PhD Thesis:

Making Worlds Collide: Using Tolkien's Fantasy Literature to Create a New Leadership Development Framework

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Abstract

Complex global challenges, and the need to radically reinvent processes and products, confront today's leaders, yet the leadership development field is often criticised for being confused, disparate, and not fit for purpose for today's organisations (Kellerman, 2012), with much criticism of its limitations and narrowness. New imaginative processes are needed to develop leaders' skills, behaviour and thinking to create alternative futures, and find new ways to generate innovative solutions. Literature reviews reveal that leaders and leadership developers have generally not considered the possibility of using speculative fiction and fantasy literature as a source for imaginative growth and the stimulation of multiple perspectives. This research creates a new process for leader developers and coaches to use fantasy literature in this way, called *Practical Applied Literature*.

Literary Conceptual Encounter was devised as a tool to work directly with a piece of fantasy literature, adapted for this research from De Rivera's Conceptual Encounter technique. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy was used as a working model to demonstrate the process of Practical Applied Literature, and to create a new leadership development framework for leadership developers and coaches. This new framework was then explored with a group of senior leaders, using Conceptual Encounter interviews to produce collaborative insights for further development. The many insights generated were collated and assessed, using another new technique developed for this study called Conceptual Synthesis. The subsequent improved version of the framework showed that the structured use of fantasy literature for imaginative leadership development solutions can be useful and effective; and that this unique approach has sufficient value to merit further improvement and research.

This study will contribute to the work and thinking of leadership development theorists and practitioners through the new Practical Applied Literature process, the tools it uses, and the Leadership Development framework that can form the basis of a new leadership development modular programme. This research will also contribute to Tolkien Studies because leadership and its development have generally been neglected by Tolkien commentators and academics, but can provide many imaginative insights and ideas for today's world.

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Chapter 1: The Research Problem

During 2020, the level of expected disruption of the workplace from rapid technological change was multiplied many times by the unexpected and lethal contagion of a global pandemic. Hundreds of thousands died, national economies 'crashed', and billions of pounds were spent in seeking to contain it. Leaders take central stage in battles like this - their abilities, thinking processes and decision-making skills are dissected daily by the media. Anxious citizens demand that leaders use more 'joined-up' thinking, and better, more imaginative solutions. The rebuilding of society requires creativity and resilience, while preventing further pandemics will need imagination, planning and '*what if*' foresight. Leaders face a myriad of challenges of this sort across the globe every day – social discontent, war, health issues, financial and political downturns – all require leaders to be the best they can be. This means that the way the quality of their thinking, their decisions, and their imagination is developed must be effective, even outstanding. This thesis examines a new method of developing leaders and leadership: it is an exploratory study into how a leader developer can use fictional literature to create leadership development frameworks. In order to demonstrate how this might be done, selected novels by Tolkien have been used as a worked example.

Leadership development is considered particularly important when political and social upheavals are matched by technological, demographic and global disruption (Bennis, 2007). Leaders are considered by many to enable knowledge creation within organisations and to boost innovation (Caridi-Zahavi, Carmeli & Arazy, 2016; Sethibe and Steyn, 2015). As 'major contributor[s] to organisational performance' (Brockliss, 2016), leaders are credited with increasing the competitiveness and long-term survival of enterprises and organisations. For this

reason, leadership development has grown rapidly, resulting in the multitude of development techniques currently in use (Day, 2001).

Yet things are not perfect in the leadership development field. The immense belief in the *potential* of leadership is widely shared, but disillusionment and condemnation about the *practices and behaviour* of current leaders have become commonplace (Kellerman, 2012, p.xiii). Perceived deficiencies and the underperformance of UK leaders have produced anxiety about global competitiveness and performance. In 2014, 72% of British organisations reported a deficit of leadership skills, despite an immense expenditure of £3.2 billion (CIPD, 2014). In the US, spending on leadership development is estimated at $200 billion annually (Moldoveanu & Narayandas, 2019, p. 43). Over 90% of CEOs want to increase their leadership development investment – being 'the single most important human-capital issue they face' (McKinsey Quarterly, 2015, p.1).

However, while there is belief in leadership development for organisational growth and profit, there is passionate debate about the quality, relevance and outcomes of today's leadership development frameworks that underpin current leadership behaviour. Day and Halpin (2008) assert bluntly that 'there are indications that our nation's leadership is in crisis…there is reason to believe that organisations may not be prepared for the leadership challenges of the future' (p.3), and that 'there is an acute need to develop leadership more comprehensively across all organisational levels… as quickly as possible' (p.4). Part of that development means that leaders need the chance to drastically challenge existing ways, let go of old ways, and learn to imagine this new world of possibilities. Leaders require 'more nuanced ways of perceiving the world and potential scenarios of the future', to facilitate 'a greater tolerance of a multiplicity of visions of the world' (Genovese, 2016, p.84-85).

Establishing the Research Problem from the Literature Reviews

In order to establish the research problem and focus, the results of the three literature searches are presented. The first, on leadership and leadership development, was intended to understand whether the problematic gap in leadership development that I had noticed in my own consulting work was also evident from the academic literature. From this review, I found that there was a lack of action or interest in boosting imagination skills and solutions for leaders and leader developers, despite today's radical changing landscape creating a strong and urgent need for them. Hauptman (2019) argues that imagination is an essential prerequisite of developing foresight and prediction. Imagination speculation spurs the '*what if*' questions 'as a kind of a thought experiment' (p.52). A solid, unshakeable sense of black and white thinking, of fixed solutions, and rigid perceptions and beliefs will not help leaders to become super-flexible, agile, and imaginative in today's 'radically discontinuous' situations.

Having perceived a serious gap in the thinking about leadership development, I reflected on ways of addressing this gap, hence the need for the second literature review. Having used fantasy literature in my leadership development work, I felt that it could be used more extensively and in a more structured way, to create imaginative and innovative solutions for leaders and for leadership development. This had not been done before, to my knowledge, and needed to be investigated.

So I decided to make a second literature review on fantasy literature, to judge whether it could be a worthwhile resource to fill this gap, and to understand whether fantasy literature could be harnessed as the basis of a worked example to invent and demonstrate a potential methodology. I decided to see whether a work of fantasy fiction could help me to create a new leadership development framework, tailored for twenty-first century leaders, and, if so, to explore how

this might be done. The need to identify which work of fantasy literature would be best to use led to the third literature review, to understand whether selected work of the famous fantasy writer, J.R.R. Tolkien, might be a good choice to demonstrate a worked example. I felt that he would be, and am very familiar with his work, but I wanted to research this decision in more depth.

Consequently, a third literature review, on Tolkien, was undertaken to judge whether *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy would be an appropriate source of fantasy writing to use in the worked example, to stimulate the creation of a leadership development framework. I wanted the best writer available to undertake the worked example, and this was Tolkien, in my estimation.

I now summarise the findings of the literature reviews, to explain how they contributed to the research problem definition and research aims.

1. **The Leadership Literature Review**

In the first leadership literature review, I examine the development of leadership thought from the early twentieth century, into the twenty-first. By using and updating 10 successive 'eras' of leadership thought, by Van Seters and Field (1990), the development of leadership theory is tracked. All of the main leadership theorists are considered in this descriptive analysis, with varying degrees of criticality. Having exhaustively considered the various theories, I found that the literature does indeed show a clear gap: there was nothing about the use of imagination and speculative fiction as a way of developing leaders or leadership thinking and skills.

In addition, and, I argue, as a result of this gap in imagination skills, four major areas of criticism are levelled at today's leaders, as well as at the leadership development discipline, as seen apparent the leadership literature review. These are:

i) **Outdated training, preparation and research resources for leadership**

Scholarly debate has challenged the standards of existing leaders and current leadership development processes, especially those produced by business schools with outdated or ineffective teaching content. Many educational institutions still teach leadership frameworks developed in the last century (Alvarez, 2018, p.154), with little regard for current demands. Some researchers perceive a growing 'revisionist movement' which challenges the 'over-simplistic leadership' models of some academics (Pearce, 2007, p.357); others criticise academic models as being overly complex. Researchers frequently focus on one or two small aspects of leadership effectiveness in their research, rather than examining a unified holistic view of leadership (Mendenhall et al, 2018, Yukl, 1989). This leads to criticism of leadership performance overall, as they feel their particular approaches are not fully acknowledged, while practitioners feel that academics are tackling only a small part of leadership. For these reasons, the fields of leadership practice, research and development are confused, crowded and disparate, of little help to leaders 'at the coalface'. More clarity is needed, yet Yukl (2012) writes that over half a century of leadership research has not yet yielded clear results about the wholescale nature of effective leadership behaviour.

ii)   **Poor skills and low levels of leadership performance**

Leaders are often seen as inappropriately trained in the necessary, important skills for the twenty-first century (Bennis & O'Toole, 2005). Because their training has been too narrow, leaders are often considered ineffective in dealing with 'today's complex enterprises' (Rowland, 2016; Snook, Nohiria & Khurana, 2012; Breen and Hamel, 2007). Kellerman asserts that 'while the leadership industry has been thriving (…) leaders by and large are performing poorly, worse in many ways than before. Miserably disappointing in any case' (Kellerman, 2012, p.xv). She continues that: 'unless we get a grip, the prognosis is grim'.

McGuire and Rhodes (2009) argue that leaders are perceived to be failing because they cannot achieve the flexibility, mental agility and conceptual thinking practices required, unable to meet today's needs. While they may develop analytical and conceptual skills, there is usually a deficit in their people-skills, emotional intelligence and spiritual capabilities (Riggio, 2017; Quatro, Waldman and Galvin, 2017). The bulk of leadership research suggests that a huge shift in leadership development, thinking and behaviour is needed to guide people through radical change (Owen, Hodgson and Gazzard, 2004). A stronger focus on self-learning and inner growth is seen as crucial for leadership development, as a move away from old pre-occupations and limited thinking is essential to the leadership capability to cope with future change (McGuire and Rhodes, 2009, p.13). Petrie argues that leaders should undertake:

> 'an act of deliberately propelling themselves upward through vertical layers of self-induced growth; to broaden their mental capacity and perception, and to 'grow their brains' (2014, p.11).

iii)   **Unethical and self-serving behaviour by leaders**

The increased transparency created by social media has highlighted leadership morality to the point where it has exposed widespread failings: 'leadership frequently appears to be in crisis as a seemingly endless sequence of revelations undermines respect for leaders' (Lewis and Malmgren, 2019, p. x). A gap is often perceived between the claims of what leaders say they believe, versus what they actually do, known as the 'fantasies of leadership' (Sveningsson & Larssen, 2006, p,xxii). Unethical, self-serving leadership is highlighted by research showing a growing incidence of abuse, poor motivation and lack of loyalty (Barnes and Spangenburg, 2018, p. 49.). Mo and Shi (2015) argue that unethical leadership erodes trust and commitment, fostering destructive employee behaviour and burnout (p. 3). Problems with leadership ethics may be related to the leader's inability to *imagine* the impact on stakeholders (Ciulla, 2005) - arguably stemming from being 'too little focused on the interpersonal skills of empathy and relationship-building necessary now' (Lewis and Malmgren, 2019, p.x).

iv)   **Leaders cannot cope with the new Artificial-Intelligence driven workplaces.**

Fast, complex and difficult technological change; the unforeseen emergence of global pandemics; new expectations on leaders' performance; financial hardship; increased transparency of actions; and unpredictable social behaviour: all place huge stress on today's leaders (Alvarez, 2018, p.153). In particular, 'the adoption of automation and AI technologies will transform the workplace as people increasingly interact with ever smarter machines' (McKinsey, 2018, p. 2-3). Leaders must have the ability to invent new processes, products and systems: 'to rethink and redefine the skills that make us human' (Alvarez, 2018, p. 154). Technological and communicational capabilities are overtaking other skills, so organisations must boost their mind-set, work activity, workforce, and top-level leadership to cope (Mckinsey, 2018). Petrie suggests that 'an era of rapid innovation [is] needed in which organisations experiment with new approaches that combine diverse ideas in new ways' (Petrie, 2014, p.4). This is not easy, as 'complex organisations do not have enough of the kind of leaders they need' (Swart, Chisholm and Brown (2015, p.40) because current and future technology require a massive increase in imaginative skills (Phillips, 2019). As we enter 'the Imagination Age' (King (2012), the leader's strength of imagination will determine the success and sustainability of any enterprise. Leaders must 'collectively imagine and create the future we want to inhabit before it is too late…[so that] we can rapidly prototype and test ideas to alter our systems and lives' (King, 2012, p.2).

Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009) suggest that today's leaders must be better at managing disequilibrium, to support the emotions of employees through the conflict and chaos of change, and encourage distributive leadership, and brave conversations. Leaders today require the new relational and conceptual skills of sense-making, story-telling, imagination, self-identity, reflective reasoning, self-reflexivity, emotional intelligence, and ethical thinking (Day, Harrison and Halpin, 2009, Arkoubi, 2013).

2. The Fantasy Literature Review

One way to reconceptualise new forms of leadership development is to explore resources that place imagination at their heart. This means determining whether it is possible to use fantasy fiction to generate leadership development frameworks that are relevant to, and can meet, today's leadership needs. This is the rationale behind the literature searches into fantasy and Tolkien: whether they could fill a gap in leadership development in boosting imagination and possibility thinking. Consequently, through the Fantasy Literature review, I examined the way that this type of fiction has stimulated human imagination and creativity, creating a framework of the 10 Uses of Fantasy Literature. The use of literature to learn, grow and gain insights about life and its problems has been well-documented (Berthoud & Elderkin, 2015; Holland, 2009; Calvino, 2009). Shakespeare has been used for leadership development for several decades (Etzold, 2012; Corrigan, 2000; Stevenson, 1996); robots and science fiction writing are being used to improve medical and forecasting skills (Gerhaus, 2011; Hauptman, 2019); and George Martin's *A Song of Fire and Ice* (1996 - present time), has been used to improve leadership decision-making. Eastman (2013) uses literature to help business students and employees 'become creative and critical thinkers through reading widely', as well as to improve their problem-solving abilities.

Adler (2006) identifies the need for 'anticipatory creativity' in our times, a 'leadership of possibility', and 'the cross-fertilisation of the arts and leadership' (p.487). Pointing out the need for passionate creativity, courage, meaning, the generating of multiple possibilities, ways of seeing alternative reality in organisational life - and most of all, to generate hope - she highlights the need for the skills of the artist community. To Adler, art and artistic processes are essential to successful entrepreneurial skills in the twenty-first century. Hughes (2009) and Sutherland (2013), individually argue that engaging in artistic endeavour, (sculpture and

drawing respectively) is capable of generating emotion, and deeper levels of understanding about their organisations, through the drawing out of experience through metaphor and self-expression. Garavan et al (2015) examined the impact of arts-based intervention on 164 leaders, comparing an art drawing exercise with conventional development processes. The study measured four aspects of leadership skill: emotional intelligence; leader identity; openness to experience; and feedback orientation (receptivity), to show that three out of the four (excluding openness to experience) had improved significantly compared with the non-arts-based intervention. They comment that 'the leadership drawing exercise can contribute to the development of organisational leadership capacity' (p.12).

However, while experiential art, and artistic communities, are clearly important for learning and insight, the colourful and vivid world of fantasy literature has a special and unique richness of scope and content which is, perhaps, even more powerfully enabling of personal change. Stimulated by the sense of 'otherness' of fantasy, it is easier to look again from a different perspective at the reader's own world, thus challenging all of its assumptions, alternative options, and inconsistencies. It has an intensity of all of the things that Adler feels necessary for business, a fecund and concentrated burst of the skills that create a 'leadership of possibility'. An examination of fantasy literature commentary below shows why and how it does this.

Mendlesohn and James perceive fantasy literature as 'the presence of the impossible and the unexplainable', in contrast with science fiction, which 'while it may deal with the impossible, regards everything as explicable' (Mendlesohn and James, 2012, p.3). Jackson considers that the precise value of fantasy literature is in a 'resistance to definition… 'free' from many of the conventions and restraints of more realistic texts' (Jackson, 1998, p. 1). Jackson describes the most common characteristic of fantasy literature as 'its obdurate refusal of prevailing

definitions of the 'real' or 'possible', at times resorting to violent opposition. Ambiguity, and the dramatic re-perceiving of reality that leads to questioning and doubt, are the very things that make fantasy literature, and the fantasy genre overall, potentially useful for twenty-first century leaders. Attebury argues that 'Its way of playing with symbols encourages the reader to see meaning as something unstable and elusive, rather than single and self-evident' (Attebury, 2014, p.2).

Ulrick et al (2014) argue that fantasy literature has the most to offer in alternative perspectives because of its wild, previously unimagined landscapes. It is a place of liminality, capable of stimulating unforeseen ways of thinking and behaving, and providing: 'the freedom to dream up solutions to contemporary problems, in a place where the real and the ideal invariably meet and comfortably co-exist' (Austin, 2010). Fantasy fiction is useful for leaders because it helps the understanding of many perspectives, forges an empathetic response to different characters and viewpoints, providing much imaginative material for thinking development. Other types of literary fiction stimulate inner contemplation and reflection too, but fantasy fiction may be particularly effective at this because it is the literary genre most focused on disruption. The fantastic 'takes the real and breaks it… [it] re-combines and inverts the real, but it does not escape it: it exists in a parasitical or symbiotic relation to the real' (Jackson, 1998, p.20). This quality of disruption and challenge to the 'real' is appropriate for the previously-unforeseen tasks that leaders face now – to question old behaviours, reinvent new worlds and organisations, and 'imagine' what the future could be.

Fantasy literature can stimulate leadership development, although that is not usually the primary purpose of fantasy fiction. However, its portrayals of good or bad leaders, the outcomes they create, and the journeys they undertake, may incidentally serve to spur the reader's reflection and imagination about leadership. This can lead readers to consider what

leadership might mean in a new kind of world, and what skills and behaviours become important. By challenging our internally held assumptions about the nature of reality ('*cognitive elaboration*') while developing motivation for change through emotional identification ('*cognitive transportation*'), leaders become more ready to initiate change (Day et al, 2009). Oatley (2011) also notes that the study of literary fiction speeds up our abilities to change and transform ourselves, which could deliver an essential 'vertical development' in the quality of cognitive growth required by leaders. Stories can also be powerful aids for change by developing empathy, self-reflection and understanding: 'When business leaders read about the conflicts of literary characters, they can better understand their own circumstances' (Badaracco, 2006, p.46). Fantasy literature 'teaches people the psychological aspects of life and gives insight into what is meaningful. Finding a sense of self is what every person strives to figure out in his or her life' (Faris and Warner, 2014). It is also an essential requirement for leader development.

3. The Literature Review on Tolkien

Tolkien's writing was a logical choice for the worked example because he is seen as the originator of modern fantasy, who ensured that 'the heroic fantasy 'trilogy' became almost a standard literary form' (Shippey, 2001, p. xviii). He provides a 'new continent of imaginative space' (Shippey, 2001, p. xviii), and a mythological world in which the 'deep questions are explored' (Fimi, 2010, p.10). Tolkien's leaders undergo complex leadership dilemmas about the nature of good and bad leadership, followership, identity, power, resilience and morality. This is all done within a setting which is not quite normal, which stimulates, challenges and disrupts expectations, to capture our imagination and attention. When Flieger comments that Tolkien's work is 'more relevant to the world today than it appeared to be when The Lord of

the Rings was first published on the mid-50's.' (Flieger, 2012, p. ix), it may be in the nature of excellent leadership practice that this is most true.

Tolkien argues that the result of the writer's imagination is the act of sub-creation: a secondary imagined world, containing familiar, recognisable features of our (real) primary world alongside strange elements of the writer's invented 'secondary world'. This subcreation contains 'an arresting strangeness' that jolts the reader into seeing their familiar primary world anew (Tolkien, 2014, 1947, p.60), playing 'strange tricks with the world and all that is in it' (p.64). Tolkien's characters face developmental journeys that include complex leadership dilemmas: the nature of servant leadership, followership, identity, power, resilience and morality. Constant stress, burnout, anxiety, lack of confidence in making decisions – all are highlighted, providing leadership insights for new thinking and action.

From this literature search, I conclude that Tolkien's work has much potential applicability for leadership developers, aiming to improve leadership in a time of radical change and major turbulence. More immediately, I judge that Tolkien had much relevance for this research; and that his work would be ideal for the worked example.

The Research and Practice Problem

So to summarise the research problem at the heart of this study: the academic research suggests that leadership skills, especially imagination skills, do not meet current needs. The gap shown by a review of the academic literature – i.e. the lack of attention paid to building the strong imagination skills of leaders indicates that the quality of today's leadership development must be severely limited. The fantasy literature search also showed a gap - this genre appears to have much potential to develop imagination in a number of interdisciplinary applications,

yet little work has been done on this topic. To rectify these gaps, I argue in this research that fantasy literature can become a rich stimulant for leadership development, and, with the right processes and support, help grow these leadership capabilities needed now. This study creates and explores new methods of how that could be done, including a 'worked example' to act as a demonstration of using fantasy fiction to create a new leadership development framework, via the work of J.R.R. Tolkien.

This chapter examines the perceived need for more imaginative, flexible, ethical and responsive leadership development, as a response to the complex changes and threats emerging across the globe, and considers the possibility that today's leaders might be failing. The aims and objectives of the study follow, with the identified research problem. Findings from the three literature searches are then summarised, and terms are defined, with the research methodology and structure of the thesis.

Aims and Objectives of this Research

So the aim of this research is to be an exploratory study into how a leader developer can use fictional fantasy literature to develop new leadership development frameworks. Five objectives have been identified in pursuit of this aim:

1. To critically review leadership thinking, leadership theory and the possible future skills needed for leadership, to explore leadership development requirements;

2. To critically review fantasy literature, and its relevance to leadership studies, to examine how it may be able to broaden and stimulate leadership development solutions;

3. To demonstrate a structured technique and new 'tools' to analyse selected work of Tolkien, so that new thinking and insights can be used to create new leadership development processes and solutions;

4. To improve and refine these frameworks further through additional tools, interviews, feedback and data collection techniques with real-life senior leaders;

5. To document the growth of the process of stimulating imagination and innovation through fantasy fiction, as a way of broadening existing theoretical and practical. leadership development solutions, suggest how this process could be used by practitioners, and consider possible next steps for this research.

Research Methodology.

Fantasy literature will be used to stimulate insights and imagination to create a conceptual framework, which will then be explored and improved through interviews with experienced leaders. Consequently, a qualitative research stance seems to be most appropriate. Qualitative research methods can absorb the diversity and complexities of the inner life of people because they focus

> on the 'why' rather than the 'what' of social phenomena and rely on the direct experiences of human beings as meaning making agents in their everyday lives' (Qualitative Research Network, 2009).

Denicolo et al (2016) argue that a constructivist approach and methods 'are an appropriate, if not the most appropriate, way to study situations involving human interactions' (p.14), and that

> 'meaning-making is not, therefore, a passive process but rather is an active process of continuous negotiation between existing constructs and new sensory inputs' (p.31).

Leadership is about meaning making and perception, so qualitative research methodology fits the type of knowledge used and required for this study. According to Klenke (2016), quantitative methods are not capable of producing a sufficiently deep understanding of the complexity of the leadership discipline. Leadership research is about the interpretation of meaning, themes, description, multiple 'lens' perspectives, observations, and direct quotations: this type of research cannot be easily quantified or measured, requiring a depth of understanding of leadership ideas. This research is about working with individuals to examine their experiences, insights, beliefs and perceptions, and for this reason, a constructivist, interpretivist and phenomenological stance has been adopted.

This research could also be said to be inductive as well as constructivist– from the close reading and literary analysis of Tolkien's work (by identifying broad themes and insights from the text) to the generation of a framework; then from the comments of the interviewees, and a structured way that interview results improve and contribute to the latest framework version. This interpretive and constructive process inherent in this research is central to its research strategy.

Ontological assumptions connected with constructivism confirm that there is no objective reality but a range of socially or personally constructed realities, no single reality or 'truth' to be discovered, but many views and perspectives to be explored, all offering validity and insight. This fits this research well: a single 'truth' is not expected from this exploration, but a flexible process which itself is open-ended and capable of further development, a versatile way of stimulating further thoughts and solutions.

Implementing the Research Strategy

This research methodology takes an action learning approach to implement the research strategy. I discover what stages were necessary by undertaking and completing a worked example, using Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* to stimulate the creation of a new leadership development framework. New tools are invented and used to make the process workable, as well as the adaptation of De Rivera's 'Conceptual Encounter' technique.

The research strategy consists of four distinct stages, after the completion of the literature reviews and the definition of the research problem and focus, as well as new 'tools' to implement:

1. The creation of a new process (*Practical Applied Literature)* to use fantasy fiction as a method of creating a leadership development solution. This includes *Literary Conceptual Encounter*, and '*potential insight events*', to formulate a draft leadership development framework;

2. Interviews with Senior leaders using '*Traditional Conceptual Encounter' and* '*potential insight moments*' to discuss the leadership development framework and seek improvement;

3. Data Analysis through the Conceptual Sy*nthesis* process, in order to improve and finalise the leadership development framework;

4. Final refinement and improvement of the leadership development framework; and reflection about the Practical Applied Literature process as a means of leadership development methodology for practitioners and researchers.

TRADITIONAL CONCEPTUAL ENCOUNTER

Traditional conceptual encounter is a little-known qualitative research tool, not widely used, but of value to the researcher who wishes to explore a phenomenon in depth, and to consider it from different aspects and levels of insight (de Rivera & Kreilkamp,1976). The De Rivera Conceptual Encounter technique, called in this research '*traditional conceptual encounter*' to distinguish it from my own adaption and use of his technique called '*literary conceptual encounter*'. As a research technique, conceptual encounter enlarges and expands the thinking about a model or concept, being well-suited for exploring the leadership development framework. It allows a discussion of experience and perspective, to help understand something more deeply and learn from others. This is the reason that it is used in this research: to help me to expand my own ideas about leadership, and to collaborate with others about what is possible. It also matches my values and belief in equality. A key ontological and epistemological assumption of conceptual encounter is that interviewees ('research partners') are respected as equal contributors to the study, considered to be as much value as the researcher ('research investigator').

The process starts with the 'conceptualisation' (or initial framework, or model) of the phenomenon being studied, creating a diagram to explain how it works. This phase is the Literary Conceptual Encounter. Following this, the 'research investigator' holds discussions with the 'research partners' individually, to discuss, or 'encounter' the conceptualisation, collaborating for ideas, improvement and insight. The initial framework is exposed to a group of experienced leaders. Discussions or 'encounters', are held, using questions to explore their thoughts and experiences about the topic (leadership), and seeking feedback about the 'conceptualisation' (the framework).

Acknowledged as being subjectively involved in the process, I, (as research investigator), use semi-structured interviews in these encounters, changing the questions as insights emerge, expanding or limiting them to deepen understanding of the phenomena. In this way, the interviews and I gradually learn more about the phenomena: 'Theory, data generation and data analysis are [thus] developed simultaneously in a dialectical process' (Mason, 2007, p.180). I also look for what is not said, seeking insight from any gaps, hesitations and apparent inconsistencies. After each interview analysis, I reflect and consider the points made in light of the framework, then group the insights into a useable number of key themes (of similar topics) for analysis.

The conceptualisation is intended to increase understanding, to expand the conceptualisation and its uses, and provide a practical outcome. It is intended to capture the phenomenon in a whole new way. De Rivera argues that conceptual encounter 'seems to enhance the power of the conceptualisation so that it is more apt to capture the essence of the experience' (de Rivera in Fischer, 2006, p.219).

LITERARY CONCEPTUAL ENCOUNTER

I adapt the Traditional Conceptual Encounter method, as a tool to generate insights from Tolkien's writing, through the main characters, the plot, and the positive or negative outcomes of characters' decisions. I engage with Tolkien's trilogy of '*The Lord of the Rings*', using my own adaptation of de Rivera's (Traditional) Conceptual Encounter (1981), called by me, Literary Conceptual Encounter. My adaption of *Literary Conceptual Encounter* is used with only two parties: the research investigator and the author, via the narrative. By interrogating the narrative, it expands the exploration of the writer's thoughts and feelings, through those of the

main characters. The investigator can 'seek answers' to important questions; can focus on areas of interest in the narrative; and observe how the main characters exhibit leadership.

During the encounter between the narrative and investigator, inspiration and insights are created from the characters, the narrative, and the action that then produces the initial 'conceptualisation' of the phenomenon (de Rivera, 1976) – or, in this case, the leadership development framework. The investigator seeks to understand its character, meaning and shape, through creative insight, because 'the power of conceptualisation reveals aspects of the experience that were previously unnoticed' (de Rivera, p.228).

I search for and identify what I called *'Potential Insight Events'* from selected literary passages. These are the events or situations that I felt were relevant to the topic being investigated, leadership. Those passages or events are re-read several times. Much thought is given to the events, how they are described, what the characters are thinking, doing, planning, etc, to identify insights about some aspect of the phenomenon. To some extent, the researcher uses personal experience (or current area of concern) to identify and target these areas for in-depth analysis –the process is quite subjective, after all. The insights are then used to build up a model, a conceptualisation or a framework.

So, an initial framework for developing leaders is devised from these Potential Insight Events, ready for the next step: traditional conceptual encounter. This process is explained in Chapter 4, and an example is illustrated in Chapter 5.

CONCEPTUAL SYNTHESIS

The many insights from the traditional conceptual encounters were grouped into seven themes, to be analysed by me through '*Conceptual Synthesis*'. This process, developed specially for this research, examines themes from four perspectives: what the leaders said about the theme; what Tolkien said about it through his writing, what academic research says about it, and then, finally, what the researcher thinks, using her experience and judgement, as well as considering the other three perspectives, to decide what should be done with each theme in terms of the framework. The framework is then amended accordingly. Conceptual Synthesis is fully illustrated in Chapter 7, which ends with the latest version of the framework ready for application.

Personal Motivation for this Research.

As a leadership consultant in Australia, the UK, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, and New Zealand, I frequently used literature as a 'thought-stimulant' on my leadership development programmes, helping participants perceive insights from novels and films to gain important perspectives. While undertaking my M.A. in English Literature, I used Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1895) to explore family dysfunctionality and parental loss in early childhood. Through close analysis of the novel, and the application of Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1946) as a conceptual 'lens', I gained insights that illuminated my childhood and our inter-generational family patterns. From this experience, I sought to understand how, by applying the 'lens' of another discipline to literature in a structured way, alternative ways of thinking and new imaginative solutions could arise.

My lifelong interest in speculative literature (science fiction and fantasy) derived from. the ideas, questions and possibilities contained within their pages. Tolkien has particularly fascinated me because he matches the beauty of his archaic language, with the excitement of

his world-building, and with a strong sense of reality in his characters. Consequently, I have been a member of the Tolkien Society for several years. In 2016 and 2017, I presented conference papers at the Annual Tolkien Conference on different aspects of leadership within Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, which were well received. I have Masters' degrees in Human Resource Strategy; English Literature (with Distinction); and Positive Psychology (with Distinction); and I have worked in leadership throughout my career, so undertaking an interdisciplinary study was appealing.

From my study of Tolkien and the fantasy genre, I saw that I could make a contribution by using his work to illuminate leadership and fantasy literature for scholars, and to create a practical support for leadership practitioners. I also believe that skills in interdisciplinary thinking are important for the future. Now that I am developing the process and conceptual 'tools' to make this idea a reality, I am even more motivated to pursue this field of applied literature further, even after this specific research is finished.

The Significance of this Research

This research is professionally and academically significant because it provides a new process to generate imaginative, innovative solutions for leadership development, using the rich source of fantasy literature. It fills gaps in leadership and fantasy literature; illustrating the practical uses of applied fantasy literature to leadership development studies, a benefit neglected by researchers and practitioners alike. It expands the Tolkien Studies discipline by exploring leadership development within Tolkien's work – again, a neglected aspect of Tolkien Studies. It provides a tailored framework for leadership development, and a toolbox of techniques for practitioners and leaders to use in leadership development research and practice.

Leadership

Leadership is not well understood, being defined in too many different and confusingly diverse ways, 'despite the myriad of studies, books, press articles and theoretical work completed' (Klenke, 2016, p.3). Many writers resort to categorising leadership rather than defining it because they find it too hard. Day and Antonakis (2012) define leadership as:

> purpose-driven action that brings about change or transformation based on values, ideals, vision, symbols, and emotional exchanges (p.5).

This is straightforward, except that it does not mention followers in any way at all – a glaring omission. A more accurate definition is also by these authors, as:

(a) an influencing process – and its resultant outcomes – that occurs between a leader and followers and,

b) how this influencing process is explained by the leader's dispositional characteristics and behaviours, follower perceptions and attributions of the leader, and the context in which the influencing process occurs (2012, p.5).

However, this does not seem quite accurate either, because it defines leadership too narrowly and prescriptively, leaving out important aspects. Consequently, for this thesis, I define leadership in my own way, as:

> the vision, communication, influence and actions, with and through followers, to bring about necessary changes and solutions to situations, thoughts and events in a way that improves life, now and for the future.

Leadership Development

To a leadership practitioner, leadership development often refers to the growth and fostering of leadership capacity throughout the whole organisation, including relational and networking aspects. It includes the developmental processes of levels or teams of people, as well as

promoting leadership growth across the organisation using appropriate systems and processes, such as using performance appraisal to monitor and reward leadership behaviours.

Leader development is generally concerned with the capabilities, attitudes, expectations, goals, self-management, knowledge and thinking processes of individual leaders. However, in the workplace these terms tend to be used in a vague, interchangeable way to mean any work done to improve leadership, on singular and plural basis. In this thesis, I am not using the term 'leadership development' in an organisational-wide sense, but as the process of growing and fostering leadership capabilities at wherever human level the organisation needs and has chosen to focus on. In this case, leadership development is deliberately person-centric, concerned with developing the capacity of a leader or group of individual leaders together.

Day (2001) creates a blended definition of leadership development, usefully merging definitions from Dixon and Weick:

> 'Leadership development involves building the capacity for groups of people to learn their way out of problems that could not have been predicted (Dixon, cited in Day, 2001, p.582), or that arise from the disintegration of traditional organisational structures and the associated loss of sensemaking' (Weick, cited in Day, 2001, p. 582).

I like Day's focus on the leader undertaking creative problem-solving while dealing with chaos and the unexpected; and that the leader builds human learning capacity, as well as making meaning for people. This definition fits today's unexpected and dramatic leadership environment very well. Consequently, I will use Day's blended definition for this thesis.

Fantasy Literature

Fantasy literature seems to have even more difficulties of definition than the leadership literature does! Many prominent commentators on fantasy do not even try, blatantly admitting that it is simply too hard to do (e.g. Flieger, 1990). Mendlesohn comments unhelpfully that it is not even worth discussing any definitions of fantasy, arguing that 'a consensus has emerged, accepting as a viable 'fuzzy set' a range of critical definitions', describing it instead by its predominant 'mode' (2008, p. xiii). More usefully, Moeller and Whitehead (2019) refer to Todorov's (1975) definition of fantasy as 'the confrontation of the familiar with the unreal, the mysterious, and the unknown' (p. 3).

For this thesis, I define fantasy literature as:

> 'a literary genre that uses visionary imagination, the supernatural, or unrealities such as magic or special powers, to construct what is impossible, and generate other worlds that may help us to mirror, question and interrogate our own world more critically'.

The Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1 introduces the research topic: its focus, its range, and why this topic is necessary for leadership development now. It describes current issues for leadership and leadership development, explaining the skills and behaviours that are essential for leadership in a different environment. It explains why fantasy literature and Tolkien were chosen, outlines the methodology of the study, and describes its new techniques. Finally, it defines key terms used, and describes the structure of the thesis. A view is taken on whether current leadership theory and development have sufficient capability to meet current and future challenges, and if not, what the gap is, and how to attempt to fill it.

Chapter 2 and 3 present the literature searches for leadership and leadership development; fantasy literature; and for Tolkien.

Chapter 4 explains the Methodology of this study, exploring ontological and philosophical aspects of this qualitative research, and why constructivism was chosen as a main approach. The research strategy is outlined, along with the newly devised and adapted tools and techniques. The benefits of interdisciplinarity are explored. The chapter discusses the selection of fantasy literature and Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* for the worked example of the strategy. It describes why and how de Rivera's (1981) '*conceptual encounter*' process was used I discussions with senior leaders to explore leadership and the framework. It shows the data collection and analysis stages, highlighting methodology, advantages, and drawbacks. Finally, it explains how the framework was improved, and conclusions made about the methodology and the research process.

Chapter 5 describes the 'worked example', illustrating how an applied analysis by the researcher of *The Lord of the Rings* created the leadership development framework through *literary conceptual analysis*. It describes the new process, and the chapter ends with a description of the initial framework produced.

Chapter 6 then shows how the concept of leadership, and the new leadership development framework, were explored through conceptual encounters with 15 senior, experienced leaders. Data collection was done through individual interviews, recorded for further analysis.

The many insights and recommendations are considered and collated, for analysis in Chapter 7. This chapter summarises the main themes from the data collection, using *Conceptual Synthesis* to analyse them. Four perspectives are used for analysis: what emerged from the leaders'

interviews; what Tolkien wrote in his novels about the topic; what academics had written; and finally, what the researcher decided, integrating the first three perspectives with her own experience and judgement. Improvements were then made to the Framework. .

Chapter 8 shows a further grouping of Framework stages into four discrete learning modules, ready for teaching and coaching use. It explores the conclusions gathered from the research processes; explores the contributions and outcomes from the research. Chapter 8 acknowledges study limitations, exploring recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Search into Leadership and Leadership Development

This chapter examines the main theories that have driven leadership behaviour and development over previous decades. Drawing on recent research, I argue that each leadership theory is a product of social, financial and political movements, charting the preoccupations of the time. In this chapter, I also analyse theories through the lens of competing paradigms, using the paradigm shift concepts of Thomas Kuhn (1969).

The literature review underpinning this chapter was undertaken by examining theory in a range of leadership books of the past 50 years, and searching for online resources for journal articles using key search terms including; 'leadership theory'', 'leadership', 'leadership development' and 'the future of leadership', as well as searching for specific theories. Journals of most use were *The Leadership Quarterly*, and SAGE Journals. In addition, the *Journal of Organisational Change Management*; and Taylor and Francis Online provided interesting perspectives and analyses. Google Scholar was used to identify more popular initiatives, as well as unusual articles for more detailed scrutiny in *The Futurist* and a range of psychology journals. A search alert was set up to provide information about new journal articles, using 'leadership theory' and 'leadership development' as key search words.

Dominant theories strongly impact current practice: when these theories become the accepted, dominant, and often uncriticised view of the nature of leadership, an overarching ideology of leadership is created. This ideology underlies professional development, day-to-day behaviours, the expectations and assessment of overall leadership performance and its reward systems (Bolden, 2004, p.9). As such, understanding leadership theory is an important part of conceptualising the field of leadership altogether.

In this chapter, the growth of leadership theory will be shown using the Van Seters and Field's (1990) framework. After exploring it, I reconceptualise it, using Kuhn's paradigm concept, into my own Four Waves of Leadership Theory classification, Figure 2.2. I update the previous leadership categories to include additional theories and insert an additional category to include current and emerging theories. This 'scoping' of the leadership field allows me to see that there is a visible gap in theory and practice, i.e. the use of speculative and fantasy literature as a resource for leaders.

Leadership v. Leadership Development in this Chapter

Although there are many approaches to leadership development (such as organisational-wide leadership, team leadership, etc), this chapter, and thesis, is concerned with only one: the development of individual leaders, at any level, through direct training programs and experiences, self-development activities, and coaching programs. It has not demarcated a line between leadership and leadership development, because I perceive leadership development to have been an extension of, and training in, the dominant leadership theories of the time: 'devising interventions to equip leaders with the skills of each particular theory' (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm & McKee, 2014). Leadership theorists have failed to consider leadership development as a separate topic for practice or study (Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber, 2009, p. 425). Also, research into leadership development had generally not been undertaken in the twentieth century (Day, 2001), although it is expanding now in the twenty-first century. There is still much vagueness and confusion in the terminology.

Despite historic writings on leadership by ancient Greek and Roman societies, and writers like Lao Tse and Machiavelli, the biggest growth in leadership theory occurred during the twentieth century. This was partly a response to the emergence of widespread, large-scale industries, and

theorists such as F. W. Taylor (2011), who advocated new and improved production methods and structures. At this point, it was widely realised that in these difficult, unwieldy organisations, leaders and leadership were the key to performance, productivity, and income. From then on, interest in the field of leadership and its development was assured, with business schools, consultants and workplace 'gurus' competing to sell their theories in books, conference presentations and 'user licences'.

Research commentaries about these leadership theories were not altogether positive. Alvesson and Kärreman commented that much analysis of existing leadership theory has been conducted from an ideological, and biased, perspective, writing that 'Language rules, social norms, and the inclination to avoid cognitive dissonance in many cases facilitate predictable 'results' (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2016, p.149). They stressed the need to consult less the 'ideologically soaked holy texts' and to 'de-ideologize leadership', by going to the field of workplaces and manager-subordinate interactions to generate direct observation of leadership processes (pp.149-150).

Thus, theory development may be seen as a succession of 'holy texts', each major theory illustrating the dominant paradigm and social focus of the decade, and each triggering new applications and initiatives. Storey (2016) asserts that 'the leadership domain is a peculiar one' (p. 3), suggesting that leadership theories and the resulting national initiatives are in a state of constant flux and change:

> 'The importance of leadership, it seems, is periodically discovered, emphasised, institutionalised, taken for granted, neglected, discarded and then rediscovered. Throughout the ups and downs, the leadership industry remains large…. Strategic leadership initiatives are launched and relaunched with surprising regularity–perhaps reflecting the see-saw of belief and hope vying with experience and disillusionment' (pp. 5-6).

Perhaps one source of this constant movement and confusion in leadership is because of what it represents within society. Becker (1997) argues that society is 'a symbolic action system', where through psychological transference, the leader and the followers 'project' their own inner fears onto each other:

> 'People project their problems on to [the leader], which gives him his role and stature. Leaders need followers as much as they are needed by them: the leader projects onto his followers his own inability to stand alone, his own fear of isolation' (p.139).

If this is so, in a time of great anxiety and technical upheaval, these fears would significantly increase in range, diversity and number, leading to even more definitions and varied conceptualisations of leadership.

In any case, despite this turbulence, there is no sign yet that the 'holy texts' are being consulted less, nor that their high priests and acolytes are reducing in number or marketing activity! Almost all the main leadership theories have supporters and defenders in the academic and practitioner world because, no matter how old the theories are, they still have resonance as alternative ways of seeing and interpreting leadership. Older theories are updated or re-interpreted, with new, trendy wording in their teaching manuals. Each theory has its own ontology and epistemologies, containing different world views, values and expectations. However, this multiplication of leadership theories creates multiple definitions of leadership, with most theories competing for the dominant narrative about the meaning, source and techniques of leadership. This creates confusion and division in the business community, with investment in leadership development becoming fragmented, and even bewildering (Storey, 2016).

Because of the huge range and number of leadership theories, structure is needed to organise and understand their features and limitations. Most leadership textbooks contain a

classification as a way of structuring and making sense of the main theories. Northouse comments that at least 65 different classifications categorised and structured the range of leadership theories in existence towards the end of the twentieth century, and many more have been constructed since (Northouse, 2021, p. 2). A classification of leadership and leadership development thinking is useful at this stage in the thesis.

A common approach to discussing the development is to describe them in various loose categories, as 'trait v. process' theories; 'assigned v. emergent' leadership; theories of leadership power; leadership coercion, and leadership v. management, before analysing a range of theories individually (Northouse (2021). Western (2018) refers to the growth of leadership theories as 'the discourses of leadership' (p.80, p.183), categorising four types of discourse: the leader as controller (scientific management), therapist (Human Relations movement, coaching, emotional intelligence), Messiah (transformational and cultural leadership) and emerging Eco-Leader (interconnectivity of systems, interdependence, ethical responsibility and sustainability. This fourth category of theory is vague, linking the leader with goodness and spirituality, protecting the natural world and connecting with the fragility of life and nature 'to find ways to harness the human spirit'. How that last discourse fits today's pressured organisations may be debatable, but the sentiment is certainly popular.

Grint (2010) argues that most leadership thinking can be defined in one of four ways: leadership as person (focusing on the characteristics of leaders), leadership as process (about their style or activity), leadership as positional (focused on leaders' power and actions), and leadership about results (about mobilising others for outcomes), Grint ascribes the differences in these mental models as the main reason for the inability to reach any consensus about the nature of leadership.

A useful and detailed structure for understanding the chronological development of leadership thought was developed by Van Seters and Field (1990), who take an evolutionary developmental perspective. Van Seters and Field divide the main leadership theories into ten 'eras', each representing a more advanced focus, analysis, and development, thus providing what they consider to be an evolutionary schema of leadership theory (p. 30). Each of these 'eras' contains a group of theories, seen by their originators as THE answer to successful leadership. Some build on earlier theories, most compete with them.

In this chapter, I examine leadership and leadership development, using the Van Seters and Field's (1990) framework, in order to show the stages of leadership thinking over the decades. It could be said that a more recent reference might have been better as this classification is already 30 years old, but it is a clear and logical summary compared to the many frameworks existing on this topic. I have updated it to include recent theories, with critical commentary added about the benefits and limitations of some of the main theories. Provided their framework is critiqued and updated, the Van Seter's and Field framework is one of the more logical and straightforward classifications, out of the many currently in existence.

After exploring the development of leadership theory through this framework, and adjusting it for omissions, I provide my own alternative framework of leadership theory, viewing the development of leadership theory as a series of paradigm shifts, and updating and expanding it to include some recent or emerging theories. Then, I comment on the large gap that is evident in the literature, and suggest the action needed to rectify it.

Exploring Leadership Theory through Van Seters and Field's (1990) Ten Era Classification

1). THE PERSONALITY ERA

The Great Man Theory asserted that successful leaders are different to other people, being 'born and not made' from good parental material: their success has relied on them inheriting specific aspects of personality, skills or character, rather than any training (Jennings, 1960; Carlyle, 1907; Galton, 1869). Turnbull-James and Collins (2008) comment that the attraction of the Great Man theories may relate to archetypal applied literature notions of leadership: the human psychological need for a hero. However, this perspective was simplistic and unhelpful to those seeking to identify and grow leaders, especially in the expanding industrial and commercial organisations of the time. It provided little insight into developing leadership capability, nor how to locate, recruit and train excellent leaders. Progress was made through copying the traits of 'the Great Man'. Its extreme leader-centralist approach failed to include other important aspects of leadership, like context, the situation, and relationships with followers.

After this, the subsequent development of trait theories made leadership capability more accessible: by identifying and understanding specific personality traits of outstanding leaders, others could be trained and developed to be leaders (Bowden, 1927). Leaders could be both born AND made. The problem was that it was impossible to identify traits that were universally applicable in a range of contexts and situations, although substantial efforts were made throughout the twentieth century. Also, because traits are fixed aspects of personality, training was difficult: it is not easy to change long-lasting traits within a limited timeframe.

By mid-century, criticisms arose that trait theories did not consider the context of the leader, the surrounding expectations, nor the nature of the leader-follower relationship (Stogdill, 1948; Jenkins 1947). No single trait, or groups of traits, could ever be correlated with successful leadership in its full range or complexity. Trait theories were gradually discarded as being too simplistic (Mann, 1959).

However, trait theory never disappeared entirely, and re-emerged later. In 1991, Kirkpatrick and Locke provided research stating that effective leaders possess the traits of drive, leadership motivation, self-confidence, cognitive ability and knowledge of the business. Northouse supported this re-emergence years later, commenting, approvingly, that:

> 'No other theory can boast of the breadth and depth of studies conducted on the trait approach. The strength and longevity of this line of research give the trait approach a measure of credibility that other approaches lack' (Northouse, 2021, p. 24).

The re-emergence of these theories has grown a new vigour since then, as:

> 'Leadership scholars have been re-energised by new directions in the field, and research efforts have revitalised areas previously abandoned for apparent lack of consistency in findings' (Day and Antonakis, 2012, p. 4).

Part of this re-emergence, Storey (2016, p. 30) identifies three 'meta-capabilities' traits of leaders: big-picture sensemaking (scanning and interpreting the environment to discern threats, assessing the organisation's strengths and weaknesses, and constructing a vision, mission and strategy accordingly); the ability to deliver change' (mobilising support, communicating, energising and inspiring followers, active listening, using emotional intelligence, being supportive, enabling and empowering others), and 'inter-organisational representation' (the ambassadorial role).

Trait theory tends to be seen today as one contributory aspect of leadership performance among many. Trait-based leadership development now uses assessment and psychometric instruments

to chart the traits and strengths of leaders, to increase emotional intelligence and self-knowledge, and thereby, the leader's efficacy and self-management (Northouse, 2007). Psychometric testing and the 'big-five' list of personality factors have been correlated with leadership performance (Day and Antonakis, 2012).

The authors argue that leadership 'socio-biology', the new 'hard-science' field of biological and evolutionary research into leadership, is a twenty-first century extension of the trait theory, in examining and understanding individual differences. They quote initiatives such as behavioural genetics, the effect of hormones on correlates of leadership; neuroscientific perspectives; evolutionary stances; and integrative biological approaches, as pointers to new and exciting research directions (Day and Antonakis, 2012, p.14).

2) THE INFLUENCE ERA

The Influence Era represents a focus on how the leader influences others, particularly through the application of power and dominance. Five styles of leadership power were identified, with the successful leader being able to use each style in the right way (French and Raven, 1959; French, 1956; and Schenk, 1928). A strongly individualistic focus placed all the emphasis on the leader asserting power downwards on to the followers. This set of theories was considered simplistic, not flexible enough for the full complexity of leadership practice, nor the style or preference of the individual leader. Van Seters and Field divided this era into the Power Relations movement, and the Persuasion movement that omitted coercion as the main way of exerting power.

The concept of power has generally not been well-covered in the main leadership theories. As a process of leadership influence, it tends to be treated in a one-sided way, assuming that power

is always positive, and ignoring power-based conflict, unhelpful to an understanding of leadership power. This process of how leadership power is dealt with must be understood fully because 'power is fundamentally inherent in the leadership process and … leaders will usually have to engage with political behaviour within organisations' (Schedlitzki and Edwards, 2017, p.142). Western (2008) writes that 'Aspiring democratic leaders and organisations are troubled by the concept of power that is often treated as a dirty word and avoided' (p. 49).

However, there has been a re-emergence of writing about leadership power more recently. Yukl (2010) identified common proactive influencing tactics versus the political uses of power; Lukes (2005) listed three dimensions of power: visual influencing behaviour that impacts on conflict and decision-making; agenda setting; and collective group power on the individual through norms, culture-setting and values. Nicholson and Carroll (2013) explore how power is exercised by leadership development programmes, through programme discourse and images.

An interesting, more recent perspective on power is that of Ford and Harding (2018), who argue that leadership literature has ignored the role of followers until recently, but that the whole of leadership studies has been, and still is, constructed on the implicit assumptions about the need to control followership power. They argue that distributed leadership is a pretence that all in the workforce are equal: power inevitably resides in hierarchy and structures. They assert that transformation, authentic and servant leadership are a response to potential class conflict, as an attempt to control the mass of followers:

> 'We suggest that the implicit academic theory of followers that informs writing on leadership is one that echoes the fears of the powerful through the millennia: that the mob is always straining at the ramparts, ready to destroy civilisation' (Ford and Harding, 2018, p. 27).

They conclude that leadership theory is written for managers, while the followers get on with their normal jobs: 'unexplored, unknown and un-theorised' (30). The real power is that asserted on leaders being made to confirm to norms, practices and expectations that ultimately are 'empty promises about the leader's ability to fill up the follower with their own charisma, or authenticity, or goodness, or abilities'. They conclude that, rather than focusing on followers, 'it is the leadership industry's continuing effects on managers [now] that need our attention' (p. 30).

While it could be argued that this view is somewhat harsh and unfair upon the leadership development industry, I believe that it will have momentum in the years ahead, gaining traction from the writings of Kellerman (2012), discussed in Section 7 of the Van Seters and Field classification, on The Anti-Leadership Era. Alvesson and Spicer (2012) condemn the many recent critical (Anti-leadership) commentaries on dominant leadership theory that describe it as being only about 'inequality, power, discipline and control' (373). The authors appeal for a more positive 'critical performative approach', which questions the negative power-aspects of leadership, but adds new ways of understanding and influencing debate and practice (p. 376).

3) THE BEHAVIOUR ERA.

The next era examined what effective leaders do at the workplace, rather than what they are, each theory advocating the one best way to be effective. Researchers believed that successful leadership could be learned, if leaders were trained to do the right behaviours with skill, including choosing the right approaches of 'task versus people', and 'directive versus participative'. Studies within this group included the Ohio State Studies of 'consideration versus initiating structure' behaviours (Fleishman, Harris and Burtt, 1955; Halpin and Winer, 1957); the Michigan Studies (Katz and Kahn, 1951); the Managerial Grid (Blake and Mouton, 1964); and McGregor's 'Theory X and Theory Y' (McGregor, 1960).

Operant Conditioning (Ashour and Johns, 1983; Sims 1977) is also included here, because it seeks to identify how leaders can identify and 'reinforce' desirable follower behaviour. However, interest in these theories declined gradually, because they ignored all the other influences of leadership, were leader-centred, and considered 'manipulative' and mechanistic. Solid evidence for the workplace impact of these theories was mixed also (Van Seters and Field, 1990).

However, some of these theories are being resurrected. In 2004, Judge, Piccolo and Iles re-examined the Ohio State consideration versus initiating structure theory, testing it in four industry types, finding that the ideal leadership approach was to be high in both consideration and initiating behaviours (Humphrey, 2014). Other researchers that have updated and re-examined these theories include Dale and Fox (2008); Zinnerman, Mount and Goff (2008); Van Emmerik, Euwema, and Wendt (2008); and Koene, Vogelaat, and Soeters (2002).

4) *THE SITUATION ERA*

The next developmental stage was identified as the Situation Era, which contained yet more complexity by including additional influencing factors beyond the leader-follower duo: the organisation itself, the external environment; the social standing of the leader and followers; the influence of the group and team; and the task itself. Van Seters and Field (1990) divided this era into the *Environment Period*, which suggested that leaders are replaceable, thrown up, presumably by invisible social forces, when they are 'in the right place at the right time' (34); the *Social Status Period,* which stressed the social influences of leadership; and the *Socio-Technical period*, combining the first two categories.

The landmark socio-technical work of Trist and Bamforth (1951) examined productivity during mechanisation in the coal industry, advocating that by improving the quality of employees' conditions, better results are achieved. However, this has been hard to evaluate in practice. The Balanced Scorecard was a later movement to attempt to evaluate socio-technical designs (Kaplan and Norton, 1992), but the movement was considered to have failed (Land, 2000).

Elliott Jacques' Stratified-Systems Theory (SST) suggested the leader must ensure the right managerial hierarchical structure (*requisite organisation*), and task complexity (*the time-span of discretion*) for organisational success (Jacques, 1989). Boxer asserts that psychoanalytic theory underlies these organisational structure and systems, as Jacques seeks to create the 'philogenic organisation', with loving, collegiate working relationships, versus the 'paranoiagenic organisation', full of envy, greed and guilt (Boxer, 1990, p.338).

5) *THE CONTINGENCY ERA*

The Contingency Era holds that leadership styles must be chosen according to a more complex combination of factors. Van Seters and Field (2007) refer to this period as 'a major advance in the evolution of leadership theory' (p.34), because it integrates previous theories by combining the most effective combination of factors for successful leadership, the 'contextual variables' (Van Seters & Field, 2007, p.44). There was no 'one best fit' of leadership, but there could be a matching of leader style for each situation. These theories are more complex and nuanced than the last ones, but still considered overly simplistic. More damning, this research was found to be not easily replicable, like so many others of this time (Bryman, 1986).

Various contingency theories dominate this era: the LPC Contingency Theory, and the Path-Goal Theory. The LPC Theory (short for Leader Preferred Co-worker, the measure used to

rate leader's styles as task or relationship focused) posited that leaders' natural styles must be accurately matched to each specific context to ensure the 'best fit', task-focused or relationship-focused (Fiedler, 1964, 1967). A key component of this theory is that leaders cannot, or do not, change their leadership styles, so this 'fit' becomes vitally important. Situational variables were leader-member relations; task structure; and situation 'favourability' created by position power (Schedlitzki and Edwards, 2018, p. 51).

The second contingency movement was the Path-Goal Theory, Evans (1970); House (1971, 1996); and House and Mitchell (1974). Like Jacques' earlier Expectancy Theory, it was assumed that understanding goals clearly; the path to those goals; and the steps to the successful achievement of a task leads to effective work performance, when combined with a desirable reward. The focus was on follower motivation, the most rational way to achieve that, and an appropriate leadership style. Leadership style was focused on meeting employees' needs to achieve this with directive, supportive, participative and achievement-orientated leadership.

