

IMPRESSIONIST STORIES OF LEADERSHIP FOLLOWERSHIP NURSING
RELATIONALITY MOVEMENT ENCOUNTER AND WITHDRAWAL

by

Jo Rothwell Gibson

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A b s t r a c t

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Relationships are at the heart of leadership followership. Nursing continues to grapple with leadership enactment in practice. Nursing research indicates the efficacy of leadership in relation to workplace cultures, workforce movement and patient safety. Moral imperative is declared in relation to nursing leadership. Moral transgression in healthcare systems however have been reported in Australia and internationally in relation to vulnerable populations accessing health services and, in some circumstances involving nurses and others providing healthcare. Responsible leadership, has over the past decade, developed into a new paradigm of thinking in the extant literature beyond nursing. Leadership and followership thought about in this way is truly relational, shared and characteristically entangled, and as such a driver for building sustainable, and truly responsive and mutually person focused healthcare services. According to Barad (2014), diffraction 'queers' binaries and calls for a rethinking of notions of identity and difference. Drawing on the work of Barad (2007) I have pursued an agential realist approach to explore the entangled nature of leadership followership in nursing to “imagine and accomplish an inquiry that might produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently” (Lather, 2013, p.635) Narratives are used as valuable heuristic forms that can set in motion multiple social and material forms that cooperate, come into conflict, and overlap, without claiming an ultimate cause. This diffracted inquiry draws on process philosophy, thinking and responsibility and integration as a different way of thinking about and illuminating differences that matter for people entangled in healthcare services.

by Jo Rothwell Gibson

Chairperson of the Supervisory Committee: Professor Karen Strickland
School of Nursing, Midwifery and Public Health; Faculty of Health

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F o r e w o r d

I do want to mention at the outset the thesis as text. I have addressed you directly as a reader and have persevered with non-essentialist personal pronouns. I have ordered the text and constructed it. In doing so I am reminded of Miller Mair's (1987) suggestion that:

Words are substantial, like paint or clay. They are not transparent and secondary. They tell their own tales. They muscle in wherever they are used to influence everything around them with the stories they wish to tell. They bring with them baggage from other places and other times. They lead off in directions that speak of their relationships with other words and other things. Words, and the choice of words in relationship, create realities of their own and do not point to things we suppose are separate and of superior importance. Kelly, Bannister and a Story-Telling Psychology, p.16. (Lyons, 1989).

Relationships are special. They are characterised by entangled leadership and followership with shared responsibilities ... and profound trust, individuals emerging through and as part of their entangled intra-relating.

For some of the most fertile minds composition in writing, or in a form reducible to writing, seems to be an impossibility. In every faculty you will find that some of the more brilliant teachers are not among those who publish. (Whitehead 1929b, p. 99)

Butler (1995) elaborates this warning as follows: "For the question of whether or not a position is right, coherent, or interesting, is in this case, less informative than why it is we come to occupy and defend the territory we do, what it promises us, from what it promises to protect us" (pp. 127–128). Surely, this is the hardest work that we must do, this work of being willing to think differently (St Pierre, 2000, p. 478)

As you read on you may recognize quotations from Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland - this is not random but rather points to Carroll's insightful thinking and playful ideas and asking questions and questioning answerers - imperative if we want to understand the world and the human conditions, we impose on it.

PART I – OPENING

This 'beginning', like all beginnings, is always already threaded through with anticipation of where it is going but will never simply reach and of a past that has yet to come. (Barad, 2010, p. 244)

Section One

This section will situate and shape this thesis that is an encounter with how leadership and followership appear in nursing practice. The thesis will draw upon a range of qualitative theoretical and methodological insights to investigate the dynamic relationship between leadership and followership also raising second order issues around ontology and epistemology.

POSITIONING LEADERSHIP (AND FOLLOWERSHIP) IN NURSING

I have been thinking about leadership in nursing for a long time. I began to wonder about the role that leadership and, sometime later, followership plays in authentic person centredness that upholds the dignity of people who are in relationship in healthcare settings. My initial curiosity about this subject was sparked when I was working in a formal clinical education role. I observed that whenever there was perceived to be a need to change practice or attitudes to care in practice, the educator was called for to find a solution. It seemed that for every problem, every practice issue, every challenge in organisational culture, every question about professionalism, someone was proposing an educational solution. Whether the perceived problem was a clinical issue such as the provision of evidence informed mouthcare or the implementation of a newly developed clinical guideline, or some other professional or interpersonal issue, the request for an educational rather than a 'management' solution seemed ubiquitous.

I wondered at the time about what I was more clearly observing to be the complex and systemic nature of healthcare. I pondered about the complexity of the structure of the healthcare system in which it appeared that every response and effect had implications on many levels and with individuals and groups and running through both the human and the non-human. To try and attend to one variable of an enmeshed and networked constitution as an environment for practice seemed to me to reveal another element. I pondered about the real impact one education session, or in-service session could possibly have to change entrenched practice, or the experience and impact of organisational culture, or the expression of professional identity and professionalism, or the dynamic influence of power. I then started to think about the stakeholders involved in changes in practice, organisations, and professions and how, and why,

and who, the individuals and groups, human and non-human, involved could be influenced and change, achieved. I thought about leadership followership and how it works in nursing practice; how are the principles, the philosophy, an ethic of care in nursing recognisable in leadership and followership? Provoked by curiosity the reading about chaos theory and systems thinking commenced resulting in the assembling and absorption of many books and articles about leadership theory and practice. The simplicity of the models and theoretical constructs presented in the literature seemed to be at odds with the organic, dynamic, and just sheer humaneness of complex nursing and healthcare environments.. Interest was piqued to look at the issue of how simple theoretical constructs and simplified representational models could be helpful beyond the heuristic to support complex person-centred cultures of care.. In approaching this doctoral inquiry, a definition of leadership together with followership in nursing was unclear. A received and orthodox view that different leadership theory might be used in different circumstances to create different outcomes did not seem to be illuminating. This definitional and experiential opacity merged in combination with a growing sense that *‘identity and experience simultaneously produce each other and cannot be thought about separately, or in some sort of temporal order, as in: experiencing leading to thinking leading to describing’* (Grant, Short & Turner, 2013, p. 10).

This qualitative inquiry bends to at least two of the ‘posts’ – post humanism and post qualitative. For this reason what comes immediately prior and what comes next will be written in the plural where possible to suggest multiple understandings that work, to not be essentialist in their expression(St. Pierre, 2018).St Pierre’s consideration of nonessentialism, is informative for this ‘post’ inquiry. Thrift (2000) constructed the term nonrepresentational theory. According to Thrift, nonrepresentational theory is *“a radical attempt to wrench the social sciences and the humanities out of their current emphasis on representation and interpretation by moving away from the world based on contemplative models of thought and action towards theories of practice which amplify the potential flow of events”* (Thrift, 2000, p. 556). According to Juleskjaer, Plauborg and Adrian (2020) agential realism offers a voice to nonrepresentational research practices and there are four themes that both cut across previous dialogues and current illustration of agential realist research practices. These themes thread through this thesis and include generating response-ability and ethical attention as vital quality criteria in research practices, engaging in discussions of data/empirical material, engaging in practices of reading

and writing, and considering what the researcher may become when explored through agential realism (Juleskjaer, Plauborg & Adrian, 2020, p. 143).

Key texts that have informed this agential realist research include Barad's book (2007) *Meeting the Universe Halfway* and Jackson and Mazzei's (2011) *Thinking with Theory in Qualitative Research*. These texts offer questions that have become with this inquiry; In what sense are social relations produced and what does this entail? What is the nature of the processes that 'shape' these relations? What are the relationships between the material and discursive dimensions of power relations? How are we to make sense of the nature of power dynamics? Of materiality?(Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 132)

From this inquiry text will be developed tracing entanglements of leadership and followership in nursing across space and time that are already always relational, together with engagement as a mode of producing and working with data/empirical material, multiple entangled times and places involved as entangled processes of reading and writing and with the inquirer as an emergent element of iterative materialisations of specific nonrepresentational inquiry practices.

MEETING NURSING

Nurses as declared advocates are in a prime position to support the dignity of people (Gallagher, 2004; Heijkenskjø, Ekstedt, & Lindwall, 2010; Lawless & Moss, 2007; Gallagher, 2011). The indignity of illness can be unavoidable however, this indignity is compounded by fundamental failures in the provision of care (Jones, Hamilton, & Murry, 2015; Lake, Riman, & Sloane, 2020). Failures of care are not isolated and should be a major concern for the profession of nursing (Hutchinson & Jackson, 2013b). The environments where fundamental, compassionate care is required are complex on many human and technical fronts that include organisational cultures. The declaration of nurses as guardians to uphold the dignity of the vulnerable is a deceptively simple statement, it is also a statement that belies the complexity of demonstrating and providing safe and quality care and a broader practice remit that is political and emergent (Allen, 2019; Carryer, 2020). The narrative of nursing is complex and dynamic.

The profession of nursing presents standards for the performance and capability of nursing practice to include the requirement of high levels of education, autonomy in decision making, critical thinking and professionalism and, concomitant moral comportment of the highest calibre, and if these qualities are emerging, individuals are compelled to engage in a process of lifelong learning and striving for excellence (Price & Reichert, 2017). Nursing is an evolving profession that has sometimes subscribed to a discourse of oppression as a factor of steeply hierarchical organisational paradigms in patriarchal societal structures (Gunn et al., 2019). The narrative of nursing subjugation somewhat clouds the actual power nurses have and exercise in dealings with communities, families, and individuals. Nursing, however, has never been outside of the system, but has been prevalent in the development of the inequality, motivations of individualism and inherent bias including racism established in contemporary healthcare systems (Smith, 2020).

Added to established and emergent complexity in practice scope, community expectation and capability to respond are workforce concerns. . Examples of the pressures and workforce concerns are described in a study of the association between missed care and satisfaction with nursing position(Bragadóttir, Burmeister, Terzioglu, & Kalisch, 2020). Brook, Aitken, Webb, MacLaren, and Salmon(2019) consider the characteristics of successful interventions to reduce turnover and increase retention of early career nurses. ; Specific practice contexts such as the care of people who are older and who have dementia are also a focus of research looking at the retention of qualified nurses (Chenoweth, Merlyn, Jeon, Tait, & Duffield, 2014) Meanwhile, the future supply of nurses as an important component of healthcare systems is vulnerable due to an ageing workforce and, approaches to workforce planning(Buchan, Twigg, Dussault, Duffield, & Stone, 2015).In a systematic review focused on leadership practices and the intention of nurses to stay in practice the implications for nursing managers point to the practice of relational leadership and also to the quality of workplace environments (Cowden, Cummings, & Profetto- McGrath, 2011). Fast & Rankin (2017) emphasise professional nursing as a critical resource for safe, effective, and high-quality patient care and conclude that more research is needed to advance the rhetoric of leadership and the practices of management that impact the provision of nursing care. Nursing shortage, globally and the implications for nursing managers is also considered in a scoping review of nursing workforce planning and

forecasting (Squires, Jylhä, Jun, Ensio, & Kinnunen, 2017). The integral factors of nursing workforce and leadership and management are broadly documented.

Workplace cultures impact patient safety (Braithwaite, Herkes, Ludlow, Testa, & Lamprell, 2017). The use and misuse of power is threaded through the stories that continue with a frequency and pervasiveness and, that expose the construction and legitimatisation of workplace bullying with serious health consequences for individuals, both students and experienced practitioners, and, significant occupational and organisational impacts (Birks et al., 2017) ; Budden, Birks, Cant, Bagley, & Park, 2017; Graj, Sheen, Dudley, & Sutherland-Smith, 2019; Hutchinson, Vickers, Jackson, & Wilkes, 2010a; Lever, Dyball, Greenberg, & Stevelink, 2019; Wright & Khatri, 2015). The environments that nurses work in have direct and indirect impacts on patient safety (Olds, Aiken, Cimiotti, & Lake, 2017).

Organisational culture and leadership to optimise nursing outcomes are well documented in extant nursing literature and as the subject of a broad and extensive range of systematic reviews. It is important to note that the works referenced here are a selection of the much bigger bodies of work by multiple researchers. This is an illustrative rather than an exhaustive synopsis of views and so a ten year window between 2010 and 2020 has been used.

The dialogue that nurses are fundamental to the advocacy of dignity and person centredness in healthcare contexts is deeply rooted(Hayter, 2013; Darbyshire, Ralph, & Caudle, 2015; Turale & Kunaviktikul, 2019). The received historical story of nursing includes a clear story line that nurses have been creators and visionaries in healthcare systems. These systems are steeped with inherent inequality and nursing has played a role in building disparity into institutions. Leading health systems to dismantle policies of exclusion, judgement and substandard and unethical practice is required (Smith, 2020).

The phenomenon of leadership is integral to highlighting and strengthening the experience of nurses and breadth and scope of nursing now and in the future for and with the people who need healthcare. Leadership studies in nursing and more broadly present a diversity of theories, constructs and approaches that represent partitioned meaning, relevance, and impact

(Hutchinson & Jackson, 2013; Hurley & Hutchinson, 2014; Gardiner, 2016; Stanley, 2017; Carroll, Firth, Ford, & Taylor, 2018) It is fascinating to wonder what else we might learn about the leadership process looking beyond traditions and the usual interests and activities of leadership studies in nursing to consider renewed socio-material understanding and practice of leadership and followership. As Alvesson and Einola (2019) quoting Antonakis and others (2016) write from a general leadership studies perspective, confusions around notions like charisma and transformational leadership has made the fog over the leadership landscape thicker still, adding that excessive positivity can be unhelpful in pragmatic organisation practice despite offering hope and inspiration are often theoretically shaky (Alvesson & Einola, 2019; Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Antonakis, Bastardoz, Jacquart, & Shamir, 2016). Furthermore, Gardiner (2011) contributes to a critique of ‘authentic leadership’ saying, ‘*Leadership cannot be authentic without acknowledging different forms of dissent, such as silence, our way of living tends to revolve around similarity rather than difference*’(Gardiner, 2011, p. 104). The leadership landscape in nursing is also impacted by these critiques of dominant positivity and this is explored further in the next paragraphs.

Nursing acknowledges the importance of leadership to the profession. Leadership is recognised as a process of influence, and, yet questions about how and why leaders affect outcomes in nursing remain largely unexplored. Furthermore, observable relationships do not always reflect the contributing pattern of events. Exploration is needed to add to existing research in other disciplines that has for some time highlighted inherent weaknesses in typical leader focused approaches to leadership. Leadership development that concentrates on changing elements of leaders often collapses in relation to the expectations that previous research results might suggest (Carroll & Nicholson, 2014; Kjellström, Stålné, & Törnblom, 2020; Larsson, Holmberg, & Kempster, 2019; Lord & Brown, 2003; Schweiger, Müller, & Güttel, 2020). For example, the Australian College of Nursing offers several leadership development programs proclaiming research inspired design. These leadership programs aimed at different levels of experience are exclusively offered to registered nurses and are specifically directed towards individuals to equip them as ‘powerful leaders’ (Australian College of Nursing, n.d.). Critical leadership literature declares that the exaggeration of the impact of individual heroic leaders is a romanticism reproduced through leader-centred leadership theories. ‘*Such a romantic view*

'can be equal parts bewitching, disingenuous and harmful' as it neglects and avoids the ruptures, tensions, and complexities leadership offers' (Collinson, Smolović Jones, & Grint, 2018, p. 1642).

Leadership development is a contested terrain and is also a site that can exhibit interdependencies of power, resistance and struggle that reflect the complexities of leadership in organisations (Carroll & Nicholson, 2014b). This critical perspective acknowledges complexity as an inherent element of our social world, while also accepting that no one—not even leaders—can ever have complexity ‘under control’ and yet, work contexts and peak bodies in nursing reinforce heroic leadership meanings. Refocusing to concentrate on processes shifts the attention of leadership researchers from the heroic leader to the social context in which people with greater or lesser power influence each other. Followership is not the mirror of leadership and new ways of thinking are required about the adequacy of words to represent pre-existing things. Arguably, what is described as followership is an inevitable consequence of the need to work in groups to benefit from coordinated actions, involving some level of voluntary deference (Bastardoz & Van Vugt, 2019). Leadership can be thought of as a dynamic, unstable, relational process but needs to be balanced by consideration of followership (Uhl-Bien & Carsten, 2018; Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014). More evaluation of leadership and followership as integrally related processes is needed with a view to pivoting to integrity and a consideration of ethics and values in leadership research (Bligh & Kohles, 2012; Hutchinson & Jackson, 2013b).

Followers and followership as intrinsic elements of leadership process have been acknowledged in leadership studies and in the leadership literatures beyond nursing for some time (Kohles, Bligh, & Carsten, 2012). Most of the leadership investigations are cross sectional comparisons of leadership styles and followers’ perceptions of leaders’ styles. In nursing, there has been a tendency to reprocess methodological manoeuvres with a preference for survey designs and, with under estimation of common methodological and attributional bias. As human individuals, we are tidy creatures. We distrust chaos. Though experience comes to us with no recognizable system, for no intelligible reason, with blind and carefree generosity, we believe all evidence to the contrary in law and order and portray our gods as meticulous archivists and dogmatic

librarians (Manguel, 2015, p. 259). Following what we believe to be the method of the universe, we put everything away into the files and compartments; feverishly we arrange, we classify, we label (Kirksey, 2015) There has been what appears to have been assertions of the cause and effect of transformational and other two dimensional models of leadership in nursing research that are claimed with limited consideration given to the constraints of the instruments used indicating a lack of critical attention to common method bias and attributional bias (Hutchinson & Jackson, 2013b). Broadly, less has been studied in relation to the perception of followers about the co-formation of leadership.

In increasingly complex healthcare contexts, to draw the rhetoric and experience of person centredness more closely together, there is a need to think about nursing leadership differently to include followership. A recently published study by McCance and colleagues (2020) explores the utility and feasibility of implementing eight person-centred nursing key performance indicators to support nurses in community settings to lead the development of person-centred practice. The implications drawn from this study include knowledge pointing to the collective work of teams to enhance experiences of care. *'Involving and engaging nurses at all levels in service development has been shown to enhance morale, teambuilding and leadership, creating the conditions for a flourishing workplace environment'* (McCance et al., 2020, p. 1451). For person-centredness to flourish, it must be the norm, with everyone's voice heard and valued. Relationships between all stakeholders within healthcare environments should be characterised by a shared purpose, shared decision making, mutual respect and involvement of all (Phelan et al., 2020, p. 20).

Focus on person-centredness should be extended beyond consumers of healthcare to include those providing healthcare (McCormack & McCance, 2017). Person centred cultures are required to enable mutually respectful relationships (Buetow, Martínez-Martín, Hirsch, & Okun, 2016). Such cultures highlight the necessity to consider responsibility. Gardiner (2018) asserts that both collective and individual responsibility is an important dimension of leadership ethics. Consideration of issues from multiple angles may allow action that is responsive and responsible rendering leadership as collective action (Gardiner, 2018).

Viewing leadership/followership as a complex and ecological phenomenon requires a range of methodologies beyond the predominant surveys that only serve to capture individual perspectives (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). A process approach to the exploration of leadership and followership is not about gathering idiosyncratic tales. Alternatively, narratives that are gathered are stories that carry important theoretical messages. Additionally, “small-n” studies that feature a number of temporal observations have the capability of producing rich narratives that can capture situated precision to answer the opening questions, What is going on here?, and , building to a broader question; What is this a case of ? (Tsoukas, 2009).

Complex, unpredictable, and ambiguous workplaces imply a need to consider all the facets and diversity of leadership practice and processes that includes followers. Followers and followership as intrinsic elements of leadership process have been acknowledged in leadership studies and in the leadership literatures beyond nursing for some time (Kohles et al., 2012). Most of the leadership investigations are cross sectional comparisons of leadership styles and followers’ perceptions of leaders’ styles. In nursing, there has been a tendency to reprocess methodological manoeuvres with a preference for survey designs and, with under estimation of common methodological and attributional bias. As human individuals, we are mostly tidy creatures. We tend to distrust chaos. Though experience comes to us with no recognizable system, for no intelligible reason, with blind and carefree generosity, we believe against all evidence to the contrary in law and order. Following what we believe to be the method of the universe, we put everything away into the files and compartments; feverishly we arrange, we classify, we label (Kirksey, 2015).

The questions, what is leadership? Or what is followership?’ assumes easy objectively determined definitions. The plethora of extant literature that asks these very questions and then stops short of an absolute answer suggests the difficulty in approaching leadership and followership research in this way. Lack of definition clarity when studying any human material phenomena such as love, or justice does not imply that these things do not exist. An introduction to a special issue of the journal *Leadership Quarterly*, contended that social science with a focus

on deconstruction and the humanities relying on human capacities for storytelling and the use of metaphor and image need to be incorporated to come to a fuller or, perhaps different understanding of phenomena such as leadership and followership (Ciulla, 2008).

Most Western leadership theories are derived from research methods based in positivistic ways of knowing. Reductionist methods are not well prepared to provide adequate understanding about how leadership followership arises within groups and temporal moments. Critical leadership scholars propose that traditional exploration of leadership renders followership absent. Schedlitzki and colleagues (2018) advance an understanding of the reported absence of ‘real’, physical leaders and followers in organisations (Harding, 2015). This includes notions of the failing attempts of post-heroic discourses of shared leadership and followership to gain strength in organisational discourse and practice. This position suggests that as long as our language of organisations is centred on leader/ship as the pinnacle of desirable status and qualities, following can be no more and no less than the absent, feminised validating Other of leader/ship (Schedlitzki, Edwards, & Kempster, 2018, p. 498). Attempts to describe the phenomenon from the outside with accepted social science methods and assumptions about validity and objectivity also represent a leader-centric orientation. Diffractive methodologies record histories of interaction, interference, reinforcement, and difference with the intent of producing heterogeneous rather than homogeneous accounts (Davies, 2014; Uprichard & Dawney, 2019).

INTRODUCING STYLES OF INQUIRY

When a pebble is thrown into a pond the still surface is broken. The ripples that flow when a handful of pebbles are cast into the water intersect and interfere, creating new shapes. Diffraction can illuminate differences within. The interference patterns are spaces worthy for analytic inquiry. Diffractively (re) reading insights has the potential to materialise insightful and iterative (re) configuring of patterns of differentiating entangling. It is the creation of something new. Diffractive methodology supports a performative understanding of different knowledge making practices. There is an element of materiality in knowledge making practices, including knowing, thinking, measuring, theorising, observing (Gullion, 2018).

Diffraction methodology is not about uncovering pre-existing facts about independently existing things. Rather, it is a way of learning about phenomenon, or specific configurations of development. Diffraction methodologies map where differences appear, with the aim of making a difference in the world. Barad (2007) draws on Haraway when describing diffraction as a methodological practice that is a reading of '*insights through one another*'. Reflection is a practice of critical self-positioning. Reflection is one optical phenomenon \and as such is a metaphor that reflects the themes of mirroring or sameness, in contrast, diffraction is marked by patterns of difference.(Barad, 2007, p. 72).

This exploration is informed by traditions of inquiry that are concerned with both the social world and the material world. In addition, practice inquiry is drawn on to consider the ways that practice becomes a conventional way of doing things (Gherardi, 2016). To explore entangled leadership and followership in nursing differently, agential realism is used as an approach, and a style of inquiry. Agential realism is proposed by Barad (2007) as an ethico-onto-epistemological framework. In brief, this framework provides some understanding of '*of the role of the human and non-human, material and discursive, and natural and cultural factors in scientific and other social-material practices*' (Barad, 2007, p.23). In this inquiry the social material practices are leadership and followership in nursing.

Agential realism as a framework for this inquiry will be expanded theoretically later in the thesis. There are two elements of the agential realist framework that are key to this inquiry. The first is the concept of diffraction that proposes an approach to modelling relational differences, in a way that engages with the exploration of entanglements without disrupting data into segregated themes (Barad, 2007). The second key element is inherent in the notion that ideas matter, that is, that theoretical concepts are materially present in physical arrangements that are the focus of inquiry (Barad, 2007). It is necessary to note here that an agential realist account allows the illumination of the intersection of the real and the socially constructed for more complex and nuanced understanding of phenomena, in this inquiry leadership and followership in nursing (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012).

The centrality of identity constructs assumes a bounded ‘I’ and ‘other’ rather than an entanglement. *‘The self in positioning itself against the other, constituting the other as negativities, lack, foreignness, sets up an imponderable barrier between the self and other in an attempt to establish and maintain its hegemony’* (Barad, 2014, p. 170) That is, dominance over or ascendancy. To search and find out more about what matters and to understand more about patterns of difference rather than sameness in leadership and followership in nursing is to move away from hierarchical binaries, to reframe the leadership and followership as an assembled phenomenon in process.

Over time, there has been a considerable investment in leadership development in nursing but whether this investment results in better engagement, better person centeredness, better workforce or better caring, better learning or better scholarship is inconclusive or requires further research; a position suggested by multiple authors (Hafsteinsdóttir, van der Zwaag, & Schuurmans, 2017; Hartviksen, Aspfors, & Uhrenfeldt, 2019; Hutchinson & Jackson, 2013a; Seidman, Pascal, & McDonough, 2020; Walia & Marks-Maran, 2014). Leadership and followership potentially involve a complexity of relationships and intertwined processes involving identities that may be non-binary and ambiguous and dynamic.

So, drawing these ideas together; reductionist methods are not well prepared to provide adequate understanding about how leadership followership arises within groups and temporal moments. Different approaches to inquiry are needed to explore leadership and followership in nursing differently to understand the phenomena in different way,.. A different approach requires a problematization of binaries and engagement with unstructured thinking. The centrality of identity constructs assumes a bounded ‘I’ and ‘other’ rather than an entanglement. The questions, what is leadership? Or what is followership?’ assumes easy objectively determined definitions. Most of the leadership investigations are cross sectional comparisons of leadership styles and followers’ perceptions of leaders’ styles. Reiterating a quotation from Anzaldua and Keating (2015)‘Who and what we are depends on those surrounding us, a mix of interactions with our environments, with old and new narratives. Identity is multilayered, stretching in all directions, from past to present, vertically and horizontally, chronologically and spatially’ (Anzaldua & Keating, 2015, p. 69). An exploration of how rather than what or who, may be illuminating; This inquiry seeks to illuminate leadership followership practice in

nursing from an overarching exploratory question; how do we come to know each other when our being is uncertain and developmental?

INTRODUCING INTRA-ACTION AS AN INQUIRER

Research informed by any paradigm involves human decision making that is influenced by human perspectives. At every touch point, there are decisions that might include known and unknowable contact effects. Many research approaches assume that the researcher can be an objective outsider and that clear research mechanisms and analytic procedures will remove the human element (Aranda, 2020). Quoting Barad (2007), however, '*every measurement involves a particular choice of apparatus, providing the conditions necessary to give meaning to a particular set of variables, at the exclusion of other essential variables, thereby placing a particular embodied cut delineating the object from the agencies of observation*' (Barad, 2007, p. 115). Appreciating that the measurement apparatus creates reality is a principle here. This precept also points to a need to account for entanglements created during the practice of inquiry (Gullion, 2018).

Several feminist authors such as Karen Barad, Jane Bennett, Rosi Braidotti and Donna Haraway are influential in reshaping research that cuts across divisions to reshape qualitative inquiry that de-centres human agency rather to pay attention to how the world is configured or made up of assemblages of animate and inanimate subjects and objects that are more than the human world, that together, in intra-action, produce the messy realities we recognise as the world (Aranda, 2020, p. 183). Inquiry that is informed by feminism new materialist ontology is not inevitably against binaries but is interested in how binaries come undone, or falter and dissolve through mind, matter, culture, nature separations and other influential dualisms with the material world conceptualised as multiple non-human, as well as human, sources of agency with capacity to affect (Andrews & Duff, 2019; Lather, 2016; Aranda, 2020). The binaries of language serve to obscure or disguise partiality and normative superiority of one term over another and perpetuates inherent privileging of rational scientific knowledge through assumed objectivity and neutrality. The resulting assumption of binaries is that tacit, indigenous, experimental, affective, narrative and performative ways of knowing are dismissed as 'too partial, too subjective or emotional or irrelevant' (Aranda, 2020). Barad (2012) explains agency in an

interview with Van der Tuin and Dolphijn. This explanation is poignant and will be expanded with distinctions and differentiations throughout this thesis.

Agency is about response-ability, about the possibilities of mutual response, which is not to deny, but to attend to power imbalances. Agency is about possibilities for worldly re-configurings...Even though there are no agents per se, the notion of agency I am suggesting does not go against the crucial point of power imbalances. On the contrary. The specificity of intra-actions speaks to the particularities of the power imbalances of the complexity of a field of forces (Barad interview, Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012, p. 55)

A multitude of touch points in the exploratory process of inquiry feature decisions. Decisions such as what counts as data, what methods will be used to collect and analyse the data and the form of the text that creates the narrative of the research. Whether it is acknowledged or not, the entangled mind/body of the researcher -or inquirer are primary instruments of inquiry. To 'see', is to intervene (Barad, 2007, p. 51; Gullion, 2018). So, an inquirer, is not so much an outsider looking in or, removed from the phenomena of inquiry. This requires accountability to the specific materializations of which the inquirer is a part, entangled in the forms being studied, requiring attention, observation to fine detail and openness to capabilities and possibilities (Barad, 2007). Barad (2007) combines quantum physics with post structuralist and feminist accounts and extends Butler's (1990 and 1993) substantially cited thesis of 'performativity', iterative and reiterated by including a material possibility. The term 'intra-action' is an alternate perspective of performativity that re-forms entanglement and expresses a view that entities are not ontologically discrete (Davies, 2018a).

Human observers are '*ineluctably caught up in the actions they attempt to describe and rather than bemoaning a failure of objectivity, from a new materialist perspective this reveals how thoughts, desires, and interpretations are part of the ongoing production of materiality*' (Fox & Alldred, 2017, p. 26). The new material is underpinned in ontoepistemology, or, knowing in being. Materiality is an element of an agential realist framework in which data are shaped and, the inquirer plays an active role in the storyline of the inquiry that is also influenced by the participants of the inquirer (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). In addition, St Pierre (2011) discusses the human subjectivity of research participants as objects of knowledge and might be thought of as 'provocateurs'. As lines of flight that take us elsewhere (St.Pierre, 2011). Material feminism

offers qualitative inquirers non essentialist accounts with possibilities to explore relational ways that leadership and followership come to materialise, configure, reconfigure being that is fluid unfolding and not constant.

It is critical to briefly introduce the key concept of agential realism at the outset of this thesis. Agential realism allows the material in performativity as an active participant in the ongoing intra-activity of leadership and followership in nursing (Barad, 2007, p. 136). Therefore, agential realism draws upon a performative and relational ontology. Agential realism is a key concept in this thesis and the inquiry as an element of the ongoing arrangement of parts to shape, remodel or reform. Importantly, agential realism retracts the division between being and knowing, that is, ontology and epistemology. This retraction signifies that inquiry is of the world and, is part of the world's ongoing reconfiguration. Agential realism challenges representational thinking by not beginning with divisions that need to be overcome such as structure and agency, mind and body, nature and culture, world and representations. To review this introduction of the concept, agential realism *'radically reworks conventional notions of objectivity, realism, agency and causality and foregrounds ethics to support accountability in knowledge production with which entanglement comes to matter in a more than human world'* (Juelskjær, Plauborg, & Adrian, 2020, p. 20).

SUMMARY

This section situates and shapes this thesis, which is an encounter with how leadership and followership appear in nursing practice. The thesis draws upon a range of qualitative theoretical and methodological insights to investigate the dynamic relationship between leadership and followership also raising second order issues around ontology and epistemology. This section articulates a positioning of leadership and, an absence of followership in nursing practice and extant literature guided by the premise that if our language of organisations is centred on leader/ship as the pinnacle of desirable status and qualities, following can be no more and no less than the absent, feminised validating 'other' of leader/ship. For me, as others have noted, working in inquiry, and using an agential realist approach that is a profusion of embodiment, situated knowledges and affect becomes a life that cannot be lived as it was before in ways that science, knowledge, power relations, justice or a position as an inquirer have been understood.

Understanding ethics, epistemology and ontology as mutually constitutive results in the way I am of the world (Juelskjær et al., 2020 p.31). The section also introduces styles of inquiry that are feminist, new materialist and tend to posthuman and post qualitative inquiry. In addition, the inquirer is introduced as accountable and inextricably intra acting in mutual becoming.

A THESIS AIDE

The first section sets the scene, for illuminating followership in the study of leadership in nursing and more broadly and the ways leadership and followership might come to matter in this diffractive inquiry about leadership and followership in nursing practice.

The second section introduces important literatures and the history of some key concepts. These literatures will also be blended in substantial ways throughout the thesis. This section also details processes that were undertaken to shape the inquiry including structural process required for a doctoral thesis, meeting ‘the nurses’, gathering data, and an approach to analysis.

The third section is an invited to engage with the impressionist stories as texts Each impressionist story is a synthesis of theory, thinking, fieldnotes and verbatim transcriptions of semi structured interviews of three nurses in leadership or management roles in one healthcare service. The stories exemplify an ethico-onto-epistemological or, agential realist approach to this inquiry that has become entangled with the inquiry and entangled with the inquirer rendering the stories as a product of intra-action.

Each story is labelled in numerical order, One, Two or Three to correspond with the three discrete texts. The categorisation of the text in this way is a device used to support the reader. Different fonts have been used to illuminate the synthesised text, episodes of thinking with theory and other fragments of writing and theory to diffract and open the data to explore differences that (might) matter.

The fourth section is a brief exemplar of some of the theorists and their concepts that were read and written diffractively with data, demonstrating the threaded through materialization of theory and the ‘past yet to come’. In agential realism, the sensitivity to the production of differences that is enabled by the concept of diffraction underscores entanglements.

Disciplinary boundaries are re thought in agential realism resulting in an implicit rethinking of disciplinarity, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinarity (Juelskjær et al., 2020). Agential realism makes possible the analysis of diverse empirical materials engaging with diffractive practice that reads insights through one another instead of against one another, while attending to the specificities of the materials enacted through the diffraction (Haraway, 1988, 1992, 1997). The result ‘thinking with theory, diffractively, across empirical materials illustrates how knowledge is opened up and proliferated rather than foreclosed and simplified. The theorists presented in the fifth section are important to work with against interpretation.

The fifth section is a coda that follows an exploration across the insights that emerge from the impressionist stories and invites the reader to consider the entanglement of leadership and followership in nursing practice to lead to a potentially altered understanding of leadership and followership development in nursing. The section draws the thesis to a close as an illustrative point in time rather than a solidified theory.

PART II – DIFFRACTING

We surely have our work cut out for us as we try to set aside a system of thought, an order of things, that is so powerful we can slip back into it with a single, telltale word (St. Pierre, 2013, p. 655).

Section Two

This section articulates the decisions made in exploring leadership and followership in nursing with theory entwined method and methodology. Framed by agential realism, it expands this further in relation to a theory of ethics and responsibility in inquiry. The section describes the approach to the research design, the enaction of diffractive methodology, the landscape of the inquiry, ethical approvals, issues of consent and privacy. Furthermore, some principles of collaboration with inquiry respondents, their characteristics, and their recruitment to be involved are articulated. The method of generating the data styled as ‘thinking with theory’ involving working in the threshold. Jackson and Mazzei (2012) offer the allegory of the threshold that contains both entry and exit, and in the middle of things. The threshold as allegory, has no purpose or meaning until it is connected to other spaces. The allegory of threshold, also supports the idea that data and theory constitute one another where the divisions and definitions collapse together (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) Finally, an introduction to data construction as narrative is outlined in an attempt to work with texts that become ‘*agentially real*’ (Barad, 2007) to transform theory and data and keep them on the move within agential realism as framework that aligns with process approaches that ‘seek to imagine and fight against ‘ready-made’ models of inquiry (Stengers, 2011, p. 11). Diffractive approaches to research suggest exploratory flights and flows to expand rather than limiting thought. Linearity, however, is required in this thesis to offer a path to follow. Following the previous overview of theory to enhance understanding of an agential realism approach to relational process ontology, the decisions made to enact diffractive ethnography will be developed in the following chapter as an introduction to the processes of this inquiry.

Agential realism is an ...’epistemological-ontological-ethical framework that provides an understanding of the role of the human and non-human, material and discursive, natural and cultural factors in scientific and other social-material practices, thereby moving considerations beyond well worn debates that pit constructivism against realism, agency against structure and idealism against materialism’ (Barad, 2007, p. 74)

AN INQUIRY TO COME

This inquiry aims to challenge what we know about how leadership and followership happens in nursing practice. Practice is contradictory and yet features repetitive patterns, while displacing and shifting, and continuously rearranging. In addition, there exist a proliferation of lists of traits and static models that are representative constructs of leadership followership in nursing and more broadly. Representation is described as an act of mirroring a reality that is thought to exist independent of the researcher. Barad (2008) argues that *‘What often appears as separate entities, and separate sets of concerns with sharp edges does not actually entail a relation of absolute exteriority at all’* (Barad, 2008, p. 122). Through a diffractive analysis the people in the inquiry have permeable boundaries, open to influences both interior and exterior that make specific identity clear and blurred in addition to the material conditions of space-time (Davies, 2017).

