



The Ethics of Management and the Ethics of Development: A Global View

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The concept of ethics in management clearly refers to the usual issues – not cheating customers, selling sub-standard products, neglecting to pay suppliers, and so forth. But here I will argue that it has a much wider scope since it takes place in a planetary context. This is different from the notion of globalization and refers to the larger planetary crisis in which we find ourselves – a crisis of many dimensions and which certainly includes issues such as climate change, collapsing resources, pollution and toxic elements in the environment and our bodies, loss of biodiversity on the environmental side, and social issues such as poverty, militarism and the arms trade, many forms of social exclusion and related injustices. Given that the corporate sector is the single biggest global actor, its ethical responsibilities are equally big. These might include such factors as commitment to environmentally safe energy systems and modes of transport, concern with what society and economy might look like as we enter the era of fossil fuel decline, commitment to “cradle to cradle” design in all contexts, and concern with the real social and environmental utility of products. The paper will explore these issues and attempt to link the issue of ethics and management to three major movements: concern with the creation of a social economy as a possible form of post-capitalist or post-industrial socio-economic order; to the field of development ethics as an important way of relating management and development; and the re-conceptualization of management as management for transition and sustainability as key elements in creating not only a desirable future, but any future at all in a situation where the future of our civilization is truly at risk.

Introduction

Two things should be evident about the contemporary world. The first is that we face a global crisis of unprecedented proportions.

Global warming and its associated climate change will have vast and as yet unknown effects on agriculture, rainfall patterns, temperatures, extreme weather and rising sea

levels which will have huge impacts on the livelihoods or even survival of many millions. At the same time we see extensive pollution of the atmosphere, water and soils, unabated extraction of non-renewable resources, loss of biodiversity, extensive corruption within many societies, conflict and crime within and between societies, and new forms of crime emerging in tune with what were supposed to be benign technologies (cyber-crime for example). The tragic and depressing list goes on – hyper-urbanization with its associated crowding and lack of facilities, soil loss, human trafficking, widening economic inequalities within and between nations, arms trading, terrorism, lack of access to educational or medical facilities on the part of many, persisting gender inequalities, child labor, and no doubt even more examples that any of us could add. What is particularly frightening is that today, unlike periods in the past when some of these features were present, they are now all occurring together, and in a political environment that sees an international move to the Right (signaling less positive environmental legislation, unfriendliness to migrants, rolling back of social protections) and the election of “leaders” who seem to care little about these issues or are not willing to take unpopular but necessary steps to address them.

The second is that, of all the social actors responsible, business, and in particular large corporations, that are among the most responsible agents. It might indeed be argued that of all social actors, business is now the major one on a global scale. Politicians are often in thrall to business interests and it has been cogently argued that a great deal of so-called “political” policy is in fact just economics by another name, or to put it slightly differently, that it is economics (and not for example environmental concerns or issues of social justice) that drive public policy, both domestically and internationally. Business is then in an ambiguous position as regards the sad list of problems enumerated above. On the one hand it can benefit (weak

pollution controls, corruption in the granting of mining licenses, the favoring of certain kinds of migration policies over others, access to cheap and unregulated and un-unionized labor, the legal ability to keep people on short-term or even “Zero Hours” contracts and to be supported by the courts in doing so). On the other, because of its sheer size and power as a social actor, it can potentially address those problems that are within its zone of competence.

But in saying this it is important to distinguish direct from indirect effects. A responsible company may (and many do) aim to cut CO2 emissions and other pollutants, not too foul rivers or other bodies of water and not to draw off ground water needed by local farmers and other members of the surrounding communities. It can pay fair wages, have equitable gender policies, provide child care rather than exploit child labor, provide pensions and otherwise act in a highly positive way as almost, in the case of large companies in particular, as a kind of mini-state pursuing very socially beneficial policies. But it may do none or few of these things. So while terrorism can hardly be traced to the activities of any legitimate business organization (illegitimate ones and those engaged in such activities as arms manufacture and trading are another issue), the long term and hidden effects may indeed be there: destruction of the local economy and its traditional occupations, creating not unemployment but generating only low skilled monotonous jobs, the hollowing -out of communities as mega-malls and giant hyper-markets get constructed near small towns where modest local businesses were the mainstay.