Situational Leadership by Hersey and Blanchard (1971), and later by Blanchard and colleagues (1985), is still in use, holding that leaders must match their leadership style to the follower's developmental level, and the situation, task and context. Leadership styles are a relationship between directive behaviour (the leader provides direction, tasks, objectives and deadlines) versus supportive behaviour (the leader encourages and supports the follower in setting goals, assessing performance, and self-leadership). A leader must know and assess follower performance, development and motivation levels accurately, plus the context, to choose which leadership style to apply to each person. This theory ensures that leaders focus primarily on the developmental levels of their followers, constantly monitoring and varying their own leadership styles to match each developmental level. Critics argue that the theory is

prescriptive and artificial, with some maintaining that follower style does not link to employee performance in the real workplace (Vecchio, Bullis and Brazil, 2006), and that it does not predict results.

Expectancy Theory is a theory of rational choice decision-making, asserting that employees will be motivated to choose certain behaviours if they can see a relationship between type of work, level of effort, performance level and desirable reward. Vroom (1964) saw that people would be motivated to seek organisational goals, when they could perceive this relationship, and systems were recommended that made these linkages explicit. Its many criticisms included that Expectancy Theory was overly-complex in structure, that research findings do not show consistent success (Yukl, 2011); and that it is simplistic in the way that it links motivation with leadership behaviour (Northouse, 2009). Later theories tied the concept of self-efficacy to higher performance. Some work is still being done in this area: Isaac, Zerbe and Pitt (2001) investigated expectancy theory and leadership behaviour, while Renko, Kroeck and Bullough (2012) used Vroom's theory to examine entrepreneurial motivation.

The decline of contingency theories generally has been ascribed to its overall simplistic approach, with the development of more recent 'broader contextual approaches' (Day and Antonakis, 2012, p. 9).

6) THE TRANSACTIONAL ERA

This transactional group of theories asserted, for the first time, that followers were not merely passive receivers of leadership, but fully participate in joint interactions that influence the nature and style of leadership and its results. Derived from the earlier Vertical Dyad Theory, the tacit agreement of followers enables leaders to emerge and lead. The leader and follower engage in a mutually respectful equal exchange: rewards or payment in exchange for work

'done efficiently' (Western, 2018, p. 109). This type of power through interpersonal relationships means that leadership can 'reside in the subordinate and not the leader at all' (Van Seters and Field, 2007, p.36). Examples are the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory (Dienesh and Liden, 1986 and Graen, Novak and Sommerkamp, 1982), concerned with understanding and improving follower and leader relationships.

Thus, leadership styles and workplace successes are formed by leader and follower interactions and relationships, and the in- and out-groups that form. Friendship can moderate the productivity of the LMX working relationship (Boyd and Taylor, 1998). Race relations and gender, psychological skills, and organisational contexts like culture and the economic situation can also influence LMX outcomes (Scandura & Lankau,1996).

LMX theory is still highly influential, with very active research groups, known now also as Relational Leadership Theory (Miscenko and Day, 2016). Day and Antonakis (2012) comment that a renewed focus in transactional theories is generating new research initiatives, 'including [a] growing interest in the role of followers' (p.10). Pearse (2017) concludes that the development and effective use by the leader of a 'service competency', that of 'individualised consideration, compassion, a motivation to serve, humility, and integrative thinking', improves the social exchange and beneficial relationship between the leader/follower dyad.

Miscenko and Day (2016) consider that LMX is an influential theory, standing among other theories because of its unique leader/follower relational approach, and its differentiation between different LMX relationship quality, in leader-employee relationships. The authors argue that recent multilevel modelling techniques will form future research directions, along with researching more contextual variables.

7) THE ANTI-LEADERSHIP ERA

The Anti-Leadership Era followed, where the value and existence of leadership and leaders were challenged. Critics questioned the rigour of research methodologies, their validity, and whether leadership was purely a conceptual idea, or something too vague to be of use. Critics included Gennill and Oakley (1992); Mitchell and Wood (1979); Salancik and Pfeffer (1977); Miner (1975) and Meindl et al (1985). Although this movement was largely ignored by practitioners, stern critics of the leader role and its development are still vocal today.

Kellerman, in *The End of Leadership* (Kellerman, 2012) argues that despite its huge 'industry', leaders have not developed or improved their performance. To Kellerman, social changes and the rise of technology made the role of leaders almost impossible: their followers now have more power than them, and do not want to be led by anybody. The long history of leadership has been 'about the devolution of power- from those up top to those down below' (p.3), with leaders 'routinely derided, ignored, or circumvented', finding it 'increasingly difficult to exercise…power…or authority' (p. 33). Participatory democracy, the media, focus groups, crowdsourcing, and the culture itself are today combining to undermine leaders and create severe 'leadership limits' (p.39). Leaders today are disempowered and ineffectual: 'they are revealed, naked as it were, emperors without clothes, while we stand and stare, no longer surprised to find that they, like we, are merely mortal' (Kellerman, 2012, p. 47). Another recent critic is Pfeffer (2016), who argues that the huge leadership industry has failed, and that, consequently workplaces and individual leaders are suffering. This is confounded by the lack of adequate research methods: 'the relationship between scientific rigour and success in the leadership industry is somewhere between small and negative' (p. 32).

However, Day and Antonakis (2012, p.10) argue that, ultimately, the 'Skeptics-of-Leadership School' benefit the leadership research community, creating better, more robust methodologies; leadership at different levels is better understood; and it advanced (and rebalanced) the role of the follower in the later leadership theory.

8) THE CULTURE ERA

The Culture Era sees leadership as located primarily within the organisation's culture, rather than in one or a group of individuals. Culture must be shaped and manipulated to create leadership throughout the organisation, allowing leaders to spring up at every level. Tools, techniques and Organisation Development (OD) approaches are recommended for preparing the workforce and organisation for change. Advocates of this approach include Pascale and Athos' (1981) 7-S Classification; Peters and Waterman's (1982) In Search of Excellence material; and Ouchi and Jaeger's (1978) Theory Z. Later versions of this can be seen in Manz and Sims (1990) with their Super-leadership approach, and Senge's 1990 *Learning Organisation* concept. All of these theories were popular at the time, but again evidence of workplace performance was hard to track, and many have just disappeared.

I have added Senge's The Learning Organisation concept in this era because the movement is concerned with the leadership behaviour needed to create and sustain individual, team and organisational learning, for competitive advantage. The organisation is meant to be transformed by the practice and organisation-wide use of five disciplines: systems thinking, the challenging of mental models, personal mastery, building shared vision, and team learning (Senge, 1990). It was influential at the time, but leaders always found it hard to implement rational, reflective techniques in highly pressured workplaces. There is little research evidence that it makes a performance difference, and it has since been discarded. Grieves (2008)

comments that the theory should now be abandoned, while Burgoyne and Pedler (2017) argue that it is too early to tell at present whether the theory is still relevant, but that more research is needed to find out.

9) THE TRANSFORMATIONAL ERA

Transformational and charismatic leadership formed the most dominant leadership paradigm for the first decade of the twenty-first century (Day and Antonakis, 2012), and the last decades of the twentieth. Transformational Leadership is 'the theoretical flagship in the great armada of the booming area of leadership… often equated with effective leadership' (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2016, p. 140). Tichy and Devanna were prominent early advocates, with their book, *The Transformational Leader* (1986). It recommended the re-emergence of the dominant leader, energising followers through exciting visions of the future, thus creating a passion for change. Storey comments that these theories of 'transformational, charismatic, visionary and inspirational leadership' are known as the 'New Leadership School' (2007, p. 19). This era divides into the Charisma Period, described by Conger and Kanungo in 1987; and the Self-Fulfilling Prophecy Period, influenced by Eden (1984); and Field (1989), which focuses on building positive self-expectations.

Bass and Riggio (2010) argue that transformational leaders require higher moral development than others, because they inspire others, and must care for their followers. The strategic leadership focus of this era created a stronger leadership context (Schedlitzki and Edwards, 2018): leaders understand their environment to achieve outstanding strategic visions through their people. This focus generates many theories where leaders inspire and energise followers by a vision of change, challenging goals, and powerful change management processes. (Avolio and Yammarino, 2002).

However, Storey (2016, p. 11) comments on a growing discontent with transformational and charismatic leadership theories: 'the campaign extolling transformational leadership rests on a series of basic propositions, each of which turns out to be contentious'. Overly simplistic approaches and a lack of complexity are common criticisms (Conger and Hunt, 1999) while Day (2001, p.606) comments that these theories

> 'do not come close to representing the entire depth or complexity of thinking on leadership needed to design, evaluate, and improve leadership development efforts for the present and the future'.

Additionally, transformational leaders are often described in terms more suitable for sainthood! Yet stories of corporate failures, financial scandals and sexual exploitation tell a different story, creating disillusionment, and demands for increased governance (Storey, 2016, p. 34).

However, transformational leadership will still remain a popular subject for researchers, and exert a major influence on leaders, because the central emphasis is on making change happen, and because positive performance impacts are becoming apparent (Zineldin, 2017).

10) THE FUTURE LEADERSHIP ERA.

Van Seters and Field (1990) assert that future leadership theories will culminate in the integration of all that has gone before, incorporating all previous theories into one unified synthesis, to meet contemporary challenges. They speculate that the next leadership theory movement will be integrative, with multiple interactions, and complex relationships identified and charted. This is a disappointing conclusion: readers might conclude that this is a case of

theorists 'playing it safe', because they do not have any idea of where leadership is going in the future, so they just say it is 'all of the above'!

It is unlikely that an integrated theory of everything, by integrating and using all past leadership theories, will be the next dominant leadership theory. Rather a completely new paradigm will be necessary for the new environments that leaders are facing: one that can cope with faster, distributed leadership, the massive growth of seamless artificial intelligence applications, and other radical technological and social changes.

Some emerging new concepts and directions are explored in the *Four Waves of Leadership Theory* classification, outlined a little later in this chapter.

Conclusions on the Growth of Leadership Theory

Leadership theory over the decades shows a clear development: from the simple to the complex; from the leader to the wider organisational context; from the dominance of the (male) leader to the importance of the follower. However, while each set of theories had merit, many tended to be simplistic, providing only a fraction of the 'leadership story', while a constant lack of affirming research evidence showed that style did not equal successful leadership (Van Vugt and Ahuja, 2011, p. 33). Many theories petered away, losing energy and adherents. Some built on others' work, while many were re-invented in a new and updated way. In short, they represent 'an alphabet soup' of leadership recommendations, where 'too many training initiatives …rest on the assumption that one size fits all' (Gurdjian, Halbeisen and Lane (2014: 2).

Kelly (2008) comments on 'a general dissatisfaction with the results and lack of coherence in trait- and style-based psychological research' (p. 765), leading to a general questioning of the main theories and research methods. Empirical research has failed to support most theories, and much of the research behind the theories was inadequate, in any case (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010).

Schedlitzki and Edwards (2018), commenting on contingency theories, sum up the problems of all of the leadership theories, as promoting

> 'an individualistic, leader-centric perspective that fails to fully account for subordinate behaviours, the interactional nature of leadership processes, emotions, multiple or dispersed notions of leadership and a recognition of change-oriented and strategic leadership, as well as the dark side of leadership' (p. 61).

The Van Seters and Field descriptive structure of these leadership theories is also limited. While listing the theories clearly, they focus largely on leadership research activity from the 1980s and 1990s: there is little of substance noted beyond. They give some theories significant prominence, but without taking a critical approach to them. The ten categories Van Seters and Field specify are excessively detailed: it may be difficult for the reader to differentiate them usefully. In addition, their descriptions of the tenth era, Leadership Theory of the Future, are sparse and under-researched. However, despite its limitations, the Van Seters and Field chronological framework is still one of the clearest of the classifications, and a helpful way to chart and perceive the rise and fall of the many leadership theories.

Analysing the Development of Leadership Theory as Paradigms

Western argues that 'critical theorists must go beyond identifying 'bad leadership practice' and aim to create and support successful ethical frameworks for leadership' (2008, p.21). Similarly, agreeing with this view, Alvesson and Spicer (2012) suggest that a new way of engaging with leadership is necessary, not adopting a 'messianic faith' in leadership, nor providing a naïve

rejection of it. The authors suggest strongly that there is now 'the need to reconstruct leadership' (2012, p. 367). Consequently, I am suggesting a new framework for leadership, that provides the space, and a rationale, for its reconstruction, improvement and continuing incremental and radical change, as well as seeking to discover the latest ideas in leadership theory.

It is helpful to visualise the long march of leadership theory development as a series of 'paradigm shifts', each paradigm striving to solve the problem (or crisis) of how to boost leadership performance within complex environments. By considering leadership theories in this way, it is possible to gain insight into the overall leadership landscape, as well as to anticipate possible future directions for leadership theory. The concept of paradigms was popularised by Kuhn (1962), who expanded the way that the development of scientific (and human) ideas over the centuries was perceived.

Kuhn investigated the ways in which scientists developed their disciplines, within existing frames of thought, and sometimes constrained by dogma and limited perspective. This challenged previous widespread beliefs of the logical and incremental growth of scientific thought. Kuhn argued that paradigms are present in all fields from political thinking to the creative arts. As an 'accepted model or pattern' (Kuhn, 1970, p.23), or 'perceptual transformation' (p. 112), a paradigm solves a problem - usually an unsolvable anomaly - and in doing so, provides 'a revolutionary transformation of vision' (p.112) that impacts the way researchers understand the world and their discipline. As a 'source of coherence' (p.42), the dominant paradigm explains and defines theory, definitions, rules, language, punishments, and specific terminology to make the paradigm usable. It provides new measurement and assessment equipment and processes; techniques and methods to operationalise the paradigm; and 'tells the practitioner what the world and his science is like' (p.42).

A dominant paradigm creates a scientific revolution by 'a displacement of the conceptual network through which scientists view the world' (p.102): for when a paradigm changes, the scientist 'must learn to see a new gestalt' (p.112). The paradigm is a short-cut for the researcher because it enables her to 'take the foundations of their field for granted', to work on 'more concrete and recondite problems' (p. 21). As a 'shared disciplinary matrix', it is a basis for further problem solving (p.170). A crisis is usually necessary for a new paradigm to be identified and accepted, because 'novelty emerges only with difficulty, manifested by resistance, against a background provided by expectation' (p.64). The crisis provides motivation to challenge existing perceptions, increasing the impetus to create major changes (or shifts) in techniques and thinking.

Paradigm change consists of two distinct modes: **adaptive change** (step-change within the paradigm, building on the work of others to make it more efficient within existing boundaries, rules and ways of working; and **innovative change** (radical change of the whole paradigm, rejecting existing theory and replacing it with a new theory or paradigm (Kirton, 2003). This is a useful structure for considering change, as it helps understanding of how old and new paradigms fit together. Figure 2.1 shows the stages of paradigm change, incremental and radical, as a problem-solving response to a crisis or anomaly, based on the writings of Kuhn (1970) and Kirton (2003).
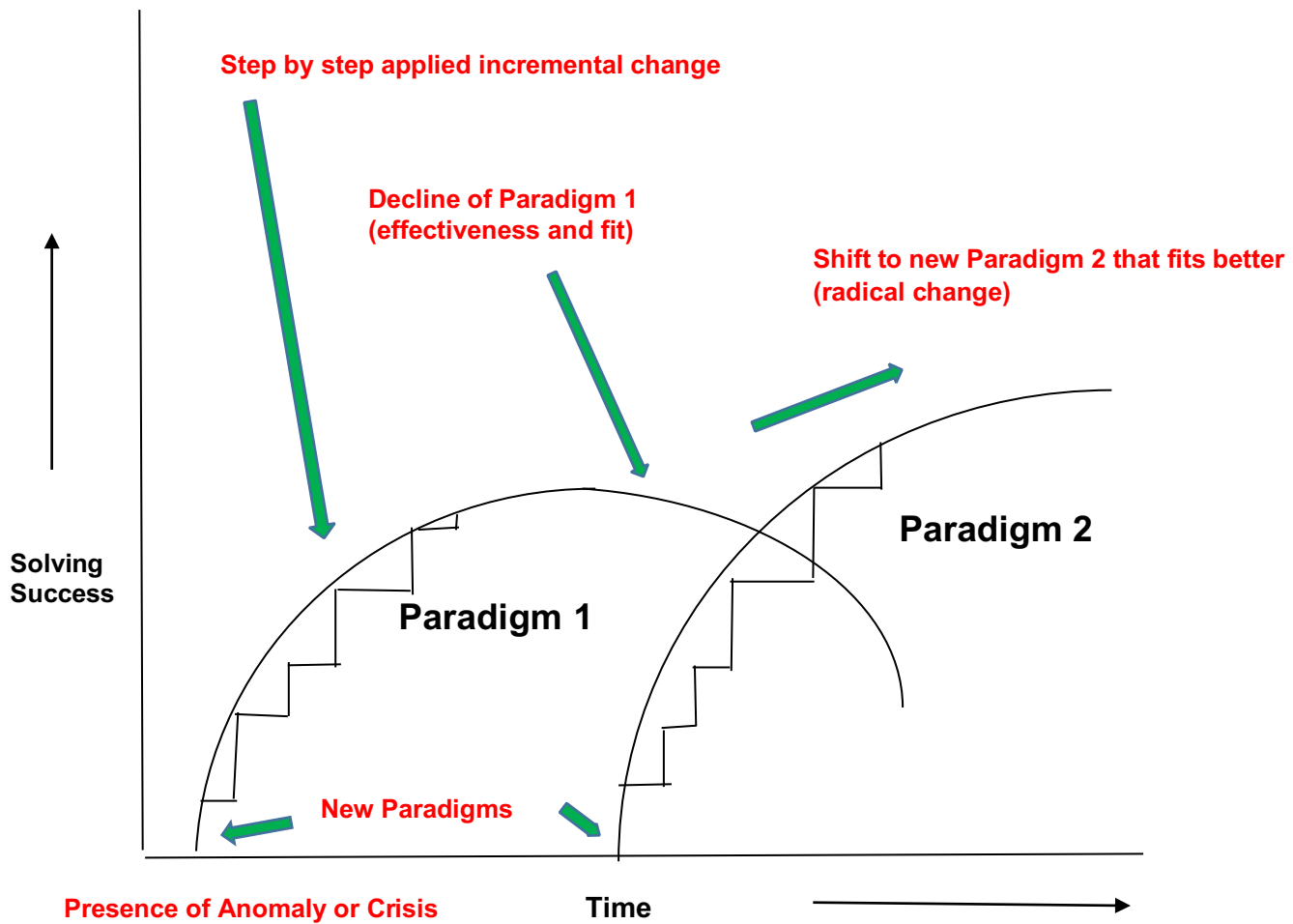
FIGURE 2.1: TWO TYPES OF PARADIGM CHANGE, INCREMENTAL AND RADICAL

Figure 2.1 shows two types of change occurring – incremental: gradual, step-by-step improvement within the paradigm, and innovative: radical paradigm shift to another paradigm. These two types contain different approaches, values and world views. Incremental change tends to value tradition, process improvement, better solutions, efficiency and precision. Radical change tends to value discontinuous shift, different solutions (not better), and often a rejection of the ways of the past.

When a paradigm is first presented to the world, its potential is generally recognised. Its advocates then undertake incremental improvements, making the new paradigm more efficient,

and able to fit its environment better in problem-solving and efficiency – these are the small 'steps' of the diagram. However, as external situations change, the paradigm ceases to 'fit', becoming less effective, resulting in declining problem-solving capability - the downturn of the curve in Figure 2.1. This could be the case when leadership theories are considered ineffective or out of touch with current situations: something new is needed. The efficiency reduction forces the move to another paradigm, to one that fits the environment and solves problems better. A recognised set of anomalies may create dissatisfaction with the old paradigm, which cannot address them effectively.

Different leadership skills are needed at different stages of the paradigm journey – innovative, entrepreneurial skills at the early paradigm stages of high risk and high growth; process improvement and efficiency to keep the paradigm growing and on track (Kirton, 2003). Strategic leadership is needed to make the shift to the next paradigm. As paradigm efficiency declines, there is a period of conflict, with demands to redefine the paradigm. A crisis forms when the existing paradigms (or theories) cannot effectively solve the important problems of the era. A new leadership development paradigm is now urgently needed, but frustrations deepen as theories fail to provide solutions to the crisis. New theories spring up and compete as researchers seek to find or invent the next new paradigm. The supporters of the new paradigm battle the supporters of the old paradigm, who constant try to make the old paradigm fit by ingenious (but fruitless) re-invention. Eventually the new paradigm is widely adopted, providing temporary stability, until the environment changes again, and another new paradigm is needed.

This seems to be how leadership theory has developed: a new theory, incremental improvement, then a leap to a very different theory, incremental improvement, etc. The present situation seems to be the demise of the old paradigms, and a desperate search for new ones–

multiple 'solutions' are devised, amid much confusion. So, if we perceive the procession of leadership theories over the past century as a series of paradigm shifts, then there is a rationale for the proliferation of new theories, as well as those seeking to reinvent themselves as a better way of solving the crisis.

The 'Four Waves of Leadership Theory' Classification.

A useful way to perceive the development of leadership theories, using Kuhn's paradigm change concept, is to see them as four distinct 'waves' of complexity, breadth and depth of analysis. Consequently, for extra clarity, I have integrated existing leadership theories into a new classification, the Four Waves of Leadership, and extended it by adding 'Wave 4, Leadership Reinvention Theories', to show new, emerging theories. Figure 2.2 shows this classification. It is not meant to be comprehensive but rather an illustrative list, showing gradual growth in complexity of content, and conceptualisation.

To start, I grouped the main theories underneath their overall core question and world view, seeing how the theories, or waves, co-exist and travel together, with their particular built-in cognitive constraints. Each paradigm has underlying questions or areas of ambiguity that it is intended by its supporters to solve, and that underly each step of its development and dominate its focus. Each have basic assumptions about the world, a set of rules, its own language or 'jargon', and its boundaries.

Table 2.1 below shows this underpinning process:

Paradigm Core Question	Paradigm Assumptions Underpinning the Theories. Leadership must be:
Wave 1: What is a leader like?	*In control, Not shared, top down, hereditary, male, powerful.*
Wave 2: What does a leader do?	*In control, top down, mechanistic, manipulative, powerful."*
Wave 3: How is leadership socially constructed?	*Constructed, flexible, products of society, interpretive, dynamic, diverse, influenced, male/female.*
Wave 4: How can we reinvent leadership?	*Shared, creative, unexpected, experimental, gender/age/race neutral.*

TABLE 2.1 PARADIGM CORE QUESTIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

I then considered how these underpinning theories might relate to each other, constructing the Four Waves of Leadership classification diagram to provide simplicity and insight. I created four main sections to make the classification straightforward and understandable, inserting practitioner and academic commentary about their value and relevance. I changed the Van Seters and Field's (1990) classification, added subsequent theories to each wave, and inserting a new section and new theories. Figure 2.2 shows how I linked the underpinning questions, within a thematic descriptor (e.g. theories to do with leadership behaviour), to the specific theories, showing a recent development in complexity and creativity in theory development:

WAVE 1:	WAVE 2:	WAVE 3:	WAVE 4:
Leadership Characteristics	**Leadership Behaviour**	**Leadership Construction**	**Leadership Re-invention**
What is a leader LIKE?	*What does a leader DO?*	*How is Leadership SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED by and between people?*	*How should/could leadership be RE-INVENTED in new ways to meet 21st Century needs?*
• Great Man Theory • The Trait Theory • Leadership Competencies • Charismatic Leadership. • Authentic Leadership • Servant Leadership	• Theory X and Y • Situational Leadership • Path-Goal Theory • LPC Contingency • Vertical Dyad • LMX Theory • Transformational Leadership • Learning Organisation • E.I. Leadership	• Sensemaking • Social Identity Theory • Followership • Implicit Leadership. Theory • Psychoanalytic Theory	• Evolutionary Leadership • Interdisciplinary • Leadership • Parental influence /Attachment Theory • Quantum Leadership • Creative Scenarios • Socio-Biological • Leadership Imagination

FIGURE 2.2 THE FOUR WAVES OF LEADERSHIP THEORY CLASSIFICATION

The new Four Waves 'paradigm' classification helps leadership developers to support leaders in four ways:

1. By showing the development of leadership theory as a series of paradigm shift, it helps track which theories have survived and metamorphosed, where specific paradigms are positioned now, and whether they are rising or falling;

2. It helps to see the two ways of developing theory, intra-paradigm and inter-paradigm, and what leadership skills and actions are necessary to boost the way that the paradigm is improved;

3. It provides a discussion point for leadership scholars and practitioners to consider where theories are currently, in terms of the paradigm, and develop shared viewpoints about what leadership response is needed most now; and

4. The clarity of the wave diagram makes it easier to perceive any gaps and omissions in the waves of theory.

The Relevance of the Four Waves of Leadership Classification to my Research Aims

In terms of the aims and objectives of this research, by understanding leadership theory better, it will be easier to see how fantasy literature can be used to support leaders, what theories are missing, what theories might have relevance to the approach needed. Most of all, the Four Waves of Leadership classification can help leadership developers to understand that the boosting of imagination and creativity is consistent with the latest directions in leadership thinking and paradigm development. This then helps leadership developers consider my radical new process that uses fantasy literature (and Tolkien, specifically) to support their creation of leadership development solutions. By seeing how the latest leadership theory has a growing focus on new and alternative theories that promote greater imagination and interpersonal emotional intelligence, leadership developers may accept, use and grow the approach, theories and tools within this research.

I now describe each of the 'waves' below, what has been included, and why.

WAVE 1: LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS - WHAT IS A SUCCESSFUL LEADER LIKE?

Wave 1 contains Leadership Competencies, Charismatic Leadership, Authentic Leadership and Servant Leadership as developments of the Great Man and Trait Theories. The Leadership Competencies Theories of the 1990's may be seen as a comprehensive development of trait theory. Bolden, Gosling, Marturano and Dennison (2003) concluded that Competency Frameworks create a 'particularly individualistic notion of leadership and a relatively prescribed approach to leadership development' which will not allow for 'a more collective and emergent view of leadership and leadership development and of sharing the role of 'leader' more widely within organisations' (p. 2).

Charismatic leadership theories are included in this wave: individual leaders with a 'divine gift' of 'special characteristics and abilities', who 'inspired feeling of awe amongst their followers, and of a reverential belief that the charismatic leaders were special and far above the common leader' (Humphrey, 2014, p. 346). Seen as prophetic and inspirational, charismatic leaders are often linked with spiritual practice (Schedlitzki and Edwards, 2018). Streyer (1998) listed four types of charismatic leadership, depending on leadership context: paternalistic, heroic, missionary and majestic. Later developments of the theory contained trainable actions to help leaders become 'more charismatic'; others argued that charisma is largely a social construction (Gemmill and Oakley, 1992). However, the essence of charismatic leadership seems foremost to do with the characteristics and nature of the individual leader.

Authentic Leadership is also included: another trait-derived theory that ascribes leadership success to the characteristics of ethical behaviour and sincere, truthful communication (Avolio and Gardner, 2005), focusing on leaders' traits of authenticity, ethics and openness. This theory has its origins in Positive Psychology (Humphrey, 2014, p. 262), and is defined by Avolio et al

(2004, p. 802) as individuals who understand themselves, their ethical framework, core values and beliefs; acting, reflecting and communicating, transparently and always in accordance with their stated beliefs. Although much work was done on developing the values and ethical behaviour of leaders in the 1980's and 1990's (Secretan, 1997; Terry, 1993; Hall, Tonna and Ledig, 1986), this concept is widely used and promoted as unique. Luthan and Youssef (2009) argue that an authentic leader demonstrates. 'Psychological Capital' (or 'Psycap') skills of self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience, although leaders must use critical reflection to review their self-concepts during 'trigger events'.

Authenticity is projected by a self-narrative style, with the leader explaining and clarifying goals, values and insights to foster trust and deep understanding. Shamir and Eilam (2005) believe authentic leaders to be self-aware leaders who reveal their inner selves to others, ensuring their espoused visions and values match their behaviour. Leaders should be 'of high moral character', with 'advanced cognitive, emotional and moral development' and inherent ethical responsibilities (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing and Petersen, 2008).

There are many criticisms of this theory. Northouse (2013) argues that no solid research base exists; definitions and linkages are woolly, and not fully explained or explored; the 'psycap' positive psychology aspects of the theory are difficult to justify, measure or define; and no evidence exists that this theory creates effective leaders. Its simplistic literature offers few actionable plans for developing leaders, mostly just to 'do what is right' (George, 2003). Gardiner (2011) argues that it fails to include power and gender imbalances, cultural and institutional biases, and the 'social and historical circumstances' that impact leadership performance, arguing that 'authenticity shows up differently, depending on your place in the world' (p.103). The myth of leader rationality is at its heart: that leaders can voluntarily choose and act to change. De Vries argues that it is not easy for leaders to change, even if desired, and

that it is simplistic to think that it is (De Vries, 2003). The unconscious actions of leaders may shape organisations as much as their conscious ones do; leaders do not always know themselves; nor be able to manage their own behaviour (De Vries, 2003).

Ladkin and Spiller (2013) write that the 'ethically flawless' and saintly authentic leadership ideal resembles Jesus or Buddha, suggesting that this 'leader-centrism' may create unhelpful 'employee dependencies' and marginalised, unconfident employees. Costas and Taheri (2012) question whether it spells the return of the 'phantasmagorical Freudian primal father figure, with similar concerns about employee impact. Storberg, Walker and Gardiner (2017) suggest that authentic leadership does not incorporate the 'complex, societal issues' that affect leaders and followers, failing to consider the importance of diversity and 'otherness' (p, 359.) After a fallow period, authentic leadership is again popular with today's leadership scholars, but there are still many critics.

The Servant Leadership movement has been inserted into this section, being a more recent version of the 1970's theory, regaining popularity again in this century (Russell and Stone, 2002). Developed by Greenleaf (1977), the Servant Leadership movement believed that leaders should 'serve', support, develop and make sacrifices for their followers, thus inverting traditional structures of hierarchy and dominance, so the followers can become the best they can be, growing and maturing as self-leaders. This theory also has a religious flavour: the description of the perfectly self-controlled, self-perceptive and wise leader seems unrealistic – it does not incorporate the frustrations and stresses of real leadership roles. Not supported by empirical research, and with little practical guidance for leaders, it is still seen as needing extensive development and research (Stone, Russell and Patterson, 2004).

WAVE 2: LEADER BEHAVIOUR- WHAT DOES A SUCCESSFUL LEADER DO?

I have included the theories from the Influence, Behavioural, Situational and Contingency eras of Van Seters and Field's (1990) framework, focusing on the actions of leaders, including theories about power and culture. Emotionally Intelligent Leadership has been added to theories in Wave 2, as a theory concerned with what leaders DO.

Emotionally intelligent Leadership was popularised by Goleman's book, *E.I: Why Emotional Intelligence Can Matter More than IQ* (1990), although various writers had discussed the concept earlier. It is included in the Second Wave because the theory is about what leaders do, how they behave. They must develop advanced skills in understanding and managing their own emotions and those of others, thus redressing the traditional imbalance of intellect over emotion. Used frequently on leadership programmes, with 360 degree instruments showing feedback on emotional intelligence capabilities, it has wide appeal as a way of boosting goal-setting, interpersonal skills and self-management. It also provides a sharp spur for senior leaders to change unhelpful behaviours with their followers and colleagues.

WAVE 3: LEADERSHIP CONSTRUCTION - HOW IS LEADERSHIP SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED?

This section includes theories in the Transactional, Anti-leadership, Culture Era and Transformational eras because these are about how leaders and followers jointly construct leadership and followership expectations, behaviours and successes. The twenty-first century saw an energetic 'third wave' transition from a male-dominated, individualistic, largely Western, elitist image of the leader, towards a relationship based, more feminine, process-focused, situational and social constructionist interpretation of leadership (Schedlitzki & Edwards, 2018, p.348). Leadership became seen as a socially constructed product of expectations, beliefs, worldviews, past experiences and language. This post-positivist approach held that leadership is subjectively invented, produced by social interaction, different in each

situation, with each group of followers and stakeholders. This new research stance generated new vigour, encouraging the emerging research theories of Sensemaking; Implicit Leadership Theories, Social Identity Theory; Followership Theory; Psychodynamic Theory; and Parental/Attachment Theory, to mention just a few. I will include these theories in this section.

The sensemaker role (Weick, 1993) requires the leader to make sense of the environment and communicate it to others, whereas to Osborn, Hunt and Jauch (2002), leaders must provide sense-making for their followers, to create the vision and manage the change process:

> 'We should consider the theories and models that describe and explain theory and research about leadership as a succession of stories and well-crafted constructions' (Weick, 1995, p.529) because 'how leadership is explained and understood depends largely on one's theoretical stance and opinion' (Bolden, 2004, p.4).

Implicit Leadership Theory, initially developed by Eden and Leviatan (1975), is the set of images that each person holds about leadership and followership, their influences, perceptions, judgments, expectations, attitudes and responses. These powerful 'mental models' contain perceptions of good or bad leadership, in different contexts and situations. Implicit leadership theories determine whether people choose to take on a leadership role, how they will perform it, and how they think they should behave. Offermann et al (1994) identify eight dimensions that make up implicit leadership expectations: sensitivity, charisma, attractiveness, intelligence, strength, dedication, tyranny and masculinity. Epitropaki and Martin (2004) identified six: sensitivity, dedication, intelligence, dynamism, tyranny and masculinity. Research has since found that the elements that make up implicit leadership theories vary with culture, gender, and individual personality: these components are now considered to be 'highly contextual' and highly individual. (Alabdulhadi, Schyns & Staudigl, 2017). Parental role-models establish early expectations about leaders and 'parental models of leadership may play a pivotal role in shaping implicit leadership theories' (Keller, 1999, p.590).

Social Identity Theory and identity theory are similar theories, and two perspectives, concerned with the social construction of the self:

> 'Both address the social nature of self as constituted by society, and eschew perspectives that treat self as independent of and prior to society. Both regards the self as differentiated into multiple identities that reside in circumscribed practices (e.g. norms, roles)' (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995, p. 255).

Hogg (2001) explains that leadership is a group process which is socially constructed by all players; whereas Barreto and Hogg (2017) researched whether group prototypical leaders are more favourably evaluated than less prototypical leaders, Reicher, Haslam and Hopkins (2005) consider that leadership is a mechanism in which leaders and followers partner up to create a shared identity, while leaders work with identities to make their leadership viable. This theory seems to be a rebalancing of followership, restoring it to its rightful place. Much research is taking place, which combines social identity theory with the earlier LMX exchange theory, and even with the old dyadic theory research. It is an expanding field.

Followership has had neither passionate adherents nor research output in the past century. This is because the strong leader-centric tradition in leadership theory has 'elbowed it out' - but 'it is now widely accepted that leadership cannot be fully understood without considering the role of followers' (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe and Carsten, 2014, p.89). Early writers on followership were Kelley (1992) and Chaleff (1995). Followership theories were ignored for a while, but recently, a renewed interest in followership has developed. This is now a growing field, with more Followership research finally underway.

Psychoanalytic Theory has its roots in Freud, with the study of leaders being based on psychoanalytic principles, focusing on the leader's role in the fantasies and emotions of leaders

and followers. Rybnikova (2016) argues it challenges and highlights human rationality as well as 'the unconscious processes framing organisations'. It emphasises childhood influences and that of the unconscious (p.114), and there are numerous schools within this category. There is a strong link with attachment theory.

WAVE 4: THE REINVENTION OF LEADERSHIP.

This wave is concerned with identifying growing or emerging theories, the paradigms at early stages of development, or not even recognised yet. Some of these theories have been 'rediscovered', re-shaped from their inception years ago and seem familiar; others seem odd and new. Wave 4 is a scanning, exploratory stage, searching for the abundant energy evident in 'the new surf'. Six examples could be:

I) *EVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP*

Van Vugt and Ahuja (2011) maintain that leadership and followership behaviour was evolved in our earliest times, constructing Evolutionary Leadership Theory (ELT). to explain how humans. 'evolved to help our ancestors solve problems of social coordination that group living presented' (p. 21). The 'savannah hypothesis' holds that humans developed psychologically useful, meritocratic, democratic and egalitarian behaviours over thousands of years, because of our innate, highly developed learning abilities, in order to survive their particular environmental conditions. Van Vugt and Ahuja maintain that the natural learned response to cooperative endeavour has been damaged by greed, despotism and excessive power behaviours, and needs to be reinstated. Kenney (2012) argues that although the intellectual basis of their theory is not fully developed, 'their analysis and interpretations are highly innovative, skilfully argued, and they raise a host of important questions' (p.89).

More recently, Van Vugt and Rueden (2020), in a special evolutionary issue of *The Leadership Quarterly*, show how far the theory has come in general acceptability. Interdisciplinary contributions are now made from a diversity of backgrounds, from biologists, geneticists, anthropologists, psychologists, neuroscientists and management scholars, 'from genes to

culture' (p.4). Evolutionary theory is a new leadership paradigm that has a long way to go yet in the years ahead.

II) INTERDISCIPLINARY LEADERSHIP

Evolutionary leadership theory is a good example of interdisciplinary leadership theory. Owen argues that:

> 'it is no longer sufficient for leaders to develop cognitive complexity in only one or two disciplines…leaders must be capable of multimodal thinking and be educated in interdisciplinary, integrative, and intentional ways' (2015, p. 49).

Owen suggests that Twenty-First Century leadership requires a multidisciplinary approach for problems that are so complex they could not be solved by one discipline only. As a way to overcome the fragmented, silo-based thinking processes from separate disciplines that restricts thinking and possibilities, interdisciplinary learning and collaboration is essential now. Leadership development must be done across these divides, which represent deep learning.

III) ATTACHMENT-BASED LEADERSHIP THEORY

Attachment Theory, a concept initiated by Bowlby (1969), asserts that the presence, absence or quality of relationship of a primary caregiver in a child's formative years may influence their internal working model of life. This then influences their actions as leaders (or followers) in later life (Keller, 2003, p.155). Developed in the 1940's, Bowlby's work was initially controversial, but it has been regaining ground recently. Writers have been increasingly applying it to leadership theory, with some asserting that integrating it could benefit and strengthen leadership theory overall (Bresnahan and Mitoff, 2007).

IV) QUANTUM LEADERSHIP

Porter-O'Grady and Malloch popularised the quantum leadership concept with their 2005 book, The Quantum Leader. Arguing that leaders must take metaphors from the quantum physics field, seeing the world as a series of complex, adaptive systems, and in a constant state

of change and movement. The leader perceives events through a quantum lens: seeking to remain innovative, creative, fluid, communicative, aware of the intersections in the systems and highly relational. Aware of the total context, maximum flexibility and 'sustainable systems change' (p.7), leaders must be able to cope with the chaos and unpredictability of the future. They comment that it is a

> 'continuous dance between order and chaos, simplicity and complexity, and leadership and systems that guides the unfolding of the future role of the leader' (p.15).

V) CREATIVE SCENARIOS

This is an older concept from futurism studies, in that it seeks to anticipate, forecast and prepare for different scenarios of the future, using a variety of tools such as brainstorming, pattern management, scenario planning, and future search technologies. Varum and Melo (2010) comment on the revival of earlier work on scenario planning, and the importance of setting a research agenda for the future in these imaginative analytical processes for leaders. Chermack (2005) comments on the need for a body of research and theory development.

VI) SOCIO-BIOLOGICAL LEADERSHIP THEORY

Day and Antonakis argue that leadership 'socio-biology' is the new 'hard-science' field of biological and evolutionary research into leadership, a twenty-first century extension of the trait theory concerned with examining and understanding individual differences. They quote initiatives such as behavioural genetics, the effect of hormones on correlates of leadership; neuroscientific perspectives; evolutionary stances; and integrative biological approaches, as pointers to new and exciting research directions (Day and Antonakis, 2012, p.14).

Summary

In this chapter, I sought to understand the development of leadership theory, by analysing and updating Van Seters and Field's (1990) leadership theory framework. I next reconceptualised the growth of leadership theory, using Kuhn's paradigm work to form my Four Waves of Leadership framework, in Figure 2.2. The range of leadership theories were located within the four waves, and I explained why theories were positioned where they were. Finally, I listed some possible emerging theories.

It has become apparent that the field of leadership theory is not in a healthy state, beset by conceptual weaknesses; incomplete research; unproven and ambiguous constructs; and the tackling of only a part of the leadership puzzle rather than the whole (Yukl, 1999).

One large gap was absolutely evident. In a listing of over a century's leadership theories, the use of imagination is rarely, if ever, mentioned. Imagination is seen as something to be done outside the workplace. Reich (2017, p. x) comments that we live in an imagination age, but we aren't using our imagination. There is a gap between what we think about, the kind of impact we try to have, and what we could conceivably achieve. We have an imagination gap. As leaders, we will not achieve to have the kind of social and organisational impact that is possible until we rectify that gap.

It is a conspicuous omission, especially now. At a time when leaders need imagination, the most important research on the subject has been silent. Our imaginative faculties are trailing behind our other mental powers, for, despite becoming increasingly clever: 'our imagination is not advancing at the same pace' (Paradis, 2019, p. 7). This research explores the use of fantasy

literature to stimulate a new leadership framework: through this, I hope that this study will

provide a useful contribution to starting to tackle this omission.

I will now use Chapter 3 to consider and explore the development and uses of fantasy

literature, to consider whether this is the correct 'vehicle' to stimulate leadership imagination,

and to help me to create processes and techniques needed for a productive 'working

framework' of leadership development.

Chapter 3: Review of Fantasy Literature.

This chapter describes the results of a literature search in fantasy literature, aimed at understanding its possible use within a leadership development research initiative. It will describe and define fantasy literature; discuss its functions for human society through a list of ten uses of fantasy literature; and provide some recent examples of fantasy literature applications in the world of leadership and organisations. At the end of the chapter, a view will be taken on whether fantasy literature will be appropriate for this research.

Searches were done on past and current applications of fantasy literature to explore these issues. Key search words used were 'fantasy', 'fantasy literature', 'fantasy literature for the future' and 'using fantasy in leadership'. The most useful and frequently accessed databases were EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, JSTOR, APA PsycInfo, and Researchgate. For Tolkien Studies I also accessed The Tolkien Society website, its magazine, *Amon Hen,* and its journal *Mallorn.* Current and future directions of leadership were explored in established leadership journals, such as *Leadership* and *The Leadership Quarterly*. Prominent books were identified on the future of the workplace and its leaders, as well as postgraduate theses, scholarly books, and conference papers. In addition, commentary from fantasy writers about their craft were identified, by writers like Le Guin and Pullman. Finally, many other disparate journal articles about the practical applications of fantasy literature have been used.

The most useful publishers for this search have been Routledge, MacFarlane, Palgrave and various universities. The most informative journals have been *Futures,* the *Futurist*, the *Journal of Futures Studies,* the *Journal of Business Venturing*. the *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*; *Science Fiction Studies; Leadership;* the *Journal of Leadership Studies;* and the *Journal of Leadership and Management*.

This chapter is structured around four key areas:

1. An investigation into the definitions, nature and scope of fantasy literature;

2. A literature search into the functions and uses for fantasy literature for society and individuals that have been identified and explored by researchers and fantasy writers. I have identified ten key functions for fantasy literature in society from the research literature. These are considered;

3. A literature analysis that explores how applications for fantasy literature have been, and are being, applied specifically to develop leaders and groups; and

4. A literature analysis that explores whether Tolkien and his work, *The Lord of the Rings,* are appropriate and suitable for use in the working example of this thesis.

1. The Definitions, Nature and Scope of Fantasy Literature

Leaders seek to create the future of their organisations (Northgate, 2006, p.x), so the capacity of fantasy literature to reshape the world through mythopoiesis, the recreating of myths, legends and stories to match current needs and situations, should be of great interest to them now in the difficult circumstances they continually face. By helping to understand the factors and forces that shape our world; the human meaning of important technological and social changes; and any their unexpected associated dangers, in time to take action successfully, fantasy literature can provide them immeasurable benefits. Ulrick et al (2014) comment on the strong influence that the fantasy fictional culture has on widespread perceptions of leadership, arguing that fantasy literature has the most to offer leaders, in its development of alternative perspectives of society, and its wild, previously unimagined landscapes.

Fantasy literature has been described as a literary genre that resists exact definition, a 'literature of unreality' that is constantly changing, in accordance with changing notions of

what constitutes 'reality' (Jackson, 1998, p.4). At its heart is this characteristic of ambiguity and instability. It defies any definition other than the broadest, because it is strongly interwoven with the multitude of beliefs and institutions of its contemporary society. However, it has an oblique, almost aggressive, approach to these beliefs and institutions, subverting the comfortable habits of social interaction, assumptions, expectations and beliefs, to reveal what Jackson calls the 'underside' of realism (1998, p.25). This quality of the genre is powerful, as it broadens perceptions and challenges superficial thinking. Jackson writes that the definition of the 'fantastic' derives from the Latin word 'phantasticus', which means to make visible or manifest, adding that:

> 'The fantastic traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent' […] Its introduction of the 'unreal' is set against the category of the 'real' – a category which the fantastic interrogates by its difference' (Jackson, 1998, p. 4).

Fantasy literature has many functions, with subversion of its social context high on the list (Jackson, 1998, p.3), for 'a characteristic most frequently associated with literary fantasy has been its obdurate refusal of prevailing definitions of the 'real' or 'possible', a refusal amounting at times to violent opposition' (Jackon,1998, p.4). To Jackson, the value of fantasy literature resides in its freedom to be whatever it wishes, its 'shapeshifting' nature, and in its: resistance to definition, in its 'free-floating' and escapist qualities [is] 'free' from many of the conventions and restraints of more realistic texts' (Jackson, 1998, p. 1).

Fantasy literature may overlap with many other genres, such as novels of the American Renaissance and the writers of Poe, Hawthorne and Melville. Other forms of literature can and do possess these qualities of escapism, and freedom from 'the conventions of the more realistic texts'. |Fantasy literature, and its sister, science fiction, is a broad church, and many a bottle of red wine may be sacrificed to facilitating arguments about which novels fit which genre!

Many novels outside the fantasy canon also can provide an excellent source of human insight and learning, and countless examples of fiction draw upon mythical motifs and themes, regardless on their genre or ultimate focus. It is notable that my MA in literature, exploring these issues, was based on Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* - not generally seen as a fantasy novel.

To Robinson, the value of great novels, regardless of genre, is about its emotional education. She argues that 'novels are often thought to provide more profound knowledge of human nature and morality', commenting that the most important thing that great novels can teach us is about emotional learning (2005, p. 154). She writes:

> 'What we learn is not theoretical knowledge, but practical: experiencing literature can help us become more perceptive and astute in our understanding of human motivation, human frailty, and human achievement' (page 155).

Robinson holds that 'the process of reflection succeeds and depends upon the process of emotional involvement' (p.156) with the characters, the plot, etc, because:

> 'a good novel encourages us to cognitively monitor or reflect back upon the whole emotion process, including affective appraisals, physiological responses, action tendencies, points of view, and foci of attention' (p.156).

Fantasy narrative, particularly the fairy story, has been seen by writers as a form of emotional learning and a way of developing emotional regulation, creating strong 'emotionally charged situations' that support emotional reflection and learning (Fleer and Hammer, 2013, p.242).

However, it is the characteristic that fantasy literature is most known for, its wide structural flexibility, that perhaps offers the reader the most potential in application and insight. This is also the reason why fantasy literature has been chosen to spearhead this research at this time. Because of this wide structural flexibility, fantasy covers the broadest spread of themes, settings and plots, sourcing many of its timeless themes from history, unconscious archetypes and beliefs, fairy tales, beast fables, mythology, religious parables, popular ballads, and folk

legends. Attebury describes the range of fantasy writing as from 'tiny picture books or sprawling epics, formulaic adventures or intricate metafictions' (Attebury, 2014, p. 1). Fimi writes that 'while science fiction worlds are more about speculation and 'thought' experiments', fantasy worlds tend to focus on enchantment and the revival of mythical motifs (Fimi, 2017, p. 2).

Fantasy writing is not science fiction, although they both fall within the term 'speculative fiction', which contains many linked sub-genres (Martin, 2009, p.40). They are often conflated together, yet their scope and emphasis are different. Science fiction is generally predicated on a scientific background, even if it is not yet invented (and might never be). The stories and situations within the science fiction genre *could* conceivably come to pass, whereas fantasy is unlikely ever to come to pass, with features like magic, dragons, talking animals and walking trees transgressing the known laws and experience of the natural world.

Science fiction has become science fact in many productive inventions, and generally conforms to the known (or predicted) laws of physics. Fantasy, 'the presence of the impossible and the unexplainable' does not have any such restrictions, while science fiction 'may deal with the impossible, [it] regards everything as explicable' (Mendlesohn and James 2012, p.3). Both major form of speculative fiction greatly enlarge 'the boundaries of the imagination' (Martin, 2009, p. 4); but while science fiction 'pushes science to its limit', fantasy is focused on belief: 'fantasy, wonder and wishes overcome knowledge and explanation. Belief rules over science, because 'Fantasy celebrates the nonrational' (Martin, 2009, p.5).

However, while there can be considerable overlap in these themes and treatment, the two genres also portray their imagined worlds quite differently. Mendlesohn (2008) comments that 'Genre markers… are useful analytical tools but they are constructions imposed on a literary landscape. The same landscape may be susceptible to quite different cartography' (p.xxv).

Mieville writes that 'the initial insertion of the 'fantastic moment' where the impossible is possible, is the starting point of radical alienation from actuality…that both 'sf' and 'fantasy' share (2008, p. 64, quoted in Baker, 2012, p. 444). The difference between the two, according to Kroeber (1988), is that while science fiction extrapolates from the real, using scientific discourse, the fantasy genre turns inward, as: 'a form of literary self-reflexivity', which is 'deliberately and self-consciously creating a reality it understands to be impossible' (p. 9).

Attebury sees fantasy as 'mythopoiesis', or 'modern myth-making', a literary genre which recreates and makes myth anew, to recontextualise and apply myths for modern times to remind us 'of their social and political power' (Attebury, 2014, p.4). It is through its mythopoiesis, its myth making ability, that fantasy literature is able 'to establish the fundamental orders of nature and society' (p.35). Because it is 'inescapably metaphoric' and 'metonymic' in portraying and describing representative characters, rather than real ones, it can be 'an iconic stand-in for everyday life, rather than an extension from it' (Attebury, 2014, p.21).

The impact of fantasy novels has been seen as a result of the co-construction of reaction between the writer and the reader. It is a 'fiction of consensual construction of belief' that produces the shared sense of wonder, created partly by genre expectations and the specific familiar forms of writing fantasy (Mendlesohn, 2008, p.xiii). Quoting Attebury's statement that fantasy writers create 'frames' to separate the real world from the fantasy world, Mendlesohn suggests four separate categories of the fantastic that separate the real and fantasy worlds, purely based on how the fantastic 'enters the text' (Mendlesohn, 2008, p. 268). These categories include the portal-quest (the reader enters the fantastic through a gateway or portal); the intrusive (the fantastic enters into a fictional world, as 'bringer of chaos'); the immersive (the reader is within a sealed fantasy world totally, accepting its unquestioned and unexplained

assumptions); and the liminal (the reader experiences dissonance in that fictional characters question that events within the story are fantastic, creating a range of possible readings, creating a 'liminal space … between world and world' (Mendlesohn, 2008, pp. 183-189).

To bring structure to the vague, hotly contested definitions of fantasy, Attebury applied a concept of 'fuzzy sets' to the various fantasy categories: 'defined not by a clear boundary or any defining characteristics but by resemblance to a single core example of group of examples' (Attebury, 2014, 33). In this way, fantasy can inhabit a 'set' within a genre, and still overlap with other 'sets', or be mostly like the 'set', but not completely representative of it. This definition allows for flexibility in the writing and characterisation of fantasy, as well as to create new categories and genres that fit a novel, or group of fantasy novels, better than older ones. It provides a flexible way of defining fantasy literature more clearly and unambiguously (Attebury, 2014, p. 33). It is this very ambiguity of categorising the genre and the inability to constrain its range, imagination or reach that makes fantasy literature an ideal vehicle for twenty-first century leadership development.

2. The Functions and Uses of Fantasy Literature

In this chapter, I broadly examine the way that fantasy literature has benefitted society from its earliest beginnings. From an extensive search of the fantasy literature, I structured a 10-point framework on its diverse uses for humanity, to organise and make sense of its possibilities for this research, and then used the framework as a way to structure the exploration of this highly ambiguous genre. By studying the commentary of academics, researchers, authors, and writers, I can consider the wider applications, and practical interdisciplinary implications, related to this study.

Coleridge's 1817 essay, *Biographica Literaria*, is often accepted as the start of the fantasy movement - his reaction to the dominance of reason and the intellect during the Enlightenment, gave a new importance to the literary and creative fields of imagination, feeling, sensation and perception. Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats actively supported and strengthened Coleridge's efforts. Wolfe, however, points out that the origin of fantasy was actually a creation of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, arguing that 'the whole node of fantasy as a mode of poetic creation… had been going on for more than a century prior to Coleridge's essay' (Wolfe 2012, p.7, cited in James & Mendlesohn, 2012). Similarly, Jackson considers the correct starting point for the study of fantasy should be the late eighteenth century, with its tensions about industrialisation, social dislocation and the advent of technology (Jackson, 1998, p.4). However, if the widest range of fantasy such as myth, legends, fairy stories, religious stories, and ancient morality tales are included in the fantasy genre, then it is possible to look much farther back, to the 6th Century *Gilgamesh*, perhaps the first literary tale in the world (Martin, 2009, p.3). Oral traditions had developed earlier, with people sitting around the fire in the dark of the night to share fascinating tales.

Storytelling had a practical function for our early ancestors: 'the historical evolution of storytelling reflects struggles of human beings worldwide to adapt to their changing natural and social environments' (Zipes, 2013, p. xi). Zipes considers storytelling to be linked to 'evolution, adaptation, innovation, and transformation' before the advent of nation-states, when humans developed the capacity to speak and remember the 'oral wonder tales' from 'pagan times to the present' (Zipes, 2013, p.xii - xiv). A predisposition towards fantasy may have been hardwired into the human brain early in its development, as an evolutionary advantage for species survival, particularly in social situations where individuals need to assess other humans' motivations and desires for their own security (Boyd, 2009).

Since *Gilgamesh*, tales like *Beowulf,* folk tales, fairy stories, beast fables, travel satires, The Canterbury Tales, the Welsh Mabinogion stories, the northern Mystery Plays of the Middle Ages, Arthurian legends, Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, and many others across the centuries have demonstrated the importance of fantastic imaginings, and what they can teach and show us. Much of their power and impact derived from the skills that mixed realism with non-realism in their important task of 'world-building'.

World-building is the creation of extensive, detailed and consistent, usually populated, landscapes that form a stage for the protagonists to indulge in gripping adventures. The worlds that writers create tantalise and play with the imagination. Wolf writes that imagination is strongly stimulated by world-building that can 'extend beyond the stories that occur in them, inviting speculation and exploration through speculative means. There are realms of possibility, a mix of familiar and unfamiliar, permutations of wish, dread and dream, and other kinds of existence that make us more aware of the circumstances and conditions of the actual world we inhabit' (Wolf, 2012, p.17).

World-building de-emphasises the usual narratives and stereotypes, to focus on the nature of environment, populating and describing a strange landscape, habits, languages, physical features, behaviours, political and social systems. Kennedy writes that: 'Forget about beginnings, middles and ends. The new story-telling is about making your way in a fragmented, imaginary world' (Kennedy, 2003, quoted in Wolf, 2012, p. 13).

Fantasy literature can warn of impending dangers, like political tyranny, scientific experimentation, and the ethics of scientific 'progress', as in Orwell's *1984* (1949)*,* Huxley's *Brave New World.* (1932)*,* and Well's *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896). Garth comments on the capacity of fantasy to exaggerate certain aspects of reality to consider their full

implications: 'Realism' has a knee-jerk tendency to avoid extremes as implausible, but 'fantasy' actively embraces them, magnifying and clarifying the human condition. It can even keep pace with 'the calamitous imaginings of would-be dictators' (Garth, 2004, p. 223).

Fantasy literature allows people to access their imagination and creativity, stimulating alternative visions of worlds that they can visualise and build: 'In particular, the genre of fantasy literature can expand our imagination and understanding of reality by building 'secondary' worlds of unexpected possibilities and alternative futures, to illuminate 'how we conceptualise, understand and imagine the 'Primary World' (Wolf, 2012, 286).

Leaders seek to create the future of their organisations (Northgate, 2006, p.x) and the boost in creativity and imagination from fantasy literature could be immeasurably useful to them. For leaders, the essential skills developed by world-building include scenario planning, (anticipating and speculating about the future) and creating a compelling vision for their people.

I have devised a grouping of the most frequently mentioned areas of fantasy, in terms of value to human society, to consider how these functions have contributed to, and benefitted, 'species survival', described some recent uses of fantasy, and explored how these might be utilised effectively by leaders in the future.