This inquiry is informed by practice described in three ways. First, as an organised constellation of different people’s activities therefore, it is a social phenomenon. Secondly, practice involves mutually constructed realities that nevertheless feature boundaries reference. Thirdly, practice is always relational, linking social interactions that form patterns. People find complex practices difficult to express in words. Practices are often controlled and embodied (Trowler, 2014). Practices also involve emotions and expectations, as well as performance, partly because of characteristics that are beyond words. Practical awareness often involves simply knowing how to ‘get on with it’ in daily life without always being intentionally aware of how the performance is done. Individuals develop a practical logic which they display through the practical skills they acquire (Bourdieu, 1990).

The inquiry draws upon a range of qualitative theoretical and philosophical insights to investigate the dynamic relationship between leadership and followership in nursing. This is a qualitative study that explores the rich affordances of storytelling in sharing the lives of the leaders and followers. The inquiry also aims to raise some second order issues around ontology and epistemology. Imagining an exploration of leadership and followership as a complexity of relationships and intertwined processes involving identities that are non-binary but rather, ambiguous, and dynamic. One reading of leadership in nursing is about the charismatic and transformational leaders championed in the literature. Another is yet to be illuminated. Each

may ‘capture some of the detail of stories of recognition’ (Davies et al., 2013, p 689). The ontological question is, what is real? This inquiry replies to that question with this response; one story of recognition need not be privileged over the other. As St Pierre (2013) writes of post qualitative styles of inquiry with a flattened ontology, ‘*In this ontology, thinking and living (italics in original) are simultaneities, and we have to think possible worlds in which we might live*’ (St. Pierre, 2013, p.655). Davies and co-authors (2013) write with clarity about a post qualitative style of inquiry.

Post-qualitative research, as we are conceptualizing and practicing it here in this paper, seeks encounters, in which the research itself, both its practices and its findings, might emerge as something new, something not-yet-thought. Such encounters do not foster research practices that engage in methodical rule-following, and they do not impose or presume a moral framework. Rather they open up a moment-by-moment ethical questioning that asks how things come to matter in the ways they do. Post-qualitative encounters do not place humanism’s individual subject at the apex of inquiry but see subjects, including the researcher, as emergent in encounters with others – with human others, with discourses, and with physical and social landscapes (Davies et al., 2013, p. 680).

A process of thinking and preparing for this inquiry required wide and deep reading, as St Pierre (2011) describes it, ‘ a citational trail from one text to another’ followed (St.Pierre, 2011). Engaging with ‘*theory that makes people*’ is a process of ‘*spreading meanings differently to what they might be otherwise*’, ‘*folding texts into one another to flatten them out*’ (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 131). Diffractive reading allows a process to ‘*engage the threshold as a site of transformation*’ (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 7).

Reading about leadership and followership in nursing and reading and thinking widely and deeply about leadership and followership and management and process and diffraction and feminism and materialism provoked further thinking about whether ‘we’ knew all that we ‘needed to know’ about the process and practice of leadership and followership in nursing beyond the theoretical models and fixed definitions claimed objectively in the literature. Diffractive reading, as the process came to be recognized, (that is, as post humanist

performativity), is dynamic and moves from one theorist to the next to expand, stretch and distort previous knowledge and, as a moving relationship between the material and the discursive (Barad, 2003a) As Jackson and Mazzei (2011) discuss, *'diffractive reading is not about the experience or what is told, but about the ways in which what is experienced is formed in the intra-action between the discursive and the material'* (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 131). This allows the question to be asked; How does leadership and followership in nursing help constitute who and what comes to matter?

DIFFRACTION AND MESSY PROCESSES TO INQUIRE WITH THEORY

Koro-Ljungberg (2016) encourages consideration of labels, such as methodology, qualitative, data and analysis, in terms of the associated discourses and practices, pointing to how labels constitute scholars.

'Methodologies without methodology generates a 'messy' qualitative research process and researchers are expected to make potentially informed decisions about theories, methods, representation, emergent questions and interactions with non-human and human matter. Sometimes, these might be different decisions and responsibilities that insist on different methodological places and theoretical spaces (Koro-Ljungberg, 2016, p. 3)

Diffraction attends to detailed patterns and fine-grained details that matter in a performative move away from normative readings and narratives constructed in discursive interpretations that often overlook material intra-activity. Diffraction as a process in inquiry involves *'reading insights through on another'*, to account for how practices matter in contrast to reflecting on representations and so, reflection is a practice of critical self-positioning' (Barad, 2007, p. 90) Diffraction is about attending to specific material entanglements or, patterns, constellations, and relationalities (Kaiser & Thiele, 2018). Reflection and diffraction are both optical metaphors, however, diffraction shifts from the notion of reflexivity and reflection that hold the world at a distance as accurate representations of reality that have no impact on the objects of inquiry. Material entanglements, 'matter and meaning', are not, Barad pronounces, *'separate elements'* (Barad, 2007, p. 3). Waves of water, sound and light, all exhibit diffraction under the

right conditions writes Barad. Waves are not things in themselves, but are rather *'disturbances ...that propagate in a medium (like water) or as oscillating fields (like electromagnetic waves, the most familiar example being light)'* (Barad, 2007, p. 76). Waves are not discrete entities; they can overlap within the same space. Additionally, waves do not describe objects, but movements. Waves interfere with each other where they meet and cause interference or distraction patterns. Simply put, diffraction *'has to do with the way waves combine when they overlap and the apparent bending and spreading of waves that occurs when waves encounter an obstruction'* (Barad, 2007, p. 74).

Classical physics suggests that *'diffraction patterns are simply the result of differences in (the relative phase and amplitudes of) overlapping waves'* (Barad, 2007, p. 80). Furthermore, matter was generally seen mechanically as inert, stable, and fixed forming separate things that enter relations across boundaries. The quantum physics-philosophy of Niels Bohr, in the mid-twentieth century, challenged Newtonian physics, but also, Cartesian epistemology and the representationalism of construction of words, knowers and things (Barad, 2003a, p. 813). Bohr's diffraction apparatus suggested matter as *'dynamic'* entangled with meaning. Light can behave as a wave or a particle since depending on the measurement *'the nature of the observed phenomenon changes with corresponding changes in the apparatus'* (Barad, 2007, p. 106). This is a rudimentary glimpse of the intricacies of quantum physics and of the queer nature of matter. What this unrefined precis attempts to point to is the essential allusion that ontology and epistemology cannot be separated, and this profoundly affects our conception of the *'world'*. Diffraction is more than a metaphor and understanding the *'world'* as differential relational emergence are considered *'in their differential becoming. Particular (re) configuring of the world diffractively aligns with shifting boundaries and properties that stabilize and de-stabilize'* (Barad, 2003a, p. 813). The quantum world does not disavow boundaries and does not validate a mesh of undifferentiated sameness that results from everything being related. Diffraction offers an invitation, however, to shift focus to *'specific intra-actions in the ebb and flow of agency'* (Barad, 2003a, p. 817). These long quotes from Barad are required to facilitate the conveyance of integral and complex concepts.

The two slit diffraction experiment queers the binary light/darkness story. What the pattern reveals is not lack. Darkness can be produced by 'adding new light' to existing light – 'to that which it has already received. 'Darkness is not mere

absence, but rather an abundance... Diffraction queers binaries and calls for a rethinking of the notions of identity and difference (Barad, 2014b, p. 171).

Furthermore,

According to agential realism, knowing, thinking, measuring, theorizing, and observing are material practices of intra-acting within and as part of the world. What do we learn by engaging in such practices? We do not uncover pre-existing facts about independently existing things as they exist frozen in time like little statues positioned in the world. Rather, we learn about phenomena-about specific material configurations of the world's becoming. The point is not simple to put the observer or knower back in the world (as if the world were a container and we merely needed to acknowledge our situatedness in it) but to understand and take account of the fact that we too are part of the world's differential becoming (Barad, 2007, p. 91).

The focus on relationality rather than single entities at the foreground of Barad's (2007) thinking is entangled with the physics-philosophy of Niels Bohr. These ideas are transdisciplinary to nursing and require an explanation that draws on the physics experiment to illustrate the foundation of Barad's philosophy. Effects of the intra-actions of the experiment rather than the direct result of discrete entities emerge in Barad's approach that enacts a swing from epistemology to onto-epistemology through the work of early twentieth century physicist, Niels Bohr. Bohr's view arranged around 'agential reality' attributes agency to matter, and more specifically matter that has been given agency by a theory. Matter becomes agential and importantly tolerates the role of theory in what will become 'reality'. In addition, and of importance in Barad's work, Bohr's work emphasises the 'apparatus' so that measurement and description require each other. Intra-action, a neologism coined by Barad, embraces theory, apparatus, and material in entangled becoming (Barad, 2007, p. 146; Gullion, 2018; Hekman, 2010; Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; Malou, Juelskjær & Schwennesen, 2012).

Many leadership practices are attributed to cause and effect, and the very idea of leadership is taken for granted (Knights, 2019). Leadership and followership intra-actions and processes in nursing are highlighted in this inquiry. Approaching the inquiry diffractively is a factor in looking for reverberations in assemblages. Thinking about diffraction patterns and difference to map the becoming and folding is one approach to differences in the relations in leadership and followership in nursing. Politics, philosophies, and practices shape the undertaking of this inquiry. Leadership and followership as emergent and in the moment is a different viewpoint to endlessly seeking the essential characteristics of individuals and the imposition of static models (De Schauwer, Van de Putte, Blockmans, & Davies, 2018). Moving separately a different viewpoint in an inquiry about leadership and followership in nursing is a shift away from representationalism to a more performative understanding of discursive practices, and we ‘challenge the ‘thingification’ through which ongoing, unfolding relations are reduced to “things”, “entities”, “relata”’ (Bennett, 2010, p. 2). In this inquiry, the concept intra-action, refers not to the interaction between separately existing entities, but to the ‘mutual constitution of entangled agencies’ (Barad, 2007, p. 33). This is a move out of the structures that prevent us from thinking differently—this work is *différance*, not repetition (St.Pierre, 2011, p. 471). Difference is not a given, it is not fixed and so differences are within.

DOING INQUIRY DIFFERENTLY, WITH *DIFFÉRANCE*

The next section of this chapter provides an overview of descriptions of inquiry ‘that produce us and the world’ all the while mindful of the structural boundaries while also attending to what is and has happened in the inquiry. What has and is happened in an entanglement of the onto-epistemology of agential realism with the traditions of ethnographic, praxiographic and, qualitative research that provide various methods for collecting and analysing data. The descriptions are necessarily separated and linear for the purpose of presenting this information for this thesis. The descriptions are entangled and also feature boundary making practices to fragment the information to write descriptions about them with *différance* (St.Pierre, 2011, p. 473). Differences are formed through intra-activity in the making of ‘this ‘ and ‘that’ within the phenomenon that is established in entanglement.

The measurement apparatus is the condition of possibility for determinate meaning for the concept in question, as well as the condition of possibility for the existence of determinately bounded and propertied (sub) systems, one of which marks the other in measurement of the property in question. In particular, apparatuses provide the conditions for the possibility of the determinate boundaries and properties of 'objects' within phenomena, where 'phenomena' are the ontological inseparability of objects and apparatuses (Barad, 2007, p. 128).

The process of this inquiry evokes phenomena that include intra-action with 'methods', 'instruments' and 'subjects/objects'. The challenge this presents is to discover and utilise research tools without defaulting to a representationalist framework. Schadler (2019), using the theories of new materialism and ethnography, and Gullion (2018), describing diffractive ethnography in the 'ontological turn', provide helpful illustrations about the reconfiguration of methodological tools to give complex accounts of the world, and the complexity of human behaviour situated in larger environmental or ecological contexts (Gullion, 2018; Schadler, 2019a). *'An agential realist elaboration of performativity allows matter its due as an active participant in ongoing intra-activity'* (Barad, 2007, p. 136).

This chapter continues to also articulate this inquiry that entails writing ethnographically to build a world containing specific inhabitants and is also an allusion to the world in which it is built. First, however, it is necessary to expand the idea of ethnography as a practice of diffraction framed by agential realism. Situating the method/ological style of this inquiry as 'ethnographic' requires definition while acknowledging that fuller exposition of these matters have been dealt with by others elsewhere. What follows is comprehensive elucidation to provide an opening to the style of the inquiry, because design implies a more formal and specified plan. Ethnography, influenced by anthropology, has been defined as a set of usually qualitative methods and theories entwined in an open-ended experimental research endeavour (Mellander & Wiszmeg, 2016a). The effect of this definition is that an ethnographer is a person performing research through closeness and therefore, a practice dependent on proximity. This closeness is varied and includes relationships with the research respondents of research. Closeness also emerges through entanglement of the researcher with large quantities of research material. The closeness is analytical and entangled with the processes of decision making. Haraway (1988)

asserts that all research is a way of interfering in the world. It follows that doing ethnography is a way of interfering in the world and therefore ethnography affects and is affected (Haraway, 1988 in Cunliffe & Scaratti, 2017). Furthermore, *'there never was a traditional hegemonic ethnographic order. It never was a stable entity and so cannot be unproblematically defined'* (Atkinson, Okada, & Talmy, 2011, p. 27). Ethnography has moved through postmodernism, feminism, and into the post qualitative era and Denzin (2010) emphasizes the social change potential of contemporary ethnography (Denzin, 2010). Cunliffe (2010) describes ethnography as having a variety of 'flavours' including realist, interpretive and critical. Paying attention to the minutiae of research practices forces the ethnographer to take responsibility for the work that concepts are expected to do 'rather than taking refuge in convention'. Such convention relies on reflexivity as a trope employed to handle closeness. Such approaches to ethnography are not new but are inclusive of assumptions from other areas in social science in what might be referred to as bricolage or, process of invention (Cunliffe, 2010).

Praxiography, an ethnographic application of social practice theory derived by Mol (2003) in a small body of literature and resonant with a larger span explaining practice theory from which methodological implications can be deduced. Mol also described 'praxiography' as 'a method to stubbornly take notice of the techniques that make things visible, audible, tangible, knowable' (Mol, 2003, p. 33). Praxiography, focuses on ontological instability or multiplicity of the body and how it is differently enacted in every practice as an acting agent amongst other agents, such as sites, material and techniques and therefore works with materiality without essentialism (Clever & Ruberg, 2014). A praxiographic approach is one of contextual contingency and privileges close-up, in depth case study that is ethnographic in character. Change oriented praxiography moves beyond ethnographies of situated practice such as Actor Network Theory and *'focuses on reservoirs of practice that lie beyond local examples of performance'* (Trowler, 2014, p. 22). Encompassed in praxiographic approaches are social and relational elements of practice (Bueger & Gadinger, 2018) There are methodological implications in the practice of doing practice focused research, or, praxiography as a mode of engaging with the world that is sensitive to multiplicity of reality (Gullion, 2019).

There are challenges encountered in the practice of research that is praxiographic; 'Many of these problems are familiar and have been discussed in ethnography (or debates about Actor Network theory). This includes for instance, access to and selection of data. Others are more

specific about the challenge of writing about practices, such as how to cope with *'temporal dispersion of practices and their unruliness or how to unravel the embodied, tacit type of knowledge that underlies a practice'* (Bueger, 2014, p. 385). Researchers doing praxiography necessarily depend on a bricolage approach to research strategy and methods that are unique to the context and question being explored, *'because of its multifaceted and complex nature, practice can never be captured by a single method, or reproduced through one single style of writing'* (Nicolini, 2009, p. 196). Praxiography has been employed in healthcare in studies including examinations of standardised practices related to death, materiality in nursing education and postmortem care and the role of the nurse (Hadders, 2009; Soffer, 2016; Williams, 2016). Mol (2003), describes praxiography as a way of studying practices that pushes beyond the matter of epistemology and associated concern with representation and knowledge pointing to multiple ontologies (Mol, 2003).

Barad's concept of onto-epistemology is helpful to challenge Cartesian habits of mind to consider shifting boundaries and a differential sense of being is enacted through the ongoing ebb and flow of agency (Barad, 2003b, p. 187). Diffractive ethnography as Gullion (2018) describes it, is an approach that follows practices of diffraction rather than reflection and so puts research processes to different use and considers new materialism in a shifting orientation (Gullion, 2018). The enactments of inquiry that is approached through agential realism become separated during the process of writing (Schadler, 2019a). An ethnographic perspective provides a space to explore the complex and contingent. While an agential account of leadership and followership practice in nursing and issues of onto-epistemology include method/ological consequences of significance that are informed by the objects of research and the objects of practice. These objects of research and practice might illuminate behaviours, artefacts, knowledge resources and meanings, configured to accomplish enactments, that is, the process and practice of research.

The process of practice focused ethnography is not as focused on a geographical location in which one must become immersed. The field site in part becomes irrelevant as the focus becomes networks, connectivity, and the nature of engagement. Practice focused ethnography is open to multiple possibilities to pay attention to how artefacts and human practice shapes each other (Trowler, 2014). The site in this style of inquiry becomes an impression of an explicit milieu, a place composed of practices and material arrangements (Bueger, 2014). In this inquiry

exploring leadership and followership in nursing, the inquiry landscape is the hospital, that is, a site holding a complex assemblage of practices. The hospital and nursing are somewhat synonymous and so, an ideal site to trace artefacts as important containers of practice. The hospital, however, is only one of myriad settings where nursing practice and nursing culture is alive. Artefacts as containers of practice might include objects, technologies, language including concepts and metaphors. These features are described here to contextualise the inquiry landscape but will be expanded in a following section. The analysis of collected data is considered in this inquiry using elements of artefacts including objects, spaces, and conceptual and metaphorical language. Analysis is challenging when in a ‘post’ inquiry, ‘The concept *data collection* is itself problematic because it points to an ontology that assumes data are separate from human being and so can be “collected.” Importantly, the concept *data*, as described in conventional research methodologies, is simply not thinkable’ (Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre, 2019, p. 4). Furthermore, there is no predetermined approach to data analysis. It is to come.

...creativity is not about crafting the new through a radical break with the past. It's a matter of dis/continuity, neither continuous nor discontinuous in the usual sense. It seems to me that it's important to have some kind of way of thinking about change that doesn't presume there's either more of the same or a radical break. Dis/continuity is a cutting together-apart (one move) that doesn't deny creativity and innovation but understands its indebtedness and entanglements to the past and the future. (Barad cited in Juelskjær & Schwennesen, 2012, p. 16).

Agential realism, as a theoretical framework for this inquiry, determines ethical concerns as integral to the inquiry process and not incremental with values integral to the nature of knowing and being. Ethics involves responsibility to others. ‘*Ethics is therefore not about the right response to a radically exterior/ized other, but about responsibility and accountability for the lively relationalities of becoming of which we are part*’ (Barad, 2007, p. 393). There is, however, the necessity of the following description of ethical approval and processes required by institutions and organisations such as the university and the hospital as settings for and with thinking and doing this inquiry. This is approached with ‘*an ethical imperative to rethink the*

nature of being and a heightened curiosity and accompanying' (St. Pierre, Jackson, & Mazzei, 2016, p. 106).

ETHICAL PRACTICE

Ethics is emergent in the intra-active encounters in which knowing, being and doing (epistemology, ontology, and ethics) are inextricably entangled. (Barad, 2007)

Ethics, from both poststructuralist and new materialist perspectives, demands that we examine the onto-epistemologies through which any events are constituted and constitutive. We must continually ask: how are we mutually implicated in particular unethical practices; what practices of knowing and being are we mobilizing when we choose to engage in them, or to ignore them; how are we dis/continuous with the world's injustices; what habitual emotions and embodied practices do we engage in that sustain violations of others; how are our own bodies, bodies that we have in common, affected by and implicated in 'humanity's inhumanity'. (Davies, 2018b, p. 125)

This inquiry was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Canberra and the ACT Health Human Research Ethics Committee (Low Risk Sub-Committee) as a matter of protocol. Three nurses were invited to be involved in the inquiry and a discussion with each took place to explain the general aim of the inquiry, and their voluntary participation, obtaining written consent from each participant. In this inquiry relationality matters as is focus on mindfully dwelling amid the socio-material practices and entangled relationships and so it involves consequences as they are experienced by individuals as the result of socio-material practices. This ethical onto epistemological approach then, requires special attention to be paid to the future worlds disclosed and shaped by different ways of enacting in socio-material arrangements. Doing so shifts focus from privileging the individual as subject and embraces the emergence of discursive material entanglement (Barad, 2007). Some key normative ethical

concerns, or what is morally right or wrong for this inquiry, include acknowledgment and mindfulness related to ownership of the story, who tells the story, who's version is convincing, what happens when the narratives compete and as a professional community, what do stories do among us?

Privacy and confidentiality have been maintained throughout the inquiry process. The products and outcomes of the inquiry are being provided in this thesis for examination and may be presented at conferences and written up for publication. However, in all these reports, protection of the confidentiality of humans is maintained. It is acknowledged that due to the need to collect personal information and stories from the nurses, it is not possible for the inquiry to be fully anonymous. An assurance was given by the inquirer to all three nurses, who gave their time and stories with great generosity, that all reports of the research will contain no information that can intentionally identify any individual and all identifying information will be kept in the strictest confidence, the information collected will be stored securely on a password protected computer throughout the project and then stored at the University of Canberra for the required five-year period after which it will be destroyed according to university protocols. The raw words provided by the nurses were transcribed verbatim. Only the inquirer has had access to this raw information.

THE NURSES

The inquirer approached this inquiry with an understanding of one who is not an all-knowing outsider looking at a research problem, more, a nurse in assemblage with the inquiry in the making (St. Pierre, Jackson, & Mazzei, 2016b). The generation of a portrait for this ethnographic agential realist style of inquiry required data collected from the culture sharing group, in this case, nurses. The nurses were identified at one tertiary hospital. All were working in roles that had leader or manager in the job title or role description. The roles the nurses were working in were both acting and substantive positions. The nurses were serendipitously at different levels of the organisational structure and with different levels of leadership and, or management experience. The nurses were initially approached by phone and a follow up email was sent to seek involvement in the research. The emails included the plain language information required for ethical approval as an enactment of responsibility (Koro-Ljungberg,

2016). Interviews with clinical nurses who were employed in named leadership or management roles generated data. The inquirer did not engage in participant observation as in traditional ethnography but was more an observing participant who, as part of her daily activity, studies the setting the focal activity is embedded in considering, that there are always sources of influence in an interview context that cannot be minimized or controlled. Furthermore, it is seldom possible to separate the “distortions” from “authentic experiences” or “correct information”(Alvesson, 2003). This is also consistent with agential realism in which knowing does not come from standing at a distance and representing but rather from ‘*a direct material engagement with the world*’ (Barad, 2007, p. 49).

THE NURSES (UNCONTAINABLE VOICES)

Since “voice” cannot be thought as existing separately from the milieu in which it exists, it cannot be thought as emanating “from” an individual person. There is no separate, individual person, no participant in an interview study to which a single voice can be linked – all are entangled (Mazzei, 2013a, p. 734)

Barad wrote, ‘*neither the discursive practices nor material phenomena are ontologically or epistemologically prior*’ (Barad, 2007, p. 152). Being a nurse allowed the inquirer to insert into the material and discursive assemblage with the nurses, a hub of connections of colleagues, research, doctoral study previous workplaces among others, and in this way of thinking inspired by the work of Deleuze and Guatarri (1987), these elements are to be thought as acting on one another simultaneously (Mazzei, 2013b). The research involved four (by negotiation) unstructured, taped ‘interviews’ from each nurse over a period of six to eight months. Interviewing and interview data transcribed into transcripts are only one agential force in the assemblage that is plugged into the process that is called “research.”.. The approach was longitudinal, and event driven, and to that end gathered structured data in stages through the series of interviews and the writing and thinking with theory in the intervals (Feldman, 2000). The inquirer kept personal journals and this together with the quotation collection technique described by St Pierre was integrated together with notes and words arising from the supervisory process of a doctoral student. These processes have been recognised in the

published literature discovered late in the doctoral activities. Writing in this way is not finding truth in this knowledge and knowing, but being in analytic, fluid and creative processes of writing: opening up for multiplicities, complexities, possibilities and play (Richardson & St Pierre, 2005; Honan & Bright, 2016; Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre, 2017) and . At the time, the inquirer was ‘doing the next thing’ and that too has been discovered in preparing the thesis (Guttorm, Hohti, & Paakkari, 2015; St. Pierre, 2011, 2019).

In this style of inquiry, the voices of the nurses, interviewed for the purpose of inquiry become through the enactment of ‘interviewing’ in an emergent intra-action with other agents in the agentic assemblage and as such are more than spoken words to an entanglement of things such as offices, doors, institutional discourses, feminine bodies and masculine discourses of leadership and management, for example (Mazzei & Jackson, 2017, p. 1096). In the ‘knot of forces’ between the material and the discursive, the potential risks to the nurses related to privacy and confidentiality. Responsibility was taken to ensure that any reports of the data do not identify any individual or their circumstances other than a separable definition of their professional role. Details that are potentially identifiable in a small city are changed in this thesis so that the nurses are not represented on their own but as Mazzei and Jackson (2017) articulate, ‘points on a spectrum that can produce different questions and research practices’. The spectrum might include other nurses, hospitals, gender norms among many other points. *‘The point, for interviewing practices, is to notice how these elements—including voice—are joined in a particular way, ‘in the sheer wonder of the spacetime entanglement at work’* (Kirby, 2013, p. 77; Mazzei & Jackson, 2017, p. 1096).

THE NURSES AS PROVOCATEURS

About research respondents, you say that rather than seeing them as objects of knowledge, they could be thought of as “provocateurs,” as lines of flight that take us elsewhere (St.Pierre, 2011, p. 620).

The nurse ‘provocateurs’ do not precede the phenomenon of entangled leadership followership that started this inquiry. The nurses as provocateurs are in this inquiry, the inquiry respondents, and the nurses who were interviewed. The assumption is that no thing, human or material exists

in isolation, and nothing exists without the need of other things and so, the world is symbiotic (Hodder, 2012). Entering the field involved developing and building relationships with the Nurses, to enable one core activity of ethnographic fieldwork, that is, to ‘establish a place in a natural setting on a relatively long term basis in order to investigate, experience the social processes in that setting’ (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Entering the field to work with the nurses required a ‘jump into the middle’, not at a discrete beginning, ‘*there is no beginning to capture*’ (Gullion, 2018, p. 108). An ethico-onto-epistemological agential realist style of inquiry provoked the consideration of intra-action among, the inquirer, the objects of research, nurses and a spectrum of material and discursive points and the apparatus of the inquiry itself.

The relationships formed with the nurses is something of a compromise when the unit of analysis in an inquiry informed by agential realism is not people or groups but phenomena to explore the tracings of processes rather than cause and effect. Sampling phenomena is not an easy aspect in the context of this research. Given that agential realism involves rethinking of the oppositional concepts that are used that lead us to think in the binary, Barad encourages the importance of the ontological as an important issue.

Does nature provide some template that gets filled in by culture in ways that are compatible in local discourses? Or do specific discourses provide the lenses through which we view the layering of culture on nature? Does the full ‘texture’ of nature get through, or is it partially obliterated or distorted in the process? Is reality an amorphous blob that is structured by human discourses and interactions? Or does it have some complicated, irregular shape that is differently sampled by varying frameworks that happen to ‘fit’ in local regions like coincident segments of interlocking puzzle pieces? Or is geometry fractal, so that it is impossible for theories to match reality even locally? At what level of detail can any such question be answered, if at all? And what would it mean? (Barad, 2007, p. 42).

For the purposes of doctoral research, the consent of research respondents is an essential element of ethical conduct. This enactment of the research is written about separately here but is not inherently distinct in the diffractive research process. The separation is a boundary making practice of writing about method (Schadler, 2019b, p. 220). This is particularly

important in a style of inquiry informed by practice focused ethnography when there are questions about who the insider is and who the outsider is depending on the focus of the research. Important then is the assumption of a way of thinking and acting in this doctoral research/inquiry that every enactment of research/inquiry is entangled with other aspects of the research/inquiry. Barad (2007) describes this as the concept of ‘exteriority within’, compelling new ways of thinking about ways of knowing with research respondents in ‘*a place where we are not strange, not yet the same*’ (Mellander & Wiszmeg, 2016b, p. 6).

The relation to the nurses is a way of enacting the world mutually. In agential realism, the division that cuts ‘together apart’ creates difference and makes the world knowable through its entanglements. Agential cuts sometimes cut the researcher and the nurses together, and sometimes to cut us apart (Barad, 2014c). What is included in this thesis are decisions, guided by doctoral supervisors, who are also senior colleagues. It is important however to think about how the nurses, directly involved in this inquiry, hold the inquirer tightly or loosely, what kind of knowledge they enlarge and what they do with that knowledge. Power is an important consideration, and care was taken not to presume before an agential cut is or was enacted.

The process of attaining consent is required as an ethical element of research and this is held in tension as premature statement of roles in a diffractive inquiry process that theoretically allows new roles and relationships to emerge. The inquirer needed to align and join with the nurses to enact knowing with them rather than about them. Considerations of privacy in ethico-onto-epistemological research enactments ‘have to do with responsibility and accountability for the entanglements “we” help to enact and what kinds of commitments “we” are willing to take on, including commitments to “ourselves” and who “we” may become’ (Barad, 2007, p. 382; Völker, 2019). These commitments inform the considerations made about confidentiality as an enactment of inquiry.

THE NURSES’ CONFIDENTIALITY

Maintaining confidentiality while presenting a detailed agential realist account of the inquiry enactments presents some remarkable challenges. The emergent nature of the style of inquiry, including analysis of data and writing to document the processes as a doctoral student is challenging and although the inquiry was intentionally nascent all the available information

was shared with the nurses at the stage of the inquiry where consent was sought and granted. Enacting research process using deductive disclosure or, internal confidentiality, presents the need for very careful consideration when the traits of individuals or groups make them potentially identifiable in research accounts (Kaiser, 2009). In most research, ethics approval is procedural and typically addressed during research planning, and development of the proposal as it was in the research approval documentation that preceded this thesis. Procedural ethics usually addresses confidentiality in relation to data collection, data organisation, and the dissemination of the research. The goal of this inquiry and ethnographic research more broadly, is to share rich and detailed data while maintaining the essence of the data and respecting the nurses' perspectives on how data might be used.

The nurses were informed about the use of the data and this included a careful conversation about how the inquiry might be used. These conversations were captured using audio recording. The possible uses of the data included the possibility of presentations, drafts of text prepared for this thesis to be read by supervisors, and journal articles and other published text including the final thesis to be prepared for examination. As the inquiry progressed, there was continual reflection on motivations beyond writing a thesis for examination. The audience of the final thesis that might be beyond supervisors and examiners was considered very carefully.

It was important to be clear but at the same time to acknowledge and give voice to challenges that arise from documenting detailed accurate accounts from rich data that are enactments of responsibility and accountability and not falling into paternalism and yet protecting the identities of nurses whose occupation and roles are revealed in addition to the contextual identifiers which remain in the final thesis (Kaiser, 2009) Issues of confidentiality were guided by Barad's (2007) position that '*values are integral to the nature of knowing and being*'...and questions of responsibility and accountability lie at the core of scientific practice' (Barad, 2007, p. 37). Ethics and ethical considerations of confidentiality in research enactments, 'cannot be about responding to the other as if the other is the radical outside to the self' (Barad, 2007, p. 179). These ideas require clarity in the becoming of an agential realist research account and diffractive research enactments. Gullion (2018) addresses assumptions about data and confidentiality in this quote.

The ‘data’ for this project (if I can co-opt that term to describe my thought process) are multiple, fragmented, and entangled: philosophical and ethnographic texts in assemblage with my embodied researcher self, with countless physicalities and objects, all do so from the understanding that “to be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained identity” (Barad 2007:ix). When I write of entanglement, I do so from the perspective of quantum entanglement (Gullion, 2018 p. 227).

I needed to identify and work with methods that enable me to reconceptualise and challenge orthodoxy. Leadership followership are entangled and intricately linked to social change. Change is an intricate problem in that practices are always emergent (Gherardi, 2019a). This emergent element was an important consideration in the ethical facets of the ethico-onto-epistemological agential approach including attaining informed consent and being careful with privacy and identifying ways of collecting data.

GATHERING DATA

Gathering data in a ‘post’ style inquiry needs to consider the problems that arise from methodological mismatches, interviewing, feedback loops of interpretation and intra-action and the incompleteness that results from filters and the always entangles inquirer and ‘provocateur’ nurses.

Ann Oakley (1981) discusses the methodological problems arising from the gap between textbook ‘recipes’ and her actual experience as an interviewer. Oakley’s evaluation highlights the problems of interviews including her observation that they have no meaning in terms of social interaction (Oakley, 1981, p. 30). Barad’s notion of intra-action as a key element of her agential realist framework is signified by the mutual constitution of entangled agencies (Barad, 2007, p. 32). Additionally, Oakley states that interviewing is essentially derived from a masculine paradigm. The lack of fit between theory and practice related to interview sourced data, in the context of feminist research, is highlighted by Oakley, as it is by authors writing regarding post humanist and post qualitative inquiry, that have developed from a feminist

paradigm. Oakley (1981), outlines issues on which researchers who conduct interviews rarely comment. These issues include: *'social and personal characteristics of the interviewer; the interviewees feelings about being interviewed and the interview; interviewers feelings about the interviewees; the quality of the interviewer interviewee interaction; hospitality offered by interviewees; attempts by interviewees to use interviewers as sources of information; and the extension of interviewer and interviewee encounters into more broadly based social relationships'* (Oakley, 1981, p. 31). Data collected through interviewing it can be said then is always filtered. Narratives formed with words from interviews are from a mediated view and research respondents decide what to reveal and how to reveal it. It is a feedback loop of interpretation (Gullion, 2018).

St Pierre, who wrote in her dissertation *'this story has no beginning but always has been, and I slip into it over and over again in different places, and as if I too have always been there'* (St Pierre, 2018) *'text'*, or the exposition of the inquiry, is an entanglement with the nurses, the *'provocateur's*. The process of doing research will always be partial and will always bear the traces of the research processes that are undertaken. Whatever the assemblage or arrangement of forms, methods produce objects that will be shadows of the questions asked, the thoughts of the inquirer, the context of the meeting and so on. Different methods will produce different objects even when the investigation is on the same social entity. As Uprichard and Dawney ask, why do we expect methods as boundary making practices to produce coherent wholes? (Uprichard & Dawney, 2019). The process of doing research that are partial and will always bear the traces of the research processes that are undertaken will be articulated later in the thesis.

Having transcribed recordings of the interviews with the nurses literally, I wrote verbatim what I listened to and heard in the recordings and forwarded and replayed the recorded words, sometimes doing so several times to capture words or arrangements of words. I then wrote four separate but related narrative pieces. Three developed narratives, or assemblages of material were developed to explore the stories of individuals and materiality in practice and to provide a collection of stories or cases.

DOING ANALYSIS THINKING DIFFRACTION AND ENTANGLEMENT

The theory used to open possibilities for thinking and doing shapes different analytic questions to illuminate differences that matter rather than trying to find a 'right' answer. The thinking and analysis happen in a threshold space.

Theory, as Jackson and Mazzei (2018) discuss, has many different meanings in the academy and for the purposes of this new analytic, theory is not a reference to the development of theoretical models of specific phenomena (such as leadership and followership in nursing). Rather, theoretical concepts from thinkers in disciplines other than nursing such as Hannah Arendt, Mary Parker Follett and Karen Barad are used to open new possibilities for thinking and doing (MacLure, 2010, p 277). To enable the progression of different analytical questions, the theoretical concepts used includes responsibility as it is described in relation to intra-action (Barad) integration (Parker Follett) and becoming (Arendt). The common thread is power with, rather than power over, and the notion that the self and society are in a cycle that constantly create each other.

In a discussion about posthumanist data analysis, Jackson (2013) advances the idea that qualitative data analysis typically has relied on categories and assumptions about people as authentic, stable subjects of research, who speak from a place of pure consciousness and who grant researchers, also authentic, rational, and coherent truths that serve as a substructure for analysis and interpretation. It is humanistic and essentialist, sorting and grouping and presenting a coherence imbued with easily discernible patterns (Jackson, 2013). St Pierre (2000) discusses this analytic process as a desire to stabilise an essence, to create order, uniformity, constancy and to privilege identity among similar things. The codes, themes and meanings derived in some qualitative practices serves to stabilise structures and bases an unchanging truth in the real; a knowledge claim (Jackson, 2013).

As Hekman (2010) suggests, 'stop expecting to separate the elements and find the 'right' answer. The right answer is that we are in the mangle' (Hekman, 2010, p. 26). These ideas about *'the marvellous tension between the general and the particular characterizes the inherent complexity of nursing's intimate relationship with knowledge development'* (Thorne, 2008, p. 26). As Jackson and Mazzei write

A diffractive reading of data is not insertion into the context in an autoethnographic sense, nor is it reflection that takes our own researcher subjectivity into account, but it is an installing of ourselves ...to try to position ourselves as researchers otherwise than merely already-already object. Reading diffractively means we try to fold these texts into one another in a move that “flattens out” our relationship to the material. In so doing, “We install ourselves in the event that emerges in our reading, and we ask ourselves how we are affected with our encounter with it” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2011, p. 131).