Many of the critics of globalization make exactly these points: that the global economic playing field is not level, that there are losers as well as winners and that the multilateral financial and trade organizations (the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO) are biased in the direction of supporting those who already have economic power. The history of globalization has been replete with examples of the

destruction of local economies, displacement and marginalization of peoples, cultural erosion, the export of waste and polluting industries to the poorer countries, and the many other well documented accounts of the “underside” of globalization, a process from which some have benefitted and many have suffered. The shining new cities of the Gulf States and Singapore have been quite literally built by temporary migrant labor (usually forbidden to settle in the places they have constructed) from India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Thailand and Indonesia. Virtually every middle-class Singapore family is served by a Filipina maid, who is often a college graduate and who may be better educated than her employers, but who cannot stay beyond the end of her contract and is forbidden to marry a local person. The disruption of family life that such sojourns abroad entail, justified only by the economic benefits of being able to remit money home, is considerable. But all these social processes are driven by what are indeed economic interests – the need for cheap, docile and expendable labor, or for a maid who will allow others to pursue active economically beneficial (to themselves) careers without problems of childcare or home work. In all these senses Karl Marx was basically correct: the economy underlies and to a great extent determines other levels of social reality – what we can earn, where we can live, our patterns of consumption, travel and movement, our status and our very subjectivities – our values in other words and our sense of self and hence of others.

Ethics, Management and Responsibility

It should be quite clear that there is a close connection between the state of the world (which we have not found but created in its social, economic and political dimensions) and ethics. In a fairly obvious sense, business and management have an ethical dimension – not to cheat your customers, or to provide substandard products. To charge fair prices, to pay your suppliers on time. To be responsible for the “afterlife” of your products when they have reached the end of their reasonable

utility. But given the context in which business must now operate, and equally given that this context is a planetary one today, the notion of business ethics must also be expanded beyond this limited range. It too must be a planetary ethics. Some of these principles are already embodied in widely accepted practices – the whole Fair Trade movement and the issues that motivate it (paying fair prices to primary producers of commodities such as coffee, handicrafts and handloom products, and assisting those producers to work in a sustainable and ecologically appropriate way), in international declarations such as the foundational Universal Declaration of Human Rights (not often cited however in business circles), and in emerging aspects of international law such as the law of the sea, laws pertaining to the exploitation of Antarctica, and the rise of environmental law as a whole new specialism. But these need filling out to relate them to actual areas of concern, and this I will now attempt to do.

1. Resources. It is very obvious that we live in world of finite resources. Oil, coal, water, forests, even soil, are not unlimited. Yet resource extracting industries often act as if they were, and become predatory in their search for new sources. A finite resource by definition cannot last forever; only renewable ones can. This simple fact has extensive ethical as well as practical implications. The practical ones, although rarely thought through in any detail except perhaps by the “Transition” movement (Hopkins 2008) and a number of scholars who have seriously addressed the questions of a post-oil society (Urry 2013) are actually immense. If we accept the argument of the Transition people that we have already passed the point of ‘peak oil’ – the point at which economically recoverable sources have diminished to the extent that we are now entering a process of ‘energy decline’ in which oil will become a rarer and hence more expensive commodity and that all the myriad processes and products on which our oil-based civilization depends will be

harder and then eventually impossible to sustain - our modes of transport, heating and cooling, plastics, and millions of products – and that consequently huge economic and social shifts will follow. The current “technological fixes” – moving to nuclear energy from oil or coal based generation, or the extraction of oil from tar sands, which uses more energy than it produces (and vast quantities of water) and creates massive environmental damage – are all fraught with large (and in the case of nuclear waste, unresolvable) problems. Yet there is little systematic thought about either how to manage the enormous transition from an oil based to an ‘alternative’ form of society and economy, or of how we should plan rationally now for a future of little oil, an inevitability that has vast social and cultural implications as well as economic and technological ones.

The other aspect is of course ethical. What right do we have to quite literally burn non-renewable resources not only causing immense pollution, but depriving future generations of the benefits of access to the energy and products that are dependent on them? This raises significant philosophical questions – do we have responsibilities to future and as yet unborn generations? Do animals, and even plants, have rights? They inhabit the same biosphere as humans, and we are dependent on many of them for food, medicines, company and aesthetic pleasure. But is their relationship to us purely functional (i.e. we can exploit them as we like for our own human benefit without regard to their intrinsic interests?) Of course, longer term thinking makes us realize that we *are* dependent on them, and cannot survive without them. Even an ethics of caution, regardless of extending this to the issue of the intrinsic rights of other species which we now treat simply as resources, would suggest that care of the natural environment is very much in human interests. (There is now a large and growing literature on the subject of

environmental ethics. For a good survey see Curry 2011).

