

TRANSFORMATIVE WOMEN LEADERS



SERIES EDITORS Randal Joy Thompson • Chrys Egan • Dionne Rosser-Mims



WOMEN EMBODIED LEADERS

Peacebuilding, Protest, and Professions



Volume Editors

RANDAL JOY THOMPSON AND LAZARINA N. TOPUZOVA

Women Embodied Leaders

TRANSFORMATIVE WOMEN LEADERS

The *Transformative Women Leaders* Series is published in collaboration between the International Leadership Association (ILA) and Emerald Publishing. Celebrating women leaders and the leadership styles they employ to achieve success, the books in this series highlight successful context-specific leadership approaches and the moral qualities of endurance. Serving as a model and inspiration for young women leaders entering the workforce and for women leaders currently facing challenges, it provides a community for women leaders around the world.

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Randal is a Scholar-Practitioner with 40 years professional experience in international development, serving in countries around the world. A Fellow with the Institute for Social Innovation, Fielding Graduate University, her research focuses on the commons, gender, education, evaluation, and organization development. She is the past President of ILA's Women and Leadership Community.

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Published Books in This Series

Genderwashing in Leadership: Power, Policies and Politics

Edited by Rita A. Gardiner, Wendy Fox-Kirk, Carole J. Elliott, and Valerie Stead

Women Embodied Leaders: Peacebuilding, Protest, and Professions

EDITED BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*To my granddaughters Eleanor, Alissa, and Kaia
My prayer is that you will discover your true potential and thrive as embodied
leaders in our ever tumultuous world.*

Randal

*To my daughters, Nadezhda and Irena
You are the embodiment of strength and limitless potential. You are my love and
inspiration.*

Lazarina

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Contents

About the Editors	<i>xi</i>
About the Contributors	<i>xiii</i>
Series Editor Preface	<i>xxi</i>
Series Foreword	<i>xxiii</i>
Foreword	<i>xxv</i>
Acknowledgments	<i>xxxiii</i>
Introduction and Overview	1
<i>Randal Joy Thompson</i>	
Prelude: Women's Bodies, Culture, and Leading for Peace	17
<i>Lazarina N. Topuzova</i>	
Part I: Embodied Somatic Leadership: Models/Praxis	
Chapter 1 Embodied Somatic Leadership as Practiced in <i>In the Time of the Butterflies</i>	31
<i>Sydney D. Richardson</i>	
Chapter 2 The Embodiment of Agency: Women Leaders in Authoritarian, Patriarchal, and Religious Societies	41
<i>Elizabeth Stork</i>	

Chapter 3 Hope and Communityship: Women's Ways of Engaging in Embodied Somatic Leadership	55
<i>Kem Gambrell and Terri Stewart</i>	

Part II: The Indigenous Way of Embodied Leading and Protesting

Chapter 4 All Our Relations: Indigenous Women's Holistically Embodied and Relational Leadership in Canadian Universities	71
<i>Candace Brunette-Debassige</i>	

Chapter 5 Indigenous Women Warriors: The Embodiment of Place	83
<i>Kem Gambrell and Salena Beaumont Hill</i>	

Chapter 6 Antiracism in Aotearoa New Zealand: Perspectives of a Māori Woman and a Pākehā Woman on Maintaining Mana	95
<i>Heather Came and Moahuia Goza</i>	

Part III: Embodied Protests

Chapter 7 Women's Counteroffensive to Violence and Injustice in Nigeria's Political Landscape: The Impact of Naked Protests	111
<i>Salome Irimekyen Samuel</i>	

Chapter 8 Hijab, Habitus, Hysteresis: Unveiling Iranian Women's Embodied Leadership	125
<i>Elham Salehi, Keyhan Shams and Trisha Gott</i>	

Chapter 9 The Women of Srebrenica: Planting the Seeds of Hope and Love in Bosnia's Charred and Blood-Soaked Terrain	139
<i>Mira Ibrišimović</i>	

Chapter 10 Global Followers' Identities Within a Global Social Movement: Exploring the Lived Experiences of Global Followers Within the Women's March	149
<i>Tobey J. Zimmer</i>	

Part IV: Performativity: Embodied Protests Through the Arts

Chapter 11 My Body, My Voice: Women and the Art of Protest 163
Darin Jones and Crystina Wylar

**Chapter 12 Reflections on the Madre Diaries: A Fiction-Based
 Autobiography of Mourning and Resistance** 177
Kevin D. Collins

**Chapter 13 Performing Leadership for Radical Change: Women’s
 Embodied Activism Through Theater** 195
Victoria Pagan and Sara Zaeemdar

Part V: Reclaiming Our Bodies

**Chapter 14 Body Matters: Arts-Based, Embodied Leadership
 Development for Resisting Violence and Injustice** 209
Kathryn Mansfield and Katia Ornelas

Chapter 15 EARTH: Empowering All Relatives to Heal 223
*Noshene Ranjbar, Andréana Elise Lefton, Alta Piechowski-Begay
 and Rica Wilson*

Chapter 16 Our Bodies, Ourselves 237
Barbara Kellerman

Index 251

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About the Editors

Randal Joy Thompson, PhD, is a Scholar-Practitioner with 40 years of professional experience in international development, serving in countries around the world. A Fellow with the Institute for Social Innovation, Fielding Graduate University, her research focuses on the commons, gender, education, evaluation, and organization development. Her book publications include *Reimagining Leadership on the Commons: Shifting the Paradigm for a More Ethical, Equitable, and Just World*, coedited with Devin Singh and Kathleen Curran (2022), *Proleptic Leadership on the Commons: Ushering in a New Global Order* (2020), and *Leadership and Power in International Development: Navigating the Intersections of Gender, Culture, Context, and Sustainability*, coedited with Julia Storberg-Walker (2018) which won the Human Resource Development R. Wayne Pace HRD Book of the Year Award. She has published many book chapters and peer-reviewed journal articles on women's leadership. Her book chapters covered women leaders in Afghanistan, postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina, Myanmar, Morocco and she published two articles on violence against women and LGBTQI+ in El Salvador. She holds a BA in Philosophy from the University of California, Berkeley, an MA in Philosophy and an MBA from the University of Chicago, an MA in Biblical Exposition from Capitol Seminary and Graduate School, and a PhD in Human and Organizational Systems from Fielding Graduate University. She was the 2021 President of the International Leadership Association's Women and Leadership Community.

Lazarina N. Topuzova, PhD, brings over 15 years of experience teaching and training in the fields of organizational research and program evaluation, diversity, and intercultural communication. She currently is a Professor in the Department of Communication and Organizational Leadership, School of Communication and Media, Robert Morris University, USA. Prior to beginning her career in academia, Dr Topuzova spent time in Kosovo working on educational program development, capacity building, and conflict resolution skills training for youth from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Dr Topuzova holds a PhD in Social Work from the University of Utah. She has an MA in American Literature from Sofia University, Bulgaria and a Master's in Peace and Conflict Resolution from the European Peace University, Austria. Her current research interests and expertise

xii About the Editors

are in developing leadership capacity in community and grassroots organizations, leadership for peace, women in leadership, as well as best practices in online teaching and learning in leadership education. Dr Topuzova is also the former coeditor of the *Journal of Hate Studies* and past Chair of the Leadership for Peace Community of the International Leadership Association.