Latour (2005) writes that ‘every single interview, narrative, and commentary no matter how trivial it may appear, will provide the analyst with a bewildering array of entities to account for the hows and whys of any course of action’ (Latour, 2005, p. 47). Diffractive analysis seeks to resist imposing pre-conceived order onto empirical materials, or data. This approach to analysis occurs in a *‘threshold space in which new ideas and new ways of thinking about a thing or phenomena can emerge. One way to navigate this space is with theory’* (Gullion, 2018, p. 103). One way of approaching analysis diffractively is to *‘fold texts into one another in a move that flattens out relationship to the participants, the theory, and the data’* (Jackson & Mazzei, 2011, p. 12). In this inquiry, this was done by using questions adapted from Barad to provide a productive site for a diffractive reading to explore ways in which theory can be ‘plugged in’ to data to produce analytical questions. The process also produces a different researcher self. Examples of the questions formed by Barad and later adapted by Jackson and Mazzei (2011, p. 132) are,

- In what sense are social relations produced and what does this production entail?
- What is the nature of the processes that “shape” these relations?
- What is the relationship between the material and discursive dimensions of power relations?
- How are we to make sense of the nature of power dynamics? Of materiality?

It is these questions that are used to show thinking with theory and how the data were opened for analysis later.

Sally Thorne, in her explanation of ‘interpretive description’ as a qualitative approach to research that is aligned to nursing knowledge cautions about the use of coding as an analytic tool, describing coding as a ‘crude replica’ of human capacity to find meaning from chaos (Thorne, 2008, p. 147). Similarly, St Pierre (2007) and Lather (2007) while acknowledging alternate approaches to coding may appear to be transgressive emphasise the points that coding tends to ‘subsume’ superordinate categories or ‘themes’ based on hierarchical principles to reduce complexity. The aim in the analysis in this inquiry is not to reduce complexity or to produce regularities, but rather to attend to the density, and detail, and diversity in the data, that is, to find the differences that matter to add a new insight and to invite new possibilities (Barad, 2007; Thorne, 2020). This is consistent with agential realist accounts of research that are indeterminate, incomplete and, open ended.

Thorne also describes ‘attention grabbers’ in the data that may be used as flags in the analytic process (Thorne, 2008). These signifiers can assist to inform questions about meaning in the text in the context of the evolving inquiry (Thorne, 2016, p. 148). MacLure (2010) uses the term ‘data hotspots’ to describe an aligned manifestation. ‘Data hotspots’ involves data that seems to ‘glow’ or ‘glimmer’, which stay in your mind, touch your heart, spark off connections and other instances or concepts. Focus on these ‘data hotspots’ as MacLure portrays them, enables the ‘work of conceptual development at the level of singularity and specificity’ (MacLure, 2010, p. 282). Relationships can form that allow matters of strange connection that arrive through a process of in- depth interrogation of the data, diffraction, intra-actions, and thoughtful examination of possibilities (Barad, 2007; MacLure, 2013; Thorne, 2020). *‘The process of pattern recognition into an understanding of relationships requires active and thoughtful work in the work of analysis’* (Thorne, 2016, p. 150). Attending to the detail of the data and trying not to impose themes, patterns or systems requires repeated reading and listening to the audio recordings of the interviews. To this end, all the recorded information gathered during the interviews was transcribed. Written in narrative format, the transcriptions, other written artefacts, and ethnographic texts evoke social worlds and social processes. In the move from patterns to relationships in the data the emphasis moves from similarity to difference.

The analysis of my research documented in this thesis draws on diffractive approaches to thinking with theory specifically drawing on questions adapted from Barad’s agential realism

and folding texts together with theories of leadership and management developed by Mary Parker Follett and, theories of becoming developed by Hannah Arendt. Thinking with theory is an iterative process to make sense of the material and discursive relationships in the fragments of data (Jackson & Mazzei, 2011). As MacLure states, *'the value of theory is in its power to get in the way'* (MacLure, 2010, p. 277). These movements with the data and theory, allow for a series of *'technical and/or intellectual operations that will allow you to know your data intimately, to consider similarities and differences with respect to a wide range of dimensions among the various cases you have included in your sample'* (Thorne, 2016, p. 150). These technical and intellectual operations are in effect, connectionist opportunities to follow 'a path of inquiry in relation to individual cases as they illuminate relationships and differences, recognising difference and diversity and the value of heterogeneity to see outside what might be a false dichotomy of leadership and followership in nursing. This process began with the preparatory reading of theory and synthesis during the transcription of the nurses' words (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018, p. 721) and the analytic questions articulated earlier were already being shaped .

Jackson and Mazzei (2017) propose 'thinking with theory' as a new analytic for qualitative inquiry. This analytic does not follow a single method relying among other factors, on borrowing, and reconfiguring concepts, demonstrating a range of analytic practices of thought, creativity, and intervention (Jackson & Mazzei, 2017, p. 717). Thinking with theory is constantly on the move and not just after the collection of data. Furthermore, thinking with theory is process oriented and therefore ontological, in other words, 'not a thing but a doing' (Barad, 2007; Jackson & Mazzei, 2017).

Jackson and Mazzei (2011, 2017) use the symbol of the threshold to situate their relationship with, and the work of, theory in qualitative inquiry. They argue that theory is necessary to 'incite change, movement and transformation of thought in qualitative inquiry' (Manning, 2013; Mazzei & Jackson, 2012c). In the threshold, 'things enter and meet, flow (or pass one another, and break open (or exit) into something else and, theory *'keeps knowing and being in the middle of things, in a state of in betweenness, as always becoming'* (Jackson & Mazzei, 2017, p. 721). The characterisation of thinking with theory as an analytic is aligned then with an agential realist account as an ethico-onto-epistemological- framework or, knowing in being (Barad, 2007). This inquiry was informed by experiential and empirical evidence beyond the scope of

inclusion in this thesis. Anything that seemed to be related to leadership and followership in all fields including nursing was read, listened to, and watched, constantly. It was in this intra-activity with theory initially that brought attention to Barad's writing about entanglement (Lyons, 2014). Engaging with all the texts and mediums required a critical and yet productive confrontation between data and the pre-understandings of the inquirer and this process was for me seemingly everywhere, and all the time. This is the iterative life of thinking with theory and working in the threshold as Jackson and Mazzei describe it eloquently (Jackson & Mazzei, 2011; Jackson & Mazzei, 2013; Mazzei & Jackson, 2012a). Thresholds also invoke in this inquiry liminality, a term that often defies explanation due to the plural uses and applications, 'poetic in its description, made flesh in its materialities, and is political in its representations. Liminalities is an invitation to cross borders to give birth to new material realities'. The words of the nurses were engaged with in the threshold, and liminalities productively to create impressionist stories and, 'as a concept, space, affect, practice, process and new form of relationality' (Carlson, McGuire, Koro-Ljungberg, & Cannella, 2020, p. 2).

DATA CONSTRUCTION AS STORY

The analytic approach to data described as 'thinking with theory' is enacted through a process of engineering a set of experiences to provoke the thinking mind to explore, seek and tentatively interpret not dissimilar to an approach articulated in nursing by Thorne (Thorne, 2008). The analytic practices that are thinking with theory requires the co-reading of theory alongside other texts so, the theory of Barad, Follett Parker and Arendt are read alongside interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials (Spivak, 2014, p. 77).

It is a very difficult thing, reading theory well. When we are reading this way, we are internalizing. Theorizing is practice. Our own way of thinking changes, so that when we are reading, all of the theoretical reading begins to organize our reading, not because we are applying it. Reading theory is like athletics. First class athletes do not think about the moves they make. They do not "apply" what they have been taught. It comes as a reflex, and if you look at the "instant replay", you watch muscle memory perform. That is how one

“uses” other people’s theory - with respect, preparing oneself to be able to read it, following through. In order to prepare yourself that way, you enter the protocol of the other person’s theory, enter its private grammar, so that the theory transforms you (Spivak, 2014, p. 77).

Narrative as a form, captures the experience of diffracted forms, suspending causality and sometimes offering new insights. Potential texts are everywhere. McGee’s (1999) understanding of texts as fashioned from fragments containing text and context is informative, making a collage look like a narrative. Schechet (2005) describes Poulet’s articulation of the experience of reading through his observation that observation that “whenever I read, I mentally pronounce and I, and yet the I which I pronounce is not myself” (Schechet, 2005). First person narration brings together author, narrator and reader providing possibilities for interpretative or, hermeneutic entry into the texts. We imagine realities and construct meanings when we read. Narrative can be rhetorically self-reflexive, enacting together with its reader, claims and implications of contemporary thought and so is entangled. The writing of a text anticipates readings to come (Ricoeur, 1984, p. 166). Storytelling, as Arendt describes it, is a mode of purposeful action or praxis that simultaneously discloses our subjective uniqueness and, our intersubjective connectedness to others as well as the environmental impact to which we are all subject. To this end narrative aligns with an agential realist account.

The stories I have created are depictions of the cases and drawn from compilations of field notes and interview transcriptions. Throughout the research process I have assembled multiple notebooks filled with handwritten memos, ideas, concept diagrams, pieces of blogs, websites, podcasts and citations of journal articles and titles of books. This is consistent with research using an ethnographic approach (Gullion, 2016). The stories aim to illustrate slices of social life. Ethnographic approaches support the presentation or description so that I have worked to ‘place the real-life story within a larger, social political, or institutional issue or research question’ (Goodall, 2010). These impressionist stories are an approach to explore in research ‘inductively derived description of the phenomena- leadership and followership in nursing.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Agential realism is the framework for this inquiry and, ethnography is a wonderful diversity of practices used as a method for researchers in this inquiry as it is in almost all academic disciplines to explore a slice of social life. The focus of the research is on relationships that enact socio-material phenomena. Agency is not a property of separated entities but emerges from (and is distributed over) continuously negotiated relationships where actors are brought together and intra-act (Barad, 2007). To think of knowing in being or, ethico-onto-epistemologically, requires more than an insertion of the material, or the privileging of the material and in doing so shapes an approach to research that ensures that the material is considered without rejecting the insights of the discursive (Hekman, 2010). Being open to complexity in this thesis is best bounded by approaches to agential realism that are traceable and resonant.

Decisions are made in every moment and touchpoint of the research process. What counts as data, who will participate in the collection of the data, which techniques will be used to collect and analyse the data, how words will be used to communicate the research. The research assemblages, the arranged narratives here are just one way to use words to register existing social conditions, so while they are read, there is a moment that apprehends social reality. The stories are of course constructed and stylised formed objects to afford thinking about vibrant and diffracting social forms.

Drawing this chapter to a conclusion, the design of an agential realist practice focused ethnography builds on traditional models of ethnography while emphasising practice perspectives that are narrative connected case studies, that ask oblique questions and analyse the discursive and material in terms of an inferential rather than direct analysis. The methods of data collection and analysis aim to access multiple dimensions of the social and material in leadership and followership practice in nursing.

This chapter articulated the decisions made to enact an exploration of leadership and followership framed by agential realism related to a theory of ethics and responsibility in inquiry. The chapter describes the approach to the research design, the enaction of diffractive methodology, the landscape of the inquiry, ethical approval, issues of consent and privacy and collaboration. The method of generating the data is an approach to an analytic method for qualitative research styled as ‘thinking with theory’ involving working in the threshold. Finally,

an introduction to data construction as narrative is outlined as work with texts that become “agentially real” (Barad, 2007) to transform theory and data and keep them on the move within agential realism as framework.

THE NEXT CHAPTER

The data stories in the next chapter invite a reading, not to illustrate meaning, but to show how concepts of intra-action, responsibility and integration might work in action in leadership and followership in nursing. The stories are at once, narrative, memoir, and diffraction. Everything in the data shaped as narrative here happens at the point of touch. The narratives offer an invitation to let go. Reading, in tension with the normative. Reading the stories offers an opportunity to make each one personal, as they impart as much about us as the ideas. The only representation is the unfolding of the limitation of language and reflection. The stories are not prosaic, but they are marked with micro performance. The stories are provoked by a problem and transformed by the contour of concepts. What we want is transformative. There is no given that precedes and is independent of our interaction with it. We do not know or only think we know what is on the other side of transformation.

Solnit (2005) states that the word “lost” comes from the Old Norse *los*, meaning the disbanding of an army, and that this origin suggests soldiers falling out of formation to go home, a truce with the wide world. Solnit’s concern is that people never ‘disband their armies’, never go beyond what they know (Solnit, 2005, p. 7). In a similar light, Barad quotes Fulton, ‘*Nothing will unfold for us unless we move towards what looks to us like nothing*’ (Barad, 2007, p. 39). Rather we learn about phenomena and about specific material configurations of the world’s becoming and we are part of those phenomenon. (Gullion, 2018, p. 91) and this is illustrated in the stories that are fashioned by thinking with theory, in the threshold and do not seek to answer questions in traditional qualitative inquiry but by posing problems to open up thought (Stengers, 2011).

The notion of uncertainty mentioned earlier in the thesis is brought to the fore again with this quotation by philosopher and essayist Walter Benjamin, drawn on by Solnit when she writes that to be lost is to be fully present, and to be fully present is to be capable of being in uncertainty an in mystery (Solnit, 2005, p. 6). Merged. Bodies and places, nurses, nursing, leadership, and

followership in movement Materialised across time and space. Spaces are not so much prosaic as rich in micro- dramas in which, from moment-to-moment, the work of constituting the self occurs (Harding, Ford, & Lee, 2017a). Citing past events in every moment institutions exist in shuddering, flickering repetitive performances. The world is of course more chaotic and conditional. Possibility is prospective. In the following chapter the impressionist stories synthesised from the nurses' words and already made in their becoming are presented...

Section Three

“The space of possibilities does not represent a fixed event horizon, nor does it represent a homogeneous, fixed, uniform container of choices” (Barad, 2007 p. 246).

These are impressionist stories that were formed in the ‘space of possibilities’ of this inquiry in a move that involved ‘a trail of data with writing as the first analytic stance’ (Augustine, 2014). These stories are part of the processes of thinking with theory and reading and writing and creating as analysis is espoused by Peräkylä’s (2005) admission that many qualitative researchers ‘do not try to follow any predetermined protocol in executing their analysis’ (Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, 2005, p. 870). Furthermore, as Davies (2014) writes:

The analysis is emergent and unpredictable, a series of encounters with the new. It is hard, demanding work, requiring the capacity to let go of the already-known, and of tired clichés and explanations, of tired categories and coding. It involves hard epistemological, ontological, and ethical work to enable the not-yet-known to emerge in the spaces of the research encounter (Davies, 2014, p. 735).

These are impressionist stories written as the first analytic stance.

Where shall I go from here? said Alice. ‘Well that depends a good deal on where you want to get to’ says the Cat (Alice in Wonderland – Lewis Carroll).

Before going down the rabbit hole into the logics and inverses of Wonderland, let me first describe one of Carroll’s more serious questions about our reality. His question was; where does the day begin? And it goes like this: if someone is to travel westward around the Earth with the same speed as the Sun, they will find that though they started on a Tuesday, when they return to their starting position the day is now called Wednesday. So, asked Carroll, when did the day and date change? Apparently, Carroll made many government officials as mad as the Hatter asking for an answer to this question, which he first posed in 1860. Of course, not a soul could answer him, not until 24 years later in 1884 when the arbitrary International Date Line

was established. This shows that insightful thinking and playful ideas and asking questions and questioning answers is imperative if we want to understand the world and the human conditions, we impose on it.

Maybe you can see the interacting, thinking, making relationship, growing new understandings, or not, as you read with a view to; “an assemblage isn’t a thing—it is the process of making and unmaking the thing” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018). *In the introduction to the Storyteller, Walter Benjamin theorises on what it is that the storyteller does. He sees every story as first needing to be absorbed, sunk ‘into the life of the storyteller’ as he phrases it, so they can then draw it out again in words that connect the story to their own experiences: in this way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel’ (Benjamin, Eiland & Jennings, 2004 in Ash, 2020).*

ONE

How it happened, Alice never knew, but exactly as she came to the last peg, she was gone. Whether she vanished into thin air, or whether she ran quickly into the wood (and she can run very fast! Thought Alice), there was no way of guessing, but she was gone, and Alice began to remember that she was a Pawn, and it would soon be her turn to move.

Lewis Carroll – The Garden of Live Flowers, Through the Looking Glass

Neat. On time she meets me. As we had arranged. To my relief she is here, and hasn’t forgotten, or been called to an emergency. We enter her office. It is small. No windows. The office has the slightly odd atmosphere when there is only a fluorescent tube to provide light. A converted consultation room, a room to treat, check a dressing, sign a consent form. A desk and, the washbasin in the corner. Tiled splash back. White and clean. The whiteboard is neatly covered in strategies and ‘ideas. Reminders and symbols. Ways of getting’ the job’ done. The posters, carefully taped to the wall, reminding us of the standards that must be upheld. Bright colours and simple icons to simplify to codify the work. It is not neat work, I think. ‘Wash your hands’, above the sink. Two ring binders with ‘policy’ printed neatly down the spines, on a shelf. Enough space for an ‘acting’ leader in nursing, I think. Compliant and obedient. Is this what is

required by the organisation? Is this what is called professionalism? What about the critical thinking and decision making 'the profession' puts forward as beacons of uniqueness and standards for nurses to uphold?

Outside, in the hallway, the noises of a hospital. The surgical department. Trolleys, voices. The anticipation of the day to come. It is still early in the strange temporal space of the hospital where the time is continuous but is divided to provide industrial boundaries, to provide markers for legal documents. To create order from human complexity at times of despair and triumph and everything in between. There are people to be excised, and sutured together, and paperwork to be completed, people to be greeted, to be farewelled, perfunctorily. To meet standards. 'The organisation supported putting me in this role', she continues. Meeting standards. To shape you into what is needed I think because I have experienced the same. I nod and encourage her to keep going. I need to remain open and I am genuinely interested in her story.

'I didn't know how I would do this role. I suppose the qualities I show. I just push myself' she says. 'In a big meeting I won't usually talk but in a small meeting I am fine. I think I am, I am very efficient'. One of the effects to meet standards, efficiency, I think. 'You know', she says sitting straight. 'I can run the floor. I can manage all of those things I think I am. I can problem solve. When I was out there, it would only need to be a big issue that I needed to ask for help. Sometimes, I hesitate when I speak to bed managers and shift coordinators. I could manage most things on my own. I flew under the radar'. Trustworthy, autonomous. Meeting standards. It is all remarkably familiar.

A standard path, or one of them. She says she did not see it at first. This role came to her through doing what was expected by others. Someone else doing the job and they were moved on to fill another place and then another 'substantive' jumping back in' and then leaving to do something else and then, the Director of Nursing telling her to apply. Obedient and compliant. She says she thinks that she was the only one to apply and that is probably why she was given the job. She leans forward again and tells me that when she started, she had 'no management skills at all'. She laughs at that. 'I was just a clinical nurse straight off the floor'.

I wonder why nurses do not see management, in their bedside work. Management is about planning, budgeting, resource allocation, assignment of tasks, control, policy making, role specifications. Part of the role? Planning for people, budgeting relationships, allocating

resources to relationships with people. Assigning tasks to ‘look after’ people. Controlling people. Specifying a role to work with people. To meet standards. From ‘being one of them to managing them, took a year’, she goes on, this neat nurse. I am thinking about the starkness of the way she describes this shift, and the timeframe that she recalls. A hint at how hard this might be. Doing what is expected. Making the complex neat.

She tells me about ‘out there’ – in the clinical space, I can imagine it. Nurses’ station, bed spaces in a line, hushed but people talking, occasionally a raised voice. People propped against smooth white pillowcases, tray tables with plates of small triangular sandwiches to break a pre-operative fast. A persistent alarm. Clean and neat, except for some who come and go from here today, staff and patients, their experience of today, will shift them imperceptibly or seismically to a future yet unimagined. ‘The difference’, I hear her say, is ‘the shift from relating to one person at a time as a team leader to the collective’. A shift in a space for charisma and collegiality, perhaps. ‘All the personalities come into play in the bigger group’. Space for control. ‘Some of them have strong personalities’ she says, and I have met these nurses too.

Self-possessed, determined voices. Vociferous, but not always guaranteed to be responsible or reliable in relationships. In a seeming contradiction, that in my experience is perpetual, she declares that the ‘strong personalities want to run out there but not do the nurse manager part. Some do not really appreciate me jumping over them, they want the control—if I have to do something, I have to target them. I have to get them onside’. Finding control. I find this so fascinating. I am listening intently, and I am enthralled. I have not seen or heard anything too removed from what I have observed during almost all my working life as a nurse. I think about some of the leadership reading I have done; people ‘consent, cope, and resist at different levels of consciousness at a single point in time’ I think.

Am I on the right track? she asks, seeking my reassurance after explaining how she ‘gets the staff to do the innumerable audits, how she communicates with them, consults and, how she makes what ‘she is directed to do’ happen. Maintaining standards. No fuss. I assure her that I just want to hear about what she does each day, and that this is terrific. ‘Obviously’, she says as we stand up, each to continue with our days, in our different jobs, ‘I can talk about this easily because it is what I do every day’. I thank her, enthusiastically, and make sure that she knows when I will come back.

“Fighting for the crown?” “Yes, to be sure, “said the King: “and the best of the joke is, that it is my crown all the while!”

Lewis Carroll – The Lion and the Unicorn, Through the Looking Glass

I track back through the hospital. A family in the little waiting room nearby, leaning in as a united cluster, missing from our conversation. Staff in scrubs and surgical caps, unclassified. Reception: staff in theatre clothes, white gowns as loose covers, masking shapeless scrubs, and, in more stridently identifying corporate wear. A dark hallway with unidentified doorways, I wonder what is behind them. As I make my way past beds, some with people in them, being transported, to one all too familiar place and another, somewhere foreign, and the people here, in this place, moving through. I wonder where these people have been during our conversation.

She greeted me so warmly last time we met. Chatty and open. Today she is more direct. She tells me about a conversation she has just had, and I respond knowingly. A shared understanding. I know the acronyms, I know the jargon, I know the setting and the incident, not specifically but there is no leap of imagination to know what she is telling me. I have arrived on time and the familiar strikes me again. As I pass people on the way from the car I wonder if people know if I am a nurse. Does my gait give me away? Do I walk like a nurse? Does my leather bag holding my laptop and, notebooks and fountain pen with aquamarine ink look efficient or something else, am I a nurse only inside my skin, in my head? I feel so familiar here, but I have followed a different career path and I *feel* a divide. Do I look like I know where I am and that I have traversed these hospital hallways, passed the same people so many times, allegorically? I have wondered about them, probably, at times I wondered if despite wearing a uniform they knew that, I am a nurse, wondering about them and all of this.

We get to the point efficiently. There is a job to be done. I get on with it. I want to talk about a specific incident I say. An incident that was all about change. She tells me about an auditing process. I nod patiently. I react a little, inwardly, at the word audit. Meeting standards. I ask what an ‘audit angel’ is? Virtuous, exemplary, supernaturally meeting standards? I think to myself. ‘It is important’ she says sincerely, ‘it helps us to figure out where we are going wrong’. She tells me about ‘my guys’ today. She means the people she works with. I feel uncertain about the possessive language. The control. The double-speak of teams and

entrenched hierarchy We are drawing a diagram of the movements involved in a practice change.

‘The chain of command comes down’ she says, ‘I don’t know where the directive comes down from’ and ‘it moves along’. ‘The followers become leaders when they get more education’. ‘The leaders are interested in all kinds of things, like the storeroom or clinical handover. The followers must stay with the patients’. As if it is a punishment, I think as she speaks. This conversation is about straight lines and directions and directives. ‘The leaders all have little cohorts of supporters and I had to manage them’, ‘I get the directive and they have to do the change’. It sounds so simple, so neat. The relationships are raw-boned and mechanical, obligatory. To get the job done. Just another thing to do. Managing ‘them’.

‘People come and go’, the staffing is never the same and there are always different people at the table’. Ah. That must be a test of dexterity and connection. Then, the communication appears again. Constant conversations, ‘developing relationships to get what you need, or to maintain a standard’. ‘It makes it easier to ask them, to do what I want, if I have a relationship with them’. ‘Oh, and to feed them’. Banana muffins. ‘Just to let them know that I am on the team and that we are working together’. I leave her then, to get on with the busyness and the business. I hurriedly pack up my things. I do not want to take her time. ‘You are always doing dual roles’ she had said, and I wish I had asked more about what that means, and I think as I find my way back to the car, about the ‘they’ who figures out ‘what has to be improved’. Passing humanity, I wonder.

Our time together is ring-fenced today. She is easily able to draw a boundary around her time now. To make her expectation known. An equipoise, perhaps. Business as usual. She is still keen to meet, and I am grateful. I want to hear more about what she does and how she does it. I am waiting for something unlikely to appear I think, expectantly. She tells me a story about something that has happened since we last met on her team, the people she works with. It is a funny story, and full of the reality of the mismatch between expectations and reality of people consenting, coping, and resisting. ‘I can’t do this without my team behind me’ she says and then quantifies with a percentage of majority that is displaced a little by the qualifying; ‘they will all do it even if the attitude varies a bit’.

‘I like to think that I hold the power, but I don’t’ and I ask her what she means. ‘I give the direction, I suppose the power I think of is how I get things done, how do I get change to

occur, if the change doesn't occur it, the power is with them'. It sounds like a sharp demarcation. I start to think of the differentiation between power that is created through the collective and about how that is different from coercion. It is a line that has stuck with me. I draw my attention quickly back to the conversation, and as I do so she shifts back to a statement about how she makes change happen and, she suddenly states, 'so, talking to them and telling them why we need to change different things and you hope you have very good Level Twos.'

I think', she goes on that I give the ideas for change and we talk about the direction for the team'. Then, an embodied statement; 'I might be the brain, but they are the heart'. 'Giving them clear expectations, telling them what we need to achieve and how we will do that, so that change happens, so that they will influence the change. If you do not sustain the change they go back to their old ways. They have the power of enforcement'. The language of rational persuasion and coercion knotted together, I think. Obedient to the management manifesto.

The tentative acknowledgement of the inherent and enacted authority in the role has diminished in this state of parity that we are now in. She suddenly starts to describe a 'wayward child', one of her colleagues, another nurse, and how this person does what is expected but will have 'an attitude, her own opinion'. Sometimes, she says 'you have to leave your opinion at the door and do the greater good'. I am certainly not unfamiliar with this power of language to effect change and yet it still disappoints me to hear it here. I hope I am impassive on the outside. I need to hear more.

She is telling another story, and as I tune back into her description, she says 'so I think the power was in a way there in that situation because we have to look after this or it will be taken away from the unit, basically we will get into trouble. I say to them if you don't do it I will get into trouble and you know what you are supposed to do and how, and if you don't, I am the one who has to explain so I will be asking you to explain. So, it is always that backwards and forwards. The warrant of 'power' is tentative and faltering.

The self-effacing authority appears again, 'I don't like to use power, I don't see my position that I should use the power I have'. I am struck by the uncertainty, reticence. Then in the next sentence, 'you have to be seen to be fair and equitable'. I wonder if it is a limitation of language, the time pressure but the words 'seen to be' jar. You either are or you are not my internal voice of appraisal snaps. 'I do have power, but I have to be careful how I use it which direction I push it in and who I give it to'. The authority to authority is reclaimed. 'It is the

attitude, performance managing people who are not behaving ethically from what I see, and performance managing that before it gets hold’.

This is our last meeting and I thank her for her time and her candour, and I tell her I will contact her to let her know how I am progressing and does she want to see what I am writing. Is email okay, I ask. We walk out through the electronic sliding doors and the activity is all around. ‘This has been interesting ‘she shares. ‘I have learnt a few things, the top leader has to have ethics and must have got there, not like a dictator, but through doing what they need to do’. How tidy, how controlled.

She just kept the tips of her fingers on the handrail. And floated gently down without even touching the stairs with her feet: then she floated through the hall and would have gone straight out the door in the same way, if she hadn’t caught hold of the door-post. She was getting a little giddy with so much floating in the air and was rather glad to find herself walking again in the natural way.

Lewis Carroll – Looking Glass House, Through the Looking Glass

TWO

“I should see the garden far better”, said Alice to herself, “if I could get to the top of that hill; and here’s a path that leads straight to it- at least, no, it doesn’t do that –” (after going a few yards and turning a few sharp corners), “but I suppose it will at last. But how curiously it twists! It’s more like a corkscrew than a path! Well this turn goes to the hill, I suppose, no it doesn’t! This goes straight back to the house! Well then, I’ll try another way.”

So, resolutely turning her back upon the house, she set out once more down the path, determined to keep straight on till she got to the hill. For a few minutes all went well, and she was just saying “I really shall do it this time –” when

the path gave a sudden twist and shook itself (as she described it afterwards), and the next moment she found herself actually walking through the door.

Lewis Carroll – The Garden of Live Flowers, Through the Looking Glass

It is extremely hot, early February, cloudless, airless. Bright sun, heat. I am meeting another nurse. Hospitals, in my experience are a study in pragmatism over conforming to an architectural philosophy. Amassed buildings to control and comprehend humanity in birth, living, illness, death. This office is different. Location determines seniority. A larger office. A larger bookshelf, a larger whiteboard with a staff leave plan. Windows. I feel as though I am imposing on her time. The importance of her office. A tactful welcome, after a late arrival. An offer of water or tea. This nurse projects managerial practicality. Diplomatically, I submit, quieting internal tension. Will there be a kind of hierarchical distance I must work within, here?

My first question is met with a rejoinder, a question back to clarify. Her answers about how she came to the role she is in now are markedly precise. This, then this, then this. Ambition, moving to a major hospital with a specific plan. Opportunities found and taken and clear decision making and skill development. Experience and technical expertise. Learning the environment. A potted history of challenge and progress and opening, covering decades. Then, she says, she' is asked by a senior colleague to fill in for a few weeks'. I recognize this manoeuvre in nursing, the tap on the shoulder, amid bureaucratic standard keeping. Instead of weeks, it turned into years, she simplifies. Movements in the higher level, positions changed quickly and a cascade effect of back filling. Refilling after excavation. Expedience spliced hurriedly together with prudence. The reward for many who used to be good at what they used to do.

So far, this nurse's story of ambition, opportunity and skills and reflected, acknowledged capacity, is a reverberation of 'needs must', and I wonder who else's voices are here reiteratively. I am keen to hear more. She says she was sort of floundering and overwhelmed until others reached out with support and direction and relationships that have lasted the tests of time. I am jolted and thankful for this sudden move to candour. Further education and trustworthy guides, she says have 'given her confidence in this role when she gets into situations that she doesn't know what to do'. Many of her role models have been doctors, she says; 'very

professional, structure and process'. 'Unambiguous business rules to prevent mistrust'. Responses, conditioned.

Hierarchies that can be understood, 'that kind of thinking works for me' she says. I am reminded of the axiom, 'all nurses are practical' though I do not agree, and I wonder if that desired level headedness is a response to humanity or inhumanity in healthcare systems. 'That is how I got from country nurse to a nurse executive'. I wonder where the people who she has tended are in her nursing story, the ongoing products of relations. I think about interior, exterior, past, present future iteratively enfolding and reworked. Enfolding, enclosing, surrounding, wrapping. I think again about making the complex neat.

Neat, and strong. The matter of strength. 'Courage', she says, 'making decisions, decisions that are not going to be liked and you can control somethings and you can influence some things'. The materialisation of relationship. Relationships to manage and lead. I think of these fragments that matter as she explains 'the difficult conversations she must have with staff', about budgets and rosters, and fitting people into the matters of the institution. Interaction. When the organisation disturbs and becomes indeterminate. 'So, a good leader is courageous'. Good and strong. 'Not being in control at times, feeling out of control' she shares, 'has helped me to be receptive to supporting others'. To 'being transparent about not being in control, about working together'. 'Listening to others when you don't have the answers. 'This is courageous'.

'It is working, this is my philosophy, now' and she tells me about getting people to take responsibility. Open and dynamic, responsive to possibilities, living the questions. Enabling responsiveness. 'They are qualitative things; they create space for me'. I am finding this fascinating. In less than half an hour there is something opening and then, 'I need structure and process' and I wonder if that is the materialisation of the leadership here. Her leadership. As we prepare to finish, I am aware of the fullness of the conversation. 'Even though I am removed from the patient side of things in this role, I enjoy seeing a really good outcome for a patient'. The shift between the air-conditioned office and the still warm atmosphere outdoors is unambiguous.

The next time we meet, a few weeks later the feeling of imposition reappears. The late afternoon light is less intense though. I have sent an email to make sure my appearance is expected and that she can manage time around our meeting. I did not receive a reply and I wait

outside. Uncertain. I have left my office to come over to the hospital. She appears and while it seems clear that this meeting is not high on her list of priorities, she is professional in her greeting. I wonder if my commitment to boundaries during this process is obvious. Would I be different if I had been involved in the things she has had to do today? There is a shaft of light streaming across the meeting table from the window. There are complex change happenings described once we start talking together.

I must keep checking the details of the events and the characters as she describes them. It is a complex story about change and processes, and I think about a 'saviour story' and how we are seduced by the romance of a crisis when someone might come to save the day. As she speaks of the movement between the people involved. Resistance, confrontation, inviting not controlling, active following, active influencing, active response. A paradoxical dance of ideas and interruptions and initiatives. The word 'dynamic' is threaded through the dialogue' there is a dynamic', 'that is the dynamic' and behind every image she creates for me, behind the words, for her, there is something real. The insecurities, the unknowns, the assumptions. She says she has a 'few like this on the run now'. She is talking about relationships and roles and getting things done and then, 'this is the most' she pauses, 'complicated'. Complex, I think.

She is supported. One hundred percent. It must be managed out of this office. One hundred present reassurance. One of the staff is not to be given a line of reporting to the next level. 'I am more than happy to do that; I think it is the right thing to do'. Playing into the caricatures in the hierarchy? Who knows best? Who is right or wrong? Who is clever? I ask about the patient amid the matter, this complexity. She pauses, 'mmmm the patient, where is the patient? Well, the patient is in all of it, not in one spot, I do not know. I think the patient is...not on the outside, that is not right. It's hard to visualise, I am not sure where I would put them'. I interject and ask if she is following her 'boss', 'yes, he is providing the support I need to lead all of this'. 'I have responsibility for these people, and they deserve my full support, and I will give it to them' she says with emphasis. What matters is responsive, generative, and expressive.

In the afternoons, there is less activity around as I make my way to her office. Passing visitors, making their way back to the car park, the bags they carry conspicuously emptied of the new supplies of perhaps night clothes and small comforts, traces of another life in another place. I wonder how their visits have been. Full of hope, anticipation for a resumption

continuity. Or fractured by trying to make up lost time or occupied with the confusion of melancholy and bad news and a façade of brave facedness. The days are getting shorter now. The light less intense. There has been a miscommunication, a miscalculation and I must wait fifteen minutes for her to arrive at her office. 'I am just waiting, I say to several people who inquire after my presence, who I am waiting for, as they pass and recognize me as a stranger here. Each inquiry, an apprehension superimposed with politeness.

Then, she arrives, and we enter her office that has become increasingly familiar. In the late afternoon, the room is now lit artificially, even though it is still light outside we start our conversation about teams. Values and beliefs, and how they fit in with the expectations of the team, and their roles. Understanding and valuing every member regardless of rank or classification. I find myself nodding in agreement. The slight irritation I felt while waiting is fading. 'You must develop a profile of everyone, what their strengths are what the areas for development are. It takes communication, good communication' she shares. 'They have to feel part of the group. Allowing each individual to be heard and to be part of the decision making'. I wonder how she manages this in a division with hundreds of staff. Individuals.

My own disquiet about the leadership or management 'recipe' resurfaces. Who is really heard, who is silenced? The descriptions of democratic process, of collaborative process in flattened structures, in contest with the typical 'command and control' interactions of the traditional hierarchy. The shadows of the past, of present reality are explained through the discourse of 'collaborative discussions, collective decision making and shared ownership', often. The managers' and leaders' 'how to guide'.

I ask about the influence of those in the order of the organisation. 'I have good communication and understand what the level below me and the level below them does or is doing. For the levels two or even three below me, we have communication forums. Or a group email that is sent to hundreds of staff. I can update down to the Level One Registered Nurse'. 'I try to go to the units for a purpose, to speak with a senior nurse. The others may know me, I don't know'. She tells me about a multiple level, multiple discipline cross area approach to a project that is 'usually prescriptive'. It sounds complex. 'We don't take everything on board, of course'. A tactical operation with 'frontline' staff. Contentious strategy to realise egalitarian responsibility and cooperation. It is complex.

Alice thought to herself “Then there’s no use in speaking.” The voices didn’t join in this time, as she hadn’t spoken, but to her great surprise, they all thought in chorus I hope you understand what thinking in chorus means- for I confess I don’t), “Better say nothing at all”.

Lewis Carroll – Looking Glass Insects, Through the Looking Glass

Our conversation about holding a team in a space leads to stories and storytelling. There are nuances and sensitivities to be considered to come together with people who are defensive about their own experiences. Being aware of being an ‘outsider’. Making judgements about being judged to keep boundaries porous and people willing to engage. ‘Telling stories is powerful but telling stories about patient care are absolutely powerful. Talking to people about what worked somewhere else, well people are not very receptive, they can think there are comparisons being made, but patient stories, well’. She pauses. ‘When we talk to families and tell their experiences, and how they felt, that is incredibly powerful. I wonder why these experiences are only amplified when something dreadful happens. The patient is here, in this thread.

‘I pulled some themes out of the Mid-Staffordshire context, to discuss risk mitigation. The staff sometimes say they don’t have time for safety and quality’. Setting the scene for the nurses to let them know it can happen here’. She is clearly frustrated by this. ‘I say to them, we don’t have time to check for pressure areas? or who might be a falls risk? or that they get the right blood or the right medication?’. ‘Telling the stories of when things go wrong is enormously powerful and families have the courage to tell us, so it won’t happen to others. ‘They are powerful stories. So is making it about their expectations for how they would want their family treated’. An appeal to reflection. With and without transformation in their care. Hundreds of nurses, teams within teams.

