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In Search of Ethical Business Leadership: Time to Mix our Metaphors?



Ken Peattie



About the BRASS Centre

In 2001, Cardiff University won £3.1 million in research funds from the Economic and Social Research Council to develop a Research Centre for Business Relationships, Accountability, Sustainability and Society (BRASS). The Centre is a joint venture between the University's Schools of Business, City & Regional Planning and Law. It brings together the three Schools' existing research expertise on issues of sustainability, business ethics, company law, corporate reporting and business communication.

The Centre started work in October 2001 under the leadership of Professor Ken Peattie of the Business School, Professor Terry Marsden of the Department of City and Regional Planning and Professor Bob Lee of the Law School. The funding of the Centre covers an initial five-year period, but this should just mark the beginning of BRASS' contribution to creating more sustainable and responsible businesses locally, nationally and globally.

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Introduction – an unfolding crisis in business ethics ?

The unfolding Parmalat scandal in Italy is just the latest in a series of incidents that have shone a spotlight on the behaviour and ethics of top business leaders. Founder Calisto Tanzi is currently in jail, accused of having falsified the company's accounts for many years. This follows on the heels of Enron, WorldCom, Global Crossing, Equitable Life and several other sorry tales. In Germany, several business leaders have appeared in court in connection with bonus payouts during the \$180bn Mannesmann takeover by Vodafone, including Deutsche Bank's Chairman, Josef Ackermann and former Mannesmann Chief Executive Klaus Esser. In America, the media is warming up for a whole series of celebrity business leader trials. Martha Stewart, America's lifestyle queen, is already in court facing charges of insider dealing. In February, Scott Sullivan, WorldCom's former Chief Financial Officer, is in court charged with accounting fraud. Also in February, John Rigas, the founder of Adelphia Communications, will be one of several appearing charged with illegally removing one billion dollars from the company. In March, Frank Quattrone, formerly of Credit Suisse First Boston, returns to court to face charges of obstructing justice.

Some might argue that such scandals are nothing new, and that there have always been business leaders who have failed in their ethical duties towards shareholders and other stakeholders in order to enrich themselves. One can go back to the Dutch East India Company of 1622 (which can be viewed as the prototype of the modern international company), to find protesting shareholders on the dockside of Copenhagen, handing out leaflets complaining about management secrecy and self-enrichment at the expense of shareholders. Their campaign did lead to action by the government of the day, who moved swiftly to ban such pamphleteering, but they also pledged to improve information for shareholders and strengthen shareholder influence over public companies. Recent events suggest that perhaps not as much has changed in the past few hundred years in the field of corporate governance as might have been hoped.

The US government and others have sought to downplay the seriousness of recent events by presenting them as isolated incidents, at odds with the vast majority of businesses that are well-run by responsible and ethically-minded individuals. There is some research evidence to support such an argument. Eighty percent of 1,498 managers surveyed categorised their firms as highly ethical (Posner and Schmidt, 1987), and most people reported themselves as unlikely to engage in unethical activities at work (Eastman, *et al.*, 1996). However, such self-reporting is not necessarily conclusive. Survey respondents consistently perceive their own ethical standards to be higher than those of their peers or others in their immediate working environment (e.g. Cole and Smith, 1996; Ford and Richardson, 1994).

Even if unethical behaviour is confined to a minority of companies, this argument does not appear to be reassuring the general public. A 2002 CNN/Time survey revealed that 72 % of US adults did not believe that recent business scandals are isolated incidents, but viewed them as evidence of a systematic pattern of deception among those running major companies. Such findings have potentially serious ramifications. Trust is a vital component of a healthy economy and business culture. If investors cannot trust the information they are given by companies, it will hamper investment. This could contribute further to the emerging pensions crisis, if people do not believe that such financial investments are secure, because they fear being left in the same situation as those pensioners depending on Enron, Global Crossing or Equitable Life. If consumers do not believe the information that is provided for them on issues relating to the socio-environmental performance of business, this will also cause problems. It will hold back the development of markets for more ethical and environmentally sustainable goods and services. This is something that governments around the world are depending upon to act as a spur for the development of fairer and more sustainable economies and societies. If a culture of cynicism about the conduct of business continues to develop, it may also create a vicious circle of lowered expectations about the ethical conduct of business, which in turn leads to less ethical conduct amongst those running companies.

