Theoretical

Myth-Busters:
Traditional And Emergent Leadership

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The purpose of this paper is to describe the common "myths" of leadership rooted in the modernist notions of hierarchy, status, planning, predicting, and control, and to contrast these myths with emergent leadership theories grounded in symbolic-interpretivism and complexity thinking. Kant's contribution of "both…and" thinking was highlighted as an important precursor to Formative Teleology and the modernist leadership paradigm. Complex Responsive Processes rooted in interpretations of Hegel and Mead, underscored the need to reconceptualize traditional forms of leadership toward a more ontologically and epistemologically congruent form of leadership with complexity. Greenleaf's notion of servant leadership, specifically the distributed web of relational complexity in his idea of *primus inter pares*, was proposed as an alternative to the "myths" of traditional leadership.

Myth-Busters: Traditional and Emergent Leadership

The study of organizational leadership is situated at a significant juncture (Hazy, Goldstein, & Lichtenstein, 2007; Shirky, 2008; Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2008; Wheatley, 1994). Throughout the modern era, the Western notion of leadership has been described using words like "predict," "plan," "analyze" (Wheatley, 1994: 26), "organize," "direct" (Barker, 1997: 349), "manage change," "influence," "vision," "harmony," and most of all, "control" (Keene, 2000: 16). There is however, a new form of emerging leadership rooted in the complexity sciences that is gaining credence (Dooley & Lichtenstein, 2008; Hazy *et al.*, 2007; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2007: 144; McCollum, 1995; McKelvey & Lichtenstein, 2007; Morrison, 2002). In this paper, I will discuss the dominant "traditional" form of leadership, the philosophical foundation upon which it is constructed, and why it is no longer congruent with today's multi-faceted challenges, nor congruent with the nature of reality (Lichtenstein *et al.*, 2007: 141; Nielsen, 2004: 23; Schreiber & Carley, 2007: 229-230; Schreiber & Carley, 2008; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2008: xiii). I will contrast this traditional notion of leadership with emerging leadership that is grounded in the complexity sciences. I will also discuss how Complex Responsive Processes (Griffin, 2002; Stacey, 2001; Stacey, Griffin, & Shaw, 2000; Morrison, 2002: 27) underscore the need to reframe traditional notions of leadership toward a more ontologically and epistemologically congruent form

of complexity leadership: servant leadership (Keene, 2000: 17; McCollum, 1995; Pepper, 2002: 354).

Modernism

The philosophical underpinnings of the rationalist and logical empiricist traditions can be extended as far back as Plato (Stacey *et al.*, 2000: 195; Winograd & Flores, 1987: 14). These traditions have greatly influenced the progression of thought leading to the "scientific," "modern" view (Reed, 1996: 10). The "scientific" view, also known as the Cartesian and Newtonian view, has dominated the philosophical, research, and social paradigms since the 17th century (Marion, 2008: 13; Wheatley, 1994: 9). With its roots in the thinking of four "giants" of scientific thought—Galileo, Descartes, Newton, and Kant—this ontological framework assumes that mind and matter are separate and that objective science can be conducted without the subjective interpretations of the researcher (Kuhn, 2007: 157). With roots in objectivist ontology, many modernists assume that "reality exists independently of those who live in it" (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006: 12). Modernist epistemology is generally considered "positivist," meaning that one understands what one knows through scientific measurement, focusing on "reason, truth, and validity" (p. 13). Central to objectivist ontology is the notion of reductionism: the idea that the object of study can be examined by separating it into its component parts and that a greater understanding of the "whole" may be achieved by combing those elements (Bruner, 1990: xiii; Marion, 2008: 2; Richardson & Cillers, 2001: 10; Stacey *et al.*, 2000: 17).

Modernist thinking underlies many of the common practices of organizational management as demonstrated through classical organization theorists such as Taylor and Fayol (Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2005; Wheatley, 1994: 140). Modernism continues to remain as the primary ontological and epistemological framework for many organizations (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006: 278; Stacey *et al.*, 2000). "It has led to the emphasis many managers still place on predicting the future, choosing strategies, motivating individuals, measuring activities, and controlling them in detailed ways" (Stacey *et al.*, 2000: 17). Modernist manifestations of thinking and behaving have grown exponentially and were best exemplified in the Industrial Revolution, when managers placed an emphasis on discovering the best ways to complete objectives through specialization and division of labor (Bolman & Deal, 2003: 45; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2007: 148-148; Smith, 1776/2005: 39; Uhl-Bien *et al.*, 2008: 190-191). These ideas were primarily based on scientific observational methods that have resulted in universal management principles. From this perspective, workers were needed to accomplish the economic and production goals of the organization, typically through coercion and control (Shafritz *et al.*, 2005: 28-29).