‘There are a few key people that seem to be doing everything. It is a big dynamic. Varies from shift to shift. ‘It depends on who the team leader is, there are some, clinically competent, but their people skills are just, oh’, she says. Perceptions of unfairness, favouritism or feeling unrewarded for a doing a job well that bubble to the surface in this very human pursuit of providing healthcare for people. To care for people. So much complexity, and individuality in what is a team effort. The way we care for others and for ourselves.

‘Team nursing has taken a dive; patient allocation has allowed people to take no responsibility. You hear nurses say, “that is not my patient” it is really odd, have we conditioned people to act in that way?’ Her question hangs anxiously, involuntarily. She tells me about some of the difficult personal issues ‘her staff’ deal with and how they push it down to be ‘professional’. Empathy, care, attention, compassion. The phone rings, she looks at the number and explains that it is someone who has been trying to speak with her since morning ‘I have just kept saying five minutes, five more minutes. She turns back to resume her conversation with me. ‘I was talking with someone the other day about pilots, high stress conditions and catastrophic outcomes, and how some people just make cognitive space to learn from the decisions you make at the time. You feel like you are functioning on adrenaline all the time. It is quite a reactive environment’. I sense her stress and tell her that we should stop so that she can resume. Efficiently we close the discussion. She seems so calm; I think as I cross the road to leave the hospital.

Our last meeting together is in the early afternoon. In a generic meeting room and not her office. I wait but this is what I have come to anticipate and to understand. I ask her how she has been, how much time we have. She is still, and competently contained. Small talk, above the line, about her work. I am interested in our difference. Where I might have said, ‘I have been thinking about what we were talking about when we last met’, she waits for me to ask a question. We find a way to discussing power.

‘The person in the most senior role is perceived to hold power. That could be right or wrong because there are people who sit below, who can be powerful’. I sit forward. ‘They are influential through respect or, intimidation’. ‘Power can be a good thing or not so. I am uncomfortable with the word power, dictatorial or self-serving or it could be about bringing people along’. May be this is ‘transformational influence’.

This is interesting. She continues; ‘Sometimes a decision has to be made, the commander has to exercise the power, it might be a time critical thing’, if you were in battle and you said to the troops, we have to do this, and they said no, well the whole thing would fall apart, you rely on the team’. Authority. ‘It is ethical agreement, following. Fundamentally if it were against my principles I wouldn’t follow, it’s hard when someone is charismatic, but there are cases when people have good morals and find themselves in situations, they never thought they would be in’. ‘You have to be strong to go your own way. You might say well this is not right

I do not believe; I think it comes down to people. You can be persuaded to change of course, but if you have a fundamental belief'. 'There is you know, a herd mentality, it depends on how strong you are'. Values and beliefs and a contest of strength I wonder?

The rhetoric surfaces, 'creating an environment of trust, respectfully allowing people to say what they need to say' and I think, I have experienced both this and seen also seething silent dissent that looks like a respectful covenant until other private spaces are created and entered and the atmosphere fans flames of discord. Decisions creating dissonance, discussions that aim to dissuade. 'Knowing the history and how a decision has been made, and then a different direction is taken to where it was going, to what I have been working on for a long time. I am not the final decision maker, my line manager is, and well it is in his court, so he has made the decision'. I hear the uncertainty and the compromise. To keep the harmony.

Maintaining harmony, respecting both the decision and the outcome of the decision. 'I can usually predict the outcome, and when there is a human factor at the end it is a struggle, I let it be known that on principle, I disagree'. The human factor is often about patients and their families. She tells me about a couple of scenarios, theatre cancellations and admissions in the case of trauma. The everyday work. 'Those human factors are significant to me'. Keeping the patient safe, negotiating, skill mix, keeping emotions out of the decisions. 'How do you make sure the staff feel valued and cared for in all of this?' I ask. 'That is a hard one, the staff will say that no one listens to them. They do not see the bigger picture, you have to take the emotion out of it, make it managerial. You take the decision making to the next level so that the pressure on them is relieved. Processes so it is not ambiguous'. It is equivocal. 'Some need to permission to do anything, some have to have limitations, but they need to be able to make mistakes. They must step up to make decisions for themselves. To learn.' Responsibility, the ability to respond to the other. A collage. An assemblage. A knock on the door, this room is booked for another meeting.

"That's easily managed. You could be the White Queen's pawn, if you like – and you're in the second square to begin with: when you get the Eighth Square you'll be a Queen -"

Alice looked round her in great surprise. "Why, I do believe we've been under this tree the whole time! Everything is just as it was!" "Of course, it is, said the Queen "What would you have it?"

Lewis Carroll – The Garden of Live Flowers, Through the Looking Glass

"I'll settle it said Alice to herself, "when the road divides and they point different ways". But this did not seem likely to happen. She went on and on, a long way, but wherever the road divided, there were sure to be two finger posts pointing the same way.

Lewis Carroll – Looking Glass Insects, Through the Looking Glass

THREE

I do not seek, I find.

"So I wasn't dreaming, after all," she said to herself, "unless-unless we're all part of the same dream. Only I do hope it's my dream, and not the Red King's! I don't like belonging to another person's dream."

"I don't know," Alice said doubtfully. "I don't want to be anybody's prisoner. I want to be a Queen."

After the fourth or fifth tumble he reached the turn, and she waved her handkerchief to him, and waited until he was out of sight. "I hope I encouraged him," she said, as she turned to run down the hill: and now to the last brook and to be Queen! How grand it sounds!" The Eight Square at last. "But how can it have got there without my knowing it?" she said to herself, as she lifted

it off, and set it on her lap to make out what it possibly could be. It was a golden crown.

Lewis Carroll – ‘It’s my own invention’, Through the Looking Glass

It is early in the day, and I have been given four, half hour slots for our meetings. Diarised, noted. I appreciate the time. I am early. My status is indisputable. I am greeted and shown in, welcomed. Once in the threshold of her office, her greeting is candid and sincere. A corner office, a view. I am the most forthright with her. Authority and, not warmth, but professional conviviality. I feel that she appreciates my effort to do research, as a nurse. She is the most senior, and, very senior. An executive in the truest sense of director, decision maker, superintendent. She asks for a plan of our meetings. I tell her, that I want to hear what she does each day. ‘That is a good question’, she replies.

Without hesitation she tells me that she decided ‘to go into management rather than taking a clinical path early on. Otherwise, it limits your opportunities’. Leadership in nursing is where she settled. She tells me that she enjoys this role the most, having worked through general manager roles. Operational. Building decision making confidence. ‘More luck than anything’, she says, right person at the right time. Opportunities have presented themselves. ‘Luck’ she repeats. ‘You need a willingness to step back rather than always going forward’. Thinking about what those opportunities, and she means the back steps, represent. Beginnings and not ends. I feel that this might be a practised speech for those seeking career advice. ‘You must have a desire to do leadership’, she counsels. Practised.

Experienced. Assured. What ‘gets her out of bed in the morning’ is her ‘knowledge that she can and does make a difference, a stabilising force for the profession’. The answers are authoritative, proficient. Tempered with, ‘you are not indispensable, well there is bit of that, inherently so, but decisions will be made that you have influenced even if you are not here physically’. Certain. Qualified. ‘Anyone can be given a budget and make decision about how to spend it. When you do not have a budget that drives decision making, you have to use influence’. Authority. ‘I like to come to work to see how that influence plays out’. So, I think, influence as both a noun and a verb, and then she says; ‘to see people grow’. There it is again, oblique, and complex.

She tells me about a particularly important role model to her. A wonderful man. Influential. 'I never thought the types of women in nursing that rule with an iron fist bring about real change'. She describes some mentors and I have met these people, figuratively, too. Presence and fairness. Authoritarian and clever. Conservative and yet, influential. Examples to learn from. Not only nurses, but medical men too, surgeons, medical administrators in the operative sense. Magpie like, picking up polished things to emulate, such as, how to manage situations. As well as people and situations to match and follow, 'thoughtful risk taking'. 'I make mistakes of course, everybody does, but you can't do what you want to do without taking a risk. I do like to take a risk if there is an opportunity for a good outcome', she confides. 'On the balance of success and non-success, there have been more successes'. She maintains steady eye contact as she genially says this. Unambiguously. The results and the extent that 'others think it is the right thing'. Infers dialogue, interchange.

Human outcomes are the measure. 'Outcomes for patients are a measure of success. Dissatisfied staff are measure of the decisions you make'. 'Financial success is one thing but just as important are the success of people that you are asking to do something, or who are depending on you', she says firmly. 'If you can influence people to understand that the decision you are making is the right decision. That is an achievement, if you succeed in achieving what you set out to achieve'. Opposition requires consideration if it is indeed the right decision. Sometimes it is. 'That is much harder work'. An exception rather than the rule. What kind of leadership do people prefer? I ask. 'Interesting question', she pauses, briefly. 'The origins of nursing were in the military theatre, with Florence Nightingale. Anybody can stand up with a rank in front of subordinates, and turn around, and say this is what you will do, and everybody goes off and does it. Perhaps not happy, perhaps not even thinking about it, or thinking if that is what we have been told to do well and, do it'. Not thinking, just following, just doing. 'It's different now, you can't get away with that, and neither you should. That is not leadership, that is just using power over people just because you are the person in charge. I wouldn't want that style, of...management'. There it is a hint of classification. Ordering. Leadership and management.

Then, in the next sentence she pronounces, 'I think people want strong leadership. An advocate for them and their patients. Someone who is willing to go into bat for resources, well informed about what people need.' This thread continues, with a concern about patient care,

poor patient care and strategies to amend. 'I have been on a quest'. Meetings. Saturation with information. Everybody feels informed, and everyone feels that they are part of the decision making. A variation on this theme. However, here is a point of difference, 'making sure that people have an opportunity to express their support or, their lack of it'. Empowerment. The hierarchy again, or an acknowledgement of the order; in roles, in information sharing, in authority. 'They are the decision makers not me. I influence them to make the right decisions. You do decide, I think, as the conversation moves on.

Strong leadership, 'commitment, not being wishy washy but, you can change your mind in the face of new evidence. That's a good thing shows that you are not set in your ways and you are prepared to look at things differently'. Sounds like person centred practice, good nursing practice. 'I think it takes a good strong leader to admit that the path needs to change and that thinking needs to change. Shows courage to admit that the first direction, with more evidence, more investigation is not right and come up with a different course.' Strong, committed, supportive.

'The relationship is key, so they are willing to come and talk. I can support it if I know about it. I will support them if it is the sound and right thing to do'. You decide. Relationships and values. 'Integrity is the most important value. You must be able to sleep at night. Cutting people off at the knees, thinking that is the best way to get an outcome for the organisation. No integrity in that. It is important that people see that. Being honest and upfront even if they do not agree with you, they will trust you. That's what it is about'. Trust, honesty, integrity.

Again, there is something striking in her next words; 'It is not about your leadership as an individual. It is about your leadership of other people, knowing about trust, respect, honesty. The fact that you put time and effort in to working with people for people who can see that what you are doing is inherently right. They will want to follow'. Justice, entangled. Trustworthiness. Leadership of other people, how can that be unravelled, disentangled?

'There is someone senior to me. An exceptionally talented leader, it wouldn't matter what she said I would trust what she said was for a good reason and therefore I would follow. You follow because you want to not because you have to.' She equivocates, fleetingly, and continues. 'It may not be a career defining moment if I turned around and said, "no I am not doing that" though, her trust of me is such that if I said "I don't think that is right" she would stop and listen and suggest more discussion and work through some of her reasoning in a way

that influences me'. I hear a shadow of surrender, but perhaps it is just respect and collaboration, a step sequence, choreographed. So, she continues, 'it is influence for the followers and then for the followers it is about being influenced by the leader'. It is more nuanced than that I think but, the pull of causality, of binaries in healthcare is strong. The supremacy of science. The enlightenment.

Illuminating this point further, discussing senior staff she says, 'if I think this is the way forward, and they disagree, I can be influenced by their compelling arguments. Not every decision is the right one. It is a temptation to make an ill-informed decision. Good leaders don't do that' she concludes definitely. Then, magnanimously, 'my role is to develop others, in part because of my influence of them'. She is a commanding figure, as she speaks. Conviction and clarity. 'If you think about classic leaders, leadership is an art, there are no good or bad leaders. Just leaders. Leaders, she says who influence people to make the decisions they need to. 'I don't give them skills but, I do give them opportunities to develop those skills'. Prompting, influencing, persuading. The binary is apparent again. Among her staff, she says are leaders, emerging leaders and then the managers. Privilege. Indulgence. Impact.

The influence on followers is what 'sets a leader and manager apart', she explains. The separation is here again. The word influence chosen over; effect, impact, inspire, impel, coerce, control, power. She declares something interesting; that she works with the managers to give them insight into the impact their decisions will have on followers. 'Those with true leadership capability just need reinforcement that they are doing the right thing. They have the right values'. The right values. Correct, approved. Then, 'anybody can manage a clinical situation or team. Managers fade eventually, because leaders need followers and managers don't have followers'. So, are allies, admirers, aficionados the definitive players in nursing leadership? Do managers not have devotees, believers? 'No', she says again conclusively, 'managers tell people what to do, and they do it because of rank. They have recruits who say yes and no at the right time, that's not leadership'. The right path, that is the fundamental difference'. Determined.

She is sure, it is irrefutable, I see. To finalise our conversation, 'followers follow because they want to, conscripts to managers follow because they have to'. The certainty, again. Is it so unambiguous, and I wonder about the 'right path'? Who knows the veracity of the path? Is it an epitome or, an antithesis of the entangled phenomenon of leadership followership? She tells

me about the complex issues facing her today. I wonder if the 'right path' is encoded, embodied as she faces her assignments for today. 'You just think, oh well, that is the day and we best work through it as best we can'. Is the determination, the surety only a case of muddling through?

Another day. I wait to be 'let in'. I feel like I am being permitted to enter the inner sanctum. I wonder how clinical nurses feel when they come to the 'executive suite'. If they indeed do. I wonder if the liberal offer of time is because I am outsider. An offer of coffee. A proper takeaway coffee made by a barista in the hospital café. 'What would you like?' she asks. Generosity, hospitality, the authority to offer largesse. I feel thankful for her time. I state my preference to her personal assistant, with thanks, and we settle into her office, set up to receive guests, to meet, to talk.

We begin to discuss the people she has transactions with each day. We deliberate on how she connects with different people over the course of each day, expansive in her role.' It would be easy to think of it as an organisational chart. I would be somewhere in the middle. Let us think of it as more circular. It is more about influence than direct reporting'. She includes patients in the ripples she is describing. Those who report to her directly though, are in the currents of influence as she is describing it. Waves. Folds.

How do you negotiate these relationships I ask. 'Is it constant'? Every day, *all* the time she says with emphasis. Repetition, intercession. 'You need to be careful in a position of influence to keep people believing in your effort to manage. A relationship role, not even a professional role to include others'. She dissects her role further, leading, following, collaborating are distinct groupings. Then in saying this, the interplay is revealed, learning from this group to lead this group, who can be influenced and who needs more effort. Moving up and down. Snakes and ladders.

'They are interesting, complex relationships' but, she qualifies, 'hospitals are built on hierarchies. It's not about controlling, but it is about inviting people into discussions for a purpose'. Is it about respect, or trust, or confidence? Or is it about fear. 'It is interesting that the way we allocate resources, allocation, nurses to patients, forcing them to work in isolation. They do not all have the skill, or the courage to ask for help. Teams are needed but they do not know how to work in teams. Teams are dependent on leadership.' She tells me a story of a patient that died. Meeting the family in their home. Trying to bring the focus back to the patient.

Needing to work as a team, not sequestered. Relying on each other when tested. 'There needs to be good leadership, confidence and trust.' I think back to her earlier edict about there 'not being good or bad leadership', just leadership.

The next time we meet she presents me with an academic paper on followership, found in a journal. Perhaps I would be interested in it? I am fascinated that she has been so interested in our conversations. We talk about her recent conversation about following and how it relates to changing cultures that support bullying and harassment. I think of the focus on the patient that we talked of previously. I ask how she would tell a new person about how to pull a team together, to 'follow their leadership'.

'Building on successes,' she volunteers. 'Show them you can make a difference, and if they stick with you, things will happen, and then building on the quick wins to be more sustainable'. Possibility. 'Popularity and being liked are not leadership but doing the right thing is'. I guess it is a workable formula, not entirely original, but a workable platitude. 'Like a mother looking after her children'. Maternal, matriarchal. Reinforcing the gendered nature of the profession, I wonder. 'You have to be objective despite the criticism of you sometimes'. 'I don't paint a picture that is all sweetness and light. I was once told, a while ago now that I am a control freak, well, I learned a lot from that. You must get over it. You have to let yourself let go of some of things that go really wrong'.

From the formulaic she scales back to telling a courageous narrative about a group of nurses who allowed themselves to be compromised by others with power. 'I use those stories, to get people to sit up and think, what if that was me?'. Influence. Persuasion. 'Followers following incorrect practices, it required strong leadership. Tenacity, knowing the outcome and not wavering.' She pats the table with an outstretched palm. For emphasis. 'Leadership is not always about a good outcome, but the right outcome'. Command. 'Not everyone can become a leader, it takes credibility. Convincing people it is not about you but for an outcome.' I wonder about this as she says it. The contradiction resurfaces. Isn't the conformist measure of the individual leader, institutional, organisational, the outcomes they achieve? I keep listening, trying to sift and filter the aphorism from the authentic. Are they the same? This; 'equity is not based on numbers rather than on patient acuity' then, 'following principles doesn't have to be regimented. People might do things differently, but they are doing what you want them to. As long as they look consistent'. Uniform, dependable. Standard.

“I can’t believe that! Said Alice. “Can’t you the Queen said in a pitying tone. “Try again: draw a long breath, and shut your eyes”. Alice laughed. “There’s no use trying,” she said, “one can’t believe impossible things.” I daresay you haven’t had much practice,” said the Queen – why sometimes I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast”.

Lewis Carroll – Wool and Water, Through the Looking Glass

Our last arranged meeting starts with the same cordiality, curiosity, and a cooperative greeting. She has the capability of eliciting feelings of merit, of unhurried attention. ‘There has been a shift in the way leaders attract followers in nursing, a while ago it was about respect and clinical credibility and age. Seniority. If a younger person were promoted the swell of how many people had been climbed over would reverberate. Raw talent was not as recognised, and rather it was matter of the general acknowledgment that people had been pushed aside’. This is a substantial start today. ‘It is a still a little bit about respect. It is more though about being fair and equitable, sound decision making, trust in the decisions and the path. People will challenge now. They will defy. You cannot just expect others to follow because of your position. It takes a lot more time and effort and patience. Respect? Communication, conflict resolution, constantly. People were never a problem, they just did it if you were the leader. They would not question. They did what you wanted’. This is perhaps unrefined and genuine.

‘You have to be able to compromise, you try to be idealistic and you suffer, you suffer because you can’t achieve it, and followers suffer because your expectations are too high. It is a different landscape now.’ This feels like an opening into a different perspective. ‘In the past you didn’t go to leadership classes because it was about inherent personality and the relationships you had. Now you can be taught a skill set. It is learned’.

‘The skills involve time and effort and patience. In the past you could just make the decision’. Tenacity. Big picture or trustworthiness to convince why you cannot share. ‘There are politics in all of the decisions we make.’ ‘It doesn’t matter if you think it is the right decision, they want to know more. They will not follow’. Relationships, ‘it is a very distrusting world in terms of followership, it will come if they trust you.’ ‘They need to know that you are investing in their best interests with your decisions.’ Doing the right thing.

‘Relationships, in nursing form differently now. The individual rejects the collective effort, it is the I not the we. The value of supporting your colleagues is a lot harder now than it used to be.’ We are nearly finished. I need to know specifically about values. Are values the defining essence? Of leadership? How do values work? She deftly articulates the corporate tenets, the organisational values. ‘The one that is missing is accountability. It is a big issue. All care and no responsibility. Care goes without saying in healthcare.’ I wonder; is that accurate? ‘Excellence is so nebulous,’ she continues, ‘integrity, is essential, it allows me to sleep at night’. She describes her understanding of the tenuous liminality of personal and organisational values in a complex workplace that is culturally disparate on many levels. ‘Values work for the collective, it changes with the individual’.

As we conclude, I feel that a layer has been peeled back. She tells me she has been thinking a lot about leadership after our conversations. A layer revealing real observations and experiences has been peeled back, pared away. ‘The power is not exclusively held by the leader anymore. Leading is now about turning that power into something positive and that is not a natural flow’. ‘Is nursing care in the relationships shared power?’. I thank her. Sincerely. I leave her office. I am mentally working through what we have shared as I walk.

“Well this is grand!” said Alice. “I never expected I should be Queen so so- and I’ll tell you what it is your majesty,” she went on in a severe tone (she was always rather fond of scolding herself), “It’ll never do for you to be lolling about on the grass like that! Queens have to be dignified you know!”

So she got up and walked about-rather stiffly just at first, as if she was afraid that the crown might come off: but she comforted herself with the thought that there was nobody to see her, “and if I really am a Queen”, she said as she sat down again, “I shall be able to manage it quite well in time.”

“Speak when you are spoken to!” the Queen sharply interrupted her. “But if everybody obeyed that rule” said Alice, who was always ready for a little argument, “and if you only spoke when you are spoken to, and the other person always waited for you to begin, you see nobody would ever say anything—”.

“What do you mean by ‘If you really are a Queen’? What right have you to call yourself so? You can’t be a Queen, you know until you have passed the proper examination.”

Lewis Carroll – Queen Alice, Through the Looking Glass

ENDING

Nurses moving through the environment, the encounters the processes, the models, the patients, and families the shared stories, the profession. Through this movement and inactivity and convergence are entangled. Nursing and leadership and followership are inferences. Merged. Bodies and places, nurses, nursing, leadership, and followership in movement. Through processes of entanglement, nurses attend to their everyday work as a set of tasks, responsibilities; like meeting, talking, meeting standards, providing care, implementing policies, meeting expectations.

There is an ironic generalised specificity in each historical moment, In the ordering of bodies and spaces. In hierarchies and narratives, in containments and exclusions. Structures endure and persist in organising our lives. Institutions persist and hold on through the citation of rules, and the performance of practices. Materialised across time. Citing past events in every moment institutions exist in shuddering, flickering repetitive performances. The world is of course more chaotic and conditional. Possibility is prospective.

Section Four

‘THINKING WITH THEORY’ IN FLOW

‘Patterns of difference that make a difference’ are not codified but performative (Barad, 2007, p. 72).

This section begins to re-turn as a ‘mode of intra-acting with diffraction’ to situate thinking with theory as an analytic with no formula as something yet to come and emergent and yet always re-thinkable and re-doable that *‘relies on a willingness to borrow and reconfigure concepts, invent approaches, create new assemblages that demonstrate a range of analytic practices of thought, creativity, and intervention’* (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018, p. 717). This section is worked with consideration to a point made by Jackson and Mazzei (2018) building on the work of St Pierre (2011); that ‘signifiers “data” and “analysis” have taken hold and have become “so transparent, natural, and real that we have forgotten they’re fictions. We have come to accept them as truth” (St Pierre, 2011, p. 623 in Jackson & Mazzei, 2018, p. 718). Drawing on the process theory of Whitehead, Jackson and Mazzei (2018) suggest that thinking with theory is its own generative movement as well as its own effect and this process is captured here at this point in this thesis but *‘does not come at the end of something but is emergent and immanent to that which is becoming’* (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018, p. 719). The notion of emergence has a profound impact on how we philosophically engage leadership (Bohl, 2019, p. 289). Thinking with theory about leadership and followership, is as such dispersed and threaded through throughout this section that is never closed and never finished.

Furthermore, ‘plugging in’ captures the activity of thinking with theory as a production of the new (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018). All other texts become part of the process in an acknowledgment that the research assemblages created in this inquiry and other texts and agents both human and non-human become inserted in the process. The notion of the threshold discussed earlier in this thesis, and its place in crafting analytical questions emerge together with each theorist and concept in use. Jackson and Mazzei (2018) point to their own work and theorists and theories they plugged in in this way; ‘an image we have experienced is having

Manning, Massumi, or Colebrook reading over our shoulder or asking a series of questions, using theory as practice *'to prompt analytic questions that flow from concepts, all texts (that is theory and data and selves) become something else, something new.'* (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018, p. 729). So, there is nothing that is new and nothing that is not new.

Reading feminist scholar Haraway, and Whitehead a process philosopher, diffractively with Barad feminist scholar and physicist, Sehgal writes that *'diffraction is a process and the result of a process at the same time with diffraction patterns rendering both how something became as well as what it is. Being is becoming'* (Sehgal, 2014, p. 25). Diffraction is a legacy of feminist theorizing about difference and is as much about that as it is about physics (Thiele, 2016). Diffraction is not a fixed resolution, but perpetual reconfiguring of diffracting and entangling.

Diffractive analysis makes us aware of our embodied involvement in the materiality of the event of analysing data. The diffractive analysis is simultaneously about intervention and invention, responsibility, and ethics. Inquiring with feminist approaches requires engagement with diffractive analysis and a commitment to understanding how researchers are responsibly engaged in shaping the future for humans, non-humans and the material environment in a production of knowledge because productions of knowledge are also productions of reality that will always have specific material consequences (Barad, 1999, p.8 in Taguchi, 2012, p. 278). As Mazzei (2013) says, *'Analysis (if we still call it that) is triggered by an agentic clash on the surface with data'* (Mazzei, 2013a, p. 739). Diffraction is not a single event it is more dynamic and so is dispersed throughout this section and this thesis.

Diffraction is a 'lively affair' that troubles dichotomies and by focusing on process, and thinking and integration and intra-action and doing so has been shaped by the three moves for thinking with theory outlined by Jackson and Mazzei (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 5):

One: Putting philosophical concepts to work via disrupting the theory and practice binary by decentring each and instead showing how they constitute or make one another

Two: Being deliberate and transparent in what analytical questions are made possible by a specific theoretical concept and how the questions that are used to think with emerged in the middle of 'plugging in'

Three: Working the same ‘data chunks’ repeatedly to ‘deform [them], to make [them] groan and protest (Foucault, 1980, p.22-23), with an overabundance of meaning which in turn not only creates new knowledge but also shows the suppleness of each when ‘plugged in’

These moves are to show not to tell what is happening in the assemblage and *‘enter and exit this inquiry sideways, beginning in the middle’* (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018, p. 733). The three actions for thinking with theory are supplemented by four questions outlined by Barad (2007) in an exemplar using the work of Fernandes (1997) illustrating the co-production of workers and structures showing *‘the shop floor as a material-discursive apparatus of bodily production’* (Barad, 2007, p. 226). The questions are here (Barad, 2007, p. 229):

One: In what sense are social relations produced and what does this entail?

Two: What is the nature of the processes that ‘shape’ these relations?

Three: What are the relationships between the material and discursive dimensions of power relations?

Four: How are we to make sense of the nature of power dynamics? Of materiality?

In explaining the usefulness of a turn to matter in nursing, Aranda (2019) writes ‘Exploring matter and meaning as co-implicated serves to politically challenge dominant biomedical, authorial, normative understandings of experience and positivistic, outcome-based evidence. These theories reinforce the value of fine-grained, complex, detailed narratives and empirical accounts and the importance of more comprehensive, effective, and inclusive explanations and understandings as the grounds for activism. To undertake, such work is political in reimagining possibilities for more ethical, affirming, and sustainable responses to the enduring global challenges of our shared world (Aranda, 2019, p. 11). To reiterate, the text produced, is not to be taken literally as representation; rather, it is offered as an evocation and provocation to think with (Barad, 2007). The text, therefore, is one possible expression that is non conformal commitment to not repeating the same.

The following is a diffracted illustration of the three impressionist stories revealed in the previous section. As described previously, each impressionist story is a synthesis of theory, thinking, fieldnotes and verbatim transcriptions of semi structured interviews of three nurses in

leadership or management roles in one healthcare service. Also discussed earlier, is the ethico-onto-epistemological or, agential realist approach to this inquiry that has become entangled with the inquiry the inquirer and the product of this intra-action. The reader is invited to engage with the impressionist stories again here. Each is labelled in numerical order: *one*, *two*, or *three* to correspond with the three discretely illustrated texts. The categorisation of the text in this way is to support the reader. It is essential to note that there is a slight stylistic departure from an entangled agential realist approach in the following in that the text could be construed to be presented hierarchically. The impressionist stories are nevertheless split here to illustrate the synthesised text, episodes of thinking with theory and other fragments of writing to diffract and open the data to explore differences that (might) matter.

ONE

Question: In what sense are social relations produced in leadership and followership in nursing and what does this entail?

This question begins an exploration about how leadership and followership in nursing is materialised within organisations. Jackson (2013) explains the ‘mangle’ as Pickering (1993) argues for a post humanist perspective that accounts for agency as the ‘entanglement of constitutive human and non-human elements that make up the mangle. Pickering (1993) clarified:

Neat. On time she meets me. As we had arranged. To my relief she is here, and has not forgotten, or been called to an emergency. We enter her office. It is small. No windows. The office has the slightly odd atmosphere when there is only a fluorescent tube to provide light. A converted consultation room, a room to treat, check a dressing, sign a consent form. A desk and, the washbasin in the corner. Tiled splash back. White and clean. The whiteboard is neatly covered in strategies and ‘ideas. Reminders and symbols. Ways of getting’ the job’ done. The posters, carefully taped to the wall, reminding us of the standards that must be upheld. Bright colours and simple icons to simplify to codify the work. It is not neat work, I think. ‘Wash your hands’, above the sink. Two ring binders with ‘policy’ printed neatly down the spines, on a shelf. Enough space for an ‘acting’ leader in nursing, I think. Compliant and obedient. Is this what is required by the organisation? Is this what is called professionalism? What about the critical thinking and decision making ‘the profession’ puts forward as beacons of uniqueness and standards for nurses to uphold?

“Agents are continually coming into being, fading away, moving around, changing places with one another, and so on. It is important that their status can easily make the transit between being real entities and social constructs, and back again”. (Pickering 1993, p. 563) and “Pickering went on to explain that accounting for how both the human and non- human constitute (or mutually produce) one another avoids the trap of representation of a stable “real.” That is, “things” constantly move between being socially constructed via discourse (Alecia Youngblood Jackson, 2013a, p. 743).

So, the ‘things’ in the office are agentic in what is real or socially constructed about the role of the nurse manager. The smallness of the office that is a space designated for use as an office and that has been repurposed. The desk that makes it an office even though the tiles and whiteness make it a space within a space in the clinical environment. It is a material place that shapes what the nurse does in her leadership and/or management role. The space that is appointed as an office also become an office because of the work that occurs there. The whiteboard and the words written on the whiteboard with a non-permanent marker that hint at the dynamism and shifting agendas and the very materiality that this is work about ideas and concepts that are made valid in the written form and a demonstration of the ‘work’ of management and leadership that is different to the clinical work of the nurse with patients.

The posters and the policy folders that indicate external agency from other sources. These non-human elements *‘decentre the nurse as a knowing subject and their ontological practices are analysed as entangled and performative’* (Jackson, 2013b, p. 747). The non-human elements; office, whiteboard, posters and folders, start to show what the nurse *‘does in the world via the interplay between human and non- human agency, shifting from epistemology to ontology, from representation to performativity, agency and emergence’* and the contours of agency of the human and the non-human emerge alongside each other. (Pickering, 2002, p. 414 in Jackson, 2013b, p. 747). The material-discursive situation of this space of the conversation is difficult to separate from any other event of talking involving a nurse and an inquirer who is a nurse that takes place in a hospital (Lenz Taguchi, 2012). In this way, matter is intra actively implicated in the differences that are within the phenomenon of entangled leadership and followership.

Bender (2018) argues for a re- conceptualized metaparadigm that articulates nursing’s ontology. What exists for the nursing discipline are not already-demarcated metaparadigm

domains, but rather interdependent, dynamic relations that constitute people, including nurses, in their health/environment circumstance (Bender, 2018a, p. 1). In this theoretical sample, Bender articulates an entanglement of nursing as a phenomenon constituted in entanglement.

Nursing is a relations sensing performance that continuously brings the interrelationship of nursing, person, environment, health into being through which the enactment of skilled nursing practice emerges...Put quite simply, nurses create worlds where they can make a difference—where they can make things better. Nurses may not often achieve that goal, and the question of “better for whom” is pertinent, but the process itself brings about situations where what is important at any moment in time—to the nurse, the patient, the family member, the interprofessional clinical team, the community, the policy arena—is made visible, and thereby actionable (Bender, 2018, p. 7).

Question: What is the nature of the processes that ‘shape’ these relations?

Thinking about meeting standards and the organisation ‘putting me into this role’ prompts thoughts about being shaped into what is needed’ suggests the work of Mary Parker Follett exemplified in this excerpt.

What is the central problem of social relations? It is the question of power; this is the problem of industry, of politics, of inter-national affairs. But our task is not to learn where to place power; it is how to develop power. (...) Genuine power can only be grown, it will slip from every arbitrary hand that grasps it; for genuine power is not coercive control but coactive control. Coercive power

Outside, in the hallway, the noises of a hospital. The surgical department. Trolleys, voices. The anticipation of the day to come. It is still early in the strange temporal space of the hospital where the time is continuous but is divided to provide industrial boundaries, to provide markers for legal documents. To create order from human complexity at times of despair and triumph and everything in between. There are people to be excised, and sutured together, and paperwork to be completed, people to be greeted, to be farewelled, perfunctorily. To meet standards. ‘The organisation supported putting me in this role’, she continues. Meeting standards. To shape you into what is needed I think because I have experienced the same. I nod and encourage her to keep going. I need to remain open and I am genuinely interested in her story.

is the curse of the universe; coactive power, the enrichment and advancement of every human soul (Follett, 1924, pp. xii–xiii).

In addition, ‘*We should work always to take account of that reciprocal adjustment, that interactive behaviour between the situation and ourselves which means a change in both the situation and ourselves*’ (Follett, 1995, p. 86). Follett envisions the individual-in-society as something constantly being made and remade. The human being is an evolving, relational individual, ‘*always in flux weaving itself out of its relations*’ (Follett, 1919, p. 577). This integrating process is ‘*the essential life process*’ (Follett, 1919, p. 576). Barad (2007) explains this in terms of entangled and co-produced relationship: ‘Neither discursive practices nor material phenomena are ontologically or epistemologically prior. So, neither discursive practice can be explained in terms of the other. Neither discursive practices nor material phenomena are reducible to the other. Neither discursive practices nor material phenomena have privileged status in determining the other. Neither is articulated or articulable in the absence of the other; matter and meaning are mutually articulated’ (Barad, 2007, p. 152). In this mutual articulation, being as leadership and followership is constituted relationally.

In a discussion about the ‘*dogmatic image of thought*’: “*Everyone knows*”, Jackson (2017) quotes Deleuze and Parnet (2007 p. 23), “*Images*” here doesn’t refer to ideology but to a whole organization which effectively trains thought to operate according to the norms of an established order or power, and moreover, installs in it an apparatus of power, sets it up as an apparatus of power itself” (Jackson, 2017, p. 668; Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 23). So, when the nurse says; ‘the organisation put me in this role’ it is an insight into those norms of an order of power that trains thought and the non-human elements to ‘decentre the nurse as a knowing subject and their ontological practices are analysed as entangled and performative’ to show what the nurse does in the world.

Question: In what sense are social relations produced and what does this entail?

‘I didn’t know how I would do this role. I suppose the qualities I show. I just push myself’ she says. ‘In a big meeting I won’t usually talk but in a small meeting I am fine. I think I am, I am very efficient’. One of the effects to meet standards, efficiency, I think. ‘You know’, she says sitting straight. ‘I can run the floor. I can manage all those things I think I am. I can problem solve. When I was out there, it would only need to be a big issue that I needed to ask for help. Sometimes, I hesitate when I speak to bed managers and shift coordinators. I could manage most things on my own. I flew under the radar’. Trustworthy, autonomous. Meeting standards. It is all remarkably familiar.

A relational ontology assumes that: There is no ‘I’ that exists outside of the diffraction pattern, observing it, telling its story. In an important sense, this story in its ongoing (re)patterning is (re)(con)figuring me. ‘I’ am neither outside nor inside; ‘I’ am of the diffraction pattern. Or rather, this ‘I’ that is not ‘me’ alone and never was, that is always already multiply dispersed and diffracted throughout spacetime (mattering)...in its ongoing being-becoming is of the diffraction pattern (Barad, 2014a, p. 182). The nurses are part of this diffractive pattern. The specific practices that the nurses share was enacted in mundane everyday practices by catching sight of the ongoing materialisation. This ongoing materialisation of managers and leaders and followers in nursing can be thought to be historically contingent and the performative practice making subject positions as available and legitimate. A diffractive reading from the perspective of relational ontology suggests the complexity and ambiguity of co-construction of leadership and followership in nursing that is constantly being made and remade and therefore unlikely to be reduced to universal truisms (Clegg, Kornberger, & Rhodes, 2007). Relational ontology allows a view of the nurses practice that does not always start with human intention, but in the situated and ‘already made ready’ that creates the range that makes practices repeatable and possible. Agential realism the world is ‘ongoingly worlding’ itself as Barad illustrates here.