About the Contributors

Salena Beaumont Hill, (Báawatbakala Xiasseesh, Shining Crucifix), is a member of the Apsáalooke (Crow) Nation and descendant of the Amaskapi Pikuni (Blackfoot) Nation. She is an Assistant Professor for the Doctoral Program in Leadership Studies at Gonzaga University. Her work is grounded in Apsáalooke philosophies and she incorporates Indigenous worldviews in her teaching, research, and mentoring. Salena has served as a Higher Education professional for the past 20 years centering her work in student advocacy, leadership, teaching and mentoring. Developing student support programs serving underrepresented students and building curriculums integrating diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging have been her heart's work.

Candace Brunette-Debassige, PhD, is a Mushkego Cree scholar based in London Ontario Canada working as an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Western University on the homelands to the Anishnabek, Haudenosaunee, and Lenapewak People. Her research and professional practice centers on advancing the liberatory struggles of Indigenous Peoples in Euro-Western colonial educational settings in Canada. Her research and teaching focus on Indigenizing and decolonizing education, Indigenous educational leadership, Indigenous policy, and Indigenous research methodologies.

Heather Came, PhD, is a seventh generation Pākehā New Zealander. She has a background in public health and social justice activism. Her research focuses on critical policy analysis, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, anti-racism, and institutional racism in the health sector. As an Activist Scholar, Heather is a founding member and co-Chair of STIR: Stop Institutional Racism has prepared expert evidence for Waitangi Tribunal, has presented to United Nations human rights committees. She is a long-standing member of Tāmaki Tiriti workers. In 2020, she founded the Decol 2020 series of virtual anti-racism gatherings that has built a dynamic, diverse community of learning of thousands of activists, scholars, and practitioners interested in racial justice. She was a joint winner of 2021 Kāhui Hauora Tūmatanui Public Health Champion Award in recognition of her lifetime contribution to public health. In 2022, she was made a member of the order of New Zealand for her contributions to Māori, health, and education. In 2023, she was appointed an Adjunct Professor with Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington and has a consultancy – Heather Came and Associates – focusing on pursuing racial justice.

Kevin D. Collins, PhD, Knoxville, Tennessee, USA, has lived many career trajectories. He has owned and operated a land surveying and property management business and has worked in most of the building trades. He has been active with nonprofits, working on issues of hunger and disaster relief, prison reform, homelessness, voting rights, racial integrity, environmental and immigration issues, nuclear weapons disarmament, as well as with museums and historical preservation. More importantly, he has used art and music as a way of doing activism for the last 20 years focusing on megapuppetry performance in skits, parades, street theater, and community theater. Since recently earning his PhD, he is currently collecting his activist writings and music for publication while continuing his activist artistry.

Kem Gambrell, PhD, is an Anglo educator-scholar with over 20 years of experience in academia. Kem is the Chair of the Doctoral Program in Leadership Studies at Gonzaga University. Her research has centered on exploring under-represented leadership paradigms, specifically focusing on Native American and Indigenous perspectives, constructive development, social construction, and communityship. Kem has consulted for not-for-profit and medical organizations on a variety of leadership and organizational change topics. Kem's perspectives, research, and teaching have been deeply influenced and inspired by collectivist communities and ideologies, especially those that center relationality and the desire to develop thriving and well-being for self, others, and the earth. Her writings include topics such as exploring anti-racism in the classroom, communityship, women in higher education, Indigenous collectivism, Lakota women leaders, decolonized alliances, and cultivating leadership. She lives in the Inland Northwest with her spouse and two dogs and enjoys reading on the back deck, kayaking the regional lakes, and traveling.

Trisha Gott, EdD, is an Assistant Professor and Associate Dean of Academics at the Staley School of Leadership at Kansas State University. Gott teaches undergraduate and professional coursework related to ethical dimensions of leadership and leadership development. Gott focuses on practice-based leadership education and development for professionals.

Moahuia Goza (Ngāti Kauwhata, Ngāti Unu, Ngāti Kahu, Ngāti Raukawa) is an indigenous woman of Māori descent. She has a background in indigenous leadership, indigenous rights, traditional knowledge, public health, and cancer. Her rangahau (research) focuses on indigenous cancer knowledge, Te Tiriti Waitangi, and mātauranga Māori anti-racism praxis. Moahuia is leading the cancer and oncology claim against the New Zealand Government in the Waitangi Tribunal Inquiry into Māori Health and Outcomes for racism against Māori and the privileging of non-Māori/non-Pacific adults across the cancer continuum. She is a member of numerous indigenous leadership and health networks and is currently consulting on national indigenous political rights issues.

Mira Ibršimović is an international development professional with over 20 years of experience working in many countries of the world. She has expertise in knowledge management, monitoring, evaluation and learning, training and

mentoring, communication, and program management and has worked in Serbia, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, and the United States, for long-term assignments, and many other countries for short-term consultancies. She is a global citizen who communicates fluently in English, Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian, Spanish, and Italian and easily crosses cultural boundaries in her work. She holds a Master of Professional Studies, PR and Corporate Communications from Georgetown University, a BA and an MA in English Language and Literature from the University of Belgrade, and Certificates in Innovation and Technology from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Monitoring and Evaluation of Development Programs from Duke University. She is a KM Institute Certified Knowledge Manager.

Darin Jones, for the last 25+ years, has worked with organizations of all sizes, from start-ups to Fortune 500 brands, to develop and execute creative communications strategies to reach their global audiences. Starting in media production, he came up through the television, film, and advertising industries to lead a Miami-based multicultural marketing agency for nearly a decade. Moving to Washington DC in 2007, Mr Jones began working with government and technology clients to not only build effective outreach programs but also improve their internal communication strategies. He's also helped nonprofits and not-for-profits develop engaging media tools and has been a board member for Art Transforms Conflict since its inception. A Professor of media history, mass media, journalism, and group communications for the University of Phoenix, he is continuously exploring the social impacts of mass media.

Barbara Kellerman, PhD, was the Founding Executive Director of the Center for Public Leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School and a member of the Harvard Kennedy School faculty for over 20 years. She is currently a Fellow at the Center. Kellerman has held professorships at Fordham, Tufts, Fairleigh Dickinson, George Washington, Uppsala, Christopher Newport, Dartmouth, and the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth. She also served as the Director of the Center for the Advanced Study of Leadership at the University of Maryland. She is the author and editor of many books on leadership and followership including, most recently, *Leadership from Bad to Worse: What Happens When Bad Festers*. Kellerman regularly posts at <https://barbarakellerman.com/articles/>

Andréana Elise Lefton is a poet, author, and amplifier of women's voices. Her poetry collection *Circle the Bones with Shining* was published in 2022 by Finishing Line Press. She holds an MS in Philosophy and Public Policy from the London School of Economics and is a Kellogg Fellow with the Center for Mind-Body Medicine. She works with souls who have been oppressed, marginalized, and traumatized to express and embody their inner truth. She is the lead storyteller and storywork facilitator for The EARTH Initiative.