2. Climate Change. Here many of the same ethical issues apply. If indeed, as all the scientific evidence suggests, climate change is largely human-driven and created by aspects of ‘advanced’ contemporary civilizations – primarily industrialization, but with it our addiction to the car, deforestation, meat-eating, unnecessary long distance transportation by truck, sea or air of non-local commodities, extensive use of highly polluting energy generation methods (in particular coal) and the huge carbon footprints of our mega-cities with their traffic, trash generation, air-conditioning, commuting, and endless construction activities – then those societies are responsible. What is humanly created can be humanly modified, but therein lies the rub: seriously tacking climate change will entail vast, and to many people unwelcome, changes in lifestyle: abandonment of the private car, much less air travel, extending the useful life of products, re-cycling rather than abandoning obsolete articles of use, reducing meat consumption, genuinely protecting wilderness areas that are absolutely not available for “development”. This is at the individual level, but at least two other levels are also involved. One of these is the fraught question of whether, on the principle that ‘the polluter pays’, the industrialized countries have an ethical responsibility towards the victims of the climate change that they have triggered, and in particular as to whether that ethical responsibility should be concretized in the form of financial and technological transfers, vastly increased aid and the accepting of genuine environmental refugees? The other is that, as ‘industry’ is a synonym for ‘business’, it is actually the corporate community that carries the heaviest responsibility, and should according accept and respond to the fact that past or current pursuit

of profits (which have also frequently involved exploitative use of non-renewable resources, involvement in deforestation, the promotion of polluting and unnecessary products and even dangerous or unhealthy ones) is at the basis of a great deal of climate change and greenhouse gas production. Is it then incumbent on industry to curb its own emissions, reduce pollution, pay for the cleaning up of pollution already produced, and move systematically towards the creation of ecologically responsible and socially useful products and services? Clearly a good ethical case can be made that this should be so. (For further discussion see Gardiner, Caney, Jamieson and Shue 2010, Skrimshire 2010).

3. Energy. We live in a highly energy intensive society. Lighting, heating, cooling and powering our endless array of electrical devices – cookers, toasters, microwaves, personal computers, smart-phones, radios, televisions. We insist in travelling in energy burning and polluting devices – cars, buses and planes and transporting much of our produce by truck or by sea in large oil burning cargo ships. The car is in fact one of the least efficient transport devices ever invented, converting most of its fuel to heat, exhaust and water, with only a small proportion being utilized to actually propel a heavy steel, rubber and plastic container with probably only one person inside. We fly – including so-called “binge flying” (the impulsive decision to take cheap flights at short notice just for personal gratification). All this requires prodigious amounts of energy, most of it currently produced by coal, oil, gas or nuclear power, all requiring non-renewable resources, generating substantial pollution and CO₂ emissions and discharging heat and waste into the atmosphere, rivers or the sea. And many of the appliances powered by it are not themselves energy efficient and require long transmission lines across country where much of the generated energy is lost. Yet emphasis

on conservation is weak – designing and using energy efficient devices such as LED light sources, simply turning things off, shunning energy guzzling and inefficient devices such as the car, architectural design that utilizes natural light and cooling and which uses less energy in construction and incorporates recycled materials where possible. Such considerations again have ethical implications – the need to change lifestyles and responsible behavior in relation to personal use of energy on the part of individuals, and the commitment of business to good design, the production of socially useful products, lowering energy use in respect of production and distribution and by the end-user, and educating consumers about wise-use and disposal (increasingly a responsibility of manufacturers in societies such as Japan.) We all know that renewable energy generation technologies exist – solar, wind, hydro, tidal, biogas, yet relatively little investment of such technologies exists relative to the continuing vast investment in conventional sources. But good signs also exist. The German government for instance, already a leader in promoting renewable energy sources in a large industrial economy, has recently announced that it wishes to phase out the production of all petrol and diesel powered vehicles by 2030 and their entire replacement with electric ones, a plan that will involve not only the development of more efficient and longer range ones than currently exist by the auto industry, but also of course the development of the infrastructure necessary to support such a move – charging stations in particular and the gradual phasing out of filling stations. Here, while government is taking the initiatives, it will be up to industry to respond in the appropriate ways and perhaps to innovate in ways as yet unseen.

