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Emergent Leadership: The Eco-leader Discourse

Introduction

The continuous search for new leadership ideas is driven by two main urges: (1) the need to find contemporary leadership solutions to the changing social, political and economic conditions; and (2) the need to keep the huge leadership/management development industry afloat, through selling the latest ideas through books, consultancy and training, business and management schools, etc. These two drivers are not always compatible. The hubris and the marketing of leadership sometimes get in the way of supporting a legitimate search for successful leadership. New leadership is often 'mutton dressed as lamb', that is the old is dressed up as the new in order to sell the book or course. Continuity and experience can be dismissed and overlooked simply because they are not new. Tradition and orthodoxy are not the marketer's favourite words; new sells, old doesn't. Leaders themselves when new to post are under huge pressure to generate some signature change in order to prove their worth, often to the detriment of continuity to the organization. Politicians also scramble to modernize public institutions and to find ways to demonstrate their credentials as change agents. The Labour Party in the UK became successful when they re-branded to 'New Labour' (this was true of many other leftist European parties). In academia, modernizing and modernity are now passé as we fly into the future of the latest 'new' which usually involves the word 'post', the post-modern, post-structural, post-industrial, etc. The fetish of the new is nicely captured by the phrase 'I Pod therefore I am' (Jones, 2005) suggesting you only exist if you follow the latest trend; many parents will fully understand this sentiment. Leadership itself can become what Marx called a 'commodity fetish' whereby the thing itself once commodifed, i.e. is changed into a product to sell, takes on a fetishist presence with little relation to what it actually is.

However, beneath the hubris, there are signs of a new leadership discourse emerging which I call the Eco-leader discourse.

New discourses in leadership

Therefore, from a critical perspective, new leadership theories and models should be treated with care. One helpful way to identify what a new leadership model is

really offering is to think about it in terms of its underlying discourse. Is it repeating old news, does it bring subtle changes showing signs of an emerging new discourse, or perhaps it merges discourses? I will briefly look at new developments in leadership to see if there are signs of new leadership discourses emerging. Right now no clear discourse has overtaken the Messiah discourse. Although the fervour for transformational leaders has died down (after 25 years this has had a good run) and there is now a vocal minority who critique transformational leadership, the Messiah leadership discourse remains strong. Take a look at the package offered to Ford's new CEO, Alan Mulally: 'Ford said Mr Mulally would receive a salary of $2 million a year, plus a $7.5 million signing bonus. He will also receive $11 million to offset performance awards and stock options forfeited by leaving Boeing' (Maynard, 2006: B3). At just short of US$20 million, this initial package suggests that the company are expecting a high return from this leader. Perhaps to act as saviour and resurrect Ford (a company of national symbolic importance) and with it American manufacturing industry, hence the call from the US President to the company chairman regarding this appointment. This is an example illustrating that the belief in the Messiah discourse is alive and well.

A new discourse will emerge but has not done so yet, however, I will briefly note three areas in which there are signs of change in contemporary leadership thinking which could herald a new emergent discourse:

1   post-heroic leadership;
2   leadership spirit;
3   systemic and emergent leadership.

These three leadership frames often refer back to the previous discourses I have already described and they also overlap and merge with each other. Together they may also point towards a new emergent discourse.

Post-heroic leaders

The Messiah discourse is not the final word, but it remains the contemporary dominant discourse in the mainstream literature and practising leaders' mindset. My personal field experience, working in different sectors and continents, finds that when people generally talk and think about leadership, they think of the transformational-charismatic-inspirational leader, someone who influences followers. However, there has been a small but growing backlash against the Transformational and hero leader.

Binney et al. (2004) agree that the Messiah discourse which they call hero-leadership remains so pervasive that people don't even recognize it; however, their analysis of the hero leader misses the important points raised under the Messiah discourse, which differentiates this leadership from the traditional 'Great Man' version of the leader. Huey (1994) who coined the term post-heroic leadership, and Mintzberg (2004b) in his *Harvard Business Review* (HBR) article 'Enough leadership' berate the recent glut of leadership hype and wisely counsel moderation on the subject. Badarraco (2001) in his HBR article 'We don't need another hero' makes the case for quiet moral leadership 'modesty and restraint are in large

measure responsible for their extraordinary achievement'. Binney et al. (2004) set up a false dichotomy, taking the Transformational leader as an individual figure and ignoring the discourse and the broader aims as discussed in the Messiah discourse. Many authors in this vein establish yet another binary split: positing (bad) hero leader versus (good) post-heroic leader. The hero depicted is the tired 'Great Man hero', a solo character, with formal power, who exerts charismatic control over a dependent, passive workforce. Their answer is the post-heroic leader, but under examination we find regurgitated leadership approaches, taken directly from the Therapist leader discourse.

Their analysis ignores a generation of leadership literature and practice, and fails to address what was new about the Messiah discourse. They do not address the covenantal leadership, the narrative, generative and dialoguing approaches or the efforts to lead through strong cultures in order to overcome traditional hierarchy, dependency and control. The post-heroic leader does, however, show some signs of change, it is a reaction to the noise and bells of the 'tub thumping' evangelic style of the Transformational leader. The leader is toned down, forceful but with humility and quiet but focused influence. Examples of this approach are Badarraco's (2001) quiet leader, and Jim Collins' (2001) Level 5 leadership 'who blends extreme personal humility with intense professional will'. Binney et al. summarize the effective post-heroic leader:

If leaders are to connect with others and understand the context, they need to bring themselves to the job of leading. Leaders can do this in the following ways:

- **they come across to others as genuinely human, and don't wear any kind of mask**
- **they draw on all their humanity, their intelligence, their emotions and their intuition. They don't stay in their heads and draw solely on their rational selves. They make use of all their senses and intelligence**
- **they remember what they know from their life experiences and make use of them in the world of work**

(Binney et al., 2004)

As can be seen, the leader needs to be authentic, emotionally intelligent, sensitive and less rational, privileging the emotional and internal self. They describe the post-heroic leader as relational, as about people, the classic 'leader as Therapist' discourse. The post-heroic leadership literature also includes the recent idea of leader-coaches, advocating that leaders should be coaches to their followers and should create 'coaching cultures' in the workplace; the leader-coach is the archetype leader-therapist. Much of this literature represents ideas from democratic and the Human Relations movement, it is particularly close to Greenleaf's 'servant leader' (1977) which pioneered post-heroic leadership under a different name, over 30 years before the latest post-heroic, new idea. Servant leadership is again ensconced in the 'therapist discourse'. Larry Spears, the CEO of the Greenleaf Center, describes servant-leadership:

As we near the end of the twentieth century, we are beginning to see that traditional autocratic and hierarchical modes of leadership are slowly yielding to a

> newer model – one that attempts to simultaneously enhance the personal growth of workers and improve the quality and caring of our many institutions through a combination of teamwork and community, personal involvement in decision making, and ethical and caring behavior. This emerging approach to leadership and service is called *servant–leadership*. (Spears, 1995)

This language identifies personal growth within a 'caring community', positioning the organization as some kind of therapeutic clinic, led by a 'therapist leader'. This resonates with Rose's (1990) comments about therapeutic culture at work: 'The management of subjectivity has become a central task for the modern organization.' The post-heroic leader literature also calls for dispersed leadership, networking and matrix organizations and advocates greater collaboration, in line with much of what the Transformational leader set out to achieve.