Kathryn Mansfield, PhD, facilitates learning about trauma-sensitivity, resilience-building, and reignition of creativity amid conflict, stress, and adversity. She has worked in the field of peacebuilding for over 15 years, including doctoral work focused on arts-based, embodied learning for resilience building. Prior experience

includes work in the United States in corporate, nonprofit, higher education, and youth programs, and in Kenya, India, and the Philippines (Mindanao) with peace education, trauma awareness, and resilience training. Her formal and informal education include a PhD in Expressive Arts from the European Graduate School; study of embodiment at the Tamalpa Institute; teacher training in yoga and healing-centered dance/movement; an MA in International Peace Studies from the Kroc Institute of International Peace Studies; learning with peace and justice educators in the United States, Philippines, and India; and an AB in History from Harvard-Radcliffe. Dance and meditation are her daily medicine.

Katia Ornelas is a Mexican Lawyer with a Master's degree in Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding at the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding (CJP) at Eastern Mennonite University (Harrisonburg, VA, USA 2013), and a restorative justice, and psychosocial well-being specialist. She has experience in the transformation of Mexico's criminal justice system, and the defense of human rights and women's rights, working in those fields since 2004 with national and international organizations. After completing a Master's degree in Conflict Transformation (2013), Katia has devoted her professional life to becoming a restorative justice and transformative justice practitioner, particularly in the context of school violence, and sexual and labor harassment and discrimination at the workplace, nurturing embodied responses to violence and injustice.

Victoria Pagan, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in Strategic Management at Newcastle University Business School, UK. With a decade of experience in economic development and regeneration consultancy, she joined Newcastle in 2011 and has spent her academic career focused on researching power in organizations and organizing. Her most recent work examines knowledge, its generation, uses, marginalizations, epistemic violence, and epistemic injustice; moral emotions and aporias; and social justice. Victoria has published recently on silencing practices and their embodied effects. She is Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, and a Certified Management and Business Educator with the Chartered Association of Business Schools in the United Kingdom.

Alta Piechowski-Begay, PhD, matriarch, mother, grandmother, resides on the Diné (Navajo) Nation and has provided over 30 years of service to her community in the areas of school psychology, counseling, and school administration. She is grounded in the Diné traditional teachings and a fluent speaker of the Diné language. She is the cofounder and chairperson of the Hozho Voices of Healing Center, a nonprofit whose mission is to revive Indigenous knowledge and lifeways, including land restoration, gardening, animal husbandry, and social-emotional health.

Noshene Ranjbar, MD, is an Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson, where she leads the Integrative Psychiatry Program. She also serves as a faculty and advisor for the Indigenous Initiative and Iran Initiative at the Center for Mind-Body Medicine, building health promotion programs for minoritized communities. As a social justice advocate, Dr Ranjbar leads efforts training clinicians to support asylum seeking

individuals at the US–Mexico border. She is the founder of the EARTH Initiative.

Sydney D. Richardson, PhD, is an Associate Professor of Leadership Studies at North Carolina A&T State University. Her research focuses on counter-storying in narrative inquiry, minority leadership development, and women entrepreneurship. She often uses works of nonfiction and historical fiction to explain nontraditional leadership practices in her classes, workshops, and research. Dr Richardson holds a BA in Political Science and a PhD in Educational Leadership and Cultural Studies from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and an MA in English and African American Literature from North Carolina A&T State University.

Elham Salehi is an Iranian woman with an educational background in Islamic law and jurisprudence. She holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Quran and Hadith in Tehran, specializing in the field. Additionally, she has undergone rigorous training and successfully completed all seven exam levels required to become a judge assistant within the Iranian judiciary system. Despite her qualifications and achievements, she has never been appointed to a court.

Salome Irimyeken Samuel is a Peace Advocate working as the Executive Director of Pride of Sheba, a Nigerian LGBTQ peace-focused nonprofit organization working to transform prejudices around diversity, equity, and inclusion through peacebuilding. As a scholar and University of Jos graduate in Christian Religious Studies and Philosophy, Salome delves into women's pivotal role in challenging violence and injustice in Nigeria's political sphere. Through groundbreaking research, they explore the phenomenon of naked protests, highlighting their efficacy in demanding accountability from leaders. With interdisciplinary expertise, Samuel's work offers insightful analysis of historical, cultural, and socio-political contexts, empowering Nigerian women and advancing social justice.

Keyhan Shams is an Iranian and a doctoral candidate in leadership communication at Staley School of Leadership Kansas State University. He has lived in Iran for more than 30 years and worked as a consultant for the United Nations Human Settlements Program in Iran (UN-Habitat) and the Iranian government as well as a leadership coach in Iranian less developed communities. He has observed and experienced Iranians' social movements over the last two decades including the 2009 green movement, the 2019 protests, and the 2022 Women, Life, Freedom. As a former urban planner and current leadership scholar, his main research interest is studying how leadership emerges in the public sphere, particularly urban spaces.

Terri Stewart is a dedicated Religious Coordinator at Green Hill Academic School within Juvenile Detention, where they bring compassion and guidance to young lives. Beyond her professional role, Terri finds solace and inspiration in the melodies of her piano, the immersive worlds of gaming, and the pursuit of knowledge through her studies. Currently enrolled in a PhD program in Leadership Studies at Gonzaga University, they are exploring the intersection of spiritual, ethical, and religious

(SER) programming and its role in creating or sustaining hope. Terri's commitment to incarcerated youth is reflected in their publication in *the International Journal of Servant Leadership* in November 2023, where they delved into the intricate dynamics of self-forgiveness, servant-leadership, and the pivotal role of religious volunteers in juvenile incarceration settings. With their multifaceted interests and unwavering dedication, Terri is committed to building hope both within and beyond the walls of academia.

Elizabeth Stork, PhD, is a Professor of Organizational Leadership at Robert Morris University in Pittsburgh, PA. She earned her PhD in Social Work, her MA in Sociology (Gender, Race, & Class), and her MSW from the University of Pittsburgh. Her BA in the Classics is from LSU. Stork teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in leadership theory, gender/sex, power and leadership, and decision-making, social movements. She publishes on a variety of topics, most recently about women, peace, and inequality. Her research work is currently on women activists in authoritarian, patriarchal societies, on critical leadership theories, as well on leadership education.

Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson, K.C. (Haida: *Gid7ahl-Gudslaay Lalaxaaygans Gadaaldyaas*) is an Indigenous lawyer, artist, activist, and author and a member of the Raven Clan from the Haida Nation. As a lawyer, Williams-Davidson specializes in Indigenous and environmental law, having represented the Haida Nation at all levels of court since 1996 and notably participating in the litigation of the Haida Nation's TFL39 Case to protect the old-growth forests of Haida Gwaii, a case that effectively altered the government's stance on the consultation and accommodation of Aboriginal Rights. Williams-Davidson has also become an important figure in the preservation of Haida culture, using music and literature to revitalize the language and culture of Haida Gwaii. She has released three studio albums of Haida songs: 2008s "Lalaxaaygans: Beautiful Sound," 2011s "New Journeys" and 2017s "Grizzly Bear Town" as well as two books based on supernatural beings from ancient oral Haida narratives: "Magical Beings of Haida Gwaii" and "Out of Concealment".

