Still Points: Simplicity in Complex Companies

Calvyn C. du Toit and Christo Lombaard

Abstract Building on a previous contribution on "negative capability" (Lombaard, Leadership as spirituality *en route*: "negative capability" for leadership in diversity, Increasing diversity: loss of control or adaptive identity construction? 103–114; 2017) as a non-directive but actively searching and highly influential (Chia and Holt, Strategy without design: the silent efficacy of indirect action, Cambridge University Press, 2009) style of leadership, this paper investigates aspects of the concept of simplicity and its relation to leadership. As management literature has recognised of late, simplicity as a spiritual orientation to life has deep historical roots and various dimensions. One predictable response to simplicity as orientation points to societies invariable complexity. Hence organisations, companies, and almost all human social systems defy attempts at effortless, simplistic illumination. However, niche building within complex systems allow leaders and managers influence. Such influence either aligns interdependent parts of a complex system or distorts the illusions of cheap harmony within it. Here, in these niches, insights and practices of simplicity cultivated in various spirituality traditions may fruitfully be employed. Such insights and practices might steer groups and entities, always awash in entropy, towards coherence, constrained (i.e., strategically guided) action and consistence. Thus, neither social system's complexity nor their entropy are denied or disingenuously reinterpreted. Rather, they are acknowledged and valued as key operational kernels giving structural stability, strategic progress and conceptual clarity to the whole. In this manner, simplicity contributes not only to the resilience organisations and companies but also to sense-making amongst people involved, namely as a dimension of experiencing fulfilment in life. Examples are provided, and spheres of applicability indicated.

C. C. du Toit (✉)
University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

Department of Dogmatics and Christian Ethics, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

C. Lombaard (✉)
University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

J. (Kobus) Kok, S. C. van den Heuvel (eds.), *Leading in a VUCA World*,
Contributions to Management Science, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98884-9_6

1 The Human Yearning for Simplicity

Complexity has become a contemporary buzzword; one which illuminates something new but also has ancient roots. Its ancient roots open the possibility of drawing from the past to assist us in the present.

The observation of complexity as an *intense involvedness* characterising our lives, private and professional, is valid for many people. This complexity could be taken as a problem, in the sense that we may wish to live in an age in which we have a more secure sense, a more solid grasp of our social world. However, as the South African philosopher Danie Goosen (2007) argues, in a notably optimistic tone, the sheer abundance that life offers us, is precisely one of the characteristics of our modern age. The interwoven tapestry (a concept here borrowed from Boersma 2011) of our existence is such that it provides a rich resource for constant wider referentiality, and does so in almost every dimension of human life. This includes, positively, the ability of seeking deep personal, social and transcendent significance within one's work life. In quite a surprising way, Marxist philosophy and Calvinist theology come very close to one another on the aspect of the significance of work: in work, one finds fulfilment—not only as duty, but also for meaningful existence.

The above-mentioned transcendent aspects refer, here, also to the complementary interaction of other fields which had in earlier decades and centuries been deemed either at odds with one another or fully incompatible. This includes fields such as theology and the natural sciences. Van Huyssteen (2006), for instance, argues on evolutionary grounds that religion had always been inherent to the advancement if our species: without religion, *homo sapiens* would have had less chance of survival. Religion, like technology and language and other aspects related to being human, constitutes part of the resources our species could draw on, in order to survive and thrive.

In the previous century, which may be termed the post-modernist decades, meaning was regarded as an almost impossible feature of humanity's language of life. Mere traces of significance may have remained, it was argued, but even then such sense was always beyond our reach (Derrida 1976). In our current, unfolding cultural era of post-secularism (Lombaard et al. 2018), however, it has been realised that meaning can indeed be sensed, namely *experienced*. Such experience does not have be viewed as a-contextual or anti-intellectual (Biernot and Lombaard 2017, pp. 1–12); still, the meaningfulness reflex of our times lies for more and more people in what they *sense* as valid or *feel* to be meaningful. What people reflexively *undergo*, what makes them *feel* existentially at home, is accepted as compatible with their sense of being and of *wellbeing*, without further questioning or validation required.

This age of interrelatedness, also, finds expression in a growing body of writings on management and spirituality, to which this contribution adds. For instance, in "'Visionaries . . . psychiatric wards are full of them': religious terms in management literature," Kessler (2017, pp. 1–9) recently reviewed this trend, to which also one of the present authors (Lombaard 2017, pp. 103–114) contributed, with "Leadership as spirituality *en route*: 'negative capability' for leadership in diversity." In many other

instances, some of which are referred to by these two recent studies, concepts from spirituality are drawn on in order to think through aspects of management in particular contexts.