In the wake of the recent generation of business scandals, there has been a wide-ranging search for solutions. Tougher laws on corporate governance, greater independence for auditors, wider adoption of codes such as the Global Reporting Initiative or GoodCorporation's guidelines, greater powers for non-executive directors, harsher penalties for corporate wrong-doing and more corporate ethics officers are among the solutions that have been suggested. All of these can play a valuable part, but none of them addresses the question of why senior business leaders are drawn into unethical behaviour in the first place. Research into why people engage in unethical activities often cites factors such as time pressure, or pressure to achieve demanding targets. Such factors hardly seem explanatory since they would appear to face most people in business situations, only a minority of whom respond with unethical behaviour. Other factors cited include the influence of the company's leadership and its corporate culture, group dynamics and norms.

The importance of leadership is a recurring theme within the business ethics literature, and top executives have been shown to have a great impact when it comes to establishing the ethical tone of an organization (Wiley, 1998). However, if ethical leaders help to inspire ethical organisations, who will inspire those leaders ? How can we develop business leaders for this new millennium who can embrace and demonstrate an ethical approach to running businesses, and help to turn the tide of dwindling trust in business ? These are important issues, that may require some original and imaginative approaches if "*business ethics*" is to avoid becoming regarded by the general public as nothing more than an oxymoron.

The role of business education

Working within a University, it is perhaps natural to wonder whether there are fundamental flaws in the way in which we educate the business leaders of the future, and in the ideas that underpin their view of how a company should be run. Research evidence suggests that business students typically have relatively low expectations about the ethics of businesses and managers. Students believe they must adopt a "*winning is everything*" philosophy at work (Pressley and Blevins, 1984), and perceive managers as more concerned with

economics than ethics (Alam, 1995), and focussed more on financial goals than social and employee-oriented goals (Beggs and Lane, 1989). Students, when role-playing as managers, typically rate social responsibility criteria, both individually and collectively, among the least important determinants of organisational effectiveness (Kraft, 1991; Kraft and Singhapakdi, 1995).

One popular development over recent years has been the introduction of Business Ethics as a university course. Several studies have suggested that such courses provide significant improvements in students' ethical sensitivities (Duizend and McCann, 1998; Carlson and Burke, 1998; Gautschi and Jones, 1998), although others have found little or no evidence of improvement (Wynd and Mager, 1989; Glenn, 1992). As with many other areas of education, this suggests that it is not whether something is taught, but how well it is taught, that matters. In terms of post-graduate business education, the MBA curriculum appears to have a value neutral impact for the majority of students (McCabe *et al.*, 1994). Where Business Schools do include teaching on business ethics, it has been criticised for being too strongly based around “*sterile ethical theories*” from textbooks, with insufficient attention paid to the real-life ethical dilemmas managers face in business (Derry and Green, 1989). Business schools have also been criticised for their relatively slow response to some key socio-ethical issues which now confront society and businesses, such as pressure to develop more sustainable economies and businesses (Coopey, 2001).

A weakness in much of the research into the effectiveness of business ethics teaching is that it concentrates on business ethics as a stand-alone subject. What is usually ignored, is the extent to which the principles being taught within business ethics are reinforced or contradicted by other aspects of the business curriculum. This led me to consideration of my own discipline of strategic management and the degree to which it reinforces or hampers the process of promoting business ethics. Strategic management is typically treated as an overarching integrative discipline that provides a holistic-counterbalance to other management subjects, which focus on individual business functions and disciplines. For business degrees that lack a dedicated business ethics course, it is also a popular place in the curriculum to

address ethics. Strategic management places considerable emphasis on issues such as leadership and stakeholder analysis, and in recent years issues of corporate social responsibility have begun to feature much more strongly. It therefore provides an apparently logical and suitable “home” for business ethics issues within the management curriculum. However, there are a number of aspects of conventional strategic management, and the way that it is taught, which provide potential barriers to the development of a more ethical and sustainable approach to business. This article will examine two of the most fundamental components of strategic management thinking from this perspective. Each involves the application of a metaphor to a key stakeholder role, and they are both so commonly used that they are rarely either noticed or challenged. Yet each potentially acts as an obstacle to the development of a more ethically orientated way of thinking about business and business leadership.

The trouble with “strategy”

Strategic management is, logically enough, concerned with strategy. When we begin to educate future managers about strategy, the word itself is often the starting point. “*Strategy*” comes from the Greek word “*strategos*”, which originally had a relatively narrow meaning referring to the role of an army commander, but later evolved to refer to “*the art of the general*”. By the time of Alexander the Great it had broadened to mean

“the skill of employing forces to overcome opposition and to create a unified system of global governance” (Evered, 1980).