Rica Wilson, DMin, is a mother and advocate for education and human rights. She holds a doctorate in Pastoral Counseling and a certificate in Complementary and Alternative Medicine. As a licensed minister and law student, she blends compassion and cultural competence to seek justice for voiceless and vulnerable individuals. She is the Founder and Director of Brown Girl Wellness, a 501c3 nonprofit based in Baltimore, MD, that strives to empower marginalized women and children through narrative justice.

Cristina Wyler, PhD, is the Founder and President of Art Transforms Conflict (ATC), a nonprofit based in Washington DC. A highly trained communicator, coach, and performer with over 30 years in television, stage, and film, her creative methods open new avenues of expression and enable individuals to find their voice, transforming conflict through dialog. ATC programs have provided creative communication training through arts-based methods to communities in conflict around the world, with particular emphasis on women and youth. Today, she continues working with partners to expand her research and work on

female and youth empowerment, generational wounding, cultural identity, and youth marginalization and radicalization. In 2020, she published “Keepers of the Cultural Flame” exploring how adult refugee Syrian women, forced to migrate during their formative years, are maintaining and transmitting their cultural identity in their new host communities of Jordan and Lebanon.

Sara Zaeemdar, PhD, is a Lecturer in Organization Studies at Newcastle University Business School, UK. Her research focuses on theater-based interventions in the context of work and organization and the impact of such interventions on the identity construction of organization members, with special focus on identity issues related to women in contemporary organizations. In her work, she draws on aesthetic theory, dramaturgy, critical feminist theory, and Foucauldian gender studies. She is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and has completed her PhD studies in Management at Macquarie Graduate School of Management (MGSM) in Sydney, Australia.

Tobey J. Zimmer, PhD, received her doctorate in Global Leadership from Indiana Institute of Technology in 2020. Her research focuses on global followership and how global followers contribute to the leadership process within the context global social movement of the Women’s March. She has presented her research at various conferences including the 2017 International Leadership Association (ILA) Annual Conference in Brussels, Belgium, the 2023 Global Followership Conference in Newport News, Virginia, and she has been accepted to present at the upcoming 2023 ILA Annual Conference in Vancouver, Canada. She also routinely volunteers to serve as a reviewer of proposal submissions for ILA conferences. Uncovering new and exciting themes within her research fuels Dr Zimmer’s desire to continue global followership research and study in the future. She looks forward to continuing her research and examining the interconnected nature of leadership and followers within a global context.

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Series Editor Preface

Male domination of the female body is the basic material reality of women's lives;

and all struggle for dignity and self-determination is rooted

in the struggle for actual control of one's own body...

– Andrea Dworkin, 1989

We three editors are pleased to present the second book in our International Leadership Association Women Transformative Leaders series, *Women Embodied Leaders: Peacebuilding, Protest, and Professions*. Women have been trying to escape the myths, morals, images, and violence imposed on their bodies throughout the ages. As embodied leaders, women are reclaiming and positioning their bodies as powerful authentic peacebuilders, protestors, and professionals. This book brings to life stories of such leaders in war and peace, art, somatic training, healing, and work. The book concludes with Barbara Kellerman's call to women to finally accept our bodies and to push our right to be fully women:

Being in the body of a woman, having the body of a woman, is so radically different from being in the body of a man, having the body of a man, that this difference must be front and center before greater and faster strides toward equity at the top can be made.

We believe that this volume offers much to reflect upon by women leaders and look forward also to our next volume, which should be coming in 2025.

Randal Joy Thompson, Chrys Egan, and Dionne Rosser-Mims

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Series Foreword

Transformative Women Leaders

The International Leadership Association (ILA) is pleased to collaborate with Emerald Publishing on *Transformative Women Leaders*, a dynamic exploration of women leaders who are making a difference in their communities and organizations around the world. Providing both inspiration and model, the series delves into the “why” behind these leaders’ journeys, exploring the barriers they face and the unique perspectives and approaches they bring to leadership. These women are not simply overcoming obstacles, they’re redefining what leadership is and demonstrating the power of diverse voices to drive creative innovation and catalyze global transformations that impact the globe’s systemic challenges.

Transformative Women Leaders continues the work of the ILA’s groundbreaking series, *Women and Leadership: Research, Theory, and Practice*, which presented cutting-edge research, robust theoretical frameworks, and practical applications that sparked vital dialogue around the advancement of women in leadership. This new series advances the conversation by presenting additional, compelling evidence of women’s unique leadership approaches and their effectiveness in various contexts. These practical examples will further equip women with the knowledge and know-how they need to navigate the leadership landscape. Importantly, *Transformative Women Leaders* will fuel further research into the complexities and intersections of gender and leadership.

Both series were conceived of, led by, and worked on by members of ILA’s Women and Leadership member community, part of ILA’s global community of leaders and leadership researchers, educators, and development specialists who believe that leadership is the key to a just and thriving future for all. We are proud that *Transformative Women Leaders* contributes to advancing the work outlined in ILA’s mission, vision, and purpose and provides an exciting opportunity for

people to connect and engage with one another while exploring innovative thinking, creating new resources, and multiplying our collective impact for the good of people and planet.

Cynthia Cherrey
CEO & President
International Leadership Association
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Foreword

Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson, K.C.

Situating Myself

I am a citizen of the Haida Nation, of the Raven clan from my ancestral village of Skedans in the southern islands of Haida Gwaii. I was raised in a small village of 500 people in Skidegate, Haida Gwaii. I am an artist, musician, author, activist, lawyer, and student dedicated to the resurgence of Haida culture. I have a long-standing interest in the study and perpetuation of Haida songs, dances, language, and artistic expressions. These earliest passions were fueled by the suppression of these traditions resulting from the impact of residential schools, but they were also grounded in culture bearers within my family that did not attend residential schools. My father, a residential school survivor, encouraged education, and I obtained a degree in Computer Science. My devotion to Haida culture was transformed with the realization that the source of culture – the islands of Haida Gwaii – was under threat from unsustainable development. In ceremony, I committed to protect the environment, and in 1992, I returned to the University of British Columbia for a law degree. Armed with this degree, I worked for a decade providing free legal advice to Indigenous Peoples to protect Aboriginal rights and the environment before focusing on representing my own nation, the Haida Nation, in litigation and negotiation.

After 20 years of legal practice, I returned to my first love of music and singing, which ignited a latent fire for deeper knowledge of Haida traditions and refined legal skills. In the last 10 years, I have embraced these responsibilities and my ancestral teachings in a way that privileges the Haida Supernatural worldview and the Haida language. I bring my legal, cultural, and artistic practice to assist the Haida Nation to achieve sovereignty over legal traditions. I see these multifaceted roles as fulfilling a sacred responsibility to Haida Gwaii, my ancestors, and the Haida community.

Embodying Our Teachings

As a child in Skidegate, my parents and grandparents taught me about some of the Supernatural Beings of Haida Gwaii. My spirit was captured by these songs and narratives, especially those about my ancestors' interactions with Supernatural Beings. I sought to learn and share as much as I could about them.