Discussion of Kant's Contribution

Stacey *et al.* (2000), Stacey (2001), and Griffin (2002) noted that Kant's contribution was significant in Western philosophical thought because he was the first to institute the "both…and" way of thinking about nature as well as human action. Griffin stated that to eliminate the paradox of being subject to nature but also free of it, Kant avoided both scientific empiricism and "dogmatic rationalism" and instead argued that people were "both subject to the laws of nature and free to set their own goals" (p. 4). According to Stacey, Kant viewed nature in terms of self-organizing systems of "wholes" that unfolded into an already pre-determined form that was known as Formative Teleology. This type of thinking did not allow for anything truly novel to emerge in nature. Griffin claimed, however, that within Kant's conception, humans possessed the rational freedom of choice and had the ability to understand nature as objective observers (p. 6). "Humans are a part of nature, but in having souls…they are free. Humans exercise a causality that is based on freedom while nature follows a causality in which there is none" (Stacey *et al.*, 2000: 24).

Stacey *et al.* (2000) claimed that the "Kantian Split" associated with Formative and Rationalist Teleology was important because it served as the philosophical foundation for systems thinking and the design of modern organizations. What is most problematic is that the social sciences and organizations now observe human action through the lens of Formative Teleology—exactly, according to Stacey *et al.*, what Kant was arguing against. By applying Formative Teleology to human systems, human freedom is limited and "therefore confined to special people and special moments" (p. 184). This framework of causality is contradictory because on the one hand it results in a loss of freedom, while on the other hand it requires the freedom of some participants for the system to function. The freedom that a designer of a system has is momentary, because after stepping outside of the system where the designer possesses rational choice, they "re-enter" the system where freedom is lacking. The implications are significant: this manner of thinking can be said to eliminate the possibility of novelty in human action (Stacey, 2001: 5). This issue is particularly salient for leaders and organizational leadership.

Myths of Traditional Leadership

What constitutes "leadership?" Who is a leader? What does a leader do? Is a leader a person in a position that influences, plans, controls, and eliminates conflict and disorder? *Or* does a leader enable complex interactions and serve as a catalyst for disequilibrium that allows for emergent relationships and novelty? Because much of what is called "leadership" today is built on the modernist way of thinking rooted in the Kantian "both…and" dichotomy (Griffin, 2002: 43) and mechanistic orientations of organizations described by Mintzberg (1979/2005) and Weber (1922/2005), some scholars believe it is

necessary to reformulate who a "leader" is and what actually constitutes "leadership" (April & Hill, 2000: 45; Barker, 1997; Nielsen, 2004; Lichtenstein *et al.*, 2007; Uhl-Bien *et al.*, 2008). Some of the most distinct voices calling for a reframing and different conception of leadership are emerging from the complexity sciences (Hazy *et al.*, 2007; Griffin, 2002; Jennings & Dooley, 2007; Lichtenstein *et al.*, 2007; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001; McCollum, 1995; Morrison, 2002: 57; Pepper, 2002; Plowman & Duchon, 2007, 2008; Stacey *et al.*, 2000). In the following sections, I will discuss Plowman and Duchon's (2008) myths of traditional leadership and the alternatives that the complexity sciences offer through Complex Responsive Processes, rooted in symbolic-interpretivism.

The first myth concerning leadership is that "leaders specify desired futures" (Plowman & Duchon, 2008: 137). In this view of leadership, a leader develops a vision, sets the course for action, and is responsible for achieving that vision and helping everyone else involved arrive at that predetermined outcome (Jennings & Dooley, 2007: 19). This myth involves the leader utilizing rational thought, logic, and linear thinking to determine goals and actions (Svyantek & Brown, 2000: 69). The leader has an objective viewpoint and is able to simultaneously be in the system and stand apart from it, just as in the Kantian "both…and" dichotomy (Stacey *et al.*, 2000: 184). According to the myth that "leaders specify desired futures" (Plowman & Duchon, 2008: 137) the leader is shaping and forming an organization, but is not shaped or formed by the system through his or her interactions, initiatives, or planning (Plowman & Duchon, 2008: 138).