Observing this from a discourse perspective, there appears to be a contemporary synthesis and a tension between the Therapist discourse and the Messiah discourse. It is as if the Therapist discourse is pulling leadership in one direction, and the desire/need for the Messiah discourse in another. Attempts have been made to harness the Therapeutic character to serve the interests of the Messiah discourse. For example, Jim Collins' 'Level 5 leader' retains the heroism but inverts it. Rather than acting with machismo and visionary language, the Level 5 leader advocates humility, focus and resilience as tools to achieve the same outcome. 'The most powerfully transformative executives possess a paradoxical mixture of personal humility and professional will. They are timid and ferocious. Shy and fearless, they are rare – and unstoppable' (Collins, 2001: 1). The post-heroic leader literature also leans towards spirit(ual) leadership, which is both explicit and also implicit in the tone of their claims.

Leadership spirit

I would like to use the term 'leadership spirit' rather than 'spiritual leadership' as it is not possible to succinctly define what is spiritual and how 'spiritual leadership' impacts in the workplace. Leadership spirit implies that leaders act with spirit, or there is a spirit of leadership. This spirit can be generically acknowledged as the human spirit. For some people, the divine informs this human spirit and they may speak of being spiritual. Some may wish to go further and say that their spirituality is informed by an organized religion, 'I have Catholic spirituality or a Buddhist spirituality, or I am a Muslim, or a Hindu'. For others, the human spirit is informed by the natural environment, deep ecologists, for example, and some New Age religions and pagans. For others, the human spirit is informed by an inexplicable but universal transcendent spirit, for atheists and humanists the human spirit comes out of a deeply human experience. For others, it is a mystery or a mixture of the above.

In this context, it matters little what informs or underpins the leadership spirit, however, the spirit must support the joy, creativity, the positive life-force and the underlying ethics and holistic approach of the Eco-leader discourse. Practising how to leverage this leadership spirit is more important than finding its source.

I will now take a critical look at some of the literature on spiritual leadership.

Spiritual leadership: compassionate corporate Bodhisattvas

(A Bodhisattva is a Buddhist saint, one who attains perfect knowledge but resides on earth.) There is a growing interest in spiritual leadership in the literature. I don't intend to cover this subject in depth in this book, although it is important in this context as it helps to signify the next emergent leadership discourse – Eco-leadership discourse.

A recent article in *Business Week* (Conlon, 1999) estimated that at least 10,000 Bible and prayer groups meet regularly in US workplaces and the Academy of Management now has a Special Interest Group on Management, Spirituality and Religion at its conference while management books and journals are full of refer-ences to spirituality.

Patricia Aburdene lists seven new megatrends for 2010; all support the forma-tion of the Eco-leadership discourse:

1   *The power of spirit*: In times of change and turbulence people seek the journey inwards: 78% sought spiritual practices (meditation and yoga).
2   *The dawn of conscious capitalism*: Top companies and CEOs are re-engineering themselves to fulfil all stakeholders' needs (not just the bottom line).
3   *Leading from the middle:* Leadership not just at senior level. Leadership at middle levels where values and morality are carefully considered and driven throughout the organization.
4   *Spirituality* in business is a growing trend.
5   *The value-driven consumer*: They buy from companies that respect the environ-ment, their people and the community.
6   *The wave of conscious solutions*: They are tracking their results of spirituality in business. As an example, hybrid cars (sensitive to resource usage) are being developed and offered on terms of 0% interest.
7   *The socially responsible investment boom*: Investment analysts are placing funds and faith in companies that respect the environment, their people and com-munities. Globally, labour forces are not being exploited as they were 10 years ago (e.g. Nike).

(Aburdene, 2005: xxi–xxii cited in Katz, 2006)

Mitroff and Denton in their book *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America* write: 'If one word best captures the meaning of spirituality and the vital role it plays in people's lives, it is interconnectedness' (1999: xvi). Their spiritual audit finds these responses to how corporate employees define their personal spirituality:

• Highly individual and intensely personal
• Belief that there is a supreme being that governs the universe and that there is a purpose for everybody and everything
• We are all interconnected. Everything affects everything else
• Being in touch with your interconnectedness
• No matter how bad things are, they will always work out

- We are here to serve others/mankind
- Connected to caring, hope, kindness, love and optimism.

With the following definition of spirituality:

- Is not denominational
- Is inclusive and embraces everybody
- Is universal and timeless
- Is the ultimate source of meaning and purpose in our lives
- Expresses the awe we feel when we are in the presence of the transcendent
- Is sacredness and everything, including the ordinariness of everyday life
- Deep feeling of interconnectedness of everything
- Integrally connected to inner peace and calm
- Provides one with an inexhaustible source of energy, faith and will power
- Spirituality and faith are inseparable.

(Mitroff and Denton, 1999: 23–5 cited in Katz, 2006)

Their findings are interesting as they blend the Christian-Judaeo tradition finding that spirituality is individual and transcendent, with the Eastern and perhaps indigenous Native American tradition, focusing on the ecological ideas that 'We are all interconnected. Everything affects everything else'. I will return to this point later.

It is rare in other literature to find the transcendental idea that there is a supreme divinity. Much of the spiritual literature is difficult as it merges with humanism, individualism and rationalism. For example, Zohar and Marshall use the term Spiritual *Intelligence* which clearly demonstrates the 'stickiness' of the Controller discourse and its underlying message of management efficiency and rationality. Spirituality paradoxically becomes linked to cognitive intelligence and rationality, for no other reason except to sell to the management market which means keeping it within the normative, rational discourse. I was listening to a leadership lecture recently on spiritual development for business leaders, where participants were offered 'executive yoga' in the morning and 'executive meditation' in the evening. I laughed: how does 'executive yoga' differ from yoga?

The paradox is that these techniques are supposed to move leaders away from the ego and the rational and yet making yoga and meditation executive attempts to make it elite in some way for the 'special executive'. The language used signifies and reproduces the existing normative management discourse and the power relations and structures that accompany it.

Zohar and Marshall describe Spiritual intelligence (SQ) as 'the intelligence with which we access our deepest meanings, values, purposes and highest emotions' (2004: 3) They state:

In understanding SQ and Spiritual Leadership it is important to list the twelve transformative processes of SQ (these are characteristics displayed in a person of high SQ):

- Self-awareness
- Spontaneity

- **Vision and Value led**
- **Holistic**
- **Compassion (feeling with)**
- **Celebration of diversity**
- **Field–independence**
- **Asking why?**
- **Reframe**
- **Positive use of adversity**
- **Humility**
- **Sense of vocation.**

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(ibid.: 80)

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Taking these 12 processes, I would argue that not one of these could be separated from the characteristics of a leader with a value-based, humanistic stance. This begs the question, what separates the spiritual leader from an ethical 'good' leader? Being religious or spiritual doesn't always lead to positive outcomes; many a spiritual leader has failed due to their immoral and unethical acts.

Reflecting wider social trends, some employees are seeking a deeper meaning from their work life and attempt to integrate a 'spiritual-work' identity (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003). Attempts to claim spiritual cultures increase productivity, are now being made (Becker, 1998; Altman, 2001). How does an organization pro-mote spirituality in the workplace? According to May (2000), the most important influence is leadership.