3. Ten Main Uses of Fantasy Literature, from the Literature Search.

Of all fiction genres, fantasy literature seems to be the most fertile in terms of imagination and potential application to people and society. From this study of fantasy literature research, ten main uses of fantasy literature for human society have been identified. Figure 3.1 shows these uses, listing key commentators who contributed to my thinking about these categories.

Main Uses of Fantasy Literature	**Contributors to Framework Groupings:**
1. To Explore and Understand the. External World	Zipes (2009); Keyes (2004); Shippey (2001); Stevenson (2010; Holland (2009); Boyd (2009); O'Sullivan (2010); Henthorne (2010); Simmons (2012).
2. To Create Cognitive and emotional action rehearsal through thought-experiments	Attebury (2014); Zipes (2009); Tooby & Cosmides (2001), Holland (2009); Fimi (2017); Jackson (1998); Clayton (2007); Reinsborough (2017)
3. To Challenge and Subvert the Primary World	Jackson (1998); Attebury (2014), Zikes (2009); Pilinovsky (2004); Bettelheim (1991); Bhelkar (2009); Hindle (2003); Croft (2015); Clute (2002); Shippey (2000).
4. To explore and understand the inner world; and to heal inner wounds	Jackson (1998); Hindle (2003); Bettelheim (1991); Botling (2014); Anolik & Howard (2004); Tropp (1999); Perry ( ).
5. To give a voice to the 'other', to express fears and surface the repressed	Stevenson (2015); Filmer (1996); Martin (2013); Tolkien (1939); Croft (2015); Clute (2002); Bettelhein (1991); Tropp (1999); Hindle (2003); Anolik and Howard (2004)
6. To create hope, meaning, purpose and vision	Attebury (2014); Le Guin (1979); Boyd (2009); Wolf (2012); Fimi (2017); Kennedy (2003); Baker (2012); Rochelle (1977); Filmer (1996); Keys (2006)
7. To recover from reality, escape and be consoled	Tolkien (2008/1939)
8. To teach essential survival skills, incl. facts, knowledge, reflection & learning	Huber (2014); Harris (2002)
9. To teach morality, friendship and social cooperation	Tatar (2010) Keane; Graham and Burns (2014).
10. To teach change and transformation skills	Keane, Graham and Burnes (2014); Johnson (2011).

I now define and expand the ten uses of fantasy literature that seem apparent from the literature search:

1. To Explore and Understand the External World

It is ironic that it is through 'untrue' fantasy literature and myths, which C.S. Lewis described as 'lies breathed through silver' (Carpenter, 2016, p.197), that 'true' insights and perceptions about the external world in all its realism and detail, can be generated. Zipes explains that:

> 'It is through fantasy that we have always sought to make sense of the world, not through reason. Reason matters, but fantasy matters more…it is through the fictive projections of our imaginations based on personal experience that we have sought to grasp, explain and comment on reality' (Zipes, 2009, p.78).

'Fantasy is not about escaping reality, but about describing reality', writes Samuel Keyes (2004). Similarly, Shippey comments that fantasy literature has become 'the dominant literary mode of the twentieth century' (p.vii), because in many cases fantasy deals with important themes, such as:

> 'the origin and nature of evil', and power, war, and morality, providing 'a deeply serious response to what will be seen in the end as the major issues of this century' (Shippey, 2001, p. ix).

Stevenson explains that many twentieth century fantasy writers dealt with World War 1 within their pages, concluding that these fantasy works were serious and sophisticated articulations of an alternative response to the horrific issues of their time (Stevenson, writing in Croft, 2010):

'the fantasy of the first half of the twentieth century is in fact a complex, multifaceted response both to the war itself and to the cultural landscape of the post-war world' (Stevenson, 2010).

In this way, fantasy may be seen as a mirror to reveal 'truths' and insights about the world, the human condition, death, betrayal, and greed. This represents a plumbing of the depths of the dark side of humanity, the evil, the 'other', and our fears and anxieties, seeking continuously to understand the minds of others. Holland argued that fantasy literature allows us to 'meta-represent the views of others …to theorise about other minds', which 'confers big advantages in survival and reproduction' (Holland, 2009, p. 327). This theory of mind also confers an advantage for leaders in negotiation, conflict resolution and collaboration.

Fantasy can indirectly stimulate the reader's thoughts with fictional examples of leadership behaviours to avoid; or show through the story how too much power might corrupt leaders. Fantasy literature can be a highly effective and useful way of illuminating unhelpful or tyrannical political systems, to illustrate the nature of political intentions and behaviour, such as Orwell's 1948 novel '*1984*', Bradbury's 'Fahrenheit 451' (1953) or Huxley's 'Brave New World' (1931). Pullman's '*His Dark Materials*' trilogy shows the terrifying power and action of a religious elite, who are experimenting with cutting away children's daemons, their external souls that accompany them throughout life, in order to make social populations docile and manageable. There are clear parallels to societies that have too rigid political systems, systems which foster rebellion and challenge of the ruling classes. O'Sullivan (2010) argues that *His Dark Materials* is written 'in the tradition of republican revolution' and that the work that seriously challenges the misuse of religious and state authority 'makes the case for the revolutionary potential of literature' (O'Sullivan, 2010, p. 1).

Similarly, Collins, in *The Hunger Games* novels (2008-2010) shows us the dark nature of political dictatorship through President Snow, the narcissistic, all-powerful villain of the story. His devious scheming authority is overthrown and replaced by a female general leading the rebels, who is shown to be every bit as bad as Snow. When Katniss realises this, and consequently kills her at the rebels' victory celebration, she is teaching readers not to trust politicians with great power, as power attracts bad leaders, with no ethical foundations or genuine concern for the people.

It is a lesson in political realism, as well as the complexity of power, politics, choosing and fighting for a cause. Its realism lies in its accurate portrayal of the emotions around the need to look deeper, to reflect and consider what has been seen, to show the world up for what it really is, and announce when it should be changed.

Katniss, at the end of the series, like Frodo in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (1954-1955), is a spent force, damaged and scarred by the events of her life, but clear-sighted now about the complex nature of her world and what goes on under the surface:

> 'One of this book's underlying assumptions is that messiness is a good thing, at least when it comes to fiction, since it reflects the way life really is. If Katniss's story were easy to follow, if the novel were easy to classify, if Collins's themes were easy to discern, then The Hunger Games would tell us little of the world we live in or how we might go about changing it' (Henthorne, 2010, p.7).

All too often, a hero is seen emerging from life and death battles unscarred and undamaged, so the chance for leaders to consider the personal cost of leadership conflict and courage is invaluable. Simmons comments that Collins' trilogy helps 'students [to] understand that violence and brutality towards children is not fiction, but very real, and that they can help play a role in its abolishment, just like Katniss, through social action projects (Simmons, 2012, p.12).

Fantasy here is being used for social politicisation, to help school students understand the nature of the world around them, and to fear the rise of tyranny.

Another powerful, political imagining and interpretation of a dystopia - one that provided the world with a stark warning about what is possible in a ruthless regime -. was George Orwell's 1949 novel, *'1984':* a grim fantasy that provided such a frighteningly dystopian vision of the future that its terms have become part of everyday speech as things to avoid, such as double speech, Big Brother, doubletalk, and newspeak. It has become a powerful warning about political totalitarianism in the popular consciousness – something to be guarded against. Orwell, who had seen fascism while fighting in the Spanish Civil War, wrote 1984 because he was:

> 'convinced that western leaders in the initial stages of the 'cold war' were as corrupted by power as their Russian counterparts, and that the bloodletting of war had not cured the political ills apparent to Orwell in the 1930s' (Thorp, 1984, p.6).

Di Nucci and Storri, remarking on the similarity of 1984 with today's America, wrote of the 'perceptiveness and creativity with which Orwell…anticipated the way in which technology could be effectively used for the manipulation of information (2018, p.3). Orwell's dystopian novel has significantly altered the way that people understand power, strength and authority in human society. Much of 1984 has already happened somewhere (or perhaps everywhere) in the globe. Orwell's political and social fantasies appear prophetic and accurate, an example of speculative fiction that is highly relevant for leaders everywhere.

2. To Create Cognitive and Emotional Action-Rehearsal through Thought-Experiments.

Attebury argues that fantasy literature 'proposes a different way of bringing the strange, the magical, [and] the numinous into modern life' (Attebury, 2014, p.3), where 'to study myth in the modern world is to study the fantastic imagination, and vice versa' (Attebury, 2014, p. 8). Fantasy literature gives humans the chance to consider the outcomes of the 'what if' questions, see what

those outcomes might mean for the human race, and play them out to their possible – or impossible – conclusions. It is a vehicle for structured imaginings, imagination put to good use in the cause of a successful future, where subtle aspects of our intended action are untangled and looked at in the cool light of day. It is a surprisingly effective vehicle for this purpose: Zipes comments that 'we speculate with the fantastic. As a module in our brains, it has the capacity to transform plain junk into gold that glitters' (Zipes, 2009, p. 77).

Fantasy has generated useful thought-experiments for societies for many centuries, to prepare them to face real problems more effectively than if they had not anticipated them: 'what if a huge beast comes upon us in the forest?', 'What if the benign ruler is secretly an evil sorcerer who will kill us?'. Tooby and Cosmides (2001) comment on the usefulness of 'the ability to stimulate', which helps humans create imaginary worlds with which we engage emotionally, and can consider the implications of the situation, but without engaging in any action. We can 'decouple' the emotions we feel from the normal responses of everyday reality because we understand they are stories only, not reality. In effect, humans create a 'cognitive firewall', to experiment with solutions to problems without incurring dire repercussions (Tooby & Cosmides, 2001, p.8).

The centrality of imagination in fantasy literature may be the key to the growing popularity of fantasy literature now, in times of drastic change, when imagination is increasingly and urgently required by individuals, leaders, societies and organisations. The mind-expanding capacity of fantasy to display numerous imaginative possibilities is especially important for leadership developers, needing to consider all options, bond with followers and communities, and develop strong relationships of trust and understanding.

Fantasy may provide evolutionary advantage because it allows humans to create and consider alternative realities with their own physical rules and social laws. Fimi (2017), writing about world

building in fantasy, notes that: 'to talk about fantasy worlds is to talk about imaginary space and time, carefully thought-through and crafted'. Once fictional worlds have been imagined, they expand the range of preparatory, tribe-promoting actions, which equip early humans with the cognitive benefits that aid survival, especially in the areas of warfare or intertribal cooperation.

Fantasy literature often does this through archetypal applied literature images, metaphors and symbols – short-cuts to understanding and identifying with the characters in the story, drawing the reader into a shared acceptance of the unstable and topsy-turvy conventions of the genre. Attebury writes that 'Fantasy fiction differs from nonfiction in that its central assertions are untrue' adding that because the fantasy world or story could not exist, it 'acquires the potential (not always realised) to generate powerful symbols' (Attebury, 2014, p.21). Jackson comments that fantasy takes the unexamined assumptions of society and overturns or exaggerates them to the extreme, thus shocking the reader: 'by an overt violation of what is generally accepted as possibility…a violation of dominant assumptions [that] threatens to subvert (overturn, upset, undermine) rules and conventions taken to be normative' (Jackson, 1998, p. 14).

In this way, fantasy writers have often explored the human implications of the latest widely acclaimed scientific developments, controversially warning of unforeseen dangers and threats. H.G. Wells was one of a group of writers who regularly attended the lectures of the great Victorian scientists at The Royal Institution, and then constructed novels about how scientific inventions might impact society. His disturbing and violent novel, *The Island of Dr Moreau,* (1896). deals with the artificial blending of humans and animals in the search for superior organisms, but the results are extreme cruelty leading to terrible pain, both physical and mental; as well as an examination of the human tendency to seek to control nature, for scientists to do as they wished, without moral consideration or responsibility. Clayton writes that the ethical concerns raised by Wells have been raised in the twenty-first century by the new scientific creation of 'interspecies

hybrids, xenotransplants, and chimeras', stating that 'the questions Wells raised about the ethics of creating chimeras have a new relevance today'. In fact, Wells anticipated the two recommendations of the Institute of Medicine guidelines on the ethics of interspecies experiments 123 years before they were needed (Clayton, 2007, p. 570).

Wells stimulated public discussion about evolution, degeneration and vivisection, in an age before 'divergent trajectories' were taken by the disciplines of Science and the Arts. By imagining and portraying the results of horrific inter-species experimentation, Wells 'dramatises the issues at stake and enables the public to identify with the consequences of ethical choice' (Clayton, 2007, p. 572). This scrutiny of one discipline by another is a feature of fantasy literature in great demand, as 'the relationship of disciplinary expertise to public life is in flux again, much as it was in the 1890's', and these thought experiments have never been more necessary (Clayton, 2007, p. 576).

Clayton's point certainly resonates with contemporary research. According to Reinsborough, 'fiction can be a method for engaging with and mapping the influence of possible futures', and the communication between researchers and the public is greatly helped by the input of speculative writers. (Reinsborough, 2017, p.7).

3. To Challenge and Subvert the Primary World

Fantasy literature seems to be the literary genre most focused on disruption. Applying fantasy thinking would require leaders to let go of the old ways and beliefs to transcend what is currently possible, above - and even against - their norms and social contexts. Jackson describes the most common characteristic of fantasy literature as 'its obdurate refusal of prevailing definitions of the 'real' or 'possible', a refusal amounting at times to violent opposition.

Attebury writes that fantasy literature's way of playing with symbols encourages the reader to see meaning as something unstable and elusive, rather than single and self-evident (Attebury, 2014, p.2). This instability can provoke leaders to look anew at their world because it is a:

> 'story based on and controlled by an overt violation of what is generally accepted as possibility…a violation of dominant assumptions [that] threatens to subvert (overturn, upset, undermine) rules and conventions taken to be normative' (Jackson, 1998, p. 14).

Fantasy literature 'proposes a different way of bringing the strange, the magical, [and] the numinous into modern life' (Attebury, 2014, p.3), where 'to study myth in the modern world is to study the fantastic imagination, and vice versa' (Attebury, 2014, p. 8). Fantasy literature reflects the human need to challenge, re-interpret and re-invent, in response to a world where everything is changing, fragmented and confused. Organisations, society, and workplaces must be disassembled and re-invented. So it is useful when the fantastic 'takes the real and breaks it…. [it] re-combines and inverts the real, but it does not escape it: it exists in a parasitical or symbiotic relation to the real' (Jackson, 1998, p.20).

Attebury asserts that 'Fantasy fiction differs from nonfiction in that its central assertions are untrue' adding that because the fantasy world or story could not exist, it 'acquires the potential (not always realised) to generate powerful symbols', being 'one degree more fictional than fiction' (Attebury, 2014, p.21). Fantasy is 'based on and controlled by an overt violation of what is generally accepted as possibility…a violation of dominant assumptions [that] threatens to subvert (overturn, upset, undermine) rules and conventions taken to be normative' (Jackson, 1998, p. 14). In an age where unforeseen developments and radical change occur continuously, 'normative' is hard to define. Zikes comments that imagined fantasy is now outstripped by reality, and 'cannot keep pace with the devastating and disturbing fantastic of real occurrences, or what I call the incredible credibility of the real' (Zikes, 2009, p. 78).

One visible response to the extraordinary changes of twenty-first century may be the growth of subgenres in speculative literature, and the increasing cross-overs or hybridisation between fantasy and science fiction: 'a wholly unpredictable melange of influences and associations' (Pilinovsky, 2004, pp.189-191). These include science fantasy, horror, Gothic fantasy, fairy tales, scientific romance, steam punk, slipstream, ecological fantasy; utopian fiction, dystopian fiction, interstitial arts, the new weird, and the liminal fantastic. Pilinovsky comments that:

> 'We no longer see things, to approach the issue from a binary perspective, in black and white, colonial or post-colonial, or even in terms of fantasy or science fiction – instead we see a multiplicity of perspectives…as the intersections of realism and the fantastic beginning with the Gothic period eventually gave us speculative fiction, now speculative fiction is giving rise to something which is, as yet, undefined' (Pilinovsky, 2004, pp. 178-191).

Dey and Mason (2018) seek to overcome the common limitations of collective imagination in entrepreneurship, through 'disruptive truth-telling' and 'the creation of possible worlds' (p.84). They link disruptive truth-telling with an escape from the 'orthodox social imaginary', or collective imagination. The authors argue for three main actions in their 'activist entrepreneuring': a more creative use of the humanities to extend the boundaries of collective imagination through 'disruptive truth-telling' to generate images of possible alternative worlds; acknowledging the improving of collective imagination as 'a genuine entrepreneurial accomplishment'; and finding ways to 'strengthen the explanatory power of our theorising on disruptive truth-telling' (p. 96). In this way, the limits of imagination are reduced by 'critical speech, infusing entrepreneurship with a real sense of possibilities, opportunities and competitive advantage.

4. To Explore and Understand the Inner world, Healing Inner Wounds

Coles (1989) writes of the importance of connecting with story to heal and transform lives, illuminating the connection to narrative of his own psychiatric practice. It may be that the

particularly unique characteristics of fantasy literature are of special importance to this aim because fantasy writing has the capacity to respond to external events by surfacing the less visible inner thoughts of humans, and their subconscious interactions (Bettelheim, 1991). They may engage the author and reader in a healing process that allows the expression of hurt or anxiety, and the resolution of the pain, through the fictional establishment of order, or the elimination of the threat. Bettelheim writes that fantasy writings stimulate the curative power of myth: 'They communicate on a deep unconscious level, revealing eternal truths that often evade the conscious mind, expressing the anguish of inner conflict in symbolic form' (Bettelheim, 1991, p.24).

Because of its lack of restrictions and boundaries, fantasy literature can expose the sensitive areas of our psyches, our current fears, obsessions, hurts, and the wounds that reflect our times. Each generation's fantasy literature mirrors the concerns of the age, as in the murky fiction of Gothic Fantasy. Nineteenth century gothic fantasy gloried in darkness and horror, but in the end, order and social structures had to prevail:

> 'An enormous appetite existed in the last quarter for crime, ghost and horror stories. These imaged various kinds of social and psychic terror into existence, only to impose upon them closures often invoking radical forms of order – and sometimes the law' (Hindle, 2003, p. xix, in Stoker's Dracula, 2003, 1897).

Fantasy fiction has also been seen as a reaction to the horrors of two world wars and modern industrialised warfare, because fantasy literature is 'among the truest of responses' (Croft, 2015, p.3). The healing power of fantasy was uppermost in its formation, and 'created out of the wound of aftermath of World War 1 by a wide range of writers… who shared little but a need to close the wound. For them, fantasy begins in suture (Clute, 2002, pp. 420-433).

Shippey (2000) notes that many popular fantasy writers of the twentieth century were veterans of combat: Tolkien experienced the Battle of the Somme; C.S.Lewis, the Western Front; Vonnegut, the bombing of Dresden; Orwell, the Spanish Civil War; and Golding had fought in World War II.

Perhaps the fantasy genre provided for these authors the freedom to fully express the deepest nightmares of war, dictatorship, loss, pain, betrayal, and death, in the most vivid, powerful and unforgettable way possible. Tolkien, in particular, expresses 'the most pressing and most immediately relevant issues of the whole monstrous twentieth century – questions of industrial warfare, the origin of evil, [and] the nature of humanity' (Shippey, 2000, p. ix).

Fantasy literature can be cathartic, a way of loosening the pain of the past and the tight bondage of history. For this, Clute (2002) recommends that four actions are necessary. Fantasy literature engages in 'a negotiation with', or critical exploration of, history 'as a sense of wrong', exploring and surfacing injustices and errors. Next, it provides a 'thinning' of the historical story into a 'terrible, impoverishing, senseless affray, rather like trench warfare', so the worst aspects of the story are emphasised and dramatized. Then it provides a positive approach, letting protagonists see and learn from the ashes of past pain, understanding more about themselves, and seeing a 'light at the end of the tunnel'. Finally, the last stage puts everything in perspective, offering a successful return of normality and a satisfactory conclusion. This fantasy process allows the pains and anxieties of history to be worked through, making sense of it to facilitate healing and redemption (Clute, 2002, pp. 420-433).

Bettelheim writes that 'internal processes are externalised and become comprehensible [when they are] represented by the figures of the story and its events': this produces healing, and helps decision-making and problem-solving (1991, p.25). Bettelheim notes that the identification of a child's inner feelings and emotions is helped by the power of the fairy-tale, which speaks 'directly to his unconscious' (Bettelheim, 1991, p.32). Adults, too, gain a 'mature understanding to what until then had remained childish anxieties, preserved intact in infantile form in the unconscious mind' (Bettelheim, 1991, p. 38).

5. To Discover, Explore and Express Fears and Repression

Fantasy literature often deals with unconscious desires or longings, in one way or another. The human mind harbours fears, resentments, anxieties, jealousies, anger, longing, envy, and a number of darker aspects that are not always easy to perceive, acknowledge, or bring out into the light. The Romantic movement of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries acted as a counterbalance to the dominant rationality of the time, to focus on the power of raw emotions, feelings, sensations, and perceptions, considered equally valid and valuable. Fantasy literature is 'alert to uncontrollable emotional eruptions' (Hindle, 2003, p. xxxii), and is able to find expression and visibility for the inner darkness, the fears and the repressed desires of humans. This expression creates fear, repulsion, rejection - and finally healing.

Bettelheim writes that:

> 'When unconscious material is to some degree permitted to come to awareness and worked through in imagination, its potential for causing harm – to ourselves and others – is much reduced; some of its forces can then be made to serve positive purposes' (Bettelheim, 1991, p.7).

Thus, anxieties emerged in the nineteenth century about inhuman aspects of industrialisation and the overcrowded, disease- and crime-ridden cities. Anxiety about scientific discoveries about mental illness and its treatment is expressed throughout 'Gothic' fantasy literature, such as Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847), Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), Stokes' *Dracula (1897),* and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902).

Gothic fantasy is a deeply disturbed version of fantastic literature that counteracted the optimism of the Enlightenment, with a dark, brooding, supernatural evil at the heart of human existence.

Botting argues that:

> 'In more psychological renderings, ghostly recurrences manifest and unease and instability in the imagined unity of self, home or society, hauntings that suggest loss, or guilt or threat. Savage and primitive energies, archaic and immature, link different historical and individual ages, marking out the other side, the unconscious, as it were, of both cultural and personal development' (Botting, 2014, p.3).

It is no surprise that darkness requires an outlet, both to balance the dominating narrative of reason and the supremacy of the mind; and to reflect the cruelties and terrors of modern life, when: "reason is overwhelmed by feeling and passion, and signalled as a horrifying, paralysing encounter with something unspeakable' (Botting, 2014, p. 6).

The surfacing of the 'other', the individual who is different, perhaps representing the dark side of ourselves, is a feature of dark fantasies. Through the 'Other', fantasy literature brings to the surface widespread fears about difference and what it means, including racial tension, racism, gender stereotyping, disability, aliens and disease. Gothic fantasy writers have often demonised the Other, to emphasise and make visible the boundaries between the self and Other (Anolik & Howard, 2004, p.11): as such, it becomes 'a useful ground upon which to safely confront very real fears and horrors' (2004, p.1).

In addition, particularly for the United Kingdom, the Gothic can surface raw 'post-colonial angst', to force a rethinking and redefinition of the dominant narratives of power and control. Botting explains:

> 'Haunting, engaging a sense of loss and dislocation, of history, culture, identity and autonomy also tells the suppressed stories of colonisation, of its terrors, trauma and violence, and offers a path, in the telling, to recovery' (Botting, 2015, p. 18).

Learning to integrate and understand people who are different are essential skills for leaders. Dark fantasy can support leadership development and learning by providing a different perspective to consider, to surface and explore prejudice and negative feelings about difference and 'otherness'. Tropp comments that this is a healthy aspect of dark fantasy, being:

> 'the heritage of horror taught a society undergoing a frightening metamorphosis to face its fears, give them form, and, perhaps, to live with them in uneasy peace' (Tropp, 1999, p.9).

Leaders must be able to confront their own fears and uncertainties, as well as learn to recognise those of others in the workplace. The dark side of human nature is ever-present, and leaders must be able to understand and confront it, in themselves and others, if high levels of trust and motivation are to be achieved. Morris (2019) writes that 'fearful times call for fearless leadership' (p.155), asserting that the level of fear in the USA has been at excessively high levels in recent years. Leaders must learn to be courageous in exploring the darkness. Le Guin suggests that this exploration requires inner work, mirrored by the way that fantasy develops the reader psychologically, with an almost Jungian approach: 'most of the great works of fantasy are about that journey into the subconscious and the collective unconscious and up again to self-knowledge, to adulthood, to the light.' (Le Guin, 1979, p.15).

Ket de Vries also focuses on the inner world, describing how he writes and uses fairy-stories to help business leaders control their darker instincts, and learn valuable lessons for the workplace:

> 'Fairy tales are one result of our struggle to control the bestial and barbaric forces that are part of the human condition through metaphors and symbolic narrative. They are the closets in which we keep our deepest secrets and fears…But reading or listening to these tales allows us to work through these fears and learn about what is right or wrong…enabling us to master the challenges that life had in store for us' (2016, p.7).

6. To Create Hope, Meaning, Values and Purpose for the Future

Fantasy literature with its 'sceptical thought' had 'a significant part to play in the religious concerns of the late twentieth century' (Filmer-Davies, 2005, p.5). Seeing the writer as 'author-priest whose role is to minister hope to readers and to construct visions of a reality in which humanity might transcend itself' (p.13), Filmer-Davies asserts that fantasy literature has replaced religion in society, not in the issue of faith, but of hope. She argues that 'Fantasy works to restore hope' (p.21), by creating a cogent power behind the popularity of fantasy, a rebirth of hope (p.22)'.

After World War 1, a cynical sense of disillusionment and rejection of beliefs in meaning and purpose, and a relaxation of moral values could be said to be discerned in what was called 'post-modern literature'. It has been said that the rise of fantasy literature was a response to this feeling of being a 'lost generation', with a contrasting 'teleological historical narrative and a concomitant sense of moral clarity and transcendent hope' (Stevenson, 2015, in Croft, 2015).

Attebury writes that fantasy is about a problem and its resolution, moving through 'death, despair, horror and betrayal…but that must not be the final word (Attebury, 2012, quoted in Baker, pp. 437-459). Fantasy is also about hope, victory against dark forces, and the sudden happy ending that follows the trials of the protagonist.

Rochelle (1977) writes of the comfort and hope that the strong values of fantasy literature can bring to readers who 'turn to fantasy for hope concerning the future of mankind… It is comforting to adults to be able to pick up a friendly fantasy and find answers to the evil that 'lurks in the hearts of men' (p.55). The author argues that the optimism inherent in fantasy literature, and the accompanying acceptance of 'man's perfectibility', also benefits human health, well-being and mental wellness: 'It is this belief that good will triumph and that the force in the universe is good that psychiatrists claim is so necessary to mental health' (p. 55).

Keys (2006) likens this aspect of an optimistic resolution within fantasy literature with that of the literature of the Middle Ages, as they share a common sense of hope and purpose. She feels that medieval romance literature is similar to fantasy literature because 'they [both] make us believe in ourselves and our world rather than throwing up our hands in disgust or giving up in despair' (p.2). They both use courtly themes, such as the quest, the notion of chivalry, and the knightly warrior, and they both focus on behaviour and growth, holding up: 'a character not as an individual to be scrutinised under a psychological microscope but as an archetypical example of what humans are, and of what humans can be at their best (p. 2).

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Keys comments that although tales with unhappy endings do exist in both of these literary genres, they are usually outnumbered by more optimistic ones:

> 'Hope is the result of the fundamental tension…the tension between the real and the ideal that places science fiction and fantasy in the romance genre besides medieval romance…Hope, then, is part of the definition of each of these terms, hope that mankind will somehow find a way to be the best it is capable of being' (2006, p.2).

Ultimately, speculative fiction, and especially fantasy fiction, can help keep the spirit of positive possibility-thinking alive in the human species, despite the hardships and lethal threats we face. Filmer also sees this important aspect of fantasy, writing:

> 'If fantasy literature is the voice of hope in this age of discontinuity, displacement and despair, then the authors of fantasy mediate that voice, so that the readers can engage with it and experience, through the regeneration of their own imaginative faculties, the rebirth of hope' (Filmer, 1992, p. 29).

7. To Recover, Escape, and Find Consolation from Reality.

In his 1939 essay, *On Fairy-Stories*, Tolkien outlined three main functions of successful fantasy (or fairy-stories): *recovery, escape and consolation* (Tolkien, 2014, 1947). First, recovery is necessary to get back that which was lost, and to counter the tendency that familiarity stops people. 'seeing' everyday life clearly, resulting in them taking it for granted, and hindering them from connecting

properly with the things or people they love. Recovery helps us to see more clearly. Flieger comments that the fantastic: 'should enable us to see the ordinary as if for the first time and thereby to regain a sense of its extraordinariness' (25).

Tolkien's description of recovery is inspiring, arguing that creative fantasy may:

> 'open your hoard and let all the locked things fly away like cage-birds. The gems all turn to flowers or flames, and you will be warned that all you had (or knew) was dangerous and potent, not really effectively chained, free and wild; no more yours than they were you' (2014, 1947, p. 68).

So fantasy creates the shock of long-neglected recognition; of seeing anew, and realising that life is both more different, and less certain than previously thought. This re-perceiving creates a return to health, a renewal of energy and spirits, a 're-gaining' of perspective, and a renewed 'freshness of vision' and wonder in life.

Second, having provided recovery, fantasy can stimulate an escape. This is an escape from the ugliness of modernity, from noisy mechanisation, squalor, poverty, pain, old ambitions, old desires, weaknesses, and injustice – anything that escape may be needed for. Ultimately fantasy can even provide an escape from death, man's age-old obsession. Man's separation from nature, from animals, from hand-made and natural things, creates his own prison, but the fairy-story can give him 'the escape of the prisoner' (p.60), by helping him to turn away from ugly reality into consolation.

Third, fantasy offers consolation: the satisfaction of the 'eucatastrophe', the surprising, happy ending after all looked lost. This means 'the sudden joyous 'turn', the 'sudden, miraculous grace' or the 'fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief' (p.75). It is

this 'strange, mythical fairy-story quality, greater than the event described' (p. 76) that has 'the very taste of primary truth' (p.78).

Tolkien's commentary on his story-telling art is powerful, and readers of fantasy know well what he is referring to – that sudden glimpse of a mythic, deeper 'truth' that goes to the heart of the things that matter in life. It is often the serious things that provide personal growth. Garth writes that without the Great War, there would have been no story of good and evil, nor thoughts on eucatastrophe or 'the significance of fairy-story' (p.309). Middle-earth, he writes, 'looks so engagingly familiar to us, and speaks to us so eloquently, because it was born with the modern world and marked by the same terrible birth pangs' (p. 309).

The Recovery, Escape and Consolation of fantasy that Tolkien describes would have been health-giving to thousands of returning servicemen from both world wars, as with refugees, bombed-out civilians, and exhausted factory workers. Tolkien asserts that recovery is about seeing things more clearly, and freeing the mind before escape can be possible. Some assert that it was through fantasy that he sought to maintain his own flagging sense of wonder, in the grip of deep grief from many personal losses during his life (Rosegrant, 2019).

8. To Teach Survival Skills: Wisdom, Knowledge and Learning

The three aspects of survival skills that are taught through fantasy literature includes: essential knowledge (or where to get it); judgement and the capacity to be reflective. Survival wisdom is about teaching the members of the tribe or group the basic skills and knowledge needed to overcome local threats, understand the terrain, know what to do in danger or threat situations, know which other humans can be trusted and what to do in social situations.

Survival wisdom is not just factual information about where fresh water and ripe berries can be found – that is quickly communicated! -. but it is also about the essentials of living and getting on in groups; dealing with sudden responsibilities; managing conflict; learning to be trustworthy and honest, finding purpose and action; and building relationships, often in new settings of changing rules and expectations. It is the mastery of survival skills in its widest form that matters to individual and group survival in the long-term, and that often are the hardest to learn: fantasy survival stories can be powerful teachers.

Survival fantasies are often about learning, growing up, coping with imposed change, managing difficult emotions, making connections with others, and maturing internally. Many survival fantasies centre the story around the protagonists' *bildungsroman*, their personal development journeys, so that, by journey's end, they have grown immeasurably. There are inevitable costs to this learning, but ultimately, the story's events have changed the hero's internal world for the better, permanently.

Huber writes that there has been a revival of the *bildungsroman* theme in fantasy survival literature since the decline of the postmodernist 'oppositional stance' and its antagonism of cultural certainties during the second half of the twentieth century (Huber, 2014, p. 18). In place of deconstruction and undermining dominant ideas and beliefs, the new literary aesthetic is now focused on repair, reconstruction and remaking, as a counterbalance (Huber, 2014, p.18). He posits that this could why survival tales are so popular in young adult fantasy, because they provide positivity and hope for a better future (Huber, 2014, p.18).

Harris distinguishes urban survival fantasy from classic adventure survival fantasies, commenting that 'urban survival tales' challenge the protagonists 'to see the world around them differently and to confront other points of view', while 'defamiliarising a familiar urban space', such as a mall or

shopping centre (Harris, 2002, p. 64). Similarly, Harris discusses the 'urban survival' novel within young adult fantasy fiction, which often shows city children left alone, with no adults, to survive an environment suffering from plague, post-nuclear disaster, technological breakdown, environmental catastrophe or war (Harris, 2002, p.64). They must learn fast, and not only about the threat itself.

John Marsden's survival fantasy series, *When the War Began,* is an example of a group of teenagers surviving alone in 'Hell', a thick, isolated part of the Australian bush, after a hostile invasion force has taken over their town and imprisoned all of the adults. Throughout the seven novels, his characters face serious challenges, learn about and build relationships, face moral dilemmas, save themselves and each other, experience loss and grief, learn to hope, and act as an effective guerrilla force against occupying forces. They mature and grow, including in their ethical stance to the dilemmas of violence they must enact. Survival fantasies also show that a shift in perspective is gained, providing the ability of the protagonist to understand and be able to confront others because they are now outside the safe and protective system. The survivors ultimately learn through their experiences to develop an optimism 'about the potential of communities to be inclusive, rather than exclusive, making room for people and feelings that have been left out' (Harris, 2002, p.74).

Survival fantasies include the survival skills of knowledge generation, judgment, learning, self-reflexivity, cooperation, and collaboration processes. Leaders need these skills badly in these highly pressured times.

9. To Teach Values, Friendship and Social Co-operation.

Fantasy literature has been seen as the most effective form of literature to provide moral guidance, raising issues of good and evil, ethics, values and philosophical dilemmas, and expressing these

questions through fantasy because it has additional power and impact on the readers. Fantasy literature is frequently seen as educating the young in moral imagination (Hilder, 2006), gives the examples of the fantasists, MacDonald, Lewis and L'Engle, nurturing 'the ethical human being' through mythic storytelling (p.162). Encouraging a mythic consciousness can counteract everyday materialism and superficiality, to 'educate the imagination with healing stories of courage and hope, and the need to do so with an imaginative pedagogy that encourages moral fortitude' (p.162).

The quest fantasy frequently role-models comradeship, friendship, loyalty, honesty and social co-operation, with Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* being the ultimate example. Time and time again, in dangerous straits and unexpected betrayals, Tolkien shows us the meaning of close fellowship, self-sacrifice, the importance of trust, and being able to perceive deceit, as in the actions of Boromir, Saruman and Wormtongue.

Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy does much the same, showing Lyra's fortitude and resilience, Will's loyalty, and her parents' redeeming self-sacrifice. Meyer's dark fantasy series *Twilight* produced many debates about female freedom, individuality and power, as Bella succumbs to the over-bearing (but attractive) vampire, Edward Cullen. Urick and Racculia (2017) explore the use of Martin's fantasy series, *Game of Thrones* (1996-present) as a way of teaching business leaders to apply moral reasoning and ethics to decision-making.

10. To Teach Imagination, Foresight, and Change Skills

Fantasy has enormously boosted the growth of human creativity by encouraging humans to practice the skill of thinking, to consider how life may be transformed by imagining 'the world as other than it is' (Boyd, 2009, p. 197), thus extending 'our imaginative reach' (Boyd, 2009, p. 198). The importance of the cognitive skills that deal with imagination, anticipation and foresight, and change

skills have never been greater. If collective imagination is strong, people will ask the '*what if?*' and the '*why?*' questions that can prepare a society against attack. With anticipation and foresight, provisions are gathered against a hard winter, or an impending flood. Skills in imagination, foresight and change can be turned into effective, lifesaving action. Fantasy Literature can boost these skills, because it 'can create a cogent 'environment' where new perspectives and concepts emerge' (Keane, Graham and Burnes, 2014, p, 55).

Part of this fecund emergence is due to its fantastic world-building capacity: 'Since the advent of daydreaming, imaginary worlds have drawn us away vicariously to fantastic realms culled from endless possibilities' (Wolf, 2012, p. 1). This world-building provides support in the essential leadership capabilities of speculation and anticipation:

> 'worlds extend beyond the stories that occur in them. There are realms of possibility, a mix of familiar and unfamiliar, permutations of wish, dread and dream, and other kinds of existence that make us more aware of the circumstances and conditions of the actual world we inhabit' (Wolf, 2012, p.17).

Boyd, taking an evolutionary approach, argues that this benefit of fantasy is an example of imagination-driven cognitive play that stimulates the brain by creating 'especially enriched environments' to remodel the human mind to maximise its plasticity, 'fine-tune our systems' and create 'scenarios for reasoning about our own and others' plans and actions' (Boyd, 2009, p.95). He writes that 'stories help train us to explore possibility as well as actuality, effortlessly and even playfully, and that capacity makes all the difference' (Boyd, 2009, p. 188).

This ability of leaders to imagine possibilities to facilitate change can be supported by metaphor, or the use of literary 'praxiphorical analysis', the testing of a literary metaphor's explanatory value in

a fictional context (Keane, Graham and Burnes, 2014). The authors developed a process to use speculative fiction to illuminate and explore complex concepts for organisational analysis, as 'testing ground for [the researcher's] chosen theory' (p. 60). Similar to Johnson's 2011 'product prototyping' using science fiction, these applications are exciting new ways of improving human capability for change.

Change skills are based in our belief in our ability to successfully transform ourselves, because 'transformation is at the heart of magical practices' - and therefore of fantasy literature. Its predilection for constantly re-inventing itself and its sub-groups through 'shape-shifting and metamorphosis' (Tatar, 2010, p. 60) provides a good example.

Similarly, Ket de Vies remarks on the psychological aspects of using fantasy to support organisational change, teaching that individuals can understand that transformation is possible for everyone, if done properly and ethically:

> 'If there is one clear constant in the fairy tale, it is transformation. These tales demonstrate that change is possible if we prepare ourselves for it properly. Personal transformation is one of the key themes in fairy tales' (2016, p.9).

These ten sections have been useful for considering the applications of fantasy literature, as a trigger for further research and exploration. Figure 3.1 below summarises the categories:

The diagram shows "THE USES OF FANTASY LITERATURE" at the center, surrounded by ten ovals:

1. TO EXPLORE & UNDERSTAND THE EXTERNAL WORLD
2. TO CREATE THOUGHT-EXPERIMENTS & REHEARSE ACTION
3. TO CHALLENGE, CHANGE & SUBVERT EXISTING SYSTEMS & BELIEFS
4. TO EXPLORE & UNDERSTAND THE INNER WORLD; & HEAL ITS WOUNDS
5. TO DISCOVER & EXPRESS FEARS & REPRESSION
6. TO CREATE HOPE, MEANING & PURPOSE & VISION FOR THE FUTURE
7. TO RECOVER, ESCAPE. &. FIND CONSOLATION FROM REALITY
8. TO TEACH SURVIVAL & LEARNING SKILLS
9. TO TEACH VALUES, FRIENDSHIP & SOCIAL. CO-OPERATION
10. TO TEACH IMAGINATION, FORESIGHT &. CHANGE SKILLS

FIGURE 3:1. TEN USES OF FANTASY LITERATURE, FROM MY REVIEW OF RESEARCH

Having explored the fantasy literary genre, I now focus specifically on my literature search of Tolkien and his work, to explore if he is the best choice for the worked example.

Literature Review: J.R.R.Tolkien and his Work

Tolkien was arguably the most outstanding fantasy writer of the past century, so using his work for the worked example only provides this thesis with the best chance of success. In the Practical Applied Literature process, this worked example, and during part of the later conceptual synergy

process, are the only places where Tolkien's work is actually used in this study. However, his constructed world, and potential for 'out-of-the box' thinking, combine to produce a useful basis for new research techniques and approaches. Additionally, as literature is to be analysed in this thesis should be as realistic as possible so that we can analyse and draw conclusions as if the characters and events were real, almost as literary case-studies. This provides the greatest chance of making connections and utilising insights back in the real, primary world.

It could be said that four characteristics of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* make his work particularly useful and relevant to today's leaders: a strong realism in his writing of characters and their behaviour (despite the fantasy elements); recognisable descriptions of leaders and their particular dilemmas and doubts; his portrayal of dark leadership and its temptations; and his portrayal of the human need for a powerful vision of hope, love and success through extreme struggle. Yet the timeless and important themes he describes can be grim, dark and frightening, representing a realistic portrayal of human life, and its struggles. He does not hesitate to tell hard 'truths', by describing, exploring and illuminating the extremes of the human condition in striking ways. It is Tolkien's constant striving for this powerful 'inner consistency of reality', that provides the reader with a 'sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth' (Tolkien, 2014/1964, p.77). The leadership behaviour that Tolkien describes is realistic; their own leadership self-doubts, regrets and despair are recognisable; and even their falls and failures are familiar, in some sense, to the reader. To make this happen, the most credible portrayal of reality is essential in the writing:

> 'every writer making a secondary world, a fantasy, every sub-creator, wishes in some measure to be a real maker, or hopes that he is drawing on reality: hopes that the peculiar quality of this secondary world (if not all the details) are derived from Reality, or are flowing into it' (Tolkien, 2014, 1964, p.77).

Tolkien's created, secondary world is a stimulant to the mind, enabling the reader to 'clean our windows; so that the things seen clearly may be freed from the drab blur of triteness or familiarity – from possessiveness.' (Tolkien, 2014, 1946, p. 60). This shock of re-perceiving the familiar 'jars' the mind, forcing it to open wider, to understand more, and to gain insight and wisdom. It has a dangerous power to release the things that have been tightly hidden or controlled by the mind, the things that humans have locked down safely. This 'unlocking' and opening of the mind to re-perceive reality is necessary for leaders in times of rapid change, seeking to invent new and effective options.

Tolkien viewed normal life as the primary world, the real one, and the created fantasy world as a secondary world that combined primary world familiarity with 'an arresting strangeness', to stop readers in their tracks to look again at their reality, but this time through the bizarre or distorted lens of the secondary world (Tolkien, 2014/1964, p.60). Tolkien describes a world where problems and issues of the (real) primary world can be examined and solutions sought - all within a world which is not quite normal, which challenges and disrupts expectations. This psychological disruption led to new understandings of the primary world: 'in such fantasie, as it is called, new form is made; Faërie begins, man becomes a sub-creator' (Tolkien, 2014, 1964, p. 42).

Tolkien seems to capture an underlying reality of this primary world with such outstanding genius in his secondary-world characterisation, writing, and world-building, that any analysis of leadership in his work can be both intensely productive and intensely jarring. Throughout his work, we are inspired to conceptualise about leadership, because we constantly see images of successful, inspiring and effective leaders: for example, Gandalf, Aragorn, Elrond, Galadriel, Faramir, Eowyn (arguably) and Bard (reluctantly). Leaders who were nuanced and more realistically conflicted as leaders may be found in the characters of Thorin, Denethor, Boromir, and King Thranduil; wholly

evil leaders are Sauron and Saruman. (Frodo never does really become a leader, except ethically, perhaps, in preventing the deserved death of Sharkey.)

Tolkien highlights issues that leaders would do well to pay attention to today: industrialisation; greed; betrayal; the vandalising of nature and the countryside; cynicism and negativity; lack of ethics and honesty. Similarly, fantasy literature has the most to offer leaders in thinking up alternative perspectives of society because of its 'wild, previously unimagined landscapes' (Ulrick et al, 2014); in challenging the norms and behaviours of society; and in letting go of old ways, to think and act anew. In fantasy, many cognitive, visioning and scenario planning qualities become available, plus social skills, decision-making, and self-awareness. Fantasy literature is highly relevant to today's leaders, and likely to expand further as a resource for the research, exploration and creation of future lives.

Because 'fantasy is a literature intrinsically situated at intersections', the offspring of these intersections are abundant and fertile in the imagination and energy that is produced by the different types of thinking arising from many diverse disciplines. The shock of this interdisciplinarity 'collision' can stimulate disruptive technology and innovative transformation for leaders well into the future. More research is needed here, in the neglected area of leadership and fantasy literature, to see how fantasy literature could be harnessed to be a force for leadership enlightenment, transformation and change, especially in real worldbuilding in our 'primary' world.

Tolkien's writing about a 'primary world' reality, portrayed through a 'secondary world' literary construction, touches the visionary in its conception and breadth. There is a mythic quality about his writing which speaks to our inner truths, as fairy stories do. To MacDonald, Lewis and Tolkien, work-building was an act of 'sub-creation' (Tolkien's description in his 1939 speech to Leeds University), and reminiscent of the world-building activities of God, the original world-builder.

Emulating this Godlike creativity, 'the fantasist follows in the same divine footsteps, but his or her worlds only exist in the imagination' (Fimi, 2017, p. 4). It is this timeless compulsion to touch the numinous, to 'sub-create' in God's image, that gives Tolkien a way of connecting so powerfully with his readers, of whatever generation, background and nationality. Baird (1976) writes of the 'human sharing, common from culture to culture, in the visionary … of the human impulse to reflect, or to rival, a suprahuman cosmic order' (p.3). Tolkien's writing touches our deepest meanings because, to him, his sacred responsibility as a 'sub-creator' is to convey essential 'truth' and wisdom. Fortunately, this also includes much about leadership truth and wisdom.

Summary

Fantasy literature, fairy-tales and mythic stories illuminate our journeys though work and life, along paths that they have been lighting brightly and colourfully for many centuries. Society and its leaders have probably never needed speculative fiction as much as they do now, to help them conceptualise and drive the hard decisions that lie ahead. Fantasy writers, especially Tolkien, can contribute much to this endeavour as a stimulus to the imagination and the generation of alternative solutions to today's leadership development problems.

I chose Tolkien's work for my worked example because of his towering intellect, the realism and scope of his material, and his insight into leadership. Other scrutinised authors were Rowling, Le Guin, Attwood, and Pullman, but, to me, they did not show the same level of depth, realism and insight. Tolkien's work holds particular strengths in helping leaders access their imagination, their sense of challenge, their creativity, and even their wildest dreams (or nightmares), to stimulate alternative visions of the futures they must build.

In Chapter 3, I have laid a literary basis for this research. It contains an investigation into the definitions, nature and scope of fantasy literature; and a literature search into the functions and uses for fantasy literature for society and individuals, that have been identified and explored by researchers and fantasy writers. From this, I developed a classification of ten important functions for fantasy literature in human society, including consideration of some recent applications specifically developed to support leaders and individuals. A gap is apparent in that there is no research that specifically seeks to use fantasy literature as a source for leadership development in a structured, organised and repeatable way. This research will rectify that. To complete the chapter, I also presented a literature search into Tolkien and his work, showing that he is an excellent choice for the worked example of this thesis.

It is now appropriate to consider how leadership and fantasy literature can be brought together to achieve the research goals of this study, through a new and original methodology that is fully described in Chapter 4, and shown as a working example in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Chapter 4: The Research Methodology

If this interdisciplinary research were an animal, it would be a *chimera*: a magical blended creature, formed by a unique stitching-together of a lofty scrutiny of fantasy literature, with the solid requirements of practical, down-to-earth leaders. My aim is to use fantasy literature to create a theoretical and practical leadership development framework, to help leadership developers develop high-performing leaders. The chimera has grown three strong legs (the three literature searches) and four powerful wings (the practical applied literature process; conceptual encounter; literary conceptual encounter; and conceptual synthesis) to address the research aims and objectives.

This chapter has four main sections:

1. **The Philosophical Stance of this Research**

My philosophical, epistemological and ontological stance is explained, including why qualitative research is considered appropriate for this research;

2. **The Research Approach, and the Practical Applied Literature Process**

These are described, including the three literature searches that confirmed the research aims and objectives, and the interdisciplinary methods and tools designed and used. The newly designed method of *Practical Applied Literature* is explored, with techniques of de Rivera's *Conceptual Encounter;* and my own adaptation, called *Literary Conceptual Encounter.* It explains the place of fantasy literature in this research, and in particular, the work of Tolkien, in generating a new leadership development framework, (illustrated in Chapter 5 as the 'worked example');

3. The Methods of Data Collection and Analysis, using Conceptual Synthesis

The methods are outlined, with the various stages and research tools used; the creation of different versions of the framework; and how feedback from senior managers were incorporated into the framework using *Conceptual Synthesis*;

4. The Limitations and Ethical Considerations of the Methodology and Final Steps

I explore the limitations of this research methodology, possible ethical implications and issues, and the final steps in this research methodology.

1. The Philosophical Stance of this Research: Qualitative Research

All research studies should identify and articulate a clear set of the underpinning philosophy and perspectives that dictated the research methodology and strategy (Denicolo, Long and Bradley-Cole, 2016). My philosophical stance is that qualitative research is an appropriate way of mining the richness, ambiguity and possibility thinking of leadership research. Qualitative methods fit the study of leadership generally, and this research in particular, because of the history and characteristics of its approach. A brief outline of the growth of qualitative methods versus quantitative methods illustrates why this is the case:

The natural sciences have long dominated ontological and epistemological thinking, with their positivist, quantitative and empirical scientific methodologies (Creswell, 2008). In a quantitative world, knowledge is clear and distinct, able to be collected and analysed in an objective, unadulterated way, with the researcher standing apart from the process: only knowledge that can be physically seen and observed can be included in the research, and knowledge is obtained inductively rather than deductively (Ritchie

and Lewis, 2003, p. 6). However, Kuhn's work in 1962 radically altered the perception of scientific ideas and their development, casting doubt on the objectivity and sequential development of scientific thinking and the growth of academic disciplines. Kuhn argued that members of any academic community bring to their discipline world-views, prejudices, and ontological assumptions that influence their decisions and choices. He described these dominant thinking modes as paradigms: the 'shared belief systems that influence the kind of knowledge researchers seek and how they interpret the evidence they collect' (Morgan, 2009, p. 50).

Development of a discipline may be stifled and held back because of a reluctance to embrace paradoxes or anomalies, or their implications. This is especially true in those situations that might suggest that established thinking must change to continue to be effective at solving discipline problems. Kuhn argued that two types of change represent development within disciplines: step-by-step or incremental development 'within the 'paradigm'; and `discontinuous radical development into another paradigm, a 'paradigm shift'. The characteristics of these types or styles of change are quite different, requiring different types of actions. These styles occur spontaneously, or deliberately, as a response to the stage of development that the paradigm is currently in. The Kuhnian concept that scientific development was not in reality performed in a controlled, rational way, because subjective decision-making and arbitrary choice of direction was how the scientific community *actually* worked was radical, even shocking. It triggered a long period of questioning. of the old, established paradigm of quantitative methodology by the new, emerging paradigm of qualitative methodology, especially for the emergent, revitalised social science research topics.

The resulting heated and bitter ontological conflict of the late twentieth century ('the paradigm wars') led to criticisms that traditional 'positivist' approaches were outdated and ineffective for social science research; with qualitative research being 'a superior alternative' (Morgan. 2009, p. 57-58). Qualitative methodology is considered more appropriate for social science research because it is defined as a flexible way of making the world more visible, studying phenomena in natural settings, and interpreting data through the meanings that people ascribe to it (Denzin and Lincoln, 2017, p. 10). It took research out of the laboratory, and up close into the subjective world of the research subject. More flexibility was needed to capture new people-focused research goals within widely divergent research environments, so the subsequent stance that there is no 'one best way' to use a qualitative approach led to 'numerous variations in approaches' (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls and Ormston, 2013, p.2). These practices are intended to reveal the world as it truly is, so qualitative research has now become strongly pluralistic and participant-centred (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Qualitative approaches often experiment with diverse techniques because the meaning-making human species requires alternative ways to explore their ideas, communication, stories and words, especially in situations where a richer meaning must be identified through constructs and inner feelings (Denicolo, Long and Bradley-Cole, 2016).

So qualitative study is concerned with an analysis of words and meanings over numbers; data collection that works with the everyday rather than constructed situations; the presence of multiple truths or pictures of reality; the seeking of knowledge within its context; and the identification and acceptance of researcher reflexivity to acknowledge bias and subjectivity (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 3-5). For these reasons, qualitative researchers see themselves as irremovable and subjective

parts of the research process, as useful and integral elements of the study, which is certainly the case in my own research approach.

For these reasons, my research stance for this study is phenomenological, constructivist and interpretivist because these stances fit the qualitative research question. This may be seen by the following explanatory passages:

A Phenomenological Stance

Zahavi (2019) refers to phenomenology as 'one of the dominant traditions in 20th century philosophy', 'presenting a detailed account of human existence, where the subject is understood as an embodied and socially and culturally embedded being-in-the-world' (page 1). Fitting within a qualitative paradigm, phenomenology is currently 'undergoing something of a renaissance' (page 2). Developed by Husserl (1859-1938), Heidegger (1889-1976) and Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961), phenomenology is based on the ontological assumption that knowledge can only be gained through experience, through lived experience and subjective meaning. The view that 'the phenomenologist is driven by a pathos to discern the primordial secrets of the living meanings of the human world' (van Manen, 2016, p. 17) reflects the desire by phenomenological researchers to get to the heart of meaning and experiences, 'bringing all the living of life to meaningful expression through the imageries and languages of phenomenological writing, composing and expressing' (page 18). It is 'the way of access to the world as we experience it' (page 28), a 'method for questioning' (page 19).

This research is phenomenological, concerned with the lived experience of leadership and leadership development, and seeking to broaden understanding by reflection on events within

fantasy literature, as well as from the everyday experience and thoughts of senior leaders. Heidegger emphasises the need for wonder in phenomenological investigation, because 'wonder may be the antecedent to inquiry' (van Manen, 2016, p. 37). I would argue that fantasy literature is strong on providing wonder! Exploring fantasy narratives may lead to stronger reflection and investigation of specific lived experiences in the plot by boosting the wonder and awe felt by the reader. This is why fantasy literature has been so interesting in seeking to understand the lived experience and development of leaders – it stimulates useful phenomenological reflection and discussion analysis, while stimulating a sense of wonder and excitement to act as a motivator for the researcher and participants.

It is logical that this phenomenological approach is utilised for this research because it focuses on the ambiguities of leadership and leadership development, and on the true inner, lived experience of being a leader. The phenomenological stance is also my stance for my consulting work, to keep myself open to understanding and making sense of experiences and meaning from wherever stage or situation people happens to be in.

Interpretivism and Constructivism in this Research

This research is interpretivist in ontology, and constructivist in its epistemology, and so informs the techniques and methods chosen. Interpretivism is a broad approach, 'a philosophical position that recognises the individual subjectivity of understanding' and its role within research (Denicolo, Long and Bradley-Cole, 2016, pages 205). Interpretivism is also a fertile approach. Shusterman (1978, p.323) argues that interpretative analysis can create a 'pluralism of practice', with three distinct philosophical positions reflecting different interpretive aims: *descriptivism -.* explanatory hypotheses about the work; *prescriptivism* – expressing prescriptions about

how to see the work; and *performatism* - interpreting what the work is and means. The performatist interpreter wants to express and communicate her or his own perception of the work, because the features and meaning are dependent on its interpretation (Shusterman, 1978). Shusterman's performatism is a fitting description of my process in this research, and how I have interpreted Tolkien's work: interpreting it creatively within a certain 'lens', based on my own experience, perceptions and insight, to create a new meaning, direction and framework from the novels that can then be shared, understood and used.

Located within an interpretivist stance, constructivist research is 'an exploration of the meaning people attribute to aspects of the world as they experience it', from their own inner personal perspective (Page 206). Constructivist research is based on understanding that constructs are the subjective and personal ways that individuals make a picture of their world: how they understand, perceive, make judgements or connections about the things in their lives; how they construct meanings and what these meanings may be. There is no single 'truth' in life's meanings, but many. Constructivist research seeks to see a topic or event from the full perspective of the individual, as expressed and articulated by them.

An analysis of speculative fiction is by its nature interpretivist and constructivist: the reader interprets the nature of characters, environments, and even the story's actions (Tierney and Lincoln, 1997), and constructs mental images and insights from this interpretation. The process that I use in this research constantly 'dances' between interpretivism and constructivism in order to achieve a useful outcome. For example, in the worked example of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, I read the novels using a certain focus (leadership); interpret the actions, speech and events involving

Tolkien's characters (interpretivist), then using this as an *'idea stimulant'*, I build a framework to improve leadership development back in the real world (constructivist). I then interpret Tolkien's work in a certain way, according to my own beliefs, biases, expectations and experiences. Then the research participants interpret and use my framework in the workplace, influenced by their own constructions, biases and interpretations. They then collaborate with me, as we merge our interpretations and constructions together to co-create a final framework. I then anticipate that the readers of this thesis will interpret what I have created, constructing their own meaning according to their own experiences, biases and expectations, using it accordingly. Thus, the process is full of diverse meaning and potential applicability for all of the stakeholders, enriched and expanded by the various interpretations and constructions.