Curiously, some two thousand years later, such a definition seems less military in its connotations and more like an excerpt from a job description for the manager of a trans-national corporation.

In developing a strategy discipline for the commercial field, management academics have borrowed freely from the military science developed by generals such as von Clausewitz and Sun Tzu. This has provided us with a vocabulary of management strategy peppered with references to targeting, outflanking, retreating, attacking and defending. Standard strategy texts reflect this, particularly the early editions of *The Strategy Process* (Quinn *et al.*, 1988) which are illustrated by the campaigns of Alexander, Napoleon, MacArthur, Mountbatten and the German and French armies of 1914. Whole books have been dedicated to the parallels between military and corporate/marketing strategy (notably James, 1985, and Ries and Trout, 1992), as have articles in leading academic journals (Kotler and Singh, 1981, Parks *et al.*, 1994). This was taken to extremes in one article published in *Long Range Planning* (Ginter and Rucks, 1984), which portrayed a business enterprise as a virtually perfect reflection of a war machine.

The danger in this ancestry is that we risk accepting a philosophy of strategic management in which concepts of aggression, eradicating “*the enemy*” and disregarding the environmental

and social costs and consequences, are seen as “*natural*” and accepted as readily as in the field of military science. In practice, despite its widespread usage, an army provides a poor metaphor for a business (Peattie, 1990; Rindfleisch, 1996). As Cannan (1929) pointed out:

“Economic competition is not war, but rivalry in mutual service”.

The warfare analogy might seem appropriate to those engaged in oligopolistic competition, but try to imagine one of the 20,000 players in the European shoe industry defining who the “*enemy*” is and where the “*battlefield*” lies. Monopolists would also struggle to view themselves as akin to an army, except perhaps as an army of occupation, which lacks the usual sense of a noble struggle. The complexities of modern business relationships also make the military metaphor seem redundant. In key global industries such as cars, telecommunications, computers, aerospace, and financial services, the companies involved increasingly co-operate with their competitors through numerous strategic alliances. Such relationships do not suit the concepts of all-out aggression which typifies warfare and make business strategy formulation today much more akin to diplomacy as an activity.

Despite all the shortcomings of the military metaphor, it has become deeply rooted in the practitioner and academic view of corporate and marketing strategy, so that

“the existing strategy literature appears to present a one-sided, overly conflictual view of competitive interaction. Considering the extensive military experience of many post-war corporate executives and the positive feelings toward the military in the wake of World War II, practitioner embracement of this metaphor is not surprising. Unfortunately for many firms, marketing-as-warfare may have produced a host of unintended consequences for both themselves and their customers.” (Rindfleisch, 1996).

The relevance of this for business ethics perhaps lies in the two maxims “*The first casualty of war is truth*” and “*All is fair in love and war*”, which are both indicative of the relationship between militarism and issues of ethics and truthfulness. In an era when people are more than ever concerned with the ethics and trustworthiness of firms, it seems ironic to model them on organisations for whom propaganda, secrecy and the suppression or

distortion of truth are considered legitimate and often vital. It also seems a classic example of the type of business thinking and scholarship, which those approaching the discipline from a feminist perspective criticise for being centred on masculine concepts like aggression and determinism. The metaphor certainly suffers from some of the classical biases associated with a male-dominated approach to social phenomena (Stevenson, 1990). These include a concentration on masculine dominated sectors of life; the use of paradigms, concepts, methods, and theories which reflect men's rather than women's experiences; and the use of men and male lifestyles as the norms in interpreting social phenomena. A thorough feminist critique of the military metaphor in strategic management would require an article of its own. Space considerations mean that this article can do little more than highlight the feminist perspective on the military metaphor as yet another convincing argument to consign it to the past.

The marketing concept – enthroning the consumer

Another metaphor, which acts as a fundamental building block within the strategic management discipline, is that of “*consumer sovereignty*”. It resides within the “*marketing concept*”, that the basic aim of a business is to create profit through an integrated effort to achieve customer satisfaction. The marketing concept is so widely endorsed and accepted that it has become a “*motherhood*” espoused by virtually all companies (even if fully implemented by relatively few) and rarely subject to any real theoretical scrutiny (Houston, 1986). The metaphor of the customer as a monarch, and the rallying-cry that “*the customer is king*”, is fundamental to marketing and to free-market economics. As Mulhern (1992) notes:

“while neo-classical economic theory assumes consumer sovereignty, the marketing concept proclaims it by explicitly orientating a company toward the satisfaction of consumer wants.”