“Diffraction is not a set pattern, but rather an iterative (re)configuring of patterns of differentiating-entangling. As such, there is no moving beyond, no leaving the ‘old’ behind. There is no absolute boundary between here-now and there-then. There is nothing that is new; there is nothing that is not new”, and “Matter itself is diffracted, dispersed, threaded through with materializing and sedimented intra-acting, an open field. Sedimenting does not entail closure. (Mountain ranges in their liveliness attest to this fact.)” (Barad, 2014a, p. 168).

Barad’s more recent discussion of relational ontology and mattering is reverberated in the work of Follett who describes individuals and the situation within which they interact as co-created in an ongoing process of mutual becoming she termed interweaving and, interchangeably; integration (Follett, 1919, 1924, 1995, 1998), interpenetration (Follett, 1919, 1924, 1998), coadaptation (Follett, 1998), synthesis (Follett, 1998), and harmonizing (Follett, 1998). These terms focus on the relation and connections among groups of individuals and the environment in practices like ‘*politics, economics, and jurisprudence*’ (Follett, 1995, p. 38). ‘*The genuine social will, or community, is always a moment in the process of integrating*’ (Follett, 1919, p.

580). *'We should work always...to take account of that reciprocal adjustment, that interactive behaviour between the situation and ourselves which means a change in both the situation and ourselves'* (Follett, 1919, p. 577). Furthermore, Follett conceives the individual in a community as something constantly being made and remade. The human being is an evolving, relational individual *'always in flux weaving itself out of its relations'* (Follett, 1919, p. 577). The making and unmaking in a society or community such as nursing might be ontologically relational, situated and *'already made ready'* creating the conditionality that makes practices repeatable and possible.

Question: What is the nature of the processes that *'shape'* these relations?

Leadership theory has traditionally explored leaders as sites of disembodied traits, characteristics, and abilities and that leadership involves micro dynamics in which the leader is materialized through practices of working on a corporeal self for presentation to both self and others (Ford, Harding, Gilmore, & Richardson, 2017, p 1553). These authors point to a growing body of work in leadership research that acknowledges the merits of understanding leadership as corporeal practice and, there is a need for acknowledgement of not only bodies but other materialities such as technologies and places, as well as discourses, language, power and resistance, in the emergence of leadership (Pullen & Vachhani, 2013). The nurse is recognized as a leader (manager) by others before she sees it herself and so is materialised as a leader through what is described by Barad as causally productive forces of knowing and being (Barad, 2007). This is different to *'traditional humanist accounts, intelligibility requires an intellectual agent (that to which something is intelligible), and intellection is framed as a specific human capacity'* (Barad, 2007, p. 149). In an agential realist account, intelligibility is an ontological performance of the world in its ongoing articulation and, knowing is a matter of intra-acting (Barad, 2007, p. 149). So, the nurse knowing herself and being known by others in her leadership role is not a *'bounded or closed practice but an ongoing performance of the world'*

A standard path, or one of them. She says she did not see it at first. This role came to her through doing what was expected by others. Someone else doing the job and they were moved on to fill another place and then another *'substantive'* jumping back in' and then leaving to do something else and then, the Director of Nursing, a man, telling her to apply. Obedient and compliant. She says she thinks that she was the only one to apply and that is probably why she was given the job. She leans forward again and tells me that when she started, she had *'no management skills at all'*. She laughs at that. *'I was just a clinical nurse straight off the floor'*.

(Barad, 2007, p. 149). Ford and Harding (2004) describe this materialized becoming in this way:

Managers, meanwhile, occupy a space where the boundaries of the self and those of the organization merge and disappear, rendering managers subordinate and subservient. This is an organization, in the managers' accounts, with a precise ontological status. It can be articulated through numbers and can be manipulated and controlled. On second reading, however, the ontologically distinct organization disappears, for managers assume the materialized metaphysics of this 'organization' – it is articulated through their bodies and therefore does not have a separate existence. There is no agentive manager within an organizational structure; there is rather an organization inscribed upon the body of the manager, each collapsed into the other. (Ford & Harding, 2004b, p. 827). What a phenomenon, such as leadership or management consists of the effects of ongoing materialisation characterised by tensions and possibilities entangled and enfolded in what already exists.

Question: How are we to make sense of the nature of power dynamics? Of materiality?

The material elements of leadership and followership in nursing at times involve the materiality of management such as planning, budgeting, resource allocation, assignment of tasks, control, policy making, role specifications., planning. The issues of classification in relation to management and leadership are important discussions but need to be set aside here.

Barad (2003) argues that materiality is not a separate or static entity and emphasizes the ontological inseparability of discourse and materiality. 'The relationship between the material and the discursive is one of mutual entailment. Neither is articulated/articulable in the absence of the other' (Barad, 2003a, p. 822). In conceiving ontological entanglement there is an in-principal suggestion that agency is not natural, 'belonging' to an individual, or forming a serial chain of consequences set in action by a primary influence. Viewed in this way, agency is a temporal flow always inheriting from previous practices and flowing into following practices,

I wonder why nurses do not see management, in their bedside work. Management is about planning, budgeting, resource allocation, assignment of tasks, control, policy making, role specifications. Part of the role? Planning for people, budgeting relationships, allocating resources to relationships with people. Assigning tasks to 'look after' people. Controlling people. Specifying a role to work with people. To meet standards. From 'being one of them to managing them, took a year', she goes on, this neat nurse. I am thinking about the starkness of the way she describes this shift, and the timeframe that she recalls. A hint at how hard this might be. Doing what is expected. Making the complex neat.

yet also continuously subject to conditional possibilities of the present (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Agency is an enactment and a responsibility about the possibilities of mutual response to pay attention to power imbalances.

Neither human or material elements are endowed with a locus of agency but rather are suggestive of enactments within a cyclical and performative flow (Barad, 2007). Follett (1924) describes these concepts in terms of the 'circular response' and through circular response we are creating each other all the time (Mary Parker Follett, 1924, p. 62). The concept of performativity is key here as it conveys the circular processes whereby categories such as manager or nurse are enacted and recur within a circular process, assuming the subject and practices sought to be described and so performativity is not commensurate with the word performance but rather is regularized controlled repetition of norms or a replication of authoritative constructs (Borgerson, 2005; Butler, 1993). Performativity suggests then that social relations are material discursive practices and, a circulating flow through material-discursive practices, and moving with this thought the temporal unfolding of these practices and on how certain actions condition the possibilities for other actions become possibilities. The contrast of doing what is expected and social relations that are material discursive practices is a nexus of power.

The nurse mentions that; "being one of them to managing them, took a year", and so a question that arises is related to the processes that shape these relations. Drawing on material and discursive differentiation processes draws boundaries between entities within the phenomenon, but not between phenomena. Therefore, even if there are boundaries between entities that are complex to change, the entities are transversally associated, because they are a part of the same phenomenon (Barad, 2003a, 2007). The assumption is made then that in material-discursive processes, the matter is not just material, discursive or cultural. Therefore, humans are material-discursive dynamic figurations, as are objects, structures, values, and meanings and, as re-enacted processes develop, maintain and dissolve boundaries, a figuration can be perceived as fixed and real, but not as ahistorical and merely natural (Schadler, 2019a, p. 217). The exploration of entanglements does involve a responsiveness and responsibility to inherited possibilities of the future and the past as Barad, writes here.

'As the rings of trees mark the sedimented history of their intra-actions within and as part of the world, so matter carries within itself the sedimented historicalities of the practices through which it is produced as part of its ongoing becoming – it is ingrained and enriched in its becoming.' (Barad, 2007, p. 180)

According to Follett (1919) words like power and authority imply hierarchy and domination. *'The study of community as a process does away with hierarchy, for it makes us dwell in the qualitative rather than the quantitative'* (Follett, 1919, p. 582). To describe concepts that replace atomistic understandings of behaviour and transaction, Follett uses words that connote relation in action, such as interpenetration, interpermeation, integration, harmonization, intermingle, interrelating, co-adaptation, interweaving, inter-individual, and synthesis. She also uses verbs that function as nouns to better express the making of relational process saying, *'the truth is that the self is always in flux weaving itself out of its relations'* (Follett, 1919, p. 577). Consequently, she describes relating as a process of mutual, circular response (Mary Parker Follett, 1995, p. 35). The complexity Follett found in pressing the English language into process meanings that convey elements in the universe in a constant and dynamic state and this is a prescient problematization of thinking leading to the becoming of new materialism and relational material discursive process. (Stout, 2012) If there were a formula or function for organic process, it would be one that describes *'the relating of things that are varying, which makes the relating vary'* (Follett, 1995, p. 46). In this comparison, Follett takes care to clarify that the term function is the activity and not the result *'function is the activity of relating, it is the operation, not what results'* (Mary Parker Follett, 1995, p. 52). So, the nurse provides an account in which they are planning for people, budgeting relationships, allocating resources to relationships with people. Assigning tasks to 'look after' people. Are elements of how the leadership role is operational. As Follett (1919) notes, when the focus moves from the parts to the integrated whole, the way the parts are related becomes the phenomenon of interest. (Follett, 1919). So, the associated arrangement is the complex pattern of relational movement, not a permanent arrangement of objects.

Follett and Whitehead and Barad align and support thinking about an ontological primacy of process. In Whitehead's philosophy there is no underlying substance capable of justifying the way things are: the actual entities are themselves the only reasons (Whitehead, 1978, p. 24).

These entities endure as societies, as patterns of prehension that take on varying degrees of consistency depending on their environment. An endurance may have the consistency and durability of a physical object, but this is certainly not a necessity: *'some enduring objects form material bodies, others do not'* (Whitehead, 1978, p. 109). According to Whitehead's process philosophy, it is the process itself that has made a difference on its own terms (Roberts, 2014). Following this thread, humans are part of the process but not the only actant in material discursive practices as a complex relational movement.

Question: What are the relationships between the material and discursive dimensions of power relations?

In sharp contrast to conceptions of "power over", notions of "power to" and "power with" are coactive in nature and facilitative of imagination through building connection and collective agency (Follett, 1940, p. 101). Harding, Ford, and Lee (2017) draw on the performative theories of Judith Butler and Karen Barad to explore how resistance to organisational strategies and policies and the individuals who resist strategies and policies co-emerge through complex interactions of entangled discourses, materialities, affect and space/time. Judith Butler's theory of performativity challenges presumptions of the existence of entities as such rather than becoming *'singular and monolithic by virtue of the convergence of certain kinds of processes and practices that produce the "effect" of the knowable and unified [entity]'* (Butler, 2010, p. 147). 'Knowable effects' such as gender, sex, work and organizations, are performatively constituted within 'rigid regulatory frames' governed by norms and power. 'Performativity' is a *'repeated stylization' involving a myriad of acts that 'congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being'* (Butler, 1990, p. 33). Barad (2007) inserts additional concepts to theories of performativity and posits phenomena as *'entangled material agencies'* (Barad, 2007, p. 56). Phenomena in this conceptualisation emerge through constitutive

She tells me about 'out there' – in the clinical space, I can imagine it. Nurses' station, bed spaces in a line, hushed but people talking, occasionally a raised voice. People propped against smooth white pillowcases, tray tables with plates of small triangular sandwiches to break a pre-operative fast. A persistent alarm. Clean and neat, except for some who come and go from here today, staff and patients, their experience of today, will shift them imperceptibly or seismically to a future yet unimagined. 'The difference', I hear her say, is 'the shift from relating to one person at a time as a team leader to the collective'. A shift in a space for charisma and collegiality, perhaps. 'All the personalities come into play in the bigger group'. Space for control. 'Some of them have strong personalities' she says, and I have met these nurses too, a euphemistic description for resistance and power.

practices. Barad's thesis is one of *'ontological in separability /entanglement of intra-acting agencies'* (Barad, 2007, p. 139). Harding, Ford and Lee (2017) working on a performative theory of resistance, *'suggest these spaces are not so much prosaic as rich in micro- dramas in which, from moment-to-moment, the work of constituting the self occurs. When the 'I' is jeopardized, a resistant that resists may take its place'* (Harding, Ford, & Lee, 2017, p. 1227). Thinking about the categorisation of power relations as processes of dynamic relations offer different meanings and materialisations of different enactments.

In an analysis of how material places and leadership are related to each other Ropo, Sauer and Salovaara (2013) consider how places and spaces construct and perform leadership. These authors introduce their paper from an embodied perspective citing several leadership scholars who have recently discussed leadership from an embodied perspective leading to a conception of leadership as an aesthetic, relational experience rather than an influence from one person to another and, the experience of material places cannot be reduced to managerial or architectural plans and intentions to construct certain kind of leadership. The performative nature of material place occurs through subjective embodied experience. (Donna Ladkin, 2010; Ropo, Sauer, & Salovaara, 2013, p. 379). Furthermore, although writing about leadership from the perspective of a social constructionist ontology *'the discussion of space and place in leading and organizing explores the power of material place to shape people's actions, interpretations and judgements'* (Ropo et al., 2013). Space, time, and matter – spacetimemattering - is rethought in agential realism in a departure from considering space and time as passive.

An agential realist question about space emanates from the nurse's reference to 'out there' as an element of matter in social material practice such as leadership and followership (Barad, 2007). The performative nature of spaces is thought to occur through the embodied experiences of people using the space (Ropo et al., 2013) Spaces are argued to 'play an active role in generating, transmitting, legitimizing and undoing meanings associated with leadership' (Hawkins, 2015, p. 952). Pöyhönen (2018) explored how plural and hierarchical leadership are sociomaterially constructed in liminal and dominant organizational spaces. *'In tune with the management and organization studies investigating liminal spaces, here, it is found that dominant organizational spaces reinforce the existing social structure, as the social flows related to the structure are strongly interwoven in these spaces'* (Pöyhönen, 2018, p. 595). The

concept of intra-action described earlier enacts and encompasses time, space, causality, and agency.

Exploring the mutual constitution of agency that is simultaneously materially and discursively produced between nurses' bodies, 'leaders' and 'followers' bodies and nurses' leadership and followership bodies together with the spaces in healthcare institutions, Barad's notion of intra-action is a re-insertion of ontology in the task of knowing (Mazzei & Jackson, 2012a, p. 121)). The dynamics of iterative enfolding are described by Barad (2007) in this way; iterative intra-actions are dynamics through which temporality and spatiality are produced and iteratively reconfigured in the materialization of phenomena and the (re) making of material discursive boundaries and their constitutive exclusions. Exclusions constitute an open space of agency; they are changing the possibility of changing possibilities (Barad, 2007, p. 179). Phenomena as mutual constitution. are what the world is.

Central to Parker Follett's theory is the idea of submitting or giving up of the "self" to the law of the situation and the process of interpenetration (Snider, 1998). Barad (2007) points out, however that agency is a matter of intra-acting, and is an enactment, not something that someone or something has (Barad, 2007). Follett's notion of interpenetration or, interchangeable integration, is aligned with Barad's description of agency as '*doing/being in its intra-activity*' (Barad, 2007, p. 235). Follett (1924) supports that will (or agency) and activity '*do not dwell in separate spheres*' and that "[every] living process is subject to its own authority' (Follett, 2013, p. 207). Enlarging collective power therefore implies coming together in reciprocal influences and by that creating collective agency (Carlsen, Clegg, Pitsis, & Mortensen, 2020). As Ford and Harding (2004) point out in a study of organizational merger, 'staff working in large organizations occupy material places which they endow with a meaning and identity that renders them vulnerable to multiple forms of alienation but also provides both security and identity' and, 'we found no such thing as separate and distinct employees/managers and 'the organization(s)', but places and spaces inscribed upon, collapsed into, defined by and constitutive of psyches and bodies (Ford & Harding, 2004a, p. 828). Spatiality is intra-actively produced (Barad, 2007). Sometimes as a space for control.

Question: In what sense are social relations produced and what does this entail?

What if we were to recognise that differentiating is a material act that is not about radical separation, but on the contrary, about making connections and commitments? (Barad, 2010a, p. 266)

As this sentence implies, for Barad, *'agency is an enactment, not something that someone is or has'* (Barad, 2007, p. 235). The data and theory, therefore, are folding into one. In a discussion of intra-actions of matter, agential realism and the question of nature, Barad uses the metaphor of sedimentation as a way of illuminating ongoing processes of differential mattering, so, *'changes do not follow in a continuous fashion or a teleological trajectory'* and, furthermore; *'the past matters and so does the future, but the past is never behind, never finished once and for all, and the future is not what will come to be in the unfolding of the present moment: rather the past and the future are enfolded participants in matter's iterative becoming. It is a lively process'* (Barad, 2007, p. 181). Materiality as an active factor in the processes of materialization and *'questions of responsibility and accountability present themselves with every possibility; each moment is alive with different possibilities for the world's becoming and different reconfigurings of what may yet be possible'* (Barad, 2007, p. 182, 2010b). The possibilities for resistance and materialising in leadership and followership are imbued with those very questions of responsibility and accountability with the past and the future of leadership and followership enfolded in iterative becoming. Practices of *'knowing in being might be a way to think about the kind of understandings we need to come to terms with how specific intra-actions matter'* (Barad, 2007, p. 185). Entanglements though, are not coalescence and diffraction is difference, systemically.

Considering Barad's comments on connections and commitments in leadership and followership intra-actions that matter enfolded in iterative becoming again suggests Follett's

Self-possessed, determined voices. Vociferous, but not always guaranteed to be responsible or reliable in relationships. In a seeming contradiction, that in my experience is perpetual, she declares that the *'strong personalities want to run out there but not do the nurse manager part. Some do not really appreciate me jumping over them, they want the control- if I must do something, I must target them. I have to get them onside'*. Finding control. I find this so fascinating. I am listening intently, and I am enthralled. I have not seen or heard anything too removed from what I have observed during almost all my working life as a nurse. I think about some of the leadership reading and thinking I have done; people consent, cope, and resist at different levels of consciousness at a single point in time. I think.

focus on the process of leadership rather than the ascendancy of a so-called leader who dominates and controls organizational life. Of course, in nursing contexts decisions do have to be made and orders need to be given. Follett settles this contest by reiterating that it is the situation that determines decision making, but within a context that preserves the relational dynamic of the enterprise and as such, describes the ‘lively process’ described by Barad. For Follett, leading and following are not found in top-down or bottom-up linearity and paradoxically, leadership occurs when leaders abandon the need to control and dominate, and emerges within the dynamic interactions of daily organizational existence and so, perhaps as an ongoing process of differential mattering (Barad, 2007; Bathurst & Monin, 2010). The notion of enfolded iteration is intimated in this passage.

To find the law of the situation rather than to issue arbitrary commands, I have called depersonalising orders. I think it is really a matter of re personalising. We, persons, have relations with each other, but we should find them in and through the whole situation. (Follett, 1949, p. 24).

According to Follett, leadership lives in the moment, valuing the present, while at the same time looking to the future; paradoxically running to stand still:

The leader, however, must see all the future trends and unite them. Business is always developing. Decisions have to anticipate the development. You remember how Alice in Wonderland had to run as fast as she could in order to stand still (Follett, 1949, p. 53)

As a researcher it is important to consider the ‘*constructions and interactions, then, are not just about bodies, nor just about words, but about the mutual production of both subjectivities and performative enactments*’ (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 111). The space for thinking that is agential realism allows engagement with theory and reality that are divergent and also intra-actively integral.

Question: What are the relationships between the material and discursive dimensions of power relations?

Moving through the space of the hospital can also be regarded as a process of iterative intra-activity through which material- discursive practices come to matter with an enfolding of wellness and suffering and of structural relations of hierarchies, technologies of health, practices as specific material arrangements and (re) arrangements of the world, the ‘past’ and the ‘future’, iteratively reworked and enfolded and intra-actively produced in the making of phenomena; where neither space or time exist as determinate givens outside of the phenomena (Barad, 2007, p. 383). Orienting a researcher self ethically and onto-epistemologically, the space and temporality, the matter and the meaning are mutually constituted in the production of knowing (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). There is a move then from descriptions and reality to matters of practices/doings/actions (Barad, 2008, p. 121). This movement through the space is an installation into an event that emerges in the reading (Lenz Taguchi, 2012). It is thinking intra-actively.

Question: How are we to make sense of the nature of power dynamics? Of materiality?

Am I on the right track? she asks, seeking my reassurance after explaining how she ‘gets the staff do the innumerable audits, how she communicates with them, consults and, how she makes what ‘she is directed to do’ happen. Maintaining standards. No fuss. I assure her that I just want to hear about what she does each day, and that this is terrific. ‘Obviously’, she says as we stand up, each to continue with our days, in our different jobs, ‘I can talk about this easily because it is what I do every day’. I thank her, enthusiastically, and make sure that she knows when I will come back.

I track back through the hospital. A family in the little waiting room nearby, leaning in as a united cluster, missing from our conversation. Staff in scrubs and surgical caps, unclassified. Reception: staff in theatre clothes, white gowns as loose covers, masking shapeless scrubs, and, in more stridently identifying corporate wear. A dark hallway with unidentified doorways, I wonder what is behind them. As I make my way past beds, some with people in them, being transported, to one all too familiar place and another, somewhere foreign, and the people here, in this place, moving through. I wonder where these people have been during our conversation.

She greeted me so warmly last time we met. Chatty and open. Today she is more direct. She tells me about a conversation she has just had, and I respond knowingly. A shared understanding. I know the acronyms, I know the jargon, I know the setting and the incident, not specifically but there is no leap of imagination to know what she is telling me. I have arrived on time and the familiar strikes me again. As I pass people on the way from the car I wonder if people know if I am a nurse. Does my gait give me away? Do I walk like a nurse? Does my leather bag holding my laptop and, notebooks and fountain pen with aquamarine ink look efficient or something else, am I a nurse only inside my skin, in my head? I feel so familiar here, but I have followed a different career path and I *feel* a divide. Do I look like I know where I am and that I have traversed these hospital hallways, passed the same people so many times,

In thinking with Barad, the consideration is not just about how discourse is functioning to produce the nurses and the researcher self but how they materialize (Barad, 2007, p. 57). As Jackson and Mazzei (2012) articulate in their own exploration of thinking with theory, with Barad, from a posthuman perspective, agency is distributed and “understood as attributable to a complex network of human and non-human agents, including historically specific sets of material conditions that exceed the traditional notion of the individual”. ‘Agency, then, is an enactment, not something an individual possesses’ (Barad, 2007, p. 23 in Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 114). The feminist orientation of these views about materiality and agency also necessitates making the body explicit. Ropo, Sauer, and Salovaara, (2013) mentioned earlier discuss dominant norms that may impact the movement of individuals in surroundings (Ropo et al., 2013). Gardiner (2018) drawing on feminist phenomenologists including Hannah Arendt refers to the way normative practices affect the way ‘we orient ourselves to our spatial surroundings’ saying, ‘Who feels ‘at home’ in one surrounding may experience discomfort in another environment. When we feel uneasy, this influences how we move through space. For those who feel marginalized by their surroundings, there is a double bind in that we are not only silenced by the discomfort we feel, but we may also silence ourselves. Sometimes, silencing can be a gesture of defiance but, at other times, silencing is an effect of marginalization from dominant societal, and organizational norms (Gardiner, 2018a, p. 300).

Pullen and Vachani (2013) introduce a volume of writing that explicitly considers different views about the materiality of leadership and discuss the ‘taken-for-granted assumptions that underpin the relationships between materiality and leadership where the *‘body re-emerges as the place where we may begin to know again’* (Bhattacharyya, 2001, p.38) and express anticipation ‘that future research focuses on ways in which bodies and embodiment have, in part, been silenced but emerge in the performance, expression and enactment of leadership’ Furthermore, materiality may disrupt, restrict but which bodies and embodiment have, in part, been silenced but emerge in the performance, expression and enactment of leadership (Pullen & Vachhani, 2013, p. 318). The intra-activity of the discursive and material reverberates. There is no pre-existence in this intra action with the individuals and objects emerging as part of

allegorically? I have wondered about them, probably, at times I wondered if despite wearing a uniform they knew that I am a nurse, wondering about them and all of this.

entangled intra-action and being with and being in-between (Gherardi, 2018). The quotation here illustrates the onto-epistemological energy of co-constitution pointing to a different perspective to a more common assumption of pre-existing entities.

I have said that we find responsibility for management shot all through a business, that we find some degree of authority all along the line, that leadership can be exercised by many people besides top executives. (Follett, 1949, p. 61)

Question: What are the relationships between the material and discursive dimensions of power relations?

An agential realist account points to our ability to understand the world in view of our *'knowledge making practices that are social-material enactments that contribute to and are a part of the phenomena we describe'* (Barad, 2007, p. 26). Auditing is a continuous activity of meeting standards and management as knowledge making practice in leadership and

We get to the point efficiently. There is a job to be done. I get on with it. I want to talk about a specific incident I say. An incident that was all about change. She tells me about an auditing process. I nod patiently. I react a little, inwardly, at the word audit. Meeting standards. I ask what an 'audit angel' is? Virtuous, exemplary, supernaturally meeting standards? I think to myself. 'It is important' she says sincerely, 'it helps us to figure out where we are going wrong'. She tells me about 'my guys' today. She means the people she works with. I feel uncertain about the possessive language. The control. The double-speak of teams and entrenched hierarchy We are drawing a diagram of the movements involved in a practice change.

'The chain of command comes down' she says, 'I don't know where the directive comes down from' and 'it moves along'. 'The followers become leaders when they get more education'. 'The leaders are interested in all kinds of things, like the storeroom or clinical handover. The followers must stay with the patients. As if it is a punishment, I think as she speaks. This conversation is about straight lines and directions and directives. 'The leaders all have little cohorts of supporters and I had to manage them', 'I get the directive and they have to do the change'. It sounds so simple, so neat. The relationships are raw-boned and mechanical, obligatory. To get the job done. Just another thing to do. Managing 'them'. 'People come and go', the staffing is never the same and there are always different people at the table'. Ah. That must be a test of dexterity and connection. Then, the communication appears again. Constant conversations, 'developing relationships to get what you need, or to maintain a standard'. 'It makes it easier to ask them, to do what I want, if I have a relationship with them'. 'Oh, and to feed them'. Banana muffins. 'Just to let them know that I am on the team and that we are working together'. I leave her then, to get on with the busyness and the business. I hurriedly pack up my things. I do not want to take her time. 'You are always doing dual roles' she had said, and I wish I had asked more about what that means, and I think as I find my way back to the car, about the 'they' who figures out 'what has to be improved'. Passing humanity, I wonder.

followership and management of practice and ‘naturalcultural’ process in clinical nursing and the mutual constitution of entangled agencies (Barad, 2007). When the notions of causality, agency, space and time and matter are reworked and so as Barad (2007) writes, agency for example, rather than being thought in opposition to ‘*structures as forms of subjective intentionality and the potential for individual action*’ (Barad, 2007, p. 230). The dynamism of intra-activity works congruently with processes of differentiation.

Intra-actions of nurses and audits and management of people intra actively configure what is possible and what is impossible. Power in Barad’s terms draws from the thinking of Foucault and Butler and is not an external force that acts on a subject, ‘*there is only reiterated acting that is power in its stabilizing and sedimenting effects as forces at work in the materialization of bodies are not only social and the materialized bodies are not only human*’ (Barad, 2007, p. 235). To make sense of the power dynamics that emerge the intra-action of Follett’s concept of coactive and coercive power in organizations is informative. Coactive power may grow into coercive power, which again may stifle the former.

A process ontology of leadership imbued with the concept of ‘power-with’ signalled by Follett is implicated in leadership models that are alternate to managerial models that rely on formal positions, systems maintenance and decisions based on data analysis, towards processes that recognize organizations function in complex and multifaceted (intra-active and agential realist) environments. This stance considers the continually emerging and social construction of leadership as a phenomenon and that can be extended through ‘new materialism’ as agential realism, however, there is convergence as a posture contesting traditional hierarchical conceptions (Salovaara & Bathurst, 2018). Process ontologies such as that which Follett forecast, is conceiving of leadership as taking form as processes through actions and a difference that matters.

Salovaara and Bathurst (2018) discuss the collocation of Follett’s thinking with the constant drive for effective systems and efficient staff in modern organisations where the “‘forces for conservation’”, tend towards preserving existing hierarchical arrangements, allowing for speedy decision making which satisfies the needs of stakeholders and keeps privileged elites in power concluding that Follett’s orientation toward becoming and ‘unknown knowing’ runs counter to entity ontologies that underpin leadership practice (Salovaara & Bathurst, 2018, p. 184). An

orientation toward becoming moving the focus from single instances towards the process across time.

There is a suggestion in ‘banana muffins, feeding them, and the reference to ‘I am on the team and that we are working together’ that is constant with Follett’s view that situations are fluid and can be appreciated in the moment by ‘leaders’ willing to step beyond fixed positions where ‘plusvalents’, a neologism used by Follett to articulate dynamism in relationship in contrast to the stasis of equivalence and in an ongoing and never-ending process. Alluding to common sense or that ‘*the experience of all is necessary*’ (Follett, 1924, p. 19). As Gardiner (2016) notes, Arendt might say our current fixation with leaders is because we have lost faith in tradition, a sense of responsibility for the world, and the power that arises from collective action (Gardiner, 2016). Responsibility is an iterative aperture enabling responsiveness.

The model of the maternal family unit being fed and doing what is wanted. Gardiner and Fulfer (2017) draw on Arendt to suggest that organizations can ‘do’ diversity better with a structure that enables praxis to emerge. In addition, we point to ways in which family as an organizational principle privileges a narrow conception of family that obscures gender, racial, sexual, and class-based inequities. This project contributes to the feminist scholarship on diversity and organizational inequities (Gardiner & Fulfer, 2017). In Arendtian terms, the ability for others to speak and act is, to a certain extent, controlled by the head of household. As that control is sometimes wielded by force, for Arendt, the familial realm can be a site of violence. Since hierarchy is a constitutive feature of the concept of family, when family becomes an organizing principle, individual differences are suppressed (Gardiner & Fulfer, 2017b). Essentially, Arendt is a humanist in contrast with the post humanist agential realism previously engaged with, nevertheless both Arendt and Barad contribute to a feminist exploration of leadership and followership in nursing.

Question: What is the nature of the processes that ‘shape’ these relations?

Our time together is ring-fenced today. She is easily able to draw a boundary around her time now. To make her expectation known. An equivoise, perhaps. Business as usual. She is still keen to meet, and I am grateful. I want to hear more about what she does and how she does it. I am waiting for something unlikely to appear I think, expectantly. She tells me a story about something that has happened since we last met on her team, the people she works with. It is a funny story, and full of the reality of the mismatch between expectations and reality of people consenting, coping, and resisting. ‘I can’t do this without my

Gardiner (2018) contends that Arendt (1958) ‘provides us with an account of leadership as collective action’. She argues leadership functions best when it arises out of the individuals working together over a common cause, since they discover the strength of collective action. As such, it is the actions that emerge when a group of committed individuals work together toward a common goal that constitutes a robust sense of leadership. Yet, over time, leadership understood as collective action has been erased. ‘*Now, it is the leader as sovereign individual that dominated our thinking*’ (Gardiner, 2018b, p. 296). The group is being performatively reconfigured and the world is always becoming. Situated outcomes are being produced as a result and their performativity, that is, the realities that play out over time (Orlikowski & Scott, 2015). In an agential realist account, the concept of realism is contested because the focus is relational between concept and object, emphasising the coupling of matter and meaning but not as a simplistic correlation between word and thought such as leadership as collective action (Juelskjær et al., 2020).

Jørgensen (2020), drawing on Arendt’s work to develop storytelling as a process through which experiences and appearances occur in collective space, refers to embodiment and materiality as mattering in storytelling in organisations. For Arendt, ‘storytelling is inherently political’ (Jørgensen, 2020). Storytelling, also has the capacity to open space and to change practice in groups (Tassinari, Piredda, & Bertolotti, 2017). According to Jørgensen (2020), for Arendt, stories require an audience because telling stories is to make us seen and heard before others. Stories take place, relate to, and are organized around what lies in between people, the ‘interest’ (Arendt, 1998, p. 182). This, Arendt (1998) suggests is that we can never be the exclusive authors of our own life stories. Actions fall within an already existing web of relationships with their innumerable conflicting wills and intentions (Arendt, 1998, p. 184). Furthermore, stories are rarely organized around a clear plot but are fragmented, spontaneous, and plural (Arendt, 1998, p. 192). At odds with a material-discursive position, Arendt (1998) as an existential phenomenologist and humanist does not think about action as material and embodied but rather is inspired by the theory of the speech act (Arendt, 1998 in Jørgensen, 2018). The narrator, or storyteller, in agential realism permeates the text becoming one of many voices in a polyphonic way, and the exploration of phenomenon allows opportunities to be heard.

team behind me’ she says and then quantifies with a percentage of majority that is displaced a little by the qualifying; ‘they will all do it even if the attitude varies a bit’.

Jørgensen (2020) points out, that Butler (2015) counters Arendt on this point with a suggested embodied and performative understanding of action. Butler (2015) recommends that showing up, standing still, taking up space, breathing, moving, gesturing, gazing, making moving, speaking and so on are all expressive actions that are part of the collective action produced by material conditions or arrangements whether or not this is '*concerted, coordinated or unpredictable*' (Butler, 2015, p. 19). We are entangled with the world and its bodies, materials and discursive and geographical conditions (Jørgensen & Strand, 2014; Strand, 2014). Thus, the 'I' embodies the others as well as non-human others (Barad, 2007). The team, and the power are influentially entangled with the embodied 'I' in the stories of the nurses.

In addition, Butler (2015) considers that this material reorientation ties the possibility of a space of appearance more to a location and place than Arendt alludes (Butler, 2015). In a relational process ontology that is agential realism, storytelling occurs in mattering practices. Inherently political, storytelling is a mutual constitution of objects and agencies of observation and phenomena (Barad, 2007, p. 197). Storytelling material and embodied in the intra-actions of the nurse and 'her team' and expectations and attitudes, and support, the '*reiterative character of performativity that opens up the possibility of agency*' (Barad, 2007, p. 213). The stories the nurses tell are, as Barad (2007) suggests, political processes and so inherent to decision making and power relations.

Question: How are we to make sense of the nature of power dynamics? Of materiality?

As Harding, Ford, and Lee (2017) write; there is more to be understood about intra-actions and materiality and discourse in the performative constitution of resistance/resistants. The same authors write, citing Ashcraft (2005), that '*contemporary theory rejects the notion of agents who control; or practise resistance but agents nevertheless remain implicit*' (Harding et al., 2017, p. 1210). The power matters, when the 'I' is compromised 'inhabited by intra-acting sentient and non-sentient actors, influenced by affect, materiality and discourses, perhaps

'I like to think that I hold the power, but I don't' and I ask her what she means. 'I give the direction, I suppose the power I think of is how I get things done, how do I get change to occur, if the change doesn't occur it, the power is with them'. It sounds like a sharp demarcation. I start to think of the differentiation between power that is created through the collective and about how that is different from coercion. It is a line that has stuck with me. I draw my attention quickly back to the conversation, and as I do so she shifts back to a statement about how she makes change happen and, she suddenly states, 'so, talking to them and telling them why we need to change different things and you hope you have very good Level Twos.'

arising and subsiding or repeated from moment-to-moment' (Harding et al., 2017). It is the micro dramas, moment to moment in each reiterated act of turning away and turning towards, doing and being fold into each other in entangled intra-actions of spacetime-matter, and a 'rich genealogical account of the entangled apparatuses or practices' (Barad, 2007, p. 390). The directions that are given, how is change made to occur and the 'power' is material through comprising resistance/resistants the 'I' embodies the others as well as non-human others (Barad, 2007).

Power is a flux of forces or 'affects' fully immanent within events, while resistance is similarly an affective flow in events producing micropolitical effects contrary to power or control (Fox & Alldred, 2018). Power is consequently integral to what goes on in this daily round of events; to be treated not as a unitary force upon citizens but revealed and deployed at the very local level of actions and events (Barad, 2001, p. 94). Fox and Alldred (2018), in an exploration of flattened ontology state that 'terms 'power' and 'resistance' may offer the impression of much more concerted social processes, whereas at the level of an event the flux of forces in assemblages can often shift the capacities of bodies or collections of bodies for moment to moment.

The notion of intra-actions reformulates traditional conceptions of causality and agency in an ongoing reconfiguring of the real and the possible. Agency is cut loose from its traditional humanist orbit and is not aligned with human intentionality or subjectivity and so, agency, says Barad *'is doing/being in its intra-activity'* (Barad, 2007, p. 235). The agency of power dynamics in nursing leadership and followership might then be a doing of power and a being of power as the real and the possible are reshaped. Butler, (1997) indicates that 'enabling constraints' are where *'Agency begins where assumed sovereignty wanes. The one who acts ... acts precisely to the extent that he or she is already constituted as an actor and, hence, operating within a field of enabling constraints from the outset'* (Butler, 1997, p. 16). The field of enabling constraints is shaped by assumed authority, perhaps by virtue of the role or the title of leadership, and yet, this is identified as not automatically aligned with the agents that control. So, 'power' as the nurse declares, becomes meaningful in a defined way of becoming so in intra-action in ways that include this 'power' it becomes performatively produced as a specific realization (Introna, 2013). In an agential realist account, causality as intra-action is a reworking of power (Barad, 2007, p. 237). Whether influence is claimed to be achieved through hierarchical affiliations and

the ability to impart rewards or alternatively influence is by associated power that is shaped through the unmitigated appeal of personality, power is involved (Ladkin, 2020). Reworking power and forms of resistance as intra-activity supports different understandings of the categories of power and leaders and followers as processes of dynamic relationships. In this way, thinking in terms of processes, categories accomplish different meanings and materialisations as they are enacted in lives.