Consequently, in this research, I use an interpretivist, participatory and constructivist stance from within a strongly qualitative paradigm, because I believe this is the approach most likely to answer the research question, whether fantasy literature can boost insights to create a framework for leadership development. In addition, this qualitative stance fits my worldview and axiology. I believe that the researcher, the participants, and the social environment strongly influence each other, and their impact can only be isolated with great difficulty. Facts and values are not clear and unambiguous; results are influenced by the research investigator's own values and worldview; it is impossible to conduct objective, value-free research; and social researchers and participants can gain meaning together in a collaborative, co-creating way (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, p. 12). I believe that people are experimenters in their own lives, construct hypotheses from their experiences; and choosing actions based on these meanings and values.

So I consider that the research partners and the research investigator should be equally valued in terms of contribution and opinion. The challenge to the traditional view of the researcher's authority is a useful way to disrupt habitual research thinking, challenging 'four centuries of Western tradition', resulting in 'all the furniture … flying out of the window' (Gergen, 2015, p. 2). The use of fantasy literature compounds this challenge, for, as Eastman (2016) comments: 'broadening the mind [through literature] is challenging, destabilising, alienating even' (p.2). The sense of challenge is reinforced by the two main assumptions of this research. Firstly, the views we use to construct our world through our beliefs and thinking can lead to a critiquing of our own (and others') thinking, which may lead to useful personal change; and, secondly, that the creativity that this disruption stimulates through the generation of new paradigms, solutions, interesting options, and previously-undiscovered opportunities can help researchers think differently. Qualitative research through constructivism and interpretivism can generate many innovation and possibilities (Gergen, 2015; Denicola, Long and Bradley-Cole, 2016).

2. The Research Approach, and Practical Applied Literature

Qualitative research is said to be characterised by the spirit of interdisciplinary sharing, because a collision of disciplines can produce a plethora of options and diverse outcomes and 'unending cross-disciplinary enrichment' (Gergen et al, 2015, p.10). This research intentionally utilises that enrichment, stemming from my conviction that literature contains the insight and energy needed to stimulate the creative human imagination into solving problems in other disciplines - if humans know where to look, and how to do it. In this research. I believe that fantasy fiction is *where to look'* – it could also be other literary genres, but

speculative fiction is fecund and radical in ideas. Also, it is necessary to provide a clear example of '*how to do it*'. Consequently, an interdisciplinary approach is taken, and a 'worked example' is included, in this research methodology. Interdisciplinary research can:

- widen the research opportunities and techniques available.

The intention behind this research is to widen the problem-solving possibilities available to practitioners through the insights of fantasy literature, so any processes that can increase options and research techniques is valuable.

- result in more effective solutions to real-life problems

In reality, many contemporary problems are highly complex and multifaceted, requiring dynamic, synergistic solutions from contributors and stakeholders: a single discipline may not provide the wide breadth of perspective (or curiosity) needed to find a lasting solution. An effective interdisciplinary effort is more likely to find solutions, or to come up with better techniques to tackle the problems, leading to 'new academic disciplines or sub-disciplines, new insights, shortcuts and solutions to intractable problems and better decision-making' (Lyall et al, 2011, p.18).

- identify and change the mind-sets and perspective of those involved

Most academic researchers are trained and work in one main discipline, learning its methods, assumptions, rules and biases. Working across disciplines provides a useful and necessary learning and training experience for researchers, who learn the tools and techniques of interdisciplinary collaboration, as well as those of the other disciplines they are operating within (Lyell et al, 2011). Researchers tend to think more widely, perceive their own discipline anew, and become more challenging of the boundaries and limits of their thinking.

Most of all, an interdisciplinary approach integrates well with a constructivist

paradigm, because it, too, seeks 'to understand individuals internal processes: attitudes,

interests, beliefs, values, different perspectives and identities' (Denicolo, Long and

Bradley Cole, 2016, p. 5). The very nature of interdisciplinarity requires an ability to

accept and work with ambiguity. The ability to imagine oneself speaking from the

perspective of another discipline can be hard, yet it provides an openness to difference

and empathy important to leadership development.

I use the term interdisciplinary to describe my research process of integrating different

concepts from two disciplines into the overall outcome as one seamless product, rather

than keeping the contributions separate but visible, or multidisciplinary. In this

interdisciplinary research, I aim to integrate the fantasy literature and leadership

development fields to successfully use their individual perspectives and strengths,

while building a synergistic outcome that captures the benefits of both.

The Three Literature Searches

For the reasons listed above, a decision was made to place interdisciplinarity at the

heart of this research. It then became necessary to complete three literature searches,

because:

a) <u>A search of leadership theory</u> was important to ensure that the study was necessary. It

was helpful to understand the growth of leadership theory, and how closely movements

in leadership thinking correspond with paradigms in the external world. Leadership

theory and leadership development have always been closely intertwined. The literature

search shows the confusing nature of leadership theory, how many similar and conflicting theories exist and persist simultaneously, and how the latest theories include more imaginative approaches and concept 'borrowed' from other disciplines.

Through this examination, a gap in the literature is clearly identified – little has been done in a structured way on the imaginative uses of fantasy literature as a stimulus for the development for leaders. There are few contributions about how to use fantasy literature as a resource for leaders; and even fewer include a structured process of how to do this.

b)   <u>A search of fantasy literature</u> examined the nature and role of fantasy literature in human society, illustrating its value to human society over countless generations. The development of a 10-stage model of the functions of fantasy literature in society provided a framework to fully appreciate its value, and to reflect further on the role of fantasy literature in the future. It confirmed that fantasy literature fulfils many vital social functions, and is fully capable of providing insight and wisdom to today's leadership developers and other readers.

c)   <u>A search of Tolkien's life and work</u> was also needed to consider his background and characteristics for the worked example – to ascertain whether Tolkien had experienced any direct leadership responsibility, what issues he had faced in his life, and what he might have wanted to convey in his writing about leaders and leadership. It was useful to understand the nature of Tolkien's beliefs and core values, to be able later to identify insights and lessons more easily from his work.

These three literature searches showed that there is a sizeable gap in the leadership literature that fantasy literature could fill – that of using imaginative fiction to generate ideas for leadership development. It also confirmed that Tolkien is an appropriate choice as a source for a worked example to show how this could be done. Having ensured from the literature searches that there are currently no research projects that fill that gap, and understood that filling the gap is important for future leadership development, the key methods for this research can be devised:

Key Methods Used in the Research Process

For clarity, I now provide a brief definition of each of the tools, before explaining how they work in detail in the following sections:

- **Practical Applied Literature** is what I called my overall process of how literature can be used in a structured way as a resource for imagination, problem-solving, and solution generation in any potential discipline.

- **Traditional Conceptual Encounter** is used to explore the initial framework with a group of experienced and senior leaders. It is a way of exploring phenomenon, assumptions and deeply held beliefs through interviews, guided discussion, joint learning and co-creation with 'research partners', with the aim of furthering a specific research goal. The original 'Conceptual Encounter' invented by de Rivera (1981), is called by me 'Traditional Conceptual Encounter' in this research, to distinguish it from my adaptation of it during the literary analysis stage, Literary Conceptual Encounter, to avoid confusion.

- **Literary Conceptual Encounter** is my adaptation de Rivera's (1981) research technique, **Conceptual Encounter**, used by me as a tool to generate the initial leadership development framework from selected works of fantasy literature. An additional tool developed for this process included identifying and exploring **Potential Insight Events,** as a way of identifying areas of the text that could provide intense insight for analysis.

- **Conceptual Synthesis** was developed specifically for this methodology. Once views, responses, and co-created insights have been generated about leadership and the framework, they are collated, analysed, and considered deeply through a process designed for this research called Conceptual Synthesis, to simplify the collected data and decide which insights will be used to improve the framework.

Stages in the Practical Applied Literature Process

It is useful to present an overview of the Practical Applied Literature process before providing detailed explanations of each of the data collection stages and tools:

1. Identify issue to be researched; decide on method and tools of research; recruit 15 Senior Managers; consider potential ethical issues; explore limitations of methodology;

2. Undertake three literature searches; agree aims and objectives; and finalise methodology;

3. Complete Literary Conceptual Analysis with Tolkien's work, using it to create and improve a framework for leadership development;

4. Share the framework with a group of Senior Managers, and engage in Traditional Conceptual Analysis interviews, to explore the phenomenon of leadership, and gain feedback and insight about the framework and the process used;

5. Collect the data, identify moments of insight from the interviews, and apply Conceptual Synthesis to decide what insights to include or exclude in making improvements to the framework;

6. Finalise the framework; reflect on the outcomes, process, limitations and learnings; and identify next steps.

Figure 4.1 shows the stages of the Practical Applied Literature Process:
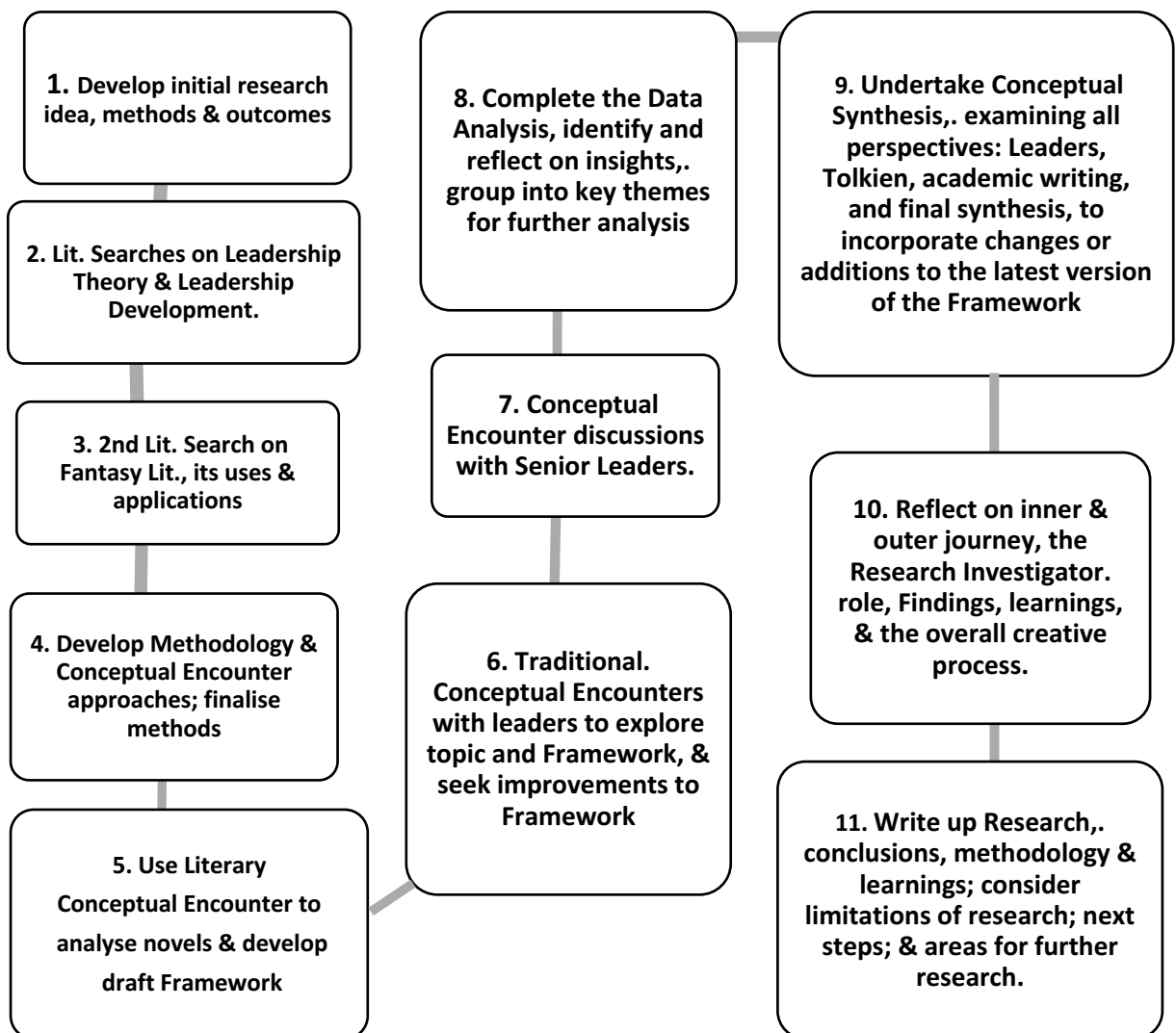
FIGURE 4.1. THE PRACTICAL APPLIED LITERATURE PROCESS

The Practical Applied Literature process is somewhat like a funnel: to gain the maximum

perspective of the topic being studied, literary conceptual encounter starts with the imaginings

and descriptions of the storyline and its context, using the characterisations and plots of fantasy

literature to explore the topic in the widest sense. By starting as widely as possible, nothing is

excluded or ignored; and unusual possibilities present themselves. This is similar to the way

that Osborn's process of problem-solving through brainstorming starts as widely as possible,

then narrows successively into useable actions (1957), thus *diverging* and then *converging*

thinking and ideas. As Kirton observes, this process aims to help practitioners to:

> 'funnel out in a deductive process to widen their problem definition, their information
> search, and their cognitive operating area. This widened area is expected to offer them
> added alternative perspectives of the problem and to assemble a wider array of possible
> solutions to be considered. The advantage is that solutions may emerge that the current
> system has not yet reached' (Kirton, 2003, p.170).

Through the initial broad examination of fantasy literature, the 'cognitive operating area' is

significantly expanded, to encompass all sorts of possibilities and ideas from the 'secondary

world' of fantasy story telling.

Literary conceptual encounter then provides a step-by-step structure for identifying and

recording ideas and insights from the literature, to create an early, initially sketchy, attempt at a

product, framework or solution, ready for the next stage. Stages 2 and 3 then also provide many

ideas and insights, which are analysed and eventually refined down at the end of Stage 3, the

conceptual synthesis. This process –rather like boiling down or 'reducing' a large pan of meaty

bones and vegetables to make a concentrated stock. - is illustrated in Figure 4.2:

Figure content:
- 1. Literary Conceptual Encounter with Tolkien, to generate new Framework from fantasy literature
- 2. Traditional Conceptual Encounter with Real. Managers to generate insights on Framework
- 3. Conceptual Synthesis to Improve & Extend. Framework
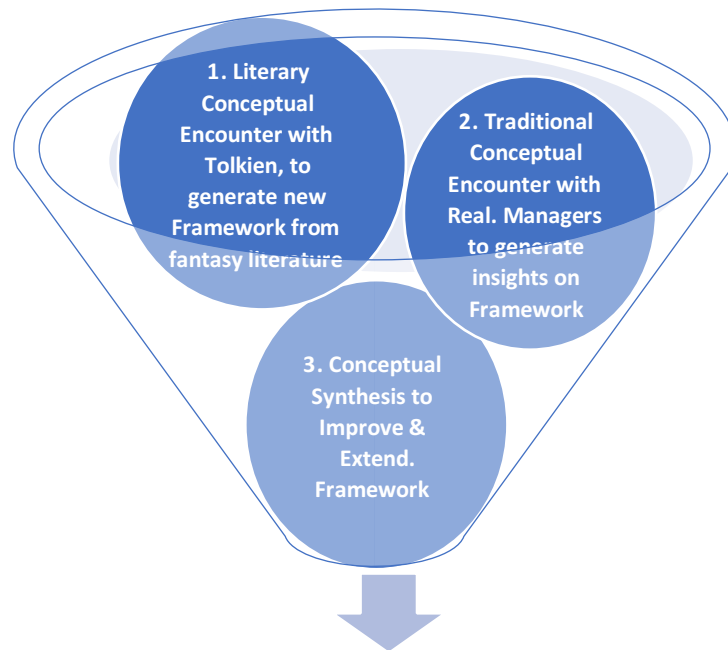
FIGURE 4.2: PRACTICAL APPLIED LITERATURE – A DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS PROCESS LEADING TO A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

2. Three Methods of Data Collection and Analysis: Conceptual Encounters and Conceptual Synthesis

a) Data Collection through Traditional Conceptual Encounter

Conceptual encounter is an open, honest and exploratory process that seeks to

> 'describe precise structures for different ways of being, structures that may be profitably used to map our personal experience and that enable us to share our experience with others. [It can] create structures which reveal important aspects of different ways of being' (De Rivera and Kreilkamp, 1981, p. 1).

In this research, I have called it *Traditional* Conceptual Encounter, to differentiate it from my own adaptation of it, *Literary Conceptual Encounter*.

There are few examples of this technique being used generally, and de Rivera has written little about it, but the method contains considerable potential in future research, because it matches the contemporary values of equality, openness and transparency, skilful discussion, reflexivity, exploration, collaboration and co-creation.

The purpose of conceptual encounter is to investigate fully how a topic or situation is perceived and experienced in order to:

> 'be able to articulate an abstract description of the general phenomena that will illuminate our specific experiences and enrich our experiences of life…solidly grounded in the concrete experience of actual events in the lives of persons' (de Rivera and Kreilkamp, 1981, p. 2).

Starting with the recall of a concrete personal experience relating to the topic, the researcher gradually encourages the 'research partner' to engage in 'abstract conceptualisation', enabling both parties to learn and grow their ideas and understanding. Using an unstructured approach to questioning and empathetic listening, the interviews gradually become more focused, particularly as more people are successively involved and contribute their own thoughts and experiences.

The conceptualisation is intended to 'capture the essence of the phenomenon – to describe how the experience is organised – its structure' (de Rivera and Kreilkamp, 1981), p. 5). The 'research investigator' seeks to see a pattern emerging after a number of interviews have been completed with the 'research partners' (the interviewees).

This produces a well-considered and detailed conceptualisation of the topic:

> 'As the process moves back and forth between interviews, observations, literature and reflection, gradually becoming more alert to the nuances and patterns of the phenomena' (de Rivera and Kreilkamp, 1981, p.7).

In this research, the conceptualisation specified by de Rivera is the leadership development framework constructed from the analysis of fantasy literature. Thus, conceptual encounter is

a mutual and respectful exploration of the fit between the research partner's views and experiences of a subject, versus those of the research investigator. In the process of exchanging ideas and exploring this 'fit', mutual insight and understanding is gained; and possible improvements to the conceptualisation explored.

A major advantage of the conceptual encounter process is that reflexivity is built into every stage –by research partners who must reflect on their experience and beliefs about leadership; and by the researcher, who will create the 'conceptualisation' and integrate the contributions of the research partners into it. It encourages a full exploration of the topic, and the gradual build-up of understanding and knowledge, by all involved. High levels of trust are required between each research partner and research investigator, because 'fruitfulness depends on both persons feeling comfortable with each another and the situation' (de Rivera and Kreilkamp,1981, p. 80).

The process is that the research investigator meets the first research partner, holds the interview, reflects on the process and learnings, and then may change the questions for the second interview, based on insights generated by the first interview. This process continues, with the questions changing, the areas explored widening, and the conceptualisation becoming more solid, as more and more people contribute thoughts and experiences. By the end, a clear picture and characterisation of the topic has emerged, with new understandings of the subject, and recommended improvements to the conceptualisation.

Once I had constructed three versions of the framework using literary conceptual encounter, I started the process of refining it using traditional conceptual encounter, to create a fourth, improved version.

- Data was then collected using the **traditional conceptual encounter process,** conducting interviews to discover a general understanding about leadership, and discuss the framework and possible improvements. This enabled the creation of the fourth version of the framework.

- This data was collated, interpreted and explored deeply through the **conceptual synthesis** stage. This collated the insights and comments from the conceptual encounters into seven main themes, and examined each of them from four different perspectives: what the leaders said about the topic; what Tolkien's writing said about it; what scholarship and academic papers said about it; and finally, having looked at all viewpoints, what I concluded about that topic, using my own experience and judgement.

b) Data Collection through Literary Conceptual Encounter

In the same way that de Rivera's traditional conceptual encounter explores a topic with interested practitioners in a disciplined, focused way, I decided that a 'literary conceptual encounter' should similarly explore literary fiction in a disciplined, focused way, seeking different perspectives about leadership development. I found the best way for me to identify insights in the fiction was to move frequently back and forth mentally, from the text to my own leadership experiences and knowledge, reflecting on the novel then moving back to the text again, in order to generate new thinking and ideas in my own head: the dance of literary conceptual encounter! I decided to undertake these 'encounters' through a close examination and 'interrogation' of the text.

How is Literary Conceptual Encounter Different to Just Reading the Novel?

It is possible that the Literary Conceptual Process might be initially confused with literary activities such as discourse analysis, traditional literary analysis, or even just reading the novel. It is, in fact, very different in several important ways. Jones (2019, p.2) argues that discourse analysis is: 'the study of language: the way that sentences and utterances are put together to make texts and interactions and how those interactions fit into the social world'. Itis also a way of understanding:

> 'how people use [language] in real life to do things such as joke and argue and persuade and flirt, and to show they are certain kinds of people or belong to certain groups' (Jones, 2019, p.2).

Literary Conceptual Encounter is different to this because it is about deciding on a goal from the start, (to see if some sort of solution can be constructed from a text), choosing a realist text; analysing it for insights, ideas, solutions; using those insights to achieve the goal (e.g. to construct a framework); then exploring and improving the framework with others. Strongly focused on achieving a specific outcome with a constructivist approach, Literary Conceptual Encounter relies strongly on the instinct and experience of the research investigator to draw out insights about concepts, motivation, actions, barriers, etc. It. might analyse language, but only if that language contributes to generating insights for the solution or goal wanted: it is not interested in the language or the writing for its own sake, only how it can be usefully applied to real life, to achieve certain specified outcomes. Similarly, the act of literary analysis is concerned with studying the construction and content of literature for its own literary sake, being:

> 'the systematic examination of a literary work or aspect(s) of a work – a consideration of how the individual parts contribute to the whole. [it] is not just about identifying what literary devices a writer uses; it is about exploring the effects of those devices' (Henly, Stancar Johnson, 2019, p.7).

Simple literary analysis also does not have a specific applied goal, other than the desire to understand the literary work better in some way or another, whereas literary conceptual encounter is totally goal-centred. Another key difference between literary conceptual encounter and the first two techniques is its focus on the *space between disciplines*. The rich area *between* the disciplines can provide interesting opportunities, where the imagination is unconstrained by disciplines, rules, established thinking and tight boundaries. This process considers what has never been thought of - what is missing, or what might not be done at all. The space *between* the disciplines can be very productive.

Finally, Literary Conceptual Encounter is different to simply reading a book, again because of overarching goals it will have for any work of literature, the structured tools it employs to achieve that goal, and the outcomes it works for in analysing that piece of fiction. Just reading a novel may be for leisure or enjoyment, escapism or learning, but it rarely takes such a structured approach, uses such tools or techniques to get something tangible from the book. A fiction book reader may learn or gain wisdom, which may be incidental or accidental, where the *sole* intent of the researcher using Literary Conceptual Encounter is intentionally to '*suck the novel dry*' for insights about the phenomenon being studied. The process may not even be pleasurable or relaxing for the researcher, unlike how just reading a book feels.

Steps in The Literary Conceptual Encounter Process

It is helpful to consider the step-by-step stages of the literary conceptual encounter process, the adaptation of traditional conceptual analysis (Figure 4.3). It must be borne in mind that the literary conceptual encounter process is very subjective. It is a searching and reflective process, that rests greatly on the insight and experience of the reader or researcher. The choice of which Potential Insight Events offer the most riches will tend to relate to issues of current preoccupation

of the reader, such as stress management, or internal conflict, etc, as well as issues of general

interest at the time.

1. CLOSE, FOCUSED READING OF TEXT

2. IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL INSIGHT EVENTS

3. THINKING & REFLECTION TIME

4. FIND POTENTIAL INSIGHT EVENTS

5. INTERROGATE POTENTIAL INSIGHT EVENTS
- What is really. happening and why?
- Is it different to our reality; if so, how?
- Is there anything new, interesting or striking here?
- What is this telling me that is useful to the. problem/framework?
- What have I not seen in the past, and why?

6. MAKING CONCLUSIONS ABOUT INSIGHT EVENTS, ANALYSING AND IDENTIFYING IMPLICATIONS FOR PRODUCT OR SOLUTION

7. CREATE THE PRODUCT, MODEL OR SOLUTION

FIGURE 4.3: STEPS IN THE LITERARY CONCEPTUAL ENCOUNTER PROCESS

Having formulated the initial leadership development framework as a solo activity, I next wanted

to explore and improve it through traditional conceptual encounter with others: one-to-one

discussions with an informed and experienced group of senior leaders who could provide a wider

view and challenge my own thinking. De Rivera and Kreilkamp emphasise the value of being

united with 'a community of others' to 'see experiences with fresh eyes', and thus force 'a renewal' of our thinking (1986, p. 25).

The conceptual encounter discussion is 'solidly grounded in the concrete experience of actual events [related to the research topic] in the lives of persons', who are asked to relive an actual related experience, before considering the 'conceptualisation' of the research investigator (de Rivera and Kreilkamp,1986, p.4). This process ensures the link with other perspectives by 'forcing the investigator to create a new conceptualisation (…) or (…) leading the partner to a new comprehension of his or her experience' (de Rivera and Kreilkamp, 1981, p. 4).

As each research partner is interviewed, the research investigator makes the questions more precise to provide a 'depth and generality' of insight that can 'capture the essence' and more widely represent human experience. The two-step process is well-balanced. The concrete, accurate personal experience provides the reality that the 'elegant' conceptualisation must fit, within the 'deep structure' of the phenomenon. The second step explores the conceptualisation and whether it has truly captured the phenomenon, transforming it for practical purposes. The investigator and the research partner work together to see if it is accurate, whether more work is needed, or further research. The investigator gradually becomes 'more alert to the nuances and patterns of the phenomenon', which has been brought into a new light (de Rivera and Kreilkamp, 1981, p. 4-6). Both the research investigator and the research partner will benefit and learn much from this process.

The process requires that the conceptual encounter questioning is directed by the research investigator almost intuitively, *'feeling'* the direction to be taken to maximise insight about the topic. The research investigator:

> 'must intuit an abstract symbolic form that succeeds in capturing the essential relationships involved in all of the concrete individual experiences. Like Michaelangelo sculpting, he or she must free the form that lies hidden in the rock' (De Rivera and Kreilkampf, 1981, p.6).

Becoming alert to a new way of perceiving the phenomena happens through substantial critical reflection between interviews, aided by repeated analysis in successive interviews. De Rivera and Kreilkampf note that this repetition interspersed with reflection is important because:

> 'the formation of a good conceptualisation is a continual making process as the researcher moves back and forth between interviews, observations, literature and reflection, gradually becoming more alert to the nuances and patterns of the phenomenon' (1981, p.6).

The choice of conceptual encounter for this stage of data collection was straightforward. Alternatives to the one-to-one interview were considered, including detailed questionnaires, and focus group interactions - but they could not have provided the data nor results needed. Questionnaires are essentially uni-directional and static, notoriously poor at measuring interactions, and unable to facilitate the interaction, collaborative discussion, and in-the-moment insights needed to understand the 'deep structures of leadership phenomena' (Conger. 1998, p.109). They are also not recommended for exploratory purposes (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007, p. 356).

A rich, two-way discussion was important, not only to collect responses to the framework, but to work with participants to identify how the leadership phenomena and the framework

could be expanded, refined and improved. Conger discusses how research into leadership often ignores the multi-level, 'nested'. aspects of leadership, so a reflective, collaborative and active process was needed. The discursive semi-structured interview approach used in conceptual encounter was the only method that would serve both purposes of qualitative data collection of leadership, and discursive discussion and recommendations about the framework.

In addition, I was confident that these one-to-one conceptual encounter interviews would provide:

a) Confidentiality: they allowed me to spend personal time with senior leaders that I had worked with previously to explore their views on using the framework;

b) The chance to probe ideas more deeply and thoroughly;

c) Time for both the interviewee and the interviewer to focus down and reflect, and not feel rushed by a wider group of other peoples' thinking processes:

d) The building of trust and openness between the interviewer and participant:

e) A collaborative creative and sharing process that might generate additional ideas and previously unconsidered perspectives.

Potential Problems of the Traditional Conceptual Encounter Method

Research Investigators need to be aware of the possibility of potential problems of this traditional conceptual encounter technique. De Rivera and Kreilkamp (1981, p.13) comment that the immense potential power of the conceptual encounter technique depends greatly on the research investigator, but only partly on the research partners. Some reflexivity and honesty are needed by the research investigator about any interviewing skills they may need. Descriptions of the phenomenon are subjective, and may be remembered poorly by the research partners; manifestation of a phenomenon may only be realised after the interview; or research partners may be 'defensive rather than authentic, for whatever reasons they may have' (De Rivera and Kreilkamp, 1981, p.13).

The research partner may try to please the investigator or may want their experiences to simply 'fit' the model or framework as closely as possible, despite the real situation. The validity of this process rests on the honesty and openness of the interaction, and the conscious or unconscious goals of the research participant, so much reflection must be undertaken about the quality of the relationship and interaction.

De Rivera and Kreilkamp (1981) list additional potential traps and problems possible within the process, which are summarised here:

1. The research partner may not actually understand his or her own experiences, or not be able to voice them accurately.

2. The investigator may not have a wide experience herself or himself of the phenomenon, so may not fully grasp what the research partner is describing.

3. Words and terms may be adequate for a truly accurate description of the phenomenon.

Recruitment of Research Partners for Traditional Conceptual Encounter

The research participants for the conceptual encounter process were recruited from a group of senior university leaders, because it was considered that they could be expected to show a range of contemporary leadership attitudes and opinions. I believe that Australia is overall quite committed to investing in and boosting leadership development, more so than the UK in my own consulting experience, so I felt that Australian leaders could provide an informed and interesting input to the research.

Because an important feature of a conceptual encounter sample frame is 'the person's willingness to participate genuinely' (de Rivera,1981, p.89), the researcher's own global professional and consulting networks were accessed to identify these leaders. Individuals

from a university client group from within my Australian network were invited to participate. This was a group of leaders who were especially committed to leadership, so I felt they would provide an excellent contribution.

There was another reason for choosing this organisation as a source of participants. Research participants had all previously completed a four-month advanced leadership program with me in 2016, which gave me the chance to present a basic version of the Leadership Development Framework. This was part of a previous PhD programme that I had started at a different university. This programme provided significant experience in practising, discussing and debating leadership, as well as working with 360-degree feedback, and personal development goals. A detailed explanation of the leadership development framework, then called a leadership model, was taught to the 2016 participants through programme teaching and coaching time.

I changed university just after that time, and while the feedback interviews were not used on the subsequent PhD with my current university, it meant that this group of. participants were very clear about the Leadership Development Framework, and how it worked in practice. Naturally, because they knew the initial framework well, and most had used it in their leadership with their own staff for three to four years, they were a logical choice to be part of this research, so participation was requested, and 15 senior managers responded. They turned out to be a useful and knowledgeable group for framework feedback and ideas.

So all research participants were senior leaders, with high levels of strategic, operational and budgetary responsibility. The research partners all had to have a minimum of 5 years senior leadership experience – in reality, most asserted that they had had over 20 years. They were employed in the same large higher education institution, but with widely divergent jobs and roles, situated across a broad geographical area, and many locations.

The Chief Operating Officer was contacted, and agreement given, for these past participants to be invited to be involved in this research. I was assigned an excellent Administrator to arrange the interview dates and times - no easy matter, with fifteen exceptionally busy people plus the researcher, and a nine-to eleven-hour time difference.

It is not possible to know what percentage of the total participant and coach individuals had volunteered, because only participants from the last two programs were approached, plus their internal coaches from the programs: about 35 people in total. Of the two participant groups, some had moved to other departments for promotion or experience, and some had left the university: these numbers or contact details were not available to me.   In reply, 15 individuals agreed to take part, and returned their consent forms to me.

The Oxford Brookes Privacy and Data Protection Notice was sent out to participants later, so participants would not feel bombarded with information all at once, and could make informed choices about involvement in any further research activity. Oxford Brookes University's Ethics Committee (UREC Form, April 2018, Item 2.5) recommends that the researcher must be sure of the participant's ability to give free consent. Therefore, I ensured that no dependent relationship existed between me and the research partners; no report would be made to top management, nor would research related to the partners' careers be influenced in any way by anything they said during the interview. Research partners were assured that refusal to take part in the study would have no impact on their position or studies.

The documentation is all contained in the appendices, and is as follows:

a. The Invitation letter to participate in the research, 10th May, 2019 (Appendix 1) All research participants were sent pre-interview emails inviting them to become involved, explaining what the research was about, and what would be asked of them, along with 3 other documents;

b. The Participant Information Sheet attached to the letter (Appendix 2). The Participant Information Sheet was included, explaining the purpose of the study, the benefits to them for taking part, why they have been involved, and the voluntary nature of their involvement. Confidentiality was explained, details about the storage of their information, and what will happen as a result of the research were included.

c. Consent Forms were sent out, and all were signed and returned before the interviews were completed (Appendix 3).

d. The list of semi-structured interview questions devised for the conceptual encounters is included in Appendix 5.

As expected, participants proved articulate, thoughtful, and enthusiastic about the subject of leadership, and were very willing to be involved. Only participants from the last two programs, about 35 people, were approached, because of their exposure to the initial framework. Of the two participant groups, some had moved to other departments for promotion or experience, and some had left the university: these numbers or contact details were not available for further discussion. In reply, 15 individuals agreed to take part, and returned their consent forms to me.

All interviews took place between May and June, 2019. Fifteen participants were interviewed using Zoom, in the traditional conceptual encounter approach. During the interview, many of these details were explained again to the research partners at the start to avoid confusion; participants were told that they could stop or withdraw from the process at any time. As we were conducting these discussions on Skype, then on Zoom,

the research partners were asked if they would be content to have the interview confidentially recorded. All of them agreed without any hesitation or reservation.

A summary of the Research Partner Information is shown in Figure 4.4:

The Research Partner Profile

Ref.Code	Pseudonym	Gender	Coach?	Job Level	No. of Staff	Years of Leadership	Fantasy Lit.Fan?
1	Nathan	M	Y	Senior Level Leader	150	20+	yes
2	Steph	F	Y	Senior Level Leader	40+	15+	no
3	Jane	F	Y	Senior Level Leader	150	30+	no
4	David	M	Y	Senior Level Leader	120	30+	yes
5	Mary	F	Y	Senior Level Leader	2	15	yes
6	Nicola	F	Y	Middle Level Leader	10	15	no
7	Robert	M	Y	Senior Level Leader	25	20	yes
8	Maxim	M	N	Middle Level Leader	10	10	no
9	Ben	M	Y	Senior Level Leader	25	26	yes
10	Trent	M	N	Senior Level Leader	50	30+	no
11	Teresa	F	Y	Senior Level Leader	65	20	yes
12	Soriya	F	N	Middle Level Leader	6	18	no
13	Judy	F	N	Middle Level Leader	1	20	yes
14	Ruth	F	Y	Senior Level Leader	8	25+	Yes
15	**Jenny**	**F**	**Y**	**Senior Level Leader**	**5**	**10**	**No**
15 Leaders:		**9x F/ 6xM**	**7 coaches**	**11 Senior/4 Middle Level**		**Av: 20+yrs**	**8xY 7xN**

FIGURE 4.4 RESEARCH PARTNER INFORMATION

The Conceptual Encounter Interviews

In accordance with de Rivera's method, semi-structured interviews were devised (Appendix 2), and a list of questions was then finalised. The questions changed as they became more refined as the interviews proceeded, as did the time commitment – from 2 hours to around 1.5 hours – because it was felt that the initial full-time estimate was not needed. The semi-structured list of interview questions was also altered slightly for each participant, to carefully focus on his or her main leadership concerns.

During the interviews, I welcomed each research partner, explained the nature of the research, what would be asked of them, and how long the interview would probably last. I explained the research fully and, in order to generate some contextual understanding during the interviews, I explored how things had been in the organisation since their Leadership Programme in 2016, specific challenges and stressors, promotions, changes in jobs or structures, or the latest leadership issues that they were now facing. This contextualisation was important because it helped me to gain greater insight into their mood, comments and experiences within their role in the organisation. It also helped them to focus and reflect on leadership again – and on the strategic and operational changes and problems that had occurred recently.

As the interviews continued, it was important to spontaneously and carefully build additional questions from what has been said during the interview, building on my prepared schema to follow specific lines of thinking. When we had exhausted key aspects of the research partner's experience and views of leadership, I introduced and explained

the conceptual framework that I had constructed, reminding them of the work they had done previously about it on the leadership programme. Most remembered all or partial sections of the initial framework, and all were happy to discuss how it fitted their own views, experiences and perceptions as a leader. They were asked if and how they used the framework; what experiences they had had; whether it had helped them; and whether they taught it to their staff. Finally, they were asked to comment on the structure and process of the framework; and whether anything was missing or could be improved.

As more interviews are held, 'the conceptualisation becomes more precise and acquires depth and generality' (De Rivera, 1981: 4). In this way, the initial framework was explored, refined, and supplemented, and became a product of thoughtful insight, experience and collaborative inquiry. An in-depth analysis of the interviews and an analysis of their data is presented in Chapter 6.

Data from the interviews was then typed up professionally and confidentially from the recordings, and insights drawn out from the sessions. Several research partners had offered outstanding insights and perceptivity, and all expressed enthusiasm for this research process and the initial framework. The participants were informed that they could be given a summary of the thesis at completion, should they require it. Many of the participants said they were happy to be involved again with leadership thinking, and the framework. The process reminded them of key course concepts, and definitely both of the parties of the conceptual encounters benefitted from the stimulating discussions.

Operational Difficulties with the Interviews

1. Technology
After some problems, Zoom was used in preference to Skype for the interviews: the recording video facilities proved much more effective on Zoom. Several other early

technological problems surfaced, but these were soon rectified. The client's systems did not work well with commercial software at that time, so the use of Zoom was difficult for some of the research partners.

2. Time Zone Differences, and Length of the Interview

At the time of the interviews, there was an extensive time difference between the research participants and me. While I was used to this from my international consulting work, it proved hard to focus on careful, effective interviewing at 2am in the morning! Initially, I scheduled three or four interviews during the night, but gradually spread them to two interviews per day, starting at 5am.

Originally, I had anticipated the interviews taking about two to three hours. While I did not feel that this length of time was a practical proposition for these hard-pressed leaders, I knew a reasonable chunk of time was required. In practice, some research partners talked much about leadership, whereas some did not. On average, interviews lasted between one hour to one and a half hours: that period worked well in the situation, eliciting much useful data.

3. Distance

Cultural differences were not problematic. My previous extensive work with this client meant that I was familiar with its organisational pressures, issues and culture. However, face to face physical contact might have worked better for the in-depth interviews, especially when probing the full personal leadership experience. I had previously coached all the research partners, which is why I believed that online interviewing would work: we knew each other already. It would have been challenging for the conceptual encounter interviews to be only on-line if I had not known them individually beforehand. It is possible that ambiguous or tricky issues would not have been raised, nor a full and honest discussion of personal leadership issues been easy at that time. The global Covid crises of 2020 and 2021 have made individuals far more comfortable with long-distance online personal communication, however, so the 2019 problems of online interviewing may have become less apparent.

c) Analysing the Data through Conceptual Synthesis

Thematic analysis was considered as a possible method of analysis for these discussions, as a flexible yet rigorous methodology for qualitative research. It is a widely used and increasingly popular method of analysing qualitative data for research purposes (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke and Braun, 2017, p. 18). However, on further reading, this approach seemed more useful to a study that is aimed at inductively generating conceptualisations or frameworks from the traditional conceptual encounter interviews themselves. This is different to my own research in that a framework had already been created from literary analysis and literary conceptual encounter. In my research, the subsequent traditional conceptual encounter interviews are used to generate additional creativity and insights about that framework, as a creative and collaborative act, and provide insights into its context, the phenomenon of leadership. Terry, Hadfield, Clarke and Braun (2017) state that:

> 'Themes are developed from coding and working with the data and codes, rather than pre-existing the coding process. They are the outcome of the analytic process, rather than a starting point. They are not imagined or anticipated early on, and do not drive analytic direction' (p. 19).

Conceptual Synthesis was an effective way to analyse and examine the data, choose and apply from the many themes the most useful insights for the framework, in an evidence-based way. This can be seen in Chapter 7. The first step in conceptual synthesis is to group the insights and suggestions into shared themes. After rereading the comments from the research investigators and the co-created insights (listed in Chapter 6), it was possible to group the insights and recommendations into seven main themes (Figure 7.1). These themes were then explored and analysed one by one from multiple perspectives: what the leaders had said; what Tolkien's writing had said; what academic writing had said; and finally from a concluding summary and judgment of my own, from the evidence presented.

This final stage of conceptual synthesis was deciding which themes to incorporate and improve the framework and modify it accordingly.

I then saw how useful it would be to group the main stages of the framework into Modules of similar functions. These modules made sense conceptually, and now provide a ready-made structure for leadership development programs and leader goal-based coaching. This continuous reflection is central to the development of new imaginative products: different improvements are continually coming to mind, and care should be taken to be aware of them, constantly monitoring for when they emerge.

Ensuring Quality in the Methodology

Ensuring quality research standards are maintained is a difficult problem for qualitative studies generally, because of the multiplicity and variety of 'theoretical, epistemological, approaches' which 'all represent [different] ways of meaning' (Flick, 2008, p. xi), involving widely different tools and alternative methods.

However, Cypress (2019) argues that qualitative researchers 'must be proactive and take responsibility in ensuring the rigor of a research study', defining it as 'the quality or state of being thorough and accurate', asserting that rigor 'equates to the concepts [of] reliability and validity'. (Cypress, 2019, p. 253). This research design contains various elements intended to ensure quality standards are maintained throughout:

a) Review by Peers

Flick argues that effort must be made to counter premature conclusions and explanations as a strategy for ensuring quality (Flick, 2008, p. 35). One way of achieving this is to build

into the process the use of peer debriefing and review. This allows research partners to challenge the outcomes of the research, what Flick calls 'member validation', and provides the opportunity to the research investigator to 'integrate rejection' into the process. By building this into the process through traditional conceptual encounter, I can ensure that the framework is useful to leaders, giving them the opportunity for rejection and alternative viewpoints. This helps ensure the quality of both the final product, and the on-going research process.

b) Triangular Monitoring and Reflexivity.

The quality assurance principle of triangulation is not part of a qualitative methodology, because the idiosyncratic nature of qualitative research makes. consistency and corroboration impossible. However, Abdalla, Oliveira, Azevedo and Gonzalez (2018) maintain that this is a contested field, with many arguments for and against triangulation in qualitative research, since the inception of the concept in the 1950's. These authors define triangulation as:

> 'being able to look at the same phenomenon, or research topic, through more than one source of data. Information coming from different angles may be used to confirm, develop or illuminate the research problem…[it] limits personal and methodological biases, and increases the possibility of reproducing the findings (p. 71).

I like the idea of triangulation, and the prospect of considering the research from several different angles. Using it in qualitative methodology, the researcher should try to be as open and reflexive as possible, to identify biases that would obscure and hinder any data collection, by checking thinking and assumptions at every stage. Consequently, Figure 4.4 illustrates a simplified triangulation process that has been incorporated into this research, as a way of confirming that the framework is on the track and not getting exclusively focused on my own concerns: a potential danger in constructivist methodology. In this

research, it is used as a monitoring process, so triangular monitoring might be a better name, and a useful process.

Flick (2008, p.43) argues that triangulation can also be used to extend the knowledge available in the study, and certainly that is the objective in this research. Self-reflexivity is used continually in my initial literary conceptual analysis, where questions are asked like, 'am I making the correct conclusion from this passage?', and. 'does this section of the literature justify this assumption?'

Next, the conceptual encounter process enables much feedback about the conceptualisation and the phenomena being studied, so the dominant thought processes and conclusions are continually challenged. Finally, conceptual synthesis forces the researcher to look again at a range of opinions – the piece of fiction, academic writing, the leaders' insights, before using her own judgment to decide which to use and how to incorporate these sources of information. Bias, subjectivity and perceptual blockages can never be eliminated from a qualitative process, nor should they be as they are part of the research data, but awareness and scrutiny are another matter.

In the pursuit of improved thinking processes, and hopefully limiting any bias, my triangular monitoring seems to work well, based on my subjective assessment. Having the research partners commenting on the framework maintains the quality of the framework, as well as provides additional thoughts and possibilities for it. Figure 4.5 shows this simplified triangulation process.

c) Strengthening the Framework through the Input of Others

The quality process also strengthens the transferability of the framework, because a group of experienced leaders have considered it at depth and contributed various insights. This strengthens its credibility with other leaders, ensuring that any problems are identified early. Having an effective and practical worked example within the research enables the researcher to be able to draw wider conclusions about the methodology of using literature to stimulate problem solving, and to show that it works. This constant monitoring will continue as the framework enters the world of the practitioner, to continue to be improved and developed by the input of others.
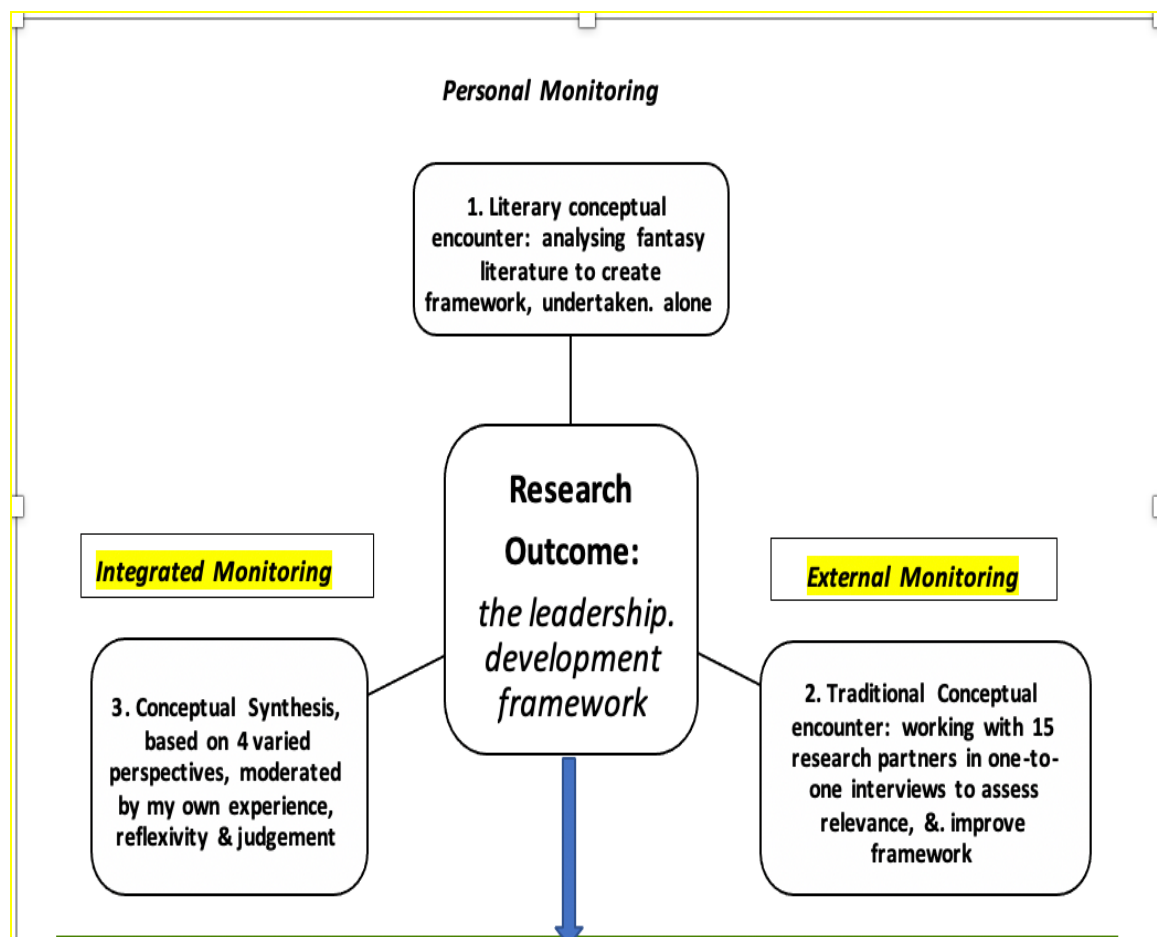

FIGURE 4.5: TRIANGULAR MONITORING BUILT INTO THIS RESEARCH DESIGN

d) Quality Assurance within the Interviews.

Quality assurance has been built into the structure. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2013,

p.180) comment that it is important that certain elements are incorporated into the qualitative

research interviews by any researcher, including sensitivity to context, an exploration of goals,

anxieties, and feelings of real-life leaders, a careful focus on their inner worlds of participants, the

showing of empathy, activities to relax the research partners, the recognising and managing of

power and identity in the relationships, and an identifying of any areas of career concern. These

were all considered in the process.

Ensuring validity in interviewing could be said to be about 'Do respondents tell the truth, the whole

truth, and nothing but the truth?' (Weiss,1994, p.147). This seems a strange question in terms of the

conceptual encounter interviews, representing a methodology which contains the implicit

expectation that research participants will be honest, thoughtful and clear-sighted, only requiring

time and a discussion resting on a relationship of trust for them to surface their insights and

thoughts to the research investigator. However, the dangers of 'looking good' to the investigator,

or trying to please her, might be more of an issue, but, for confident and experienced senior leaders,

in a one-to-one meeting of confidentiality, gentle challenge, and trust, this should not be a problem.

e). Transparency of the Process

The sample size was quite small, in keeping with the need to counter in any complexity present,

and to consider it at the required depth, exploring any connections to the model that may arise

(p.51). Transparency of process was maintained at all stages, with data being available for scrutiny,

and all stages and methods were open to examination by participants at any stage if they had

wished (p.182-3). The research sample was a homogeneous group of middle managers, close to an

'ideal sample' because they were chosen for their senior leadership experience, the relevance of the

research to their everyday lives and needs as leaders, their level of commitment to the process, and

to their related life experience to that point as successful middle managers with leadership

experience and aspirations.

This sample was chosen because they had undertaken one or more of my leadership programs, and I knew that they were committed and motivated leaders. However, this represents a bias in itself – more research is necessary to try this framework out with less enthusiastic leaders.

4. Limitations of the Research Methodology; Ethics and Final Steps

The limitations contained within this overall research methodology suggest that this thesis provides an *exploration* of the issues, rather than a set of conclusive and definitive findings: as a new methodology, it is a start. While this is often the case in ambiguous leadership research, it is acknowledged that more research is needed to balance the methodological limitations listed below.

One limitation was that the fifteen research partners were well-known to me, having been coached by me over four months or more in the past, and may have wanted to provide positive responses to the framework. Every effort was made to counter this, by repeatedly and specifically asking for improvements and problems, and emphasising that honest feedback was wanted at this stage, but this factor must be kept in mind. I wanted to hear their insights and views, as they had been introduced to an early version of the framework, and many had used the framework in a work setting.

Conducting the interviews by Skype or Zoom over a long distance is not ideal for the formation of a trusting and open relationship. A face-to-face meeting over a coffee might have been more conducive to research participants opening up to me about leadership problems. I was very focused on tone of voice and manner of communication, as a way of

picking up any hesitation or unspoken thoughts, but face-to-face discussion might have been better in this respect. On the other hand, we could use the time more effectively because there was no travelling time, and I did know each research partner well.

Some initial time was lost because of technical problems, so pre-interview IT support would have been useful at both locations. More time is needed on getting this right next time, even before any of the interviews are conducted.

Finally, there is a danger, because the research design appears quite complicated, that readers may be confused by the description of the process. It might have been more straightforward to devise a different worked example; one that was not a leadership development framework, but something quite different - for example, a program on conflict management, or assertiveness. The topic of the worked example being a leadership development framework is perhaps too close to the overall aim, of seeing whether fantasy literature could be useful to leadership developers as a tool for developing leaders. While the outcomes of the research are of considerable benefit to the practitioner as well as the researcher and academic, it is possible that the research methodology would have been easier to understand had the topic not tried to score quite so many points in application usefulness!

Ethical Considerations and Issues

Interviews were conducted confidentially and on a one-to-one basis. The main focus was on understanding the nature of leadership, and considering whether the leadership development framework was relevant, effective and could be improved. However, it was important to be aware if any difficult, confidential or upsetting leadership issues had

arisen. The nature of the 'intensely personal encounter' between investigator and partner is of the utmost importance:

> 'Its fruitfulness depends on both persons feeling comfortable with each other and the situation so that they can try to be completely open and honest with each other…there is an atmosphere of partnership within the structure of objective inquiry' (de Rivera, 2012, p.219).

Adverse attitudes were also not anticipated from the interviews because this process is intended to be positive and enabling, focusing directly on the research partner's thoughts and feelings. All the same, research partners' body language and responses were monitored continuously during the interview for any uncomfortable responses or reluctance to reply. I had set up experienced advisers to be available, if required, but this was not needed. The research partners were all senior managers, well used to discussing leadership at work, and exploring the relevance of frameworks and leadership tools.

All research partners were told that they could stop the interview at any time if they wanted, and also withdraw from the research at any time. They were told that they could contact me after the interviews if they had any subsequent questions or comments. However, no problems were encountered before, during or after the interviews. Research partners were assured that data would not be shared with anyone, and that when it was written up in the thesis, it would be anonymised. Security of data was discussed, and research partners were informed that the data would be kept in a locked cabinet in my office.

Final Steps in the Research Methodology Process

The Framework was developed and improved through literary conceptual analysis using fantasy literature; it was then discussed through traditional conceptual encounter, receiving

feedback from 15 senior managers. Their insights were collected and analysed though conceptual synthesis, and the best ones integrated into the final framework design. All that remains at this stage in the process is for the researcher to reflect on two things: the final version of the leadership development framework, to assess whether anything is missing or has undue priority, and the effectiveness of the overall practical applied literature process. These are undertaken in. Chapter 8, along with a consideration of the recommended next steps of the research; any limitations of, and improvements to, the process; and ideas for further research into its development, robustness and practical application.

Summary

New methodologies are needed to provide leader developers with the tools to use imagination as a stimulant to re-conceptualise the future; create new approaches for leadership development; collaborate across boundaries to solve previously unseen problems; and challenge existing ways of thinking and working. By using Tolkien's imaginary, secondary worlds to explore leadership development, we can apply the 'lens' of one discipline to solve the real-life problems within another. By analysing, observing and questioning the actions and beliefs of Tolkien's leaders, new thoughts about leadership development and performance emerge, a fresh energy for change is generated, and new versions of a framework for advancing leadership development in the real (primary) world can be created.

In this chapter, the methodological, ontological and epistemological approaches selected to address the critical research aims listed at the beginning of this thesis have been outlined. I have shown how a unusual mixture of research tools has been devised and applied – the practical applied literature process, literary conceptual encounter, traditional conceptual

encounter and conceptual synthesis – to further the aims and objectives of the study, to fill a gap, and a need, in both research literature and professional practice.

Chapter 5 now illustrates how this process of 'literary conceptual encounter' was used with Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy to create three gradually improving versions of a framework for leadership development.

Chapter 5: The Literary Conceptual Encounter.

I have explored how fantasy literature can be a source of intellectual challenge and stimulation, and a way of boosting leadership capability. The literature reviews identified a gap in leadership theory and development– the neglect of structured and imaginative fantasy-based approaches to problem-solving or solution generation, and to leadership development. Chapter 4 explained the practical applied literature process. This chapter now illustrates the 'worked example' of this, using fantasy literature to demonstrate a potential new and useful methodology. Using novels by Tolkien, I will show how literary conceptual encounter can work. The aim of this method is to obtain and apply deep insights from literature to aid leadership and create a 'clash of worlds' – a liminal dislocation and an intellectual 'shock' of ideas and context, intended to stimulate creativity, innovation and renewed energy. By the end of the chapter, I will have used literary conceptual encounter to create a framework, and have the framework ready for the traditional conceptual encounter process in Chapter 6.

The 'clash of worlds' refers both to the forced conjoining of the two different disciplines of literature with leadership development, but also of the mind-set and experiences of the researcher-reader and the author's work. This 'clash' produces new ideas about leadership: suddenly a wider choice of actions is presented. Shusterman (1978) refers to this as a 'plurality of practice', created by a performatist approach of the reader actively interpreting and creating the response.

In the literary conceptual encounter process, it is essential that any fiction used (or 'encountered') takes a strong realist approach, in terms of whatever 'primary world' (real world) concept is to be studied. it must contain truthful and apt observations about the primary

world because literary conceptual encounter can only use fiction that is capable of providing real insights, genuine truths, observations, and relevant perspectives. It cannot be a superficial piece of fiction, in terms of consistency of character-portrayal, psychological depth and recognisable truth.