4. Food security and Agriculture. Food security lies at the basis of any other kind of security. With rising global population this is even more the case, and with climate

change, soil loss through non-ecological practices of either industrial or some forms of traditional agriculture (slash and burn techniques for example) adding new dimensions of risk, it is evident that a great deal of attention and responsible investment should be being devoted to the agricultural sector. Industrial agriculture in particular with its penchant for 'factory farming' of chickens, huge feedlots for beef cattle, monoculture of crops over large land areas, and the attractions of genetically modified crops and the extensive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, is of course a form of investment, but one that, when integrated with major processed food producers, is highly energy intensive, promotes the extensive use of antibiotics to control diseases among animals and birds often crowded together in extremely unsanitary conditions, generates large amounts of pollution in the form of literally lakes of animal wastes, damages the soil and, paradoxically, often results in foods of little nutritional value. Obesity and malnutrition from over-reliance on low quality processed and de-natured foods, including the many varieties of "fast food", and associated diseases such as diabetes and high cholesterol which lead to heart problems, are epidemic in some of the most "developed" countries in the world. The issue of food then, not only a business and political one, but also teems with ethical questions. Is industrial agriculture basically immoral? Do people have the right to good quality, nutritious food, as, indeed, a basic human right? Is the spread of huge agribusiness and the downstream emergence of large supermarket chains with standardized and often unhealthy food products something to be combatted? Is food security both an individual and collective right? All these questions have implications for individual consumption decisions, business and governments, and given the profound cultural significance of food as well as its necessity in sustaining life, an "ethics of food" involving all the

stakeholders is highly necessary. And as with energy of course, quite alternative discourse and practices exist – the "Slow Food" movement with its origins in Italy, but now an international one, the growth of farmers' markets, demand for organic produce which in the UK for example is forcing even large supermarket chains to stock such foods, the expansion of community supported agriculture, the taking up of farming by former urban professionals, the mushrooming of organic cafes in many Western and Japanese cities, demand for 'natural' materials for clothing, and many other initiatives and practices. Of all the areas we have been considering, a case can certainly be made that an ethics of food – its production, processing, nature, consumption and waste – is central both to civilization and to the businesses that largely control those processes in modern societies where subsistence has ceased to be an option for most people. (For an excellent overview of these issues see Roberts 2009).

These four examples are sufficient to establish the close links between business and ethical or unethical practices and which in turn point on to certain principles, of which I will here enumerate four: real utility, cradle-to-cradle design, ecological, social and economic restoration, and the aesthetic issue of beauty and what I have elsewhere called "visual justice".

1. Vast quantities of essentially useless and resource consuming items are constantly produced by manufacturers. Many of these may actually be harmful to consumers as any reader of the "nutritional" information on cans and packets will have realized. Others are simply fads catering to a passing fashion, or are designed to lead to yet further consumption, many are non-biodegradable, and others have no useful function, promoted by advertising, very much one of the areas of business that needs very careful ethical scrutiny as regards the truth of claims. The notion that I would like to introduce here is that of *social utility*:

the encouragement of production that does not damage the environment, produces objects of beauty and usefulness, which do not undermine existing dimensions of the economy (say, for example, the marginalization of handloom products by machine made synthetics, which, being synthetic are usually ultimately oil based), and of advertising and marketing which genuinely extols the virtues of durable and well-designed products that actually enhance the quality of life.