The growth in this management interest in spirituality is telling, not only of our current age of interrelatedness, but also of the sense of meaning yearned for by many people, also in their professional lives. Spirituality is namely often associated with a kind of clarity of mind, a sense of purpose and groundedness, combined with an awareness of emotional rest or lucidity—orientations which unite many aspects of being human under an overarching (consciousness of) wholeness and wholesomeness (wellbeing).

Without diminishing the magnitude of this totality, or whole-person orientation, one may still discern core constitutive elements. Kernels are thus acknowledged: niches in which all, or much, of this totality is concentrated. These kernels carry extraordinary power of influence, for guiding from there the rest of the network which is humanity and institutions, interconnected. This foundational orientation on such kernels may be termed *simplicity*.

Such simplicity should not to be confused with religious fundamentalism, where a kind of "oneness" is found in a single truth which is sourced from a single source (a holy book or perhaps a revelation) to be forced onto everything and everybody, "for their own good" (a term from the Inquisition, often unknowingly appropriated in less-than-democratic moments). That constitutes false simplicity, because it supresses complexity by means of an overarching, "heavy" truth. In an expression attributed variously to several philosophers and theologians: we should fear those who know only one book well. Rather, here, more organisational-architecturally than philosophical-theologically, the most important operational hinges which afford structural integrity, strategic progress, and conceptual clarity to the whole are acknowledged for their essential value. Without these hinges, the doors of process do not just open or close. Importantly, the nature of complexity is neither denied nor disingenuously reinterpreted, as seems to be the case in some pop literature on the matter. The central cores and their hinge functions are, rather, acknowledged for the disproportionally high value that they, in fact, do contribute. Thus understood, *this attribute of simplicity* adds not only to the resilience of organisations and companies, but also improves sense-making among the people involved, namely as a dimension of experiencing fulfilment in life.

Neither should the spiritual impulse, here, be equated with a yearning to escape from reality into a secluded sphere, cut off from the rest of life. Where such an understanding is ascribed to, the metaphor of the monastery in mediaeval times is often employed, and falsely so. Monasteries had namely been communities only minimally separated from other societal spheres, but their strength and success lay precisely therein that they were institutions also established with an explicit orientation to serving their immediate community. Similarly, the current turn to spirituality (an expression from e.g. Kourie 2006, pp. 19–38) in many aspects of society involves precisely a turn *to* the world (that is, to *this* world, rather than to only the inner world or the above world). For precisely this reason, it is not surprising that even an atheist could formulate his spiritual intentions as "to believe in spiritualities

that open onto the world, onto other people, onto everything … to inhabit the universe" (Comte-Sponville 2007, p. 197).

With these two possible misconceptions prevented, our concrete "age of complexity" moreover does not only refer three-dimensionally to the events and structures of society we encounter. Perhaps as the single most noticeable characteristic of our time, the fourth dimension, that of time, comes into play ever more strongly: because of economic, technological and cultural-personal drives, all things go faster—as argued influentially by Rosa in *Social acceleration: a new theory of modernity* (2013). In corporate life, this is seen as dramatically as anywhere else: the quicker things go, paradoxically, the less time there is—to cope, to reflect, to be. To adapt somewhat the ancient philosophical conundrum: speed as an *unstoppable force* is not met by any *unmovable wall*—be the latter workers' rights and/or wellbeing, the limitations of present states of (financial, technical, geographical, etc.) affairs, or laws (as recent corporate scandals have again shown). The quickening of everything seems like the lessening of humanity—an attenuation of being human.

In the busy-ness of business, work's multidimensionality often defies clear grasp, opening the gates, also, to the other kind of corporate scandal, the managerial, in which executive oversight just does not seem possible anymore. This is the void into which rogue stock traders, for instance, drift. The central beams or the key foundation points on which the construction of the business reality rests, have become unknown—often to most employees, at times to all, including management. This runs fully parallel to the phenomenon in spirituality which is, as stated above, associated with "clarity of mind, a sense of purpose and groundedness." On the absence of a *still point* which balances essential aspects of being human, follows disorientation, loss of contact with reality, and ultimately disintegration.