Question: What is the nature of the processes that ‘shape’ these relations?

Materiality says Barad (2007) is a doing rather than a thing: ‘*Matter refers to the materiality and materialization of phenomena, not to an assumed, inherent, fixed property of abstract, independently existing objects*’ (Barad, 2007, p. 210). So, the ideas for change are not prior but rather, from a relational ontology that which the material and the discursive, the nonhuman and the human, are always already ontologically entangled and inseparable (Barad, 2007). The ideas and directions and the expectations and change and ‘old ways’ are intra-actions, performative instrumental enactments that materialise entities and boundaries out of ontologically inseparable relations. For Barad, it is only through specific ‘agential intra-actions’ that ‘entities’ (bodies, meanings) and boundaries are ontologically inseparable relations. Practices enact what Barad terms ‘agential cuts, which do not produce outright separations, but rather cut together - apart (one move)’ (Barad, 2014a, p. 168). Barad’s concept of agential realism disrupts ‘both radical constructivism and the notion of individually existing individuals’ (Lather, 2016a). ‘*Giving them, directions, my brain, their hear, clear expectations*’ become from this perspective a field of forces that becomes the focus in assessing responsibility in the face of power imbalances. Furthermore, says Lather, (2016) ‘*Complicating any linearity and untroubled claims to truth, objectivity, and reference, what the ontological turn might offer, finally, is the opportunity to make a science out of indeterminacy*’ (Lather, 2016b, p. 129). As Barad (2007) asks, do we really own any of our ideas, do we have a bounded identity, or is this all an entanglement and our perception of individuality a fantasy we use to make sense of incoming

‘I think’, she goes on, ‘that I give the ideas for change and we talk about the direction for the team’. Then, an embodied statement; ‘I might be the brain, but they are the heart’. ‘Giving them clear expectations, telling them what we need to achieve and how we will do that, so that change happens, so that they will influence the change. If you do not sustain the change they go back to their old ways. They have the power of enforcement’. The language of rational persuasion and coercion knotted together, I think. Obedient to the management manifesto.

stimuli? Entanglement, when thought of in this manner is after all impossible to separate without making a decision and making such a decision infers responsibility.

Question: What is the nature of the processes that ‘shape’ these relations?

Gullion (2016) suggests thinking about ‘an actant as one that acts, an entity that makes phenomenon happen, change, move, flow, or what not. This does not have to be a conscious action and so, agency is said to have a distributed property. This means, she continues, that *‘agency is constituted from the intra-actions of multiple actants in a phenomenon. Through this distribution, agency becomes an enactment rather than a property’* (Gullion, 2016, p. 130). Human power then is only one manifestation of intra-active agency that is relational co-creation. This way of thinking about agency splits it from linguistic behaviour (Barad, 2007). Agency in this sense is relational and enacted through the practice of leadership followership as a phenomenon and raises the question about where the separation between leader and follower is forced.

Tourish (2019) adds to a discussion related to agency and process theories declaring that; *‘Scholars are increasingly seeking to develop theories that explain the underlying processes whereby leadership is enacted. This shifts attention away from the actions of ‘heroic’ individuals and towards the social contexts in which people with greater or lesser power*

The tentative acknowledgement of the inherent and enacted authority in the role has diminished in this state of parity that we are now in. She suddenly, starts to describe a ‘wayward child’, one of her colleagues, another nurse, and how this person does what is expected but will have ‘an attitude, her own opinion’. Sometimes, she says ‘you have to leave your opinion at the door and do the greater good’. I am certainly not unfamiliar with this power of language to effect change and yet it still disappoints me to hear it here. I hope I am impassive on the outside. I need to hear more.

She is telling another story, and as I tune back in to her description, she says ‘so I think the power was in a way there in that situation because we have to look after this or it will be taken away from the unit, basically we will get into trouble. I say to them if you don’t do it I will get into trouble and you know what you are supposed to do and how, and if you don’t, I am the one who has to explain so I will be asking you to explain. So, it is always that backwards and forwards. The warrant of ‘power’ is tentative and faltering.

The self-effacing authority appears again, ‘I don’t like to use power, I don’t see my position that I should use the power I have’. I am struck by the uncertainty, reticence. Then in the next sentence, ‘you have to be seen to be fair and equitable’. I wonder if it is a limitation of language, the time pressure but the words ‘seen to be’ jar. You either are or you are not my internal voice of appraisal snaps. ‘I do have power, but I have to be careful how I use it which direction I push it in and who I give it to’. The authority to authority is reclaimed. ‘It is the attitude, performance managing people who are not behaving ethically from what I see, and performance managing that before it gets hold’.

influence each other.' (Tourish, 2019b, p. 219). The divisions that are forced and point to questions about political and power structures.

Pullen and Simpson (2009) writing in the context of managing differences in feminised work (such as nursing) argue that *'the management of difference is complex, fragmented and incomplete and is pivotal to the negotiation of gendered practices in these contexts'* (Pullen & Simpson, 2009, p. 567). The notion of 'the problem child' is interesting and as Gardiner and Fulfer (2017) write, 'In Arendtian terms, the ability for others to speak and act is, to a certain extent, controlled by the head of household. As that control is sometimes wielded by force; for Arendt, the familial realm can be a site of violence. Because hierarchy is a constitutive feature of the concept of family, when family becomes an organizing principle, individual differences are suppressed' (Gardiner & Fulfer, 2017a, p. 512). Furthermore, Butler (2004) in commentary about gender relations that are underpinned by theories that produce gender binaries restricts the fullness of human expression and produces sameness (Butler, 2004). Butler (2004) recommends that *'the social norms, such as the patriarchal human family, that still underwrite our "formal" conceptions of universality' need to be examined'* (Butler, 2004, p. 191). Arendt's *'view of action emphasizes the importance of a diverse group of individuals working together for a common cause'* (Gardiner & Fulfer, 2017b, p. 517). This notion of diversity needs to acknowledge entanglement and that drawing of boundaries and creation of separations inherent in social organisations.

Perhaps a material discursive nature of the organisation producing the language of 'the problem child' creates hierarchy integral to the concept of family as a coordinating principle where individual differences are suppressed in nursing leadership and followership.

This is our last meeting and I thank her for her time and her candour and I tell her I will contact her to let her know how I am progressing and does she want to see what I am writing. Is email okay, I ask. We walk out through the electronic sliding doors and the activity is all around. 'This has been interesting' she shares. 'I have learnt a few things, the top leader has to have ethics and must have got there, not like a dictator, but through doing what they need to do'. How tidy, how controlled.

TWO

Question: How are we to make sense of the nature of power dynamics? Of materiality?

A reading of data as sense-event might represent a starting point. But we also, I think, need to find ways of researching and thinking that are able to engage more fully with the materiality of language itself – the fact that language is in and of the body; always issuing from the body; being impeded by the body; affecting other bodies. Yet also, of course, always leaving the body, becoming immaterial, ideational, representational, a striated, collective, cultural, and symbolic resource. But this collective space is itself cut and crossed by vectors, lines of flight that escape the grids of representation that capture meaning, to open onto the new (Deleuze & Guttari, 2004 in MacLure, 2013, p. 663).

MacLure intimates in this fragment from an article considering research without representation that research and particularly qualitative research is heavily invested in language practices. St. Pierre (2011), in her map of the possible contours of post-qualitative research, writes of how difficult it is to ‘escape the “I”’, even for those who have committed to the post-structural dismantling of that humanist subject. The researcher has a guiding role to play here, as “to read these encounters diffractively is to see how ‘you install yourself in an event of “becoming-with” the data.’” (Fenwick & Edwards, 2013, p. 59; St.Pierre, 2011, p. 620).

Matters of fact are not produced in isolation from meanings and values. This is an ethico-onto-epistemological issue. Ethical considerations can’t take place after the facts are settled, after the research is done. This is the wrong temporality. Values and facts are cooked together as one brew. (Barad, in Juleskjaer & Schwennesen, 2012, p. 16)

It is extremely hot, early February, cloudless, airless. Bright sun, heat. I am meeting another nurse. Hospitals, in my experience are a study in pragmatism over conforming to an architectural philosophy. Amassed buildings to control and comprehend humanity in birth, living, illness, death. This office is different. Location determines seniority. A larger office. A larger bookshelf, a larger whiteboard with a staff leave plan. Windows. I feel as though I am imposing on her time. The importance of her office. A tactful welcome, after a late arrival. An offer of water or tea. This nurse projects managerial practicality. Diplomatically, I submit, quieting internal tension. Will there be a kind of hierarchical distance I must work within, here?

This concept of ethico-onto-epistemology emphasises how knowledge production and political processes are never settled once and for all. A foundational understanding of situatedness is therefore central to inquiry apparatus inspired by agential realism (Juelskjær, 2020).

Question: What is the nature of the processes that ‘shape’ these relations?

The nurses’ subjectivity is not fixed or characterised because of the ways they exist in the world depending on ‘the tap on the shoulder’ social relations, historical relations, and material conditions, such as ‘a senior colleague asking a nurse to fill in for a few weeks’(Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). Within intra-connected contexts, humans and other entities are inseparable from each other. Every process and entity that maintains, configures, or questions the relationships of leadership and followership in nursing can be incorporated into a different mattering or understanding and, the process itself has made a difference on its own terms. Asking a research question: How do participants make themselves visible and recognizable as leaders? Ford, Harding & Gilmore (2017) explore the materialisation of ‘leaders through micro-dynamic processes using Barad’s material theory of performativity in addition to Bollas’s interpretation of the body in the psyche (Ford et al., 2017). Mazzei (2013) illustrates how different encounters with data, research settings and participants make and unmake her in intra-actions with matter and it is her conclusion that; ‘*We act on each other in ways not always discernible or predictable, thereby producing possibilities for becoming otherwise as we rethink practices of knowing and being known*’ (Mazzei, 2013b, p. 784) and it is this concept that has become integrated in the stories of the nurses. To illustrate this notion of made and being made knowing and being known, Mazzei, quotes Grosz to further illuminate the act of telling that produces material reality; Life is the protraction of the past into the present, the suffusing of matter with memory, which is the capacity to contract matter into what is useful for future action and to

My first question is met with a rejoinder, a question back to clarify. Her answers about how she came to the role she is in now are markedly precise. This, then this, then this. Ambition, moving to a major hospital with a specific plan. Opportunities found and taken and clear decision making and skill development. Experience and technical expertise. Learning the environment. A potted history of challenge and progress and opening, covering decades. Then, she says, she’ is asked by a senior colleague to fill in for a few weeks’. I recognize this manoeuvre in nursing, the tap on the shoulder, amid bureaucratic standard keeping. Instead of weeks, it turned into years, she simplifies. Movements in the higher level, positions changed quickly and a cascade effect of back filling. Refilling after excavation. Expedience spliced hurriedly together with prudence. The reward for many who used to be good at what they used to do.

make matter function differently in the future than in the past. (Grosz, 2010, in p. 153 in Mazzei, 2013b, p. 782). Language itself is therefore material and is never inert and one element of many in entanglements that are moving, connecting, and diverging.

Question: What is the nature of the processes that ‘shape’ these relations?

The multiple intra-actions with ‘structure and process’ produce a freedom that is not a ‘quality or property of the human subject’ as in a humanist tradition, but can only be characterised as ‘a process, an action, a movement’. Correspondingly, an analysis of the shared agency between the nurse and the ‘structure and process’ in relation with the material world as intra-actions that both make and unmake. The nurse is becoming in the act of telling, so too the inquirer through the act of permeating matter and memory in the act of analysis (Grosz, 2010, p. 147 in Mazzei, 2013b). The act of telling assumes no two stories will be similar. A story retold will always differ from the original being culturally, textually and time specific storytelling is both a process of engaging with ourselves and the power relations that we are part of, additionally, Arendt’s notion of storytelling is helpful for understanding how and in what circumstances we can act politically in organisations (Jorgensen, 2018).

Question: In what sense are social relations produced and what does this entail?

So far, this nurse’s story of ambition, opportunity and skills and reflected, acknowledged capacity, is a reverberation of ‘needs must’, and I wonder who else’s voices are here reiteratively. I am keen to hear more. She says she was sort of floundering and overwhelmed until others reached out with support and direction and relationships that have lasted the tests of time. I am jolted and thankful for this sudden move to candour. Further education and trustworthy guides, she says have ‘given her confidence in this role when she gets into situations that she doesn’t know what to do’. Many of her role models have been doctors, she says; ‘very professional, structure and process’. ‘Unambiguous business rules to prevent mistrust’. Responses, conditioned.

Hierarchies that can be understood, ‘that kind of thinking works for me’ she says. I am reminded of the axiom, ‘all nurses are practical’ though I do not always agree with those words, and I wonder if that desired level headedness is a response to humanity or inhumanity in healthcare systems. ‘That is how I got from country nurse to a nurse executive’. I wonder where the people who she has tended are in her nursing story, the ongoing products of relations. I think about interior, exterior, past, present future iteratively enfolded and reworked. Enfolding, enclosing, surrounding, wrapping. I think again about making the complex neat.

Neat, and strong. The matter of strength. ‘Courage’, she says, ‘making decisions, decisions that are not going to be liked and you can control somethings and you can influence some things’. The materialisation of relationship. Relationships to manage and lead. I think of these fragments that matter as she explains ‘the difficult conversations she must have with staff’, about budgets and rosters, and fitting people into the matters of the institution. Interaction. When the organisation disturbs and becomes indeterminate. ‘So, a good leader is courageous’. Good and strong. ‘Not being in control at times, feeling out of control’ she shares, ‘has helped me to be receptive to supporting others’. To ‘being transparent

Grosz adds more about how things come to matter, and the notion of ‘freedom to’;

‘It is only after a work of art, a concept, formula, or act exists, is real, and has had some actuality that we can say that it must have been possible, that it was one of the available options’ (Grosz, 2010, p. 146). So, ‘structure and process’, ‘unambiguous business rules’ ‘education and guidance’ along with air-conditioned offices and personal philosophies among other matters come to matter. *‘As a result, the world itself comes to vibrate with its possibilities for being otherwise’* (Grosz, 2010, p. 153). Thinking about difference outside a metaphysics of individualism is an important consideration so as not to undermine the fabric of relationality in an inquiry about leadership and followership (Juelskjær et al., 2020).

Question: How are we to make sense of the nature of power dynamics? Of materiality?

In Barad’s words, *‘neither the discursive practices nor material phenomena are ontologically or epistemologically prior’* (Barad, 2007, p. 152). Mazzei (2013) expands with this; *‘Interview*

about not being in control, about working together’. ‘Listening to others when you don’t have the answers. ‘This is courageous’.

‘It is working, this is my philosophy, now’ and she tells me about getting people to take responsibility. Open and dynamic, responsive to possibilities, living the questions. Enabling responsiveness. ‘They are qualitative things; they create space for me’. I am finding this fascinating. In less than half an hour there is something opening and then, ‘I need structure and process’ and I wonder if that is the materialisation of the leadership here. Her leadership. As we prepare to finish, I am aware of the fullness of the conversation. ‘Even though I am removed from the patient side of things in this role, I enjoy seeing a really good outcome for a patient’. The shift between the air-conditioned office and the still warm atmosphere outdoors is unambiguous.

The next time we meet, a few weeks later the feeling of imposition reappears. The late afternoon light is less intense though. I have sent an email to make sure my appearance is expected and that she can manage time around our meeting. I did not receive a reply and I wait outside. Uncertain. I have left my office to come over to the hospital. She appears and while it seems clear that this meeting is not high on her list of priorities, she is professional in her greeting. I wonder if my commitment to boundaries during this process is obvious. Would I be different if I had been involved in the things she has had to do today? There is a shaft of light streaming across the meeting table from the window. There are complex change happenings described once we start talking together.

I must keep checking the details of the events and the characters as she describes them. It is a complex story about change and processes, and I think about a ‘saviour story’ and how we are seduced by the romance of a crisis when someone might come to save the day. As she speaks of the movement between the people involved. Resistance, confrontation, inviting not controlling, active following, active influencing, active response. A paradoxical dance of ideas and interruptions and initiatives. The word ‘dynamic’ is threaded through the dialogue ‘there is a dynamic’, ‘that is the dynamic’ and behind every image she creates for me, behind the words, for her, there is something real. The insecurities, the unknowns, the assumptions. She says she has a ‘few like this on the run now’. She is talking about relationships and roles and getting things done and then, ‘this is the most’ she pauses, ‘complicated’. Complex, I think.

practices take me to a new assemblage and humanist assumptions about being give way to flows and new becoming ad infinitum. Research and data analysis then become not about explaining which forces are primary and which are secondary' (Mazzei, 2013b, p. 739). The ontological assumptions and commitments of agential realism and new materialism are *'ways to account for the vast 'intra-actions' between and within phenomena that are material, discursive, human, more than human, corporeal and technological'* (Alaimo & Hekman, 2008, p. 5). Analytically, the artifacts made by agential cuts are useful for seeing and articulating the discourses around them and the voices and concerns (their politics, norms, expectations) that are involved with the artifacts. In this way the things that have been agentially cut and turned into artifacts to refract, or break up discourses, to articulate them to enable a problematisation of the initiator and messages to challenge them politically. Studying power dynamics such as those implied in leadership and followership in nursing and in doings so, preclusions of leadership and followership do not disappear but remain as part of the phenomenon and its iterative enactment and openness (Juelskjær et al., 2020).

Question: In what sense are social relations produced and what does this entail?

Barad (2010) illuminates this interpretation of material and why the material matters this way; *'only in this ongoing responsibility of the entangled other, without dismissal (without "enough already!")*, is there the possibility of justice-to-come. Entanglements are not an intertwining of separate entities, but rather irreducible relations of responsibility. There is no fixed dividing line between "self" and "other," "past" and "present" and "future," "here" and "now," "cause" and "effect." Quantum discontinuity is no ordinary disjunction. Cartesian cuts are undone. (Barad, 2010, p. 265). The concept of intra-action highlights the porousness of boundaries and challenges humanist concerns with the interaction between two separate bodies or objects. For Barad (2007), intra-action pays attention to the constant active dynamism of the world in its

She is supported. One hundred percent. It must be managed out of this office. One hundred present reassurance. One of the staff is not to be given a line of reporting to the next level. 'I am more than happy to do that; I think it is the right thing to do'. Playing into the caricatures in the hierarchy? Who knows best? Who is right or wrong? Who is clever? I ask about the patient amid the matter, this complexity. She pauses, 'mmmm the patient, where is the patient? Well, the patient is in all of it, not in one spot, I do not know. I think the patient is...not on the outside, that is not right. It's hard to visualise, I am not sure where I would put them'. I interject and ask if she is following her 'boss', 'yes, he is providing the support I need to lead all of this'. 'I have responsibility for these people, and they deserve my full support and I will give it to them' she says with emphasis. What matters is responsive, generative, and expressive.

making (Barad, 2007). For Barad, a concept of intra-action, as opposed to interaction, better describes the entanglement of relations implicated and the dynamic nature of material. Barad also urges the specificity of any intra- actions will always be shaped by specific configurations of power enacting this agency (Barad & Kleinman, 2012). So, this interpretation suggests that the humanist interaction of nurse and patient might be paid attention to in a different way in the entanglement of relations in intra-action.

Question: What are the relationships between the material and discursive dimensions of power relations?

A performative, processual, and distributed understanding of agency suggests that previously explored and theorised concepts might be differently understood from distinct and intersecting as relational to more than just other humans (Aranda, 2019; Fox & Alldred, 2017a). Aranda (2019) points out the contestation of humanism and posthumanism in an exploration of feminist theories for understanding the political in health, inequalities, and nursing. She discusses matter and the material in the context of nursing influence stating:

To decentre but not do away with the human subject in theories makes visible that which is often overlooked, it reveals a context that is more than mere backdrop to human action; it shows how subjects of health care, in any setting, are not only al- ways relational, in the sense of being connected or attached to

In the afternoons, there is less activity around as I make my way to her office. Passing visitors, making their way back to the car park, the bags they carry conspicuously emptied of the new supplies of perhaps night clothes and small comforts, traces of another life in another place. I wonder how their visits have been. Full of hope, anticipation for a resumption continuity. Or fractured by trying to make up lost time or occupied with the confusion of melancholy and bad news and a façade of brave facedness. The days are getting shorter now. The light less intense. There has been a miscommunication, a miscalculation and I must wait fifteen minutes for her to arrive at her office. ‘I am just waiting, I say to several people who inquire after my presence, who I am waiting for, as they pass and recognize me as a stranger here. Each inquiry, a apprehension superimposed with politeness.

Then, she arrives, and we enter her office that has become increasingly familiar. In the late afternoon, the room is now lit artificially, even though it is still light outside we start our conversation about teams. Values and beliefs, and how they fit in with the expectations of the team, and their roles. Understanding and valuing every member regardless of rank or classification. I find myself nodding in agreement. The slight irritation I felt while waiting is fading. ‘You must develop a profile of everyone, what their strengths are what the areas for development are. It takes communication, good communication’ she shares. ‘They have to feel part of the group. Allowing each individual to be heard and to be part of the decision making’. I wonder how she manages this in a division with hundreds of staff. Individuals.

other bodies, but are attached to differing technologies, things, or affect, desires, or places and spaces that enable or constrain (Mol, 2008 in Aranda, 2019, p. 8).

Follett pre-empts the performative, processual, and distributed understanding of agency further explored by the new material feminists, suggesting that individuality is perceived in the context of others, *'My individuality is difference springing into view as relating itself with other differences'* (Follett, 1918, p. 63). On the other hand, because relational ontology does not admit domination, binaries must either be eliminated or synthesized into wholes that enable relation and disable hierarchy while allowing differentiation—*'The fallacy of self-and-others fades away and there is only self-in-and-through-others'* (Follett, 1918, p. 8). A constant theme of Follett's writing was *'a new social paradigm that was based on cooperation rather than competition...through this cooperation, organizations would achieve greater effectiveness, individuals would achieve greater satisfaction with their lives, and society as a whole would achieve greater welfare'* (O'Connor, 2000; Schilling, 2000, p. 224). This is in the context of human and material entanglement is a moment of mutual becoming—feeling part of a group.

Question: How are we to make sense of the nature of power dynamics? Of materiality?

Reality is in the relating (Follett, 1924, p. 54)

This fragment of writing is illustrative of integration, a concept that ensues from Follett's analysis of the misuse of power and the necessity of participation in the organizational context. (Fox, 1968, p. 524). encapsulates integration in this way: as a harmonious marriage of differences which, like the nut and the screw or the parts of a watch, come together in a way that produces a new form, a new entity, a new result, made of the old differences and yet different from any of them. Leadership as material and relational phenomenon is embodied and emergent as a number of leadership scholars have suggested in concert with feminist philosophical notions of intra-action (Barad) and integration (or circular response as Parker Follett would have it)(Ropo et al., 2013). The concept of integration indicates the

My own disquiet about the leadership or management 'recipe' resurfaces. Who is really heard, who is silenced? The descriptions of democratic process, of collaborative process in flattened structures, in contest with the typical 'command and control' interactions of the traditional hierarchy. The shadows of the past, of present reality are explained through the discourse of 'collaborative discussions, collective decision making and shared ownership', often. The managers' and leaders' 'how to, guide'.

‘entanglement’ between human embodiment and non-human materiality, both ‘living’ and ‘things’, and contemplates the ethical implications of this complex interrelationship. Using ‘entanglement’ the implication is that human and non-human materiality are inescapably and intimately connected. Entanglements are heterogeneous, interdependent, co-constitutive and dynamic; they are not mere assemblages or collections, but neither are they fixed (Barad, 2003a, 2007). Dale and Latham (2015) informed by Merleau – Ponty and Levinas write about ethics and entangled embodiment in the context of organising. They draw on Barad (2007) to discuss the fragility in ‘the organised distinctions that humans make’ that can result in a potential indifference in our relations with others’ Quoting Barad (2007) they write, ‘Indifference is a closedness to the others’ otherness, their difference. It is also a refusal of the responsibility for our proximity and our intertwined materialities. Barad (2007) describes this indifference as a *‘fantasy of distance’* (p. 396)’ (Dale & Latham, 2015, p. 172). The collective decision making in organisations that retain the ghosts of command-and-control leadership and followership in nursing resonates with this idea of indifference.

As Barad (2003) enlightens,

... ethics is not simply about the subsequent consequences of our ways of interacting with the world, as if effect followed cause in a linear chain of events. Ethics is about mattering, about taking account of the entangled materializations of which we are a part, including new configurations, new subjectivities, new possibilities. (Barad, 2003a, p. 384).

I ask about the influence of those in the order of the organisation. ‘I have good communication and understand what the level below me and the level below them does or is doing. For the levels two or even three below me, we have communication forums. Or a group email that is sent to hundreds of staff. I can update down to the Level One Registered Nurse’. ‘I try to go to the units for a purpose, to speak with a senior nurse. The others may know me, I don’t know’. She tells me about a multiple level, multiple discipline cross area approach to a project that is ‘usually prescriptive’. It sounds complex. ‘We don’t take everything on board, of course’. A tactical operation with ‘frontline’ staff. Contentious strategy to realise egalitarian responsibility and cooperation. It is complex.

Our conversation about holding a team in a space leads to stories and storytelling. There are nuances and sensitivities to be considered to come together with people who are defensive about their own experiences. Being aware of being an ‘outsider’. Making judgements about being judged to keep

Language matters. Discourse matters. Culture matters. There is an important sense in which the only thing that does not seem to matter anymore is matter (Barad, 2007, p. 132).

Strand (2014) discusses language and matter implicated in the stories of the nurses when she says that *'the stories used in organisational living, ongoing processes of becoming in organizational living and change (as well as teaching and research) are material-discursive (re)configuring actions where matter, space, and time matter as co-constituents. Through these actions, it is possible to enact different in/exclusions that change present hegemonies'* (Strand, 2014, p. 100).

Question: In what sense are social relations produced and what does this entail?

boundaries porous and people willing to engage. 'Telling stories is powerful but telling stories about patient care are absolutely powerful. Talking to people about what worked somewhere else, well people are not very receptive, they can think there are comparisons being made, but patient stories, well'. She pauses. 'When we talk to families and tell their experiences, and how they felt, that is incredibly powerful. I wonder why these experiences are only amplified when something dreadful happens. The patient is here, in this thread.

'I pulled some themes out of the Mid-Staffordshire context, to discuss risk mitigation. The staff sometimes say they don't have time for safety and quality'. Setting the scene for the nurses to let them know it can happen here'. She is clearly frustrated by this. 'I say to them, we don't have time to check for pressure areas? or who might be a falls risk? or that they get the right blood or the right medication?'. 'Telling the stories of when things go wrong is enormously powerful and families have the courage to tell us, so it won't happen to others. 'They are powerful stories. So is making it about their expectations for how they would want their family treated'. An appeal to reflection. With and without transformation in their care. Hundreds of nurses, teams within teams.

'There are a few key people that seem to be doing everything. It is a big dynamic. Varies from shift to shift. 'It depends on who the team leader is, there are some, clinically competent, but their people skills are just, oh', she says. Perceptions of unfairness, favouritism or feeling unrewarded for a doing a job well that bubble to the surface in this very human pursuit of providing healthcare for people. To care for people. So much complexity, and individuality in what is a team effort. The way we care for others and for ourselves.

'Team nursing has taken a dive; patient allocation has allowed people to take no responsibility. You hear nurses say, "that is not my patient" it is really odd, have we conditioned people to act in that way?' Her question hangs anxiously, involuntarily. She tells me about some of the difficult personal issues 'her staff' deal with and how they push it down to be 'professional'. Empathy, care, attention, compassion. The phone rings, she looks at the number and explains that it is someone who has been trying to speak with her since morning 'I have just kept saying five minutes, five more minutes. She turns back to resume her conversation with me. 'I was talking with someone the other day about pilots, high stress conditions and catastrophic outcomes, and how some people just make cognitive space to learn from the decisions you make at the time. You feel like you are functioning on adrenaline all the time. It is quite a reactive environment'. I sense her stress and tell her that we should stop so that she can resume. Efficiently we close the discussion. She seems so calm; I think as I cross the road to leave the hospital.

As Gardiner (2018) , thinking with Arendt to consider ethical responsibility says, focus on everyday life reminds us that responsibility is far more complex than most discussions of responsible leadership suggest and there is a messy entanglement of everyday existence (Gardiner, 2018a, p. 32). In an exploration of the conditions of possibility of responsible leaders, Zueva-Owens (2019) augments the conversation about responsible relational leadership. Using philosophical perspectives derived from the ethics of Derrida and Levinas, she defines responsible relational leadership as aporia, or conundrum. The conclusion drawn by Zueva-Owens is that there is irresolvable tension between responsibility and the relational in leadership, but she also identifies ways through which leadership actors can strive for responsibility through purposefully engaging with the tension. Through seeking out liminal situations beyond the aporia, allows an imagination of things different to the current situation. In addition, liminality can be a way to act according to the aporia of responsible leadership precisely because it does not involve a complete break with established social systems, but only the stepping onto the margin or the space ‘in between’. (Zueva-Owens, 2019, p. 626).

Barad (2012) adds to this point in discussing the materialisation of relations saying that, the ‘im/possibilities of response are not only conditioned by specific practices for materialization of time but also of space entangled and that the queering of responsibility marks a disruption of the usual framings of ethics that take human exceptionalism to be the unquestioned bedrock of analysis...Responsibility therefore is not a calculation to be performed...it is an iterative (re) opening up to, an enabling responsiveness (Barad, 2012, p. 81). The enabling and imagination of responsiveness.

Question: What are the relationships between the material and discursive dimensions of power relations?

Our last meeting together is in the early afternoon. In a generic meeting room and not her office. I wait but this is what I have come to anticipate and to understand. I ask her how she has been, how much time we have. She is still, and competently contained. Small talk, above the line, about her work. I am interested in our difference. Where I might have said, ‘I have been thinking about what we were talking about when we last met’, she waits for me to ask a question. We find a way to discussing power.

‘The person in the most senior role is perceived to hold power. That could be right or wrong because there are people who sit below, who can be powerful’. I sit forward. ‘They are influential through respect or, intimidation’. ‘Power can be a good thing or not so. I am uncomfortable with the word power, dictatorial or self-serving or it could be about bringing people along’. May be this is ‘transformational influence’.

In a paper offering insight into person centred clinical leadership in nursing (sans followership) Cardiff, McCormack and McCance (2018) join the calling for greater relationship oriented leadership in nursing (Cardiff, McCormack, & McCance, 2018). Beckett (2013) refers to the give and take of the workplace as ‘complex manifestation of emergence’, that is neither predictable nor reducible yet ontologically distinct. It is a form of what Barad (2003) and Shotter (2013) call an ‘intra-action,’ in which the conversation is not between separate, self-contained entities but as a dynamic emerging relation shaped by the parties in response to each other and to their surroundings. In this nonetheless uneven and unstable way, practices can be transformed and remade (Nicolini, 2012). The nurse’s discomfort with power, ‘Power can be a good thing or not so. I am uncomfortable with the word power, dictatorial or self-serving or it could be about bringing people along’. This fragment belies the issue that nursing is said to be have been characterized by a culture of compliance, subordination, commitment and adherence to hierarchy with an organisational model ostensibly derived from a male military model (including rank, uniforms and command structures as Hutchinson, Vickers, Jackson and Wilkes (2010) discuss in a mapping of workplace bullying (Hutchinson, Vickers, Jackson, & Wilkes, 2010, p 27). A complex manifestation of emergence.

In a study of two merging healthcare organisations, Ford and Harding (2004) found that the participants in their lifeworld theory of the place in which they work there is no organization – there are instead people from another place who may or may not interfere with or facilitate their work...that are places and spaces inscribed upon , collapsed into, defined by and constitutive of psyches and bodies (Ford & Harding, 2004b). The person who is in the most senior position is perceived to hold the power speaks to an alternate interpretation of dynamic emergence to one that is perhaps prevalent in leadership and followership in nursing and more aligned to Ford and Harding’s original expectation of ‘a dualistic organization in which agentive employees made, or refused to make, the structure of the organization’ (Ford &

This is interesting. She continues; ‘Sometimes a decision has to be made, the commander has to exercise the power, it might be a time critical thing’, if you were in battle and you said to the troops we have to do this, and they said no, well the whole thing would fall apart, you rely on the team’. Authority. ‘It is ethical agreement, following. Fundamentally if it was against my principles I wouldn’t follow, it’s hard when someone is charismatic, but there are cases when people have good morals and find themselves in situations, they never thought they would be in’. ‘You have to be strong to go your own way. You might say well this is not right I don’t believe; I think it comes down to people. You can be persuaded to change of course, but if you have a fundamental belief’. ‘There is you know, a herd mentality, it depends on how strong you are’. Values and beliefs and a contest of strength I wonder?

Harding, 2004a). These are moves beyond leadership considering complex relations that shape emergent processes of organizing and change. It is a move away from ideas of individual agency and control.

Question: How are we to make sense of the nature of power dynamics? Of materiality?

The middle manager is noticeably absent in the existing literature and what is there is often contradictory, in a study that questions ‘Who is the Middle Manager?’ (Harding, Lee, & Ford, 2014). What these authors reveal is *‘understanding both of control and resistance and middle managerial identity is the understanding that managerial identity work involves movement between subject positions in which they are subjects not only of control and resistance, but simultaneously become agents of control, subjects of control, objects of resistance and resisters to those very controls’*. Looking upwards to senior managers and downwards to junior staff, constitutes organizational hierarchy (Harding, Lee, & Ford, 2014b, p. 1232). This can be thought of in terms of a performative constitution. The use of the words ‘create an environment’ provides an insight into how discursive practice matters (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). This might be included in ideas of how a leadership role produces what it ‘should’

Question: In what sense are social relations produced and what does this entail?

The rhetoric surfaces, ‘creating an environment of trust, respectfully allowing people to say what they need to say’ and I think, I have experienced both this and seen also seething silent dissent that looks like a respectful covenant until other private spaces are created and entered and the atmosphere fans flames of discord. Decisions creating dissonance, discussions that aim to dissuade. ‘Knowing the history and how a decision has been made, and then a different direction is taken to where it was going, to what I have been working on for a long time. I am not the final decision maker, my line manager is, and well it is in his court, so he has made the decision’. I hear the uncertainty and the compromise. To keep the harmony.

Maintaining harmony, respecting both the decision and the outcome of the decision. ‘I can usually predict the outcome, and when there is a human factor at the end it is a struggle, I let it be known that on principle, I disagree’. The human factor is often about patients and their families. She tells me about a couple of scenarios, theatre cancellations and admissions in the case of trauma. The everyday work. ‘Those human factors are significant to me’. Keeping the patient safe, negotiating, skill mix, keeping emotions out of the decisions. ‘How do you make sure the staff feel valued and cared for in all of this?’ I ask. ‘That is a hard one, the staff will say that no one listens to them. They do not see the bigger picture, you must take the emotion out of it, make it managerial. You take the decision making to the next level so that the pressure on them is relieved. Processes so it is not ambiguous’. It is equivocal. ‘Some need to permission to do anything, some have to have limitations, but they need to be able to make mistakes. They must step up to make decisions for themselves. To learn.’

Responsibility is not a calculation to be performed. It is a relation always already integral to the world's ongoing intra-active becoming and not becoming. It is an iterative (re) opening up to, an enabling responsiveness. Not through the realization of some existing possibility, but through the iterative reworking of im/possibility, an ongoing rupturing, a cross cutting of topological reconfiguring of the space of response-ability (Barad, 2010a, p. 266).

As Barad (2010) intimates in this quotation, there is something essential in considering social relationships using an agential realist approach that involves an unsettling of identity and dualisms as well as interior and exterior binaries that constitute subjugated questions of difference.

THREE

To address the past (and future), to speak with ghosts, is not to entertain or reconstruct some narrative of the way it was, but to respond, to be responsible, to take responsibility for that which we inherit (from the past and the future), for the entangled relationalities of inheritance that 'we' are, to acknowledge and be responsive to the noncontemporaneity of the present, to put oneself at risk, to risk oneself (which is never one or self), to open oneself up to indeterminacy in moving towards what is to-come (Barad, 2010a, p. 264).

Responsibility, the ability to respond to the other. A collage. An assemblage. A knock on the door, this room is booked for another meeting.

It is early in the day, and I have been given four, half hour slots for our meetings. Diarised, noted. I appreciate the time. I am early. My status is indisputable. I am greeted and shown in, welcomed. Once in the threshold of her office, her greeting is candid and sincere. A corner office, a view. I am the most forthright with her. Authority and, not warmth, but professional conviviality. I feel that she appreciates my effort to do research, as a nurse. She is the most senior, and, very senior. An executive in the truest sense of director, decision maker, superintendent. She asks for a plan of our meetings. I tell her, that I want to hear what she does each day. 'That is a good question', she replies.

Without hesitation she tells me that she decided 'to go into management rather than taking a clinical path early on. Otherwise it limits your opportunities'. Leadership in nursing is where she settled.

Question: What are the relationships between the material and discursive dimensions of power relations?