Pantoja describes how the Servant-Leader idea was born from Christology and is very much situated in the Messiah discourse as well as the Therapist discourse:

> **Servant-leadership is symbolized by *the throne* and *the towel*. He (Christ) knew his cosmic authority: 'that the Father had put all things under His power' (Jn. 13:3). That was the *throne-symbol*. Because of that ultimate sense of security, He was able to humble Himself to 'wrap a towel around His waist' like a lowly servant, 'to wash his disciple's feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around Him' (Jn. 13: 4-5). That was the *towel-symbol*. (Pantoja, 1999)**

The Servant-Leader presents us with is a classic paradox of a super-heroic/post-heroic leader. As Pantojoa's example shows, what better symbol of the Messianic discourse than a Messiah? These humble post-heroic leaders are presented as more heroic than the Transformational leader they criticize. Post-heroic leaders retain their impact as forceful leaders and yet are wonderful people, with humil-ity, relational skills, servitude, compassion, authenticity and humanness. The post-heroic/servant-leader is not new, there have been many religious and spiri-tual teachers following this path in the recent and the very distant past.

The recent interest in spiritual leaders seems to be linked to modernity's alien-ating characteristics and the quest for meaning and answers when traditional reli-gion and community have faltered in the West (Handy, 1997; Goffee and Jones, 2006). This spiritual movement in the leadership literature parallels the rising interest in New Age Eastern spirituality, which grew from the 1960s and has been linked to therapy culture, mixing personal and spiritual growth. The language used to describe the post-heroic leaders creates an image of a Therapist leader

with spiritual and moral intent. These post-heroic leaders, however, are often more idealized, more of a fantasy, than charismatic leaders of the past. Reading some of the post-heroic literature, one gets a vision of a new breed of corporate leader; the *compassionate corporate Bodhisattvas.*

A glance at management literature shows books and journals full of references to these subjects, writings on Zen and Taoist management techniques, Benedictine monks and Gaia management books and courses, American Indian symbolism and rituals in training and development for managers. Spirituality is now entering the leadership literature and practice: 'For at least a decade the press has reported company leaders speaking about spirituality and business, while multiple publications have advocated links between corporate success and issues of the soul' (Calas and Smircich, 2003: 329).

According to May (2000), spirituality is the most important influence in leadership. But as Tourish and Pinnington point out, 'Ironically, this effort is often driven by a very non-spiritual concerns – the desire to increase profits' (2002: 165).

> **The goals of SMD are personal growth and self-creation i.e. a state of being rather than skills or knowledge about the organization. In addition, SMD provides a context in which individuals are able to search for meaning and explore feelings of solidarity and re-identification with their work rules and work organization. (Bell and Taylor, 2004)**

Ackers and Preston claim that a new priestly cadre is being 'developed':

> **Arguing that a new evangelical, revelatory form of management development is making its way from the margins to the mainstream, wherein managers are treated as a 'priestly cadre' whose spiritual needs must be satisfied through semi-monastic retreats to recharge their batteries. (1992: 697–8)**

Žižek suggests why New Age and Eastern spirituality are popular with global business, his claim is that the effects are similar to the impact of the Messiah discourse when it becomes dysfunctional leading to fundamentalist and ultraconformist cultures:

> **The Buddhist stance is ultimately that of indifference, of quenching all passions that strive to establish differences … Here, one is almost tempted to resuscitate the old, infamous Marxist cliché of religion as 'the opium of the people,' as the imaginary supplement of real-life misery. The 'Western Buddhist' meditative stance is arguably the most efficient way for us to fully participate in the capitalist economy while retaining the appearance of sanity. If Max Weber were alive today, he would definitely write a second, supplementary volume to his Protestant Ethic, titled The Taoist Ethic and the Spirit of Global Capitalism. (Žižek, 2002)**

Žižek (2003) describes how Ichikawa Hakugen thoughtfully criticized the disastrous Japanese Second World War experience. Hakugen believed that the Zen focus on inner peace, the lack of a focus on social justice, the doctrine of no-self and other Buddhist traits all contributed to sow the seeds for Japan's militaristic aggression and which led to huge cruelty and a terrible defeat (see Victoria, 1998).

Žižek claims the doctrine of no-self and non-attachment means that individual responsibility is minimized. In the case of the workplace, if a leader can espouse these westernized versions of Eastern values, they can also expect a workforce to become indifferent, to focus on their inner peace and get the job done, with a sense of indifference to other concerns. The individual has a sense of non-attachment which frees them from ethical engagement, they are able to use their private inward spirituality as a coping mechanism which supports them but it does not encourage external engagement (Bell and Taylor, 2004).

The therapeutic/spiritual cultures espoused can also lead to an increased sense of focus on one's self, further embellishing a leader's narcissistic ego. This approach can also undermine the solidarity of collective agency by increasing a detached inward attitude that ends up being in servitude to rather than engagement with the corporate machine. So while on the surface the values of post-heroic and servant-leaders seem 'obviously good', when we deconstruct them, place them in the context of a corporation, in a capitalist workplace, or a public sector large organization, and ask questions of power and influence, the *new* post-heroic leader poses problems. Asking critical questions reveals more:

- *Who are these servant leaders serving?*
  In most cases of senior leaders, the answer is self-evident by checking their benefits packages, they serve themselves and also serve their shareholders, and funding stakeholders. As Freeman advocates: 'The more we can begin to think in terms of how to better serve stakeholders, the more likely we will be to survive and prosper over time' (1984: 80).
- *What are the structural hidden power relations?*
- *Does this 'post-heroic' leadership style embellished with spirituality enhance autonomy or undermine it?*
- *Does it increase the dependence of followers on the humble yet powerful leader?*
  Thomas Merton warns of the dangers of monastic novices idealizing him when he was their spiritual guide, with very damaging results, as they lose their autonomy aiming only to please and mimic him, and he lost his bearings as their spiritual director for a while: 'Penitents (Novice Monks) seduce you into taking the role of omnipotence and omniscience and in this situation while you are deluding' (Merton, 1966: 55). This is called transference and counter-transference in the psychoanalytic world, and any leader or person with influence (therapist, guru, teacher) should be alert to this danger. A leader who claims divine or spiritual qualities create a bigger danger as their followers may idealize them even more. These dangers are rarely discussed in the spiritual management literature.
- *Does this style increase or decrease personal power of a leader?*
  A wonderful person, a humble servant-leader will hold more power than the omnipotent high and mighty hero leader. When asked about great leaders, Ghandi, the Dalai Lama, and Martin Luther King are often cited, but their leadership relates to the betterment of humanity, not using their leadership power for company profit or personal success. The context can make a big difference. Non-attachment from material concerns is contradictory and inauthentic in most workplaces, unless the leader is very clear as to their authentic vocation, and how they use their leadership spirituality.

Merging discourses

Using the lenses of the discourses the post-heroic leaders waver between the Therapist characters and Messiah characters depending on the author, but encompass both aspects. What is interesting and different about this model is how the Messiah discourse is changing, taking on more contemplative spiritual-human values rather than the evangelical preacher values of the fundamentalist. This fits with social change and the rise of Western Buddhism, and Eastern spiritual influences and the demise of Western Protestant culture.