While I am a singer of Haida music in the endangered Haida language, the Haida speak through a visual language of art. This meant that when I wanted to

create a music album about Supernatural Beings, I found myself visualizing them. Certainly, master Haida formline artists have created abstract representations of Supernatural Beings, but I hungered for more. I envisioned a future where children would be as attracted to the power of Supernatural Beings as they are to representations of “princesses” in popular culture yet grounded in the Haida worldview and culture.

Thus began my journey of rediscovery of Supernatural Beings in Haida narratives. These evocative narratives were the creative inspiration for visual montages illustrating female Supernatural Beings and Clan Crest Figures. Transformation is a common theme in oral narratives and Haida art, and transforming into Beings is a fundamental part of Haida dance, using masks and regalia. Transformation is encapsulated in the Haida word for mask, which means literally “to imitate,” and figuratively to “bring to life” the being depicted in the mask. I decided to embody the female Supernatural Beings and use my own body as the basis for the photographic montages and videos. Building upon my experience as a ceremonial Haida dancer, I used face paintings and regalia to transform into Supernatural Beings and Clan Crest Figures.

My journey and transformation resulted in the book and multimedia exhibition *Out of Concealment: Female Supernatural Beings of Haida Gwaii* (Williams-Davidson). This creative process provided a unique portal into a deeper understanding of the history, laws, traditions, and identity of Haida People. The process also illuminated Haida resilience: our ancestors steadfastly held onto our laws, traditions, beliefs, and protocols for our respectful existence with each other and Haida Gwaii such that they permeate and are interwoven in contemporary life. Two streams of knowledge are relevant to and are discussed in this book: women as leaders and gender fluidity.

Haida culture and traditions hold female power as an essential component of healthy sexuality. The imposition of Christianity was oppressive to Haida feminine power and sexuality. I believe this suppression is directly related to violence against women and to the violent exploitation of the natural world. Respect for the natural world is therefore fundamentally interwoven with respect for women. My practice of embodying female Supernatural Beings harnesses their power and demystifies them to locate them in the modern world and in contemporary landscapes. In oral narratives and the Haida worldview, many Supernatural Beings transformed, becoming part of the land and seascapes and caretaking culturally significant areas important for physical and spiritual survival such as rivers and intertidal areas. I worked with photographers to source plate images of places of origin and homes of female Supernatural Beings. My hope is that viewers will have visceral connections to these places and see the feminine and powerful land and seascapes of Haida Gwaii through a worldview where the land and sea are human and worthy of respect, not to be dominated and exploited.

Our oral narratives also document gender fluidity. Raven, the central character, easily transforms between genders. For instance, the cover image of *Out of Concealment* shows Raven as a woman, although Raven is generally thought of as male. As I studied the Haida language with my mentor, Elder *GwaaGanad* Diane Brown, I learned that the language is not gendered and uses a single pronoun for

men, women, and other gender expressions, thereby substantiating equality and the intrinsic value of all gendered expressions. My hope is that the embodiment and sharing of the Supernatural Beings creates space for power in respectful balance with, and reduces violence toward, varied expressions of gender and identity.

In the rest of this Foreword, I explore one of these Supernatural Beings that grounds my legal and artistic practice, and that engages the themes in this book. Cedar Sister was my first foray into female Supernatural Beings. The cedar tree is the “older sister” to every Haida because she provides for and sustains our existence. In 2002, I told the Supreme Court of Canada what I had learned about her from artist and weaver April Churchill in a case challenging industrial logging in the heartland of Haida Gwaii: “This ancient sister lies at the root of Haida culture. She permeates every facet of Haida life, beginning in the cradle and continuing to the grave and finally, ending at the memorial potlatch and raising of memorial totem poles to commemorate and celebrate one’s life and contributions to the community.”

Cedar trees arrived in Haida Gwaii about 5,000 years ago, after which Haida culture transformed. Old growth cedar trees provided not only residential stability but mobility into the surrounding oceans through canoes and sophisticated marine technology. A plethora of material culture objects made from the cedar are enduring storehouses of intergenerational knowledge and cultural practice; we are indebted to the Cedar Sister for our long-standing existence in Haida Gwaii and the surrounding oceans.

Cedar Sister also provides a pathway to spirit and to sacred, spiritual strength and power. She features prominently in all artistic creations and associated spiritual ceremonies. Our oral narratives tell of humans serving the Supernatural Beings through cedar bark ceremonies that use the skin of this ancient sister. We learned these sacred ceremonies from the Ocean People, and today Cedar Sister provides the backbone of modern management of Haida Gwaii to ensure an interconnected land and sea. These ceremonies are also part of elaborate potlatch ceremonies to erect houses and totem poles made from the flesh (wood) of the Cedar Tree, distributing wealth gathered from the land and sea using tools constructed of cedar. Therefore, Cedar Sister encapsulates a sophisticated, performance-based legal tradition that weaves together our interconnected coexistence, validating our place in the world, and affirming our responsibilities to each other and to Haida Gwaii so that we may secure a sustainable future for our collective humanity.

Cedar Sister was the first Supernatural Being that I embodied and exhibited:



Figure: Cedar Sister from *Out of Concealment: Female Supernatural Beings of Haida Gwaii*

After completing the exhibition and book about female Supernatural Beings, I turned to cocreating a series to make this knowledge accessible to children. The first was *Magical Beings of Haida Gwaii*, cowritten with my stepdaughter and Dr Sara Florence Davidson, and in collaboration with illustrator and member of the Kainai Nation, Alyssa Koski and settler artist and illustrator Judy Hilgemann.

To make this knowledge part of everyday learning, Sara and I cowrote a coloring and activity book with educator and artist *Jaad Tl'aaw*, Paula Varnell. Below is the children's version of Cedar Sister:



Figure: Cedar Sister from *Magical Beings of Haida Gwaii*

The intention of both books was to empower young people and teach them to live in harmony with the land and sea. As I wrote in the introduction to *Magical Beings*, I “firmly believe that the Magical Beings want children to know that they too are all Magical Beings with powers unique to them.”

The last publication in this series was “The Haida Box of Knowledge: Guidance from Supernatural Sisters,” cowritten with Sharon Blödorn. My objective for this publication was to demystify and bring into daily practice the teachings and guidance of female Supernatural Beings in a way that fosters the integration of our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual selves with our responsibilities to communities and future generations.

This journey into what was once mostly esoteric knowledge extends into my legal practice. The Supernatural Beings inspired my graduate work in law. Cedar Sister became the foundation for my Master of Laws thesis. The Haida Nation is applying this culturally relevant framework to bring greater understanding of Haida Law. We are jointly expressing these laws in my doctoral studies where we

are co-researching as a community with the goal of expressing and implementing Haida Law along the path toward Haida sovereignty.

Cedar Sister embodies the Haida worldview, cultural values, and laws. Therefore, embodying her helped me feel part of the forest and Haida Gwaii. She helped me understand her critical role in metamorphosing Haida culture to one that privileges community, intergenerational learning, interconnectedness, balance, sustainability, gendered expression, and the natural and spiritual worlds as the genesis of leadership principles and guidance.