The *still point* is a term from TS Eliot (1943; *Four Quartets*: *Burnt Norton, II*)—a point where important things (the above-human, the three usual dimensions, and then the dimension of time) converge. Such convergence, not as a passive rest-point, but as an essential point of activity (the latter indicated by the italics added below), carries pivotal weight:

> At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
> Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,
> But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
> Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,
> Neither ascent nor decline. *Except for the point, the still point,*
> *There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.*

The influence of the still point as concept runs widely within spirituality literature (e.g. Colacurcio 2015; Martin 2012; Beaudoin 2006; Harpur 2000). Echoing Psalm 46:10 and the dual Greek time concepts of *chronos* (times-as-flow) and *kairos* (time-as-event; Whitstable 2007, p. 23), the idea of a central point or a few such central points that have at once centrifugal and centripetal importance, is a fruitful and enriching analogy to the concept that will be discussed next with relation to Complexity Theory: key niches in complex organisations.

2 The Niche: Key Points in Complex Companies

The managerial-doctrinal lie of full efficiency, drawn from Fordism, implemented without care, and attenuating meaningful work, dominates to a substantial extent to this day. Even if organisations accept, or plan for, wasted time as inevitable, the dream of machine-like corporate productivity continues. Machines, however, ironically also *require* "down time" for maintenance purposes. No matter how hard an efficiency leader may try to limit wasted time, wasted time, nonetheless, persists. Quashed somewhere, it reconfigures in another place. The so-called "effective leader" would, in this line of thinking, pounce on such new wastes and refocus employees; such leadership becomes reactive vigilance rather than reflective guidance. *Chronos* tyrannises *kairos* at every corner where work tries turning the alchemic trick of wrangling efficient work from meaningful work.

Of these, the three metaphoric horsemen of chronic efficiency—speed, information and communication—are the main culprits which spread leaders thin. As speed increases, a useful knotting of information and communication becomes complicated and a scattered fool's errand. Enter, then, the already mentioned contemporary leadership synthesis: complexity and spirituality. Complexity is, however, itself a fuzzy concept, requiring a brief parsing (Loubser 2014, p. 1).

2.1 General Complexity Theory

Seldom, when drawing on complexity theory, do authors frame the complexity they have in mind. Often, this masks deep epistemic commitments; it is therefore important that we play an open hand from the start. With complexity, here, is meant General Complexity and not Restricted Complexity. Restricted Complexity designates some systems as complex and others as complicated, while General Complexity sees all systems as complex at certain levels (Morin 2007, p. 10). Restricted Complexity and General Complexity include various additional internal complications and categorisations not relevant here. For our part, we will keep to General Complexity, with this exception: we borrow from Restricted Complexity the difference between *complicatedness* and *complexity*. Drawing on this distinction we can illuminate how classical models of business are different from newer ones prevalent in information and service industries. *Complexity* suggests that social systems, such as human organisations, differ from complicated mechanistic assemblages, such as aeroplanes, in three important ways. First, the primary attribute of complex systems is *connections*, while *information* mark complicated systems (Cilliers 1998). For instance: although a mobile phone is very complicated, one can often troubleshoot a technical defect of a device with relative certainty; however, tracing a mobile phone maker's loss of market share is much more difficult and much less predictable—it is *complex*. An analysis of the latter must consider the *connections* between multiple factors, and even then, no single answer may crystallise.

The second difference between complicated and complex systems, following from the first, is *memory management*. Stagnant storage, as in a computer hard drive, marks complicatedness, whereas complexity's memory remains *dynamic*, akin to a brain. Like a brain, memory stored through connections give the memory of complexity its vibrancy. Repetition is the key to complexity's retention; "use it or lose it" remains the hallmark of complex recollection (Cilliers 2016). Another quality of complex systems follows from this: a particular *slowness* marks complex systems (Cilliers 2016).

Now, calcified memory means complicated systems can tunnel through their environment with rapidity, with little regard or sensitivity to that environment. Complex systems, however, always remain entangled within their surroundings. Such an entanglement means complex systems remain semi-permeable, even though they may identifiably be outlined. Evaluative processes then become necessary, considering the semi-permeability of complex systems. Memory provides such an outlining discernment. Slow integration of environmental changes through memory procedures gives complex system adaptability, while also making them longer-lasting though pliable. Complicated machines like cars, for example, on the other hand ignore large parts of their environment up until the point at which they break down.