From a discourse perspective, the Messiah discourse is shifting towards the Eco-discourse whereby the leadership style is to focus more on immanence than transcendence, i.e. it is looking towards the inward transformation of leaders and followers rather than the Transformational leader's ability to outwardly change their followers. A key differential point is perhaps that a post-heroic leader can be inspirational without being charismatic.

What seems evident is that the post-heroic leader with a spiritual edge is very much a product of both the therapeutic and messianic discourse. The therapeutic discourse focuses on individual and team performance (close leadership) while the Messiah discourse supports culture change (distant leadership). There are really dangers of a 'sheep in wolf's clothing', super-powerful leaders presenting a veneer of humble/spirituality creating ever more conformist cultures though evoking increased employee detachment that reienforces the colluded-self.

In reality, leaders with such developed spirituality and whose egos are so 'other-centred' are so exceptional that they won't be flooding the corporate market in the next decade, and these qualities are difficult to train even in committed novitiates in religious seminaries.

However, the shift in emphasis to a more compassionate, ethical and socially responsible and connected leadership does resonate with increasing concerns about contemporary environmental issues. The rising interest in 'new' forms of spirituality and social activism is raising corporate social responsibility to the fore. Political and business leaders are adopting such a change. To many people's surprise 'The Terminator' has turned green. Arnold Schwarzenegger, governor of Californias, the world's twelth biggest greenhouse polluter, has taken some radical steps to improve the environment. Philanthropy and social responsibility are high on the leadership agenda, with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Clinton Climate Initiative, and other leaders giving substantial sums of money and commitment to these causes. Many companies have also realized the damage it does to their business if they ignore environmental issues, sustainability and social responsibility. The large oil and clothes companies are having to pay attention to the environmental concerns, critics call this 'greenwash' and I am sure some of it is, but awareness is rising and there is a tangible change taking place; see the websites of Gap, Nike, Shell and BP as examples of the attention given to these issues. Another example is that Tescos have announced that all of its delivery trucks will be fuelled by bio-diesel, and McDonalds has plans to recycle its cooking oil and use this to fule its delivery fleet.

Environmental and social responsibility leadership is an example of leadership initially coming from grass-roots environmental and social activists, who once were deemed an eccentric fringe, pressurizing corporate business to face its responsibilities, and their agenda being taken up by progressive leaders of business and politics.

Leadership seems to be moving in the direction away from the transformational evangelist and towards a more contemplative, connected leadership, favouring engagement rather than loyal followership.

However, the dangers of leaders performing rather than authentically embodying values such as niceness, compassion, morality, humility and spirituality are clear. Another problem is that there is a need for a radical vision to address the social and environmental issues and the new commercial conditions. Without a Messiah leadership, where will this come from?

The spiritual leader can evoke the ideal of inward calm, retreating from the world, rather than drawing on leadership spirit to address the urgent need for change. Without the visions and the grand narratives to inspire and align culture from the existing Messiah discourse, how organizations will hold together is yet to be articulated. What will create a common bond to prevent fragmentation without strong culture control? There are claims that the big picture will emerge from many smaller emergent successes, and there will be continuous flux. This takes us to the new emergent discourse of the Eco-leader discourse.

The Eco-leader discourse

The Eco-leadership discourse encompasses the systemic and emergent leadership I noted as the third leadership trend. I use the term 'Eco-leadership' to refer to an emerging leadership discourse which is immersed in leadership practices, values, metaphors and language which resonate with the term ecology. Ecology originates from biology and is a study of the inter-relations of living systems and the environment. Human ecology is the study of humans and their relationship to the environment.

At the heart of this discourse is connectivity, what Fritjof Capra called *The Web of Life* (1996). In this view of the world, ethics shifts from a purely anthropocentric (human-centred) worldview to an eco-centric view. There is an emerging sense that leaders of business, as well as social and political leaders are becoming (and need to become more) eco-literate, which means applying systems thinking and 'spirit' to their organizations and beyond. This leadership discourse is not just about going green or taking an environmentalist stance, although once in the Eco-leadership discourse, these issues become a natural extension of one's leadership thinking.

The Eco-leadership discourse is about a new paradigm of leadership which takes an ecological perspective. A leadership perspective which understands that solutions in one area of business may create problems in another. That growth in one industry causes decline in another, with social consequences. That short-term gains may have immediate benefits, but may have longer-term consequences which may damage the business and the environment. Eco-leadership recognizes that within an organization there are inter-dependent parts which make up a whole, this goes for all stakeholder relationships, and in ever widening circles that eventually reach the air that we breathe. It is about connectivity, inter-dependence and sustainability underpinned by an ethical socially responsible stance. The Eco-leadership discourse takes ethics beyond business ethics into social concerns; it takes ethics beyond human concerns and recognizes a responsibility

and relationship to the natural world. It also focuses the connectedness within each of us, and between each of us. The Eco-leadership discourse is fuelled by the human spirit. For some, this is underpinned by spirituality, for others not. Either way, the Eco-leadership discourse is a spirit-filled leadership, and a connected leadership. Eco-leadership has a tradition that can be traced back to many sources, to many of the great religious leaders, spiritual teachers, and philosophers and to pre-modern societies. In contemporary times, there is a rising momentum that suggests that the next discourse will be that of the Eco-leader. 'No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a part of the main. Any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee' (John Donne, 1572–1631). Donne's words are an early expression of our co-existence and our common humanity. It points to the connectivity and responsibility we have for each other. This way of thinking is becoming prominent again in the twenty-first century and now goes beyond humanity as our connectivity to nature and the environment once again becomes topical. Rationalism and the Enlightenment proposed that we could be masters of our future, and yet we are unable to be masters of our own destructive forces. Science, rationalism, knowledge, liberty and democracy and a discourse of progress have brought many positive social changes but there are also many discontents. Following the last century of destructive wars, which continue into the present, and the fragility of the environment, with global warming no longer a distant threat but upon us, a new realization of our fragility and connectedness to each other and nature is emerging and with it a strong new social discourse and a new paradigm of thinking. Leadership is not immune from these social forces, and as globalization and new technologies make the world 'smaller', our connections seem more important, and our vulnerability and reliance on each other and on safeguarding the natural world are rising concerns.

On the fringes of the leadership literature exists a growing interest in systems thinking, complexity theory, narrative approaches, and also the environment as metaphors for leadership and organizing company structures. Within this diverse literature, spirituality (usually in New Age, Eastern and environmental forms) again raises its head.

Two key themes that arise are emergent leadership and generative leadership (Senge et al., 2004), that is, the attempt to find new ways to lead complex organizations within networks of suppliers, consumers and other formal and informal influences which are not in the direct 'control' of the company leadership. This complexity requires a new leadership discourse, which is in its infancy.

As with any discourse, they are never new, there is never a distinct line in the sand where a discourse begins and ends, the present always refers back to the past and looks to the future. I now wish to briefly situate the Eco-leadership discourse in a socio-political context.

This current interest in Eco-leadership arises from three key areas:

1 New scientific discoveries such as quantum physics, 'the new concepts in physics have brought about a profound change in our worldview; from the mechanistic worldview of Descartes and Newton to a holistic and ecological view' (Capra, 1996: 5).

2 The sharp rise in awareness of our finite natural resources, global warming and the destruction of the earth's biosphere have abruptly re-awakened our connectedness and interdependence on the environment (Lovelock, 1982).