Judging the quality of fiction has long been an area of contention in the field of literary studies, with 'The Great Tradition' listing by Leavis (1948) of the great works of literature, creating bitter conflict throughout the 'canon wars' of the 1980's and 1990's. The clash was about who could judge, define, assess and promote what top quality literature actually means. Schaffer comments that the literary canon has become unified in the twenty-first century, with increased fluidity and creativity in its use:

> 'Elements of canon-wars discourse survive today, although directed at how we read rather than what we read…In the generation since the canon wars, Victorianists have come to embrace all the texts we can get. The next generation of Victorianists may have a different task: to accommodate all the methodologies we can use' (2018, p. 597).

This study is an example of one of those new twenty-first methodologies that might cause problems for traditional Victorianists! It espouses the '*how*' of reading fantasy literature, as well as a much broader '*why*'.

Tolkien was selected as an outstanding fantasist, who had, because of his writing excellence, established the fantasy genre as 'the dominant literary mode of the twentieth century' (Shippey, 2001, p. vii). He wrote 'a deeply serious response to … the major issues of his century' (Shippey, 2001, p.ix), and did not avoid painful truths about the world, nor the likely implications of his characters failing - painting a picture of intimidation, murder, and violence in the Scouring of the Shire at the end of *The Return of the King*.

In his 1939 essay, '*On Fairy Stories'*, Tolkien wrote that 'every writer making a secondary world … hopes that the peculiar quality of this secondary world …are derived from Reality, or are flowing into it.' (155). The 'realness' of the secondary world helps to provide insights into our primary world, from a detached and 'jarred' perspective. Tolkien's friend, C.S. Lewis, understood the practical benefits of using a secondary world to re-perceive and improve a primary one: 'By putting bread, gold, horse, apple, or the very roads into a myth, we do not retreat from reality: we rediscover it.' (Zombardo and Isaacs, 2004, p. 15). In creating this extraordinarily rich secondary world of conflict, heroism, anxiety, self-doubt, friendship, humour, death and betrayal, Tolkien 'speaks to us of reality' (Ulrich, 2005, p. 91).

Tolkien locates this 'primary world' realism within fantasy and mythology because it is to him one and the same. Shippey comments that Tolkien 'as a philologist and an infantry veteran, was deeply conscious of 'the strong continuity' between that heroic world and the modern one (Shippey, 2001, p. xxviii). Despite secondary world strangeness, Middle-earth is a world that we can fully recognise. Tolkien comments: 'Mine is not an 'imaginary' world, but an imaginary historical moment on Middle earth – which is our habitation' (*Letters*, p. 244). Tolkien's power of conveying this realism in fantasy is because he writes of *The Lord of the Rings,* and the other things he feels passionate about in this real, 'primary' world: 'from the beginning it began to catch up in its narrative folds visions of most of the things that I have most loved or hated' (1900, Letter 199, p.257). Spacks comments that:

> 'Tolkien removes his fiction from the realm of 'real life', only to be enabled to talk more forcefully about reality… its issues are profoundly relevant to human problems' (Spacks, 2004, in Zimbardo and Isaacs, p. 65).

The study makes a close analysis of leadership-related events involving the characters of Lord Aragorn, and the High Steward, Denethor, from The Lord of the Rings. (Tolkien, 2012; 1955). By analysing these characters through the focus of leadership (i.e. considering descriptions, events, incidents, conflicts, successes, and outcomes from the perspective of leadership and leadership development issues), ideas emerge, which, combined with my own professional experiences, may provide different ways of theorising, explaining, and solving problems. According to Garth (2003) Tolkien's writing reflects a nuanced and sophisticated understanding, illustrating how leaders attempt to defend important values against destruction, and how his 'individuals are transfigured by extraordinary circumstances' (2003, 305).

Many of his characters face developmental journeys that include the complex leadership dilemmas we recognise today: the full nature of servant leadership, difficult followership issues, identity crises, power misuse, poor resilience, a lack of ethics and morality, constant stress, burnout, anxiety, resistance, and a lack of confidence in making decisions. His fiction repeatedly illustrates examples of strong leaders: Gandalf rallying and bringing together the allied forces to fight Sauron; Aragorn holding his Dunedáin together through the terrifying Paths of the Dead, only by his courage and strength of will; Faramir motivating and leading a small guerrilla group to sabotage enemy forces; Sam desperately carrying Frodo on his back to Mount Doom, to achieve the task of destroying the One Ring. He shows us their human flaws too: Frodo fails in the end by succumbing to the power of The Ring; Gandalf seems secretive and noncommunicative at times; Boromir is full of pride and arrogance; Aragorn is wracked with self-doubt; and Denethor gives in to suicidal hopelessness and despair. Tolkien frequently described problems of leadership in the three books of *The Lord of the Rings*, allowing the reader to interpret through the novels his beliefs about how leaders should behave, and how their behaviours were fostered.

In some ways, Tolkien seems like a man of today, instead of one who was born more than a century ago: his values and some of attitudes seem very modern. To explore what Tolkien was communicating in *The Lord of the Rings,* it is helpful to consider the nature of his '*Implicit Leadership Theories*', which can be illuminated by an examination of his life and early works.

The Biographical Context of Tolkien's Leadership Writing.

Tolkien was born in South Africa in 1892, to English parents, Edith and Arthur Tolkien. His father was a bank manager in Bloemfontein, and the family lived comfortably. Both grandfathers were failed entrepreneurs who had individually become bankrupt before Tolkien was born, but both had great pride in their history. Tolkien was often told stories of bold and heroic military deeds of his ancestors; and of the family fleeing the French Revolution in 1794, to become clock, watch and piano makers in London (Carpenter, 2001, 34). This may have enriched his imagination, as. 'Somehow he appears to have gotten inside the mindset of the true adventurer, in a way which few who have not done such things can really understand' (Currie and Lewis, 2016, p.53).

In 1895, while the family were on holiday in England, Tolkien's father died in South Africa. Flieger comments that the one-year geographic separation from his father, followed by news of his unexpected death would have had a profound impact on the young Tolkien, who frequently wrote of relationships between older and younger men, and sudden unexplained disappearances of older male figures (Flieger, 1997, p.14). Certainly, a deep sense of loss of permeates his work, with Tolkien having understood from early experience 'that time was a robber, carrying swiftly and irrevocably away all that is most precious' (Flieger, p.14). His mother, Edith, converted to Catholicism in 1900, alienating both sides of her family, and

leading to personal poverty and anxiety. When Edith died in 1908 from diabetes, it would have been hard for the two young Tolkien brothers to cope if not for their guardian, a Catholic priest.

Early home-schooling enabled him to pass the entrance exam to King Edward's School in 1900. Education, learning and self-development had been central to their lives. The need to develop one's inner resources became later almost a religious duty for Tolkien, and a core belief. He wrote in 1956 that the individual is a 'seed with its innate vitality and heredity, its capacity to grow and develop. A great part of the changes in a man are no doubt unfoldings of the patterns hidden in the seed' (*Letters*, p. 240).

Self-development and self-learning underlie the hobbits' stories, which Tolkien deliberately created as:

> 'a vision of a simple and calculable people in simple and long-settled circumstances – on a journey far from settled home into strange lands and dangers. Especially if they are provided with some strong motive for endurance and adaption. Though without any high motive people do change (or either reveal the latent) on journeys' *(Letters, p. 240).*

The self-development 'journey' could be Tolkien's own early life story, particularly as he most emphatically describes himself as a hobbit (Carpenter, 2016, p. 234). Every one of his successful leaders grow spiritually, or in perspective and understanding, by the end of the novels. Those characters who do not grow and learn, stuck in their rigid thinking and limited perspective, tend to have a miserable, premature ending, like Denethor, Wormtongue and Saruman. To Tolkien, learning and growth is a leadership imperative which determines the quality of human life.

Tolkien's early childhood was unstable: he moved country at 4 years old, changing schools twice in three years, and living in twelve different homes by the age of twelve, plus the tragic death of his mother. Tolkien's religious belief became stronger after his mother's death: 'the premature death of his mother would have an enormous and lasting effect on Tolkien', because it 'it drew him even more closely to the church.' (Snyder, 2013, p.4). Tolkien associated Catholicism always with his mother and her sacrifice: 'when she died his religion took the place in his affections that she had previously occupied. The consolation that it provided was emotional as well as spiritual.' (Carpenter, p. 51). Her death made him a pessimist, with deep private bouts of profound despair and a 'deep sense of impending loss. Nothing was safe. Nothing would last. No battle would be won forever' (Carpenter, pp. 50-51).

This sense of fragility of this world and the imminent feeling of disaster resulted in a frightening world of impending chaos - as with the threat of evil in Mordor, and in the deep, dark places of the world. The feeling of loss is poignant when the magical creatures of Middle-earth, such as the elves, make their final departure from Middle-earth. Throughout Middle Earth are the signs of an impressive past that is now lost: huge decaying statues such as the Argonath, ruined hill forts, destroyed old towers and villages. Memories and legends of the past are constantly occupying the thoughts of Tolkien's characters, and to Aragorn, they live within him constantly.

The formation and creation of this world in Tolkien's imagination would have been an emotional and psychological comfort for him: there is stability in his fictional worlds, because, even with constant conflict, its settings are reliable and predictable. Middle Earth is a semi-Christian world, with the dichotomies of good/evil, free will/control, and

hate/forgiveness, providing space for personal choice: 'freedom of will implies a structured universe, a universe like the Christian one in that only through submission to the Good can true freedom be attained-' (Spacks, 2004, in Zimbardo and Isaacs, p.56). Tolkien wrote that 'the religious element is absorbed into the story and its symbolism' (Letters, p.172), asserting that '*The Lord of the Rings* is of course fundamentally a religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision' (*Letters,* p.172).

However, as always, Tolkien is more nuanced. Shippey sees contradictions in the deliberate mediating '*between Christian and Pagan*,' (Shippey, 2005, p.250). Stacks is emphatic that '*The Lord of the Rings* is not a Christian work: 'no character, good or bad, performs an act of worship…no deity is evident on the side of good or of evil' (Spacks, 2004, in Zimbardo and Isaacs, p. 53). Stephens writes that Tolkien 'was aware of the pitfalls of his story becoming too like a parody of Christianity' (2012, p.217), so care and subtlety became important. By making Gandalf's role on Middle-earth to support but not direct or coerce the hobbits, Tolkien reconciled the northern pagan concepts of doom and fate with the Christian concepts of grace and free will: 'Middle-earth is Tolkien's ideal medieval world where both pagan and Christian can coexist without contradiction*'* (Snyder, 2013, p.169)*.*

*M*orality is Tolkien's unifying framework for Middle-earth: combining his love of learning and self-development with a Christian sense of responsibility for actions, and care for others:

> 'morals should be a guide to our human purposes, the conduct of our lives: (a) the ways in which our individual talents can be developed without waste or misuse; and (b) without injuring our kindred or interfering with their development. (Beyond this and higher lies self-sacrifice for love)' (*Letters*, p. 399).

Tolkien 'wanted the mythological and legendary stories to express his own moral view of the universe' (Carpenter, 2000, p. 128), which includes selfless love. In tales of the sacrifices of Frodo, Sam, Aragorn, Gandalf, Boromir and Faramir: 'Tolkien can combine the 'sacrificial and ascetic dimensions of early Christianity with the heroism of early Anglo-Saxon warrior society' (Snyder, 2013, p.167). He further demonstrates the importance of Christian forgiveness and unity, as shown in the changing relationship of Legolas and Gimli: 'when each (Gimli and Legolas) hold the good of his own people above the good of the whole, they war, and warring, they endanger the whole' (Zimbardo, 2004, in Zimbardo and Isaacs).

At school, it was close male friendships that ignited his brilliance - his ambition to make a difference and his love of fellowship - a central theme in his novels. The Tea Club and Barrovian Society (T.C.B.S.). was 'his first intellectual community, a band of brothers who conspired against the modernist tendencies of the day' (Snyder, 2013, p. 5) with a genuine joy in being together. This was followed by 'The Inklings', a stimulating male friendship group at Oxford University. This love of male fellowship is reflected in *The Lord of the Rings,* showing that a group of comrades can work together, care for and save each other, and bring out each other's strengths. After university, Tolkien joined the Lancashire Fusiliers, arriving participating in the Battle of the Somme in 1916. Two close friends were killed at the Battle of the Somme, and one had sent Tolkien a deathbed injunction to write and make a difference in the world. Subsequently, invalided home from France, Tolkien began writing 'a grand and astonishing project with few parallels in the history of literature' (Carpenter, 125).

It is likely that this early experience formed his implicit leadership theories, and the breadth of characters and action that he created. His implicit leadership theories could be seen as the 'bone structure' (the frame and support) for all of his writing.

Tolkien's Possible Implicit Leadership Beliefs

Carpenter writes of Tolkien that 'His real biography is The Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings, and The Silmarillion; for the truth about him lies within their pages' (Carpenter, p.342). Similarly, his implicit beliefs about leaders and leadership also lie within their pages, clear in every comment, look, sword strike, rallying cry, motivating speech, or thankful embrace. Tolkien's experience of the school cadet core, the army, the First World War and the Battle of the Somme meant that leadership was a skill he was familiar with, both from being taught about it, and expected to do it for his men, while also watching his own senior officers.

Speculating about Tolkien's Implicit Leadership Beliefs is helpful when analysing his novels, as it may help identify patterns and attitudes which can highlight insights and lessons for the reader. By analysing his biography and his writing, it could be surmised that Tolkien seems to have developed these leadership beliefs:

1. Leaders should totally commit to important and worthwhile goals in life;

2. Leaders should know that life is transitory, recognising that the status quo must end;

3. Leaders must accept that leadership ability can come from anywhere, or anyone, no matter how small, insignificant or marginalised, and give everyone a chance;

4. Leaders must be determined, resolute and resilient, to see through to the end what is necessary, no matter how terrifying that might be;

5. Leaders should embrace learning, personal growth and self-reflection, which should also be encouraged and enabled in others;

6. Leaders must maintain clear values and a moral code at the heart of all action and thought;

7. Leaders should care for others, heal, nurture, protect and unify groups to a common cause;

8. Leaders should not seek power for its own sake, nor material riches, nor control over others, but be prepared to sacrifice themselves for others;

9. Leaders must nurture & defend their followers, their environment, and nature.

If this speculation is correct- and from his writings alone, it seems reasonable – then Tolkien's ideal leadership style might be a blend of servant leadership (Aragorn, Gandalf, Faramir; the Lady Galadriel; Lord Elrond); transformational leadership (Aragorn, Gandalf, the Ents); and distributed leadership (Aragorn, the Hobbits, Theoden, Eomer and Eowyn). Outstanding followership skills are shown through Aragorn, Gandalf, Sam, Legolas and Faramir: each of these are prepared to follow others' leadership with intelligence, honesty, positivity and total commitment. Negative leaders, such as Sauron, Saruman, the Orcs, and Wormtongue, are self-seeking, destructive and tyrannical.

It seemed clear that through his careful writing, characterisation and plot, Tolkien deals thoughtfully with leadership issues all the way through. I argue that it seems likely that Tolkien intended to examine the development of leadership in his main characters because he placed leadership examples in all his texts. He wrote in a 1951 letter about *The Lord of the Rings* that: 'Every part has been rewritten many times. Hardly a word in its 600,000 or more has been unconsidered' (160). This suggests that every conversation, lament and action is intentionally significant in moving plot or characterisation along, such as Aragorn's leadership journey, from self-doubt to self-assurance and excellent leadership judgment.

Creating and Implementing the 'Literary Conceptual Encounter' Process

I developed a seven-stage framework, *Literary Conceptual Encounter* (explained in Chapter 4), as a structured way to use literature to stimulate, energise, and 'jolt' the implicit theories and mental models of the reader to re-perceive the world in a different light. The 7 stages are:

1.   A focused close reading of the text
2.   Identifying Potential Insight Events
3.   Taking Time for Thinking & Reflection.
4.   Identifying Key Themes & Dilemmas
5.   Interrogating Potential Insight Events
6.   Drawing Conclusions about the Insights
7.   Finalising a Product or Solution

I called the process 'literary conceptual encounter' because it is a similar method to the 'conceptual encounter' process of de Rivera (1986). Using a conceptual lens, literary conceptual encounter explores the views of the author through the writing of his or her main characters. The metaphor of a 'lens' is powerful: in the same way that humans wear glasses to sharpen vision, the lens can sharpen a different type of vision: one that can magnify, focus in on detail, and bring certain issues to the foreground to hold up truths; understanding; and previously unrecognised insights.

In what follows, I will explain the key steps to my literary conceptual analysis process, before revealing the three in-depth literary analyses that I used to build three versions of the leadership development framework.

1. Focused Reading of the Text

The first step is to read the work in detail in a more structured way, through the lens of leadership. While reading and rereading *The Lord of the Rings* carefully, using close textual analysis, I scanned the novels for examples of leadership behaviour, expectations, goals, commentary from the characters, and successes of failures. I found them everywhere. It is leadership that provides the resistance to Sauron; leadership that raises and motivates armies against him; and leadership that creates a reinvigorated and orderly Middle-earth after he has been defeated.

2. Identifying Potential Insight Events (PIES)

Having read the novels, and specific parts, several times, it is important to identify '*Potential Insight Events*', for further reflection and investigation. Potential insight events are situations, events, descriptions or interactions (usually between the main characters) that appear odd, interesting, unexpected, or spur more reflection about what the writer is saying. Treating the characters as real, and their dilemmas as realistic, also makes it possible to consider what the writer is <u>not</u> saying – and whether any unsaid conversations are surprising, in the circumstances.

Three sections from *The Lord of the Rings* stood out to me as examples of leadership puzzles that might have the potential of generating new insights and interesting directions. The page numbers quoted are from the 2012 editions versions of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. These were:

i. **Aragorn: The Reluctant Leader (pages 380-405 in *The Fellowship of the Ring*; and pages 414-434 in *The Two Towers*)** – this is an analysis of the section when the Fellowship leaves Lothlorien, where Aragorn starts to lead the Fellowship, up until their meeting with the Rohirrim;

ii. **Aragorn: The Follower (pages 500-501 in The Two Towers)-** this short section when Aragorn and Gandalf meet again after Gandalf has been sent back to them from death) is puzzling, and has a strong link to followership capability;

iii. **Denethor**: **The Despairing War Leader (pages 754- 857 in *The Return of the King*)**– this is a close study of Denethor's wartime leadership behaviour, from when Gandalf and Pippin arrive at Minas Tirith, to Denethor's death.

Each of these examples puzzled me, intrigued me, presented me with universal leadership dilemmas, or a set of potential insights that needed thinking through. Other leadership examples could have been used, such as Frodo's rejection of a leadership role at the end of *The Return of the* King, because of his anti-violence stance created by his suffering and consequent spiritual growth. But because these three particular sections were so striking, I chose them as having the most potential for insight and ideas.

3.Time for Thinking and Reflection

Thinking and reflection time is essential for making sense of data, seeing patterns and 'letting the penny drop'. Distancing oneself from the issue or problem is an important part of the creative process, encouraging the reader to make previously unconnected connections and see potential solutions for the first time.

4. Identifying Key Themes and Dilemmas

Some leadership themes and dilemmas simply 'jump out' at readers when they read with the topic in mind. In studying a topic in literature, I start with the obvious themes that I would expect, then find the others. These are often issues of leadership style; leadership gaps or mistakes; interactions between leaders and followers; success outcomes; and links to various leadership theories. Equally, the writing might trigger a memory of a leadership coaching situation, or a situation the reader has experienced themselves at some stage of their lives.

The familiarity of recognition brings the reader closer to the text and to the emotions associated to it. It is important to try to identify the feelings brought out by the reading; and note all of the aspects of the section under analysis, including the dialogue. Does the dialogue indicate inner thoughts or emotions that may be hidden in the mind of one of the characters? Is this theme repeated anywhere else in the novel? Is it relevant for today?

5. Interrogating Potential Insight Events

The analysis stage is the most similar activity to traditional literary criticism. Line by line analysis is done, always with the topic in mind, to 'interrogate' what the author is saying, make suppositions, consider possibilities, and experiment with meanings.

Questions are used to challenge the mind of the reader, such as:

What is really happening here and why?
Is this event logical (given the narrative) or has this been inserted for a specific reason?
Is this different to our reality, and if so, how?
If not, is it saying something about our reality here?
Is there anything new, interesting or striking here?
What have I not seen in the past that this event can highlight?
Are there any patterns that I can see here?
Have I seen this anywhere else, and is that significant?

It is what the text triggers and stimulates in the reader that is important, how it works with the experience and knowledge of the reader to make connections and see possibilities and patterns.

6. Drawing a Conclusion from the Insights

Having made connections and created insights, the next stage is to write them up, fully considering their meaning, their universality, their patterns, trends and connections. If the analysis is done with the topic firmly in mind, then some practical or academic outcomes have probably been identified already. This stage is to think through what has been learned, and how that learning could be used in the most productive way. This may result in a framework; a new theory; a contribution to debate; a new process or product; a set of innovative solutions to a problem; a set of new 'rules'; or a completely new paradigm. Guidance manuals may be produced; users targeted; and plans developed to maximise the usefulness of these outcomes. At this point, collaborators may be enlisted to consider and comment on the product and its fitness relating to its intended purpose; and at this stage, suggestions and improvements may be made to the 'product'.

7. Finalising a Product or Solution

The final stage is about working out how to use the new 'product'; what systems will be necessary for it to work; how it will fit with existing theories or 'products'; what its reception may be; how people might be trained in its use; and what general support systems will be necessary. Areas for future research and development may be identified at this stage, and any areas of difficulty in applying it, also.

Illustrating Stages 5 and 6: The Analysis of the Selected Texts

I will now illustrate how I use Stages 5 and 6, the analysis stage, in order to show how insights are generated, and how they can be used to produce a useful outcome, such as a leadership development framework. I will present three analyses, or potential insight events, that seem likely to produce interesting insights. After each analysis (marked as an 'a'), I will explain what insights emerged for me ('b'); and how it influenced the next version of the framework (marked as a 'c').

1(a) First Potential Insight Event: Aragorn, the Reluctant Leader

Selfless, brave, and inspiring, full of 'shining gallantries', Aragorn is a heroic figure in *The Lord of the Rings* who represents different images to Tolkien enthusiasts and scholars. Aragorn has been compared to Odysseus by Daniel Bellum; and Beowulf by Alban Gautier, who comments that the character and deeds of Alfred the Great are actually closer to those of Aragorn. Max Adams likens Aragorn to St Oswald in his biography of the saint, while Flieger (ref) and Nikakis (ref) see Aragorn as an example of an early Celtic Sacral King, a healer King inextricably linked to the health, fertility and well-being of the land. Jane Chance sees Aragorn as a powerful Christian hero, 'the king of light' (200) and the Christlike true king (222), willing to sacrifice himself for others, and use his powers of healing and 'rebirth' for good. Similarly, George Clark emphasises Aragorn's goodness, moral virtues and self-sacrifice.

Flieger again, in *Green Suns and Faërie*, describes Aragorn as: 'an extraordinary hero who combines…romance and high memetic modes. He is above the common herd. We expect him to be equal to any situation' (p. vii). Yet in all this learned scholarship, there are few references to Aragorn's capability as a leader. Scholars discuss all aspects of his role and status, but not his leadership: it simply appears to be a neglected area of scholarship. Analysis

of Aragorn's leadership performance shows that, for a good part of *The Lord of the Rings*, Aragorn is an extremely flawed leader. Aragorn's leadership style is first fully illustrated after the fall of Gandalf in Moria. Aragorn did not expect to have to lead the Fellowship, but to act in support of Gandalf's leadership, so it is a shock for him to be thrust into this role. Even though he is Chief of the Rangers, he is not a confident leader. He is troubled about deciding their path even before he leaves Lothlorien, where Celeborn notices his silence about the way ahead, politely glossing over the awkwardness with 'I see you do not yet know what to do' (367). In fact, overwhelmed by the enormity of the task, Aragorn cannot make a decision. Despite the extreme danger of their environment, he leaves the decision about which way they should go to before they entered such hazardous countryside.

Aragorn is distracted, grieving for the loss of Gandalf, his father figure, mentor and adviser, complaining: 'Would that Gandalf were here!' (393); and 'I cannot advise you. I am not Gandalf' (396).

He is more concerned with his inner doubts and anxiety than he is on focusing on his followers. He should have noticed that Boromir was beginning to act strangely after leaving Lothlorien, 'muttering to himself, sometimes biting his nails, as if some restlessness or doubt consumed him' (402). Even Pippin noticed the 'queer gleam in his eye, as he sat forward gazing at Frodo' (402), as did Frodo (369), so why did Aragorn fail to notice this? It is the duty of leaders to notice the emotional and mental states of their followers, but Aragorn seemed too distracted by his task of whether he is leading the group correctly to notice this. Similarly, when Boromir stares at Frodo eagerly, asking his thoughts, Aragorn seems not to notice (408), nor, and most disturbingly, did Aragorn see that Boromir had followed Frodo at Amon Hen - at a time when Aragorn should, as leader, have known the whereabouts of every single member of his small group.

This is a serious leadership failing in Aragorn – he cannot care for every member of the group properly if he does not notice their preoccupations and anxious states of mind, or know where they are at all times in their current environment of extreme danger. Allowing Frodo to go off alone in the woods to decide what he wants to do, in a dangerous location where Legolas has warned him that there are Orcs close by, represents an unacceptable and surprising level of risk. He fails to notice that Boromir has left the group and followed Frodo. He is too distracted by his own anxieties and thoughts to lead the group safely.

What does Aragorn do then, as leader of the group, when he does realise that Frodo is in danger? One course of action would be to immediately find and rescue all members of the group, rush them into the boats, away from the orcs, to find a safer haven. Aragorn does not do this. Having realised that Frodo has gone back downhill, Aragorn decides to stop searching for him in order to run impetuously up to the High Seat, seeking 'to see something that would guide him in his perplexities' (413), and help him with his continued indecision about which way to go next. He sees nothing of value on the High Seat. Like the 'great bird' he sees 'descending slowly in wide circles' (413), Aragorn as a leader is also spinning in ever widening circles. He is wasting precious time, when he suddenly hears the great horn of Boromir being blown desperately, and the unmistakeable sound of orcs on the rampage. Arriving too late to save Boromir and the hobbits, Aragorn reassures the dying Boromir that he has triumphed against the ring by giving his life to save the hobbits. Aragorn gives Boromir back his self-respect, and shows his healing, affirming and caring nature, as a man and a friend, but the situation need not have arisen in the first place, had he been leading properly.

It is Aragorn's lowest point as a leader. Boromir has been killed while Aragorn was musing unproductively on the High Seat, in the very midst of a crisis. Rather than climbing up the hill and sitting in the High Seat, he should have turned around and started searching for Frodo and the others immediately, as he had already read the signs that Frodo had gone back down the hill. Merry and Pippin are kidnapped by bloodthirsty orcs; the only witness, Boromir, is dead; and Aragorn admits that he has no idea where the Ring and the Ring Bearer are, and whether all the Hobbits were taken altogether. Filled with self-recrimination and remorse, he self-indulgently weeps by Boromir's body: 'It is I that have failed. Vain was Gandalf's trust in me. What shall I do now?' (414). At this point, Aragorn has lost all possible leadership confidence, and is full of doubt, misery and self-pity: 'All that I have done today has gone amiss. What is to be done now?'. (p. 414) Within a few seconds, he asks his companions once again what should now be done (415). Instead of wallowing in self-doubt, Aragorn should be disciplined enough to realise that the key priority is to focus on the most important job in hand: urgently rescuing, or at the very least finding, the Ring and the Ring Bearer. Instead, he is musing on his leadership failings! He should have considered his personal disappointments and lessons <u>later</u>, when the time for action had passed.

This is followed by further misjudgement: Legolas and Gimli both advise him that they must follow the Orcs and be swift about it, but incredibly, Aragorn decides to give Boromir an ornate and formal ship-type burial, so that 'no evil creature dishonours his bones' (415). This is an exceedingly surprising leadership decision, showing a lack of focus on his main priority – because, at this point, it is clear that every second counts. As far as they know (at that moment), the ring - on which the whole future of Middle Earth depends – may be on its way to Sauron or Saruman, as they linger and delay. They must leave immediately to have any chance of rescuing the Ring or the Hobbits. Aragorn seems to have lost perspective of what is more important: stopping the Ring from getting into the hands of Sauron, who will then use it

to ensnare and destroy all of the free creatures of Middle earth, or preventing a wild creature from defiling a dead man's bones.

From the time they realise that the Orcs have taken Merry and Pippin (and possibly Frodo, the Ring and Sam) to the time they set off in pursuit, they delay for an estimated three and a half hours while they provide a suitable tribute to Boromir. Aragorn finds Boromir, listens to his dying words (approximately 10 minutes); grieves and weeps at his side 'for a while'. (15), Legolas and Gimli come, bow their heads, Aragorn explains, and they discuss things (15); they search the bodies of Orcs for tokens and debate their origin (15); they cut down branches and lash them together for a bier (20); they move Boromir's heavy body 'with difficulty' (15); Legolas and Gimli go back to Parth Galen for the boats, walking there and rowing back (20); they place and arrange him in the boat with hair being combed, his sword and clothes respectfully placed around him (20); they row him out into the stream and sing three verses of a lament to him (15); wait while his boat slowly departs (15); row back against the stream (10); Aragorn examines the ground and camping place (10); thinks about it and discusses it with the others (10); draws up the last boat, carries it to the trees and put all the remaining goods inside it (15); and finally discusses things at the glade (5).

By the time they have finished the funeral service on the river for Boromir and returned to their base, they have used up the afternoon, light is failing, and the sun is setting. They should have quickly covered Boromir with stones, left the boats where they were, and set off immediately to follow the Orcs: no wonder that their desperate race to reach the orcs is unsuccessful – it always would have been, after such a delayed start.
.
When they finally do set off, Aragorn turns it into a heroic, almost mythic chase: 'We will make such a chase as shall be accounted a marvel among the Three Kindreds: Elves,

Dwarves, and Men. Forth the Three Hunters!' (p.420) This may be admirable sentimentality, but the excessive speed of the chase would not have been necessary if Aragorn had got his leadership priorities right in the first place – they could have caught up with the orcs, and rescued the hobbits. But the orcs are now a long way ahead of them. They pursue them for miles, for three days, before Aragorn has another choice to make: to rest by night after their long exertion, or to go on and try to catch the orcs, but again he is loath to make a decision, repeatedly asking Legolas and Gimli what they think: 'shall we rest by night, or shall we go on while our strength and will hold?' (425). After much debate, he asks them again 'I said it was a hard choice… How shall we end this debate?' (425). Gimli and Legolas both tell him that, as the leader, he must make the decision, and he prevaricates yet again:

> 'You have given the choice to an ill chooser… Since we passed through the Argonath my choices have gone amiss.' (426).

Aragorn is painfully aware that he is a product of a later race, where the glory of the Argonath is now a distant memory. This serves to make him doubt himself even more. He finally decides to rest, but at dawn, Legolas tells him sadly that the orcs are now too far away to catch up with them, which is potentially catastrophic for the hobbits. Another poor decision. By now, Boromir has died a heroic (but probably avoidable) death and been sent off on the ship-burial; Sam and Frodo have gone off alone secretly and without support; and the other hobbits have been abducted to a possible painful fate of torture and horrible death, with no hope of rescue by Aragorn. This is not the greatest leadership performance from Aragorn, responsible for the safety and security of the Fellowship!

However, at this point, things improve from the leadership perspective. The tide turns during a threatening encounter with the Riders of Rohan, as Éomer is threatening to cut off their

heads, believing them to be Saruman spies, and the situation is becoming dangerous. Aragorn suddenly makes a decision to lead. He commits himself fully and dramatically:

> 'Aragorn swept back his cloak. The elven-sheath glittered as he grasped it, and the bright blade of Andúril shone like a sudden flame as he swept it out. 'Elendil!' 'I am Aragorn son of Arathorn, and am called Elessar, the Elfstone, Dúnadan, the heir of Isildur's son of Gondor. Here is the Sword that was broken, and is forged again! Will you aid me or thwart me?' (433).

This is a considerable surprise to Legolas and Gimli who look on amazed, especially after Aragorn's recent dithering and complaints of personal failure. Aragorn ends this rousing speech with an implied threat: 'Choose swiftly!' which gives him a sense of decisiveness, as well as danger. This sudden leadership transformation shows in his face:

> 'in his living face they caught a brief vision of the power and majesty of the kings of stone. For a moment it seemed to the eyes of Legolas that a white flame flickered on the brows of Aragorn like a shining crown.' (434)

By finally taking on his proper leadership duty, Aragorn is also taking into himself the power and gravitas of his duty, the Argonath, the pillars of the Kings, along with all their leadership power. His statement of his lineage and his right to the throne of Gondor is an assertion of who he is, as a leader and as a man. He rightly judges that by announcing his impressive power and lineage, Éomer will respond quickly and without question to his needs. However, it is largely a speech made to himself, to remind himself that he is potentially the most powerful and rightful leader in Middle Earth alive at this moment, if he chooses to be so. That thought now empowers and drives him. Like a child who recites a long-remembered rhyme to comfort himself in a dark place, Aragorn has drawn comfort from his history, his position, and the long list of titles that he is known by. He comforts himself in this way, just as he recites old stories, poems and histories throughout the narrative, usually to others, but sometimes just to himself, as a source of comfort and reassurance.

After this, Aragorn does indeed become a true leader. He acts with authority, a sense of clear priorities - there is no lack of decision now! - when King Theoden suggests that they might rest after their journey:

> 'Nay, lord… The men of Rohan must ride forth today, and we will ride with them, axe, sword and bow. We did not bring them to rest against your wall, Lord of the Mark! And I promised Éomer that my sword and his should now be drawn together.'

Éomer replies, inspired and heartened by Aragorn's positive leadership energy: 'Now indeed there is hope of victory!' (518). Similarly, Aragorn inspires and strengthens the Rohirrim at the Battle of Helm's Deep as he fights alongside Éomer: 'A shout went up from wall and tower: 'Andúril! Andúril goes to war. The blade that was broken shines again!' (534). Aragorn now acts with increasing leadership confidence and unassailable leadership strength, beginning to feel more confident now, proudly telling Gimli who questions him afterwards:

> 'You forget to whom you speak…I am the lawful master of the Stone, and I had both the right and the strength to use it, or so I judged.' (780).

Having seen the magnitude of Sauron's forces, Aragorn is then forced to make the terrifying decision to summon the dead oath breakers to fight alongside him, acting with total focus, determination and ruthlessness. He will now take all steps necessary to achieve his goals without hesitation, a strong, decisive and powerful servant-leader.

1(b) Insights from Aragorn's Transformation.

Aragorn's reluctance to lead is a familiar problem for leadership developers, (as I know through my professional experience), as is his constant self-doubt and anxiety about making a serious mistake in his decisions. Reading the text from a leadership perspective, I could

recognise the signs – they were signs that I would not have noticed, perhaps, without this leadership perspective.

Aragorn seems to have seen himself as a follower initially, carrying out Gandalf's directions and plans without serious question. After Gandalf's fall, Aragorn is not ready to assume the mantle of leadership, as Celeborn and Galadriel can see during his procrastinating in Lothlorien (page reference here). Aragorn has been an isolated ranger in recent years, spending much time in the wilderness, spying on Sauron's activities and seeking the whereabouts of Gollum. He is indeed a leader – but of a forgotten people, the Dúnedain. To thwart Sauron's intentions to find and kill the heir to the throne of Gondor, he was hidden and raised by Elrond away from his own people, so Aragorn was not raised with the mantle of inherited leadership or any real familiarity with power and high-level decision-making with his own people (as opposed to the different types of power within the Elf community of Lord Elrond).

This journey is his chance to learn about the true wielding of power, made possible by the sudden loss of Gandalf. - a member of the Valar, a ring-bearer, and the wielder of the Sacred Flame of Arnor – so quite a hard act to follow! Aragorn must try to continue Gandalf's example, and use his power wisely, deciding how to proceed on behalf of the Fellowship. He is filled with confusion, does not feel ready, does not want to lead, and does not feel that he is a leader appropriate to this challenge. I felt that these issues were important – both to Tolkien, and to the researcher/reader interested in leadership.

After his dismal start, it is important to consider how Aragorn improves his performance and transforms himself, to try to identify the key to his improvement as a leader. Aragorn strengthens his leadership confidence by reciting his poems, ancient stories, his lists of

lineage and patrimony, and those prophecies that concern him. This reminds him who he is. Possessing the legendary sword Anduril of his ancestor, Isildur, that which was broken, also strengthens his leadership self-belief, which becomes forged anew, just like his sword. When he later argues about leaving his sword outside Meduseld, and whether his will or King Theoden's should take precedence about that, it is clear that he now sees himself as a true and important leader, the king of all other kings on Middle earth.

1(c). Impact of the Analysis on the First Version of the Leadership Development Framework

Real-life leaders, especially new ones, may be unsure and uncertain about their own leadership capability, so insights into this area are useful (ref here). Sometimes, people with leadership roles do not want to lead, so how Aragorn deals with that issue is important to me as a trainer and coach.

From my study of Aragorn's leadership in *The Lord of The Rings*, I discerned five essential stages of development that helped Aragorn to become an excellent leader. From this, I created a tentative five-stage Leadership Development Framework: critical areas for leadership developers to focus their efforts on (Figure 5.1):

FIGURE 5.1: FIRST VERSION OF THE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

This framework had the obvious categories of developing effective leadership skills (Stage 4); and transforming oneself by reviewing, refocusing, renewing, and reenergising (Stage 5). However, from Aragorn's example, I then identified three more stages - internal processes - that are often overlooked in leadership development, that he had shown me were essential. These three areas must be tackled before the usual leadership skills training starts or the leader will never actually lead properly and effectively. In my experience, this happens frequently in larger organisations – people understand and talk about leadership theory, but never put it into action.

These three areas are:

1. Does the leader actually *want* to lead; (Stage 1: the Will to Lead)
2. Does the leader *see herself or himself as a leader*? (Stage 2: Self-Concept as a Leader)
3. Does the Leader know what *values and beliefs are important* to him or her? What motivates him or her to action and committed leadership? (Stage 3: The Sources of Power).

In my experience, leadership development programmes are often too focused on the teaching of leadership skills and techniques, rather than on ensuring these vital internal pre-requisites are met. Yet Aragorn's development showed me that these early internal stages are essential.

Consequently, the new framework requires that these three new stages, *the Will to Lead; Self-Concept as a Leader; and Sources of Power,* must be addressed before the leader can progress to *Developing effective leadership skills*, and *Transforming Oneself.*

The Five Stages of the First Leadership Framework

As a first version of the framework, the vital five stages are included in the correct order, and it seems that it could become a useful structure for leadership development training or coaching. These stages are:

Stage 1: The Will to Lead.

 In his early leadership of the Fellowship, Aragorn did not have a strong will to lead. He was intimidated by the responsibility of deciding the right path, when such a huge threat hung in the balance. This will to lead needed to be strengthened, and it eventually was, with loss of the Fellowship, the kidnapping of the hobbits, and the absence (and return) of Gandalf. Eventually, he HAD to lead, or everything would get much worse.

Stage 2: Self-Concept as a Leader.

Aragorn initially doesn't see himself as a leader, but rather as a Ranger, guiding and informing the Fellowship about the landscape and its features: he is most comfortable in this role. When challenged by Boromir at the Council of Elrond about whether he will be effective in battle, he replies vaguely and unconvincingly: 'Who can tell? But we will put it to the test one day.' (268). Possibly, the thought of Isildur's failure and arrogance contributes to his anxiety about being a leader; possibly the weight of expectation and the prophecies.

Stage 3: Sources of Leadership Power.

The Sources of Leadership Power are those values, beliefs and attitudes that truly motivate the leader-what is fundamentally and crucially important to her or him. Although infrequently discussed by leaders, it is essential that the leader is fully aware of their own values and beliefs, and what they stand for as a leader. This provides confidence and a sureness in leading; leaders are not then taken by surprise by their inner reactions, and can be in full control of their emotions. Aragorn has two main Sources of Power that give him energy and the motivation to act, consistent with his values, beliefs and attitudes. The first is his strong sense of tradition, the weight of the past and its history, with his right to lead and his ancient leadership lineage, which he reinforces to himself and others frequently. His other source of power is his emotional empathy and care for others, to protect other living creatures, and to heal those in need, which he does with skill and love. These give him the strength to be a strong, decisive leader – and he is prepared to die for what he believes in. When he acts according to his inner sources of power, he finds the energy to lead unhesitatingly and well.

Stage 4: Effective Leadership Skills.

Initially patchy, Aragorn's leadership skills vastly improve after he commits to leading properly. Gone is the faltering, self-deprecation, he now unites, communicates confidently, encourages, heals, makes decisions, inspires, brings people together, acts effectively, and thinks strategically. He could have done this all along, but his self-doubt and reluctance to lead had become a blockage, stopping him from finding and practicing leadership.

Stage 5: Reflection, Re-focusing and Re-energising.

Aragorn realises that he must stop, reflect, and learn by the outcomes that his lack of leadership has created. He reflects, learns and transforms himself. During the diversionary, potentially suicidal attack on the Black Gate. Aragorn shows how he has changed:

> 'We come now to the very brink, where hope and despair are akin. To waiver is to fail…Nonetheless I do not yet claim to command any man, let others choose as they will.' (880)

Gone now is any hint of indecision from Aragorn- only total, unwavering commitment, and clear direction can be seen. Aragorn is now so inspiring now that all will follow him, even to death. He has become a very great leader, as we see at his crowning, as 'wisdom sat upon his brow, and strength and healing were in his hands, and a light was about him.' (968). From a doubting, indecisive and procrastinating start, Aragorn has transformed himself. He now has the will to lead, and sees himself as a leader, He has learned to use and align his sources of power to energise himself to lead more powerfully. He is using his new and exceptional leadership skills capably and deliberately for greater effectiveness.

Finally, he has learned to commit fully to leading, whatever the cost, and to continuously transform himself as a leader, in whatever way is necessary, even unto death, to protect Middle-earth and his kingdom. Aragorn has pulled himself up by his 'leadership boot-straps' to make himself into a better, stronger and more powerful leader.

2(a). Second Potential Insight Event: Aragorn, The Follower

There is a short scene in *The Two Towers,* when Aragorn and Gandalf meet up, after Gandalf's return from death, to become Gandalf The White, more powerful than ever (pages 500-501). Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli have just discovered Gandalf again, after their long, unsuccessful three-day chase to try to rescue the hobbits. Aragorn has led the Fellowship since Gandalf's absence, and has not found it easy. He says nothing about his previous dilemma and inability to make decisions, but Gandalf seems to know, nevertheless:

> 'Come, Aragorn son of Arathorn!' he said. 'Do not regret your choice in the valley of the Emyn Muil, nor call it a vain pursuit. You chose amid doubts the path that seemed right: the choice was just, and it has been rewarded. For so we have met in time, who otherwise might have met too late. But the quest of your companions is over. Your next journey is marked by your given word. You must go to Edoras and seek out Theoden in his hall. For you are needed. The light of Andúril must now be uncovered in the battle for which it has so long awaited.' (500).

Gandalf turns Aragorn's previous delays and indecisions into a positive thing – they would not have met if things had not turned out that way – and says nothing about Aragorn's leadership mistakes or poor judgement. Aragorn seemed downhearted though, despite his mentor's positivity, and strangely he is almost reluctant to go with Gandalf to Edoras – a negative reaction most unlike Aragorn:

'Go where you must go and hope! To Edoras! I go thither also.'
'It is a long way for a man to walk, young or old,' said Aragorn.' I fear the battle will be over long ere I come there.'
'We shall see, we shall see,' said Gandalf. 'Will you come now with me?'. (501)

Then a strange paragraph follows, with Aragorn staring at Gandalf, almost sizing him up, as if deciding whether he will follow him, and what his own role may be in the weeks ahead:

'Yes, we will set out together,' said Aragorn. 'But I do not doubt that you will come there before me, if you wish,' He rose and looked long at Gandalf. The others gazed at them in silence as they stood there facing one another. The grey figure of the Man, Aragorn son of Arathorn, was tall, and stern as stone, his hand upon the hilt of his sword; he looked as if some king out of the mists of the sea had stepped upon the shores of lesser men. Before him stooped the old figure, white, shining now as if with some light kindled within, bent, laden with years, but holding a power beyond the strength of kings.'. (501)

What is this about? Aragorn is stern and grim on seeing his old friend and mentor. Why does he look long at Gandalf? What is happening in his head? He may be comparing the two of them, assessing himself as inferior as a leader. He may have been going over his own leadership actions, and judging them poorly. It almost feels like a competition, a struggle, a battle of wills between them. It feels like this is Aragorn's last real test as a wise mighty leader: whether to give up his newly won leadership role and follow Gandalf, or go off on his own, to lead others. At last, after some time, he passes the test, and commits to following Gandalf, despite his preeminent role as the heir-apparent to the throne of Middle-earth:

'Do I not say truly, Gandalf,' said Aragorn at last, 'that you could go whithersoever you wished quicker than I? And this I also say: you are our captain and our banner. The Dark Lord has Nine. But we have One, mightier than they: the White Rider. He has passed through the fire and the abyss, and they shall fear him. We will go where he leads.' (501)

This last speech seems like a true commitment to follow, to give the lead to Gandalf, despite a huge negative outcome resting on the decision, should it be wrong. This passage goes almost unnoticed

in standard literary criticism about *The Lord of the Rings*, yet Tolkien considered every word in his novels: nothing was accidental or arbitrary. To me, this passage shows of the inner struggle in Aragorn to give up leading again, to pass the baton back to Gandalf, because he has the most power and ability to lead at this time, and is the perfect person, regardless of the right to lead.

2 (b). Insights from the Second Analysis on Aragorn, the Follower

This insight seems to present a timeless truth: no matter how powerful the leadership role is, there is a time when a leader must follow others, be humble, subdue his or her ego, lead when the time is right, and follow when it is sensible to do so. This is a problem for many chief executives and top leaders, who find it hard to listen to others, or to distribute power properly. But a mighty leader must be able to do this, humbly and without ego.

2 (c) Influence of the Second Analysis on the Second version of The Framework

In the light of this analysis, therefore, I reviewed the framework again, perceiving that the section on Leadership Skills should also include Followership (Uhl-Bien. Riggio, Lowe and Carsten, 2014) – perhaps just as important to current leaders, beset by complexity and working in a knowledge/imagination-based workplace. Aragorn minimised any ego issues he might have had in accepting Gandalf's lead. His interesting exchange with Gandalf shows how he controls his emotions, and displays much humility – after all, he is the legendary Isildur's heir, rightly possesses the mythical 'sword that was broken' and is already the subject of many prophecies and songs. Yet he is content to put his own will aside, to follow the wizard's plans. Hence, with Followership added to the Leadership Skills Stage 4 section, and Stage 5 altered to have more focus

on reflection, humility and managing or reducing the impact of the ego, the framework has now become as follows, in Figure 5.2:

1. **STRENGTHEN THE WILL TO LEAD**

5. TRANSFORM THE SELF : REFLECTION,. RE-F0CUS, LEARNING, HUMILITY &. EGO MINIMISATION

2. **STRENGTHEN SELF CONCEPT AS A LEADER**

4. DEVELOP FOLLOWERSHIP & LEADERSHIP SKILLS

3. **IDENTIFY AND STRENGTHEN. THE SOURCES OF LEADERSHIP POWER**

FIGURE 5.2: THE SECOND VERSION OF THE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

3(a) Third Potential Insight Event: Suicide and Wartime Despair in Denethor's Leadership.

The final potential insight event involves Denethor, High steward of Gondor, who had always struck me as a tragic, misunderstood. figure – ripe material for a potential insight event! Denethor, as leader, is tasked with holding the kingdom of Gondor intact and safe for Isildur's heirs, should they ever return. I identified this section as the third potential insight event because Denethor's leadership response to crisis, his continuing anxiety, and uncontrollable despair leads him to a desperate suicide/murder attempt on himself and his injured son, Faramir. While Denethor's

reaction seems to be an extreme chronic stress reaction, many leaders are also faced with constant high pressure and burnout, unable to lead or make good decisions because of their physical and mental breakdowns (Thompson, 2010). Insights into this leadership phenomenon are relevant, could be useful for the framework, and could provide some interesting pointers.

For Tolkien, fantasy writing seems to have given him a way to express his inner thoughts and emotions about war. Shippey argued that fantasy writing similarly allowed other fantasy authors to express themselves, e.g.Lewis, Golding, Orwell, Vonnegut and T.H. White (Shippey, 2001). 221). Tolkien does indeed write realistically about the impact of war within *The Lord of the Rings.* C.S. Lewis wrote of the trilogy:

> 'It is all here: the endless, unintelligible movement, the sinister quiet of the front when 'everything is now ready', the flying civilians, the lively, vivid friendships, the background of something like despair' (Lewis, 1955).

Part of the unflinching realism of the human condition in wartime was the widespread and unignorable phenomenon of shell shock, chronic battle stress, and post-traumatic stress disorder. There are casualties: Frodo, because of his knife wound from Hill Top that never heals, as well as the horrors he has seen in Mordor; and Lord Denethor, hard-pressed and at war with Mordor for many years. It is Denethor, particularly, who represents the terrifying intensity, and the suicidal, often-hidden, true emotional responses to war. He is severely damaged by it, although none of the characters seem to realise it.

Denethor is 'a proud man, tall, valiant, and more kingly than any that had appeared in Gondor for many lives of men; wise and far-sighted' (LOTR, p. 1053). Comparing him with Gandalf, Merry perceives him as 'much more like a great wizard…more kingly, beautiful, and powerful; and older' (757). Tolkien's *Unfinished Tales* (date) give us much detail: he is of Númenórean origin, 'of a race and family that still normally had longer lives than other men' (*Unfinished Tales*, 524). He is 'a masterful man, both wise and learned beyond the measure of those days, and strong-willed,

confident in his own powers, and dauntless'(527), always remaining 'steadfast in his rejection of Sauron'. Denethor is proud but not selfishly proud, with a sense of responsibility, for: 'he loved Gondor and its people and deemed himself appointed by destiny to lead them in this desperate time.' (527). The palantir, or Anor Stone, is his by right, and his use of it is legitimate when he needs information (531), 'trusting his strength' to withstand any influence from Sauron (527). His strength of mind is so immense that even Sauron could not dominate him directly, except by manipulating what Denethor saw and believed in the palantir. Denethor has strong mental powers: 'He has long sight', says Gandalf, 'He can perceive, if he bends his will thither, much of what is passing in the minds of men, even of those that dwell far off. It is difficult to deceive him, and dangerous to try' (759). A man 'wise in the lore of Gondor (LOTR, 248), he preserves knowledge through Gondor's vast storehouse of books. Denethor is a strong, experienced, wise and learned war-leader, who has fought hard battles, countering the threat from Mordor, and dealing with dispiriting defeats of Ithilien and Osgiliath.

Yet like any typical real-world leader, Denethor is also flawed, complex, mixed-up and ambiguous. Like Boromir, Denethor's fault is arrogance, ambition and pride. He is 'political', championing 'Gondor against the rest' (Unfinished Tales, p. 241) because protecting Gondor is to him almost a sacred charge. He has been a strong, capable and dependable ruler - but now, with the final battle of the war on his doorstep, something is badly wrong. He has become anxious, suspicious, brooding, cynical, irritable, lacking in judgement, and in the end, despairingly suicidal. The palantir is apparently at the heart of Denethor's despair and anxiety, as Sauron leads him to pictures of defeat, but could we see in Denethor's deterioration something more than that?

Keane et al (1994) suggest that exposure to high magnitude, life-threatening stressors or traumatic events (such as the sudden death of someone close) can create an acute stress response. This could be one of Denethor's problems. For a previously cool and rational man, Denethor shows an

uncharacteristic lack of ability to control his emotions, his anger and his irritability. His irrational outbursts lead to a severe strain on his family and work relationships, and his sense of growing isolation. He makes mistakes now that cost mens' lives, as in seeking to repair the Westfold defences, when it is clear that there are more important priorities; and deciding to defend Osgiliath, when Faramir tells him it is hopeless. He is hyper-aroused, exhausted and anxious - he has been sleeping in full armour for many years, ready for anything, and expecting the worst. He displays suspicion, bitterness, cynicism and hostility towards Gandalf and Faramir. He seems withdrawn from others, fending them off. Is this chronic battle stress, and if so, what made him so vulnerable to this high level of stress? How did Aragorn escape the same fate, given his long years of loneliness, toil and hardship, going into danger constantly, growing up in an Elvish foster-home, having lost his father as an infant, and his mother at an early age? How and why did these two powerful and capable war leaders differ so much in their sources and responses to chronic stress?

The Palantir, Tolkien says, has put 'a mental strain' on Denethor…' and 'no doubt contributed to Denethor's 'grimness' (*Unfinished Tales*, 534), as well as his 'premature old age'(524), because the scenes Denethor saw always showed Sauron's victory as 'inevitable' (527). Aragorn did not use the dangerous palantir, although he was entitled to, until he felt ready, showing more judgement, caution and self-discipline than Denethor. Even for Aragorn, this is hard. After criticism from Gimli, he retorts:

> 'I am the lawful master of the Stone, and I had both the right and the strength to use it, or so I judged. The right cannot be doubted. The strength was enough – barely*' (*The Lord of the Rings*, 780).

The constant grinding-down of Denethor's energy from the on-going battles with Sauron and in the frustrating responsibility of constantly trying to protect a land against a rising flood of evil, also took a heavy and unceasing toll on him. He had experienced the death of his wife; then saw the

traumatic sight of the dead body of Boromir, followed by the wounding and apparent death in battle of his other son, Faramir, caused by a serious leadership mistake that Denethor himself has made. He feels the loss and the guilt keenly. But Aragorn experiences loss too – his father, his mother and Gandalf, his close friend and mentor. Aragorn suffers by this, but he expresses his feelings constantly, speaking to Legolas and Gimli of how he misses Gandalf's wisdom, thus dealing with his grief, and regaining some inner peace. Denethor bottles up grief. When Faramir is brought to him, apparent dying, from the battlefield, he 'looked on the face of his son and was silent' (821). When he comes back from using the palantir in the Tower: 'he went to Faramir and sat beside him without speaking, but the face of the Lord was grey, more deathlike than his son's' (821).

Denethor seems isolated - his family gone, he does not have close friends, and he would not dream of having a mentor! Aragorn, on the other hand, has strong networks of supporters and groups of friends who love and help him: the Dúnadain, the Elves, the Hobbits, the men of Gondor, and the Fellowship. Aragorn also has powerful mentors in Elrond, Gandalf, and Galadriel, who help and guide him. Aragorn has the benefit of rest and relaxation, in Rivendell and Lothlorien, when he can be safe for a little while, and be healed. Denethor has no opportunity to be healed by the Elves, or anyone else, it seems. For him, there is no respite. Similarly, those around him do not see his need to be healed and supported – Gandalf certainly could have shown him more understanding and care.

In fact, Denethor has no hope at all of a positive future: Gondor will fall to Sauron, he is sure. Aragorn, on the other hand – his childhood name is Estel, which means hope- has a vision of the future which includes marrying the most beautiful creature on Middle-earth, as well as becoming High King and freeing Middle-earth from evil domination. That would give any man the motivation to see through decades of perils and dangers! Denethor cannot control his irritability, his negative thoughts and speech, continually dwelling on the bitterness of sending Boromir to

Rivendell, not Faramir: 'Stir not the bitterness in the cup that I mixed for myself…Have I not tasted it now for many nights upon my tongue, foreboding the worse that lay in the dregs?' (Lord of the Rings, 813). Denethor has become bitter, cynical, suspicious, and jealous of Faramir's close relationship with Gandalf: 'have I not seen your eye fixed on Mithrandir, seeking whether you said well or too much? He has long had your heart in his keeping.' (812).

Aragorn strives to be constantly positive - even when Boromir had told him on his deathbed that he tried to take the Ring from Frodo, he says nothing to Legolas and Gimli, except to praise him with 'He fell defending the hobbits' (414). When Theoden announces that he will go to war, and may fall in battle, Aragorn responds with 'Then even the defeat of Rohan will be glorious in song.' (518). He does not dwell on negatives, he focuses on the positive of every situation, which gives him (and others) inner strength.

But Denethor has become old before his time, worn out and spent. There is little suggestion that he reflects on his own behaviour, seeks to learn new skills, or to change himself in any way. Aragorn has a vast range of skills and the ability to continually re-invent himself, as he has through being: Estel; Thorongil; Strider; Chieftain of the Dúnadain, and the High King Elessar. He is constantly learning, growing and expanding his identify and his consciousness. For all his love of knowledge, Denethor does not seem to learn new things. He is declining into a sterile '*Middle Age of fading knowledge and simpler skills*' (*Unfinished Tales*, 522), unable to see what he has become, nor intervene to correct and heal himself. Ultimately, it is his reluctance to change, his immense pride and stubbornness, that makes him brittle and unbending, chronically anxious, with suicidal thoughts. He simply will not accept any other possibilities of life, other than what he had known.