2. Cradle-to-Cradle design refers of course to the design movement that promotes the creation of objects that are not only both functional and beautiful and ecologically responsible in their source materials, but which do not turn into waste and junk at the end of their careers, but can be recycled, disassembled and the components reused for the manufacture of new creations (McDonough and Braungart 2002). Much of the cradle-to-cradle movement is concerned with a wider range of issues than just good design, including of course sustainability. These include ecologically and culturally appropriate architecture and its related idea of “Green Architecture” (Bell 2003, Duran and Fajardo), design, including objects of daily use (DeKay 2011),
3. The notion of “ecological restoration” has now entered the environmental and sustainability vocabulary, and has in some quarters become a business in itself – a kind of expanded landscape gardening and design. It refers to the re-creation, in as close as possible terms, of damaged and decayed landscapes – former mining pits and industrial sites, degraded former forest or prairie land, or any other site wrenched from its former ecological community. Of course it is not always possible to do complete restoration or even to know exactly what the original environment was like in all its details, but the movement does show an attempt to put back or give back qualities to the environment lost through human activities. So far however the parallel case of *economic* restoration has not gained much traction – the idea of, where possible, re-establishing “natural” economies, economies that is whose valuable features have been destroyed by the advancement of modernization and monetization. Given that economies always embody ways of life, much is to be learned from the study and replication or adoption of features from, economies that have proved to be sustainable and sociologically stable over long periods. The study of economic anthropology is a valuable tool for examining past or existing actual economies and the ways in which they have organized production, distribution and consumption, often based on notions of reciprocity or gift giving rather than on abstract monetary exchange and valuation (Clammer 2015).
4. I have elsewhere (Clammer 2014) introduced the notion of “visual justice: that there is no good reason why the rich should enjoy beauty, but not the poor. Associated with this idea is that good design need not be expensive, that architecture can be culturally appropriate and made from local materials, that handmade products can be superior to machine made ones and that access to attractive natural sites, scenery and leisure pursuits likewise need not only be the province of the rich. The concept of “environmental racism” has now become a well-known notion – that it is not only the poor, but also frequently ethnic minorities, who get to live next to the city trash dump, near polluting industries, near dangerous plants (as the Bhopal tragedy so bitterly exemplified) and with ugly surroundings and bad quality housing and exposure to waste, bad quality air and water, toxins of many kinds and high noise levels. None of these things are necessary and all point to less obvious forms of social injustice. Aesthetics has always been as much a branch of philosophy as ethics, and it at this point that they come together.

The Applied Ethics of Management

The field of what might be called “applied ethics” has burgeoned in recent years a new issues un-thought of in classical philosophical ethics have emerged. One of these has been ethics as it relates to medicine and biology, including such issues as cloning, euthanasia, organ transplants, the definition of clinical death (in many countries the state which must be observed and verified for organ harvesting to be allowed), abortion and genetic modification. An equally expanding field of ethics has been that of environmental ethics, not surprisingly as our slow ecological catastrophe unfolds. Elsewhere ethics has taken on a new salience in relation to jurisprudence and in particular developments in international law such as debates over the definition of “crimes against humanity” and the conditions on which intervention is allowed under the UN concept of the “responsibility to protect” (and not just to intervene after conflict has broken out). These and other emerging areas of concern, just as much as personal ethics, show that such value considerations are vitally necessary components of public discourse. We might indeed coin the term “social ethics” to refer to the new applications of value enquiry into what are truly collective issues, and ones that transcend now outmoded national boundaries. Arms trading, polluting, human trafficking, cybercrime, the neutrality of the sea lanes, space and the status of hitherto uninhabited areas such as Antarctica, are all examples of the new “commons” – issues that do not respect the political boundaries established by past historical developments.

Business law of course exists, and itself represents a code of values and acceptable behavior, and penalties for the violation of such. But what I am arguing for here is not simply a legal framework or set of good behaviors on the part of individual business persons (don’t cheat, give full measure, honor contracts, etc.) but a much wider conception of business ethics that relates it systematically to the larger planetary issues outlined above.

How is this to be done? Here I will outline four paths which I will argue, point business ethics in the right direction.

1. The concept of the “social economy”. All economic systems are fundamental in structuring the lifestyles, concepts of time and space, fashions, financial decisions, modes of social interaction, patterns of mobility and forms of subjectivity (how people understand themselves and others, including my sense of self: if I am what I have, then any loss of that substance will greatly and negatively affect my sense of self, but if I have a secure sense of self independent of material possessions, then their loss, while painful in some respects, does not attack my sense of self-worth. How I evaluate others will in turn be based on this same modality). Obviously in a capitalist economic system, business decisions will be largely based on the profit motive rather than social utility, and this as we also know can be highly destructive of the environment, health and inter-personal relationships as new forms of competition and materially based social exclusion emerge. In response to this numerous alternatives have emerged historically and in the contemporary world – Marxism being in a sense the great-grandfather, but with many other “alternative” proposals emerging – cooperative movements, communes of various kinds, local currencies, so-called “sharing economies”, direct farm to consumer marketing networks, barter, gift economies, the idea of “Small is Beautiful” associated with the seminal work of Ernst Schumacher (1979) and associated ideas of “Steady State Economies”, “Buddhist” economies, the no-growth and radical scaling back ideas of the French alternative economist Serge Latouche (2010), and the rapidly expanding field of Solidarity Economy (Utting 2015). All of these and many others which cannot be listed here (for a further discussion see Clammer 2016, pp.65-90) can be grouped together