The second popular conventional leadership myth is that "leaders direct change" (Plowman & Duchon, 2008: 139). Yukl (2006) stated that leading change "is the essence of leadership and everything else is secondary" (p. 284). In this view, a leader is responsible for creating desired change through predicting, forecasting, and meticulous planning (Jennings & Dooley, 2007: 19; Wheatley, 1994: 6). Often, the leader is viewed as an autonomous "hero" and "savior" who *individually* impacts the lives of followers and organizations (Hoppe & Bhagat, 2008: 498; Plowman & Duchon, 2007: 110-111; Schreiber & Carley, 2007: 230; Spillane, 2006: 2), generally through "command and control" (McCollum, 1995: 249; Nielsen, 2004: 18; Plowman & Duchon, 2007: 115). When change does not occur in the predicted manner, a leader may experience frustration when the changes he or she anticipated fall short of expectations (Bolman & Deal, 2003: 27; Plowman & Duchon, 2008: 139).

The third myth of traditional leadership is that "leaders eliminate disorder and the gap between intentions and reality" (Plowman & Duchon, 2008: 141). This theme is a variation on the common theme of "control." This perception of leadership is cybernetic and focuses on a negative feedback system that allows the manager to analyze gaps between idealized and actual performance and create desired equilibrium (McCollum, 1995: 250). Disorder and conflict are viewed as destructive and damaging to an organization; therefore, "effective" leaders

pursue stability, harmony, and order (Aula & Siira, 2007: 370; Barker, 1997: 349; Plowman & Duchon, 2008: 141).

The fourth myth of the dominant view of leadership from Plowman & Duchon's (2008) perspective is that "leaders influence others to enact desired futures" (p. 144). The concept of "influence" is prevalent throughout much of traditional leadership literature. Yukl (2006) emphasized the importance of influence when he stated: "Influence is the essence of leadership" (p. 145). Leaders are responsible for accurately predicting the effects of particular actions in a linear fashion and influencing their followers using whatever means are necessary for goal actualization (Barker, 1997: 356). In fact, many leaders operating within the traditional leadership paradigm receive evaluation concerning whether or not desired outcomes are achieved as a result of exerting their influence upon followers (Plowman & Duchon, 2008: 143; Spillane, 2006: 11).

Leading through Complexity

These four myths of leadership noted by Plowman and Duchon (2008) are potentially significant sources of frustration for leaders. Despite meticulous planning, forecasting, and controlling, in many instances organizational outcomes and goals are either not met, or achievements are accomplished but through unexpected and unpredictable means (Bolman & Deal, 2003: 27; Marion, 2008; Plowman & Duchon, 2008: 143; Stacey *et al*., 2000: 185). To address these myths, novel ideas emerging from the complexity sciences provide interesting parallels and insights into new ways of conceptualizing leadership and followership (McCollum, 1995; Schreiber & Carley, 2008).

Complexity thinking is critical to the study of social phenomena, specifically leadership (Hazy *et al*., 2007; McCollum, 1995; Morrison, 2002: 57; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2008; Wheatley, 1994). There are many instances throughout literature where the reductionist scientific model is utilized to explain, via cause-and-effect relationships, the objects being studied. But this type of modernistic thinking is not consistent with the paradigm for understanding the nonlinear, diverse, mutual relationships among leaders, followers, phenomena, and society (Lichtenstein *et al*., 2007; Marion, 2008; Plowman & Duchon, 2008; Schreiber & Carley, 2007: 229-232; Schwandt & Szabla, 2007: 38-42; Wheatley, 1994: 3). Through the orientation of complexity, leaders progress from relying on simplistic cause-and-effect relationships to embracing a more interdependent view of the world, centering on leadership as a dynamic process (Barker, 1997: 351; Jennings & Dooley, 2007: 26; Lord, 2008: 156-159; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2007: 151-152; Schwandt & Szabla, 2007: 55; Uhl-Bien *et al*., 2008). Morrison (2002) underscored the importance of interdependence in complexity thinking:

> None of us can exist independent of our relationships with each other.
> "Complexity" derives from the Latin root meaning "to entwine;" the notion
> that an organism interacts dynamically with its environment, influencing and,

in turn, being influenced by its environment, is a key principle of the emerging science of complexity. (p. 5)

In order to better understand identities, organizations, and environments, leadership theories that are rooted in an entirely different ontology, epistemology, and teleology than modernism have begun to take hold (Griffin, 2002; Jennings & Dooley, 2007; Stacey, 2001; Stacey *et al.*, 2000).