His pride makes him reject what he could have, in favour of 'naught':

> 'What would you have,' said Gandalf, 'if your will could have its way?'
> 'I would have things as they were in all the days of my life', said Denethor, 'and in the days of my longfathers before me: to be the Lord of this City in peace, and leave my chair to a son after me, who would be his own master and no wizard's pupil. But if doom denies this to me, then I will have naught: neither life diminished, not love halved, not honour abated' (854).

3 (b). Insights from the Third Analysis of Denethor

Denethor teaches us that the inability to reflect, learn and change can lead to disastrous outcomes that create chronic stress reactions, depression, and continual anxiety. As the white walls of old Gondor fall around him, Denethor sinks into a state of suicidal desperation, unwilling to defend his city, or act decisively as a commander. His inner agony takes us back to Tolkien's battlefields of the Somme, with the lasting pain and mental confusion that characterise those with chronic combat stress. It is not the Palantir alone that creates Denethor's downfall, but lifelong habits of rigidity, arrogance, control, inadequate support, and a lack of robust, honest self-reflection. Perhaps the Palantir is itself a symbol of the distorted, defeated versions of reality that such negative behaviours can produce in a war-leader. Denethor's leadership could have been helped by using the leadership development framework! He has a strong will to lead, sees himself clearly as a leader, and is driven by two sources of power: duty and responsibility to his people and position; and a self-control/ strong inner discipline to achieve success. It is the last two stages of the Framework that Denethor now needs to work on: to broaden his range of leadership skills; improve his leadership capability; and his willingness to change personally.

Lack of self-reflection, self-monitoring and self-care is a problem for leaders under stress. If self-reflection had been his long-term leadership habit, it could have helped him greatly. He would have realised his mental state of despair, and that his resulting decision-making was likely to be faulty. He would have managed his *inner resources* better, and provided some self-care. But Denethor's

dictatorial leadership style does not allow him to seek help, or to build relationships. He cannot appear weak or deficient in any way. He is a brittle leader.

Sayegh, Anthony and Perrewé (2004) comment on how, in major stress and crisis situations, 'good judgment and rational thought are largely dependent on emotional signalling' which can become deficient in highly stressful situations (p.180). Excessive emotional arousal can generate a distorted view of events and situations, especially where the 'cognitive schema' of the leader is outdated; the sense of being able to control events around them is crucial, for if there is a 'low self-efficacy', then it will be harder to regulate emotions (p. 188). This seems accurate regarding Denethor's emotional outbursts, and unusually poor decision-making.

Finally, Denethor has an ethical problem created by his lack of leadership and his total self-absorption: his focus is on himself and his pain only. At the end, he has no thought for Gondor, nor the people who still need his leadership, even though he is still the Steward: it is his job. He puts himself first, despite the city being in a desperate situation and under siege:

> 'Men came crying for the Lord of the City. 'Nay, I will not come down,' he said. 'I must stay near my son. He might still speak before the end. But that is near. Follow whom you will, even the Grey Fool, though his hope has failed. Here I stay.
> So it was that Gandalf took command of the last defence of the City of Gondor (824).

His responsibility as a leader is to protect his people, and in this, he fails. He rejects their cries, at a time when the survival of his people, and of Gondor, is seriously threatened. Rather than care for Faramir's wounds, he seeks to burn him alive, so that they can die together, heroically. As their leader, Denethor should provide aid and succour for them in this desperate hour. Instead, it is Gandalf who rallies the soldiers, and gives them the courage to fight:

> 'Wherever he came men's hearts would lift again, and the winged shadows pass from memory. Tirelessly he strode from Citadel to Gate, from north to south about the wall' (824).

Denethor has failed ethically, strategically, operationally, as a leader, and as a father.

3 (c). The impact of the Third Analysis on the Framework - Version 3

The example of Denethor's flawed leadership illustrates leadership under severe pressure, providing useful leadership insights about self-management and ethics. Consequently, I changed the framework for a third time, inserting 'ethicality' (the quality of behaving ethically in the widest sense); inserting Vision and Followership into the Leadership Skills stage. I then inserted a Self-Care stage (resilience, positivity and resilience); and the need to 'Self-Generate' as an important, constantly updating stage, to create on-going changes to the self.

Stage 4: To Strengthen Ethicality

I have added a stage here called ethicality. I use the term 'ethicality' to mean ethical behaviour at its broadest level: not just living up to rules and standards of behaviour, but also meeting his responsibilities, obligations, fealties, and promises - all of which Denethor promised in his role. Meeting promises, and generally 'doing what is right' should have been at the heart of everything he did, but, sadly, ethicality is a major gap for Denethor at the end of his life. Secretive, uncaring about his followers, jealous of Gandalf, murderous, selfish, delinquent of his duty – all are descriptions of his behaviour that would definitely undermine the trust of his followers! Without trust, there is no genuine followership; and efforts towards shared goals will be restricted.

A clear ethical framework is needed by Denethor, with solid rules and consistent guidelines, plus honesty and transparency in all his dealings. Followers would not feel secure or supported with Denethor as their leader. Nor would they do anything for him, as they would for Aragorn. He is clearly an empty shell at this stage.

Stage 5: To Strengthen Self-Care – Reflection, Positivity and Resilience

I have enhanced this stage to contain more focus on self-care and resilience. Denethor's lack of self-care, reflexivity, personal insight and self-management largely led to his tragic downfall. If self-care, reflection, positivity and resilience against Sauron's negativity had been practised daily, then Denethor would not have become so despairing and suicidal. It is not enough to lead well, there must be determination and strength to 'stick at' and achieve the goal. Denethor betrays all the effort of his long, hard life by giving in to overwhelming negativity at the end of it. The next version of the framework is shown in Figure 5.3.
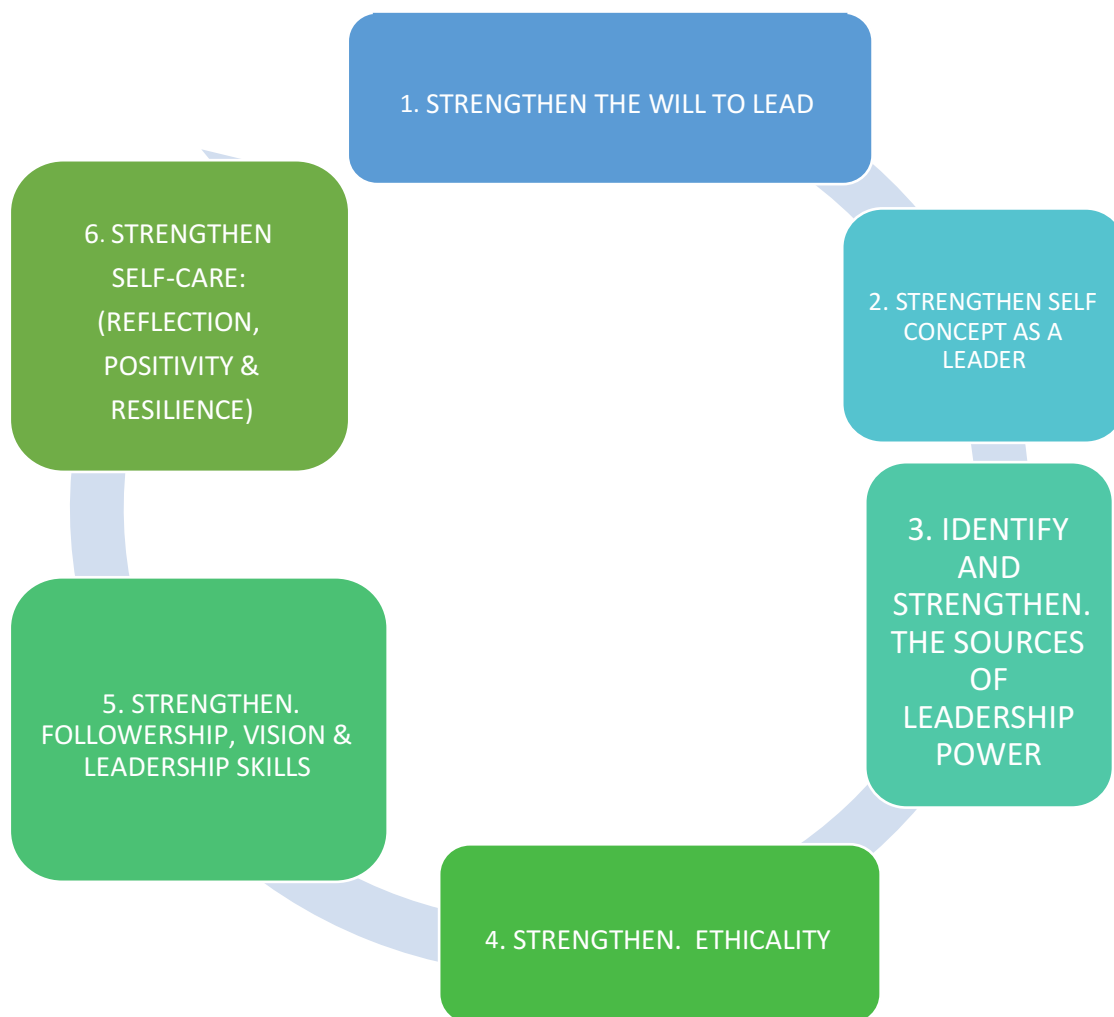

FIGURE 5.3: THE THIRD VERSION OF THE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Limitations of this Process

It is hard to think of limitations of this new process of literary conceptual encounter. Perhaps the major one is that so much depends on the commitment to the research goals by the research investigator, and the degree to which she is skilful in her literary analysis. Much rests on the research investigator designing the conceptualisation effectively, and not taking this stage of the research off-track.

A second possible limitation might be that the research investigator's experience is inadequate. This matters greatly: if she or he does not have a high level of experience and interest in the topic being explored, then potential insight events will not be identified, and the motivation of the research partners may be lost. The research investigator must have experience levels sufficiently highly developed to recognise a situation that could provide insights into a problem area.

Third, a research partner or investigator might not be interested in fantasy literature as a genre, so might not want to be involved with learning from the work, or leading the group.

Summary

This chapter describes how fantasy literature can create a solution for leadership development, and a process has now been created to produce a leadership development framework that could be applied immediately. I have shown the steps taken through my new literary conceptual encounter method, my adaptation of de Rivera's traditional conceptual encounter methodology. I have only focused on three sections from Tolkien's novels, but they have stimulated many insights and ideas for the new framework. My own experience and knowledge have contributed, as have the literature

searches undertaken initially, but ultimately, it is the process of stimulation through the individual literary encounter process that produces the most unexpected insights.

Chapter 6 will now use the framework to engage in traditional conceptual encounter techniques with experienced senior leaders to explore and discuss the framework and its uses, to explore how it can be improved further. It is important now to talk with experienced and knowledgeable leaders about the framework, to seek their views and discuss their wise insights, to ensure that the framework is improved and made relevant to their needs.

Chapter 6: The Traditional Conceptual Encounters.

This chapter illustrates the next stage in the development of the framework – undertaking traditional conceptual encounters with a group of senior leaders, the research partners, to generate potential moments of insight and shared ideas to enhance and improve the framework.

In Chapter 5, the newly devised 'literary conceptual encounter' process was explained, showing how I adapted de Rivera's traditional conceptual encounter technique to create a leadership development framework from Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. The leadership framework was formulated and refined by close analysis of different scenes within the literary work, using *potential insight events*. Chapter 6 shows how the draft framework was then improved through a creative collaboration between senior leaders and the research investigator, using traditional conceptual encounter.

Exposure of the framework to leaders through the '*traditional conceptual encounter*' process provided two valuable outcomes. Firstly, it offered useful insights about the nature of leadership and the construction of the framework. Secondly, it was a 'reality check' for the process and its outcome (the framework) –necessary for a product initially created within a 'literary ivory tower'. The framework must now be exposed to the helpful and incisive views of the senior leaders, to expand its reach, and seek improvement from individuals who are familiar with practical leadership, as well as an earlier version of the framework. This process is not a simple evaluation of the framework *per se*, but is a much deeper exploration of the context, application and the assumptions underlying. it. To ensure that this stage had the framework as its main focus, the earlier analysis of Tolkien's work (the '*literary conceptual encounter)* was not discussed with the leaders at this stage, only the outcome of the analysis: the leadership development framework.

This chapter now describes the content of the traditional conceptual encounters. It outlines and analyses the data resulting from the encounters and documents the insights from the discussions. It also explores insights and contributions to the framework that were generated from additional questions.

I had created the term 'potential insight event' during the literary conceptual encounter process, to describe scenes, events or decisions shown in the novels that provided an 'aha' moment for me - a widening of thought processes, or a sudden collision of different perspectives that could produce a valuable breakthrough or synergy. It seemed both logical and consistent to use the phrase ''potential insight moments' for the same purpose in the conceptual encounter interviews – not the exciting action focused potential insight events of Tolkien's novels, but the sudden flashes of understanding or curiosity created by close and open discussion between two colleagues. However, both potential insight moments and potential insight events are the synergies and mental energy – the thought-illuminating moments - that arise from deep analysis of human behaviour, considered from the perspective of a topic, or phenomenon, as a particular lens. In these traditional conceptual encounters, potential insight moments can contribute to new thinking, to push the framework forward, and boost wisdom and new ideas.

Consequently, by analysing the comments made during each conceptual encounter interview during and after the discussions, key points emerge in the following ways:

- **Section a)** explores the views of the research partners about leadership and what it means to each of them to be a leader;
- **Section b)** considers any comments and recommendations made by the research partners about the framework itself and the way they have used it, and;
- **Section c)** highlights any potential insight moments that have occurred to us, or just to me, either during the interviews or upon later reflection.

1a) Conceptual Encounter 1: Nathan.

The first conceptual encounter interview was with Nathan. I asked Nathan if he had expected to be a leader from his early days, and without hesitation, he replied that he absolutely had, even though it might be considered 'un-Australian' to admit that. Nathan's parents had had maintained high expectations of him. This had influenced his approach to work-life, and he reflected that, because of these high expectations, 'you become driven to succeed'.

His ideal leadership style was to be inspirational and transformational, inspiring people to act, rather than using a directive style. He spoke of leaders 'bringing people on the journey rather than driving them'. Nathan's leadership role-model was his excellent and inspiring boss, who was constantly seeking to motivate and enable others to achieve, providing the space to do so. Nathan felt that poor leaders seek to control excessively, blame others for failures, and do not have strong vision, but despite being poor leaders, are often put into leadership positions. Nathan commented that there are few good leaders around at present: many display a lack of integrity which leads to a leadership vacuum in organisations.

Nathan actively seeks to develop strong leadership within his own team of eight staff:
We focus on leadership in everything we do, outside the organisation too'. He had introduced various leadership tools for his staff, and felt that they worked well: 'By and large, I'm proud of being a leader, and proud of my own team of leaders'.

Nathan replied that something must change for leaders in the future, because the current pace of change and decision-making was overwhelming and exhausting. He believed that leaders are trying to apply old leadership theories to a world that is rapidly evolving and changing, but because they do not work, trying to apply them creates even more frustration for leaders:

> 'The old leadership theories are just too slow now! There's more pressure, more pressure, more pressure [and] an increase in mental health conditions as people try to cope. More anxiety at work puts pressure on the leaders. The emotional pressure is increasing on leaders. More people are on the edge, just coping.'

I reflected that perhaps Tolkien's work would provide a refreshing escape and alternative perspective to this leadership pressure, asking whether he himself was experiencing this intense leadership strain. He commented that 'Well, it certainly gets harder when you start worrying about the others and the pressure they are under', reiterating strongly that a good leader must be aware of the pressures his team members and colleagues are under, continuously monitoring their mental wellness and resilience, as well as his own.

We then discussed possible future leadership styles, and whether different styles might alleviate these pressures; or increase it. Nathan saw successful future leadership as less authoritative, more transformational, and less transactional, placing greater emphasis on the skills of influence, exploration, and coaching because:

> 'beating the door down will cease to work completely! You can't call yourself a leader if you aren't transformational and inspirational…Authenticity is key now. Today, people can see through a leader's façade. They must be genuine all the way through now. People just won't accept an unauthentic or an authoritative leader - if it is impossible to avoid this type of leader, then individuals start to hide aspects of themselves, and they become inauthentic as well.'

However, asking him 'is leadership as important now as it has ever been?', he replied 'Absolutely!', with great conviction. He may have disliked common leadership theories, but his belief in the phenomenon and usefulness of excellent leadership was absolute and unshakeable.

1b) The Framework.

Asked whether the framework had been useful to him in any way, Nathan commented:

> 'Absolutely. It rang true at the time and has sat in the background [since the Leadership Program]. It's a valuable framework. The Will to Lead and the Sources of power especially. I really have taken it and run with it. I'm better at understanding and defining leadership now. I've used it for team member development, especially for those who don't have positional authority, are not in charge.'

We discussed whether knowing and strengthening one's Sources of Power might be a tactically useful alternative to having a recognised leadership role, e.g. 'I'm not in charge and I don't have positional authority, so what are my sources of power?' 'Absolutely', said Nathan, 'It would make someone more confident in his or her ability to influence outcomes.'. We discussed the benefits of identifying and knowing one's Sources of Power as a way of providing confidence and energy to a leader in a difficult situation, especially when she or he has no positional power. Asked what changes to the framework were needed, Nathan felt that there were none:

> 'All stages [of the framework] are valuable. Different people move through the different stages in different ways. It is flexible.'

He liked the framework structure, saying that each of the five areas could branch off into other directions, feeling that it is a useful framework in that regard, with opportunity for the leader to unpack each of the areas. He frequently taught segments of the framework to his staff, and often talked to people about the Will to Lead, Sources of Power and Self-Reflection.

Although Nathan commented that the section on leadership skills was necessary his key focus and interest was clearly on the first three stages of the Framework. He believed that self-reflection was an important stage, although 'it could be overdone' if it were not balanced with positive self-knowledge and goals. Nathan felt strongly that leaders need to build in 'a period of reflection' when teaching leadership to others, to enable leaders to be able to handle the 'step-change' needed for additional, more mature levels within the organisation.

1c). Potential Insight Moments from the Conceptual Encounter with Nathan

To me, the most interesting parts of this discussion were about leadership overall. Nathan's comments about his parents and the expectations they had for him certainly seemed to be a driver for his desire to be an outstanding leader. He had commented on this pressure: 'So you become driven to succeed'. I wondered whether there was a link between the Willingness to Lead, Self-Concept as a Leader, and the Sources of Power with levels of parental education, familial role-models, and family expectations. Many leaders on my programs have discussed the influence of their birth family on their confidence and leadership style. The future of leadership, to Nathan, is about the leader creating a more open, enabling and ethical stance, developing others to be their best, and becoming self-knowledgeable leaders in their own right.

Nathan was strongly concerned about an increase of stress and mental health problems created by the pace of change, and the pressuring expectations of organisations on their leaders. In particular, the emotional burnout of leaders was very worrying to him. My insight moment was that managing pressure and mental health is an important area for further reflection regarding the framework: should there be an area relating to this, and how would it fit? Deeper thought is necessary for me now about mental health, work expectations, and the need for strong resilience skills in leaders.

He considered that self-reflection was a useful focus to consider where one's Sources of Power came from – why a person had a specific Source of Power: where did it come from? There seems to be a strong link between Sources of Power, and the Self Reflection stages: Nathan thought they went hand-in-hand, similar to Self-Reflection and Leadership Self-Concept; and also Self-Reflection and a Willingness to Lead. All of these contribute to understanding the self better, to

realise where these things have come from and why. Perhaps Self-Reflection should be part of every stage in the framework, rather than a stage on its own: this needs more reflection.

2a) Conceptual Encounter 2: Steph.

I asked Steph about her leadership experiences. Although she had not initially seen herself as a successful leader, strong and unanimous feedback from her staff finally convinced her that she was one. To Steph, outstanding leadership is about being authentic, focused on the vision, understanding the big picture and being a visible figurehead; while excellent leaders strive be an available sounding board for staff when they need to talk, 'to be there' and listen so that staff feel heard. She felt that leaders must also understand the need to connect with their partnering teams, being able to influence them when they don't report to him or her, and to bring the team to a high performing stage.

Steph felt that she had got much benefit from our leadership development, feeling that it had helped her in her networking and support systems - she was still meeting fellow participants for mutual support and leadership discussions. Steph believed that it had helped her to become more authentic, and 'to help solidify who she is and what's important to her… it really helped because I had to be who I was'. In addition, the need to build a strong personal leadership structure at every stage through a major change became apparent to her, especially 'with mice nibbling at the base of it all the time!'. She felt her involvement with leadership development provided her with powerful support through the pressures of change management. All leaders must manage and deliver change continuously now, to Steph, especially to deal with future challenges: 'they must be responsible for implementation and take ownership'. She felt that resilience through change was very important, for staff and for their leaders at this time, allied to a stronger focus on mental health and wellbeing.

2b) The Framework

Steph commented that the framework had definitely helped her to understand what was important to her as a leader, especially as she perceived that she had moved from 'a golden goose job, to one more like a poisoned chalice!' Understanding what was important to her as a leader had really helped her at that difficult time. She commented that the program acted as a motivator, giving her an outcome focus, as well as reminding her about the people skills of leadership:

> 'that became so strong for me, and I got so much personal satisfaction from seeing my team succeed. It prepared me to draw on a lot of tools, especially the Stages of Team Growth. I used the model a lot, and as a teaching tool too… [the framework] is a really powerful thing. Leaders need to understand other peoples' motivations, and how to support others.'

Steph commented that she hadn't used the framework that much with her staff, because time was always the issue:

> 'it's not a quick conversation to have! Using the framework with staff needs to be a dedicated process, over a specified time period. How do you teach it in the best way? Leaders need to understand how to train others on the framework – the train the trainer model – then they could take the training out further. How do you talk to your staff about it, or teach it…?'

That was a good insight, because I had not specifically taught the leaders how to teach their staff the framework – I had just assumed that they would. We discussed ways of supporting leaders with teaching tools for their staff, and a 'flipchart booklet' with clear explanations of the tools. At the end of the interview, Steph summed up her assessment of the framework, saying.

> 'I got so much benefit from the framework. It set me up for going through the change project – that was the hardest thing I have ever done. I needed to draw on my deeper resources. The framework was great because through it, I knew who I was as a leader, and I felt ready for the challenge.'

2c) Potential Insight Moments from the Conceptual Encounter with Steph.

The use of the framework seems to have been a major support in a time of great personal change and self-doubt for Steph. This led me to wonder whether more research should be done on whether the framework should be used with leaders undergoing severe stress, feeling depleted, 'lost' and

exposed. Having a personal leadership framework in their thoughts, a sureness about their own leadership values and personal insights, and a commitment to be willing to lead in a difficult situation, could be a real source of strength for leaders. This insight moment showed me the value of the framework, and how it could be used in the future for leaders undergoing traumatic and stretching times.

Another insight had been Steph's suggestion about leaders needing to be trained more in teaching the framework to their staff. This was about the preparation for the use of the framework, how the framework is taught to leaders, and what tools they could use to teach it with.

Finally, again the need to ensure resilience and mental health for leaders came through this encounter. It is important to consider further whether the self-monitoring and self-management of stress, anxiety, personal levels of resilience, and current mental health should be incorporated into the framework in some way.

3a) Conceptual Encounter 3: Jane.
With a strong commitment to the training of others, as well as her own personal development, Jane had previously coached several leadership program participants. As with other research partners, the role of early family expectations was powerful, with Jane being seen as a leader by her family and friends from a young age. She had always had a strong self-concept as a leader, rather than a follower. To Jane, personal leadership effectiveness had evolved gradually, coming with taking risks and making mistakes. Jane had experienced many excellent leaders and managers in her career, who had provided excellent role-models, and was fortunate to have been sent to international business schools for senior development. This experience had encouraged her to become more political in the organisation to help make things happen:

'Sometimes you have to make sure you're engaging with the right people, the right amount of time, about the right issues, and that's sometimes I've tried to work on…I'm probably not as political as others, it's not necessarily my thing, and I don't know if it ever will be. I think its ok, but I think if I were a lot better, it may go more our way a bit. I don't know. I think I'm better than I used to be'.

Excellent leadership, to Jane, was about being authentic, respectful, trustworthy, ethical and respectful of others, open to different points of view, tolerant and patient, and adaptable to change. They also must recognise their staff, and their good work. Leaders must recognise that work is second to family, for their staff as well as for themselves. Jane felt that a leader must believe strongly in what they are doing, so true authenticity is important. Influence as a leader is about growing a sense of integrity and trust: 'it's about understanding who you are. Sometimes you have to just swallow your pride, or [others'] poor behaviour, but continue to behave the way you'd normally behave!'

Jane believed that leadership in the future would still have these fundamentals in place, but that leaders would have to work 'at pace' all of the time because of dramatic technological changes that are moving so fast, and the need to be strategic to deal with them:

'fast pace and resilience is BIG! Leaders must be open to change and not complain about it, but to move with it. They must also be able to discuss things openly, to voice and develop brave leadership'.

After a discussion about brave leadership and how hard that can be in an organisation for staff (yet how necessary it is), Jane commented that a key challenge to leaders is how to get their team members to take full responsibility for workplace challenges:

'Opportunities must be provided by leaders, put people out of their comfort zone. It is now a necessity for managers to take more leadership responsibility – I can't always be there'.

I commented that I have heard this a lot from senior leaders, which is the reason that Willingness to Lead has been so popular generally as a stage of development in the framework.

Like previous resource partners, Jane was concerned about the pace of change and the pressure it is placing on leaders and their staff for the future:

> 'You have to work at pace all the time, the sheer volume of what you have to get through, the change that you're going through, trying to keep up…I think resilience has to be a big thing, and I think future leaders have to be open to change, and doing things differently…Not complain about it, move with it, [see] what we can contribute in this. I think people need to be willing and open to discuss things.'

3b) The Framework

Jane had not overtly used the model in her interactions with staff but used it frequently in assessing and observing her staff, particularly in their Willingness to Lead stage. She has also used it in performance reviews, as the basis of a leadership goal to discuss with the individual. The leadership blueprints that people had undertaken on their Advanced Leadership Programs also helped develop their Sources of Power and their overall self-awareness. Jane remarked that the framework has helped people 'quite a bit' a lot, and the leadership program 'has had a significant impact on our leadership'. throughout the whole organisation.

I explored whether she felt that anything was missing in the framework, and Jane replied that nothing stood out, that it was 'pretty well framed and well-rounded, which covers most aspects of leadership, if not all of them.'. The parts of the framework that she felt most connected to were the Sources of Power, and the focus on Self-reflection, because: 'you don't stop and step back and ask people what they think, or say 'is there anything I can do better? People may not always tell you…'

Several times during the interview, we discussed the importance of moving towards authenticity and what that might mean for leaders. Jane felt it was about being respectful and developing a type of self-control:

> 'although [sometimes] you want to tell them to go and take a hike. …we're a solid team, there's integrity and trust between all of us – it's not always been that reciprocated from other parts of the organisation…they're allowed to behave poorly. They continue to behave in that way, so there's no trust or integrity, so you have to keep working at it.'

3c) Potential Insight Moments from the Conceptual Encounter with Jane

The focus on the growing pressure and strain on leaders and their staff occurred again in this encounter, along with the need for resilience. We reflected that this growing focus on the need for resilience needs to be thought through within the framework: whether it is dealt with sufficiently in the current framework; if not, where it could be located, and how it can be featured more prominently. It seems to be a worrying area of concern for leaders at all levels with their current workloads and rates of change.

I realised that the issue of 'brave leadership' could perhaps counteract this rising pressure, by allowing and encouraging people to voice their thoughts and feelings openly. I wondered about there was a link between being 'brave' in an organisation and the reduction of stress, by enabling people to voice their 'truth' and authenticity. The culture would need to be right, and leader must genuinely foster that culture, but it could be one way of managing the anxieties of change, and the problems of mistrust, so stressful to people. I reflected that Jane had commented that:

> 'Giving people the opportunity [helps achieve personal responsibility and high performance]. Some have taken the bull by the horns [and] gone out of their comfort zone…There's still some work to do, but some of the managers have really taken this on board'.

4a) Conceptual Encounter 4: David

Coming from a large family with competition for resources and attention, David had developed his own expectations about his life and aspirations, commenting, like Jane, that he 'always expected to be a leader'. David's key role model was Barack Obama:

> 'a very assertive and firm-minded leader, but also someone capable of eliciting people to follow him without using his authority-' and his own manager: 'he's empathetic to peoples' needs, and I think he gets the best out of people...it's much more about giving the delegation or the confidence to lead ...and then to encourage others'.

To David, the leader must also facilitate the staff member having the space to take chances and lead. Learning to let go and trust staff can be frightening for senior leaders (with whom the buck stops), but it is necessary:

> 'it was only when I had faith in my team that I let go of that operational stuff, which then enabled me to...think a lot more critically about strategy, because you can't lead if you are operationally driven. That was an important shift for me.'

Not only must people have the space to lead, but also the leader must guide them to reflect on their own performance, in order for them to develop self-awareness and take self-responsibility:

> 'Some of my managers are smart and capable but they don't always respond to advice to shift their behaviours – that's not an immediate response, so I try continually to get them to have a look at themselves, to look at their behaviours and outcomes for them to take responsibility for their own behaviour.'

The leader's own self-concept and confidence as a leader was emphasised too:

> 'It's really important to have faith in your own ability and to back yourself, because the operational side of things is quite tangible. It's task focused and you can... be banging on about something for months, and it might be 6 or 9 months before you see any outcomes or benefits. That's why you do need to have faith, be tenacious, have perseverance and back yourself.'

David saw his main Sources of Power, and his values as a leader, as being outcome-focused and inclusive:

'You have to be considerate, sympathetic, but you also have to be tough sometimes, and it comes back to the point…[that] you do have to back yourself and you do have to think strategically. You've got to be careful not to be distracted by all the noise…It's a constant re-adjustment and re-prioritisation'.

He stressed the need for authenticity as a leader, in order to build up understanding, trust and commitment in the long term, and to maintain leadership credibility:

'You have to be very genuine and sincere about your desire to make improvements or get outcomes or to get change through leadership, and you need to be able to convince your team what you're about to do. Your team needs to understand that you're sincere and genuine about driving change through leadership…they're used to [leaders who] fake it till you make it – that's got a very short life.'

4b) The Framework

We discussed the Leadership framework, and David enjoyed the approach of using fantasy literature for this purpose because of its vividness:

'I think you're right about stimulating peoples' interest in leadership… I think it's arguably a more effective way to communicate types of leadership if you use literature, because a lot of us aren't necessarily interested in hypothetical models about leadership particularly if we think what we're doing is reasonably successful. But if we think about Lord of the Rings, and most of us have read that book, and we think about the powerful emotions that's instilled in us all, and still does, but if you use that as a vehicle to communicate leadership, then I think its potentially a very effective way of talking about the various facets of leadership.'

4c) Potential Insight Moments from the Conceptual Encounter with David

I experienced three Potential Insight Moments from this encounter. First, the importance of positivity in maintaining presence and a sense of real calm, within a frantically busy role. David used positivity as a leadership tool continually, especially through the hard times:

'I always remember this situation is only temporary. When it's tough, I can see the horizon and I know that I'm going to get there, and I never take these things personally. I see them as a challenge for a person and at that point in time, that person happens to be me, so it's not that my world is falling in – it's not falling in at all.'

This is a refreshingly logical reaction to his highly stressful leadership job. I undertook mentally to explore positivity again in more detail, to consider whether the framework should emphasise positivity specifically, as a necessary leadership development characteristic.

The second moment of potential insight was David's strong focus on leaders needing to become authentic, something I had heard frequently in encounters with other research partners. I needed to think through how this focus on values and transparency should be positioned within the framework. I decided that I needed to explore this topic in more detail in subsequent encounters, and again explore how authenticity could fit within the framework.

Third, the discussion about the use of literature to stimulate creativity, novel solutions and alternate ways of problem-solving was interesting. David had commented that people need a 'leg-up' in order to be able to use literature in this way, but that it was a good and powerful approach. I would need to consider again the way I introduced people to the use of literary analysis, when formulating a framework or training strategy.

5a) Conceptual Encounter 5: Mary

Mary's conception of leadership and the use of literary analysis as a leadership tool was thoughtful and measured:

> 'I think Tolkien and lord of the Rings has got some pretty amazing examples within it, probably some examples you don't want to use. There's some fairly nasty characters in there. But at the same time, they are leaders, because they've been able to muster large numbers of people, or things, to follow something, which I guess is still leadership.'

Tolkien's examples of evil rulers raised the issue of dark leadership, and whether exploring the nature of Sauron and Saruman could illuminate aspects of today's leadership performance. Mary was curious about the way that good leaders can 'go bad', and we discussed the nature of power and leadership. She commented:

'I think power is important to a proportion of leaders, not necessarily all –there are different types of leaders. Some are probably the ones who are power hungry, and its more: 'what's in it for me' type of personality… I don't count success by the number of staff…I achieve it through a lot of people who are not in our department, so I work through others in other departments. It's more of a collegiate relationship.'

Mary saw herself as a servant leader, with a focus on action and role modelling high performance, almost as a 'wing man', working to support her manager:

'You do the things that you do because it's a cause or a purpose, and through that it does help to have a position sometimes, because it allows you access to levels. But…in reality, you can do a lot of things without a title. In the end, you are trying not to drive the leadership by a derivation of a title, but through your action or results.'

Unsurprisingly, Mary felt her values were persistence and resilience: 'Basically, if there is something that really needs to be done, just because its hard doesn't mean you don't do it.' This 'ability to move things along' seems to be a commonly held, shared value among the senior leaders in this organisation, along with the ethic of hard work for a worthy cause. Mary clearly seemed to be an activist, problem-solving leader, working around the organisation at times:

'In large organisations, the hierarchy does make a difference, and it is a key driver, and if you ignore it, it's at your peril. There are people who will only go to the top person…I guess if people are too overt at that, I do get annoyed… [I believe that you] don't unnecessarily criticise unless you're willing to fix it or understand the problem, which is a limitation at the same time. If you try to do too many things, you can get bogged down with detail, obviously the most effective leader can make things happen over a broader sphere.'

Mary believed that leadership of the future would be harder for leaders, with multigenerational, multi-cultural expectations, and diverse values bringing more change and new technological systems. We discussed the role of the change leader, and how important it is to keep in touch with imaginative, flexible solutions, and not get stale. We also discussed the plight of an organisation with a poor top leader, and how this influences creativity and diversity, exploring how essential a culture that generates imagination and new ideas is for the future. The role of the leader in creating this type of culture is vital now:

Mary: 'People might stay for different reasons in order to protect or insulate parts of the organisation from the influence of that. Some may stay, even though it's a bad environment, but stay more as a shield.'

Liz: 'The leader as a shield is interesting… Do you think leaders do shield their staff in that situation?'

Mary: 'Yes, and it's a difficult job.'

5b) The Framework

Finding it useful and interesting, Mary also believed that the framework was logical and sensible, as we explored the stages of the model together. She suggested that the leaders' self-concepts may relate to their differing styles of leadership, and the recurring issues of reluctant leaders:

> 'Does the Source of Power generate a willingness to lead? How do you encourage reluctant leaders? There's a percentage of the population that really want to lead whether they are good at it or not. There may be another component who don't feel they have that will to lead. So how do you create it and overcome the lack of will to lead?'

We discussed how leaders could tap into Sources of Power as a way of motivating people to lead, and whether an effective leader acted as a shield that protected their staff – protecting, as well, their own Sources of Power. Perhaps one role of the leader is to identify, understand and respond to (or protect) their followers' Sources of Power: this builds confidence and trust.

5c) Potential Insight Moments from the Conceptual Encounter with Mary

I had two useful potential insights moments about leadership and the framework from this encounter: the role of dark leadership, and the role of 'shielding', protecting and supporting the Sources of Power to maintain followership energy and leadership at all levels. First, the place of 'dark leadership' and where it might fit the framework seemed important. The issue raised questions about whether it is simply the opposite of ethical leadership or something else entirely. I wondered whether it served a function in Tolkien's work, and, if so, what and how. I realised that it would be helpful to research and explore the role of 'dark leadership' further, to consider what

could turn a leader into a negative or destructive force, and whether there are implications for the framework, and for leadership development.

Second, the insight emerged that the leader needs to be, most of all, a shield for the followers. It may be important that leaders 'shield' from harm not only their followers, but also their followers' Sources of Power. I need to consider whether this seems correct; and, if so, whether this action helps sustain followership energy over time, helping to avoid gradual demotivation, apathy and cynicism. The difficulty of motivating reluctant leaders to lead appears to be a frequent area of concern for leaders – perhaps more needs to be understood about whether aligning and strengthening the sources of power with the goals, values and actions of the leader, could be used to help encourage leaders to find their own leadership 'voice' and leadership commitment. It also seems important that leaders shield and protect their own Sources of Power -. especially in difficult situations - to maintain energy, self-motivation, mental health and well-being.

6a) Conceptual Encounter 6: Nicola

Always wanting to be a leader, Nicola had applied for diverse leadership roles early in her career, seeking to gain experience and skills. Early responsibility, having 'to stand on her own feet from an early age', had encouraged Nicola to become resourceful and resilient throughout her life, as well as in a leader role. Nicola's ideal leadership style is servant leadership, valuing the ability to work with her people to coach and support them: to her, leadership is about helping, developing and mentoring others:

> 'Leaders cannot be separate from the people. They must try to take people along with them too. I like leading people to be the best versions of themselves possible. I dislike having to be the person with all the answers! How do I avoid it? I delegate!'

Nicola believed that career disappointments are helpful, because of the many opportunities they can provide. She also felt it is important to remain vulnerable as a leader, and remain exceptionally positive, because 'there is still a job to be done, no matter what else is going on.'. Getting to know the followers, while learning to adapt the leader's style to the followers' needs is vital. She saw her values as a leader as positivity, commitment, alignment, excellence, learning through doing, and constantly improving.

6b) The Framework.

Positive about the framework, Nicola did not feel that anything needed to be changed about the content or the structure. I noticed that, in her discussion and actions. Nicola seemed to 'live and breathe' her sources of power: they were vitally important to her and to her life. She had a strong self-concept, and an exceptionally high level of confidence in her potential as a leader. Her strengths and her growth of the first three stages of the framework resulted in a very mature and 'emotionally intelligent' leadership style. This made me wonder whether there was a relationship between these first three stages of the framework (willingness to lead, strong self-concept as a leader, and strong commitment to one's sources of power) and high levels of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is a vital competence for leaders who must lead a diverse workforce through the challenging times of radical and unpredictable change, making her exceptionally effective in her day-to-day leadership.

6c) Potential Insight Moments from the Conceptual Encounter with Nicola

The potential insight moment that stood out most during this encounter was the way that Nicola's strong Sources of Power seemed to create a high level of emotional intelligence. . If there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and these three early framework stages, then developing these stages might also develop the emotional intelligence of the leader, while improving his or her capability and effectiveness.

That would be a useful insight indeed, as often, the emotional intelligence literature, while describing and assessing emotional intelligence, is sketchy on ways to develop it. The framework could add a practical way of doing that, as well as adding to theoretical knowledge about the field of emotional intelligence. More research and analysis were needed on this.

7a) Conceptual Encounter 7: Robert

Robert felt that he had been fortunate in having a history of having excellent leaders, as he had strived to learn his leadership 'trade' during his career. We explored the value of leaders who were passionate about growth and development. Robert was convinced of the huge impact that leaders can have on their staff:

> 'It's a pretty big responsibility you have … you never remember the leaders for insignificant things, what you do remember is how they've developed you as a person.'.

He described his current leader, as being 'quite exceptional… wanting to create a dynasty of better people.'

The importance of positivity and cultivating a deliberate positive attitude emerged again, as with previous research partners: 'that's one of the big things I got from your course. The power of positivity is something I have consciously worked on.'. For Robert, positivity was a key value and Source of Power to him. He had certainly used this positivity as a personal source of strength through the tough times of leadership, believing that:

> '[The thought] that things will always get better, and if you can get through the bad patch, then it's all upside from there…you are going to learn things from that which will make you better equipped for the next time. You also see that bad times bring out the best in people, seeing people have supported you and done extra things to help you through the bad times.'

We discussed the future of leadership. Robert saw a key challenge for future leaders being that of training, developing and motivating people with radically different values and expectations:

> 'I think potentially there is going to be a lot quicker turnaround of staff in positions and a thirst for quicker knowledge of our position or responsibilities… I do think people… want surety and security over their future…but…the only thing that can guarantee them any sort of security is to have the skills that are in demand in the time they are looking for work.'

We considered issues about how training up a younger workforce to work effectively with an older team could work; how to train people within shorter time frames; and how to lead a team with very different ages to work together.

7b) The Framework

To Robert, the framework helps leaders understand the deeper reasons for leadership action, and how important it is to not just learn leadership skills without the human context underlying them. Without the first three stages to help the leader understand themselves and others more deeply, leadership is just 'going through the motions':

> 'Leadership… is about making the right decisions at the right time, and I think the way you've described your leadership model there, gives you the ability to make the right decisions at the right time, but if you jump in with your leadership skills, that's like having the technical knowledge without any of the theory to understand when you would apply them or how and why and what you're looking for out of this…and you're just – 'ah well, I know that I should be using this skill at the moment and I know the skill, but I don't really know why I'm using it or what I'm trying to achieve or deal with.'

That was an interesting thought. I asked if the first three stages provide enough 'human context' for effective leadership development. Robert felt that the framework enhanced it well:

'The growth part of it, and the self-reflection, obviously is the building up upon layer upon layer of your experience, and how you're applying the leadership skills, and also your knowledge of whatever it is, with your will to lead and sources of power -. and how that builds and develops even a stronger view of who you are and what you're trying to achieve. I think the model is quite sound in the way that it gives you all the different attributes for what you need to be able to lead.'

Robert felt nothing was missing from the framework, except that 'at some point, you just need a bit of luck!'. We then discussed whether extra focus and positivity could help leaders to see more opportunities and 'grab them', thus becoming more 'lucky'.

Robert had used the framework with his staff, and for his own development:

'I think I've used most bits of it for myself in different ways and times. I think it's a perfectly workable model…I can't think of anything that is missing. It does cover everything… [As a leader] it gives a structure to talk about, to think about, and to put things in boxes so you understand how it all fits together. I think it would be a very valuable tool.'

We explored a specific staff problem of his, applying the framework to it – through it, Robert understood a new perspective, and felt more optimistic about the problem. He decided to use the framework immediately on return to work, explaining the Sources of Power of this staff member to create more understanding and tolerance.

7c) Potential Insight Moments from the Conceptual Encounter with Robert

I had two Potential Insight Moments during this encounter. First, Robert had highlighted the diversity of the workforces of the future, and the leadership challenges of millennial and post-millennial staff 'colliding' with older team members. I wondered whether I should have placed more emphasis on the leadership of diversity in my framework, or whether it would best be covered in the section on leadership skills.

Second, the firm belief that Robert had developed in positive leadership seems to have helped him in times of stress and difficulty. Robert had illuminated the great importance to leaders of the people development skills, of caring and growing his people, but, most of all, the value of his leadership positivity had stood out, even in his belief about leaders needing to be lucky. More investigation into the research on leadership positivity, and whether the framework should include this in a more prominent way, was clearly necessary now.

8a) Conceptual Encounter 8: Maxim

Maxim had undergone much stress in his previous role, but now taken on a more satisfying, less pressured job of primarily supporting professional roles. As a structured, efficient and organised leader, he has an apt role in providing support to others who need it more. He seeks to lead his brilliant but disorganised manager, as well as his own team to greater efficiency.

To Maxim, courtesy and kindness is essential in a leader. He refers to one senior leader (who is a role model for him) as:

> 'He was fantastic. I know a number of times we had some major issues, everybody was throwing their hands in the air screaming about who did what and what went wrong, and 'X' would just calm it all down, just bring it all backwards focus dealing with the main issues, identify those issues and work out how do we get through this. Again, focusing on the issues rather than the people.'

We explored leadership style in depth. Maxim raised the value of the Kirton Adaption Innovation Inventory (the KAI), that we had done on the leadership program. Kirton (1986) established a range of cognitive styles based on preference for change, which impacts the way that decisions, communicating, interacting with the team, etc, are done by individuals and teams. Leaders can self-score on a 'KAI' test that measures whether their preference is more adaptive (within structure and respectful of existing paradigms and rules) or more innovative (more challenging of existing structures, working across structures and rules). Statistically solid, this concept has been useful in

teaching the value of cognitive diversity, and how to understand and respect diverse styles of

behaviour and preference. This had been a very helpful concept for Maxim:

> 'I think about that issue [the KAI] so many times and I come back to the thought that 85% of the time, people try to do the right thing. If it comes across they are not, I like to take a step back and think about their KAI, and where they are coming from – and think, is this just an issue of how we are presenting the message in a way they can understand or receive it well; or are they actively trying to be destructive? The latter is very uncommon, I find.'

Maxim had scored as a highly structured high adaptor, so AI theory had shown him why his own

thoughtful and detailed responses to work colleagues could be different to the others that he worked

with. Adaption-Innovation theory explained why 'cognitive style' can be so different among team

members:

> 'I work for a fellow who is extremely creative and he's come up with 17 ideas and wants to implement them all. Understanding that's who [he is] is very important because I won't jump on any of those decisions. I look at them for a few days, rephrase them and give them back saying here's your priority list. It seems to work most of the time! If I were jumping at every single thought bubble, I would be going round in circles every day. It's great to have that insight of when to push the pause button, and when to just go [with it].'

Accordingly, Maxim believed that future leadership should include a greater emphasis on culture

building and motivation within an environment of respecting diversity and cognitive difference:

> 'It's understanding how to motivate different people differently, that's a very important skill as a leader…that's understanding how people need to have the information conveyed to them. We've just been trying to build the culture in our organisation very gently without it being too forced.'

To Maxim, an excellent culture requires a clear focus on values, starting with the leader:

> 'I'm honest and trustworthy, and revel in fairness and equity, probably too much. I know that … the world isn't fair sometimes, and bad people get rewarded, but to try and share that amongst our organisation to make sure that the people that need help are getting it, not because they are the quietest wheel…I think really honesty and trust is so critical – also admitting when things aren't going the way you'd like them to, and you've made failures. It's just being open that is really important.'

8b) The Framework

Maxim was quite satisfied with the Framework. The only area he felt it could be improved was whether AI Theory should be included. We discussed diversity in depth, and whether there was a link between the Sources of Power and a specific preference for adaption or innovation. No other enhancements were felt necessary to the Framework by Maxim.

8c) Potential Insight Moments from the Conceptual Encounter with Maxim

One major insight emerged for me from this encounter with Maxim. No-one else had yet mentioned the importance of A-I Theory and the implications of KAI results being included in the Framework, whereas thirty years of teaching it globally had shown me its value in developing leaders' understanding and insight about themselves and others. More thought was needed on whether the whole issue of leading through diversity, and the role of A-I Theory in particular, should be incorporated into the Framework.

9a) Conceptual Encounter 9: Ben

A practical leader, Ben's preferred leadership style was about making successful change and improvement: 'I like to have the ability and power to make something happen'. His style is to foster continuous change skills in his team:

> 'I make it clear now that people who don't bring about change are going backwards, cos everything around them is improving, and if you're not improving at the same pace or more, you're effectively going backwards. Technology is a good example, if you don't keep up with it, you end up literally going backwards. So for me that's a big deal. I've always lived that way, I've always challenged the status quo… I certainly now encourage and empower my people to do that and make it mandatory really, because it's the only way we get better.'

Ben discussed how he had lately transformed his leadership style to be far more people focused, whereas previously he had been 'a bit more of a dictator'. His main leadership role-model was the same top manager who had impressed other research partners. Ben admired:

'the way he empowers people to run their own race. He equips them to do that, he trains them and gives them permission to do that. I think he's very successful in the way he's done that – he's someone I can look up to. '

Asked about the leadership of the future, he believed that technology would make things easier for leaders, supporting them with information and suggestions, and making their work and decision-making easier:

'[it] will continue to accelerate and change our lives…it will give us more power…Intelligence can filter out a lot of the simple decisions for us. It can pre-decide 1000 things before it presents us with a solution.'

9b) The Framework

Ben said that he had used the framework largely on an informal basis: 'until now, probably, I've done it more naturally. I'm pausing a bit [now] and trying to be a bit more conscious about some of that.' When asked how the Framework could be improved, he replied that, although quite satisfied with it, there were two areas that he thought needed including somehow: how a leader should exit the position of leadership to let others take over; and how leadership opportunities could be provided when no formal leadership roles are available for the foreseeable future. He felt these were important problems for his organisation:

'from an individual perspective, I think the model picks up everything as to how an individual might go… but how do we help people get past these hurdles? How do you… allow people to develop even though there isn't a need. Having the strategy to allow the cream to rise to the top without creating a void at the bottom? So in that leadership journey not to create a cavity or put a lid on it where people get blocked because of deadwood or dead mans' shoes scenario.'

The first issue of including in the Framework ways that the leader can introduce or manage their own exit is already covered in the section on personal change – leaders must review and reflect on their leadership role, and make any necessary alterations.

The second issue of finding a way to provide leadership training when no formal positions are, or likely to become, available is something that leaders should be doing as part of developing their teams. It is already part of the Leadership Skills stage of the Framework. This is about operational leadership skills and behaviour. Perhaps that aspect needs more emphasis as part of the coaching and development skills, but it is the act of instilling the correct culture for continuous growth, learning and experimentation. It is about encouraging leadership at all levels of the organisation; providing coaching support, and training other leaders to release control, and delegate more. Leadership willingness and behaviour should be inculcated throughout the organisation, whether in a formal position of authority or not.

9c) Potential Insight Moments from the Conceptual Encounter with Ben

A potential insight moment from this encounter was the tricky one of leaders knowing when to absent themselves to let others lead, temporarily or permanently. Ben felt strongly about leadership succession, and not stultifying and demotivating staff in the lower levels of leadership. The issue of knowing when to let go, and let others lead, is has plagued top leaders for centuries, ending with them, like some prime ministers, often being forcibly ejected. The topic does have validity, and needs further thought and research.

10a) Conceptual Encounter No 10: Trent

Trent is very familiar with Tolkien's work, so is able and willing to draw leadership lessons and analogies from the novels, clearly enjoying the process of doing so. We discussed the importance of role-models to leaders, especially in their function of providing more confidence to young leaders in taking leadership actions:

> 'Unless you've got a very strong role model that they're able to develop theory around as a leadership role, how do they actually know what is expected of them at that time? Because they aren't confident to make those decisions and say, 'this is the important thing I need to do right now, because that particular activity or task or issue, if it's not solved will cause a much bigger problem.' That's when young project managers rely on more experienced people to give them a little direction, and say 'this is where you need to focus your attention now.'

Trent's own leadership role-model was the New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda O'Hearn:

> 'There's so much empathy in the way she leads…[As] Churchill…would say that out of every crisis comes opportunity. Jacinta seized on that with the crisis they had with the terrorist attack. She's seen an opportunity in that to show authentic leadership, and set an example of what a true world leader really is. But still very human.'

He values this authenticity and follow-through in his own leadership, as well as in his staff, as he highlighted when praising one of his team:

> 'One of the things I commend her for, is that she's very authentic in her leadership, and she will openly say 'I'll deal with this problem the way I'm comfortable dealing with this problem' and she'll describe what she'll do. I feel that's fine and will support her with that, she'll have given it thought and knows what she wants to do, and how she wants to approach it.'

Trent listed his core values and Sources of Power as 'courage, trust and the drive to achieve great things', as well as professionalism, experience, knowledge and developing his staff. Interestingly, he thought his Willingness to Lead had increased in recent years:

> 'the older I get the more I realise that that's the path I have chosen and that it's incumbent on me to lead…[My Manager] expects that I will be able to follow a very high level of direction, and know how to get to that without constant reassurance, supervision or direction.'

Trent's concepts of future of leadership were that it would be less hierarchical, and more team-based, with leaders becoming more stakeholder and health focused:

> 'It will be more around people, wellness, creating environments that people will flourish in, and much less around building buildings, and ensuring that we've got the latest and greatest facilities. It will be more about the enabling of those facilities to achieve other things… more empathetic, more people-focused… [and dealing] with diversity much more.'

We discussed the challenges of managing millennials within a mix of many age groups, with Trent predicting huge change ahead: 'it will be fascinating looking at what the world at work will look like after that generation comes through. It will be nothing like we've seen in the past.'

10b) The Framework

Trent found the framework invaluable in his leadership role, stating:

> 'I use it myself, constantly actually, particularly the Self-Reflection part of it. Just taking time to stop and think about where am I, and what areas to I need to focus on in the short term and long term, and then start trying to address my leadership style, making self-changes – which might be relevant to one person I'm dealing with – so just using that model constantly as a thinking mechanism, at least every two weeks, to find some time to go somewhere.'

He used the framework in coaching sessions with his team, and in fostering self-reflection in leadership development mentoring with individual leaders. He felt the framework 'just builds and builds'.

We discussed the impact of the Sources of Power on motivation and commitment to action. Trent made an interesting point about the damaging overuse of the Sources of Power:

> 'One of the things I use, particularly with Sources of Leadership Power is just to get people to stop and think carefully if perhaps they are overusing one of their Sources of Power, relying too much on that. Sometimes that Source of leadership won't necessarily fit a situation, so look a little deeper in some other areas to what you might use that could be more effective in this situation.'

This is a useful point: leaders may overuse certain Sources of Power in situations where they are not appropriate. One of Aragorn's strongest Sources of Power, for example, is tradition and respect for the traditional roles and positions: extensive use of that source of power might not fit well in the fast-changing and informal teams of twenty-first century organisations.

We discussed whether anything could be added to the Framework. Trent replied that a link between follower expectations and leadership; and leaders and their cultures would be useful:

> 'Yes, I think it would be putting a direct link between Sources of Leadership Power and self-reflection… you know you talk about self-concept as a leader, but what about the external concept as a leader … your direct staff – what do they expect, what are they looking for in terms of a leader, then the people that are your own leaders…what are their expectations and what is their concept of me as a leader? There needs to be some alignment of your self-concept as a leader and the culture concept as a leader, or you'll clash.

Trent used King Thorin as an example in *The Hobbit*, at the Battle of the Five Armies. Thorin is under siege by his enemies. The dwarfs expect Thorin to lead them, but he has become reclusive, infected with 'dragon-sickness' and lust for treasure. The dragon-sickness has twisted Thorin's sources of power: he values leadership and the protection of his people above all, but fighting for his inheritance has become more important than the safety of his people, or keeping his promises to those who helped them. One Source of Power has become over-dominant, and is subverting the others. Thorin is not authentic or true to himself at this point: unable to reason, or to take care of his people.

10c) Potential Insight Moments from the Conceptual Encounter with Trent

There were two potential insight moments from this encounter. The first one is the place of role-modelling for leaders, how important it is, and the idea of whether it should be incorporated more into the Framework. We discussed whether role modelling has the importance it deserves in today's leadership development – for all leaders, not just young ones. The function of role-modelling is often counted as a leadership role, but when crisis hits, leaders are often 'too busy' to think about it. I have noticed that on leadership programs, people are often reluctant to have, or talk about, the role-models they admired and followed, as if to have a role-models is naïve or childish. We learn from leaders about how to behave. So when leaders do one thing and say another, it is considered hypocritical, and deceitful, undermining trust and belief in the authenticity of leaders, restricting openness and honesty by followers. I reflected that Leadership role-modelling should be further considered within the Leadership Skills stage of the Framework.

The second moment of related potential insight concerns the Sources of Power. Trent had wondered whether there should be a direct link between them and Self-reflection in the Framework. Yet it would not have helped Thorin in his extreme behaviour. I had wondered whether some

thought should be given to the overuse, or even the distortion, of the Sources of Power that might

create poor performance and the erosion of group goals. These are important issues for the

Framework, requiring more deliberation and analysis.

11a) Conceptual Encounter No 11: Teresa

Teresa knew the work of Tolkien well, and she enjoyed the use of this fantasy literature for the

leadership development framework – it seemed to energise her. Because of Teresa's interest in the

framework, this conceptual encounter centred strongly around its structure and five stages, and how

they integrated and worked together, so that this aspect dominated the discussion.

11b) The Framework

Teresa commented on the framework stages in detail, with particular focus on the first three stages:

> 'I know for me the Sources of Power was something that probably was the hardest thing
> to pin down when we were doing our blueprint, but I do think the concept of Sources of
> Power – not many people talk about that: the values, what the mission is as leader… [but]
> it's the drivers. It's not just about the values -. it's what makes you passionate and what
> makes you want to do what you do, and you can have the best values in the world, but
> you've still got to have that passionate drive. It probably links back to The Will to Lead,
> so for me they are quite hand in hand. Because if you can keep your sources of power as
> part of what you do, can recognise them and nurture them, then that continues to that Will
> to Lead part, rather than letting it fall away. If you've got that Will to Lead, you fire up
> that passion, but at the same time, the Sources of Power is to drive that, it's like a circle: if
> one goes the other goes.'