As e Cunha and Rego (2010, pp. 85–86) point out, many an organisation wants leaders to live in the gingerbread house of complexity, but they are at the same time encouraged to eat it with simplicity. Simplicity and complexity, however, are not the strangers one might assume. For instance, "fractals"[1] are complex patterns born from simplicity folding in on itself (Wheatley 2011, p. 273). The seeming paradox, then, is that simplicity and complexity can be partners. However, leaders often confuse complicatedness with complexity. Leadership in such circumstances becomes a question of information volume and speed: a *complicated* problem, and not one of connection—hence a *complexity* problem. As markets drift from an industrial economy to knowledge or service based economies, a leadership cohort that can manage the *volume and complexity* of such information-rich environments, are key (Uhl-Bien et al. 2007, p. 299). Information, here, designates more than the overt and networked data-sea; it also covers the multifaceted intercultural and interdisciplinary meshes stirring underneath the social surface.

Such profound and occluded connections, then, are opportune only if leaders are comfortable with a short-term time expenditure for the sake of long-term creativity, stability and gain. Allowing for short-term wastage does, however, mean cultivating discipline. In brief, for *chronos* to transmute into lasting *kairos*, time and attentiveness, both as marks of ancient spiritualities, are required. Restraint from quick-turnaround strategies is of great importance as leaders find multiple organisational tools at their disposal designed simply to reduce wasted time. Email, online

[1] Fractals are complex mathematical sets created by repeating a simple formula. The Mandelbrot set where the function does not diverge when iterated from, is one example of such a set. Every time the function is reiterated, complexity increases, until one arrives at a mindboggling amount of complexity, all through reiterating simplicity (Mandelbrot 2004, pp. 9–26).

collaborative platforms, and infograms are only a few of the tools available to the contemporary managerial reductionist who focusses on efficiency alone. Although such instruments may carry the accurate label of "productivity suites," in an ironic twist, their productivity sometimes undermine effectivity.[2] We will return to this point below to provide some examples.

To summarise: complexity means that the primary task of leadership is no longer to manage information, but rather to link the cluttered multiplicity. Of course, productivity tools are also helpful when searching for notable connections in the brute information haze. Their principal value, however, are as utilities for *administrative leadership*, which manage the bureaucracies and ruling regimes which large organisations bring (Uhl-Bien et al. 2007, p. 307; Uhl-Bien and Marion 2009, pp. 631–650). *Administrative leadership however* manages a different set of complexities than *adaptive leadership*, which focuses on the implementation and inculcation of organisational culture.[3] One area adaptive leadership guides, perhaps without explicitly realising it, is the waste which complexity brings.

Indeed, leaders in any organisation should pause to reconsider "waste management." Systems wading into the stormy waters of complexity produce superfluous communication, which in turn may leave the human actors confused and unfocused. Here, again, this contribution wants to marry complexity, simplicity and spirituality. We do this by considering time wastage, simplicity and the negative capabilities[4] key to *adaptive leadership.* In the conclusion, we describe what *adaptive leadership* can learn from spirituality.

2.2 Niches Within Complex Companies

An often-overlooked part of a complex system is the waste produced. As complexity in systems increase, so waste inevitably increases as well. Were we to forget this important part of complexity, we quickly fall into the trap of pretending that no waste exists. Leaders, then, only manage positive outcomes and are prone to forget about

[2]To accede for a moment to the predilection of philosopher *Slavoj Žižek* for using examples from human ablutions in order to illustrate a point: toilets may be ever increasingly *productive* in saving water, up to the point where they are no longer *effective* in clearing away waste. Being ever more productive does not equate to being ever more effective.

[3]Here lie echoes of the two types of thinking identified by Martin Heidegger (1998), summarised recently by le Roux (2016) as follows (italics added): "*rekende denke* en *nadenke*. *Rekende denke* fokus op beplanning, ordening, sistematisering, regulering, administrasie en organisasie. Alhoewel dié soort denke onontbeerlik is, is dit nie egte of eintlike denke nie. Alles draai egter om *nadenke*, diepdenke, kontemplasie oor ons wêreld en menswees."

[4]"Negative capability" of leaders (cf. Lombaard 2017, pp. 103–114) is, briefly defined, "the capacity to contain one's fear and anxiety when faced with a challenging situation and not respond with a knee-jerk reaction. Rather than 'doing nothing' negative capability is the capacity to wait, observe and enquire into a situation as it unfolds in order to discover an optimal way forward" (Ladkin 2015, p. 214, see also pp. 195–196).

negative management. The best leaders, however, manage waste through discernment as complexity increases (Simpson et al. 2002; on the *modus operandi* of discernment, cf. Waaijman 2013, pp. 13–24; applied to organisational context, cf. Bouckaert 2017, pp. 15–25).