This metaphor, like that of the company as war-machine, is so widely used that in practice it is rarely explicitly considered or challenged. There are however several rather curious dimensions to it :

1. Monarchies that are more than symbolic are rare in the modern era. The decline of monarchies during the last thousand years suggests that as a system it is not in itself sustainable. Citizens are generally unwilling to have decisions made on their behalf by an individual whom they have not nominated to represent their interests.
2. Monarchs in the past have often been able to wield power without responsibility. History provides plenty of examples of monarchies tainted by cruelty, selfishness and a willingness to destroy the lives of others on a whim. This is not to say that monarchs are necessarily bad rulers, but the absolute power of the monarch can have the power to corrupt absolutely.
3. Monarchs can be vulnerable to manipulation by advisors who isolate them from the realities of their kingdoms and effectively control them through the use of selective information.

Faith in the concept of consumer sovereignty also has the potential to act as a barrier to the creation of more ethical and sustainable businesses for several reasons. Firstly, it allows companies to devolve responsibility for their actions to the customer. Companies have frequently defended environmentally or ethically sub-optimal strategies on the basis that “*it is what the customer wants*”. McDonalds did this in defending their decision to replace polystyrene “*clamshell*” hamburger boxes in America with less-recyclable paper and plastic burger wraps. This was in response to continued, but misplaced, objections from consumers who did not realise that the clamshell boxes were no longer a source of CFC pollution. Volvo, a company that could justifiably claim to be among the greenest of all the car manufacturers, also raised this defence when it found itself under attack for continuing to equip its cars with large engines (Rothenberg *et al.*, 1992).

Close allegiance to the wants of the consumer can also lead to the neglect of the needs of other stakeholders. This is perhaps most obvious when discussing an issue like car safety. This is framed in terms of air-bags, side-impact bars, reinforced roll-cages and anti-whiplash seats. Car-safety ratings in magazines like *Which?* are strongly influenced by the weight of the vehicle. These are all issues specific to driver safety. As cars become heavier, the driver becomes increasingly safe, but pedestrians, cyclists and anyone else in their path become increasingly endangered. Making the driver increasingly insulated from any negative consequences associated with dangerous driving could also arguably lead to less cautious driving and a reduction in overall road safety. One important aim of sustainable development is to more equitably distribute the benefits and costs of economic activity. Consumer sovereignty as a concept encourages relatively blinkered attention to be paid to those receiving the benefits of economic activity, with little attention paid to the impact on non-consumers. Since only roughly one fifth of the world's population has the discretionary spending power necessary to qualify as a member of the "*consumer classes*", the extent to which economic progress is guided by the wants of affluent consumers can be viewed as inequitable and unethical, as well as ultimately unsustainable (Durning 1992).

A third problem with consumer sovereignty is that it is entirely expressed in terms of consumer wants rather than consumer needs. Therefore cigarette companies can market a product that will ultimately kill their customers if used as directed (assuming nothing else kills them first), and defend it on the basis of individual freedom of choice and on satisfying the wants of the consumer. Similarly in the design of cars, the issue of safety consistently lost out for decades to the more explicit consumer desire for speed and style. Mulhern (1992) calls for a new vision of the marketing concept orientated more towards consumer welfare, and less towards consumer wants.

The image of the customer as sovereign seems intuitively attractive. It suggests that as consumers we all have some power to influence the way in which society and the economy develops, and that we can do some good through the exercise of our spending power. The

reality is more reminiscent of Bertolucci's *"The Last Emperor"* in which a theoretically all-powerful monarch leads an existence carefully structured and confined to maintain the illusion of power and to keep the monarch separated from the realities of life.

Conclusions – do metaphors really matter ?

Is it really important that the discipline of strategic management is saturated with the vision of the strategist as an army commander in the service of their consumer sovereign ? For the most part it has been largely ignored, and for many people the exact choice of words used to describe things is not considered particularly important. It is easy to dismiss the question as esoteric, and *"academic"* in the most negative sense of the word (although for any people who believe that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet, a few minutes spent discussing the issue with someone from the worlds of journalism or advertising could prove educational).

In recent years however, social scientists have become increasingly interested in the power of the metaphors we use to shape both thought and action. A metaphor is

"a figure of speech in which a term or phrase with a literal meaning is applied in a different context in order to suggest a resemblance." (Sackmann, 1991).