Symbolic-Interpretivism

The alternative paradigm to the modernistic, traditional form of leadership is critical of predictability and control, which may call other beliefs concerning leadership and management into question (Stacey *et al.*, 2000: 145). While much of the traditional notions of leadership are associated with objectivist ontology and positivist epistemology, new conceptualizations of leadership are emerging within the framework of subjectivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006: 12-15). Subjectivist ontology is concerned with the idea that reality exists when a phenomenon is experienced and given meaning, while interpretivist epistemology is based on the notion that "knowledge can only be created and understood from the point of view of the individuals who live and work in a particular culture or organization" (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006: 13). In addition to relying on the five senses, symbolic-interpretivism also includes intangible aspects of study such as intuition and emotion (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006: 15). Symbolic-interpretivists insist that humans construct social reality—a key component that closely interrelates with Transformative Teleology (Stacey *et al.*, 2000: 84). Thus, symbolic-interpretivists analyze multiple understandings of phenomena by studying the mutual negotiation of meanings of symbols, artifacts, and language within the context of a particular culture (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006: 192-193; Kuhn, 2007: 170; Wenger, 1998: 54).

Transformative Teleology

Stacey *et al.* (2000) claimed that the philosopher Hegel did not concur with Kant's "both…and" way of describing the world that included both Formative and Rationalist Teleology (p. 30). Instead, Hegel argued that humans and nature were integrated within the same casual framework known as Transformative Teleology (Stacey *et al.*, 2000: 36.). Instead of eliminating the paradox as Kant conceptualized, Transformative Teleology focuses on both stability and change at the same time, therefore preserving the paradox. The notion of interaction is critical in this casual framework because it enables the emergence of the truly novel and unknown phenomena. Stacey *et al.* argued:

In this new paradigm, an organization becomes what it is because of the intrinsic need human beings have, individually and collectively, to express their identities and thereby their differences. Identity and difference emerge, becoming what they are through the transformative cause of self-

organization, that is relationship. What an organization becomes emerges
from relationships of its members rather than being determined by the choices
of individuals. (p. 123)

Here, the future is not pre-determined or assumed to unfold into an already de-fined form, but instead emerges because of micro-interactions among people (Stacey *et al.*, 2000: 184). Thus, people are both forming and being formed at the same time through active social construction (Schwandt, 2008; Stacey, 2001: 63).

Life on the Mobius Strip—Palmer and Mead

Both Palmer's (2004) notions of identity and Mead's (1934) theory of mind, self, and society are significant because they are an expression of Transformative Te-leology (Stacey *et al.*, 2000: 174). Through the constant expression of one's life, the individual is constantly *forming* and *being formed by* reality. Palmer asserted that throughout many of the world's spiritual traditions, notions of mutual inter-dependency and co-creation often associated with the mobius strip are ubiq-uitous (p. 48). There is no "outer" or "inner" reality per se, but instead a natural congruency that permeates life. "We are constantly engaged in a seamless ex-change between whatever is 'out there' and whatever is 'in here' co-creating re-ality, for better or for worse" (p. 47). Therefore, "whatever is inside us continually flows outward to help form, or deform, the world – and whatever is outside us continually flows inward to help form, or deform, our lives" (p. 47).

Mead (1934) focused his study not on the individual-centered unit of analysis that was found throughout Western philosophy and psychology, but instead on the socially constructed notion of identity and reality. According to Mead, every-thing that a person did and embodied was constituted through social means. Mead argued that social animals communicated through gestures and that a gesture in one animal and response in another animal resulted in a "social act" (p. 43). Stacey *et al.* (2000) elaborated on Mead by stating: "This is not a view of the autonomous individual first thinking and then choosing an action but of in-dividuals in relationship continuously evoking and provoking responses in each other, responses that each paradoxically also selects and chooses" (p. 172).