Barad indicates (2007) that an individual body's '*differential materialization is discursive – entailing causal practices reconfiguring boundaries and properties that matter to its very existence*' (Barad, 2007, p. 370). Importantly, this is a view of power relations in which the world is viewed in terms of material-discursive phenomena rather than separated objects and subjects with independent existence. In viewing the world in this way, it is possible to appreciate that specific entanglements, such as leadership and followership, are specific iterations of material- discursive practices.

Question: What is the nature of the processes that 'shape' these relations?

Ford, Harding, Gilmore & Richardson (2017) discuss how sentient and non-sentient actors intra-act and performatively constitute leadership through complex entanglements that enact and circulate organizational and leadership norms. In effect, the nurse works consequently on their own appearance to present an image of leadership through an intra-active process of micro-dynamics in which the leader is materialized through practices of working on a corporeal self for presentation to both self and others. Endogenous theory challenging exogenous theory of leadership (Ford et al., 2017). The 'things that are collected like a magpie' become the non-sentient matters that can be understood as having agency influencing the materialization of the leader through what might be causally productive forces of knowing and being (Barad, 2007).

She tells me that she enjoys this role the most, having worked through general manager roles. Operational. Building decision making confidence. 'More luck than anything', she says, right person at the right time. Opportunities have presented themselves. 'Luck' she repeats. 'You need a willingness to step back rather than always going forward'. Thinking about what those opportunities, and she means the back steps, represent. Beginnings and not ends. I feel that this might be a practised speech for those seeking career advice. 'You must have a desire to do leadership', she counsels. Practised.

Experienced. Assured. What 'gets her out of bed in the morning' is her 'knowledge that she can and does make a difference, a stabling force for the profession'. The answers are authoritative, proficient. Tempered with, 'you are not indispensable, well there is bit of that, inherently so, but decisions will be made that you have influenced even if you are not here physically'. Certain. Qualified. 'Anyone can be given a budget and make decision about how to spend it. When you do not have a budget that drives decision making, you have to use influence'. Authority. 'I like to come to work to see how that influence plays out'. So, I think, influence as both a noun and a verb, and then she says; 'to see people grow'. There it is again, oblique, and complex.

She tells me about a particularly important role model to her. A wonderful man. Influential. 'I never thought the types of women in nursing that rule with an iron fist bring about real change'. She describes some mentors and I have met these people, figuratively, too. Presence and fairness.

Question: How are we to make sense of the nature of power dynamics? Of materiality?

People have always paid attention to the ethics of leaders because, like it or not, leadership matters since it has the potential to greatly benefit or harm the well-being of people (Ciulla, Knights, Mabey, & Tomkins, 2018b, p. 1). The processes and relationships in leadership and followership in nursing are implied. Working with the philosophy of Arendt, challenging the idea of leadership as hierarchy and mastery and argues that every- one has a moral obligation to be actively engaged in the world. For Arendt, ethics is entwined in our relationship with the world, which unfolds in lived experience, shared obligation, and political commitment. Our lives flourish, she argues, when people think independently and courageously for themselves, and come together to discover common cause and collective strength (Gardiner, 2018a). Ciulla, Knights, Mabey and Tomkins (2018) point out that in the relationship between philosophy and leadership studies, discourses of masculinity are embedded and, homosocial (Ciulla et al., 2018b). The humanist and the post humanist are juxtaposed here but, in a way, complementary from the perspective of women thinkers, reminding that agential realism is not to be valorised, but rather is a tool to synthesis (Hollin, Forsyth, Giraud, & Potts, 2017). Barad's notion of ethics is drawn from the infinite entanglements of inhuman virtual uncertainty attending to more than human bonds of the inhuman as an aspect of human life itself with, situated moments illuminating entanglements that are dynamic and undecidable (Dale & Latham, 2014). Awareness of that intra-activity, the capacity to affect and be affected, lies at the heart of Barad's ethics that is emergent in the intra-active encounters in which knowing, being and doing (epistemology, ontology, and ethics) are inextricably entangled (Barad, 2007). The ethical

Authoritarian and clever. Conservative and yet, influential. Examples to learn from. Not only nurses, but medical men too, surgeons, medical administrators in the operative sense. Magpie like, picking up polished things to emulate, such as, how to manage situations. As well as people and situations to match and follow, 'thoughtful risk taking'. 'I make mistakes of course, everybody does, but you can't do what you want to do without taking a risk. I do like to take a risk if there is an opportunity for a good outcome', she confides. 'On the balance of success and non-success, there has been more success'. She maintains steady eye contact as she genially says this. Unambiguously. The results and the extent that 'others think it is the right thing'. Infers dialogue, interchange.

Human outcomes are the measure. 'Outcomes for patients are a measure of success. Dissatisfied staff are measure of the decisions you make'. 'Financial success is one thing but just as important are the success of people that you are asking to do something, or, who are depending on you', she says firmly. 'If you can influence people to understand that the decision you are making is the right decision. That is an achievement, if you succeed in achieving what you set out to achieve'. Opposition requires consideration if it is indeed the right decision. Sometimes it is. 'That is much harder work'. An exception

question of accountability must therefore shift and transform also and this as an ongoing practice of openness is inherent in this illuminating piece described by Barad.

[Justice entails] the ongoing practice of being open and alive to each meeting, each intra- action, so that we might use our ability to respond, our responsibility, to help awaken, to breathe life into ever new possibilities for living justly. The world and its possibilities for becoming are remade in each meeting. How then shall we understand our role in helping constitute who and what come to matter? (Barad, 2007, p. x).

An awareness alluded to in the awareness of the nurse ‘that is not leadership, that is just using power over people just because you are the person in charge. I wouldn’t want that style, of...management’. The question; ‘*How then shall we understand our role in helping constitute who and what come to matter?*’ is a question that is immanent in the nurse’s emphasis on the re-making we engage in, in each encounter (Davies, 2018b, p. 120).

Question: In what sense are social relations produced and what does this entail?

rather than the rule. What kind of leadership do people prefer? I ask. ‘Interesting question’, she pauses, briefly. ‘The origins of nursing were in the military theatre, with Florence Nightingale. Anybody can stand up with a rank in front of subordinates, and turn around, and say this is what you will do, and everybody goes off and does it. Perhaps not happy, perhaps not even thinking about it, or thinking if that is what we have been told to do well and, do it’. Not thinking, just following, just doing. ‘It’s different now, you can’t get away with that, and neither you should. That is not leadership, that is just using power over people just because you are the person in charge. I wouldn’t want that style, of...management’. There it is a hint of classification. Ordering. Leadership and management.

Then, in the next sentence she pronounces, ‘I think people want strong leadership. An advocate for them and their patients. Someone who is willing to go in, to bat for resources, well informed about what people need.’ This thread continues, with a concern about patient care, poor patient care and strategies to amend. ‘I have been on a quest’. Meetings. Saturation with information. Everybody feels informed, and everyone feels that they are part of the decision making. A variation on this theme. However, here is a point of difference, ‘making sure that people have an opportunity to express their support or, their lack of it’. Empowerment. The hierarchy again, or an acknowledgement of the order; in roles, in information sharing, in authority. ‘They are the decision makers not me. I influence them to make the right decisions. You do decide, I think, as the conversation moves on.

Strong leadership, ‘commitment, not being wishy washy but, you can change your mind in the face of new evidence. That’s a good thing shows that you are not set in your ways and you are prepared to look at things differently’. Sounds like person centred practice, good nursing practice. ‘I think it takes a good strong leader to admit that the path needs to change and that thinking needs to change. Shows courage to admit that the first direction, with more evidence, more investigation is not right and come up with a different course.’ Strong, committed, supportive.

There is an array of literature suggesting both the philosophical interest in ethical responsibility in leadership followership (Ciulla, Knights, Mabey, & Tomkins, 2018a). Initial proponents, Thomas Maak and Nicola Pless, define responsible leadership as ‘*a relational and ethical phenomenon, which occurs in social processes of interaction with those who affect or are affected by leadership and have a stake in the purpose and vision of the leadership relationship.*’ (Pless & Maak, 2011, p. 4). Maak (2016) articulates the development of the concept of responsible leadership, reiterating a link to new paradigms of leadership that are relational and inherently social. This ethical responsibility is congruent with Follett’s concept of integration. Follett goes further to say this development is ‘*the chief function of business: to give an opportunity for individual development through the better organization of human relationships*’ (Follett, 1940, p. 141). This emphasis on individual development successively enhances the ability of people to contribute meaningfully to the process of integration and their desire to participate in organisational decision-making. Follett’s (1919) essay “Community is a Process” attests these ideas. This relational thinking distinctly shaped her thinking about organizations, as Follett notes when she writes that ‘my key word of organization is relatedness’ (Follett, 1941, p. 258). Follett’s message is that within every total, evolving situation of interpenetrating circular responses there are many powerful factors operating to erode established interests, positions, and prejudices; to effect changes in the direction of wishes; and to make possible the unifying of previously separated elements into new and integrated wholes (Fox, 1968, p. 524). Follett argues that there are three aspects of process— interacting, emerging, and unifying suggesting the importance of activity, as do more recent scholars of relational approaches to leadership (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012). Gardiner (2018) writes that while Arendt admired certain leaders, ‘*she expressed her disdain for the heroic leader, because it introduces hierarchy into human relationships*’ (Gardiner, 2018a, p. 37). Responsibility in leadership is a concept that continues to be a work in progress. Additionally, responsibility has a material dimension that emerges in connections and as such is already intrinsic to the world’s intra-active becoming as an iterative (re) opening to and enabling responsiveness.

‘The relationship is key, so they are willing to come and talk. I can support it if I know about it. I will support them if it is the sound and right thing to do’. You decide. Relationships and values. ‘Integrity is the most important value. You must be able to sleep at night. Cutting people off at the knees, thinking that is the best way to get an outcome for the organisation. No integrity in that. It is important that people see that. Being honest and upfront even if they do not agree with you, they will trust you. That’s what it is about’. Trust, honesty, integrity.

Ciulla (2005) asserts that leaders must be both ethical and effective. She argues that leaders need to promote eudaimonia or human flourishing and well-being through ethical intentions, processes, and outcomes (Ciulla, 2005). This is an essentialising of agency within an individual and has been challenged. Liu (2017) summarises this challenge in terms of leadership agency also appearing to be a relational process suggesting that decolonised ways of viewing ethical leadership processes might be understood as occurring in the space between people, embedded in context and exercised via a collective political project towards the goals of equality, justice and emancipation (Liu, 2017, p. 359). The nurse both implies and contends these ideas in her description of strong leadership.

Question: In what sense are social relations produced and what does this entail?

Gardiner (2018) asserts that considering responsibility through an Arendtian lens offers insights that deepen our understanding of the interconnections among leadership, responsibility, and ethical action. Furthermore, solipsism a theory holding that the self can know nothing but its own revisions and that the self is the only existent thing, illuminates what Arendt regards as a paradox, which is that in thinking and acting we exist in two different realms. When we act, we exist in a plural realm where we are subjects and objects, doers, and spectators (Gardiner, 2018a, p. 32). Arendt emphasizes collective responsibility to care for the world. Gardiner (2018), thinking about the complementarity of the work Arendt and Levinas proposes a review interconnection among ethics, responsibility, and leadership (Gardiner, 2018a). Despite divergence with the post-humanist philosophy of Barad, Arendt reminds us that our collective task is to care for the world before ourselves. Yet, arguably, we are living at a time of mastership, as many leaders place self-interest before the well-being of others (Gardiner, 2018a). Barad (2014) observes, '*The self in positioning itself against the other, constituting each other as negatives, lack, foreignness, sets up an imponderable barrier between self and other in an attempt to establish and maintain its hegemony*' (Barad, 2014a, p. 170). Differences are within, performed in through intra-activity, in the making of diversity within the phenomenon that is composed in entanglement.

Again, there is something striking in her next words; 'It is not about your leadership as an individual. It is about your leadership of other people, knowing about trust, respect, honesty. The fact that you put time and effort in to working with people for people who can see that what you are doing is inherently right. They will want to follow'. Justice, entangled. Trustworthiness. Leadership of other people, how can that be unravelled, disentangled?

Question: How are we to make sense of the nature of power dynamics? Of materiality?

Discussing organizational phenomena broadly, Tourish (2019) suggests that leadership, can be viewed ‘as (re)created through interacting agents embedded in sociomaterial practices, whose actions are mediated by institutional, linguistic, and objectual artefacts’. Leaders do not act on relatively inert organizational structures to produce compliance. Rather, they react to the acts of others, who in turn react to the ongoing reactions of those who hold formal leadership positions in an indefinite communication process that has a mutually constitutive effect (Tourish, 2019c, p. 230). Furthermore, there is a tendency to perceive leadership and followership as dichotomous classifications in conjunction with other dualisms; good and bad, passive, and strong, masculine, and feminine (Collinson, 2014). While ‘classic leaders’ are described by the nurse in terms of the ability to ‘influence people to make the decisions they

‘There is someone senior to me. An exceptionally talented leader, it would not matter what she said I would trust what she said was for a good reason and therefore I would follow. You follow because you want to not because you have to.’ She equivocates, fleetingly, and continues. ‘It may not be a career defining moment if I turned around and said, “no I am not doing that” though, her trust of me is such that if I said” I don’t think that is right” she would stop and listen and suggest more discussion and work through some of her reasoning in a way that influences me’. I hear a shadow of surrender, but perhaps it is just respect and collaboration, a step sequence, choreographed. So, she continues, ‘it is influence for the followers and then for the followers it is about being influenced by the leader’. It is more nuanced than that I think but, the pull of causality, of binaries in healthcare is strong. The supremacy of science. The enlightenment.

Illuminating this point further, discussing senior staff she says, ‘if I think this is the way forward, and they disagree, I can be influenced by their compelling arguments. Not every decision is the right one. It is a temptation to make an ill-informed decision. Good leaders don’t do that’ she concludes definitely. Then, magnanimously, ‘my role is to develop others, in part because of my influence of them’. She is a commanding figure, as she speaks. Conviction and clarity. ‘If you think about classic leaders, leadership is an art, there are no good or bad leaders. Just leaders. Leaders, she says who influence people to make the decisions they need to. ‘I don’t give them skills but, I do give them opportunities to develop those skills’. Prompting, influencing, persuading. The binary is apparent again. Among her staff, she says are leaders, emerging leaders and then the managers. Privilege. Indulgence. Impact.

The influence on followers is what ‘sets a leader and manager apart’, she explains. The separation is here again. The word influence chosen over; effect, impact, inspire, impel, coerce, control, power. She declares something interesting; that she works with the managers to give them insight into the impact their decisions will have on followers. ‘Those with true leadership capability just need reinforcement that they are doing the right thing. They have the right values’. The right values. Correct, approved. Then, ‘anybody can manage a clinical situation or team. Managers fade eventually, because leaders need followers and managers don’t have followers’. So, are allies, admirers, aficionados the definitive players in nursing leadership? Do managers not have devotees, believers? ‘No’, she says again conclusively, ‘managers tell people what to do, and they do it because of rank. They have recruits who say yes and no at the right time, that’s not leadership’. The right path, that is the fundamental difference’. Determined.

need to. ‘I don’t give them skills but, I do give them opportunities to develop those skills’ it is also recognized that organizations and leadership are fragmented by paradoxes, contradictions, tension and differentiated interests between human and material actors (Ford et al., 2017; K. Smith, Erez, Jarvenpaa, Lewis, & Tracey, 2017; Ropo et al., 2013). A shift from the ongoing influence of overly heroic models of leadership that impede greater understanding of the complexity of emergent leadership in organisations is indicated (Tourish, 2019b). Barad (2007) might add to this encouraging a move to, as she writes,

theorize the social and the natural together To write matter and meaning into separate categories, to analyze them relative to separate disciplinary technologies, and to divide complex phenomena into one balkanized enclave or the other is to elide certain crucial aspects by design. On the other hand, considering them together, does not mean forcing them together collapsing important differences between them, or treating them in the same way, rather it means allowing the integral aspects to emerge. (Barad, 2007, p. 25).

The words of Anzaldúa (2015) supplement this; she writes that ‘*who and what we are depends on those surrounding us, a mix of our interactions with our alrededores/environments, with new and old narratives*’. Identity is multilayered, stretching in all directions, from past to present, vertically and horizontally, chronologically, and spatially (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 69). The performative force of the global ‘leadership development industry’ to turn managers into leaders however sees people preferring to call themselves leaders rather than managers (O’Reilly & Reed, 2011).

Question: What are the relationships between the material and discursive dimensions of power relations?

She is sure, it is irrefutable, I see. To finalise our conversation, ‘followers follow because they want to, conscripts to managers follow because they have to’. The certainty, again. Is it so unambiguous, and I wonder about the ‘right path’? Who knows the veracity of the path? Is it an epitome or, an antithesis of the entangled phenomenon of leadership followership? She tells me about the complex issues facing her today. I wonder if the ‘right path’ is encoded, embodied as she faces her assignments for today. ‘You just think, oh well, that is the day and we best work through it as best we can’. Is the determination, the surety only a case of muddling through?

The strong identity of the nurse as leader rather than manager is interpreted surrounded by a relentlessly complex viewpoint, leadership cannot be viewed as the resolution of critique or its abolition since critique is embedded in the act of decision. To decide means to choose and at least implicitly communicate to others that something else has not been decided. The quest for discursive closure is inherently self-defeating. The more closure is pursued, the more an implicit oppositional stance by some actors is likely to become explicit (Tourish, 2019a, p. 232). Shifting states are not a state of being but a dynamic through what has been constitutively excluded re-turns.

Question: In what sense are social relations produced and what does this entail?

If the fluid processes of intra-action in an entangled state, then the nature of the material and discursive is always already materially produced and the past is always open, as is the future. The bodies, the words, the mutual production of subjectivities and performative enactments. Viewed as an intra action, a process, a team is a possibility, and As such it can be partial, fragile,

Another day. I wait to be ‘let in’. I feel like I am being permitted to enter the inner sanctum. I wonder how clinical nurses feel when they come to the ‘executive suite’. If they indeed do. I wonder if the liberal offer of time is because I am outsider. An offer of coffee. A proper takeaway coffee made by a barista in the hospital café. ‘What would you like?’ she asks. Generosity, hospitality, the authority to offer largesse. I feel thankful for her time. I state my preference to her personal assistant, with thanks, and we settle into her office, set up to receive guests, to meet, to talk.

We begin to discuss the people she has transactions with each day. We deliberate on how she connects with different people over the course of each day, expansive in her role.’ It would be easy to think of it as an organisational chart. I would be somewhere in the middle. Let us think of it as more circular. It is more about influence than direct reporting’. She includes patients in the ripples she is describing. Those who report to her directly though, are in the currents of influence as she is describing it. Waves. Folds.

‘How do you negotiate these relationships’. I ask. ‘Is it constant’? Every day, *all* the time she says with emphasis. Repetition, intercession. ‘You need to be careful in a position of influence to keep people believing in your effort to manage. A relationship role, not even a professional role to include others’. She dissects her role further, leading, following, collaborating are distinct groupings. Then in saying this, the interplay is revealed, learning from this group to lead this group, who can be influenced and who needs more effort. Moving up and down. Snakes and ladders.

‘They are interesting, complex relationships’ but, she qualifies, ‘hospitals are built on hierarchies. It’s not about controlling, but it is about inviting people into discussions for a purpose’. Is it about respect, or trust, or confidence? Or is it about fear. ‘It is interesting that the way we allocate resources, allocation, nurses to patients, forcing them to work in isolation. They do not all have the skill, or the courage to ask for help. Teams are needed but they do not know how to work in teams. Teams are dependent on leadership.’ She tells me a story of a patient that died. Meeting the family in their home. Trying to bring the focus back to the patient. Needing to work as a team, not sequestered. Relying on each other when tested. ‘There needs to be good leadership, confidence and trust.’ I think back to her earlier edict about there, ‘not being good or bad leadership’, just leadership.

shifting, inconsistent – or tightly integrated and stable. ‘Stability’ can be a possible accomplishment – a temporary result of shared sense-making and converging actions, rather than a fixed state or a definitive outcome (Einola & Alvesson, 2019, p. 1895). Time cannot be fixed. The past is never closed.

Life is a never-ending back and forth and Einola and Alvesson (2019) conclude that a fluid process view of teaming moves beyond functions and stages and requires a more nuanced understanding of situational sensemaking focus. This newer articulation of the making and unmaking of teams is informed by and a process view and, in parallel organizational becoming discussed by Tsoukas and Chia (2002) (Einola & Alvesson, 2019; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). These ways of understanding the always already materially produced are resonant with Barad (2007) and intra-action and Follett’s concept of integration discussed earlier. The re-turn of the diffraction pattern does not signal a going back and every gesture, every word holds past, present and future.

Question: How are we to make sense of the nature of power dynamics? Of materiality?

As process and the result of a process synchronously diffraction patterns render how leadership and followership both became as well as what it is. Collinson (2006) questioned follower identities using a post structuralist analysis concluding that dualistic thinking raises fundamental questions about leadership theory and practice (Collinson, 2006). As discussed earlier and included again for emphasis, Gardiner and Fulfer (2017) work with the thinking of Arendt to point to ways in which family as an organizational principle privileges a narrow conception of family that obscures gender, racial, sexual, and class-based inequities in a project that contributes to the feminist scholarship on diversity and organizational inequities (Gardiner & Fulfer, 2017b). Family values such as trust and honesty potentially effect inequities in leadership and followership however these usually positive values can reveal paternalism and hierarchy (Hopfl, 2003).

The next time we meet she presents me with an academic paper on followership, found in a journal. Perhaps I would be interested in it? I am fascinated that she has been so interested in our conversations. We talk about her recent conversation about following and how it relates to changing cultures that support bullying and harassment. I think of the focus on the patient that we talked of previously. I ask how she would tell a new person about how to pull a team together, to ‘follow their leadership’.

Ford and Harding (2018) highlight that, leadership theory is so divorced from practice, that is, from material encounters between people in workplaces, that it cannot advise leaders on how to govern followers. All it does is provide empty promises about the leader's ability to fill up the follower with their own charisma, authenticity, goodness, or abilities (Ford & Harding, 2018, p. 21). Diffraction and an ethico-onto-epistemology offers ethical, ontological and epistemological possibilities to move beyond persistent binary logic of difference inherent in Western philosophy.

Question: What is the nature of the processes that 'shape' these relations?

Process is grounded in the work of philosopher Whitehead and infers a world continuously becoming, shaped by developing processes. Process as the ontology of the team, viewed as something that arises from material encounters between people in workplaces as a doing and a matter of intra-action based on and further encouraging subtle and shifting experiences and meanings and the always already materially produced (Einola & Alvesson, 2019). Process in this sense elicits dynamic practices, responses and entanglements that form a routine or organisation of social phenomena such as leadership followership.

Question: In what sense are social relations produced and what does this entail?

'Building on successes,' she volunteers. 'Show them you can make a difference, and if they stick with you, things will happen, and then building on the quick wins to be more sustainable'. Possibility. 'Popularity and being liked are not leadership but doing the right thing is'. I guess it is a workable formula, not entirely original, but a workable platitude. 'Like a mother looking after her children'. Maternal, matriarchal. Reinforcing the gendered nature of the profession, I wonder. 'You have to be objective despite the criticism of you sometimes'. 'I don't paint a picture that is all sweetness and light. I was once told, a while ago now that I am a control freak, well, I learned a lot from that. You must get over it. You have to let yourself let go of some of things that go really wrong'.

From the formulaic she scales back to telling a courageous narrative about a group of nurses who allowed themselves to be compromised by others with power. 'I use those stories, to get people to sit up and think, what if that was me?'. Influence. Persuasion. 'Followers following incorrect practices, it required strong leadership. Tenacity, knowing the outcome and not wavering.' She pats the table with an outstretched palm. For emphasis. 'Leadership is not always about a good outcome, but the right outcome'. Command. 'Not everyone can become a leader, it takes credibility. Convincing people it is not about you but for an outcome.' I wonder about this as she says it. The contradiction resurfaces. Isn't the conformist measure of the individual leader, institutional, organisational, the outcomes they achieve? I keep listening, trying to sift and filter the aphorism from the authentic. Are they the same? This; 'equity is not based on numbers rather than on patient acuity' then, 'following principles doesn't have to be regimented. People might do things differently, but they are doing what you want them to. As long as they look consistent'. Uniform, dependable. Standard.

Our last arranged meeting starts with the same cordiality, curiosity, and a cooperative greeting. She has the capability of eliciting feelings of merit, of unhurried attention. 'There has been a shift in the

The creation of imprecise polarity through an isolation of concepts and relationships negate the fluid and inherently entangled character of social phenomena. Some scholars understand leadership development to mainly concern identity work especially in relation to gender (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011). Identity work has been a central aspect of leadership development and research in which participants are ‘forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening, or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness’ (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003) Indeed, in a recent scoping review of leadership development in undergraduate nursing programs, a conclusion was drawn that, ‘*Role modelling can be an effective way to support learning about leadership in the clinical environment, a finding supported by this review*’ (Scammell et al., 2020, p. 783). While nursing claims a part in the vast extant literature on leadership, a recent systematic review endorses relational practice in leadership as being advantageous for health care organisations while acknowledging that there is more to be known (Cummings et al., 2018). This relentlessly positive requirement reflects a broader trend in leadership scholarship which Collinson (2012) has labelled ‘Prozac leadership’.

Sinclair (2009) determines that We need to attend to seductive patterns — our own and others — in ways that foreground their consequences for gender and power relations, for learning and

way leaders attract followers in nursing, a while ago it was about respect and clinical credibility and age. Seniority. If a younger person were promoted the swell of how many people had been climbed over would reverberate. Raw talent was not as recognised, and rather it was matter of the general acknowledgment that people had been pushed aside’. This is a substantial start today. ‘It is a still a little bit about respect. It is more though about being fair and equitable, sound decision making, trust in the decisions and the path. People will challenge now. They will defy. You cannot just expect others to follow because of your position. It takes a lot more time and effort and patience. Respect? Communication, conflict resolution, constantly. People were never a problem, they just did it if you were the leader. They would not question. They did what you wanted’. This is perhaps unrefined and genuine.

‘You have to be able to compromise, you try to be idealistic and you suffer, you suffer because you can’t achieve it, and followers suffer because your expectations are too high. It is a different landscape now.’ This feels like an opening into a different perspective. ‘In the past you didn’t go to leadership classes because it was about inherent personality and the relationships you had. Now you can be taught a skill set. It is learned’.

‘The skills involve time and effort and patience. In the past you could just make the decision’. Tenacity. Big picture or trustworthiness to convince why you cannot share. ‘There are politics in all of the decisions we make.’ ‘It doesn’t matter if you think it is the right decision, they want to know more. They will not follow’. Relationships, ‘it is a very distrusting world in terms of followership, it will come if they trust you.’ ‘They need to know that you are investing in their best interests with your decisions.’ Doing the right thing.

for leadership. There is a need to provide an analysis that reveals how these seductive dynamics may entrench or help to challenge existing power and gender regimes in pedagogy; how they may perpetuate, or overturn received notions of heroic leadership (Sinclair, 2009, p. 281). The dynamics of intra-action and the material and the discursive. One line of research understands leadership development and the associated identity work to be an organizationally controlled site (Gagnon & Collinson, 2014). Meier and Carroll (2019) suggest that leaders are not born or made but made up and the making up of leadership, the performativity of classifications of leadership and how they mutual are made needs further exploration (Ladkin, 2010; Meier & Carroll, 2019; Ropo et al., 2013). People entangled with the materiality of organizations need to become skilled at interactions that claim, contest and co-create authority in their own and others' identity work. Difference assumed inherently through binary thinking has been knotted into systems of power.

Question: What is the nature of the processes that 'shape' these relations?

Disruption of binaries is a way to resolve difference differently. Thorne (2018) implores vigilance to the breakdown of nursing systems in an appeal to a collective voice across the career trajectory and, '*workplace leadership systems must ensure a nursing angle of vision on mentorship, structures and processes is accessible to each member of the profession*' (Thorne, 2018, p. 3). In addition, 'the interprofessional practice train' has been derailed (Freshwater, Cahill, & Essen, 2014). This, says Thorne (2018) has led to tolerating a dominant corporatized model of care delivery that in many institutions means that nursing- specific leadership systems have become politically incorrect or structurally improbable when a subset of the nursing leadership that would historically have been relied upon, by virtue of its experience and positional authority, to voice the profession's concerns in the public arena has been silenced

'Relationships, in nursing form differently now. The individual rejects the collective effort, it is the I not the we. The value of supporting your colleagues is a lot harder now than it used to be.' We are nearly finished. I need to know specifically about values. Are values the defining essence? Of leadership? How do values work? She deftly articulates the corporate tenets, the organisational values. 'The one that is missing is accountability. It is a big issue. All care and no responsibility. Care goes without saying in healthcare.' I wonder; is that accurate? 'Excellence is so nebulous,' she continues, 'integrity, is essential, it allows me to sleep at night'. She describes her understanding of the tenuous liminality of personal and organisational values in a complex workplace that is culturally disparate on many levels. 'Values work for the collective, it changes with the individual'.

(Thorne, 2018, p. 2). This seems relevant in what has been and for the most part is a gendered profession.

Follett (1924) argues that leadership integration is contingent on a continual review of the total situation in all its complexity and fluidity. This leads to paradoxical notions of the subordinate role of the leader in organisational processes and the pre-eminence of leadership as an activity that concerns all actors regardless of their place within a hierarchy. Her focus on the process of leadership rather than an individual on the ascendancy is prescient to Thorne's appeal outlines above. The danger Follet relates to power (and the notion of the 'strong leader') as she articulates in this quote noting that the paradoxical assumption that 'power over' equates to 'good' leadership. .

These psychologists were making tests, they said, for aggressiveness, assuming that aggressiveness and leadership are synonymous, assuming that you cannot be a good leader unless you are aggressive, masterful, dominating. But I think, not only that these characteristics are not the qualities essential to leadership, but, on the contrary, that they often militate directly against leadership.

(Follett, 1949, p. 48)

When leadership is assumed to be always positive and is generally treated as a stable fixed essence or quality there is a tendency to reductionism and limited understanding of the always already emergent phenomena is missed. Gardiner (2016), thinking with Arendt adds, '*By considering how authenticity emerges within a historical context, we obtain insight into underlying gender prejudice about women's public role in society, which has implications for thinking about current ideas regarding gender, authenticity, and leadership*' (Gardiner, 2016b, p. 634).

To find the right entry point into such a short intervention is not easy. There seem to be too many ways to engage the discussion. Given the considerable complexity of the issues at

As we conclude, I feel that a layer has been peeled back. She tells me she has been thinking a lot about leadership after our conversations. A layer revealing real observations and experiences has been peeled back, pared away. 'The power is not exclusively held by the leader anymore. Leading is now about turning that power into something positive and that is not a natural flow'. 'Is nursing care in the relationships shared power?'. I thank her. Sincerely. I leave her office. I am mentally working through what we have shared as I walk.

stake, the aim to produce an encounter that matters between the philosophical quest for process, becoming and the quantum universe of ethico-onto-epistemology confirms a task. That is not at all simple. I started 'in the middle' by opting for a line of thought that has so far provided some of the arguments to rethink the nature of 'what is' as dis/continuous becoming (Barad, 2010b). Again, Follett is influential in her prescient thinking about power in social relations as indicated in this sample of her thinking and writing.

What is the central problem of social relations? It is the question of power; this is the problem of industry, of politics, of inter-national affairs. But our task is not to learn where to place power; it is how to develop power. (...) Genuine power can only be grown, it will slip from every arbitrary hand that grasps it; for genuine power is not coercive control but coactive control. Coercive power is the curse of the universe, coactive power, the enrichment, and advancement of every human soul. (Follett, 1924, p. pxii-xiii)

Nurses moving through the environment, the encounters the processes, the models, the patients, and families the shared stories, the profession. Through this movement and inactivity and convergence are entangled. Nursing and leadership and followership are inferences. Merged. Bodies and places, nurses, nursing, leadership, and followership in movement. Through processes of entanglement, nurses attend to their everyday work as a set of tasks, responsibilities; like meeting, talking, meeting standards, providing care, implementing policies, meeting expectations. In describing material feminisms, Aranda, a nurse researcher offers the following as a call to consider the material to political challenge dominant biomedical, normative understandings of experience.

At a minimum, the turn to matter evident in material feminisms is a serious call for an attentiveness and respect towards matter together with meaning. However, I contend such understandings offer potential to further revise the limits of modern political theories and activism through interrogating taken-for-granted core assumptions and concepts governing the normative concerns and matters of health, care or inequalities. These theories theoretically and methodologically revitalize investigations of these concerns, revealing more complete accounts of how assemblages of bodies, technologies, things and

spaces relate, attach, or come together to produce the phenomena we label or categorize as health, care or inequalities. Exploring matter and meaning as co-implicated serves to politically challenge dominant biomedical, authorial, normative understandings of experience and positivistic, outcome-based evidence. These theories reinforce the value of fine-grained, complex, detailed narratives and empirical accounts and the importance of more comprehensive, effective and inclusive explanations and understandings as the grounds for activism. To undertake, such work is political in reimagining possibilities for more ethical, affirming and sustainable responses to the enduring global challenges of our shared world (Aranda, 2019, p. 9).

There is an ironic generalised specificity in each historical moment, in the ordering of bodies and spaces. In hierarchies and narratives, in containments and exclusions. Structures endure and persist in organising our lives. Institutions persist and hold on through the citation of rules, and the performance of practices. Materialised across time. Citing past events in every moment institutions exist in shuddering, flickering repetitive performances. The world is of course more chaotic and conditional. Possibility is prospective. Sinclair (2013) contemplates how hybrid modes of writing may invite a more material and reading experience and through experimenting with different ways of writing about leadership to convey important but usually obscured aspects of leadership (Gherardi, 2018; Sinclair, 2013). Mazzei (2020) provides an illuminating clarification If we are bound by method, then our practices of inquiry are similarly constrained, yielding a reproduction of that which we already know because it is that which is reinscribed within the major language of traditional qualitative practices. It is this that a thinking with postqualitative methodology affords. Not a repetition of what is known, but rupture and provocation—a thinking at the limit.

Tourish, (2019) urges that attention be paid to what Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) describe as ‘the small and even mundane acts whereby leaders perform leadership and seek legitimacy, such as merely listening and chatting to others’(Tourish, 2019a, p. 233). Foregrounding power, control, dissent, and resistance through a diffractive reading of small acts with process theories such as integration and also, agential realism to produce a reading of relational intra- actions manifest in the material discursive doings to produce difference and complexity. This foregrounding is greater than most current theorizing on leadership in nursing and leadership

and followership in nursing has acknowledged. As Sehgal (2014) posits from a diffractive reading of Whitehead Haraway and Barad ‘*The efficacy of propositions, the way they matter, is thus a suggestive one: they elicit interest, divert attention and propose a way something is considered and what is likewise eliminated. In this way they account for difference, divergence and novelty in the various processes of intra-action*’ (Sehgal, 2014, p. 196). In the next section propositions of leadership and followership in nursing are speculated.

ENDING

There is an important sense in which practices of knowing cannot be fully claimed as human practices, not simply because we use nonhuman elements in our practices but because knowing is a matter of part of the world making itself intelligible to another part. Practices of knowing and being are not isolatable, but rather they are mutually implicated. We do not obtain knowledge by standing outside of the world; we know because “we” are of the world (Barad, 2003a, p. 829).

Section Five

This section is an exemplar of some of the theorists and their concepts that were read and written diffractively with data. Drawn together are some concepts that synthesise process philosophy in diffracted ways. These concepts have been threaded through three impressionist stories written with the data together with observations and questions that emerged before, during and after the inquiry. Some of these concepts have been drawn on at several touchpoints throughout the thesis. This section is presented after the analysis of the impressionist stories to signal that the theory is not always prior to the analytic process and are entangled in the becoming.

A summary of the nexus between philosophy and the study of leadership (and followership) will complete this chapter (Emerson et al., 2011; Gullion, 2018; Ladkin, 2020).

Data and theory and method in the threshold never stand alone, isolated and elevated; rather, they keep things on the move, keep things becoming. The threshold of theory reminds us that there is radical possibility in the unfinalized
(Jackson & Mazzei, 2013, p. 270).

To introduce the ‘data as narratives’ and the method of analysis used in this inquiry this section briefly reviews the analytic for qualitative inquiry, described as thinking with theory (Jackson & Mazzei, 2011; Jackson & Mazzei, 2013, 2017). Re drawing the outline of thinking with theory will summarise and make connections with key concepts including but not exclusively; Alfred North Whitehead and process philosophy and narrative; Hannah Arendt and narrative, process philosophy, thinking and responsibility in leadership; Mary Parker Follett and process philosophy and the notion of integration in leadership and followership; Karen Barad, process philosophy and intra-action and the responsibility of agential realism. A connection will then be drawn with process philosophy in nursing and, leadership and followership in nursing informed by the work of Bender and Holmes (Bender & Holmes, 2019b).

An agential realist approach drawing on the work of Barad (2007) and has been used to explore the entangled nature of leadership followership in nursing to “imagine and accomplish an inquiry that might produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently” (Barad, 2007; Lather & St. Pierre, 2013a, p. 635). Narratives, in this inquiry written as impressionist stories are used as valuable heuristic forms that can set in motion multiple social and material

forms that cooperate, come into conflict, and overlap, without claiming an ultimate cause. This diffracted inquiry produces a mapping of interference as a different way of knowing and illuminating differences that matter for people entangled in leadership and followership practice in the profession of nursing (Barad, 2014c).