Many metaphors are so commonly used, including both *"market"* and *"customer"*, that they have become *"dead metaphors"* whose metaphorical roots have been forgotten. The pervasiveness of metaphors and their ability to translate the complex and unfamiliar into something familiar and simple to grasp, mean that philosophers, linguists and social scientists are increasingly agreed that they are fundamental to structuring our view of the world and how we behave within it (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). Whether we use them consciously, or without thinking, metaphors can be shown to play powerful roles in how we create and

perceive business organisations and their behaviours (Grant and Oswick, 1996; Morgan, 1986).

In the field of management, the analysis of the metaphors we use has been very popular within the organisational behaviour literature, particularly relating to organisational change and leadership (for a review see Palmer and Dunford, 1996). It can also have very practical applications. For example, it has been shown that the metaphors used to express the identity of an organisation can influence the extent to which employees identify with that organisation, their job satisfaction and self-esteem (Dutton, *et al.*, 1994). The emphasis within the organisational behaviour arena is primarily on the internal world-view within the company (see for example Morgan, 1986). The more externally focused strategic management and marketing disciplines have been less enthusiastic about metaphor analysis, although Arndt (1985) produced an early exploration of the use of alternative metaphors in marketing.

During the last decade, alternative metaphors have begun to emerge in both the practice and study of corporate and marketing strategy. They are potentially important because, as Lakoff and Johnson (1999) suggest,

"New metaphors have the power to create a new reality."

If we are to develop more ethical and sustainable businesses, what metaphors should be used for the corporate strategist and the consumer, to replace the images of general and king ? Rindfleisch (1996) provides a detailed criticism of the military metaphor, and suggests the use of alternative metaphors such as organisms, games and even marriage. Oliver (1999) sees the metaphors of warfare and games within corporate strategy as distasteful and limiting, and instead suggests parallels with cuisine, with the strategist creatively combining ingredients like a chef. Other metaphors that have been suggested range from a potter's wheel to improvisational jazz. Davis (1991) has suggested that the demands of environmental management create a need for an "*orchestral*" style of management with the strategist "*conducting*" skilled teams of individuals. When concerns about the environmental impacts

of companies are discussed, an obvious source of strategy metaphors comes from biology and ecology (Clippinger, 1999). Although such an approach has grown in popularity, particularly with the increasing interest in the field of industrial ecology, it can also lead to problems. Ecological metaphors can easily slip into misplaced pseudo-Darwinian concepts of competition, and biological metaphors also suffer from a range of limitations (see Rhenman, 1973).

In relation to the consumer, it is important to understand that the customer (in most markets) is not a single individual with a single will that can be obeyed absolutely. Consumers are more like an electorate who, through their purchasing behaviour, endorse the products and activities of individual companies. Some consumers will respond positively to the company's offering, others will not. Some may be loyal and enthusiastic customers, some may patronise the firm as the least bad option, while others may decide to register a protest purchase with a rival. Such a view of consumers would allow companies to consider themselves more like potential or appointed representatives seeking to attract and serve this electorate. This could encourage firms to broaden their perspective and to take on more responsibility for customer and stakeholder welfare. This may seem very different to the approach used by many companies, but in markets such as professional services and in many technical industrial markets, there is a culture in which the company takes some measure of responsibility for the customer and for solving their problems. A government may be elected by a minority, but they must govern for all of society. Similarly, a company may only be endorsed directly by a minority of citizens, but that should not prevent them from considering the interests of all. By treating consumers as a democratic electorate towards whom they have a responsibility, firms would be encouraged towards more openness and communication on social and environmental issues (although this perhaps represents a rather idealised, open and "*spin free*" view of democracy).

One alternative to following the path of military science to understand business leadership, is to seek parallels to management strategy in the field of social anthropology. Akin and Palmer (2000) did this to an extent in using metaphors of "*Shamen*", "*Priest*", "*Magician*",

“*Medicine Man*” and “*Mystic*” to typify styles for organizational change agents. Similarly, instead of viewing the strategist as an army general, we could view them as analogous to a leader within a hunter-gatherer tribe. Such tribes lead a sustainable existence in harmony with their environment, and although they may engage in hostilities with other tribes, a tribal leader is responsible for a much wider range of strategic decisions than the purely military (although there is some debate among social anthropologists as to whether warfare tended to exist among tribal groups before economic and technical development encouraged the expansion of tribes and their territories once original carrying capacities were exceeded). One interesting example comes from the Comanche Indians of North America whose bands were led by a Peace Chief,

“usually a man known for his kindness, wisdom and ability to lead by influencing other men. Although a war record was important, peace chiefs were not chosen from among the most aggressive or ambitious men.” (Peoples and Bailey, 1994).

