I went off to fight the war in Vietnam. Became a sergeant in the Army. Army is strange. They give you jobs; you are not qualified to perform. Made me a typist, when I was kicked out of typing in high school. Made me a company clerk (like Radar in M*A*S*H, except it was Vietnam). Then they made me a Golf Pro, and never had played golf in my life. Here is the photo proof. Made me a squad leader to guard buildings at night while bullets whizzed overhead, and sometimes mortar shells. Saw lots of body bags stacked up on the airstrip, in Saigon (no Ho Chi Mingh City). So how does someone who can’t type, shoot, or play golf wind up as someone who can do all of these things. My leader traits come from practice. I learned to break out beyond my leaderly-narrative-others-expected: to type 85 words per minute, to shoot M14 and M16 (& grenade launcher & M60 – don’t ask). But learning golf, that took me into my living story theatre of leadership, and my present career (the typing helped). Since I am all about stories and theatre, let me put this into a three-act play (which is a kind of narrative Beginning, Middle, End, but in my way of telling, I begin to break out of it, into the roots of living story noticing):

**SAMPLE HOMEWORK FORMAT (3 scenes of dialogue; 3 applications to chapter)**

**SCENE 1: RISING ACTION**

Colonel Bark: “Sergeant Boje, you’ve been a good company clerk. Radar couldn’t dun it any better. But we’re replacing you with one of those college grads, who is a CPA (Certified Public Accountant). So as reward for 6 months of great work, you can have any job in special services?”

Sergeant Boje: “Yes sir. I choose golf pro.”
Colonel Bark: “OK, tomorrow, 7AM you take charge of the Pro shop, start passing out Green Fees, and organize some tournaments for the boys coming in for R&R, and you know the general like to play in em too.”

SCENE 2: CLIMAX (good story has some conflict in it, some kind of melt down)
General Westlake: “Say how can I control my slice. It seems to be getting worse. You’re the golf pro. What’s your advice?”
Golf Pro Boje: “Interlock your hands together, around the club handle, now pull it straight back over your head like you are raising both hands to the sky. Then, let the arms and club relax and fall onto your backside. OK, now gently bring your arms back into position, back over your head, and let the club come to rest just behind the ball. Practice that ten times each morning before you tee off.”
The day goes by. Boje is reading books, getting even with that CPA that took his job. Decides he’s going to college too, just as soon as he gets stateside. The general comes back in with his Spalding clubs.
General Westlake: “Sergeant Boje, you are to be congratulated. Your golf pro advice straightened out my game. What other tips you got for me?”
Golf Pro Boje: “Sir, come back tomorrow morning, and I’ll have one for you.”
The general exits. This is the interesting part. Boje had not told the general that he had never played golf in his life. Boje was reading his first book, one written by Arnold Palmer, on how to play golf. Boje had memorized one of the lessons and took the general through it. Now Boje was reading another lesson.
Let’s fast forward too the conflict part – and its kind of comical too:
Adrian Cronauer (inspiration for Robin Williams in Good Morning Vietnam movie; he’s a radio personality on Armed Forces Radio): “Boje, how about putting some Green Fees aside for me? I hate getting up at 6AM, standing in line with all the general’s chauffeurs. Cut me a break?”
Golf Pro Boje: “What do I get out of this. Colonel finds out, and I’m back in the typing pool.” {There is this voice in Boje’s head; it’s his father → “don’t be an idiot. You know you’ll get caught. Do you really want to risk it all to go to a party?”}
Adrian Cronauer: “Tell you what, you put some aside, and I’ll invite you to the most amazing party you ever been too, a Hawaiian Lou how.”
Next day Boje puts aside one Green Fee. He ignores one voice in side and listens to one that’s a bit greedier. But trouble brews
Captain Counter: “OK, Mr. Golf Pro, I been standing outside, counting. 39 people came in to get Green Fees. And your colonel tells me, 40 are supposed to be passed out. I got you dead to rights. You’ve been shorting the count, probably trading them on the black market.
Golf Pro Boje: “Hold on, must be some mistake. Maybe you did not count it up correctly.”
Captain Counter: “You saying I can’t count to 39,”
Golf Pro Boje: “No, I’m saying, maybe you missed one.”
Captain Counter: “I’m coming back in the morning, and counting again. Better be 40 or there’ll be hell to pay.”

Later that day:
Adrian Cronauer: “You got my Green Fee?”
Golf Pro Boje: “Got it here. But, I cannot do this again. Some captain was out here counting them up, and accused me of shorting. So this is all you ever get.”
Adrian Cronauer: “Why don’t you tell your friends in Personnel to send his pay records to Korea or some such place, maybe to Alaska.” {Mother’s voice in the head → “that’s really dumb! You are almost caught now you are going to do it again.”}
Another voice →”Be smart kid. You think officers should be living different than the enlisted folks. Who do you think is doing all they dying on the front line?”