What is meant by waste? As complexity increases, so too do connections increase. Increased communication, however, does not produce the utopia some would suggest (Angelopulo 2014). More links mean greater complexity, but it also means the possibility of needless communication, miscommunication and (where complexity is mistaken for complicatedness) the fear of communication. Waste management does not mean cutting out all possible wastefulness, for as stated above, there will always be some waste in a complex system. If cut off at one junction, it will reconfigure somewhere else. Leaders with deeply reflective capacities ("negative capability," cf. Lombaard 2017, pp. 103–114) seek to understand how to manage such structured, incidental and angst-driven waste.

As businesses increase in complexity, needless communication is equally inevitable. A quick glance at most people's email inbox will confirm how menial administrative tasks can distract one from one's core business. No job advertisements, however, contain the requirement that one answers hundreds if not thousands emails each week, with many of these messages being superfluous. Large corporate meetings offer another example. Such gatherings tend to find yet another PowerPoint masterpiece that should convince all of the poetry of a prosaic detail, which is somehow key to everyone's function in the organisation. Such meetings often inspire participants to take out their own smaller screens . . . ironically, probably to catch up on the just mentioned emails.

Often it is in unstructured work periods, such as the coffee breaks between possibly mediocre speakers, that the really thought-provoking connections are made. Companies like Google, for example, "manages" such creative waste by demanding employees "waste" 10% of their time on creative projects. From Sweden hails a whole culture of such "waste management" called Fika[5]—the now widely adopted extended coffee breaks during a work day. In other words, effective leadership in such instances manages "waste" by making it mandatory, ritualising and simplifying it—a simplification which takes place precisely through ritualisation.

Such a simplification of waste within complexity creates space for niches to grow. Niches, in this instance, are understood as pockets within the dominant system that foster novel ideas (Westley et al. 2011, p. 767). Such niches are, however, also managed. Managers are essential to niches, but their leadership style cannot be

[5]"The word *fika* (from *ka-fi*) coffee backwards is a vague concept. It means taking a coffee break, but has other meanings as well. When a boss says, "let's *fika*"—it could be to discuss work, give advice, ask advice, give caution, talk promotion, or just gossip. This is not gossip in the negative sense of slander and malice, but constructive, "coffee-break gossip": exploring ideas, debating rumours and conjecture, considering different views, and finding out about what's going on. . . What for many is a hidden code in Swedish decision-making processes, is quite apparent in Swedish corporate décor—the coffee break area is the central hub to the Swedish organisation" (Alexander 2010, pp. 38–39).

traditional: they do not lead through express instructions or orders. Such leaders require "negative capabilities": an orientation of listening and facilitation, rather than of being forcefully directive (our traditional associations with a "strong leader"). In other words, a niche leader would not say, "you must" or "you cannot," but instead encourages with something akin to "you can." In a sense, what a niche leader is doing, is through this proclamation of "you can" releasing participants to rearrange the business culture—what would be called in complexity theory its memory. Furthermore, with the liberative "you can," the manager also implicitly makes a covenant to protect niche participants from what could be a negative dominant regime or remnants thereof.

Although in zen-like thinking small things, such as a butterfly, are understood potentially to have a larger effect than a volcano erupting, such change happens from locality to locality within a corporation, and not all at once. The possibility of such larger events from a small occurrence, or the reverse, cannot be guaranteed—which brings us again to memory in complexity systems. Although some niches may namely not be taken up in dominant regimes, they remain useful as contributors to the superfluity of a system; a necessary by-product of meaningful interaction.

We now turn to another type of "time drag" created by complexity. Wasteful niches cannot always be structured. Complex systems draw on connections rather than on calcified hierarchies. Even if one structures superfluous communication in complex systems through niches, emergence means wasteful residues persist. As with structured waste, incidental waste can equally lead to creative solutions. Unlike structured waste, however, resistance is built into incidental waste, and thus requires a different set of (also negative) capabilities of a leader.