Believing that the Will to Lead, and the Sources of Power are powerfully interlinked, and totally

dependent on each other- the foundation and most important aspects of leadership development:

> 'There will be times in your life where you reflect that you are actually acting in a
> leadership role but if the fundamentals are a Source of Power and The Will to Lead, then
> they are almost like the foundation that can't be moved if you are a leader. The rest of it,
> you may be working on your skills or you may be self-reflecting and saying 'I feel like I
> really led this process particularly well'- they can come and go in and out as long as that
> foundation is there. So I wonder whether rather than being a circular continuum, whether
> it's more of a 'this is the foundation of a leader' and these are the bolt-ons that come.

> I guess that the difference between being a leader and being an exceptional leader might be the other three [stages], but the foundation remains the same, whether you're an average leader or a good leader or an exceptional leader.'

Teresa postulated that the foundation elements of Sources of Power and the Will to Lead were of primary importance and unchanging throughout life, with values and the leadership skills and style as 'secondary', more changeable parts. The key to great leadership is being authentic and knowing oneself:

> 'When I look at great leaders, I think it's the ones that have an authenticity about their passion, cos you can fake your passion, but when people see your authenticity around it, that's the true bit. …there are some leaders I don't necessarily agree with, but I can respect their magnetism around them, and comprehend why they end up in a position where people follow them.'

11c) Potential Insight Moments from the Conceptual Encounter with Teresa

The discussion with Teresa about the framework was radical. Instead of a circular framework, Teresa proposed an hourglass shape, with the unchanging foundation elements of The Sources of Power, and The Will to Lead at the lower level; values and ethics taking the narrow central position; and the top half comprising leadership skills and temporary 'bolt-ons', necessary for contemporary environments or situations. This is an interesting moment of potential insight: i.e. whether the shape was not a moving circle, but could be a solid base that supports the other elements. I wondered whether this more static representation would provide a sufficient sense of the continuing movement, growth or change of a self-perpetuating circle, or whether an hourglass form would be better. More reflection is needed.

12a) Conceptual Encounter No 12: Sasha

Sasha was also familiar with Tolkien, through its successful films. She had been heavily involved with a major change initiative within the organisation, and although an experienced leader, she was more interested in the leadership development framework than in more general leadership issues.

12 b) The Framework

Sasha believed that the first three elements of the Framework were essential to leadership, through understanding self and others better, and seeing the importance of skills in relating to followers:

> 'My thinking is that those fundamentals [are] about what leadership is, and those sets of personal attributes are really, really critical to good leadership, because you can teach people to have skill sets and that, but if they don't actually understand people, and what makes people work, then they haven't got that emotional intelligence to actually be able to connect. Those first 3 things are critical in being able to be a leader, and I think that's part of the problem with leadership courses, that they focus [only]… on the [leadership] skills. I think that it's a good balance that probably 60% [should be] spent on the actual person and the Sources of Power, and the Will to Lead, and all that stuff. Then the other part is all about the specifics, tools and skills that you develop, but I think that fundamental understanding of who you are as a leader, and having that drive to be a leader is really critical-'

Sasha also felt that reflection was an essential part of the leadership development process:

> 'at every stage there should be reflection, because you need to constantly be able to reflect through the stages… personal development is all about reflection, isn't it?'

Sasha suggested putting the Reflection stage at the centre of the diagram, so that it is present at every stage. We discussed the look of the Framework, and Sasha felt that the first three stages should be more heavily emphasised: pointing out that the framework design currently suggests that all stages are equally important, whereas they are not. All of the research partners had placed greater emphasis on the first three stages of the framework.

12 c) Potential Insight Moments from the Conceptual Encounter with Sasha

The Potential Insight Moment for me was the idea that the design of the Framework suggested that all stages were of equal importance, yet it appears to be the first three stages that really count. Sasha bid me look again at the way I had drawn the framework, and this was good advice.

13a) Conceptual Encounter No 13: Judy

Judy had a background in literature and drama, so the use of Tolkien for leadership development

pleased her, believing that metaphor is:

> 'a way in, of holding those concepts and that process. Helping to glue together the mind and the heart…it's very personal. The personal and professional are so much together in this program, and I connected with it at a deep level.'

Judy also had found the Adaption-Innovation model, and the KAI, its self-scoring inventory, very

helpful in her own self-knowledge, as well as in helping others to understand her:

> 'I felt that I was not understood. I was misunderstood by managers. When you identified the KAI model, that really, really helped. I got a label that I like to inhabit, nut it gave them a way to identify me and found a place to describe me. It was safer for them to relate to me.'

We discussed the difficulties of being an assertive woman over 50 at the workplace: 'people are

very quick to stereotype you', and she commented that the KAI had given her confidence to be

herself more, and to respect others at work who have different preferences and behaviours to her.

As a leader, Judy saw her preferred style of leading her staff as being a Distributive Leadership

style, 'helping them to find the answers' and to take leadership responsibility themselves.

Exploring the nature of her own leadership, Judy commented that post-traumatic growth has been

formative in her life:

> 'For me, personally, a lot of stuff has come from mistakes. Absolute shocking trauma and adversity. It's about transforming all of those and learning from it, and saying, 'well, there's no other way except to open up and become a leader' It's accepting yourself with all the trauma, fear and messiness – to start to love that. These concepts ae really empowering for people, but also very threatening.'

13 b) The Framework

Judy was satisfied with the Sources of Power, and the framework's first three stages, with their

implications. Asked what she would improve about it, she replied 'Maybe a little more work on

the actual texts? Make people more familiar with those…people would be interested in that.'. She

then referred to the BBC adaptation of Shakespeare's Richard II, and how usefully historical figures could be harnessed to consider leadership.

To improve the framework, Judy wondered whether there could be something included on coping with uncertainty, and testing the nature of our reality as leaders. The state of being vulnerable as a leader was explored, and the need for today's leaders to be able to sit with uncertainty. Judy finished the encounter by reassuring me that she was indeed using the framework, and had starting incorporating it into a training package for peer support at work, as it had so much potential.

13 c) Potential Insight Moments from the Conceptual Encounter with Judy

Two moments of potential insight stood out for me. We had explored the insight that had occurred in Encounter 12, that most leadership programs might be about teaching common words, common understandings, useful shared tools, helpful joint behaviours and expectations, and a stronger understanding of, and conformity to, the vision of the organisation. It occurred to me that leadership programs may not even teach leadership in most cases, but help leaders to integrate themselves better into the organisation, to become more effective and confident, as they now understand their own organisation and colleagues more clearly.

To Judy, leadership is about looking inside, leading from genuine conviction and authenticity, rather than from formulaic learned behaviours and responses:

> 'the stock idea about leadership, I don't like at all. Putting on a nice suit, and adopting the mannerisms: it's not leadership, its fake. Ghandi and the Dalai Lama are more about leadership… the way you were running the [development] program did shake people up. Shook me up, I'm grateful for that! I didn't want a leadership [process] that just gave me formulas. You didn't do that…you helped us dig deep.'

We both felt that just disseminating popular leadership skills and techniques, which could be picked up by anyone, leader or not, were not the best way to develop and foster leadership. Leadership is more about understanding and working through the first three internal stages of the framework, than it was about picking up the latest 'buzz' words, or trendy technique. Understanding popular leadership skills did not make anyone a leader, or promote leadership behaviour - it just taught managers the right words to say and concepts to refer to, without necessarily making any changes to their behaviour and action at the workplace. This confirmed the framework's focus on the first three elements.

Judy had also referred to Adaption-Innovation theory, remarking about how useful it had been to her leadership capability. It was starting to look like this tool had been influential within this group of leaders, and I wondered whether I should include some aspect of the AI Theory or diversity in the model.

14a) Conceptual Encounter No 14: Ruth

Ruth believes strongly in encouraging and coaching leadership within her team, especially using new forms of leadership which may suit the challenges of the future better:

> 'We are about to face some pretty humungous challenges as a world, and I don't think the 'old school' ways [are] the way to go. I'd be all for anything that acknowledges and celebrates - and perhaps re-conceptualises - leadership that's potentially sitting within all of us around different things…I think by encouraging everyone to reflect on where they can contribute leadership, it probably will become the norm.'

We discussed the type of leadership that would work in the future, and distributed leadership was raised again as the way ahead, within a culture of inclusiveness and shared effort:

> 'We need distributed leadership [because] hierarchical leaders with very authoritarian approaches are going to … be seen as less and less effective. I think people will be more

confident to share leadership, and in many ways I often say 'I have my job as a leader, and there are things that I do that you don't, but really we're part of a whole'. Like I'm here to navigate some road bumps and make things run smoothly rather than independently set the agenda.'

Ruth commented that, in this future-focused culture, it is vital that teams and individuals are as capable as possible, and their diverse skill are recognised and celebrated:

'We have to make sure that we are making the most of everybody's capabilities, and that goes across the organisation. Anything that tries to box people up and not use their full capabilities is just not an effective way to work. …you need to be listening to younger people, newer people, that have got great ideas, and if they're not confident to show leadership from where they sit in an organisation, you're going to miss out on all of that…. [If not] then we're missing out on a whole resource. I don't think the world can afford to do that.'

One of Gandalf's repeated leadership behaviours in The Hobbit and in The Lord of the Rings is to withdraw his leadership input, by leaving for an urgent errand: his companions must learn to lead themselves and build their own leadership confidence, which they invariably do. It is not a leadership approach that Ruth approves of, however:

'You need to go back and criticise Gandalf a bit there. How had he prepared his team, what was his succession planning here, and how was he looking at distributing leadership across his team in terms of who was going to take the lead here… His [way]… is to drop you in the deep end and you'll be alright, which I'm not sure I actually support.'

This reflects earlier concerns about how a leader can encourage individuals to accept and face a leadership challenge when they themselves are reluctant:

'I think there are still a lot of issues around people's will to lead or their conception of themselves as a leader, and I think we are still struggling with that quite a bit. … you're on the money with the idea that the [leadership] skills alone, this isn't what this is about, and the fact that we don't all have the same skill set. I think there is a reluctance for people to describe themselves as leaders.'

Gandalf frequently disappears to give his team members the space to develop, and avoid leadership dependency on him. Although this works well as a leadership action in Tolkien's novels, for this strategy to succeed, it does need trust and faith by leaders in the underlying competence of their team members – and some luck.

Ruth raised the issue of crisis leadership, and how that is different to leadership in 'normal' times, questioning Gandalf's leadership being similar to Churchill's war leadership style. She concludes that today's hard-pressed leaders cannot choose when to lead or not, as Gandalf does, but must find ways to create extraordinary leadership performance in themselves and their followers all of the time:

> 'We need to think about leadership in good times and bad…what you really want to do is future-proof yourself for those times of crisis. What I mean is if you've established that you are a wise leader, you've got experience and whatever your source of power is -. but when it comes to the crisis situation, you've got to do a lot better.'

14b) The Framework

Ruth liked the framework's tendency (through discovering and accepting peoples' Sources of Power) of encouraging many leadership styles to flower, putting the choice to lead on the follower. She felt this had encouraged both her and her team to lead more, and to use distributed leadership more frequently:

> 'There's something in saying you can be a different kind of leader. If your self-concept as a leader is based on your knowledge and expertise, then that's fine. How do you then enact that and at what point do you need to step up and demonstrate that leadership? Your model allows for that, which I really like. It says you don't have to be one kind of leader to be a leader…. I think your model is very helpful for those trying to find their own sense of leadership.'

> 'I particularly like your Sources of Leadership Power, and if you're saying the source of my power is my title or my position … [then] for me that's pretty slim pickings. Whereas it says 'No, you can be a leader, your sources of leadership can come from many different avenues. It can come from your experience, your knowledge, all sorts of things… I think it encourages distributed leadership, which is useful, rather than a more hierarchical model.'

I asked her if she could see herself using the model more explicitly at her workplace, and she replied:

> 'Oh, yes, for sure, and again it's about trying to work with my leaders and people who don't have well-established positions in the hierarchy… I wish I'd had something like that 15 years ago… it would have been really helpful to me in that role to have a model like that that said 'no, you don't have a position in the hierarchy, you don't have a team of staff, but you've been given teaching and learning leadership as your job…I think it would have very useful for me at that stage.'

Out of the discussion emerged Ruth's observation again about the importance of accepting followers for who they are, and then in building a solid supportive culture to use their skills:

> 'I think culture comes into this a lot, and I think that people don't surface their leadership, or even look for their Sources of Power, because they are not encouraged to do so…. Somewhere in there has got to be a supportive culture.'

We discussed the need for leadership congruence with the organisational culture, and whether the Will to Lead could change so that a leader might choose to lead in certain cultures but not others, if the Sources of Power were not aligned to the culture. A leader might think:

> 'It's ok sometimes not to be a leader, because this context isn't your context.'. Ruth felt that the framework should include the influence of culture, or the relationship of culture to the style of leading: 'So perhaps context encircles it, and just recognising how context interacts with leadership.'

Ruth thought that the role of context (or culture) should be included into the framework, pointing out that reflection and skills development were both dependent on the prevailing culture.

14c) Potential Insight Moments from the Conceptual Encounter with Ruth

Two Potential Insight Moments occurred to me. Firstly, there was the issue (raised again) of the usefulness of the framework with leaders who have no formal authority, nor position power, and

not much leadership confidence. The first three stages of the framework seemed to help individuals understand themselves better as leaders, and use their particular sources of power as alternate ways to achieve progress. The framework could enable more distributive leadership, which would be helpful for future leaders and organisations.

Secondly, the issue of culture was important, and had been neglected at the workplace, generally. Leaders must learn to work within an organisational culture, to create the forms of culture that allow the contributions of all, but I had considered this to be a specific leadership skill, rather than a specific skill that should surround the entire framework. More analysis and research were needed about the influence of context and where it should be located in the framework.

15a) Conceptual Encounter No 15: Jenny

We experienced technical problems in this encounter, so it was restarted with a different discussion application. Shortage of time meant that we went straight to discussing the framework, rather than leadership more generally.

15 b) The Framework

Jenny remembered the framework well. Like Ruth, she had not explicitly used the framework with her staff, but as she had undergone major work changes since the program, she had used it herself:

> 'I have definitely [used it] in the way I've now developed through that time – it came to me at a key time. I was deciding whether I wanted to be a leader or not. [It was] definitely those first three steps – having the time to think about what important to me helped me at a crucial stage of my leadership, and in taking it to the next stage. It really changed me, having that understanding of myself which I hadn't taken the time to do before.'

In the discussion, Jenny had an interesting question about the way the framework should be used over time, as the individual leader grows and matures, and whether the Sources of Power develop

over time, and if so, how, and whether it was a one-off activity, or a more continual process, for carrying on reflection continually.

Jenny also felt that reflection and reflexivity should be shown as something to be done continually, a central activity rather than an occasional exercise, that propels the leader forward towards more positive personal change:

> 'It's a really good model. I do like the idea of having the reflection in the middle, more than at the end…Towards the next stage of the leadership journey. Then your style will change, Sources of Power, having your reflection, growth – everything…At that point, you are transforming. Almost like it's the end, but then you might want to go back through and do it again.'

I asked her if she saw the framework as a DNA spiral. She liked that idea, comparing it to a double helix, definitely as a continual process of development.

We also discussed the role of the Sources of Power as a way of improving self-confidence and personal insight:

> 'I'll definitely use the Sources of Power… working with my team… it can really help understanding of why you find things more challenging. Help you to work through that, e.g. 'It's not a personal failing, just a conflict with my Sources of Power.'

Jenny advocated using the framework for leadership promotion, both for the recruiter and the leader being promoted:

> 'It is a model that really works. We don't think of it enough when we put people into a leadership role because of their [technical] expertise, not their leadership skills… [We] could take the time to think through, what does leadership mean to me? Do I have the will to lead? '

Finally, Jenny commented how useful our Conceptual Encounter had been for her continued learning:

> '[It's] been great to reflect back on the work we did on the program - and give me some takeaways too. It has been really beneficial to me.'

15 c) Potential Insight Moments from the Conceptual Encounter with Jenny

Potential insight moments for me from this discussion are how important this framework is for people undergoing pressure and significant change in their lives – how it can provide support and reassurance, as well as increased personal confidence as a leader. Jenny felt that the framework 'really changed' her at a formative time in her career. Jenny's issue of how often the process should be repeated was apt. Her 'double helix' analogy suggests that it should also be done continually, as a personal leadership checking mechanism, as well as for more formal, specific processes, such as during promotion or stressful change. It is necessary to think this through more, to decide on a set of recommendations for its repeated use. Going through the stages takes time, and some sort of structure should be in place about how to engage with it.

A third moment of potential insight was in discussing where the process of reflection should be placed within the model. Like Ruth, Jenny felt that reflection should be done all the way through, at every stage rather than in the fifth stage. More thought was needed about this issue.

Overall Insights Gained From these Conceptual Encounter Interviews:

a) The leaders all used the framework in different ways, some formally with their staff, and others more informally, as a set of concepts, for themselves and their staff. Some used it themselves for their own development or insight. All of the participants had found it useful, and for some, it had been of immense use.

b) It was frequently mentioned that the framework promoted a 'distributed style' of leadership, which many of these leaders felt was necessary for organisational leadership now and in the future.

c) The framework seemed to help leaders to understand themselves better, and become confident to lead in many different ways, using diverse capabilities, and recognising that there is no one way of successful leadership. This could promote a higher acceptance of diversity at the workplace, encouraging widespread tolerance of different contributions.

d) The framework is as helpful to work through when individuals are new to leadership, or do not have formal positions of power or authority in their organisation, as well as for more experienced leaders, who are seeking to know themselves better, and be at ease with their leadership style.

e) It is a beneficial framework to use when the individual is particularly stressed or going through radical change, as it helps them to remember their own values and what is important to them, through their Sources of Power, as well as to remember that leadership is a choice, to lead or not, through analysis of their Willingness to Lead.

f) All of the research partners found the first three stages, The Willingness to Lead, The Self-Concept as a Leader, and Sources of Power, invaluable as elements of the framework that definitely touched a 'truth' about leadership. They all agreed that a knowledge of leadership skills was not enough to develop leaders – it was the more personal, foundation stages that were the most important, along with the chance for deep reflection at all stages.

g) By focusing on their Sources of Power, many research partners felt that the framework enabled them to 'get in touch with themselves', and in so doing, to become more authentic, and brave at the workplace. Authenticity is a quality greatly valued by the research partners overall. It also helped the leaders to understand their staff better, and to locate the source of poor performance or discontent when others' Sources of Power were not being met or recognised at all.

h) Many of the Research Partners were experiencing pressurise and stress themselves, or had recently been so, as a result of the rates of change they were experiencing in their roles. They were also frequently anxious about their own staff and colleagues' stress levels. Much emphasis was made about the need to become aware of levels of mental health and the well-being of leaders and their staff, and those leaders whose styles were seen as creating stress and excessive pressure were felt to be less likely to do well in the future.

i) All Research Partners seemed to enjoy the Conceptual Encounter process, and to be pleased to be discussing leadership in depth with me again.

j) None of the Research Partners seemed dissatisfied or unhappy with the framework, all commenting that it was helpful and beneficial, despite my asking them repeatedly about what could be changed or expanded. Many thought it was a powerful instrument for support and development.

So, as a process, conceptual encounter seemed beneficial to all concerned. It provided a helpful structure with which to explore the phenomenon of leadership with a group of senior and experienced leaders. The structure enabled full and frank discussion of the topic. It also gave the research partners the chance to analyse and comment on the framework, and to make important recommendations and comments. In addition, the conversations triggered ideas and insights in my own thinking, which must now be considered and analysed in relation to the framework: how it is made, used, taught and thought about.

Chapter 7 will now consider and analyse the main *Potential Insight Moments* that emerged from the conceptual encounters: their value and implications; their adoption or otherwise into the framework; and any other issues relating to the framework. It will also explain and outline the final version of the Leadership Development Framework, before continuing on to Chapter 8 to make conclusions about the overall process, its value, and whether it has fully answered the research question asked in Chapter 1.

Chapter 7: Conceptual Synthesis

The purpose of this chapter is to explore, analyse and integrate the main insights from the Literary Conceptual Encounters (from Chapter 5), with the Traditional Conceptual Encounters (from Chapter 6) to form an improved version of the leadership development framework (in Chapter 7). It is then possible to answer, by the end of this chapter and in the concluding Chapter 8, the original research question: is it possible to use Tolkien's fantasy literature to create a theoretical and practical leadership development framework?

Through the traditional conceptual encounters, the leaders took part in a wide-ranging discussion about leadership, moving on to discuss an early version of the framework created by my literary conceptual encounter with Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. This resulted in many insights from the leaders, which were collated into topics that deal with similar aspects of leadership generally, or with the Framework specifically. Consequently, ten themes have emerged from the interviews. I will now explore these themes to provide the academic and analytic underpinning necessary to make a judgment about which ones should be integrated into the Framework. The Framework is then amended.

Table 7.1 below shows how the insights from the Traditional Conceptual Encounters have been converted into seven key themes. Training and Support was brought up as a helpful adjunct to using the Framework, but although it is listed below, I have not included it as a 'theme'. It is specifically to do with applying the Framework, rather than the theoretical shape or function of the Framework, so it is dealt with separately.

	Insights	Key Themes
Conceptual Encounter 1	The need for a wider use of reflection and self-reflexivity in the framework; the importance of monitoring mental health, pressure and stress; impact of parental influence on the Sources of Power, and the Willingness to Lead.	-Self-Review and Reflection -Resilience and Stress Management -Self-Review and Reflection
Conceptual Encounter 2	the immense value of the framework being used during times of high stress and trauma; more guidance in the training of leaders is needed to deliver this framework to staff' extra support tools are needed; clear guidelines for the framework's use at the workplace are needed; the value of the framework for mental health, and high stress situations.	-Resilience and Stress Management -Training and Support. -Training and Support. -Training and Support. -Resilience and Stress Management
Conceptual Encounter 3	the need for leadership resilience during radical change and stress; using the framework could de-stress individuals; using the framework can help leaders be more confident, authentic, and 'brave' at work.	-Resilience and Stress Management -Resilience and Stress Management -Authentic Leadership
Conceptual Encounter 4	the importance of leadership positivity to leaders; the value of authenticity for leaders in gaining trust from their followers; people need more training in using literature to solve problems, and to create solutions.	-Emotional Intelligence. - Authentic Leadership. -Training and Support.
Conceptual Encounter 5	'dark' or distorted leadership should be considered within this framework; the leader must act as a 'shield' for followers in the framework; the leader must shield the followers' Sources of Power, specifically; leaders should protect their own Sources of Power, to take care of their own mental health and stress levels.	--Self-Review. -Shield and Protector -Shield and Protector. -Self-Review. -Resilience and Stress Management
Conceptual Encounter 6:	Sources of Power and emotional intelligence seemed to be linked; This relationship should be shown in the framework somehow; it would be valuable to see if there is a link between the first three stages of the framework, and levels of emotional intelligence.	-First 3 Stages -First 3 Stages -Emotional Intelligence.

Conceptual Encounter 7:	the importance of getting the best from a diverse workforce; diversity awareness and training should be included in the framework somehow; positivity is vital for leaders' performance and effectiveness & should be incorporated into the framework.	-Leadership of Diversity and an Innovative Culture -Leadership of Diversity and Innovative Culture -Emotional Intelligence
Conceptual Encounter 8:	Adaption-Innovation theory is useful to leaders' self-knowledge, and should be included in the framework; A-I Theory is also useful for diversity management and should be included.	-Leadership of Diversity and an Innovative Culture -Leadership of Diversity and an Innovative Culture
Conceptual Encounter 9:	the importance of allowing others the opportunity to lead; to develop ways to enable reluctant leaders to practise leadership.	-The First 3 Stages -The First 3 Stages
Conceptual Encounter 10:	the importance of Role-Modelling as a leadership behaviour, and whether it should be included in the Framework; Is self-reflection directly linked to the Sources of Power? Do distortions of leadership involve a distortion of the Sources of Power too?	-Emotional Intelligence -The First 3 Stages -The First 3 Stages
Conceptual Encounter 11:	the framework shape should be an hourglass, rather than a circle, to give the 1st three elements of the framework more importance; the framework shape needs to reflect that the 1st three elements are foundational, with the other elements secondary.	-Framework Structure -Framework Structure
Conceptual Encounter 12:	framework shape shows the 1st three stages of the framework as the same importance as the other stages, but it should show that they are more important stages than the others.	-Framework Structure
Conceptual Encounter 13:	many leadership programs achieve a consistency of language, concept, expectations; communications; & vision, but do not enable people to actually lead. It is only working through the first 3 framework stages that helps people to learn to lead: leaders must explore the areas inside themselves, their commitment to lead, what motivates and inspires them, how they see themselves, with their anxieties and doubts - the first three stages are absolutely vital; the Adaption-Innovation Theory is important for leaders, and should be put into the framework to help understand leadership relationships, and identify individual differences.	-The First 3 Stages -The First 3 Stages -Leadership of Diversity and an Innovative Culture

Conceptual. Encounter. 14.	the importance of using the framework with new leaders; the importance of using it with stressed and change-exhausted leaders; it can grow leadership confidence when people can understand their own Sources of Power, their values and beliefs, to help them to learn to lead better; the framework encourages distributed leadership, by enabling many type of leadership and ways of doing it; . the leader's surrounding culture is of. . importance, and should be acknowledged somehow; culture formation skills should be incorporated within the framework somehow.	-The First Three Stages -Resilience and Stress Management -The First 3 Stages -Leadership of Diversity and an Innovative Culture -Leadership of Diversity and an Innovative Culture -Leadership of Diversity and Culture
Conceptual Encounter 15:	the framework can counteract stress and pressure;	-Resilience and Stress Management
	the frequency and ways of using this framework at work needs to be clearer; clarity is needed on whether it is a one-off formal usage or a low-key continuous one; self-reflection should be more prominent within the framework, e.g. in the centre of the framework; or somewhere else that is central.	-Training and Support. -Training and Support. -Self-Review and Reflection

TABLE 7.1. SEVEN KEY THEMES GENERATED FROM THE TRADITIONAL CONCEPTUAL ENCOUNTERS.

From this summary, it may be seen that some issues emerge frequently, and were clearly considered important by the leaders. The first three stages of the framework were widely seen as foundational to leaders and leadership, and of great value. The Sources of Power concept was the most referenced for self-knowledge and confidence building, and leaders found it useful in diagnosing colleague and staff problems. There was a strong perception that workplace stresses and pressure are having a detrimental effect on leaders and teams: this is causing the leaders anxiety. To counteract this, self-review was frequently mentioned by the research partners as an essential activity for leaders at all levels.

Each of the themes will now be considered in more detail, in order of frequency raised:

1. Resilience and Stress;
2. The Leadership of Diversity and an Innovation Culture;
3. The Leader as a Protector and Shield;
4. The First 3 Stages of the Framework;
5. Authentic Leadership;
6. Emotional Intelligence;
7. Self-Review & Reflection.

I will summarise what the leaders said during the Conceptual Encounters about each theme; explore how each theme is treated in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy; examine how recent academic research relates to the topic; and, finally, consider the implications of all of this, and what changes must now be made to the Framework.

1. Resilience and Stress.

a) What the Leaders Said:

Frequent observations were made by the leaders about excessive workload, anxiety or high levels of stress. They reported feeling highly stressed by the changes they are implementing, some seriously so. They also worried about high stress levels among their staff and colleagues. They often felt overwhelmed. However, many leaders had suggested that the Framework can be a way of increasing resilience and overall health. A common view was that the Framework can help build inter-personal relationships, as well as allow a leader to become more 'at peace' with herself or himself, through increased self-reflection and self-knowledge. During the encounters, leaders listed many benefits from the Framework regarding stress management, including the following:

a) Self-knowledge and an understanding of personal patterns and life choices;

b) The ability to recognise and understand the nature of personal stress reactions, by the added self-reflection processes;

c) The building of openness and increased trust by followers;

d) An increase in leadership confidence and self-certainty, to take the right action;

e) The ability to stand back and reflect, to perceive a wider perspective of a situation;

f) leaders knowing what's important, through their Sources of Power and their values, which help provide a road-map for decision-making and action planning;

g) a willingness to talk and express their inner selves more fully and openly.

b) Tolkien's Examples

As seen in Chapter 5, the tragedy of Denethor showed how little resilience he had after years of fighting and chronic stress, and how doubly brittle he became in the face of personal and social loss. More self-knowledge, communication, self-reflection, talking things through with others, and an understanding of his Sources of Power would have helped him greatly at this time. He has no social connections of any depth, no real relationships, no realisation of how stressed and 'near the edge' he actually was. He seems to have no self-awareness of his own state – no reflection or disclosure of his state of mind. From a health perspective, Denethor was a ticking time-bomb, about to snap at any time, as the third Literary Conceptual Encounter outlines in Chapter 5.

During times of major stress, this desperate situation can be all too common for leaders, as Tolkien would have known from his time at the Battle of the Somme in World War 1, because: 'it is possible to see Tolkien as one of a group of 'traumatised authors'. who used fantasy as a means of self-expression of their pain (Shippey, 2000, p. xxx). Similarly, Rosebury (1992) considers that 'The Lord of the Rings' was 'the last work of First World War Literature'. Flieger (2000) comments that:

'The literature of the post war period in which Tolkien, like many others, began to write, spoke with the voice of the 'lost generation' trying to come to terms with incommunicable experience.' (Flieger, 2000, p.219).

Flieger further asserts that, to express this pain, Tolkien turns to fantasy, because:

'War and Faërie have a certain resemblance to each other…both war and faërie can change out of all recognition the wanderers perception of the world to which he returns, so that never again can it be what it once was' (Flieger, 2000, p.224).

Frodo is Tolkien's example of that sense of loss and grief, and semi-withdrawal from the world, caused by excessive pain, chronic stress, anxiety and grief. Livingstone argues that it is clear that Frodo has post-traumatic stress disorder, because he 'exists in a psychological state that is unnaturally tenuous: for him, even small moments of trauma carry substantial weight and make substantial impact' (Livingstone, 2000, p. 15). After all of the struggle, the evil, the near-death experiences, and the exhaustion, Frodo displays all the signs of post-traumatic stress or burnout. His character has changed markedly from the early scenes of the novel. In the final battle of the Shire, he will not be part of any violence, or even wear his sword, Sting. He now has an anti-violence stance, reluctant to engage or fight, prone to withdrawal, and painful flashbacks. On their journey home, he remarks to Gandalf:

'There is no real going back. Though I may come to the Shire, it will not seem the same, for I shall not be the same. I am wounded with knife, sting and tooth, and a long burden. Where shall I find rest?' (*Lord of the Rings*, Book 3. p.989).

At the end of the novels, when the other hobbits find success and happiness, Frodo is clearly damaged beyond repair. He never recovers fully from his wounds - the only future for him is to leave Middle Earth and sail to the Undying Lands for healing. As he leaves, the reader is left with a sense of loss and sorrow:

'the sails were drawn up, and the wind blew, and slowly the ship slipped away down the long grey firth; and the light of the glass of Galadriel that Frodo bore glimmered and was lost.' (The Return of the King, p.1030).

In the tragic examples of Denethor and Frodo, it is possible to see examples of real pain, of the effects of chronic stress, of dire situations that cause disillusionment and despair. It can be argued that today's workplaces do not resemble the battlefields of the Somme, life experiences are relative to each person's perceptions of their lives. Stress burnout caused by radical, chronic change, the feared loss of a job, being forced to make others redundant – these have stresses been created by organisational change initiatives I have observed. The impact of organisational change can cause private despair, severe mental problems, family breakdown and much grief.

c) The Contribution of Recent Research.

Cooper and Quick (2017) comment that stress is connected, directly or indirectly, to seven of the ten leading causes of death in the US, UK, and all of the developed nations: 'stress can make us ill, even contribute to premature death and disability' (Cooper & Quick, 2017, pps.1-2). This is particularly relevant in times of national emergency such as the coronavirus pandemic, where stress worsened dramatically, and affects mental health, perceptions of overwork, depression and negativity (CIPD, Good Work Index, June 2020. Teo, Lee & Wee-Shiong Lim (2017), examining resilience in a SARS epidemic in Singapore, emphasised the importance of leaders' roles in recognising the early signs of crisis, and in disrupting normal routines to allow new behaviours and 'relational connections', thus enabling leaders to restore organisational function through adjustment of systems and behaviours to the stressors.

This response to crisis reflects Powley's concept of 'resilience activating' (Powley, 2009). Commonly perceived as an ability to bounce back following a set-back, resilience can produce a powerful 'inoculation impact' on leaders and organisations, as an emergent property that builds the capacity to succeed with future challenges and difficulties (Teo, Lee, & Wee-Shiong Lim, 2017). While acknowledging the complexity of protective factors, the authors examine how the social capital aspect of the leader's role - trust, communication, common language, awareness of others, and shared goals - can contribute to restoring stronger interpersonal relationships and building resilience. Social connections, thus strengthened, activate resilience and the ability to achieve a 'new normal'. Finally, they suggest that sense-making and sense-giving is an essential action by leaders during high stress and crisis situations, thus reducing stress from uncertainty, facilitating opportunities, and triggering resilient behaviour by the followers.

Wisse & Sleebosd (2016) single out rates of organisational change as a source of high stress (Wisse & Sleebos, 2016). Avey et al (2012) have argued that leaders must actively cope with pressure and anxiety increasing at the workplace, because high stress levels negatively impact creativity and their work performance (Avey, et al, 2012). The description of 'burnout' at work is associated with chronic excessive demands on individuals, which create job dissatisfaction, lack of commitment, absenteeism, and high turnover (Schaufeli & Enzman, 1998), as well as low levels of performance, greater conflict and disruption (Maslack & Leiter, 2017). Burnout affects mental and physical health, as well as depressive disorders. (Ahola , 2007), with people exhibiting 'a deep sense of exhaustion, feelings of frustration, anger, cynicism: and a sense of ineffectiveness and failure…The experience impairs both personal and social functioning on the job-'. (Maslach & Leiter, 2017, p. 36). It can affect the number of accidents at work (Leiter & Maslach, 2009), negatively impacting the sense of teamwork, community and social interaction (Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001).

However, Maslach and Leiter write that 'People experiencing burnout…have lost a psychological connection with their work that has implications for their motivation and their identity' (Maslach & Leiter, 2017, p. 41). They describe three specific aspects of the phenomenon of burnout as: exhaustion; distancing from the job or organisation, through 'a disaffection with work'; and inefficiency, caused by 'a crisis in work-based efficacy expectations' (Maslach & Leiter, 2017, p.41).

It is necessary for leaders to seek ways to address burnout and chronic stress, caused by change and work overload, because if not, there is evidence that it can stay constant for long periods without definitive changes (Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter, 2001). The 'Situational Predictors of Burnout' have been listed as workload and job demands, locus of control (no participation or influence on decision-making); perceived insufficient reward and recognition; no sense of supportive community and teamwork at the workplace; a lack of fairness or respect and courtesy; and a conflict of values and ethics (Maslach & Leiter, 2017, p.46-47). The authors refer to a 'two-process model' of burnout which consists of an unmanageable workload, plus a core values mismatch, producing reduced energy, reduced involvement, and lower efficacy.

d)   **Implications for the Framework.**

Almost all of the research relating to coping with post-traumatic stress, chronic stress, and workplace burnout relates to behaviours advocated by the Framework. The Framework allows employees the chance to be open and honest about their work; encourages leaders to give them as much support as possible; enables community involvement by building the right culture; and provides, through the distributed leadership style that it supports, the chance for people to increase control over their work and workplace. Being clear about the Sources of Power provides employees and leaders with a way of understanding their own values, and to be able to articulate what is

important to them, thus reducing the chance for values conflicts that might cause them stress and burnout. The focus on self-reflection and personal growth minimises the chances of leaders getting into burnout situations by accident: they are more likely to see them coming by reflecting on their feelings and responses. By using the Framework as a tool of leadership development, stress and pressure should be reduced, according to the leaders' encounters.

Consequently, after consideration of the previous three sources of input, I decided that the Framework must strengthen self-reflection and self-review further; include more on self-care for physical and mental health; focus more on resilience; and emphasise more the Sources of Power. I decided to create a new stage in the framework to be located at Stage 8, after Leadership Skills, to be called 'Self-Review and Resilience'. The purpose of the new Stage 8 is to review and maintain the leader's three critically important survival states of Mental, Physical and Spiritual Health, and to sustain resilience. Mental and physical health is too often ignored by leaders, especially in times of stress, as we saw with Denethor. Spiritual health is linked to the Sources of Power - what makes sense to leaders about having a 'purpose' or intention in their lives; what legacy do they want to leave; what gives them greater meaning and motivation, and a sense of personal significance.

I also decided to alter the old Stage 5 from the previous version, 'Self-Reflection: Reflect, Reform, Refocus and Re-energise', to become a new Stage 9, to be renamed: 'Learning and Self-Challenge'. This is about taking time for self-reflexivity and self-understanding; to review the leadership path taken; the results of leadership actions, good and bad; to learn from mistakes and successes; to decide what changes to make from this learning; and to commit to further growth as a leader. Reflexivity is encouraged at every stage, but this stage of the framework is to encourage leaders to spend a defined chunk of time examining their leadership progress to assess their own performance – 'how did I do? What wasn't quite right? What have I learned?', as well as assessing the progress of their people or organisation. For example, reviewing whether they are authentically 'living' their

Sources of Power should help build trust with followers; reviewing whether they were definite about their Will to Lead should increase self-confidence and role-modelling; strengthening their self-concept as a leader should give them added respect and admiration, as should strengthening their leadership skills and capability. Hopefully, these changes should strengthen leaders' sense of self-identity and self-worth, helping to reduce their own stress and pressure at work, as well as for that of their staff.

2. The Leadership of Diversity and an Innovation Culture

a) What the Leaders Said:

Leaders commented that the leadership of diversity is a significant part of current and future organisational success, becoming essential to widen the resources of the organisation – and, as such, believing that this topic should be included in the framework. Several leaders felt that acceptance of individual difference is essential for an ethical, equitable, fair, and socially cohesive society, particularly in the workplace of the future. One leader saw that the leader's role of motivating many different types of employee, with very widely differing values and expectations would be necessary; another felt that generational difference would be very challenging for leaders to manage in the future.

One leader felt that leadership resources can be spread throughout the organisation, as long as leader attention is paid to different backgrounds, skills and approaches, so that people do not feel intimidated to be themselves and 'have a shot' at leading. Another leader made the point that the Framework encouraged and supported 'distributed leadership', essential to manage greater organisational workloads of the future – but that truly effective distributed leadership relied on

having the resources and capacity for different ways of leading, which must stem from a widespread acceptance and celebration of diversity.

We discussed the sources of diversity at the workplace: race, colour, gender, age, social class, values, disability, educational background, generational attitudes, to name just a few. Several Leaders commented that each source of difference can contribute different resources to an organisation, potentially help create innovative new solutions and products, and provide the 'birth' of alternative perspectives, so important for the future. There was commonly held belief by the leaders that diversity is helpful to any organisation and must be widely understood and increased.

Cognitive diversity is an important source of difference: how individuals prefer to solve problems, be creative, and work together. All of the Leaders had the chance on the leadership program to work with A-I theory, to receive their own scores on the KAI instrument, and to see the dramatic difference that KAI can make in how individuals work together (or fail to). Several leaders commented on the considerable value of understanding cognitive diversity through Kirton's Adaption-Innovation Theory (Kirton, 1992), and argued it should be recognised and included within the Framework as an important support for leaders. Adaption-Innovation Theory had a strong impact on Leaders, who felt it had benefited them personally through a greater understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses, helping them to work better with others, individually and in teams. One of the leaders had commented that he thought about the KAI many times during a workday, finding it invaluable to his job as a leader.

Adaption-Innovation (A-I) theory posits that *how* people are creative, their 'cognitive style', is influential not only in the way they solve problems, make decisions, deal with change, and are creative (Kirton, 2003, pp.2-3), but in how they work together in teams, with colleagues and within their organisations. Kirton comments that:

'problem-solving is the key to all life. The more we understand problem-solving and the problem-solver the better off we might be; such added knowledge can be put to good advantage, particularly in problem-solving leadership' (Kirton, 2003, p.2).

It is an area of diversity that is often neglected in teams and organisations, but of considerable importance now, with so many radical change and problem-solving challenges for teams to solve.

b) Tolkien's Examples:

The issue of diversity within Tolkien's work is a complex one. In recent years, there has been scrutiny of historical figures, to examine how they treated people of different race, colour, gender, and social class in their own time and context. Tolkien has not been immune to that scrutiny, having been accused frequently of racism, misogyny, and anti-Semitism, within the texts of his work (Ruarick, 2004).

Critics have suggested that there is an inescapable Jewish presence on Middle-Earth, likening characteristics of the dwarves to the Jewish race (Cramer, 2006; Brackman, 2010). Rearick (2004) writes that there is a clear, racist delineation between the good, white heroes versus the dark, swarthy evil characters, like the Orcs and the Southron, referring to their annihilation at the Battle of Helm's Deep:

> 'It is undeniable that darkness and the colour black are continually associated with Tolkien's universe with unredeemable evil, specifically orcs and the Dark Lord Sauron. So unredeemable is this evil, in fact, that they can only be dealt with by extermination' (Rearick, 2004, p.861).

Similarly, Harrison (2013) makes accusations of misogyny against Tolkien, arguing that he punishes Lady Eowyn for secretly riding to war with the Rohirrim ('trespassing into male space'), and end up with a life of married domesticity. If it is true that Tolkien was racist, misogynist and

antisemitic, then Tolkien cannot offer this thesis any insights into the leadership of diversity. Fortunately, it is possible to explore these accusations.

Tolkien was born in 1892, when Social Darwinism and scientific hypotheses about different races and their characteristics were frequently debated and discussed. His philologist background gave him a strong interest in different races, seeking to list their nature and characteristics, without any idea that this might be seen as racist in decades to come. Fimi has argued that it is inappropriate to consider Tolkien a racist because of the historical context within which he lived: 'the notion of race was a widely accepted scientific category before the 1930s' (Fimi, 2010, p.134). She asserts that it was not until the events of the Second World War that perceptions were significantly altered about race and racial distinction, commenting that Tolkien: 'spoke openly against Nazi. ideas and even cautioned his colleagues against the use of the term 'race' itself'. (Fimi, 2010, p.135).

Tolkien was a devout Catholic, who perceived The Lord of the Rings as 'a fundamentally religious and Christian work' (Letters, 172). Rearick (2004) argues that the Christian narrative of light versus darkness, good versus evil, is Biblical imagery; the Orcs are dark because they are devils or demons, rather than that being a racist narrative, and using white and dark is a convenient shortcut and stereotype. The Elves are light-filled because their hearts and spirits are pure, but orcs are 'dark', Mordor lies in 'shadow', and dark creatures crawl out of Mordor at night, to show their evil nature.

That unshakeable Christian narrative leads him to show how his hobbit protagonists are elevated from the least important peoples in Middle-earth, the humble, self-effacing hobbits, to become a new and different type of hero. Frodo is a Christlike figure, unassuming, humble, yet sacrificing himself without hesitation for the people of Middle-earth, despite being weak, full of doubt, and fearful. Like Christ, he rejects the trappings of power, to remain a humble, quiet hobbit, despite

saving Middle-earth from The Dark Lord. His personal power is internal and strong; a courageous power that is not boasted about to others, nor widely known about – not even fully to himself. Hobbits generally (and Frodo, in particular) do not seek to wield power over any creature, and even Gandalf seeks to give free choice and free will to all, rather than exert power over Middle-earth. Tolkien's vision of his heroes is ultimately about the promotion of unity with, not power over, the different beings of Middle-earth, which suggests that Tolkien was not racist in the modern sense, because. 'Racism is the philosophy of power, but The Lord of the Rings functions with the Christian idea of renunciation of power' (Rearick, 2004, p. 872).

Tolkien's Middle earth displays immense diversity in its well-ordered hierarchy, and examples of successful multi-culturalism. In fact, the seven types of beings in Middle earth, with many sub-divisions and additional types, represent a rich and imposing diversity. Rogers (2013) argues that each group is carefully sub-divided into different cultures, with its own language, dialect, history, cultural practices and ethnic history, with inter-racial marriages and close inter-species friendships. The Fellowship contains five different types of creatures working and contributing their skills for a common cause. Tolkien presents displays of inter-group co-operation, collaboration, teamwork, friendship and loyalty through his writing, leading to Moe (2016) suggesting that Tolkien deliberately sets out to show strong collaboration between the races, despite their differences.

Dawson (2017) argues that Tolkien shows the power and rights of the individual against totalitarianism. Others argue that Frodo's and Sam's success in their mission represented the small person against huge armies and dictatorships, and so was challenging to established order. Tolkien supported the social hierarchy of Edwardian England, but he subverts it by showing the value of the most apparently insignificant creatures on Middle-earth, the hobbits, and in the Shire, social order is again subverted with the uneducated Sam becoming Lord Mayor. Tolkien seems to be saying that race, physical appearance, social position, education, wealth and power are not as important as

inner qualities of love, loyalty and care. Ultimately, Tolkien consolidates the importance of the individual, who he judges by their inner standards: the opposite of racism, prejudice or bigotry.

So, the lessons from Tolkien's characters and writing are that diversity is important, and should be encouraged, with respect, understanding, and a celebration of individuality. Tolkien's writing shows that shared values, strong Sources of Power, and a shared, committed vision can unify diversity and create effective teamwork and performance.

c) The Contribution of Recent Research.

Researchers comment that positive attitudes and concerns towards diversity is occupying a more visible and central position than ever before, because: 'Diversity influences our understanding and perceptions of leadership, and understanding diversity affects our ability to lead successfully in an ever-changing society' (Ospina and Foldy, 2009, p.877). An inclusive and cohesive culture of diversity within an organisation creates a better organisational climate for innovation and change, by providing a wider. range of perspectives, skills and abilities, and because innovation is mostly a social process (Liu, Lusch, Chen and Zhang, 2018).

McCuiston et al (2004) show that diversity improves profitability and business performance, attracts talented employees, creates a positive workplace culture, and maintains higher staff satisfaction. Top leader diversity has been seen to benefit the organisation financially (Baixauli-Soler et al, 2015), and diversity in top management teams influences innovation, performance and diversification (Li, P. & Huang, K., 2019), and better international strategic decision-making (Azam, Boari and Bertolotti, 2018). In a tough global environment, with frequent world-wide exchange of ideas and contact, culturally diverse organisations are more likely to make better contacts, and develop long-term relationships.

Diversity spans more than just nationality, gender or colour, but should include cognitive diversity - differences in how we prefer to think and make decisions. Key premises in A-I Theory are that all humans solve problems and are creative; and that intelligence and capacity (or level) of creativity is orthogonal, i.e. not related to A-I Theory. It measures a person's preferred style for creativity and problem-solving, which has strong statistical validity and reliability (Kirton, 2003, pp. 345-354); and is stable over time (Clapp & Ruckthum, 2019). Lapp (2019) shows that creativity may be perceived as a bi-polar continuum; and much international research supports this approach. Adaption-Innovation Theory can predict a relationship between cognitive style and leadership style (Hejazi, 2016); cognitive style and problem-solving styles of CEO-Manager dryads. (Chung & Li, 2017) ;. cognitive style and intra-group conflict (Qi & Armstrong, 2020); and higher cognitive diversity in engineering teams and improved performance (Menold & Jablokow, 2019).

A-I theory states that the difference between two main styles – more adaptive or more innovative – stems from the different ways that individuals deal with cognitive structure. At the Adaptive end of the Kirton Adaption-Innovation Scale (the KAI) sit the highly adaptive problem-solvers – individuals who prefer to solve problems within existing and accepted paradigms, conform well to rules and accepted ways of doing things, and are efficient within their paradigms. On the other end of the scale sit highly innovative problem-solvers – those who prefer to solve problems within and outside existing structures and paradigms, prefer to ignore rules, do not always fit well into structures and teams, and tend to 'buck the system'. Those in the middle of these two extremes usually have preferences to one side or the other, possibly being more unpredictable than the others in preferences and behaviour. No style is considered better than any other style – the scale is non-judgmental -. and much emphasis is placed on understanding individual difference, using peoples' preferred styles and building up respect for cognitive difference. It is possible, using the A-I theory

and the KAI, to positively influence an organisation's culture and change capacity by building

respect and tolerance of different cognitive styles. As Kirton remarks:

> 'a diversity of problem-solvers is required to solve a diversity of problems; style is a
> diversity in the very core of each individual's problem-solving process; and managing
> diversity is a key to achieving required change' (Kirton, 2003, p.7).

I had decided that the leadership of diversity should be contained within the leadership skills stage,

but it makes sense to include the leadership of diversity as a separate stage in the framework, as it

is seen as vital for the leadership of change, widespread innovation, and complex and difficult

problem-solving.

d) Implications for the Framework

Each source of difference can be a source of conflict too – one area where diversity is not

especially helpful to organisations can be in the area of core values and shared vision. If core

values and a vision of the future are not shared, then the work of the organisation may be

fragmented and conflict-ridden, while shared effort may be dispersed and fragmented (Senge,

1990).

As a result of the insights from the analysis, a separate stage has been added to the Framework –

Stage 6 – to be called 'Diversity and Innovation Culture'. This stage recognises the importance of

innovation and imagination as a source of creativity for leaders of the future. It places diversity and

culture alongside it because all three areas are about creating the organisation that can create the

future – a fast-moving, innovative culture of respect and celebration of individual difference.

3. The Leader as a Shield and Protector

a) What the Leaders Said:

Almost every leader has told stories about dark leadership at work, of bullying and harassment, and the need for protection by more senior leaders - often which was missing at the time. The unfortunate followers of dark leaders frequently have nowhere to go for support and protection, creating stress and fear. I saw it when a top leader bullied her senior managers; often I watched top leaders 'not see' the way their senior leaders treated subordinates within their organisations. Employees who are bullied may withdraw the 'discretionary' parts of their job, undertaking their tasks in the narrowest way possible, minimalizing their efforts. This type of culture can seriously damage. the creativity and innovation needed to cope with widespread change.

Knowing Tolkien well, one leader had commented on the 'dark leadership' of Sauron and Saruman, and the need for protection against their poor leadership and damaging actions. An effective leader must see how people are treated, and protect people against aggressive bullies, above and below them in the hierarchy. A follower might have 'upholding justice and following the rules' as one of their Sources of Power. This would be important to the follower's internal beliefs and their Implicit Leadership Theories: believing that leaders must ensure that equality is upheld, people are treated fairly, and that rules are followed by all. If that employee's leader then flouts the rules, treats people differently, rewards favourites, and punishes some but not others, then it might be hard for the employee to work well for that leader. Her Sources of Power would be compromised: she would not feel happy, inspired or energised at work. If she had no chance of leaving for another job, and was forced to stay, the employee might become disillusioned, 'switched off', stressed, ill and overwrought.

Similarly, as reported in Chapter 6, an employee with the Source of Power of a loving, attentive family life might feel depressed if his work hours prevented him from spending family time together, ultimately resulting in burnout or a serious illness connected to severe pressure. Leaders must understand their followers' Sources of Power, then respect and protect them, if they want their followers to reach their potential.

I hypothesized that leaders must also identify and protect their own Sources of Power in any situation, because ignoring them could lead to great personal disappointment and sense of failure. Protecting and championing personal Sources of Power generates energy and motivation; undermining them may lead to a lack of energy, and disillusionment. This may be relevant to the much-discussed complaint by the leaders about individuals being reluctant to actively lead: they are simply not drawing their work strength and creativity any more from their Sources of Power. Their Sources of Power are being stunted and corrupted by either their leader, their job, organisational demands, or the culture in which they work.

b) Tolkien's Examples

Tolkien portrays the 'Shield and Protector' role as an essential part of the actions of his successful leaders in *The Lord of the Rings,* possibly drawing on four possible sources of influence to support this view: Anglo-Saxon War Culture; Post World War One Modernism; from his writing craft, as a necessary plot device for his writing; and Biblical and Catholic religious traditions, through his strong Christian faith. I argue that, by exploring these influences on Tolkien's leader characterisation, it is possible to understand how his exceptional leaders protected and shielded their people; and perceive the rationale behind the portrayal of his dark leaders.

- The Anglo-Saxon War Culture

It has been argued that 'Tolkien believed that the Anglo-Saxon period was crucial for English identity and the most culturally 'authentic' (Fimi, 2010, p.55. Kundu asserts that Tolkien had a 'passionate and critical engagement with the war-literature of the Anglo-Saxons', with its loving, trusting relationships between lords and their loyal warriors (Kundu, 2013, p.2). In particular, Tolkien's leaders, good and bad, have been influenced by Tolkien's familiarity with the concepts and stories of that time, including the ancient Anglo-Saxon poem, Beowulf, and the 10th Century poem, The Battle of Maldon (Kundu, 2013). Kinship-bonds, bravery, heroism, great and noble deeds, self-sacrifice, duty and kinship are integral concepts to the Anglo-Saxon war culture, as are the protection, promises, rewards and gift-giving provided by the lord for faithful service. Tolkien, the Anglo-Saxon scholar, sought to display these rules of conduct and codes of behaviour through his writing. Leaders are described who live and fight within a group bound by oaths and fellowship: a type of 'heroism-in-fellowship bond' and 'a homosocial community of warriors' (Kundu, p. 8).

In *The Lord of the Rings,* Tolkien also describes types of 'dark' leaders who inflict damage on their followers or comrades, including the Dark Lord Sauron. 'Dark' is a general description of the absence of internal morality, goodness and 'light', contrasted with the inner and outer 'light' of the morally flawless, spiritually enlightened elves. Sauron rules by fear and enslavement, manipulation and cunning, desperate to take control – his workers are expendable pawns, serving him alone, and suffering under the harsh, totalitarian methods. Reciprocity is not a concept used in Mordor. Saruman, too, controls by devious means, destroying his environment, and creating murderous orcs to do his bidding. Both are ambitious only for power, and only for themselves. Wormtongue lies and deceives, seeking to control everything through King Theoden, for his master, Saruman. Orcs

are brutal, murderous cannibals, 'to be despatched without the slightest hint of moral compunction' (Tally,2019, p. 3).

-Post-World-War 1 Modernism

According to Attebury, Tolkien's work may be part of a post-war Modernism, arguing that Tolkien's writing (including, presumably, the way he shapes his leaders) contains, rather than an escape from Modernism, a strong response to it (Attebury, 2014). The ugly image of severe ecological devastation caused by the First World War, and the rotting buildings and landscapes of the Industrial Revolution, are similar to Mordor and the Dead Marshes. This environmental devastation runs parallel with the Modernist existential doubt of. Denethor's suicide, and Frodo's depression, anguish and feelings of loss of purpose (Attenbury, 2014, p.56). As such, Tolkien's work represents a manifestation of twentieth century angst and loss, as 'part and parcel of the era, partaking fully in its cultural convulsions' (p.42). Tolkien's evil, cruel leaders could certainly be seen as examples of these 'cultural convulsions', born from the tortured memories and emotional tatters of the horrors of the First World War (Hammond and Scull, 2005, p. 608 - 610);. but they could also be perceived as embodied personifications of the mechanistic controlling forces driving post-war change and industrialisation.

-The Use of Dark Leaders as a Literary Plot Device

The writing of Tolkien's Dark Leaders may be seen as a skilful, literary device. Tally (2019) comments that, as with all story-tellers, Tolkien needs evil, 'demonised' beings in his novels for literary purposes – to provide vivid, dramatic action and to be able to see its full consequences:

> 'Narrative is, in this manner, a sense-making system, and the more readily elements within a narrative can be assimilated into identifiable tropes, themes, categories, and patterns, the more easily the purportedly underlying reality can be given shape and made meaningful' (p.54).

It is necessary for Tolkien to show his characters as extreme, distinguish them by their difference; demonise his real villains, or exaggerate the sacrifices and efforts made by the heroes, otherwise credibility or dramatic impact might be compromised.

-Christian and Biblical Influences

Tolkien's narrative frequently hints at an overarching 'will' or mysterious presence that seeks to operate through others, as Gandalf explains to Frodo:

> 'I have not much hope that Gollum can be cured before he dies, but there is a chance of it. And he is bound up with the fate of the Ring. My heart tells me that he has some part to play yet, for good or ill, before the end' (*Fellowship of the Ring*, p.59).

Even Frodo seems to accept that there is a force of great power operating 'behind the scenes', when he desolately asks Gandalf:

> 'Why did it come to me? Why was I chosen?'
>
> Such questions cannot be answered,' said Gandalf. 'You may be sure it was not for any merit that others do not possess; not for any power or wisdom, at any rate. But you have been chosen, and you must therefore use such strength and heart and wits as you have' (*Fellowship of the Ring*, p. 61).

Being chosen comes with a responsibility and a sense of duty which leads Tolkien's protagonists to their destiny. The invisible, ever-present 'force' leads to the constant striving of characters to be their best, despite physical limitations or lack of talent. It is a plot device that sits constantly in the background, providing additional motivation for the Fellowship to travel through the Mines of Moria; or for Gandalf to fight the Balrog, or Frodo and Sam to travel through Mordor. Not having an obvious God figure means that it is easier for Tolkien to portray Christian values in a way that is acceptable to every reader, regardless of belief: 'One reason for the attraction of Tolkien's work is

surely that it satisfies vicariously a nostalgia for a more meaningful world without making any demands of faith or belief' (Glover, 1971, p. 44).