Golf Pro Boje: “I know that has happened to officers before. Especially to ones that mess with company clerks. But, I’m not a company clerk.” {That voice again → “Right remember the jerk that had you all picking up cigarette butts at 5AM, what an idiot. He stopped that soon enough, when that guy in Finance shipped his pay records to Germany.” Another voice, my dad “That is not right. He deserves his pay too. Think about what you are getting into.”}

Adrian Cronauer: “Think bigger. Why not trade some Green Fees with the Navy guys who don’t want to see all the fees go the Generals. Those officers just send their chauffeur to stand in line. You know the game.”

Golf Pro Boje: “I know a few Navy supply sergeants. They love to play golf. Maybe they’d trade me some nets and poles, and I could build a driving ranger, right outside this golf shack. Still for now, I’m not pulling any more out.”

Adrian Cronauer: “Party is on Sunday. Here’s the address. Guess I’ll get up early and stand in line from now on.”

SCENE 3: FALLING ACTION (dénouement to pull some loose ends together)
I’m on my way to the party. I decide never to short anything ever again. Makes my conscience reel. The squirrel in my head is spinning the cage wheel, and it hurts my head to think about how stupid I had been.

Adrian Cronauer: “Welcome to the party Boje. Except for those guys in the funny Hawaiian skirts, everyone else here but you, and me, is a general. Look at the food and drink.

Three sergeants, of Hawaiian decent are moving meet out of a lava rock pit, unfurling palm leaves, revealing roast pig, Teriyaki chickens, and other delicacies.

Golf Pro Boje: “Where did it all come from.”

Adrian Cronauer: “I could tell you, but have to shoot you… [I wait him out. He’s going to tell me anyway] … OK, you asked. The generals here, they rounded up these Hawaii born sergeants, and flew them to Hawaii on one of those over-sized bombers. They landed in Maui, picked up the pigs, lava rocks, and a flock of chickens, all a squawking and snorting. Then last night, the Hawaiians did up a lava pit fire, put in the meat all wrapped in palms, and covered in burlap. And then that’s all covered with dirt. It steams and roasts all night, and then the meat just falls off the bones. Can you believe it?”

Golf Pro Boje: “Sure nothing like this served to enlisted me. I don’t need to tell you that officers and enlisted do not eat the same food. Here I’m worried about shorting
some officer a Green Fee, and they are taking bombers to Hawaii, making these sergeants dress in skirts, and digging pits, so the generals can have a feast.”

Adrian Cronauer: “I know. Those with college guys get all the breaks. There are two sets of rules. One for the enlisted, and a whole other set of ethics for the officers.”

Golf Pro Boje: “Bet if these officers were putting as much energy into the front line, as they are here, we wouldn’t be losing this war.”

Adrian Cronauer: “The war was lost before it started. French lost it before us. We just too arrogant to believe we can’t succeed where the French failed.”

Golf Pro Boje: “Shouldn’t these generals be on the front lines?”

Adrian Cronauer: “These ain’t no General MacArthurs. Not a General Patton in the bunch. You are not going to see generals any closer to the front line than Saigon.”

Golf Pro Boje: “I guess that’s true. Where there’s generals, there’s golf! And there ain’t no golf on the front line. Actually, I know of one or two generals at the DMZ (demilitarized zone).”

Adrian Cronauer: “Really?”

Golf Pro Boje: “There’s a guy in my barracks. He has his own jeep, and a Lugar pistol, not military issue. He gets these calls in the middle of the night. Does not seem attached to any unit. He is not in our unit. Looks like a bouncer or one of those guys who breaks legs for loan sharks. Anyway, the guys in the unit are all scared to death of him. So they ask me to approach him and find out what he does.”

Adrian Cronauer: “So what’s he do?”

Golf Pro Boje: “His job is to break into supply depots. When the generals, who are at the DMZ, cannot get a part for a cannon, or get sent toilet paper instead of ammunition, cause they did not fill in the forms properly or some kid could not find it, or didn’t give a toss. Well this guy cuts the wire to the fence, finds what the generals at the front line need to keep their unit in ammo and gear, and then stencils a jeep and loads it up, and drives it on up to the DMZ. Then, he comes back here to Saigon, and waits on the call.”

Adrian Cronauer: “So what’s he get out of it?”

Golf Pro Boje: “Turns out the guy loves to cook. Wants to give up breaking legs, and become a chef. So the agreement is, in two more months, of breaking and entering, and stealing supplies to send to the front, he gets to go to cook’s school.”

Adrian Cronauer: “Good Morning Vietnam.” (Actually the phrase is ‘Good Morning Shadoloo!’)