Incidental waste requires what Schreiber and Carley (2008, pp. 291–331) call *contextual* and *process* leadership. In brief, contextual leadership realises that knowledge and expertise do not reside in a single person, but are distributed over the whole network. Process leadership remains sensitive to where meaningful connections coalesce, fostering them. Schreiber and Carley, however, add a descriptive modelling of context and process. Such an analysis not only divulges their Restricted Complexity assumptions, but also works against their comment about the quick-paced change and the complexity of organisations today, which produce as pointed out above, incidental waste.

The management of incidental waste through *contextual* and *process* leadership should be seen as parallel to negative capabilities. Analysis and modelling may serve as training ground for contextual and process sensitivities, but no emergent moment waits for an analysis to be complete. Incidental waste, as the name suggests, occurs haphazardly. Thus, context analysis and process facilitation require more than analysis; it entails embodied awareness.

Simpson et al. (2002, pp. 1211–1218) of how *context* and *process* as embodied negative capabilities turn incidental waste into a creative and educational process:

Nicholas is sent to negotiate a deal with Russian and Chinese counterparts for a certain multinational company. As the orchestrator of the deal, Nicholas must deliver swift results. Soon, however, he faces resistance from his compeers. At first,

Nicholas struggles to understand why various parties resist what seems to him to be reasonable demands.

Nicholas's mistake, which he is slow to realise, is his single focus—get the deal done. When working with other cultures, age-groups, or companies, one soon learns, like Nicholas, that one cannot steamroll decisions without collateral damage or encountering cooperative refusal.

Adaptive leadership, here, would mean drawing on the negative capabilities of allowing and acknowledging resistances, namely as a cooperative learning experience. In other words, if Nicholas overpowers his peers with the minutiae of the deal, without acknowledging the resistances and differences represented, he not only misses an educational moment, but he also reduces the resilience of future cooperative calibration.

We have now covered how leadership can leverage structured and incidental waste for learning and creativity. There remains, however, one more category of potential waste that a complex system can produce. The third type of waste in complex systems trains others into its own ways. Thus, whereas structured waste through niches protect the creativity of its members from dominant regimes, and incidental waste require an inculcation of reflective values, *textured waste* trains other human actors, which in companies means employees, to live within complexity.

The difference pointed out earlier between complex systems and complicated systems becomes important here. Social systems such as businesses are complex, and treating them as only complicated is reductive, in many ways. With complicatedness, operational units stand in a mono-modal relationship. In other words, each component is functional to another component. In contrast to this, however, complex interactions are multi-modal: one interaction has multiple effects throughout the system.

Thus, leaders who collapse complexity in mere complicatedness are short-sighted. Often such leaders see employees as means instead of as ends in themselves. The workers must, thus, be tapped for all their worth, and no mistakes on their part are allowed. Quite naturally, such a rigid approach soon spirals into error-shaming. Such a system may appear, at least in the short term, to produce less waste. The long-term price, however, does not justify the short-term thriftiness. The complicated system may seem more "toned," but it also breaks far easier than a complex system. A short-lived complicated view of a team would accordingly make everyone puppets of the leader. Such draconic leadership encourages grovelling instead of appreciation, reluctance instead of willingness, and insipidness instead of ingenuity—the seeds herein of longer-term effects are clear to be seen.

The three described kinds of waste may be employed to guide leaders beyond over-psychologised business babble. Caution against such cheap, short-termed "solutions" is a must for managers who draw on a humanity endeared with traits related to our spirituality. An important difference remains between spiritualties that feign wholeness or existential meaning, and a complexity-model-focused locale of spirituality with integrity. A manipulative use of spirituality directs its canons at the employee. As more integral spirituality and view of humanity transmutes demands

like "Work harder!" and "Be loyal to the company!" into questions like "What makes your work meaningful?" and "How can you draw on your inner strengths within difficult projects?," wholeness and wholesomeness are, thus, non-forced and well-facilitated.

In contrast to control sublimated as care, a complex way of approaching spirituality requires not more from the employees, but from managers. Overseers may thus orient themselves to understand the conditions under which a deeper humanity is fostered, risking the valuable possibility of "waste."