This knowledge seeking process is demonstrated in the forest; decomposing cedar trees often become nurse logs for other seedlings. We learn to draw upon ancestral knowledge. Building a strong, reciprocal network provides a means for protection and survival, not only for individuals, but also for the community. Becoming a leader in Haida culture means taking responsibility for the people and caring for the transgenerational community, including ancestors and future generations, so that a leader is only as strong as their family and community.

Embodied Somatic Leadership

My legal work spans both the divide between, and convergence of, Haida and Western law. Indigenous settler relations – both social and legal – are fractured from our shared colonial history. We need to heal our collective spirits to repair these relationships. The blueprint must be generational, seeking a thriving future for the next generations. Children are the truest measure of sustainability, and this benchmark requires we cocreate a future where sustainability is wholistically measured in ecological, economic, social, legal, cultural, and mental and spiritual health terms, with children learning together with each other and with Elders through place-based activities about culture and laws.

When I set out to create the montages and videos that are part of my art and music practice, I imagined that the Court and the legal profession – the majority of which are male – would not take me seriously as an advocate and lawyer given that the Western idea of law favors objectivity, and analytic reason over artistic practice. Despite my niggling fear about diminishing my credibility, I continued, and redefined the role of Indigenous women lawyers in Haida terms. I soon came to know through transforming into each Supernatural Being that each montage portrays Haida Laws that are necessary to draw out and articulate as this country transforms the idea of reconciliation into reality. This creative process affirmed my life's work to communicate about the critical need for all humans to transform into beings that live in harmony with each other and with the Earth. I believe that ultimately, our collective survival will depend upon our transformation and that Indigenous knowledge will be a necessary guide to this spiritual, powerful, and necessary transformation.

This book explores the knowledge and strength of embodied somatic leadership. With the knowledge you will gain from this book, you might feel the trauma and pain of the colonial history, since generations of my ancestors have made great efforts and sacrifices to ensure our laws, traditions, and knowledge endured

the colonial encounter. You might also feel my ancestors' and present generations' deeply held hopes for a brighter future. Trauma and hope are wrapped up in responsibilities to learn, actively listen, ask critical questions about our shared history, build respectful relationships, and take artful action for our shared humanity: in short, engage in embodied somatic leadership.

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Introduction and Overview

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To leave your body behind and believe you still can know anything at all is quite literally a form of madness. Berman (1989, p. 110)

Throughout history women have struggled to reclaim their bodies from the meanings and assaults imposed on them by cultural practices and sexual mores, victimization, and concepts of how their bodies should be presented and managed in public, to intimate male partners, or in the workplace. The body of women “has historically been violated and outraged; on the body of the women have woven aesthetics, imaginaries, and powers” (Paarlberg-Kvam, 2016, p. 326). The symbolism of the female body has been an obsession of male myth makers, artists, philosophers, and cultural fabricators throughout history. Women are viewed as “spectacles. . .visually striking pictures or displays. . .an object of vision: a sight of sexuality, beauty, and so on, through her awareness of being seen by a spectator” (Bell and Sinclair, 2016, p. 325). Women’s bodies are symbolically expected to fulfill ideals of youth and beauty and “a youthful body is often considered a woman’s most precious capital. . . [whereas] an aging body is frequently viewed as revolting, symbolizing an escalating loss of a precious, youthful asset, and representing the end of the ‘beauty mandate’” (Quental et al., 2023, p. 1825). As Susan Omega (2020) wrote,

Parmenides’s division of the cosmos into paired opposites, with woman as the necessary other for the definition of male subjectivity, initiates the symbolization of the female body as monstrous. Prefigured by the nurturing/devouring duality of Mother Earth and mythical women/goddesses like the Medusa, this symbolization expresses the male fear of female sexuality and agency. The resymbolization of Mother Earth as the Virgin Mary and of woman as a domestic angel are expressions of this fear.

2 *Randal Joy Thompson*

In patriarchal cultures women serve

...as a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer, not maker, of meaning. [Mulvey \(2009, p. 15 as quoted in Bell & Sinclair, 2016, p. 324\)](#)

[Bell and Sinclair \(2016\)](#) conclude therefore that

...a woman's identity is composed of two elements – the surveyor and the surveyed, as she must continually survey all that she is and does because how she appears to men determines how she is treated by them and this is crucial to her success. The surveyor is thus an interiorized aspect of the woman's being; she uses it to communicate to others how she would like her "whole self" to be treated [...]. (pp. 324–325)

The deep-seated male fear of the female body, its reproductive potential, and its infused nationalist meanings have contributed to idolizing the female or violating the female during times of war, terrorism, and even peace. Rape has been a weapon of war since the beginning of history and only after the Bosnian-Serbian war in the 1990s was it considered a war crime. Rape camps have served as locales for genocide, for eradicating religious and ethnic groups and tribes.

Globally, and for epoch after epoch, women's bodies have been brutalized to destroy their agency and their sexuality under the guise of making them marriageable and desired. Practices such as bound feet, genital cutting and lengthening, neck elongation, breast and buttock enlargements are all ways women have painfully refashioned their bodies to fulfill contrived images of beauty, sexuality, or chastity. Women have been covered and uncovered as idols of morality or its opposite. Women's bodies have been forced to become baby factories as during the dictatorship of Ceausescu who required that women mass produce the children that would comprise his army of supermen. When tiptoeing into the professional world that had been the hallowed domain of men, women had to masquerade as men, clothing their bodies like males in order to "dress for success" and disguise their unique bodily abilities.

In organizations or public positions, women are viewed as bodies not leaders and are judged against masculine stereotypes ([Bell & Sinclair, 2016](#)). Some women in executive leadership positions advise other women that they should camouflage their gender and sexuality and take measures such that their unique bodily functions do not interfere with their work and advancement. Medication for menstruation and menopause and careful planning of pregnancy not to override important leadership tasks are recommended remedies ([Bell & Sinclair, 2016](#)).

Embodied Somatic Leadership

Despite the images and expectations imposed on their bodies, women are increasingly claiming their bodies as their own in their leadership, in protesting injustice, in promoting peace, and in working in a so-called man's world. The feminist slogan "my body is mine, this body of mine is not used" (Paarlberg-Kvam, 2016, p. 326) increasingly echoes in women's leadership in peacebuilding, protest, and work. A leadership approach in which the body is recognized, consulted, listened to, and comprises an essential expression of the self is a powerful way that women begin to reclaim their bodies. Embodied somatic leadership that decries the Cartesian duality of mind and body and leverages the wisdom of the body is a practice that allows women to know and heal their bodies and to express them authentically and boldly (Hanna, 1991). Embodied leaders "have a greater capacity to remain grounded and centered even in the most complex or chaotic situations because they can tune into sensations and somatic cues and use them to inform their decision-making" (Partridge, n.d., para 3).

Amanda Sinclair (2005) revealed unabashedly that "leadership is a bodily practice, a physical performance in addition to a triumph of mental or motivational mastery... leadership works at visceral and sensual levels, activating appetites and desires..." (p. 387). Sinclair (2005) posited that one's stature, stance, posture, voice, gestures, appearance and costume have the potential to transgress and subvert norms and introduce significant change in outdated systems.