Note: Living stories never end, are told differently each time…

APPLICATIONS OF 3 POINTS IN CHAPTER TO YOUR STORY TO LEADERSHIP (please include source, chapter, page #):

1. ETHICS – “Do you have voice as a leader, as a consumer, as a worker in what is happening to you each day?” (Boje book, chap 1, p. 4). Application to story: In the Army the sergeants make things work, the generals just take all the credit and enjoy the feast. Boje learned leadership is theatre, with a front stage (counting the green fees by the officers), and a back stage (secret parties where hundreds of thousands of tax payer dollars were spent flying sergeants

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1 For more on Adrian Cronauer see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adrian_Cronauer
to Hawaii, air force pilots ferrying back pigs, chickens, and lava rocks for the feast, while the enlisted eat stuff you don’t want to have described to you. The ethics of the front stage and the back stage don’t match up. Sure shorting Green Fees is a very bad act, but the Army runs on sergeants trading favors. And yes, I did trade more of them, with the Navy supply sergeants, and built a driving range, expanded services, and made things happen that gave more soldiers rest and relaxation. They needed it more than the generals, who could well afford to pay their own Green Fees. I have all these voices in my head. I’ll bet you do too. There is an argument going on among the voices. My point is the age-old collision of categorical (obey every rule and command) and the situation ethics (do what’s right to do to do your job for the people who matters; generals don’t matter).

2. **THEATRE CHARACTER TRAITS** – “… how for example you select character traits to fit the situation and the organizing you do, as well as you approach to participation and power” (Boje Chap 1, p. 2). Application to Story: Fake it till you make it. Boje did not know how to type, play golf, or manage Green Fees. But, he kept at it until he did. The narrative traits emerged and were adopted by him. His theatre was reading books, and giving advice, and finding the narrative advice worked for the golfing generals. Boje learned that leadership is theatre. He learned that to teach, you got to perform, you got to demonstrate, you got to read up on the masters. So that is why teaching comes so naturally to Boje. After all, what is a professor: someone who ain’t done it, teaching other people who don’t know how to do it, yet convincing them --they can do it.

3. **MOTIVATION** – “I noticed the theatre of leadership, the way we sergeants did the work, and the strutting peacock officers took all the credit Boje’s motivation for reading books was to get even with the CPA that stole his job as company clerk” (Boje book, chap 1, p. 6). Application to Story: I began to question my narrative socialization. Boje noticed that officers with the college education, to have better food, more interesting parties, and get to earn more money in the world. He reads a book a day, while waiting for the generals to return from a day playing golf. He finds out he can learn, and can teach too. So he enrolls in college, and gets out of the stateside remaining service, four months early. GI bill was sensible then. It paid his tuition and a living allowance through community college. Then it was extended in 1972 to pay four years, then in 1974, extended to pay returning vets for MBA, and then in 1976, extended to pay them for Ph.D. Here’s the rub on that storyline. After Boje got his Ph.D. they slammed the door shut. No more Ph.D. education or MBE education either for the enlisted; just for officers. And now look at it, enlisted folks go to Iraq, are promised training they don’t get, and medical benefits, they don’t get, and they trade their life away for a couple years of community college. Not a good deal! A lot cheaper to put the returning vets through college. Make them all Ph.D.’s. At the very least, education would become a lot more interesting. Cheaper to pay the tuition for the veterans than for them the wind up homeless (20% of homeless are vets), in the gutter, like too many of them (in Vietnam era) did (vote is still out on the current war
vets).
So you can see from my narrative and story is a dance of leadership that is definitely all about theatre. You recruit characters without the narrative traits to do the job, then train them in the narrative behaviors, or motivate them to acquire them somehow, and when the situation arises, they step up and sometimes turn the wrong thing into the right thing to find their living story (but often not).

**Leadership is Theatre!**

There’s X – behaviors that get plotted into some kind of narrative or story pattern. Two common ones are transactions (like trading Green Fees for supplies from the Navy to build a driving range). And there are transformations, motivating a company clerk to transform his life by going to college, and becoming a professor.

There’s Y of power, the two main themes of power are “will to serve” (like serving your country or some customers wanting R&R), and there is “will to power,” wanting power to do something for you, or better yet, do something for others. That means, that sometimes a will to power (getting supply parts to the front line in order to survive), can turn into a will to serve (stealing the parts from your own nation’s messed up crazy supply chain, so lives get saved).

There’s Z of participation, in the dialogues (conversations) that happen (such as between Adrian and David). These dialogues, and ways people participate, are one of the main jobs of leadership: getting people involved, getting them to reflect on things. Letting them express their voice. There are four voices I think are pretty important. 1\(^{st}\) voice of the autocratic leader, who cannot listen to anyone else. 2\(^{nd}\) voice, a dialogue between two people, each with their own logic and point-of-view (sometimes the 2\(^{nd}\) voice gets internalized, and you can hear your boss or parent commenting). 3\(^{rd}\) voice, the voice of ethics (sometimes that parent or some teacher or holy person has some ethical wisdom that becomes a voice you hear in your head, like when you about to trade Green Fees for something stupid). 4\(^{th}\) voice is the voice of the voiceless (like all those soldiers dying at the front, because the supply chain cannot get weapon parts and gear through the bureaucratic paperwork shuffle, and so someone has to steal it, to make the thing work, which is a way to respond to the voiceless, those just dying for no good reason).