3 Whyte Noise

British philosopher-poet David Whyte—no stranger in the world of business, as demonstrated by his 2002 volume *The heart aroused: poetry and the preservation of the soul in the new workplace* (an updated version of his 1994 *The Heart Aroused: Poetry and the Preservation of the Soul in Corporate America*)—illustrated in one of his poems how what may seem intangible or unfathomable, in reality has high concrete impact. In his 1996 poetry collection titled *The House of Belonging* is found:

Working Together
We shape our self
to fit this world
and by the world
are shaped again.
The visible
and the invisible
working together
in common cause,
to produce
the miraculous.
I am thinking of the way
the intangible air
passed at speed
round a shaped wing
easily
holds our weight.
So may we, in this life
trust
to those elements
we have yet to see
or imagine,
and look for the true
shape of our own self,
by forming it well
to the great
intangibles about us.

In this poem, the interactive reciprocity between the concrete and the ethereal, the individual and the group, agency and determinism, what is at hand and what is elusive are balanced, and not only aesthetically. The word *balance* is central here: with each of the elements of these four seeming pairs of opposites, foundationally, the one cannot exist without the other. The elements may seem like opposites, but they are more like two sides of the same coin. Thus we find *interactive reciprocity*—not only as symbiotic concepts, but as a way of living and working: aspects that seem clear and aspects that seem less tangible form a network of understanding which constitutes life.

The same holds true for the key niches within complex organisations discussed above. For the most part, those associated with a business (and the larger the business, the more this is the case) know neither of key niches that impact on them nor how they fulfil for others that role. Not because key niches are in any sense ethereal; their concreteness speak clearly from the huge (potential for) influence they hold. Like "white noise" in shared modular office environments, employees may not be conscious of how niches work, how it affects them or how they contribute to them, but its enabling effect within the workspace is concrete.

One question remains: how to convey to supervisors who are used to traditionally-styled leadership approaches the orientation for adaptive leadership, for structuring waste and for such alternate, more fruitful and more humanly-meaningful leadership roles? For some decades now, religious organisations have tended to borrow "best practices" from corporate governance theories, with questionable results. Perhaps, in today's *complex* environment, organisations would consider the reverse, namely how corporate leadership may benefit from more humane, more spiritually-inclined practices of facilitation. The above thoughts hope to act as a primer for such a future discussion.

Bibliography

Alexander J (2010) How swedes manage. Intermedia Publications, Ingarö

Angelopulo G (2014) Connectivity. Communicatio 40(3):209–222

Beaudoin J (2006) Return to still point: transcending the modern separate self. Trafford Publishing, Victoria

Biernot D, Lombaard C (2017) Religious experience in the current theological discussion and in the church pew. HTS Theol Stud 73(3):1–12

Boersma H (2011) Heavenly participation: the weaving of a sacramental tapestry. William B Eerdmans, Grand Rapids

Bouckaert L (2017) Spiritual discernment as a method of judgment. In: Nandram S, Bindlish P (eds) Managing VUCA through integrative self-management: how to cope with volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity in organizational behavior. Springer, Halfweg, pp 15–25

Chia R, Holt R (2009) Strategy without design: the silent efficacy of indirect action. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Cilliers P (1998) Complexity and postmodernism. Routledge, New York

Cilliers P (2016) Complexity and philosophy: on the importance of a certain slowness. In: Critical complexity. De Gruyter, Boston, pp 211–222