Thus for Mead (1934), there was no such thing as the *individual* mind because of its socially constituted nature that was mutually co-created as one interacted with others through language. Stacey *et al.* (2000) noted:

It is impossible to have a mind in advance of vocal, public interaction, just
as it is impossible to have that vocal, public interaction, that sophisticated
social cooperation typical of humans, in the absence of minds. Neither form of
conversation is primary nor prior to the other. They must both arise together,
simultaneously. (p. 172)

The meaning of these gestures and utterances was not pre-established, but in-stead co-created in the living present. In addition to this notion of mind, Mead

also consequently described the socially constructed nature of identity through his formulation of the "I" and the "Me." For Mead, the "Me" was the internalization of one's group toward oneself, while the "I" was the action that an individual takes upon realizing the perceived social view of oneself (Stacey *et al.*, 2000: 173). "It follows that the self is a social construction emerging in relationships with others and only animals that possess language can possess a self that they are aware of" (p. 173).

Complex Responsive Processes

Systems thinking as defined by Stacey *et al.* (2000) and Griffin (2002) was embedded in Formative and Rationalist Teleology. Griffin stated that Mead's ideas focused not on "wholes" or autonomous individuals, but on participation in local interactions in the living present (p. 160). Instead of thinking of organizations as systems, Transformative Teleology perceives organizations as the result of ongoing, dynamic, local interactions (Stacey, 2001: 7). This perspective is significant because there is no longer a designated leader or manager who is stepping outside of the system/organization to make plans, craft visions and outcomes, or control the activities of followers. This notion significantly challenges traditional views of leadership (Stacey *et al.*, 2000).

In fact, the notion of Complex Responsive Processes argues that it is impossible to move in and out of a system because the organization is not a reified object—it is not a "whole" or an "it" and conversely operates more as a "community of practice" (Wenger, 1998). The organization is instead the ongoing participation among all of the agents interacting with one another, interwoven in a mutual, constitutive dance that forms both individual identities and the organization simultaneously (Panzar, Hazy, McKelvey, & Schwandt, 2007: 314; Schwandt, 2008; Stacey *et al.*, 2000; Wenger, 1998: 54). Stacey *et al.* claimed:

> Throughout, the process is characterized by the paradox of the known-unknown and in it emerges the aims people formulate, the goals they set, the intentions they form and the choices they make. What is being expressed here is individual and collective identity at the same time. (pp. 188-189)

The organization and the individual are being constituted and re-constituted in the dynamically occurring "swarm of [their] participations" (Bruner, 1990: 109).

Because of the attention of mutual interactions of Complex Responsive Processes, conversation is an important part of organizing and knowledge creating (Stacey, 2001: 98). Language is not viewed as something that is static or context-free. Its meaning is created through differences of interpretation (Winograd & Flores, 1987: 9). Therefore, whereas many of the myths of traditional leadership focus on language as a control mechanism, as well as limiting disagreements and conflict, leaders who think in terms of Complex Responsive Processes value disagreements over interpretations as a source of novelty, fresh ideas, and new

perspectives: "We need antithesis as well as thesis in order to reach synthesis" (Morrison, 2002: 37). Leadership does not control a particular outcome because according to Complex Responsive Processes, the future is unknowable: "the relational processes of communication, within which people accomplish joint action, are actively constructing the future as the living present and that future is unknowable in advance" (Stacey *et al.*, 2000: 188).

Dispelling the Myths of Traditional Leadership—Servant Leadership

One area of leadership studies that garners significant attention and support and has challenged the dominant, traditional forms of leadership since the 1970s is the idea of servant leadership (Spears, 2003: 14). In many ways, servant leadership is congruent with symbolic-interpretivist ontology and epistemology, and also incorporates important elements of complexity thinking into its theory. The basic premise of servant leadership is that leaders do not exercise authoritarian power and control to further their own agenda, but instead lead by being a servant first (Greenleaf, 1977: 16). Through care, concern, and attention to the growth and autonomy of the "whole person," servant leaders enable their followers to become servants as well (Greenleaf, 1977: 13-14). Through complex relationships and mutual dependencies on each other, servant-leaders and their followers co-create one another and their organizations. The idea of servant leadership sharply contrasts with the modern, linear, hierarchical, top-down organizational structure of power and control (McCollum, 1995: 249).