under the rubric of “Social Economy”, a term referring to the idea that, whereas in the contemporary dominant economic system we as humans largely serve that economy, in reality the economy should serve us. It should in other words be fair, not generate inequalities, provide people with life enhancing products, services and entertainment and leisure activities, protect and restore the environment rather than damage it, be sustainable and not recklessly use up non-renewable resources for short-term immediate gain, and promote not competition and greed, but rather conviviality, sharing and mutual cooperation. A tall order perhaps, but a not unreasonable one if we are to survive even this century on a habitable Earth, and one towards achieving which myriad experiments already exist (Bakshi 2009 Hawken 2008). The notion of social economy is also taken to refer to businesses which are either non-profit in nature, or which share their profits with their workers and stakeholders, and which specifically aim to provide goods and services of social utility, and, as such, overlap with the NGO sector with which it shares many aims and management structures. In a way the notion of social economy summarizes what contemporary business should be like, given the planetary crisis of our own manufacture and towards solving which all resources intellectual, technological, political and business, should be directed.

2. Much of the world, and indeed an unacceptably large part, still suffers from what is usually called “under-development”. High levels of poverty, patterns of gender, caste, ethnic and other forms of exclusion, corruption, landlordism, debt labor amounting virtually to slavery, high levels of income inequality within and between nations, radically differential access to health care, education, decent housing and even clean water, still abound in our “globalized” world, in which luxury and over-consumption abounds often quite

literally alongside degradation. These circumstances have of course given rise to the whole large field of “development studies” and the policy and practical initiatives arising. But unfortunately business studies and development studies rarely dialogue with each other. This is unfortunate for several reasons. In the so-called “developing world” questions of business and questions of development are closely related, whether in terms of the very business environment itself (if there even is one), quality and availability of labor, what kind of market exists and how to reach it with what kinds of products, and of course the list of ethical questions: should one attempt to sell sugary, non-nutritious drinks while not only using up the local ground water to manufacture it, but knowing that it has no health value, contributes to dental problems and diabetes, and is expensive in terms of average local incomes? As we know from experience, there are indeed companies that have done exactly that, a situation that raises both ethical questions and ones related to development - is this the kind of product needed, or is it one that just fuels more poverty, an addiction to unhealthy products and has no social utility at all (except to the profit line of the manufacturer)? At this point business ethics and what has become known as development ethics converge (Goulet 2006, Gasper 2004), and so they should, as my recommendation here is that they enter into close dialogue with one another.

3. Two large issues face any social or economic enterprise in the contemporary situation – notably sustainability and transition. The former of course refers to the facts that we are rapidly making our (only) planet uninhabitable, or if habitable highly degraded, ugly, resource poor, without many of the species that have inhabited it for eons, and hot. Since under these conditions business-as-usual should be unthinkable, the alternative, and a highly urgent one, is to turn all our attention to

creating a sustainable future. If we do not of course we will not have a future. There is, tragically, already a lot of evidence that we have trapped ourselves in the form of self-destructive path-dependency that Jared Diamond has identified as leading to civilizational collapse over long stretches of past history, and which almost always have resulted from the willful destruction of the environment and resource base on which those civilizations were dependent (Diamond 2005). If, as we have suggested, business activities are the source of many of our planetary problems, then the future, if it is to be sustainable, requires sustainable business practices. This may involve some radical ideas given the presuppositions of our current economic and business systems, including not only the unthinkable idea for many of “de-growth” as promoted by Serge Latouche, but also perhaps slightly less unpalatable ideas such as that of “Prosperity without Growth” advanced by the British economist Tim Jackson (Jackson 2010). At the base of many of these ideas is the simple and obvious one that we live on a finite planet. Growth cannot continue forever. And this is another point at which business ethics and development ethics converge: for the rich economies to slow down is one thing; for poor economies to be told to stop growing is altogether another. Perhaps the most radical challenge for development thinking is to devise plans that will eradicate the evils of under-development while not committing developing societies to the same path of over-consumption, resource exploitation, pollution and environmental destruction as the over-developed, not an easy political message to communicate, but a very necessary one. The problem of “transition” in the highly developed economies may be one of managing energy decline, but in the less developed it will be the equally challenging problem of creating a model of development in which high energy use is not at all an option, while still facing the challenges of poverty, illiteracy and lack of access to basic social resources.