Colacurcio R (2015) Applied spirituality: seeing through the illusion of our separateness, vol 1. Xlibris, Bloomington
Comte-Sponville A (2007) The little book of atheist spirituality. Viking Press, New York
Derrida J (1976) Of grammatology. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore
e Cunha MP, Rego A (2010) Complexity, simplicity, simplexity. Eur Manag J 28(2):85–94
Eliot TS (1943) Four quartets. Harcourt, New York
Goosen D (2007) Die Nihilisme: Notas oor ons Tyd. Praag, Pretoria
Harpur T (2000) Finding the still point: a spiritual response to stress. Northstone Publishing, Kelowna
Heidegger M (1998) Zijn en tijd. Nijmegen, SUN
Kessler V (2017) "Visionaries . . . psychiatric wards are full of them": religious terms in management literature. Verbum et Ecclesia 38/2:1–9
Kourie C (2006) The 'turn' to spirituality. In: de Villiers P, Kourie C, Lombaard C (eds) The spirit that moves: orientation and issues in spirituality. Acta Theologia Supplementum 8. University of the Free State Press, Bloemfontein, pp 19–38
Ladkin D (2015) Mastering the ethical dimension of organizations: a self-reflective guide to developing ethical astuteness. Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham
Le Roux J (2016) Hoe pas Teologie en Universiteit bymekaar? http://teo.co.za/hoe-pas-teologie-en-universiteit-bymekaar-jurie-le-roux. Accessed 27 Nov 2016
Lombaard C (2017) Leadership as spirituality *en route*: "negative capability" for leadership in diversity. In: Barentsen J, van den Heuvel SC, Kessler V (eds) Increasing diversity: loss of control or adaptive identity construction? Peeters, Leuven, pp 103–114
Lombaard C, Benson IT, Otto E (2018) Faith, Society and the post-secular. Private and Public Religion in Law and Theology. Australian lecture tour presentation at the Notre Dame School of Law, Sydney; the Australian Catholic University, Brisbane; Pilgrim Theological College, Centre for Research in Religion and Social Policy, University of Divinity, Melbourne; and in Adelaide, the School of Ministry, Theology and Culture, Tabor College and the Adelaide Law School of the University of Adelaide, 2018. HTS Theol Stud (forthcoming)
Loubser GM (2014) Engaging Complexity. Verbum et Ecclesia 35(1):1–7. https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v35i1.1316
Mandelbrot BB (2004) Introduction to papers on quadratic dynamics: a progression from seeing to discovering. In: Fractals and chaos. Springer, New York, pp 9–26
Martin R (2012) Still point: loss, longing and our search for god. Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame
Morin E (2007) Restricted complexity, general complexity. In: Gershenson C, Aerts D, Edmonds B (eds) Worldviews, science and us. World Scientific, Hackensack
Rosa H (2013) Social acceleration: a new theory of modernity. Columbia University Press, New York
Schreiber C, Carley KM (2008) Networked leadership: leading for learning and adaptivity. In: Uhl-Bien M, Marion R (eds) Complexity leadership: conceptual foundations, vol 1. Information Age Publishing, Charlotte, pp 291–331
Simpson PF, French R, Harvey CE (2002) Leadership and negative capability. Hum Relat 55 (10):1209–1226
Uhl-Bien M, Marion R (2009) Complexity leadership in bureaucratic forms of organizing: a meso model. Leadersh Q 20(4):631–650
Uhl-Bien M, Marion R, McKelvey B (2007) Complexity leadership theory: shifting leadership from the industrial age to the knowledge era. Leadersh Q 18(4):298–318
Van Huyssteen W (2006) Alone in the world? Human uniqueness in science and theology. William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids
Waaijman K (2013) Discernment – the compass on the high sea of spirituality. Acta Theol 17:13–24
Westley F et al (2011) Tipping toward sustainability: emerging pathways of transformation. AMBIO 40(7):762–780
Wheatley M (2011) Leadership and the new science: discovering order in a chaotic world. Berret-Koehler, San Francisco

Whitstable M (2007) The Eucharistic vision and the spirituality of St Francis of assisi. Gracewing, Leominster
Whyte D (1994) The heart aroused: poetry and the preservation of the soul in corporate America. Doubleday, New York
Whyte D (1996) The house of belonging. Many Rivers Press, Langley
Whyte D (2002) The heart aroused: poetry and the preservation of the soul in the new workplace (rev. ed.). Spiro Press, London

Calvyn C. du Toit is a Ph.D.-candidate in Christian Spirituality at the University of South Africa, and a Research Associate in the Department of Dogmatics and Christian Ethics at the University of Pretoria. His interests include: how Christian Spirituality intersects with cities and technologies, places where religious and philosophical metaphysics intersect, and how complexity studies might assist in building awareness of memory as key to emerging ethics. His most recent publications, in collaboration with Gys Loubser, focus on liturgy as one contemplative space for the ethical integration of technology, and myth s a technic of knowing with a specific focus on Big History.

Christo Lombaard is Research Professor of Christian Spirituality at the University of South Africa, in Pretoria. His research specialisms include Biblical Spirituality, Post-Secularism, Spirituality Theory and Applied Spirituality. He holds two doctorates: a Ph.D. in Communications (North-West University, Potchefstroom, specialising in Religious Communications) and a DD in Theology (University of Pretoria, specialising in Old Testament Studies). He is a South African National Research Foundation rated researcher, and a regular contributor to conferences across the globe. His most accessible publication is *The Old Testament and Christian Spirituality* (Atlanta, Georgia: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), which was awarded the 2013 Krister Stendahl medal for Bible scholarship by the Graduate Theological Foundation, USA. This volume may be downloaded at http://ivbs.sbl-site.org/uploads/SBL%20book%20%28final%20edit%29.pdf.