Birth of Servant Leadership

Although the notion of "servant leadership" is not necessarily a novel idea, the credit for the term is given to Robert K. Greenleaf (1977) who coined it in his essay "The Servant as Leader" (Smith, Montagno & Kuzmenko, 2004: 81; Trompenaars & Voerman, 2010: 5). Greenleaf's conception of servant leadership was powerfully impacted by *The Journey to the East* by Herman Hesse (1956): "that is where I [Greenleaf] got the idea of 'Servant as Leader.' If I had not read *Journey to the East* and seen the vivid dramatization of the servant as leader in Leo, I doubt that I would ever have written on the theme" (Greenleaf, 2003: 248). In this story, a group of travelers embarks on a voyage to discover the East. On this journey, there is a particular servant of the group named Leo who completes many of the group's chores and constantly inspires the group with his song and presence. After Leo mysteriously disappears, the group faces extreme hardship, eventually disbands, and the objective is abandoned. Years later, the narrator finds Leo and is surprised to see that he is actually the leader of the organization that had sponsored the initial journey (Hesse, 1956). With Leo as the inspirational archetype for servant as leader, Greenleaf crafted his notion of servant leadership and significantly impacted the leadership theory landscape (Pepper, 2002: 354).

Greenleaf's Conception of the Servant-Leader

Servant leadership is a long-term, transformational approach to the individual leader and society (Spears, 2003: 16). This concept is radically different than most of the "classical" forms of leadership espoused by numerous organizations, which focus on power, status, coercion, rank, short-term gains, and often use followers as a means to an end (Keith, 2008: 17; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2007; Nielsen, 2004: 23). Instead, Greenleaf (1977) proposed that a leader must initially be a servant: "The servant-leader is servant first…It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead" (p. 16).

After analyzing many of the original works of Greenleaf, Larry Spears (2003) identified ten characteristics that were indicative of a servant-leader: "listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and community building" (pp. 16-19). It is important to note that being a servant-leader does not focus solely on *what* one achieves or accomplishes, but *how* the servant-leader completes these outcomes (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002: 59). Trust, stewardship, humility, and a focus on service for its own sake are integral to defining the presence of the servant-leader (Greenleaf, 2003; Keene, 2000: 17).

Primus Inter Pares

A particular aspect of servant leadership that intersects well with complexity theory is Greenleaf's (1977) notion of "*primus inter pares*—first among equals" (p. 61). Instead of the typical organizational "pyramid," Greenleaf's conception of the *primus inter pares* consists of a team of equal participants with a primus. The primus is a servant-leader who embodies wholeness, autonomy, freedom, wisdom, and assists others in actualizing their potential and becoming more servant-like (pp. 13-14). It is co-creative relationality—not positional power—that determines how the team functions (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2003: 5; Van Dierendonck, 2010: 4; Wheatley, 1994: 68). The complexity notion of emergence is critical in determining the primus. The process of becoming the primus is not necessarily a linear, scientific endeavor, but instead is dependent on a multitude of factors and considerations (McCollum, 1995: 256). There is not necessarily a specific formula that determines who the primus will be. The servant whose gifts, traits, skills, and other pertinent aspects intersect with particular goals and challenges situated in a specific place and time emerges as the temporary primus. As challenges, goals, and other dynamics evolve, leadership continues to be distributed and a new primus eventually emerges (Jackson & Parry, 2008: 84-89; Lichtenstein *et al.*, 2007: 133-134; Morrison, 2002: 59; Nielsen, 2004: 142; Schreiber & Carley, 2007: 223; Spillane, 2006).

Conclusion

The study of leadership is situated at a critical point in its history. Will researchers, theorists, and practitioners continue to perpetuate the traditional forms of leadership rooted in Formative and Rationalist Teleology? Or will they embrace new, emergent, complex reformulations of leadership, such as servant leadership, grounded in Transformative Teleology? The reductionist, scientific, rationalist approach possesses multiple strengths and has helped create many significant advances in human thought and quality of life. This approach, however, is experiencing limitations and challenges in its capacity to linearly make sense of a dynamic, nonlinear, ever-changing, emerging world (Panzar *et al.*, 2007: 325; Schreiber & Carley, 2007; Uhl-Bien *et al.*, 2008; Wheatley, 1994). Through complexity thinking, the assumptions concerning much of the traditional study of leadership must be re-evaluated, and in some cases perhaps dismissed (Kuhn, 2007: 160; Marion, 2008: 13; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2007: 144). The hierarchical, modernistic approach that pervades organizational leadership is one such example. Through the abstract art of understanding through complexity, namely Complex Responsive Processes, the mutual interdependencies that constitute organizations situate servant-leaders on the forefront of guiding the United States, and more broadly the world, through turmoil, change, and constant emergence.

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