3 Technological advances and globalization that have, on the one hand, made the world a smaller, more connected place. On the other hand, the experience of modernity's alienation, and displacement. Whether as a refugee, an immigrant or whether the disconnectedness is within the modern self, atomized within fragmenting communities.

There is an ever-growing complexity of connected networks of organizations, suppliers, producers and consumers, forming webs of interaction with no single leadership, no planned strategy, set in a constantly emerging and changing political and social environment. From this arises new organizational forms and leadership approaches. Activist groups and new social movements have used new communicational capabilities to their advantage, taking on multinational corporations over issues such as their treatment of outsourced work in the Third World. Religious fundamentalist terrorists use dispersed leadership and de-centralized organizing to great effect as this USA National Intelligence Report demonstrates:

We assess the global Jihad movement is decentralized, lacks a coherent global strategy and is becoming more diffuse. New Jihadist networks and cells with Anti-American agendas are increasingly likely to emerge. The confluence of shared purpose and dispersed actors will make it harder to find and undermine jihadist groups. (cited in the *New York Times*, 27 Sept., 2006)

Leaders of multinational corporations are also finding that they have to find ways to increase the emergent capabilities within their companies to have any chance of keeping pace with change and the de-centralized forces impacting on them.

Within organizational leadership there are attempts to find ways of working with the unpredictable and uncontrollable patterns, as the contemporary leadership discourses refer back to forms of control, whether it is coercive or normative. They bind the leader and leadership to operating within either the technical discourse of the Controller and Therapist, with both relying on technique and a technical worldview. The Messiah discourse guides the leader to evoke strong organizational cultures. Each of the three discourses acts as the leaders operate within closed organizational systems. In the wider sphere of management, the business world also acts as if there is a closed-system governed by neo-liberal economic laws. The problem with this view is that external factors, social political and the environmental are not accounted for. External costs, the damage to the environment, polluting the air we breathe, the social consequences of corporate business on local communities; these externalities are treated as cost-free. A moral economics as well as a market economics is necessary and the emerging Eco-leadership discourse is beginning to raise these questions.

Theories from biology have been applied to human organisms and systems, for example, von Bertalanffy (1968) pioneered Open-Systems theory, Trist and Bamford (1951) pioneered new 'open socio-technical' systems at the Tavistock Institute and Gregory Bateson's work (1972, 1979) is of huge importance and his work on communications and systems thinking is found within many disciplines.

If one takes a systemic analysis and looks at the Messiah discourse through an open-systems perspective (von Bertalanffy, 1968), one can account for the un-sustainability of this leadership as the organizational boundaries are ever-closing and become increasingly rigid. When an organism's (or organization's) boundaries get too closed and don't allow inputs and outputs to flow (in human systems this includes communications), the organism starts to atrophy and will die. A plant, for example, which can no longer take in sunlight or water will die. The plant's boundary must be semi-permeable, and healthy living systems self-regulate to allow the correct amount of inputs and outputs to survive, and to adapt to changing environmental conditions. However, if the self-regulatory system fails, and the boundaries become too permeable or too closed, the system becomes dysfunctional and dies.

From an open-systems perspective, this explains what happens when the Messiah discourse leads to totalizing fundamentalist cultures, rigid boundaries are set, homogenized belief systems form within the company, the focus becomes on protecting the internal culture and the world outside seems increasingly daunt-ing and threatening, ideas and communications (inputs and outputs) stop flowing and the company falls into decline. The Messiah leadership discourse can bring early success but often leads to an unsustainable system for these reasons. Open-systems thinking teaches us that we have to interact with the environment, and to achieve this successfully requires adaptive and self-regulation. In terms of leader-ship, self-regulation and adaptive practice can only occur when there is dispersed leadership able to act and react to local change.

Leadership becomes less about control and more about navigating through complex and diverse business eco-systems. It was realized long ago that hierar-chical leadership and the Controller discourse was not appropriate for contempo-rary workplaces. Leadership styles relying on the Therapeutic discourse can help at an individual and team level but this discourse has little to offer leaders in the way of predicting the global market, or how to make sense of running an inter-national multinational which has such a multitude of political, social, environmental, economic, etc. influences on its success. How does a company leadership navigate their company strategically and operationally through these waters?

Eco-leadership is a discourse, which creates self-organizing and emergent prop-erties arising from dispersed leadership, which build into organizations the abil-ity to be adaptive to fluctuations and constant change.

One of the focuses of Eco-leadership is to find ways to harness the human spirit, and our intuition, connectedness to each other, to nature, and our non-rational ways knowing. Senge et al. (2004) promote the idea of Presencing and the *U Process* as a methodology for working with new collective awareness:

> The leadership of the future will not be provided simply by individuals but by groups, institutions, communities, and networks. One of the road blocks for groups moving forward now is thinking that they have to wait for a leader to emerge; someone who embodies the future path … but I think what we've been learning with the U process is that the future can emerge within the group itself, not embodied in a hero or traditional leader … we have to nurture a new form of leadership that doesn't depend on extraordinary individuals. (Senge et al., 2004: 185–6)

Findlater (2006) writes that the U process is aligned to spirituality. Part of this process is the solo-wilderness experience. After initially meeting and defining important issues in a group, individuals go into the natural wilderness alone to 'open up one to the deepest inner self' which is followed by attempts to reach collective awareness through what Senge refers to as Presencing and reflections to try and ascertain the future direction:

> This pursuit of personal spiritual growth to enhance the meaning derived from their work and to improve their effectiveness though engagement with an inner self and their relationship to the world relates to the Presencing phase of the U-Process, and the description of the solo (an outdoor wilderness experience) in the U-Process as working to give space to our deepest and quietest voices, which are in turn connected intimately to the whole (Hassan and Kahane, 2005). It encourages an internalised, implicit form of religiosity where the search for self-understanding and the search for meaning of closely aligned (Bell and Taylor, 2004). This also relates to the U-Process where Hassan and Kahane suggest that meditative practices can be foundational to the work at the bottom of the U. (Findlater, 2006: 4)

The literature on emergence is still in its infancy. Within the leadership literature there is a tendency to conflate therapeutic culture with New Age spirituality and systems or complexity theory. When this occurs, the mish-mash is often difficult to use in practice, and the dangers are that it becomes 'fluffy' and comforting but without depth or content.

There are other serious attempts to create frameworks for an Eco-leadership discourse which have practical applications. Tapping the spirit and non-rational knowledge as a way to get beyond the rational and obvious and move to a more connected way of leading is not a newly discovered enterprise. There are good examples of where this has been tried in other fields which could be translated to managememt practice. When discussing some of the key features of U-theory, or other leadership development notions of inward-bound training (Bell and Taylor, 2004), I immediately associate them with psychoanalytic techniques which access and make sense of the unconscious. In psychoanalysis, the analyst and the client both access their unconscious worlds; the client is asked to free associate and the psychoanalyst enters what Bion (1962) called a state of 'reverie'. Chris Bollas, a prominent writer and psychoanalyst, describes this reverie process:

> There are always levels of thought, levels of engagement, levels of response to a question, levels of thinking about something. I can think off the top of my head. I can provide a certain level of response to what you might be discussing, or to what a patient might be saying to me. But for reverie to take place, I have to be able to drift inside myself … in a more associative way … in a less reactive manner. I also have to be relaxed inside myself for this to take place, creating a containing space for the analysand [client]. (Bollas, 1997: 39)

Chris Bollas goes on to refer to the 'unthought known' (Bollas, 1987) which equates to tapping into one's own or a collective unconscious knowing. He describes how we know something but have not yet thought it. When it becomes a thought, we recognize that we already knew of it. Being able to tap into this

knowledge is vital to avoid huge mistakes: 'When I looked back it was so obvious ... Why didn't I see it!'