4. In the business schools of my acquaintance, the notion of “leadership” is much talked about. But such leadership is naturally defined as within the existing economic/business environment. This model may be now not only out of date, but positively dangerous. It may, in other words, lead people into reproducing exactly the behavior that has got us into trouble in the first place. Rather, new concepts of leadership, whether in business, development, politics, law and related spheres of public service, are needed together with a new image of the contemporary hero. Judging by the extent of the mindless violence which TV and film producers do not seem to be able to extend their feeble minds beyond, it seems that very old notions of the hero are still very much extant – the violent warrior who, while he may be fighting evil in some form, does so though the destructive and death dealing means hardly different from his opponents (with apologies to Superman). Today new forms of leaders and heroes are urgently needed that break with the old, basically military, pattern. As Sara Parkin has thoughtfully argued, leadership today should be for sustainability (Parkin 2010). To nurture such a leadership implies new forms of transformative education, including, or perhaps especially in business schools, and new images of doing business, linking it specifically to the needs of sustainability, not only in the minimal sense of having a livable future, but in a much more positive sense of actively *creating* that desirable future. Far from being approached with fear and trepidation, such as vocation should be the most intellectually exciting and challenging that can be imagined – a true statement of the new leadership in fact.

Shaping Futures

The future, as futures always are, is inevitable. The question is what we want to make of it. The thrust of this paper has been that business, being at the root of many of our contemporary problems – environmental ones, resource extraction, pollution, over-consumption at

least – is also, if not *the* solution, certainly one of the most important ones. Integral to this argument has been the centrality of business ethics, not simply in its more traditional sense, but in a truly planetary context. The planet cannot be saved or restored to habitability without a new concept and practice of business, one oriented to both an “Earth Ethics” and a “Development Ethics”, with sustainability and life-enhancement as the goal. Such a vision is no longer utopian: it is now a necessity. Humans make their own societies, so it is up to us to create the future that we collectively want. If we want the current one, we are headed for civilizational destruction, even though the Earth itself will survive (in fact quite well without us). If we want a different one then we have to rigorously and urgently rethink our systems of economics, politics and value systems. This requires both very practical thinking and a new social ethics of care, responsibility, recognition of mutual inter-dependence, and willingness to transfer technology, aid and expertise to those most affected by the mess we have made of our beautiful nest. This is what the eco-theologian Thomas Berry has called the “Great Work” of our generation (Berry 1999), and so it is. The nature of business and the education of future business leaders lies at the basis of this transformation.

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Oh Earth Earth's Act of Faith and Society

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Earth is in need of a little redemption if we set out to provide it, making it a moral and civic obligation since we ought to know how unique an investor the Earth is in peoples' lives, the references of which frequently return to her act of faith in the indigenous literature of India. She is called as 'Dharitri' (the term is in feminine gender) suggesting that she 'is the core power' of anything to support life be it the sentient or apparently non-sentient beings, since this is the 'intrinsic value' inherent in earth. Although the concept of an inherent, non-market value may appear a metaphysical wraith, a 'semantic relic to ward off the evil eye of commodity', it is nevertheless useful when it comes to apply value theory to Earth's many acts. The concern here has to be the extent to which the ethical and technical value of Earth's acts can support life by repudiating what can be called as a culture of commodity, a-historicism and pseudo-egalitarian complacency. Earth is an emblem of 'intrinsic value' which term is interestingly defined by John Ruskin as the "absolute power of anything to support life", whether it be a virtuous individual, a sheaf of wheat or a work of art (Batchelor, 2012). In this

context, one may note the importance of the dialogue between the scholarly Prof. Sharma and the erudite Dr. Daniel Albuquerque, the former drawing inspiration from Earth, as demonstrated in his 'Earth Sastra' and the latter from the seemingly daring use of the counterpoint which according to him comes from 'consciousness' studies suggesting the need for establishing the intrinsic value as their starting point. That this is the most identifiable antecedent is not just a grandiose ambition but is concerned with 'man's fallen nature and the state of nation' as evident in their persuasive way of argument. And they never play down the problems.

Mention also must be made of an enormous important work of Vikram Seth's 'Rivered Earth', in which the poet utilizes more than one time-frame, offering an ode to the Earth while not only not demanding anything from her but rather suggesting an 'ungainliness' which sets him at odds with those who cannot be understood in terms of creative imitation. That the Earth has to be revered does not come from the poet's satirical or didactic impulses neither from any kind of rueful parody but