The embodied somatic essence of leadership transcends even the physicality of leadership. Whereas physicality works "from the outside-in," embodiment works "from the inside out." Embodiment is "the means by which the invisible energies, dynamics, and impulses come into physical form" (Ladkin & Taylor, 2014, p. 6). Embodiment

...means to relate to the body as a subject, rather than an object... Being embodied is recognizing the body as not just a container for the mind... but as a living, evolving, intelligent ally through which we can meet, feel, express and experience ourselves, our personality, senses, memories, relationships, passions, sensuality, and spirit and act and be seed in the world according to these... Being embodied then, is a radical, revolutionary, liberating state to reclaim. (Bednarski, 2021, para 1, 10)

Becoming more aware of the body as perceived from within, the soma, and what the body is feeling and speaking is critical to exercising embodied leadership. Somatics relies on one's own proprioceptive senses and "uses the mind-body connection to help you survey your internal self and signals from your body" (Raypole, 2020, para 1).

Embodied somatic leadership is leadership in which intentionality for change, combined with spirit, self, mind, and values is manifested in physical representation—the mind-body, self-body, and spirit-body connections expressing themselves (Bennett, 2012; Hamill, 2013; Karssiens et al., 2014; Kupers, 2013).

Women are exercising embodied somatic leadership with the full integration of their minds, souls, and bodies, reclaiming their bodies as their own, and recognizing their power to change the world. The physical emerges as critical in embodied leadership. As [Ladkin and Taylor \(2014\)](#) wrote, the physical “includes the material ways in which ‘embodiment’ is manifested by both leaders and followers, the physical setting in which their relations occur as well as the many artifacts...which are part and parcel of how leadership comes to be” (p. 6). “Embodied leadership is authentic in that leaders are in touch with and connected to the synergy of their bodies, minds, and spirits and hence expressing their ‘true’ selves” ([Ladkin & Taylor, 2010](#)).

In Part I of our book, “Embodied Somatic Leadership: Models/Praxis,” four authors examine embodied somatic leadership, conceiving of this leadership from differing perspectives. In Chapter 1, “Embodied Somatic Leadership as Practiced in *In the Time of the Butterflies*,” Sydney Richardson explores how the Mirabal sisters, Minerva, Patria, and Maria Theresa literally put their bodies in the line of fire to defeat dictator Trujillo of the Dominican Republic. Referring to the scenes in Julia Alvarez’s historical novel, Richardson views embodied somatic leadership as a concert of spirit-mind-and-body performed holistically to encompass the whole person. The bodily performance of leadership is as much a way of *knowing* and *being* as any other form of leadership, she writes. “Soul knowing” as a way in guiding others and oneself is significant for embodied leadership.

Richardson contends that the notion of care is critical in the relationship between leader and follower implied by this leadership model. Care is embedded in the concept of women as embodied infrastructures—living, breathing, and moving community care connectors. Richardson argues that the Mirabal sisters built a community of resistance that defied how they as women were supposed to behave in society. This created their hypervisibility which clearly demarcated them as enemies to be murdered. Creating a crescendo of resistance, their murder led to the end of the Trujillo dictatorship.

In Chapter 2, “The Embodiment of Agency: Women Leaders in Authoritarian, Patriarchal, and Religious Societies,” Elizabeth Stork develops the concept of embodied agency to account for the courage of women in Armenia and Jordan to stand up against cultural values and laws that restrict the freedom of women and keep them in a victim state. Agency involves using one’s power of persuasion to bring people together with a compelling idea and to act for change in spite of sociocultural restraints in society, Stork argues. Stork conceives of embodiment from an agency perspective as the body in interaction with and influencing the environment, and from an environmental perspective as how in the long-term the environment influences the mind and mental health. In both countries, violence against women is rampant and in Jordan, women are often forced to live for years in safe houses to escape such violence that can result in “honor killings.” Stork explores the courage of women who employed embodied agency to literally put their bodies on the line and continue to push for changes in the laws and cultural beliefs despite risks to their wellbeing and lives.

Kem Gambrell and Terri Stewart highlight Mintzberg’s concept of communityship and Moltmann’s and others’ concepts of hope as essential elements of

embodied somatic leadership in Chapter 3, “Hope and Communityship: Women’s ways of Engaging in Embodied somatic leadership.” In addition to the synthesis of body, mind, and spirit, embodied somatic leadership includes the reality of the self’s necessary relatedness to others and embeddedness in the world. Beginning from this notion that our identity emerges from our connection to others and our environment, communityship highlights the beneficial aspects of leadership while decentering the leader and, with it, the often-accompanying mindset of hierarchy and patriarchy and the illusion of being “individual” or separate from others. Instead, as a mobilizer of belonging, communityship, the authors argue, moves toward “an intent of collective wellbeing, wholeness, and belonging.” The value of hope connects to understandings, socially, theologically, and ideologically. Hope is the “inexhaustible resource” that is an antecedent to creative thinking, planning, and action and adds the required intentionality and vision to embodied somatic leadership. By implication then, embodied somatic leadership manifests the synthesis of the embedded plural body, mind, and spirit that gains its momentum for social justice and positive change from the vision of a future more ideal world infusing the present with an active hope that drives women leaders forward. The authors provide an overview of approaches for creating hopefulness and mindfulness in women leaders which together with communityship prepares them to bring positive change in the world.

The Indigenous Worldview and Embodied Leading

The Indigenous Worldview contrasts with the Western worldview in that it is wholistic rather than reductionist, seeing the whole person, composed of physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual, as interconnected to others, including family, communities, ancestors, and nations. Indigenous cultures “are holding and evolving matriarchal, metaphysical, unified, equalitarian, extra-rational, holistic, connected, relational, subjective and fluid worldviews that includes parallel to the physical world the invisible spiritual dimensions of life” (Buergelt et al., 2022, p. 392). Indigenous people hence organize themselves based on nature laws with organizational structures that are “self-organizing, emerging, flexible and adaptive, and . . .sustainable social-environmental relationships that foster connectedness” (Buergelt et al., 2022, p. 392). One would expect then that women practicing embodied leadership would have a broader, more holistic sense of self and spirit connected to their ancestors and to the land, together with an imprint of colonial oppression on their soma. Leadership may well be carried out as part of an anticolonial praxis.

In Part II of our book, “Indigenous Ways of Being, Leading, and Resisting,” three Indigenous authors and two settler authors explore embodied leadership in contrasting situations. Reporting on her study of Indigenous women administrators in Canadian universities in Chapter 4, “All Our Relations: Indigenous Women’s Holistically Embodied and Relational Leadership in Canadian Universities,” Candace Brunette-Debassige argues that Indigenous understandings of leadership are arguably unique and grounded in a paradigm and methodological

approach rooted in land and place as well as a relational and ethical accountability to the Indigenous Peoples of lands that universities occupy. At the heart of Indigenous ethics in leadership is a deep sense of commitment and respect for honoring Indigenous ways of knowing, being, doing, and upholding relational embodied approaches to leadership. Embodiment is grounded in a wholistic worldview, an inter-generational view, tying oneself to family, community, lands, and place. Indigenous women leaders need to practice resistance and engage in a decolonial praxis to transform the Canadian education system from a solely Westernized approach to a system that recognizes Indigenous Peoples rights and honors the integrity of Indigenous knowledges.