Bion (1962) also identified attaining 'negative capability' (Keat's term) which is a 'particular kind of attention, where we reach a state of being capable of "not-knowing"'. This opens a space for us to access and learn something new. In the rational world of business leaders, the idea of not-knowing is totally counter-cultural and scares the daylights out of leaders operating from normative practice.

Using these psychoanalytic methodologies and drawing on my psychoanalytic training and my practice as a psychotherapist, I have developed a leadership train-ing technique called the Free Association Matrix (drawing on the work of Gordon Lawrence's Social Dream Matrix [Lawrence, 1999]). Lawrence's work is similar to the ideas of Senge's 'presencing' and preceded it. He uses individual dreams as a way for a group to intuit and infer what might be happening organizationally and socially. The Free Association Matrix performs a similar task but links the traditional psychoanalytic method, free association, to the social and organizational. It is set within a critical pedagogy which challenges the rational-knowledge pedagogies of learning. The aim is to help leaders to do the following:

1   Move to a space of not-knowing and open a space for the new to be discovered.
2   Allow them to re-connect with their own body and unconscious and with each other, and with the social world, in a different way.
3   Reflect on this process and to share what can be learnt and applied in their roles as leaders.

The Free Association Matrix creates a liminal or transitional space, which later becomes a containing space in which a group of leaders can explore their free asso-ciations, i.e. whatever 'comes to mind'. This is done not in a group, nor individually but in a matrix; a formation of chairs assembled in an ad hoc fashion. The time is usually 30 minutes to an hour. Box 13.1 shows the instructions I give to the group. In a coaching course I lead, each day begins with yoga, then we go straight into a Free Association Matrix, the idea is to ground individuals in the group in their bodies, and then move into the transitional space which allows new thinking to emerge.

Box 13.1 Free Association Matrix

Discard your memory; discard the future tense of your desire; forget them both, both what you knew and what you want, to leave a space for a new idea.

(W.Bion)

The aim:
To emancipate thoughts which are not easily accessed, releasing new creativity.

Free association is a bridge between experience, thought and knowledge.

(Continued)

(Continued)

The object we are studying is the individual and group unconscious.
This is a counter-point to the daily focus on the rational, and on goals and outputs.

This session is about pausing and hesitating, and letting go of the desire to present intelligent, well-thought–out ideas.

How we do it:
Free association means to talk about whatever comes into mind trying not to censor or edit your thought flow.

We observe our stream-of-consciousness – as it emerges, individually and collectively.

Take your time – allow your thoughts to rise to the surface.

This is not a word-association game, don't be afraid of silence.

Observe what arises, some thoughts you have (or the silence) may make you uncomfortable; stay with the process and let the discomfort pass.

We are not attempting to analyse individual offerings but to access our collective wisdom through the connections we make.

Ground rules

- **Do not ask questions:** your normal reactions to somebody's associations are to want to ask, to clarify, to comment or to disagree. Let go of this need. Simply associate your thoughts to any comments made, and, if you choose to, share your associations.
- **Stay present:** when you drift, catch yourself and bring your attention back to the matrix and your present experience.
- **Be curious** about yourself, others and the matrix you are in. Why are you feeling, angry, happy, sad, giggly? What does your body feel like?
- **Associate** to yourself, your own thoughts and feelings, and associate to each another.
- **Amplify** and open up, rather than close down. Do not look for interpre-tations, answers, solutions or closure.
- **Dreams** are an excellent source of the unconscious data – share your dreams, they allow us to access ideas we can relate to our learning.
- **Non-sense is good sense**. **Do not be tied to logic:** sense-making comes later. Just say whatever arises in your mind, you don't have to understand it

Role of Focuser

Each matrix will have at least one person who is trained in this process and assumes the role of focuser.

(Continued)

(Continued)

The role of the focuser is:

- to hold a safe space, to make connections and links when appropriate;
- to keep the group on task and to open and close the matrix on time.

Sense-making

After the matrix: sense-making in pairs, small groups and plenary takes place. This is an opportunity to reflect on the content and the process that occurred, and to make links to one's workplace experience.

The idea is to create a liminal space which breaks the social norm of a group dynamic, and normative group behaviours and expectations. When entering the matrix chairs set out in this jumbled fashion, facing all directions, it signifies a different space, a discontinuity from the norm. This is like entering the therapist's office and lying on the couch, a new and different space is established, and a transitory space is evoked within participants who are open to new experiences. This space allows free associations to occur. These are not analysed or interpreted as happens in individual therapy; the associations are accepted as data for the information of the group. After the Free Association Matrix, sense-making takes place but often it is the next day, during the week or over longer period of time that important links, deeper connections and understandings are made. One of the important aspects of this work, like the U-process, is that it connects people to themselves and to each other, it focuses on emotions and experience rather than knowledge and cognition or thinking. During the sense-making the associations are discussed, and the personal experience of the Matrix is pooled with surprising results. In one session we worked with a leader who discussed an association he had of a ladder which he was constantly climbing higher and higher. During the sense-making the ladder was deemed to represent his career and the growth of his company, however, when he drew this on a flip chart he suddenly became aware that at the end of the ladder was nothing, nowhere to go, an empty space. He realized that he had been caught up in a rush to growth, and promotion, damaging his health on the way, and to what ends? This insight allowed him to stop running around manically, and to focus on what he wanted for himself, he received personal coaching, re-balanced his home–work life balance, and it led to a strategic review of what his organization's goals were. Growth alone was no longer the endgame.

In another Free Association Matrix session held with the Principals of FE Colleges the associations led to playful ideas as to what it felt like to be a leader:

Leadership is …

A Sponge, soaking up pressure from above, below and the outside environment.
An Essence, the leader is the essence, epitomizing the company.
A Mediator, resolving conflicting tensions and conflict itself.
A Translator, translating between stakeholders and departments, etc.
A Buffer, protecting the internal organization from external pressures.
A Mirage, how much actual influence or control does a leader really have?
A Dynamo, generating energy to the employees and customers.

These highly insightful associations were only possible when the leaders were freed from their normative expectations. It allowed them to rethink how they took on their roles and what was expected of them. We then did some work using the leadership discourses I have written about, so they could work on what leadership discourses were operating in their organizations and departments.

Senge et al. and the U-theory also turns to nature, solo-wilderness trips in an attempt to tap the unconscious/spiritual and to experience what is unavailable through the rational conscious thought process. At Lancaster University Management School research is being carried out on 'Wilderness Thinking', an inward journey for leaders that claims to use SMD, and that anecdotally has been very successful over a number of years (Watson and Vasilieva, 2007). This work again raises the question of what constitutes spiritually. How does spending time in nature constitute spiritual management development rather than simply time for human reflection? Do managers get more from this activity than a day's hiking? The sale to organizations suggests links between better performance and this type of 'spiritual' development. Using spirituality with the aim of getting ever-greater efficiency is in itself problematic. Improved performance to increase productivity of what? For what purpose? With what spiritual and ethical purposes? When spirituality and religion are used for the wrong purposes, linking them with nationalism for example, has let to very disturbing outcomes, and we should be wary of breaking the taboo of serving 'God and mammon'. Great religious and spiritual teachings from all traditions lead us away from material gain and towards a non-material transcendent ethic. Unlesss reflective and 'spiritual' development are clearly linked with deeper questions on ethics, values and the wider environment and social responsibility then there seems to be radical dissonance that requires challenging. The concept of SMD has not as yet addressesd this in earnest.