Diffractive approaches in inquiry encourages a performative understanding of different knowledge making practices. There is an element of materiality in knowledge making practices, including knowing, thinking, measuring, theorising, observing (Gullion, 2018). Diffractive reading and thinking are not about uncovering pre-existing facts about independently existing things. Rather, it is a way of learning about phenomena, or configurations of development. Performing diffraction in this thesis involves reading and writing text through each other, or, thinking with theory and using writing as an approach to analysis (Jackson & Mazzei, 2011; Jackson & Mazzei, 2013, 2017; Jackson, 2013; St. Pierre, 2016; Ulmer, 2018).

Thinking with theory *'relies on a willingness to borrow and reconfigure concepts, invent approaches, and create new assemblages that demonstrate a range of analytic practices of thought, creativity and intervention'* (Jackson & Mazzei, 2017, p. 717). The thinking with theory analytic is *'like Whitehead's process philosophy, the reality is the process and constituted by its becoming, and so is both its own generative movement as well as its own effect'* (Jackson & Mazzei, 2017, p. 719). Importantly, thinking with theory, as a process methodology *'stays on the move rather than being another way of doing something after data collection and so thinking with theory can be considered to have already happened and is happening in each "now" of a philosophically informed inquiry'* (St Pierre, 2011 in Jackson & Mazzei, 2018, p.719). Other approaches to qualitative analysis seek to answer question rather than to pose problems that might seek newness as in *'thinking with theory that uses concepts to show how they work, what they do, what they allow and what they unsettle'* (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018, p. 733). Thinking with theory is not a stage in a process but rather, is the process itself (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018). That is how thinking with theory has been manifest in this inquiry.

Jackson and Mazzei (2013) discuss their work with theory while putting to uses concepts they picked up from Deleuze whereby data and theory are folded into one another whereby this process results in a *"new inside of this outside"* (Deleuze, 1986/1988, p. 97 in Jackson & Mazzei, 2013, p. 266). Deleuze are *'put to use'* by many authors in the *'post'* styles of inquiry and while not explicitly discussed in this thesis, as Gale and Wyatt (2017) note, *'We thought*

we would leave the final word with him too, our always-already-present third, fourth, fifth. Except that we won't, because to "quote" him is to do disservice to him. He is already present in our words, in these bodies writing, in these material spaces, in the morning light that catches the edge of a kitchen table, as we grasp for what might be possible, what might be opened up, what might become-other, for where working at the wonder might take us' (Gale & Wyatt, 2017, p. 362).

Thinking with theory and the writing as post qualitative inquiry in this thesis has been informed by the work of Jackson and Mazzei and their concept of thinking with theory in addition to St Pierre and her 'writing as a method of inquiry' to 'follow the provocations that come from everywhere in the inquiry that is living and writing'(Brown, McKesson, Robinson, & Jackson, 2020; Honan & Bright, 2016; Jackson & Mazzei, 2011; Jackson & Mazzei, 2013; Jackson, 2013, 2017; Mazzei, 2017, 2014; Mazzei & Jackson, 2012; St. Pierre, 2019; St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014; St. Pierre, 2018).

ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD AND PROCESS PHILOSOPHY AND NARRATIVE

Jackson and Mazzei write that '*Whitehead avoided an emphasis on problem solving, driven in response to a particular line of questioning; instead, he advocated problem posing as a way of opening up thought'* (Stengers 2011 in Jackson & Mazzei, 2017 p.732). Furthermore, Tambouku (2016) discusses the processual nature of narrative and in doing so draws on the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead whose philosophy of organism has offered insights in how we can interrogate long-held presumptions about the world and our modes of thinking about it, beyond a range of dualisms, such as objects/subjects, facts/values, individual/society, reason/experience and agency/structure that are still prevalent in social theory in general and narrative understanding in particular (Tamboukou, 2016a, p. 152). Problem posing, thinking with process philosophy and the processual style of inquiry aligns in this thesis.

HANNAH ARENDT AND NARRATIVE, PROCESS PHILOSOPHY, THINKING AND RESPONSIBILITY IN LEADERSHIP.

Hannah Arendt is included peripherally in the process of thinking with theory and writing as analysis in this inquiry. To this end, a deep scholarly prospecting of Arendt's primary sources has been succeeded with a more 'external' use of translations. Reading with, Arendt, Gardiner (2011) considers the new management discourse of authentic leadership is deeply problematic because it fails to consider how social and historical circumstances affect a person's ability to be a leader. Gardiner reads with Arendt to demonstrate Failures in addressing issues of privilege that rest on the Enlightenment notion of an all-knowing subject that serves to privilege self-knowledge at the expense of relationality (Gardiner, 2011, p. 99). Gardiner's (2011) analysis drawn with Arendt's concept of uniqueness bends towards a more material discursive perspective if notions of privilege is a materiality that are entangled with a discourse of authenticity and integrity, rather than a compendium of individual character traits, as authentic leadership theorists suggest, a person's sense of self is influenced deeply by a myriad of circumstances outside of our control (Gardiner, 2011, p. 102). In addition, Disch (1994) describes Arendt's use of historical 'storytelling' as a form of critical thinking, which neither makes claim to a privileged vantage point of truth, nor discusses history in terms of inevitability (Disch, 1994 in Fry, 2009). Arendt's work is threaded through with central themes of understanding and action and a recurring strand of her work is that wherever humans act, they start processes.

Gardiner (2018) suggests that reading '*Arendt's insights in concert with a more critical view of authentic leadership may open different avenues of thought regarding connections among gender, authenticity, and leadership*' (Gardiner, 2018, p. 363). Gardiner (2018) also writes with Arendt to 'deepen our understanding of the interconnections among leadership, responsibility, and ethical action. Turning to Arendt Gardiner says, can, therefore, increase our grasp of the complexities of leading responsibly', imploring us the think about theoretical assumptions and the interconnections among leadership, responsibility and ethical action' (Gardiner, 2018a, p. 31; Gardiner, 2020).

Barad (2010) also discusses ethics and responsibility but as 'an integral part of the diffraction patterns of worlding' and 'Responsibility is not an obligation that the subject chooses but rather an incarnate relation that precedes the intentionality of consciousness.

Responsibility is not a calculation to be performed. It is a relation always already integral to the world's ongoing intra-active becoming and not-becoming. It is an iterative (re)opening to, an enabling of responsiveness. Not through the realisation of some existing possibility, but through the iterative reworking of im/possibility, an ongoing rupturing, a cross-cutting of topological reconfiguring of the space of responsibility' (Barad, 2010b, p. 265). Although ontologically divergent from Barad's concept of agential realism and diffractive approaches to inquiry Arendt and Gardiner's analysis has been used together with Barad in this thesis to open thinking about leadership and followership in nursing responsibly.

MARY PARKER FOLLETT AND PROCESS PHILOSOPHY AND THE NOTION OF INTEGRATION IN LEADERSHIP AND FOLLOWERSHIP

"unceasing reciprocal adjustment brings out and gives form to truth" Mary Parker Follett, The New State, p. 212

Integration is a central philosophical concept in the work of Mary Parker Follett. For Follett, integration is an ontological principle—it describes the nature of being and it offers a method for growth. Integration is also the foundation of her political theory which is based in community groups. As Follett says, '*it takes time and education and training to develop (power-with); it cannot be got by revolution, it involves a process and a slow process*' (Mary Parker Follett, 1924, p. 188). Follett's theory of integration is based on her understanding of the person as continuous with community. In a pragmatist reading of Follett's integrative process, Whipps (2014) writes that for Follett, "things are in constant relation to each other, acting on and being acted on at the same time" (Banerjee, 2008, p. 4 in Whipps, 2014). Both Follett and Whitehead described the inherent relatedness of co-creation in a manner that does not deny individuality.

For Follett, the ontological principle is that individuals are always in society and engaged in the ongoing process of co-creation—the making of the self-in-and-through-others (Mary Parker Follett, 1998, p. 8). In Follett's ongoing process neither can be disaggregated from the other. This relatedness, however, does not connote sameness or agreement. Indeed, it is through relatedness that difference becomes evident (Stout & Staton, 2011a). Stout and Staton (2011) continue their discussion concluding that, while both Follett and Whitehead celebrate

difference, both also note the importance of unifying or harmonizing difference. Without harmony, progress and enjoyment cannot be attained. Differences, then, must be harmonized in the process of becoming and the social processes of living. Both also see this harmonizing process as producing something beyond a mere sum of the parts. Therefore, both the individual and the group progress in ways that can only be created together (Stout & Staton, 2011a). This sits with Barad's concepts of agential realism and intra-action.

KAREN BARAD, PROCESS PHILOSOPHY AND INTRA-ACTION AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF AGENTIAL REALISM.

In an exploration of agential realism and narrative inquiry Rosiek and Snyder (2018) stated that: Narratives are often used to represent the temporal unfolding of events on the assumption that narratives are more accurate portrayals of chronological chains of events. If time, however, is not understood as linear, but instead as the contingent product of spatial and material relations, then offering chronological narratives can become self-deceived naturalizations of a unified linear temporality. Stories can, in other words, become ways to convince ourselves that things are simpler than they are (Rosiek & Snyder, 2018, p. 3).

Agential realism implies that stories play a part in constituting the relation between the past, present, and future, and that the possible futures play a part in constituting our narratives about the past. Consequently, these ontologies require that our modes of storying reflect a more complex understanding of time, history, and futurity than simply capturing contextual influences more accurately. Rosiek and Snyder (2018) write that it would be premature to specify exactly what agentially realist practices of narrative research might look like. Ideals of "authentic" representation that inform a great deal of contemporary narrative research practice is contested (Rosiek & Snyder, 2018).

Diffraction patterns are, in Karen Barad's words, *patterns of difference that make a difference*. Such diffractive patterns not classificatory, but rather performative. In addition, the concepts of Whitehead are speculative because they are pragmatic; they acquire meaning by the way they generate 'consequential meanings', not by a supposed capacity to mirror reality. Actual entities are constituted by mutual intra-actions that Whitehead calls 'prehensions'. Informed by Barad, each actual entity constitutes itself through a 'cut' (Barad), a 'decision'

(Whitehead), incorporating and eliminating what matters into its very constitution. What is experienced are – in the vocabulary of Process and Reality—societies, associations of actual entities forming a pattern, or in Barad’s terms ‘phenomena’: ‘intra-acting “agencies”’, or, ‘ontological entanglements’ (Barad, 2007 in Sehgal, 2014). Intra-action understands agency not as an inherent property of an individual or human to be exercised, but as a dynamism of forces (Barad, 2007, p. 141) in which all defined “things” are constantly changing, exchanging, and diffracting, blending, mutating, influencing, and working inseparably (Hickey-Moody, 2018). Barad (1999) writes that,

The dichotomized positions of realism and social constructivism—which presume a subject/object dichotomy—can acknowledge the situated/constructed character of only one of the poles of the dualism at a time. Realists do not deny that subjects are materially situated; constructivists insist upon the socially or discursively constructed character of objects. Neither recognizes their mutually constitutive “intra-action.” (Barad, 1999, p. 2).

The thinking of Barad that ‘recognizes mutually constitutive intra-action’ is entangled with the impressionist stories to come.

PROCESS PHILOSOPHY IN NURSING

The recognition of ‘mutually constitutive intra-action’, integration and process philosophy are ideas to think within the illumination of leadership and followership in nursing. There is an enduring debate in nursing regarding the art–science dualism, involving an articulation of two distinct ‘kinds’ of disciplinary knowledge: objective/scientific and subjective/artistic. Nursing identifies both as necessary, yet unbridgeable, which creates problems in constructing a coherent disciplinary knowledge base. Bender and Holmes (2019) describe how this problem arises based on an ontological assumption of two different kinds of ‘stuff’ in the world: that with essential determinate properties and that without essential properties. These authors experiment with a solution by ontologically understanding the world as made from a single kind: That the most irreducible element of the world is process, in that reality is a continuous construction whereby subject and object are products, not independent constituents, of reality.

Process philosophy overcomes nursing's ontological bifurcation and enables nursing's art–science dualism to be re- conceptualized as a cohesive logic of skilled reality production and it is this thinking that is synthesised with an onto-epistemological framework for inquiry (Bender & Holmes, 2019).

THE IMPRESSIONIST STORIES

Arrangement, Buchanan argues may be a more apposite translation providing that there is clarity about the process implied in the original work of Deleuze and Guattari that informs many of the thinkers that inform this thesis, predominantly, St Pierre and Jackson and Mazzei. The theoretical concepts of ongoing process rather than a static situation are woven through. Buchanan advances his own understanding of the term ‘assemblage’ as being more consistent with ‘arrangement’ and uses the notion of the musical arrangement as an explanation. Arrangement defined in this way relates to a reconceptualization of a previously comprised work as an adaptation for a performer or performance, always in process (Buchanan, 2015, p. 383; Jackson & Mazzei, 2011).

In practice, assemblage or, arrangement is a productive intersection of some form of content such as actions, bodies and/or things, and some form of expression such as affect, words, and/or ideas. Arrangements are vital and volatile. Forms, or arrangements of elements can include all shapes and configurations, ordering principles, all pattern of repetition, and those of difference. The worlds we inhabit might appear be predictable, but they also might be rich in micro dramas that play out moment to moment in the work or processes of constituting the self if looked at through a diffracted analytic (Lenz Taguchi, 2012). These processes can be traced in writing as inquiry.

As the stories, or, arrangements, are written and read and re-read there is transformation (St. Pierre, 2015). Different arrangements can collide with surprising effect. Leadership and followership are a dynamic, relational, processual arrangement. The impressionist stories here are not generalised accounts that present the experiences of all nurses in roles that describe leadership and management in nursing. The impressionist stories were constituted and emerged from the data – ‘an assemblage isn’t a thing—it is the process of making and unmaking the thing’. The ‘thing’ presented in contrast to being represented is leadership followership practice

in nursing. Data are produced, but the inquirer is part of the assemblage of the inquiry (Gullion, 2018).

The true method of discovery is like the flight of an aeroplane. It starts from the ground of particular observation; it makes a flight in the thin air of imaginative generalisation; and it again lands for renewed observation rented acute by rational interpretation. The reason for the success of this method of imaginative rationalization is that, when the method of difference fails, factors, which are constantly present may yet be observed under the influence of imaginative thought. (Whitehead, 1985 [1929], p. 5).

PART III – EMERGING

C o d a

Impressionist Stories of leadership followership nursing relationality movement encounter and withdrawal

This section is the coda of this inquiry. Firstly, there will be an overview of the approach and style of the inquiry. Secondly, a series of propositions will be offered as a materialization of agential realism and the inquiry. Finally, a demarcated statement of ‘thinking in the threshold’ is offered as a marker of withdrawal from this inquiry.

An encounter with this inquiry illuminates a style of inquiry and ethnographic writing to ‘produce different knowledge and to produce knowledge differently’ (Lather, 2013). It is acknowledged that categories and labels are revered in a research endeavour such as writing a thesis and the entanglement of the ‘posts’ wonders about the privilege of knowing over being, however, ‘tradition is always brought into the new’ (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013b). Nevertheless, Gherardi’s (2019) introduction of a new label, ‘affective ethnography’, a style of performative ethnography that in the moment theoretically holds the movement and an epistemology of being with, being in between, and becoming with encountered in this inquiry.

What is distinctive of a post-qualitative movement is the aspiration to performative methodologies that produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently. They give to ethnography the quality of a continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies, and emergences in which researchers are immersed and entangled with other humans, more-than-humans, texts, discourses, knowledges, and various other materialities. Therefore, ethnographic practice can be seen as an agencement of all those elements that collectively acquire agency in their becoming and intra-acting. Affective ethnography troubles also the categories through which order is produced in ethnographic practice: what counts as ‘data’, who is the subject and who is the object, what is a body? Whose body? The boundaries are imploded when we look at data on the move/data that move. This means the end of ethnography as pure presence, in favor of an epistemology of ‘being with’, ‘being in-between’, and ‘becoming-with’, leaving behind any pretension

to a fixed truth, authority, or legitimacy. Any ethnographic account could have been otherwise and combining a variety of perspectives on the same event makes it possible to write and to read a text in which one event is always more than one (Gherardi, 2019a, p. 13).

Gherardi claims ‘affective ethnography’ as a style of inquiry as distinct to a method of research and, to experiment in writing as thinking, for example writing impressionist tales invites the reader ‘performative interpretations that transforms the things that they interpret. The reader is offered thoughts in the moment to shift the attention from judgement of rigor and value of one form of work through the lens of another (Cunliffe, 2010). The impressionist tales in this thesis are resonant accounts of everyday life, tales in which the inquirer is embedded.

Gullion (2018) assuming an ontological turn, styles ethnography as ‘diffractive’ and suggests an approach or style of ethnography that (Gullion, 2018) proposes when she says, ‘rather than asking what a thing means, there is a challenge to ask how the ‘thingness’ of something works’ or how to think differently about it. This notion of ‘thingness’ of how leadership and followership in nursing works has influenced this inquiry and the quest to expand how we think about the world emerges. From this approach arises the overarching question; How do we come to know each other when our own being is uncertain and developmental?

In using a style of ethnography for inquiry, despite the intra-action with diffraction there might be three recognizable pillars- embodiment and embodied knowing, affective placeness and the power of affect in *agencement*. Taken together, the style of ethnographic process that brings together the bodily capacity of the inquirer/s to affect and be affected and to focus on the intra-action between the production of ‘data’ by the inquirer and how ‘data’ produce the inquirer as a ‘thicker moment of spacetime-mattering’ (Barad, 2014d; Gherardi, 2019b).

St Pierre (2014) declares, ‘For me, writing is the affirmative and experimental space-time of the unthought, the to-come I believe in’ (St Pierre, 2014 p. 378). It is in this spirit that writing and thinking as practices of knowing and being in this inquiry are not detachable, but rather they are mutually implicated about nurses in clinical leadership roles in a metropolitan health service, ‘immersed and entangled with other humans, more-than-humans, texts, discourses, knowledges, and various other materialities as a collective acquisition of agency in their becoming and intra-acting’ (Gherardi, 2019a; Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre, 2015). St Pierre

writes that “the setting-to-work of writing that forced the rupture and demanded that I move on. When writing the next word and the next sentence and then the next is more than one can manage; when one must bring to bear on writing, in writing, what one has read and lived, that is thinking that cannot be taught (St. Pierre, 2011, p. 621). For St Pierre thinking is analysis. In refusing any ontological distinction between matter and thought, Whitehead troubles the very idea that thinking and doing refer to different realities. The process of thinking is never merely reflective: ‘A thought is a tremendous mode of excitement. Like a stone thrown into a pond it disturbs the whole surface of our being’ (Whitehead, 1938, p. 50 in Sehgal, 2014). Writing has been a mode of thinking and analysis used by this inquirer.

Tourish (2019) reproves obscure theorizing in the study of management and by extension organizations – and this might be further extended to include leadership and followership in nursing. This sentiment resonates in the words of Van Maanen (1995) writing about ethnography ‘I am appalled at much of organization theory for its technocratic unimagination. Our generalizations often display a mind-numbing banality and an inexplicable readiness to reduce the field to a set of unexamined, turgid, hypothetical thrusts designed to render organizations systematic and organization theory safe for science’ (Van Maanen, 1995, p. 139) Tourish declares ‘Yet organizations are teeming with as much life as any rural field or hedgerow. They have tribes and micro-tribes, outbreaks of insanity, struggles for existence, mass extinctions and the flourishing of new forms of organizational life. They are full of love and hatred, optimism, and despair, and all the emotions in between these extremes (Tourish, 2019b, p. 108). Conceivably, as with previous debates concerning the threat or value of postmodern or poststructural thinking to feminist or modern social theory goals and aspirations posthumanism and material feminisms may be similarly envisioned not as a post era, beyond modern theory, but as an ongoing critical dialogue with humanism. This in turn may radically revise but retain humanism's key concepts or priorities such as emancipation, agency, or progressive change (Aranda, 2019, p. 9; Carroll, Firth, & Wilson, 2019). To find something different requires different styles of thinking and different styles of inquiry.

The propositions emergent from this inquiry with conceptual movements derived from Barad’s entangled physics with philosophy. Davies (2018) summarizes these concepts in a paper considering the ethics of new materialism:

- giving up on the seduction of representationalism (with its triadic static difference between the one represented, the representor, and the verbal representation itself).
- abandoning the illusion of the autonomous self-governing reflexively aware researcher and opening our analyses to the diffractive forces through which the doing of life takes place, that is, moving from words and things to doings.
- recognizing that epistemology is always ontological, and that words are not the only medium we can work with.
- recognizing our own and others' constitutive enactments of boundaries and of exteriorities and interiorities as involving us, always, in asking in what ways the world in its doing is being made to matter.
- recognizing matter as an active participant in the world's becoming (Barad, 2008, p. 122).
- recognizing that not only matter, but also assemblages have agency (Bennett, 2010); and
- attuning to the emergent nature of life in its becoming (Davies, 2018b, p. 126).

Ladkin (2020) says that rethinking leadership that can only be known in fleeting ephemeral moments is enabled by looking to philosophy and the power of good questions to expand well work territories to reveal new possibilities for thought and action (Ladkin, 2020, p. 177). Thinking with theory (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012), writing as thinking (St.Pierre, 2011; Richardson & Pierre, 2005; St. Pierre, 2018) acclaim the wide ranging concepts that are helpful in diffracting analysis from Butler, Derrida to Deleuze and Guattari. In this inquiry I=insights associated with more dynamic relational notions of power with and power to, which goes back to both (Follett, 1924) in management and Hannah Arendt (1970) in political philosophy. From Follett's perspective, power is always relational and an entangled 'power with' in 'circular response' between activities, actors, and environments (Follett, 1924, p. 72). This concept of 'power with' is also linked with Hannah Arendt (Arendt, 1970). For Barad, agential realism supports an understanding of the material and discursive relations of power. Follett 'sits as a pragmatist between the monism of new materialism and posthumanism of Barad and the pluralism of Arendt. A touchstone read diffractively with these thinkers is Whitehead and his

process philosophy (Stengers, 2011; Sehgal, 2014; Stout & Staton, 2011; Murriss & Bozalek, 2019; Langley & Tsoukas, 2016; Nicholls et al., 2019; Tamboukou, 2016; Tamboukou, 2015).

For Whitehead, what exists is not pre-existing; it is not what is already out there waiting to be discovered, but the process that creates the reality of the world. Whitehead puts it this way: *'process is a fundamental fact in our experience. We are in the present; the present is always shifting; it is derived from the past; it is shaping the future; it is passing into the future. This is process, and in the universe, it is an inexorable fact'* (Whitehead, 1938, p. 73 in Bender & Holmes, 2019, p. 4). Being with, being in between, and becoming with may not be 'safe science' but it may get amongst to illuminate how materialities like tribes, love, and despair, flourishing and newfound forms of organization might work.

Situating thought within a tumultuous world of nonhuman relations, Whitehead's philosophy reminds us, albeit politely, that the act of thinking is never without consequence (Roberts, 2014, p. 981). Agential realism as a conjecture of Barad underlines the necessity of an ethic of knowing and our constructed knowledge has real material consequences as part of the relationalities of which we are part (Barad, 2007). Gardiner (2018) contends that in considering responsibility Arendt's perspective offers insights that deepen our understanding of the interconnections among leadership, responsibility, and ethical action (Gardiner, 2018, p. 31).

An inquirer produces and is produced by texts in the form of data, theory, and analysis that act with a material force. The inquirer then is not the sole author of such material texts, nor are they the sole authors of the inquirer (St Pierre, 2017). Rethinking practices of knowing and being known (Mazzei, 2013, p. 784). This is as much an exploration of an experimental approach as it is the doing of something different, and the assumptions that ground this inquiry. It may be different from what others are familiar with (St Pierre, 2011). Nurses like other groups, need deeper forms of engagement with the organizations that we study, and we need to draw upon multiple sources of data and modes of writing to do so (Tourish, 2019).

Material enactments bursting with life, or "material-discursive agency", boundaries and properties of elements come into being, subjects and objects are delineated, and relations are constituted that produce force. In doing so, it recognizes how crucial agency is when it is vested in non-leaders, acknowledges the productive potential of dissent, and sees leadership and followership as co-constructed phenomenon embedded in fluid social structures that we have

barely begun to understand (Tourish, 2014). Nothing is determined in advance of its own emergence. For consideration is the ethical importance of embodied sensibilities that recognize the value of orientations or viewpoints towards matter in transforming the ethics of organizational encounters. Therefore, undetermined profound future possibilities are available at every encounter (Fenwick and Edwards, 2013).

This inquiry offers these possibilities as propositional *relationality movement and encounter*: propositions – different knowledge made differently.

One: understanding more about leadership and followership in nursing needs to consider relations identifying enactment in creating worlds where a difference might be made

Two: understanding the complexity entangled with leadership and followership in nursing is the ethical and responsible action of all nurses to continue to learn

Three: understanding that the material and discursive world that is ready made already makes ‘control’ extraordinary

Four: understanding that sociomaterial, feminist approaches offer useful theoretical and methodological sensibilities and questions to further understand the process of leadership and followership in nursing

To reiterate from an earlier section- Leadership and followership in nursing is something that is always going on. The movement and the intra actions continue, enfolding agency, significance, and ongoing transformative power in the world (Alaimo & Hekman, 2008). Emergent in a relational field. The received perspective is that the concept of leader leadership follower followership must first be identified to be understood. Knowing in being, or ethico-onto-epistemology as Barad describes it rather suggests that leadership and followership can only exist when it has been lived. The separation of leadership followership can only be identified through movement, as well as encounter and withdrawal.

It is also through these interwoven and asymmetrical processes that leadership dynamics are typically enacted, often justified, sometimes resisted, and occasionally transformed. Questions of situated power, asymmetry, and paradox as fundamental to the construct of leadership even when these are distributed or more democratically established. This endogenous theory challenges the terms of exogenous theories and suggests the need for further studies of how leaders articulate and understand leadership in the everyday of organizational

life (Ford, Harding & Gilmore, 2017, p. 1568). Jackson and Mazzei (2012) inform that the threshold is a way of situating a process of putting ‘data’ and theory to work and collapse the divisions and definitions of theory and data (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 137). The propositions here are offered as materialist mappings of situated, embedded, and embodied positions after Jackson and Mazzei evoking Braidotti (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; Braidotti, 2002).

It might be expected of an inquiry into leadership and followership in nursing to offer some recommendations for leadership and followership ‘training’. As Ford and Harding (2018) outline, ‘The leadership industry is vast and global, and its powers are limited to persuading managers to call themselves leaders, while those who should be their followers are unexplored, unknown and untheorised. They get on with their working lives while their managers busy themselves with the impossible task of becoming the authentic, charismatic, servant who does not serve, and leader who does not lead. So even as we are critical of leadership theory’s lack of understanding of the complexities of the human subject, we cannot argue that it needs to replace its simplistic presumptions of followers – it is best to leave well alone. Rather, it is the leadership industry’s continuing effects on managers that need our attention.’ (Ford & Harding, 2018, p. 21). Gardiner (2020) adds to this perspective reading with Arendt to say that responsibility is not centred on the self/other relationship, but on a deeper, more human, responsiveness to diverse others. For such responsiveness we need to develop a more relational way of responding to others that is not only accountable but ethical (Gardiner, 2020, p. 118). This humanist responsibility can be expanded by also thinking with Barad.

What often appears as separate entities (and separate sets of concerns) with sharp edges does not actually entail a relation of absolute exteriority at all. Like the diffraction patterns illuminating the indefinite nature of boundaries – displaying shadows in ‘light’ regions and bright spots in ‘dark’ regions – the relation of the social and the scientific is a relation of ‘exteriority within’. This is not a static relationality but a doing – the enactment of boundaries – that always entails constitutive exclusions and therefore requisite questions of accountability... I offer an elaboration of performativity – a materialist, naturalist, and posthumanist elaboration – that allows matter its due as an active participant in the world’s becoming, in its ongoing ‘intra-activity’. (Barad, 2008, p. 122). (Alaimo and Hekman)

The literature asserts that the influence of nursing leadership and, the quality of the nurse – patient relationship are vital factors impacting on how nurses deliver the fundamentals of care and how that care is perceived by the recipient (Conroy, 2018). The dynamism of the relationship between the leader and the follower that enables person-centredness on an everyday basis (Lynch et al. 2017) and leadership and followership identities are at the heart of leadership dynamics (Epitropaki et al 2017). As Bender & Holmes (2019) write; *‘the most irreducible element of the world is process, in that reality is a continuous construction whereby subject and object are products, not independent constituents, of reality’* (Bender & Holmes, 2019a, p. 1).

Nursing is a relations sensing performance that continuously brings the interrelationship of nursing, person, environment, health into being through which the enactment of skilled nursing practice emerges...Put quite simply, nurses create worlds where they can make a difference—where they can make things better. Nurses may not often achieve that goal, and the question of “better for whom” is pertinent, but the process itself brings about situations where what is important at any moment in time—to the nurse, the patient, the family member, the interprofessional clinical team, the community, the policy arena—is made visible, and thereby actionable (Bender, 2018b, p. 7)

This inquiry has illuminated that understanding more about leadership and followership in nursing also needs to consider relations sensing performance in creating worlds where a difference might be made. To understand the complexity entangled with leadership and followership in nursing it is the ethical and responsible action of all nurses to continue to learn and understand that the material and discursive world that is ready made already makes ‘control’ extraordinary. Sociomaterial, feminist approaches offer useful theoretical and methodological sensibilities and questions to further understand the process of leadership and followership in nursing. Bender (2018) also suggests that perhaps as nurses we need ‘a re-conceptualized metaparadigm that articulates nursing's ontology. *‘What exists for the nursing discipline are not already-demarcated metaparadigm domains, but rather interdependent, dynamic relations that constitute people, including nurses, in their health/environment circumstances, which comprises nursing’s unique, fundamental point of access in the world.’* (Bender, 2018b, p. 1). From the entanglement of an onto-epistemology of nursing further

questions arise; How are nurses mutually implicated in unethical practices; what are practices of knowing and being in leadership and followership in nursing and what is the material effect whether we choose to engage them or ignore them? What are the persistent effects and embodied practices that maintain harms of others in leadership and followership in nursing? How can nurses learn to see what is being made to matter in the agential realism of actions? Being, *'open and alive to each meeting, each intra-action, so that we might use our ability to respond, our responsibility, to help awaken, to breathe life into ever new possibilities for living justly'* (Barad, 2007, p. x). Curiosity, and wondering, and being willing to see and step through material and discursive liminal spaces in nursing leadership and followership to create worlds that enact positive health trajectories that make a difference is, actionable.

POSTSCRIPT

Inquiry begins in curiosity. We do not obtain knowledge by standing outside of the world; we know because “we” are of the world (Barad, 2003, p 829).

[Justice entails] the ongoing practice of being open and alive to each meeting, each intra-action, so that we might use our ability to respond, our responsibility, to help awaken, to breathe life into ever new possibilities for living justly. The world and its possibilities for becoming are remade in each meeting. How then shall we understand our role in helping constitute who and what come to matter? (Barad, 2007, p.x)

To address the past (and future), to speak with ghosts, is not to entertain or reconstruct some narrative of the way it was, but to respond, to be responsible, to take responsibility for that which we inherit (from the past and the future), for the entangled relationalities of inheritance that “we” are, to acknowledge and be responsive to the noncontemporaneity of the present, to put oneself at risk, to risk oneself (which is never one or self), to open oneself up to indeterminacy in moving towards what is to-come. (Barad, 2014, p. 182).

There are constraints of an agential inquiry that is captured in a document such as a thesis for examination. These constraints are the boundaries and challenges that in a way hold captive the full illumination of the dynamic becoming of leadership followership using this methodology. This type of inquiry happens in the middle of things, in the threshold, as theoretical concepts and data constitute one another in an analytic practice of thinking with theory (Mazzei, 2020). Making visible the actions for an examinable thesis in nursing still indicates ‘thinking with’. Jackson and Mazzei (2012, 2017) describe process methodology as happening in the middle of things, in the threshold, as theoretical concepts and data constitute one another in our analytic practice of thinking with theory. Sections Three and Four are an account of decisions made and as such are commensurate with this description that is a positioning of writing that happens ‘in the middle of things. Section Four is an attempt to show a postqualitative engagement that might enable the acknowledgment of the tinkering, the chopping, the mangling, and the ongoing (re)production as part of the inquiry. As such, this written piece could be understood as an ongoing exercise in the performance of a postqualitative methodology in its becoming (Bodén & Gunnarsson, 2020). It is an inquiry presented for examination that is errant in a radical sense.

TO CLOSE

A universe of amplifying: vale Professor Keith Lyons (1952-2020) remarkable thinker, mentor and unstinting advocate and also my dear Mother, Sylvia Rothwell (1933-2018) who both died as I took big steps and small ones through the threshold of this inquiry and, also, to my true and steadfast father Jack Rothwell (1926-2004) - Always entangled in becoming. This thesis is realised through relations with people, animals, books, experiences, ideas, things, and places. Keith told me a story about perfectionism that became these thoughts in the threshold...

In my office at the University, I have been thinking about a story I was once told. A story about Mr Yamikaze, a perfect teacher in a perfect classroom. A story in which the protagonist it turns out, is a trick of the light. I have also been thinking about writing. I am constantly thinking about writing and completing this inquiry, this project. Completing enough for now. It may never be really finished. I hope that is so. There is more to explore.

When I started it was from a place where my long-held values were in the forefront. Values, for example, that it is unethical to try and change someone else's behaviour, however I

am in control of how I respond and react. It is possible I think to influence materiality around a person. I started this research thinking about compassion and emotional touch points and treading lightly in the world. I started this exploration thinking about person centredness and flourishing and the safety of people who need nurses to care for them and with them. Mattering and its possibilities and impossibilities for justice are integral parts of the universe in its becoming; an invitation to live justly is written into the very matter of being (Barad, 2007 xi) I have been down many, many diffracted rabbit holes in Wonderland where the Cheshire cat is Schrodinger's cat and/or Montaigne's cat ('when I am playing with my cat' said Montaigne in one of his essays, 'how do I know she is not playing with me'?).

I have considered models and ecologies and people and places and histories in combination and entanglements. I was thinking about a comment one day about a hallway, about moving through a hallway. The comment made me think about the Palace of Versailles. Versailles, a monument to political control. An edifice of French aesthetic. The costs and the symbolism were and continue to be vast. The hall of mirrors, the Galerie de Glace at Versailles was intended as a grand thoroughfare full of heightened illumination and reflection. "Versailles is a mirage, a sumptuous and theatrical entertainment. It is also a manifestation of glory and power imposed to a great extent by art, luxury, and magnificence," writes Valérie Bajou, a modern-day curator at Versailles, in her book "Versailles" (Bajou-Charpentreau, 2012). The design of the hall and the endless reflections added to the effect of showcasing the hero in the story. "Viewing was to be helped by the famous wall of mirrors, which diffuses the daylight, except above the windows, where the detail is shadowy." This diffracted hallway that I have been travelling through has often appeared to be like Mr Yamikaze's classroom. A perfect and glorious possibility. I have circled and reflected and diffracted and tried to understand in the diffracted light, stepping, taking big steps and small ones but continuing to move and encounter and withdraw, relationally.

The problem in moving is the uncertainty that is inherent in the prototype behaviours of leadership and the influence that emerges from followership - the entangled energy of identity/ies. The real problem is in the deeply intricate complexity in the way we live and work together towards collaboration that might just be at the heart of connected and compassionate ways of working. To some in the business leadership academy, there is great urgency and a crisis in addressing the shortcomings of leadership as it is conceived and taught, to manage

engagement and fulfilment in a world of vacillation, change and competition for our collective attention. Despite vast resources and energy in leadership research and development, followership as an entangled element of leadership is knotted materially into an ethico-onto-epistemology that dare not speak its name.

Neither the past nor the future is closed. Closure can't be secured when the conditions of im/possibilities and lived indeterminacies are integral, not supplementary, to what matter is. I'm suspicious of the current fascination with the new, which dovetails all too well with suspicious of the current fascination with the new, which dovetails all too well with late capitalism's voracious appetite for the new, (even in its appropriative repackaging of the old, the nostalgic, as a new/trade-new (even in its appropriative repackaging of the old, the nostalgic, as a new/trade-remarkable past). So, the engagement for me entails a different ethics than one that presumes that we get to reset time, erase the past, cancel our debts, and start anew with the new. I see my work as being very much indebted to rich histories of materialist (some of which I've studied and draw from directly, others that reverberate with my own thinking that I haven't had time to sufficiently study, as well as other ideas-to-come, those yet to be studied, and no doubt others too that are materially entangled with my own thinking without my being aware of it). (Barad, in Juelskjær & Schwennesen, 2012, p 13)

Suddenly, with the dust motes suspended in filtered light I can see through to the doorway at the end of this hallway. Compassion, flourishing. Knowing where I have come from and being true to myself seems immensely important today. Materialised with an alternate ethico-onto-epistemology. This end is enticing, and, frustratingly close and far simultaneously. It is 'tromp l'œil' scene at moments. When I get there, with your support it may just be real. I will open the door and step through with heightened awareness of transaction. Transformed, nurtured by thinking with philosophy and writing to think. To live is to learn

This study aims to illuminate leadership followership practice from the overarching question; how do we come to know each other when our being is uncertain and developmental?

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