The idea that modern society can learn from tribal societies was popularised nearly 30 years ago in Carlos Castaneda’s “*Journey to Ixtlan*” (1975) and revisited by Maybury-Lewis’s “*Millennium*” (1992). Pre-agricultural tribal societies have many elements that perhaps make them worth modelling companies around, beyond the fact that they are usually environmentally sustainable. They are usually egalitarian, with leaders selected on the basis of personal qualities and individual merit. They are generally stable and robust units, Coon (1971) stresses that nearly all tribal extinctions are related to outside intervention, usually in the form of contact with “*more developed*” peoples.

Castaneda’s book encapsulated the philosophy of the Yaqui Indians (although it can also be viewed as a vivid warning about the dangers of dabbling with psychotropic mushrooms !). This philosophy contains many principles that seem relevant to the role that business leaders will have to play if we are to create more ethical and sustainable businesses. The book outlines the philosophical steps involved in becoming a Yaqui “*Man of Knowledge*”. Space precludes considering these in detail here, but some idea of their relevance for strategy can

be gained by considering a few such as: “*Stopping the world*”, and “*Disrupting the routines of life*” which refer to the need for re-evaluation and for fundamental change; “*Erasing personal history*” and “*Losing self-importance*” explain how to escape the restrictions of experience and ego; “*Assuming responsibility*” is self explanatory and “*Becoming a Hunter*” explains the principles of living in harmony with the environment –

“A hunter uses his world sparingly and with tenderness, regardless of whether the world might be things, or plants, or animals, or people, or power. he’s not squeezing his world out of shape. He taps it lightly, stays for as long as he needs to and then swiftly moves away without leaving a mark.”

This work is just one example, but it suggests that instead of looking to the likes of von Clausewitz and Sun Tzu for inspiration, strategic management could find an entirely different source of role models and wisdom about leadership to learn from.

One curious observation about these kinds of ideas, is the response that they elicit from those involved in strategic management practice and scholarship. When discussing such an idea within a conference or workshop, it is interesting how many people will use a word like “*ridiculous*”. Why should the idea of a tribal leader as an inspiration for business leadership seem “*ridiculous*” by people who accept the idea of a military leader as a role model and source of inspiration without question ? This response perhaps says a great deal about the prejudices that we have learned, and the values that are buried so deeply that we are scarcely aware that they exist. Another observation is that some people seem to interpret this argument as a misplaced paean to an idyllic but mythical pre-industrial way of life. This article is not meant to suggest that we should return to a tribal way of life. It aims to show that there are other social systems besides armies from which we can learn potentially valuable lessons in leadership. This is particularly true if we are to develop more ethical, sustainable and effective leadership for the future.

A recurring theme in the debate about developing more sustainable and ethical business organisations for this new Millennium, is that we need to break out of old patterns of thought and action to allow ourselves to develop innovative ways to produce, consume and manage.

It is in the search for innovation and new insights that the application of alternative metaphors is so valuable, because they allow an organisation to develop a fresh perspective on itself and its environment (Morgan, 1993). Such an approach is reflected in the many contributors to the collection edited by Allen *et al.* (2001), which discusses some of the challenges involved in creating new forms of more sustainable organisations in terms of “*metaphors for change*”.

The introduction to the book “*Millennium*” suggests that

“Tribal cultures have been systematically destroyed because they hinder the exploitation of the Earth and human beings. But we humans evolved as tribal beings; it may be that the survival of the human race depends upon the acknowledgement of our tribal origins.”

Our survival may also be aided by the consideration of our tribal origins as a source of inspiration in terms of the metaphors we use for business leadership in the future. It is perhaps not entirely coincidental that in the commercial world, it is one of the greenest and most ethically-orientated companies, Body Shop, which consistently refers to its corporate culture as being “*a tribe*”. If our approach to strategic management came to mirror the role of the Comanche Peace Chief, in ensuring their tribe’s long-term security and prosperity, rather than reflecting the Western War Lord’s quest for short term domination at all costs, then perhaps the discipline could help to develop a more sustainable future for itself and for the World.

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