These trips are similar to deep ecology 'therapeutic' techniques where people go into nature to heal and renew themselves and become reconnected with nature, themselves and the universe, this is posed as an alternative to talking therapy. These leadership training techniques using the environment are further evidence of the emerging Eco-leadership discourse. This is not new of course, and it is worth briefly looking at examples whereby pilgrimages and journeys into the

wilderness and nature have been a place of refuge, revitalization and of spiritual renewal. Different cultures around the world have examples, such as the westernized Judaeo-Christian perspective, the Garden of Eden represents a place whereby perfection existed before man's search for knowledge destroyed this utopian experience. Re-visiting nature has always been a cleansing, spiritual, time of seeking a different kind of knowledge from worldly or rational knowl-edge. Examples are Moses' time in the desert and his visits to Mount Sinai, Christ's 40 days in the wilderness and the Desert Fathers, all are archetypal images of the human search for other-worldly, divine experience, spiritual cleansing and prophetic inspiration through nature, and isolation. In a sense the wilderness represents a liminal space where God can be accessed away from worldly contamination. In more contemporary times the Romantic movement in late eighteenth-century Britain, for example, Lord Byron, William Wordsworth, William Blake reacted against the Enlightenment, rationalism and industrialism by returning to nature as an inspiration. Whereas the Enlightenment emphasized reason, Romanticism emphasized imagination and feeling. Early nineteenth-century 'American Transcendentalism' (for example, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller) was also influenced by Eastern thought, inspired by nature and the transcendental spirit. Thoreau in his classic book *Walden* spoke of Vedic influences, and is regarded as a fore-father of the ecology movement.

The Beatnik generation of the 1950s also turned to Zen Buddhism and nature as inspirations; Jack Kerouac describes his trip to the mountain in Yosemite in 1955 to discover spiritual enlightenment in his novel *Dharma Bums* (Kerouac, 1958).

Most recently there has been a huge growth in environmental interest under-pinned by a re-awakening of our connectedness to nature. Deep ecology (Naess, 1989) is emerging as a powerful philosophy. Michael E. Zimmerman, Professor of Philosophy at Tulane University, explains deep ecology philosophy:

Deep ecology is founded on two basic principles: one is a scientific insight into the interrelatedness of all systems of life on Earth, together with the idea that anthro-pocentrism - human-centeredness - is a misguided way of seeing things. Deep ecologists say that an ecocentric attitude is more consistent with the truth about the nature of life on Earth. Instead of regarding humans as something completely unique or chosen by God, they see us as integral threads in the fabric of life. They believe we need to develop a less dominating and aggressive posture towards the Earth if we and the planet are to survive.

The second component of deep ecology is what Arnie Naess calls the need for human self-realization. Instead of identifying with our egos or our immediate families, we would learn to identify with trees and animals and plants, indeed, the whole ecosphere. This would involve a pretty radical change of consciousness, but it would make our behavior more consistent with what science tells us is nec-essary for the well-being of life on Earth. We just wouldn't do certain things that damage the planet, just as you wouldn't cut off your own finger.

(http://www.context.org/ICLIB/IC22/Zimmrman.htm,accessed 27 September 2006)

The Eco-leader discourse is emerging, the ideas are formative but are gaining mainstream acknowledgement. There are tangible examples of leaders raising human and ethical concerns relating to social responsibility and sustainability. Anita Roddick was an early pioneer of this Eco-leadership discourse, and she claims her ideas were part of the Green Revolution: 'Businesses have the power to do good. That's why The Body Shop's Mission Statement opens with the over-riding commitment, "To dedicate our business to the pursuit of social and environmental change" '(http://www.anitaroddick.com/aboutanita.php, accessed 28, September 2006).

   More recently, Richard Bransons' announcement at the Clinton Global Climate Initiative suggests he too has joined the Eco-leadership discourse:

British business mogul Richard Branson on Thursday pledged to invest about $3 billion over the next decade to combat global warming and promote alternative energy, saying that it was critical to protect the environment for future generations. Branson, the billionaire behind the multi-platform Virgin brand, said the money would come from 100 per cent of the profits generated by his transportation sectors – trains and airline companies. It will be invested in efforts to find renewable, sustainable energy sources in an effort to wean the world off oil and coal

(http://www.cnn.com/2006/TECH/science/09/21/branson.global.warming.ap/index.html)

In one of the many newspaper articles on the subject of sustainability, Murray Armstrong of *The Guardian* headlines 'Leaders Challenge Business as Usual' (6th November 2006) and in spite of valid reservations, 'Jonathan Porritt is concerned that it's business as usual with CSR retrospectively welded on', he writes that sustainability is central to survival, citing Mervyn Davies, chief executive of Standard Chartered bank and a director of Tesco, saying:

There isn't a management meeting in Standard Chartered where we don't talk about corporate responsibility and sustainability … you won't survive in business if you are not environmentally responsible … Every company in the FTSE 100 now produces a corporate responsibility report … 80 of them have identified climate change as a business risk … US vice president Al Gore appointed as an environmental advisor to the British Government by Gordon Brown has challenged businesses to put sustainability at the centre of their activities, Gore said, 'The old way of measuring value is becoming irrelevant'. (*The Guardian*, 6th November 2006: 24)

Being green is part of this discourse, but it is also about changing the way leadership is conceived of. Holism is vital to this discourse, leadership is always conceptualized as fluid and dispersed throughout an organization. Leadership may emerge from surprising places given the right conditions. It is about acknowledging diversity and connectiveness rather than attempting to homogenize company cultures. It is about a leadership which looks for patterns, emerging in and outside of the company, and creates an adaptive culture and a localized

and dispersed leadership which can both react more quickly and notice the changes occurring at grassroots level.

Ethics and Eco-leadership

I wish to highlight a few issues which arise with regards to the Eco-leadership discourse. If the purpose of ethics is to inform moral conduct, then two clear questions arise when thinking about contemporary leadership. The first is well rehearsed, how can ethics inform the moral conduct of leaders, as individuals and as collective groups such as corporate boards? When business ethics are taught and discussed, the focus is often at this 'close level'. By 'close' I am referring to ethics of proximity, of our actions which affect others near to us, those we are in contact with or those we are responsible for.

For individual leaders and those with clear collective leadership responsibility, Aristotle suggests that ethics and moral actions can be cultivated through 'doing ethics' in practice 'just as we acquire crafts, by having previously activated them, we become just by doing just actions' (Aristotle 1985: 34).

The second question is less well rehearsed in leadership circles, but is becoming more prominent. This ethical stance takes ethics beyond the 'close' relationships and takes into account the 'distant' relationships, those we are engaged with indirectly, for example, outsourced workers in Asia; or our damaging impact on the environment that affects all humanity. This ethical responsibility goes beyond being responsible only for what is directly in your control, and takes ethics to mean that we all share a responsibility for the planet, and for the indirect consequences of our individual and collective actions.