In Chapter 5, “Indigenous Women Warriors: The Embodiment of Place,” Kem Gambrell and Salena Beaumont Hill show how Indigenous ontology that everything is connected, including one’s thoughts, feelings, and actions—one’s whole being—and the inherent relationship between Indigenous women, the Earth, and the cosmos, are foundational to the practice of embodied somatic leadership. Indigenous understandings posit that women are sacred and hold spiritual power, which requires an alignment of one’s full self – body, mind, spirit, and environment. Despite the fact that colonization has created a misalignment of all these components, Indigenous women are finding the way back to wholeness using tribal practices, clan systems, languages, and spiritual practices. The authors argue that Indigenous women can serve as models for non-Indigenous women to achieve this alignment so necessary for the practice of embodied somatic leadership.

Pākehā (White settler) Heather Came-Friar and Māori Moahuia Goza provide lessons from their embodied leadership and practice of women-centered anti-racism praxis that is *mana*-maintaining, is constructive, maintains relationships and preserves the inherent prestige and sacredness of women and of all parties in Chapter 6, “Antiracism in Aotearoa New Zealand: Perspectives of a Māori Woman and a Pākehā Woman on Maintaining Man” *Mana*—authority, power and prestige—is an Indigenous principle that is central to life in Māori culture and includes spiritual, social, mental and familial considerations. The authors argue that the Marxist notion of debate—putting up a thesis, someone responding with an antithesis that grows into a new synthesis with the radical tools of structural analysis and feminist methods of consciousness-raising remain relevant and useful in building common ground. These techniques allow deep talking to build shared understandings and power analysis so that critical questions can be asked and answered: Who is benefitting from this situation? Where does power reside? How is it maintained? How might it be disrupted? *Mana* maintaining antiracism work is relational and requires active listening and ideally time *kanohi ki te kanohi*—face to face—to engage in *whanaungatanga*—active relationship building. Came-Friar also speaks about her internal examination as a settler woman as a necessary part of her anti-racist praxis.

Embodied Protests

Protest typically has been represented as “demonstrating against something.” This is a misrepresentation. Protest is “demonstrating for something,” calling for an action, a change, a different reality. Protest is hence leadership in the sense of being a process that influences others to accomplish an objective held by the protesters. Protest is embodied somatic leadership since the bodies of the protesters represent their intentions, their “stalwart standing for an action or change,” their often quiet determination to stand until the action is taken or the change is made. Body protest is “the use of women’s bodies by women to challenge gender restrictions. . . [and] to activate women-centric legal reforms. . . It also encompasses the therapeutic goals of asserting dominance over one’s body and of facilitating one’s expression of womanhood in revolt against a patriarchal society” (Alexandre, 2006, pp. 178–179). As Mendez and Mora (2013) argued in their study of the embodied leadership of female Pentecostal pastors:

By careful identification of resistance acts, how they evolve and how they are continuously created through the women’s embodied language, one can begin to identify how resistance practices contribute to the formation of subjectivities and to the development of leadership identities. (p. 131)

Barbara Sutton declared that “the body (clothed or unclothed) is the tool of protest *par excellence*. Most political protest is enacted through the body—from marches to political theater, to the chaining of the body to a tree or building. . . The body also serves as a symbol, a text that conveys political meanings” (2007, p. 143).

Paarlberg-Kvam (2016) contended

. . . women’s agency in deciding how and when to employ their bodies in protest, along with the boldness of their physical presence in public streets and restricted territories, is a way of putting back together the pieces of a self, and insisting on the subjectivity and full humanity of women. (p. 356)

Mass marches, mass protests in the streets, picketing, withholding sexual favors, legal protests, theater, artistic performativity, and naked protests comprise typical approaches to protesting that women employ.

Naked protests, in particular, have taken center stage in recent years, partly because many of them have taken place on social media. Culturally infused as a curse in Africa, naked protests have more recently been undertaken as a method of reclaiming one’s body, of desexualizing it, challenging the patriarchal order, and boldly separating it from the social meanings imposed on it. Naked protest, Mathebula (2022) argued, “is a powerful form of protest that transforms a woman’s body from social construction of vulnerability and consumption to a site of militancy, defiance and one that speaks back from a position of solidarity and strength” (p. 25).

Aliaa Magda Elmahdy's naked photograph on social media "brought sex to Tahrir Square in Egypt" (Eileraas, 2014, p. 45). She posted her naked self as a claim to her own body, stripping it from the "patriarchal cartography of Tahrir Square and the gendering of national space more broadly, as well as to 'remember'" (Eileraas, 2014, p. 46). Her remembering referred to the "girl in the blue bra" who was in Tahrir Square protesting, appropriately veiled and covered, and was dragged and beaten and kicked by the military, revealing her blue bra. She became a symbol of the abuse of power of the military. Elmahdy more recently became associated with the Ukrainian group FEMEN, composed of young women who protest against the government partly naked, an association that has caused some criticism as crossing boundaries between the colonized and the West.

In China, Ye Haiyan rendered her naked body online as a site of embodied protest initially to publicize and criminalize a shocking incident in which the principal of a secondary school forcibly took young girl students to a hotel to have sex with politicians. Ye Haiyan, naked, held a sign that read "Principal, get a room with ME, Leave the Pupils Alone!" (Lin, 2019, p. 865). When asked why she appeared naked on social media, Ye Haiyan responded that:

This is the power of the body. I think it is a very unique weapon for fighting and struggling. It has become a practical tool, because I know I can get what I want – the attention of the public. So the body is deliberately presented and my own purpose is to seize the courage of the public. It is no longer an individual behavior, but a social behavior: a social protest. Lin (2019, p. 866)

Ye Haiyan also went to the actual site of the sexual abuse and raised a poster and photographed the place, "making an ordinary place an iconic site in the embodied process" (Lin, 2019, p. 865).

SlutWalks often protests in near-naked "slutty" attire to protest the rape culture and sexual violence, physically arguing that the way women dress is not responsible for such violence.

Withholding of sex has been another way women have protested injustices or political rivalries or corruption they deem are hurting their country. The Colombian women's sex strike of 2006 staged to prevent gang violence resulted in a lowered homicide rate (Witton, 2022). Their cross-legged movement in 2011 resulted in a better road being built to connect their town to the province. The Kenyan sex strike in 2009 to force political rivals to reconcile and get on with government was successful (Witton, 2022). Liberian women employed a sex strike to punctuate their daily ritual of protesting the civil war. As leader of the protest, Leymee Gbowee explained: "What else do we have to lose? Our bodies are their battlefields: Let's just put our bodies out there" (Tansimore, 2021, para 14). Although the strike did not end the war, it was an additional weapon they employed in their persistent battle to stop the pointless slaughter.

Reclaiming our bodies has been the goal of the feminist movement and also of a number of protest movements. In protests such as #freethenipple, young women