Bauman says that morality becomes neutralized in three ways:

1   Denial of proximity.
2   Effacement of face.
3   Reduction to traits.

The denial of proximity directly relates to corporate leadership's dismal record on social and environmental responsibility in the past century. It is only recently, and only due to pressure from grass-roots activists, that working conditions in developing countries and the damage done to the natural environmental are high on the corporate agenda. Just because it is not on our doorstep, doesn't mean we can ignore our ethical responsibilities.

The effacement of face (the removal of face) means that leaders lose sight of their ethical concerns even if it is close by. Leaders need to be aware of bureaucratic mentality that Bauman (1989) claims did not lead directly to the Holocaust, but did not preclude it. Bauman's central argument is that bureaucracies instrumentalize morality by focusing on the organization's goals and totally disregard the moral substance of the goals themselves. Defence mechanisms such as rationalization are key to this process. In contemporary organizations Rene ten Bos (1997: 999) contends that. 'The façade of anti-bureaucratic rhetoric that is typical of this world cannot conceal the basic fact that goal orientation, rational problem solving, group and task loyalty and so forth are still held in high esteem.' He

continues by suggesting we need to pay attention to Bauman's work if bureau-cracy is still a dominant force. Morality is neutralized in bureaucratic organiza-tions because it diminishes autonomy, which is the source of morality: 'The moral impulse is the source of the most conspicuously autonomous … behaviour (Bauman 1993:124) and therefore cannot be a very welcome guest in organiza-tions' (Rene ten Bos, 1997: 1000).

This book has identified that it is not only bureaucracy which can lead to the loss of autonomy and with it morality; the powerful cultures emanating from the Messiah leadership discourse also have this totalizing function.

The reduction to traits is a warning to all leadership theorists not to be reduc-tive. When leadership is reduced to individual traits and competencies, then humans themselves are reduced to 'cogs in a machine' and leadership develop-ment becomes merely the apparatus to oil these cogs. This approach is function-alist and annihilates systemic thinking, depth analysis and relationships. The reduction to traits creates structures which provide an excuse that each of us plays a part without being responsible for the whole. This is evident when corporate leaders claim that their role is to make shareholder profit, while the culmination of this process adds to the environmental crisis we now face.

The Eco-leader discourse is beginning to recognize that leadership now means re-negotiating what success means for an organization or company. There is a need to look awry at this question, and not take the macro-economic and neo-liberal agenda for granted. Delivering growth and short-term shareholder value is no longer acceptable as the sole measurement of success if we are to act ethically and responsi-bly. Corporate Social Responsibility, ethics and environmental concerns are now on the agenda (for more information, see Maak and Pless (2006) and Parker (1988)).

To take an Eco-leadership stance, business firms need a leadership which involves them in becoming active and responsible actors in the socio-political arena. The present situation where they are powerful global actors but without political responsibility through claiming to be separate entities, working only in the economic sphere, is no longer tenable. The social world and the natural envi-ronment do not operate with such false boundaries; everything is inter-related. A new level of Corporate Social Responsibility which gets beyond 'greenwash' and enlightened self-interest and which embraces a new pragmatic and 'deliberative democracy' is required (Bessette, 1980; Habermas, 1996,1998). This is the key difference between the Transformational leader and the Messiah leader (trans-forming employees and followers, creating strong cultures within organizations) and the Eco-leadership discourse (creating connections, contexts to communicate, building alliances and networks across and beyond organizations).

A new agenda, a new paradigm needs to evolve and is evolving; provision rather than profit has to be accounted for. Provision means that the loop of profit, and success has to be linked to social justice and environmentally sustainable actions. Leadership success will be to harness technological advancement, knowl-edge, and our global trading platforms, to 'provide' for a better quality of life, and a sustainable future.

Ethical leadership is to take a critical stance, to look awry, to think holistically, to be accountable for your own actions and for the systems and networks you inhabit, both locally and globally. It places social justice and the environment first;

Milton Friedman (1962) is wrong, so wrong in his claim that a company's only role is to make a profit – this blinkered worldview should be condemned to the history books of the past century. The new leadership discourse demands more, it will continue to keep demanding more from leaders. Leadership without ethics is a non-starter. What is required is for leaders to practise ethics, to engage with ethics from a critical perspective and with what Foucault refers to as an ethical imagination: 'Ethics need not necessarily be associated (but may be) with reference to religion, law and science but be researched using an, "ethical imagination" ' (Foucault lecture given at Berkeley History Department, University of California, 1983).

Conclusion

This new Eco-leadership discourse is an emergent discourse that has both continuity and discontinuity with the previous discourses, and is aligned to other leadership approaches (see Appendix 1). It is least connected to the leader as Controller discourse, it is a paradigmatic shift away from this discourse and perhaps from modernism itself. However, the continuity resurfaces when it comes to how we limit our resource usage. For example, some leaders are advocating rationing of carbon, using carbon cards to measure and control and limit our individual use. It is an example of how Tayloristic principles of scientific management might be applied. The Therapist discourse will continue to support the Eco-leadership discourse in the area of ethics, finding reflective thinking space, and leading local teams, working on team dynamics and morale. The Messiah discourse is also to be found in regards to the vision and the ability of leaders to communicate the urgent need to undertake the paradigm change necessary to embrace the Eco-leadership discourse. The shift in focus is from functions and outputs and profits looking only at the closed system of the organization and business economy, to an ethical, socially responsible and sustainable ecological view. The discontinuity is that the Eco-leadership does not try to create strong cultures with homogeneous loyal employees, but the opposite; strong networks which enable difference to flourish.

The Eco-leadership discourse has three key qualities:

1 *Connectivity (holism):* It is founded on connectivity; how we relate and inter-relate with the ecologies in which we work and live.
2 *Eco-ethics:* It is concerned with acting ethically in the human realm *and* with respect and responsibility for the natural environment.
3 *Leadership spirit*: It acknowledges the human spirit, the non-rational, creativity, imagination, and human relationships.

The Eco-leadership discourse moves away from control and towards understanding emergence, connectivity and organic sustainable growth. The leader character exemplifies tension between central regulation and self-regulation, between emergence and direction, organic growth and strategic planning. For the highly rational management world, many of these ideas are challenging and truly create

a new paradigm. How do you invest in a business whose leadership talks about not-knowing and emergence as strategy?

Leaders are realizing that inter-connectivity is a reality and feedback systems affect them and their business as well as the rest of the planet. Training leaders to think in this way, to understand ideas of self-regulating and self-managing systems, and emergence rather than planning, then linking these to the human skills from the therapeutic discourse might support a powerful new discourse (Appendix 2, 'Lead2lead', offers a case study of a leadership development approach to help promote an ecology of leadership in a company).

This Eco-leadership discourse privileges respect for all living things, for connectivity and influence rather than leadership by control. It creates a further push towards an ethical leadership position, which is accentunted by the knowledge of the fragility of the global system itself. Paradoxically, this discourse finds that the real vulnerability of leadership lies in control, hierarchy and omnipotence. The real strength of leadership lies in devolved power, dispersing leadership and having the confidence of not-knowing, of being able to follow emergent patterns, rather than fixed plans. It will be fascinating to see how this Eco-leadership discourse will emerge.