It also makes it easier to understand Tolkien's Christian themes of the constant, never ending war between good versus evil; the chance of redemption of sins of even the most undeserving villain; self-sacrifice for the good of others; and the importance of caring for and loving all living things (except the really evil ones!). Again and again throughout the novels, Tolkien shows leaders protecting their charges in one way or another; shielding them from Orcs and Sauron's evil.

Tolkien's Leaders as Protectors and Shields of their People

So the concept of the leader as a shield and protector has close links with Anglo-Saxon war culture and Christianity. In exchange for total loyalty, and occasional military help, the leader protects and nurtures his followers, shielding them from harm. Aragorn saves the Hobbits from the Ringwraiths at Weathertop. Gandalf saves The Fellowship in the Mines of Moria. Gandalf saves King Theoden from the manipulative clutches of Wormtongue and Saruman. Boromir tries to save the Hobbits. Gandalf takes charge of the defence of Gondor, to protect the city and its terrified people. . These protective leaders reflect Tolkien's religious devotion and unswerving dedication to the elimination of evil. Gandalf The Grey dies for the Fellowship in Moria, but then 'sent back' as Gandalf the White to protect Middle earth again. Aragorn has worked patiently for decades to protect the vulnerable people of the Shire, constantly risking death. These leaders. balance wisdom with judgement: they protect the vulnerable without dominating them or misusing their considerable power, unlike Tolkien's dark leaders.

Tourish argues that the dysfunctional application of power involved in dark leadership is a major reason for today's corporate failures, commenting that 'Power adversely affects our ethics'(Tourish, 2013, p.8). Similarly, Ulrick (2014) believes that there are lessons for business leaders inherent in an examination of the power wielded by Tolkien's leaders. He examines this power through the lens of French and Ravens' (1959) five bases of power: referent, expert, legitimate, reward. and coercive power. Ulrick concludes that 'the leaders that are most effective engage in servant leadership and possess multitude bases of power' (p. 24), citing Gandalf, Aragorn, and Bilbo as successful examples of servant leadership that real-world leaders could follow.

Servant leadership is a leadership belief system developed by Greenleaf (1970), that places the needs of the followers as the primary driver for the actions of the leader, acting as a 'servant' to the followers. This theory 'emphasises service to others at work while sharing of power in decision-making and promoting a sense of community is a priority' (Owen Hodgson, and Gazzard, 2004, p.7). The servant leader also protects and nurtures the followers. Modern leaders must be aware of the ancient leadership role of shield and protector for their people, because it creates discretionary effort and innovation of the followers, essential in times of radical change and difficulty. Tolkien's evil or corrupted leaders show no care for their followers, who are just disposable minions, expendable – their lives have no value or interest for them. Tolkien's good leaders strive to understand and 'know' their followers, continually risking their lives for their safety, to shield them from harm. They are inspirational leaders who protect their people, no matter what the cost.

c) The Contribution of Recent Research.

Leadership is displayed continually in Middle earth, with both excellent and abysmal examples. Despite that, academic writing about the Leader as a Shield and Protector of the followers is not a prolific area, with little research (Molero et al, p. 184). Much of the academic writing that examines the role of the leader as a protector and shield appears to be either religious (Christian or Islam); or historic (such as the Middle Ages), with little discussion in modern organisations. Yet organisations can hold daily threats for followers, including bullying, harassment, humiliation and a wide range of types of psychological or emotional aggression, including mergers, failures, take-overs, redundancies, ageism, racism, sexism, etc.

One recent research movement that is increasing in terms of the leader as a protector and shield is that of attachment theory, and the leadership and followership relationship. Molero et al (2019), from an attachment perspective, created a 15 point scale to measure followers' perceptions of leaders as security providers, discovering that employees' perceptions of their leader as a security provider 'made a unique contribution to their satisfaction with the manager and perception of the managers efficacy' (p.183), and helped followers perceive them as authentic leaders. Other benefits were employees' greater organisational identification, work engagement, work satisfaction and resistance to burnout. The researchers. comment that leaders must fulfil five functions for followers to see them as security-providing: to provide a secure environment/base to achieve goals; to be a safe haven (providing protection, calm, and reassurance); to respond warmly to proximity-seeking; to stimulate feelings of emotional warmth in the follower towards the leader; and to generate some degree of separation distress by the follower at the leader's absence. These leaders provide security and guidance in times of distress or difficulty. When leaders respond to followers in an avoidant-

attachment way (Bowlby, 1988), then followers have been found to suffer more distress and performance problems during training (Davidovitz et al, 2007).

Molero et al (2019) argue that there is a strong link between attachment theory and leader/follower dynamics as a way of fulfilling the follower's primary evolutionary needs for protection and security, developed during the follower's initial parent-child relationship. The follower then sees the leader as 'stronger and wiser' (Bowlby, 1988), developing trust and confidence in the leader as protector and shield, especially during anxious or stressful times.

Similarly, Mayseless and Popper comment that, from an evolutionary standpoint, 'the evolutionary foundations of human relationships apply in organisational contexts', and that 'likening the leader to a parental figure served to shed light on a variety of leader-follower relational dynamics' (2019, p.157). They comment that without sufficient evidence of care and competence from the leader, the follower is not likely to trust the leader, nor develop the sense of a secure base, leading to greater chances of burnout and job dissatisfaction (Mayseless and Popper, 2019, p. 158).

Insufficient support by the leader can also restrict individuals' likelihood of exploring and taking risks, according to Feeney and Collins (2019), which would have a detrimental impact on today's organisations, with their strong focus on innovation and creativity. They argue that it provides a safe haven to provide security needs, as well as a secure base, from which to explore and understand the world, people are more likely to thrive (physically and mentally) in dyadic relationships of care and support. - in times of adversity, but also in examples such as goal-striving, independent functioning, self-esteem, positive mood, enhanced well-being, even positively affecting cardiovascular reactivity. Writing from an attachment theory perspective, they write that:

> 'the need for security is a fundamental human need and provides a basis for understanding the complex interpersonal processes involved in three interrelated components of human nature: attachment, exploration, and care-giving…. The desire for support and care in

adversity is not childish or immature, but an intrinsic part of human nature that contributes to health and well-being...Unencumbered exploration occurs only when attachment needs are satisfied' (Feeney and Collins, 2019, p. 182).

Pepping and MacDonald argue that 'attachment theory has proven to be one of the most useful frameworks for understanding relationship dynamics across the lifespan' (Pepping and MacDonald, 2019, p. 105). Perhaps it is time that this theory, used so widely in the social, health and community professions, be utilised to understand better the way that leaders, followers and their organisational cultures could interact differently.

d) Implications for the Framework

After investigating all four sets of input about the leader as a shield and protector, I spent much time deliberating on this theme. It seems to be a neglected function of leadership theory and practice, yet research shows that having a secure base and a safe haven at work increases employee wellness, goal achievement, exploration and risk-taking, confidence and work performance. Consequently, I decided to add a new stage to the Framework – that of 'Safe Haven for Wellness and Growth': the creating of a safe haven and a secure base for others. This has the aim of requiring leaders to take care of their people emotionally, with an attachment perspective; to provide a 'safe haven'; and encourage a sense of security and calm within the stresses of change and threats. This does not mean that staff will never be made redundant, nor have their hours cut, nor be disciplined for poor behaviour, etc – it means that leaders will take a more supportive approach towards staff, provide encouraging, enabling help for them to talk, listen, improve their skills, work through and solve problems, and try hard to help them to feel safe at work.

3. The First 3 Stages: The Willingness to Lead, Self-Concept as a Leader, and Sources of Power

a) What the Leaders Said

Almost every leader interviewed in the Conceptual Encounters referred to how useful the one or several of the first three Framework stages were and are to them, and to their staff. These are the three stages that deal with the basic preparation to lead, a type of personal confirmation and acceptance of the leadership role. My experience with leaders in different countries had led me to believe that a personal commitment to lead was a vital human area that had to be tackled before any leadership skills were taught. I had found that, without this, leadership training courses are a waste of time, effort and investment: people will refer to the concepts taught, but not make corresponding changes to their leadership behaviour. My subsequent analysis of leadership behaviour in Tolkien's Lord of the Rings reminded me of this, and led me to identify three factors that had to be present for people to lead with strength and conviction. Before commenting on what the leaders said, it is helpful to explain the background, content and reason for these categories.

Firstly, I identified **A Willingness to Lead:** this is about people understanding what it takes to lead others, and to make the effort to 'stand up and have a go' at leading, despite the risks, costs or. efforts this entailed. A Willingness to Lead is a decision that all leaders have to make initially, to help them position themselves as a leader, in front of others.

Secondly, **Self-Concept as a leader** seemed vital: having decided to lead, individuals had to believe that they could actually do it successfully, and that they could be a leader if they tried. If they did not believe that it was within their power to lead effectively, they would be held back, conflicted and reluctant to get involved, just standing on the side-lines. Also, a distorted self-concept as a leader might cause major problems, resulting in inappropriate or damaging leadership behaviour.

Thirdly, to boost their levels of conviction, energy and determination to lead in a certain direction, they had to find their own **Sources of Power,** the things that absolutely motivated them, their values and the ideas, concepts, things and people they held closest to their hearts. These are the things that they will go to extraordinary lengths to protect – to take huge personal risks, to strive hard all their lives, and even be prepared to die for them. I argue that all humans have their own set of Sources of Power: three or four areas that they must identify, reflect on, support and protect in their lives - otherwise, internally, they may face stress and burnout, a sense of meaninglessness, personal disappointment and a conflict of values.

All leaders from the Conceptual Encounters stated that these three stages in the Framework were very helpful for them personally - some wished they had known about them earlier in their career because it helped them to know who they are, giving them added confidence as leaders. Many stated that the three initial stages assisted more junior leaders to lead properly; to fully believe in themselves as leaders; and to lead their staff with conviction and energy. Of the three stages, the one mentioned most often was the Sources of Power, because people felt that this illuminated how people felt and behaved more than anything else. Leaders pointed out that there seem to be strong links between the Sources of Power and self-reflection; strong Sources of Power and higher levels of emotional intelligence; and distorted leadership (through a neglect of the Sources of Power) with a link to poor mental health and wellness. Leaders observed that the first three stages of the Framework are more important than any of the other stages; that they could provide added confidence to new or disillusioned leaders; and, believing, like me, that the other Framework stages could not be taught without the first three stages being taught first. Some thought that these three should be given greater prominence in the Framework, because they were the most important parts of leadership development. Others that they were the 'Foundation' stages, with the others building on top of them.

The strong affirmation of the Leaders during the Conceptual Encounters about these initial three stages reinforces the need to understand them, to perceive why they are so important to leaders, and to explore their interconnectivity with other skills. Figure 7.1 (below) shows the first three stages of the Framework, linked but separate, as the essential first three stages to be considered before any further development is initiated.

To decide where these stages fit in the Framework, they now need to be separated and understood further. While a Willingness to Lead may overlap with someone's Self Concept as a Leader, or threatened Sources of Power may spur on peoples' Willingness to Lead, (for example, if they see their country being invaded), they seemed to be of separate, albeit related, areas. An examination of the literary and academic treatment of these three stages may cast further light on their degree of separateness, and how they should be treated within the Framework. These first three important stages are represented in Figure 7.1:
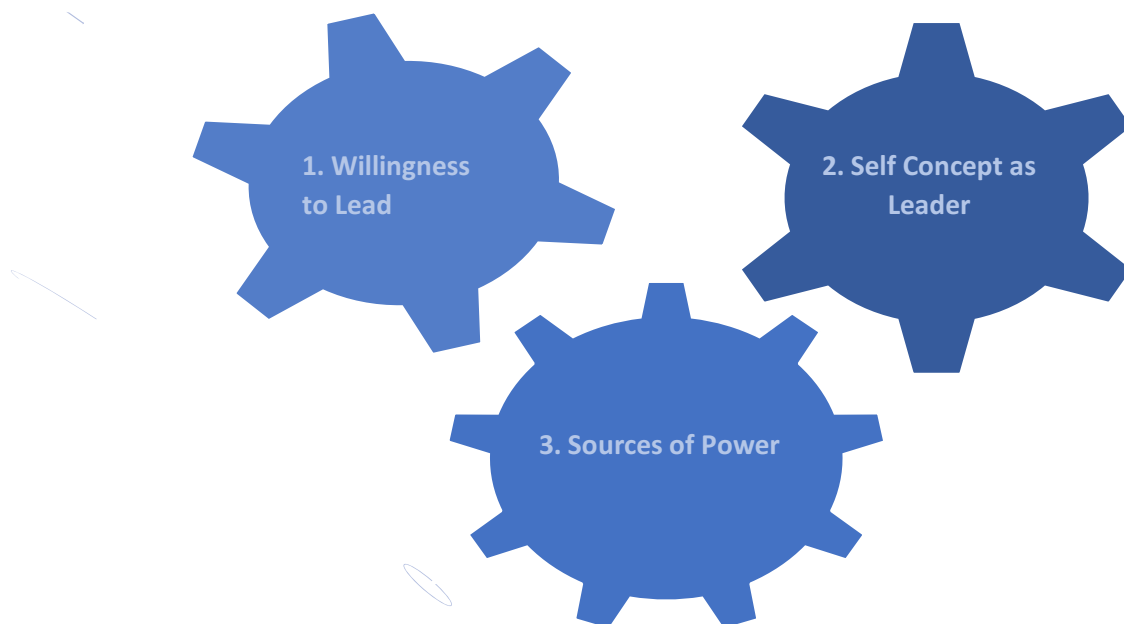

FIGURE 7.1: THE FIRST 3 STAGES OF THE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

b) Tolkien's Examples

- The Willingness to Lead, its links to Self-Concept as a Leader, and to the Sources of Power.

In Chapter 5, I discussed Aragorn's reluctance to lead after Gandalf is lost to The Fellowship. He experiences doubt, indecisiveness, and hesitation, and the enormity of his new responsibility, given the huge dangers of letting the Ring fall into Sauron's hands. He also has high levels of anxiety, believing that he is not as capable or decisive a leader as Gandalf. Perhaps this was caused by attachment anxiety from losing his father at the age of two, maybe it is the life he has led of loneliness and isolation, or the way that his people are diminishing, their cities deserted. There may be many reasons why there is a low Willingness to Lead, and they may not be easily visible or apparent. Yet, with no change, there is a waste of leadership potential, opportunities are missed, and vital goals are avoided. A low Willingness to Lead could end up with confusion, loss of home, capture or death for our early ancestors. It is clearly important to assess the Willingness to Lead, and discover whether the individual has made the decision to take the risk of leading, and what can be done to change the situation and persuade her or him to lead.

Aragorn is at his lowest point here - his development as a leader must involve a way to overcome his doubts and reluctance or the remaining members of the Fellowship will be lost. He finds it in Rohan, highlighting the importance of perceiving a leader's internal beliefs before all else. With Tolkien's World War One officer experience, he probably understood how it feels to be reluctant to lead, using Aragorn to explore it because he is:

> 'an extraordinary literary character of great depth and consequence who provided the means by which his creator chose to illuminate many of his most important themes and concepts' (Stephen, 2012, p. 10).

Because of this reluctance to lead and the resulting anxiety it produces, Aragorn makes mistakes - for example, not noticing Boromir's strange body language that disclosed his unstable state of mind. Aragorn is so preoccupied with his inner world of anxiety that he allows Frodo to wander in an area with a high danger of orcs, then fails to notice Boromir has disappeared to follow Frodo. Terrified of making mistakes, Aragorn makes even more mistakes through inaction or poor decisions, which he laments bitterly: 'Alas! An ill fate is on me this day, and all that I do goes amiss.' (*The Two Towers*, p.413).

Later, when he finds Boromir dying, he repeats his self-flagellation:

> 'This is a bitter end. Now the Company is all in ruin. It is I that have failed. Vain was Gandalf's trust in me. What shall I do now? …'. He knelt for a while, bent with weeping, still clasping Boromir's hand' (*The Two Towers*, p. 414).

The fear of not leading well has produced a decision-making paralysis, which has created a damaged self-concept as a leader. Aragorn knows he must act as a powerful leader, with his background, responsibilities and lineage, but his unwillingness to lead causes serious leadership mistakes. This creates in his mind a damaged, inadequate self-concept - which he feels keenly - and which discourages him from leading further, thus increasing his anxious inaction.

It is only when Aragorn reconnects with his Sources of Power that he is able to overcome the fear that is paralysing him and restricting his leadership. Connecting to his Sources of Power – tradition, duty, lineage, protecting his legacy – provides him with energy, inspiration, and almost a Godlike strength of will:

> 'Aragorn threw back his cloak. The elven-sheath glittered as he grasped it, and the bright blade of Anduril shone like a sudden flame as he swept it out. 'Elendil!' he cried. 'I am Aragorn son of Arathorn, and am called Elessar, the Elfstone, Dunadan, the heir of isuldir Elendil's son of Gondor. Here is the sword that was Broken and is forged again! Will you aid me or thwart me? Choose swiftly!'

> 'Gimli and Legolas looked on their companion in amazement, for they had not seen him in this mood before. He seemed to have grown in stature while Eomer had shrunk; and in his living face they caught a brief vision of the power and majesty of the kings of stone. For a moment it seemed to the eyes of Legolas that a white flame flickered on the brows of Aragorn like a shining crown' (The Two Towers, p. 433-434).

Connecting with the immense passion and belief Aragorn has in his Sources of Power has instantly liberated his fears and blockages, to enable him to lead effectively and powerfully. Tolkien shows us that this is how a reluctance to lead is defeated – by helping people understand why they are leading, what is important, and what is at stake: their Sources of Power.

Tolkien deals with a reluctance to lead several times in The Lord of the Rings in portrayal of the Hobbits too. Merry and Pippin are not reluctant to lead exactly – they are merely inexperienced. When they enlist separately with experienced war-leaders, Pippin with Denethor, and Merry with King Theoden, they learn much about leading, through a positive role-model (Theoden); and through a negative role-model (Denethor). By the time they reach the Shire again, they are highly knowledgeable and committed to raising the Shire to defeat Sharkey and Grima. Their own Sources of Power – family, kinship, hearth and home – have stirred them into fierce opposition to Sharkey.

Frodo has a different role to play – his Willingness to Lead is quietly present for most of the trilogy. He leads Sam on their urgent quest into Mordor, but the Ring damages Frodo and gradually erodes his Willingness to Lead, so that when the Hobbits are back in the Shire, he wants no part in the final battle, becoming a pacifist and refusing to take up a sword:

> 'Frodo had been in the battle, but he had not drawn sword, and his chief part had been to prevent the hobbits in their wrath at their losses, from slaying those of their enemies who threw down their weapons' (The Return of the King, p. 1016).

Nor is he now seen as a leader in the Shire, as Sam reflects:

> 'Frodo dropped quietly out of all the doings of the Shire, and Sam was pained to notice how little honour he had in his own country. Few people knew or wanted to know about his deeds and adventures'. (The Return of the King, p. 1025).

Tolkien illustrates the impact of chronic traumatic stress on Frodo – his interest in leading has dissipated, and he withdraws. This illustrates that a Willingness to Lead may be permanently damaged by excessive chronic physical or mental hardship, i.e. burnout.

So the Sources of Power are powerful! For Aragorn, these might include his duty to his ancestors, his legacy and his people; the protection of those in need; the creation of a world where good is supreme; and the importance of love, friendship, mutual support and belonging. To protect them, he finds the motivation to fight the enemy ceaselessly over long years. Gandalf's might be to protect the helpless and fight against evil; to help all living things to flourish and grow; and to be obedient to the wishes of a higher power. Saruman's sources of power could be personal power above all, knowledge, and control over everything to his will. He is motivated by selfish Sources of Power, and so fails ultimately, in bitterness and malice. Denethor is disconnected from his Sources of Power through despair and grief, so his main ones, protecting his people, doing his duty, and protecting Gondor, are disconnected from his actions and thoughts, leading to tragedy: chaos, confusion and suicide.

From these examples, the interweaving and interdependency of these three stages may be clearly seen. Insights gained from Tolkien's work helped me observe the overall boost of confidence that connecting with the Sources of Power produced, that enables leaders to be fully themselves. Leaders who are sure and comfortable with their Sources of Power, who know and 'live' them, are 'comfortable in their own skin' as a leader – more authentic and more genuine as time goes by. This would be a useful aid for young or unsure leaders, to help them understand their Sources of Power at an early stage. Tolkien showed that damaged, injured people will find be unable to

generate a willingness to lead, and, like Frodo, they should be healed first. More research is needed to see how the Sources of Power are linked to emotional intelligence, stress and pressure alleviation, confidence-building, and how to provide effective support for new, non-confident leaders.

c) The Contribution of Recent Research.

Academic writing does not fit neatly the same three stages of the Framework: there is much research material on self-development and belief systems, but nothing that exactly corresponds with these first three stages. While tempted to merge these three stages into one 'internal processes' stage, I decided to keep them separate because, by listing them separately, due attention is paid to each of the three stages. It also becomes possible to assess each one separately, for remedial action and further development. More research is also needed to analyse how the Sources of Power influence individuals, especially in the energy that stems from connecting with the Sources of Power, how the Sources of Power link to emotional intelligence, creativity, and increased 'grit'.

-The Willingness to Lead: Sources and influences

Reluctance to lead by their staff was one of the knottiest problems the Leaders raised in their recent Conceptual Encounters. Six factors that may create an Unwillingness to Lead may be seen to emerge from recent research which is explored below.

These six factors are shown in Figure 7.5:

-Implicit Leadership and Followership Theories.

My own consulting experience had shown me that the bedrock of any situation where leaders and followers work together are the personal beliefs, assumptions and expectations they hold about leadership and followership: it is the solid ground on which they build the structure of an endeavour. This perception is reinforced by many writers, as identified in Chapter 3. Similarly, Implicit Leadership and Follower theories are the basis for all of the Sources of Willingness to Lead, as they are the underlying cognitive structures that locate relevant memories, choose the factors to pay attention to, and determine the decisions to lead or not.

Implicit Leadership Theories are 'the qualities and behaviours that individuals associate with the term 'leader' (Keller, 1999, p.589), whereas Implicit Followership Theories are the perceptions, expectations and images that followers hold about leaders; both sets of cognitive structures are socially constructed and dynamic (Shondrick and Lord, 2010). They are powerful influences: when leaders and followers share the same Implicit Leadership Theories, higher assessments of their relationships result (Riggs and Porter, 2017). The key traits of an ideal leader (the prototype) reportedly include charisma, intelligence, sensitivity and masculinity, and are said to be stable over time (Offerman et al, 1994). Offermann and Coats (2017) argue that, although there may be stability, traits are also dynamic and contextual, with expressed ideal characteristics responding to changes in the external environment (p.514). If incongruence exists between what they think they should be versus what they are having to be, then people may experience depression, low self-confidence, personal crises, and self-criticism. If these personal theories do not show leadership or followership in a positive, trustworthy aspect, then the individual may be reluctant to lead or to follow. Where do these schemas come from? One vital source may be from the individual's earliest learned experiences – attachment experiences, and parental, family and cultural expectations.

-Attachment Status and Self-Esteem.

Keller asserts that early childhood experiences create individual differences in implicit leadership theories, linked to parental traits, and attachment experiences (Keller, 2003, p.143) Implicit leadership theories are important because expectations of the leader and follower influence their behaviours, and therefore their relationship, work performance, stress, and communication. Bateman and Fonagy (2004) refer to these working mental models as an example of 'mentalisation', which 'enables us to differentiate between 'reality' and our perspective or

appreciation of the world in differing ways' (Holmes, in Bowlby, 2008, p. xvii). This mentalisation

is determined, at least in part, by attachment behaviour.

Attachment behaviour has been defined as:

> 'any form of behaviour that results in a person attaining or maintaining proximity to some
> other clearly identified individual who is conceived as better able to cope with the world.
> It is most obvious whenever the person is frightened, fatigued or sick, and is assuaged by
> comforting and caregiving…for a person to know that an attachment figure is available
> and responsive gives him a strong and pervasive feeling of security. Whilst it can be
> observed at its most obvious in early childhood, it can be observed throughout the life
> cycle, especially in emergencies' (Bowlby, 2008, p. 29-30).

Thus, the attachment status created by early childhood is activated by the workplace leader-

follower relationship, as parental images and early 'scripts' are triggered. This is an insightful way

to consider the relationship because 'likening the leader to a parental figure served to shed light on

a variety of leader-follower relational dynamics' (Mayseless and Popper, 2019, p.157). This

approach is particularly useful in times of crisis or stress, when emotional responses related to

activation may be more intense. The leader-follower relationship 'is an important area for fulfilling

basic evolutionary-based needs for protection and security' (p. 158), and, as such, is strongly based

on trust. The authors argue that humans have 'an innate, evolutionary-based inclination to trust a

stronger and wiser figure' and so the traits of care and competence 'are fundamental in parent-child

and leader-follower relationships' (p. 160).

The leadership/follower relationship may activate attachment issues on both sides, leading to major

problems when styles are incongruent. Keller writes that 'anxious ambivalent followers may fear

rejection for poor performance' and 'anticipate that leaders will be …inconsistently sensitive,

supportive and responsive; whereas avoidant individuals 'may enter organisations expecting low

performance evaluations from leaders'. (Keller, 2003, p. 148). Insecure attachment styles of

leaders may also be present in the relationship, influencing their behaviour with the followers. Keller notes that:

> 'Anxious-ambivalent leaders may be likewise very attentive to followers yet express doubts about followers' mastery and competence…inadvertently undermining followers' sense of competence as followers come to doubt their abilities and rely heavily on the leader…[encouraging] follower dependence' (Keller, 2003, p.150).

Leaders who are anxious-ambivalent may unconsciously promote dependency, learned helplessness and demanding behaviour from their followers, to make the leader feel wanted and needed by others. Conversely, they may doubt themselves if their relationship with their follower is not as close as they would like. Avoidant leaders may be perceived as distant, cool and inattentive by their followers, who 'may blame themselves for the inability to establish relationships with leaders' (p.152). Ultimately, the influence of attachment style of both the follower and leader is important to their implicit leadership/ followership theories, and thus their behaviour.

Attachment issues by followers, or their leaders, or a combination of them, may therefore be at the heart of a reluctance to lead at the workplace. Flexibility, self-examination and a growth mindset may be the way to tackle this, along with the leader's willingness to show care and competence.

-Parental & Family Influence

Much of this as a source of influence is developed in childhood, from the attitudes, behaviours and perspectives of parental figures and family members. Keller suggests that:

> 'parental models of leadership may play a pivotal role in shaping implicit leadership theories; they provide children with an initial experience with a leader as well as shape interactions with authority figures' (Keller, 1999, p. 590).

The research of Eldad and Benatov (2018) illustrates the importance of parental role modelling, showed that parental style and attachment style accounts for leadership behaviour, with 'a predictive value for both transformational and transactional leadership' (p. 269). They write that:

> 'Exhibiting involvement and autonomy granting…may have an imprinting effect on the child. Through this imprinting effect, the parent leadership model is internalised and contributes to the individual's ability, later in life, to act as a transformational leader in the workplace' (p. 270).

Childhood influences on the later development of servant leadership is interesting, as parental and other role-models were one of five themes influencing leadership style, besides family life, church involvement, group activities, and accountability (Cooper et al, 2018) The authors highlight the need for positive role-models to be encouraged in childhood, to create the growth of effective leadership later in life.

So parental attitude and parental role-modelling is relevant to a willingness to lead, and positive or negative implicit leadership theories can lead to certain leadership and followership styles later. Self-reflection, autobiographical narrative and examination of its themes might help leaders choose rather than fall into their leadership style.

-Cognitive Style and Personality

The Kirton Adaption-Innovation Theory has already been discussed in this chapter, and it is apparent that different cognitive styles will probably. have differences in their willingness to lead. In an article on President Trump's problem-solving style, the author uses the lens of Adaption-Innovation Theory, speculating that he may be an unstructured high innovator (Friedel, 2020). He cites his tendency to work outside the existing system, think outside the box, bending the rules, speak out of turn (going off script), flit from idea to idea, and to keep changing people and policies.

While Friedel tends to mix up capacity with style – an effective high innovator would have 'learned' not to do these things –Trump does seem to display undisciplined innovative preferences in his leadership and problem-solving styles. Similarly, personality type might have an impact on the willingness to lead: an introvert might be more reluctant to stand out and lead, especially in a highly visible situation, whereas an extravert might be more likely to take on the risks of leading, and possibly making a mistake.

-A Threat to the Sources of Power

The Sources of Power are a complex combination of features. They are emotionally powerful, evoking a strong reaction of protection and defence if threatened, or motivating an individual to go further than expected in pursuing their Sources of Power. They can provide energy, motivation, values, strength, guidance, determination, grit and purpose. An individual is likely to be more prepared to lead in order to assert influence if something she cares deeply about is threatened.

-Culture & Management of Group or Organisation

The impact of organisational culture and the capability of its managers and supervisors has a considerable influence upon whether individuals are prepared to lead. Cameron (2012) describes a workplace where positive emotion outweigh negative ones, as a 'positive climate' (p.25), where 'well-being predominates over distress and dissatisfaction'. Cameron describes the impact of this, arguing that 'people become more creative and experimental' (p.27), which would increase the reluctant leader's willingness to take risks and lead others. This encouraging organisational climate is developed by promoting three important activities in the workplace: fostering compassion; forgiveness; and gratitude (Cameron, 2012, p.33).

4. Authentic Leadership

a) What the Leaders Said

Authentic Leadership is a concept that was mentioned frequently by leaders at the Conceptual Encounter discussions, as an approach they wanted to see more of. They felt that Authentic Leadership helped them to lead better and increase their self-knowledge. It was also often stated by the leaders that the framework itself helped leaders to be more authentic and become more genuine in their work interactions, to stand up for what they believe in, and become increasingly 'brave' about difficult issues. Some of the leaders believed that by becoming more authentic and genuine at work, they elicited more trust from their staff, with the result of increased openness and more sharing of feelings and doubts.

Leaders emphasised that the framework could help new or junior leaders become more confident and authentic, as well as more mature leaders who are lacking in confidence. By understanding their Sources of Power, leaders grow their own self-confidence, become clearer about their values and beliefs, and talk more to their team about what is important to them. Some of the leaders felt that the open expression of anxieties and concerns by senior leaders would be conducive to building the trust of other staff. Increased openness was widely felt to be a positive action, leading to a sense of increased authenticity and honesty at the workplace.

b) Tolkien's Examples

Authentic leadership is widely demonstrated by Tolkien's heroes. Gandalf, Aragorn, King Theoden, Faramir, Lord Elrond and the Lady Galadriel never lie or deceive anyone at any time – they are totally honest. Aragorn expresses his doubts freely to members of the Fellowship, or to his close friends. The truth is told to the soldiers about the likely outcomes of impending battles. There

is understanding and pity. Just before the final battle at the Black Gate, even terrified soldiers are given the chance to leave, if they so wish, but in such a way that their honour is maintained, but with no 'sweetening' of the likely outcome, 'to hold it to the last':

> 'Go!' said Aragorn. 'But keep what honour you may, and do not run! And there is a task which you may attempt and so be not wholly shamed. Take your way south-west till you come to Cair Andross, and if that is still held by enemies, as I think, then re-take it, if you can, and hold it to the last, in defence of Gondor and Rohan!'
> Then some being shamed by his mercy overcame their fear and went on, and the others took new hope, hearing of a manful deed, within their measure that they could turn to, and they departed' (The Return of the King, p.886).

I think that Tolkien cheats in his efforts to show Aragorn as an authentic leader – he attributes Godlike pedigree and abilities for Aragorn that proves he is the true King of Middle-earth, but that comes with inherited abilities. He has the power of healing, as Gandalf says:

> 'It is only in the coming of Aragorn that any hope remains for the sick that lie in the House. Thus spoke Ioreth, wise Woman of Gondor: The hands of the Kind are the hands of a healer, and so shall the rightful king be known.' (The Return of the King, p. 862)

Aragorn also has the Christlike power to raise the dead oath-breakers and travel the Paths of the Dead, and then to dismiss them to the Underworld when the battle has been won, as Gimli recounts:

> 'Aragorn spoke in a loud voice to the Dead Men, crying: 'Hear now the words of the Heir of Isildur! Your oath is fulfilled. Go back and trouble not the valleys ever again! Depart and be at rest!' And thereupon the King of the Dead stood out before the host and broke his spear and cast it down. Then he bowed low and turned away' (*The Return of the King*, p.876-877).

He does have rather an advantage there! Real-life leaders do not have the luxury of authorial favouritism: they must show that they are authentic leaders by their human deeds, words and behaviour! Aragorn is almost a God figure. However, Aragorn still role-models honest, genuine

and caring authentic leadership, as a role-model to all the other Middle-earth leaders. It provides a very solid foundation for standards of leadership everywhere, even if it is somewhat optimistic!

c) The Contribution of Recent Research

The need for flexible, adaptive leadership accounts for one reason why academic research into authentic leadership has become so widespread (Yukl and Mahsud, 2010, Walumbwa et al, 2011). Authentic leadership is defined as understanding and accepting one's own experiences, then acting and communicating in synchronisation with them:

> 'First and foremost, an authentic leader must achieve authenticity…through self awareness, self-acceptance, and authentic actions and relationships… These relationships are characterised by: a) transparency, openness, and trust, b) guidance toward worthy objectives, and c) an emphasis on follower development' (Gardner et al, p. 345).

It has also been defined as 'the unobstructed operation of one's true, or core, self in one's daily enterprise' (Kernis, 2003, p.1). Based on last century psychological research, it draws energy from the many offshoots of the popular transformational leadership movement (Iszatt-White et al, 2019), as well as from Positive Psychology. Gardner et al (2005) write that: 'authentic leadership is a root construct at the base of transformational leadership' (p. 350). Today's workplaces require trust between employees and leaders to enable complex work to be undertaken flexibly, with minimal supervision. The trust that top leaders have in lower-level employees predicts the degree of decision-making empowerment they are given, creating better productivity, turnover and employee morale (Mishra, Mishra and Spreitzer, 2009, p.39). Authentic Leadership establishes high levels of trust, facilitating strong interpersonal relationships (Avolio and Mhatre, 2013). By predicting emotional commitment and 'team potency' (the collectively shared team belief it can be effective),

the team is more likely to initiate action, achieve goals, and persevere in their work longer (Rego et al., 2013, p. 61).

Several leaders asked what the relationship was between authentic leadership and the Sources of Power. It seems symbiotic. The first three stages of the Framework are about self-knowledge, commitment, motivation and self-insight, which confirms, reinforces and sustains authentic leadership styles. Authentic leaders should know and accept their Sources of Power, Willingness to Lead, and Self-image as Leaders, if they are to be effective:

> 'by learning who they are and what they value, authentic leaders build understanding and a sense of self that provides a firm anchor for their decisions and actions, and…a more authentic self. They continually ask themselves, 'Who am I?' (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May and Walumbwa, 2005, p. 347).

Luthans et al (2006) expanded the authentic leadership field by devising 'positive psychological capital', or 'PsyCap', as core elements created by it: hope, optimism, efficacy and resilience. Developing 'Psycap' in organisations creates high financial returns, and improves employee attitudes, employee behaviours and performance, while reducing undesirable work attitudes and behaviours (Avey, Reichard, Luthans and Mhatre, 2011). Authentic followership is necessary too, having mostly the same features and characteristics as authentic leadership (Gardner et al, 2005, p. 346).

However, Alvesson and Einola (2019) comment that authentic leadership processes are seriously flawed. The intellectual foundations they stand on are too shaky to warrant the popularity they have inspired within the scientific community' because it is 'in a permanent stage of immaturity- in terms of assumptions, theory, knowledge claims and methods used' (p. 383). The authors see it as a zeitgeist, a reaction to disillusionment with corrupt, self-serving business leaders (p. 385). Rego

et al (2013) comment that authentic leadership can counteract the 'degeneration' of contemporary leadership in terms of morality and ethics, as a new theory that fosters 'what is right'. Some authentic leadership literature suggests that leaders must be above reproach: sensitive, highly self-aware, thoughtful, fair, honest, stable, self-controlled, caring, collaborative, positive, communicative, encouraging, vulnerable, charismatic and transformational. Is this all possible or realistic though, in one human being?

Some academics question authentic leadership's assumption that all leaders' internal landscapes are morally good (Nyberg and Sveningsson, 2014); Ford and Harding, 2011). However, seeing the image of authentic leaders as 'an idealised caricature' that does not allow acknowledgement of complex leader-follower relationships and nuances. Real leaders have faults, personal agenda, personal baggage, exhaustion, high stress jobs, family distractions, chronic illnesses, and sometimes must play politics to survive toxic organisational cultures. The danger is that followers may believe they should expect ideal behaviours from their leader all of the time, becoming disillusioned and cynical when their leaders exhibit 'feet of clay'.

However irritating the hyperbole and positivity of authentic leadership may be to more rigorous academic theorists, the concept seems to be inspirational to practising leaders, and some enthusiastic academics. Many of the Leaders in the Conceptual Encounters referred to Authentic Leadership as something to be emulated at work, which they liked and appreciated in their own leaders. It resonates with frontline leaders, perhaps because of its practical value, being 'instrumental in operation and/or goal-directed' (Avolio and Mhatre, 2013, p. 775), even if it is not unanimously well-received by academics as insufficiently methodologically and philosophically grounded (Alvesson and Einola, 2019).

Iszatt-White et al (2019) call for a re-examination and repositioning of authentic leadership for the future. Kempster, Iszatt-White and Brown (2018) suggested that a more useful focus would be to substitute emotional openness, authentic leadership's 'relational transparency', with a 'fidelity to purpose', instead, to make it more appropriate, disparaging:

> 'the impracticality and near impossibility of enacting relational transparency in the daily business of organisational leading, and the onerous burden this requirement places on managers seeking to live up to this normative ideal' (p. 338).

From an academic perspective, authentic leadership seems in need of reforming and updating – using better measurement and more realistic language, without the semireligious overtones and heroic imagery.

a) **Implications for the Framework**

Many Leaders raised authentic leadership for inclusion into the Framework, but there are justified academic reservations that encourage a pause. Research suggests that authentic leadership requires a stronger foundation and methodological rationale. Also, much of the authentic leadership approach is already contained in the Framework: the first three stages provide the insight and awareness of the personal values associated with authentic leadership; ethics is considered under the Sources of Power, and using honest and sensitive communication styles is dealt with under the leadership skills stage. The whole Framework advocates the same emotionally sensitive approach, and follower care, as authentic leadership.

While doing this research, I was struck by the similarity of authentic leadership to the next theme: that of emotional intelligence. Before deciding what to do with authentic leadership within the

Framework, an exploration of emotional intelligence must be made, and areas of similarity explored further.

5. Emotional Intelligence.

a). What the Leaders' Said

Several Leaders raised the concept of how useful emotional intelligence had been to them, and whether it should be included in the framework. One wished to understand if there is a link between the first three stages of the framework, and emotional intelligence. Others raised the importance of leadership positivity and whether that should be included, along with emotional intelligence. The importance of role-modelling as an emotionally intelligent leadership behaviour was flagged; and whether that should be included in the Framework also.

The Leaders had all undertaken the Hay-McBer Emotional Intelligence Competence inventory, had feedback, and received goal-based coaching on developing their emotional intelligence, so they were both positive and familiar with the concept. This is clearly an area they valued and appreciated.

c) Tolkien's Examples

Tolkien had no concept for emotional intelligence, of course, but behaving well, sensitively and with care towards others was often displayed by his heroes. Faramir's sensitivity towards Eowyn, when she is injured in the Houses of Healing shows great emotional intelligence:

> 'The Warden spoke his name, and he turned and saw the Lady Eowyn of Rohan, and he was moved with pity, for he saw that she was hurt, and his clear sight perceived her sorry and unrest' (The Return of the King, p. 959).

Almost on every page, there are examples of emotional intelligence. Aragorn is extremely aware of his inner world, and at times self-deprecating. He also knows the effect he has on those around him. Pippin comes to love King Theoden, because of his kindness, and care for the young hobbit. Galadriel, like Aragorn, has authorial privileges that make it easier to be emotionally intelligent, being ancient as the stars, the greatest of the Noldar, the High Elves, and wearing one of the rings of power, Nenya. Still, she is highly emotionally intelligent, as are Elrond, and Frodo.

d) The Contribution of Research.

Described as 'a growing and vibrant field of research, with untapped potential-' (Ashkanasy and Humphrey, 2011, p. 214), emotional intelligence has become a major movement for leader and organisational development. Armstrong, Galligan and Critchley (2011) define it as 'the ability to intelligently utilise emotional information' (p. 331). Mayer and Salovey, early advocates of emotional intelligence, describe it as:

> 'a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions' (Salovey and Mayer, 1990, p. 185).

The concept of emotional intelligence has utility because it emphasises the importance of emotion (also known as 'affect') as a key influence on motivation and behaviour, illustrating that a much more complex model and approach is needed than the deeply rooted, outdated and mechanistic, scientific management approach. Emotionally intelligent leadership is seen as fostering increased resilience, personal meaning and the ability to overcome the stresses of change (Avolio and Gardner, 2005). As a concept, emotionally intelligent leadership has wide support from Leaders in

the Conceptual Encounters discussions, as a practical and helpful leadership style that they all used. Many suggestions were made about it being incorporated it into the Framework.

Measures of the competencies of emotional intelligence, especially 360-degree measures, have wide application in leadership development   programs. Boyatzis/Goleman/Kornferry Hay Group's 'Emotional and Social Competency Inventory' (ESCi) is psychometrically robust (Boyatzis, Gaskin and Wel, 2015), and popular with practising leaders and specialist developers, whereas the Bar-On appears to have more adherents in academic spheres.

However, while considering inclusion on the Framework, I was struck by the similarities between the approaches that focus on emotion in the workplace and wondered whether they could be basically the same. They certainly overlapped considerably I compared the key concepts of the two leading emotional intelligence theories with writings on Authentic Leadership and Positive Leadership. From these two leading emotional intelligence theories and measures, it can be seen that there are areas of overlap, and that they do have a similar approach – introspective, self-aware and self-disciplined, benevolent, values-based, concerned for follower development, and positive.

Miao, Humphrey and Qian (2018) also highlight the similarities between authentic leadership and emotional intelligence, finding, in a metanalysis, that EI. 'enables leaders to use effective leadership styles, and one effective leadership style that emotionally intelligent leaders may exhibit is authentic leadership' (Miao, Humphrey and Qian, 2018, p. 685). They found that Emotional Intelligence and Authentic Leadership were positively related, that 'authentic leadership may be a construct that is less cognitively-loaded [than EI]' (p. 685).

Similarly, Duncan, Green, Gergen and Ecung (2017) argue that emotional intelligence is significantly and positively related to authentic leadership, comparing the authentic Leadership

Questionnaire, (v. 1) with the MSCEIT v2.0, which uses four constructs of difference: 'perceiving emotions, using emotions to facilitate thought, understanding emotions, and managing emotions' (Mayer et al, 2003, p.99).

Emotionally related leadership approaches are confusing, requiring further differentiation of the various definitions and multiple perspectives; and to provide clarity between the models, their functions, and their competency measures. At this stage, however, it seems clear that emotional intelligence and authentic leadership are very similar. There is little or no research that examines these two approaches with positive leadership, but a high degree of similarity is apparent. There are differences, such as the central emphasis on values and truth in the Authentic Leadership literature, but this is also included in the other styles, such as 'positive virtuousness'. The similarities seem greater than the differences, and it seems mostly a question of emphasis.

d) Implications for the Framework

Given that the Leaders taking part in this research were enthusiastic about using authentic leadership, emotional intelligence and positivity within the Framework, and that the three constructs are so similar overall (with some differences), it seems logical to integrate the three approaches into one category on the Framework, called *Connected Leadership*.

All aspects of this section are about connecting and building relationships with followers and colleagues, in any case, so connected leadership seems an appropriate word for all parts: authentic leadership, emotional intelligence and positivity. Miao, Humphrey and Qian advise that: 'because of the close conceptual overlap between EI and authentic leadership, simultaneously training employees in both EI and authentic leadership may be especially useful' (Miao, Humphreys and Qian, 2018, p. 687).

6. Self-Review and Reflection.

a) What the Leaders Said

As has already been noted, many of the Leaders commented about the great benefits they had experienced from the chance to take time for reflection. The concept of helicopter vision, the ability to examine reality from different levels and heights in order to gain perspective, was familiar to them all. They do try, but it is hard at a busy workplace to look like you are doing nothing, just reflecting. As this concept of self-reflection was built onto the Framework, there would be a requirement for them to do this. This was very helpful for them in reserving and managing their time in this way.

Lanaj, Foulk and Erez researched a 'positive leader self-reflection intervention' to find that structured reflection increased the energy of leaders, reduced depletion, and improved prosocial impact (2019). Similarly, many of the Leaders felt that it gave them time to recover and prepare for future change and stressors.

Reflexivity has been encouraged throughout the client organisation, and is seen as essential to improving skills, assessing and monitoring leadership behaviours, and achieving high performance. Leaders were happy to do more of this, along with the reflection stage, so wanted more of this to be built into the Framework.

Tolkien's Examples

Tolkien was a committed Christian, believing that man was perfectable – no man was born evil, initially. His characters grow in their self-reflection: Bilbo, in *The Hobbit,* transforms through the book, from a hobbit concerned with guarding his mother's china, to one who can reflect and learn from his part on the Battle of the Five Armies, and his relationship with Thorin. When Frodo says of Gollum that he wished Bilbo had killed him, Gandalf is dismayed, because he believes that even Gollum could have a part to play for good, and might be able to be saved. Gandalf is the character most focused on developmental, teaching, explaining, bringing together people and beings of Middle Earth. Self-reflexivity is helped by Gandalf's input, although at times, his manner would not be recommended by today's coaches. Gandalf also has a habit of disappearing and leaving his 'trainees' to cope on their own in some semi-dangerous situation, while he goes off on some important errand. This provides is a great opportunity for them to reflect on their learning and consolidate their growth.

Self-reflexivity is a key trait of Tolkien's effective leaders, sooner or later. Aragorn does it a lot when worried or concerned about his decision – we never see Boromir reflecting on his strengths or weaknesses as a leader. Saruman, Wormtongue, Denethor - or any of the Orcs - never possess any self-awareness or reflexivity. It is their downfall.

b) The Contribution of Research.

The changes and challenges facing leaders in the twenty-first century require more courageous action than in previous decades, spelling the need for 'brave leadership' (McLaughlin and Cox, 2016). The authors use the concept of 'the brave sphere' in terms of leadership development

through reflection: 'The ability to reflect in a detached yet focused way enables tensions to be experienced, held and considered prior to making brave decisions'.

They recommend 'providing a place of calm and sanctuary to reflect on problems' to enable 'a focus on different perspectives and needs', and 'the opportunity to analyse feelings in relation to the observation, holding what they find as a resource for sustainable decision-making'.

The benefits of quiet withdrawal allows the leader to look again at the challenges they face, and reconceptualise the problem, calmly and quietly.

Schon's (1983) concept of 'reflection in action' in the moment or event, is different to his concept of 'reflection on action' a longer process of considering actions that have been taken and what learning can be gained from them. It is a useful distinction – and both are needed by leaders in today's conditions.

Implications for the Framework

It is clear that self-reflection and self-reflexivity are important skills and actions, that, along with a growth mindset, are the way that leaders keep transforming and sustaining themselves. I have decided, reviewing all inputs from the leaders, Tolkien' writing and the research, that for the framework, I will split this section in two. One stage will include Self-Review and Resilience, the ability to bounce back from a setback, as well as a focus on daily health reflection and monitoring, balance and wellness. Life purpose and life balance is also included in this stage.

Some of the self-review process will fit into the stage on learning and self-challenge, facilitating personal transformation, as well as that of the organisation's teams and departments. Learning

capacity is crucial in current work settings, and this topic must have its own focus, if it is to be maintained effectively.

7. Training and Support Issues

This stage will be dealt with differently, as it is concerned with the training and preparation for the use of the Framework. Several of the Leaders felt that they would like more guidance in how to use this framework – is it a one-off activity, once a year, or could it be done monthly? Is there training in the skills required, especially for the first three stages?

Consequently, this theme will be completed when the framework is totally finished, and training can be started at its place of application, with the leaders who will be delivering it. How the modules will be delivered needs to be established, the timing, the resource available, and the outcomes expected from the leader/participants and coaches.

It would be helpful to have some more research findings available about the contents and parameters of the framework, and the linkages between the framework's construction (via practical applied literature) and whether that would be included in some way, given the urgent need for imaginative processes for leaders now.

Summary

This chapter used Conceptual Synthesis to examine the outcomes of the Traditional Conceptual Encounter, integrating the suggestions that the Leaders made and the insights that emerged collaboratively from their comments; Tolkien's writings on each particular theme; and the research findings connected with each theme. These three perspectives were weighed up, and considered, using my own judgment and experience, to decide what should be included in the final framework, and how it would look. The final addition was my realisation that the stages actually clustered naturally, so I inserted modules over the top of them, linking the modules with the overall focus of the stages. This was to make it more sensible conceptually, and more logical for developmental purposes, development programs, etc.

It has been an excellent learning opportunity for me to consider these issues from multiple perspectives, to analyse and decide what should be done with them.

Changes to the Framework

The new Framework includes areas from the first three versions, as well as additional new areas that are a result of Chapter 7. The new Framework from the Conceptual Synthesis process is presented in Figure 7.6.

<u>**Stages 1-3: The Existing First Three Stages are left as is, and strengthened:**</u>

All aspects of the analysis showed that these three stages were useful and well regarded: perhaps the most valued of all the stages.

Stage 4: Shield and Safe Haven - The Leader as a Protector and Shield are now included:

Lessons from Tolkien remind us of a forgotten truth – how important this area is, and how much of a timeless truth it is: belonging to a stable, supportive and protective group is necessary for people to explore the world, and to take risks. The leader has a responsibility to take care of the followers, and that is reciprocal: a sense of security goes both ways. By linking with Anglo-Saxon war culture, Tolkien was pointing out that people need their leaders to make them feel safe: perhaps this is a basic survival requirement.
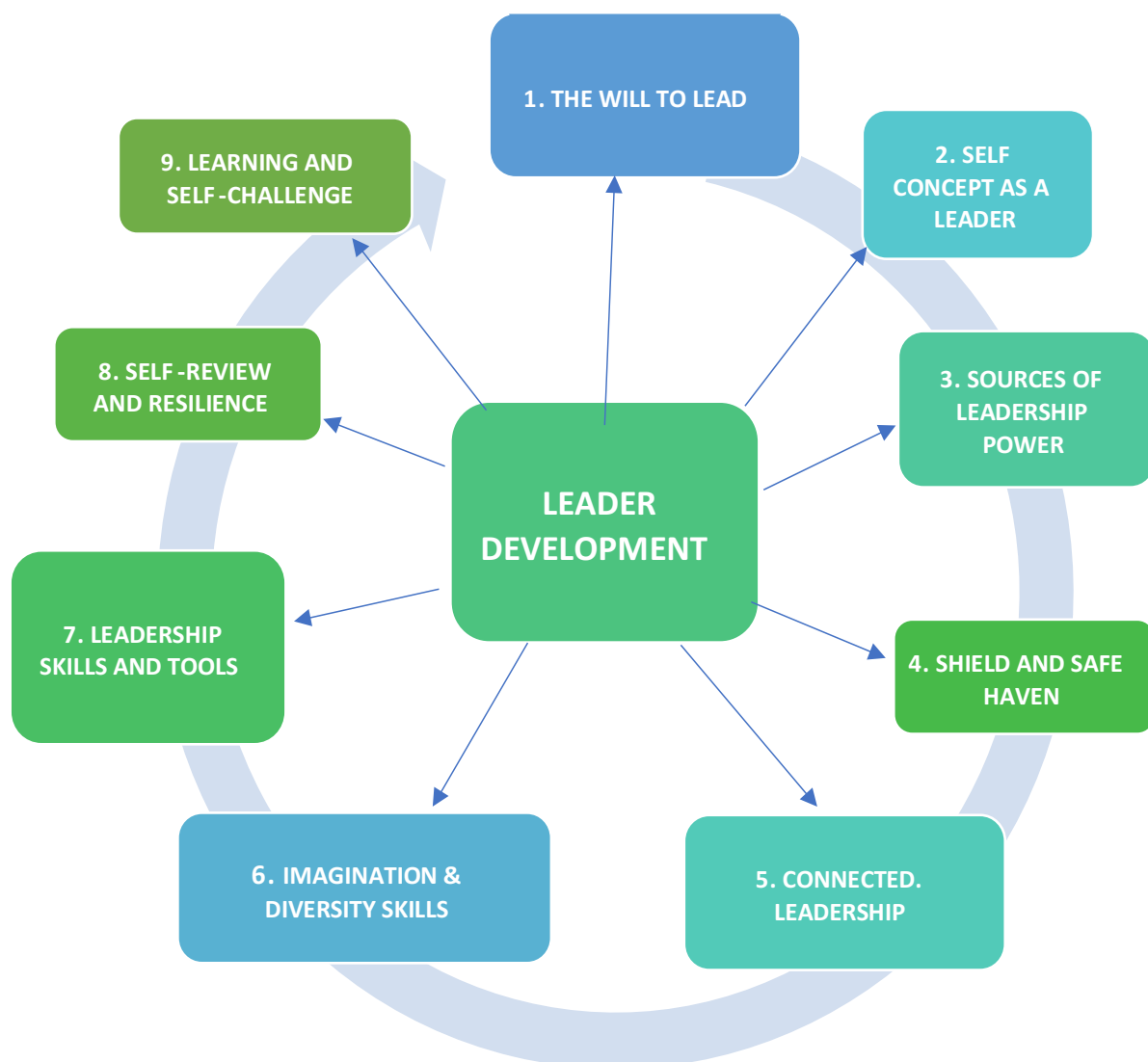
FIGURE 7.6. THE FRAMEWORK FROM THE CONCEPTUAL SYNTHESIS PROCESS, WITH ITS 9 STAGES

Stage 5: 'Connected Leadership' now includes Positive Leadership, Emotional <u>intelligence,</u> <u>and Authentic Leadership Skills:</u>

This stage is a blend of positivity, authentic leadership and emotional intelligence, including areas of similarity and difference. Leaders must learn how to get the best out of all of these theories, to develop a strong emotional leadership capability to cope with today's challenges.

Stage 6: 'Imagination and Diversity Skills' now includes Imagination, Diversity, <u>Cognitive</u> <u>Style and Creativity:</u>

The need for diversity leadership is clear in a world where major change dominates every walk of life, in order to design a creative, imaginative culture for maximum thinking and imaginative capacity to generate solutions. Getting the best from all people requires that every individual is valued for the unique skills and perspective they have, accepting that leadership is possible from anywhere inside the organisation. Imagination is a vital skill that can unlock inner wisdom and solutions.

Stage 7: The New Stage 'Leadership Skills and Tools'. replaces the old <u>Leadership and</u> <u>Followership Skills section:</u>

This section includes whatever valuable leadership theories, ideas, techniques and tools are current and relevant at the time of using the framework. Vision, the leadership of change, leadership skills, followership skills, inspiring leadership, change management, amongst other things, may be part of this toolbox, to equip leaders with the skills they need. This section will get updated continuously, as new skills and techniques emerge and others fade- it is about learning the most successful techniques to lead and follow with at any one time.

Stage 8: The Self-Review and Resilience stage has been expanded to include Resilience:

This stage includes an honest self-review of leadership performance and behaviour from within the organisation, the Leader, and the team. This is an honest assessment of the way that leadership has been undertaken, along with results achieved, what went well or badly, what should be done differently. Resilience is about bouncing back after a difficult set-back, vital in times of change. Balance and wellness should be included as a vital source of review and monitoring every day, since stress and pressure causes problems with physical and mental health, and with performance. Life balance is of considerable importance.

Stage 9: The new Stage is called 'Learning and Self-Challenge'.

Positive transformation is essential for all leaders, and transformation of work teams and workplaces is a necessary part of surviving radical change. The capability for learning well and quickly is vital to a leader's repertoire, as is the ability to change and upskill.

The Revised Framework

These changes will create a robust framework for the future. The first three stages already worked well, and now the new stages will equip leaders with a powerful learning development experience. So practical applied literature has sparked new techniques to stimulate four version of a leadership development framework: a simple initial version after the first literary conceptual encounter; two more later versions after literary conceptual encounter; and a fourth one, after the 15 traditional conceptual encounters and the conceptual analysis, shown in Chapter 7.

After more reflection, I then grouped the 9 developmental stages into 4 learning modules of similar focus to make a fifth, more complete version. This makes sense conceptually, as well as providing ready-made modules for leadership development or other programs.

The new framework is shown in Figure 7.7:
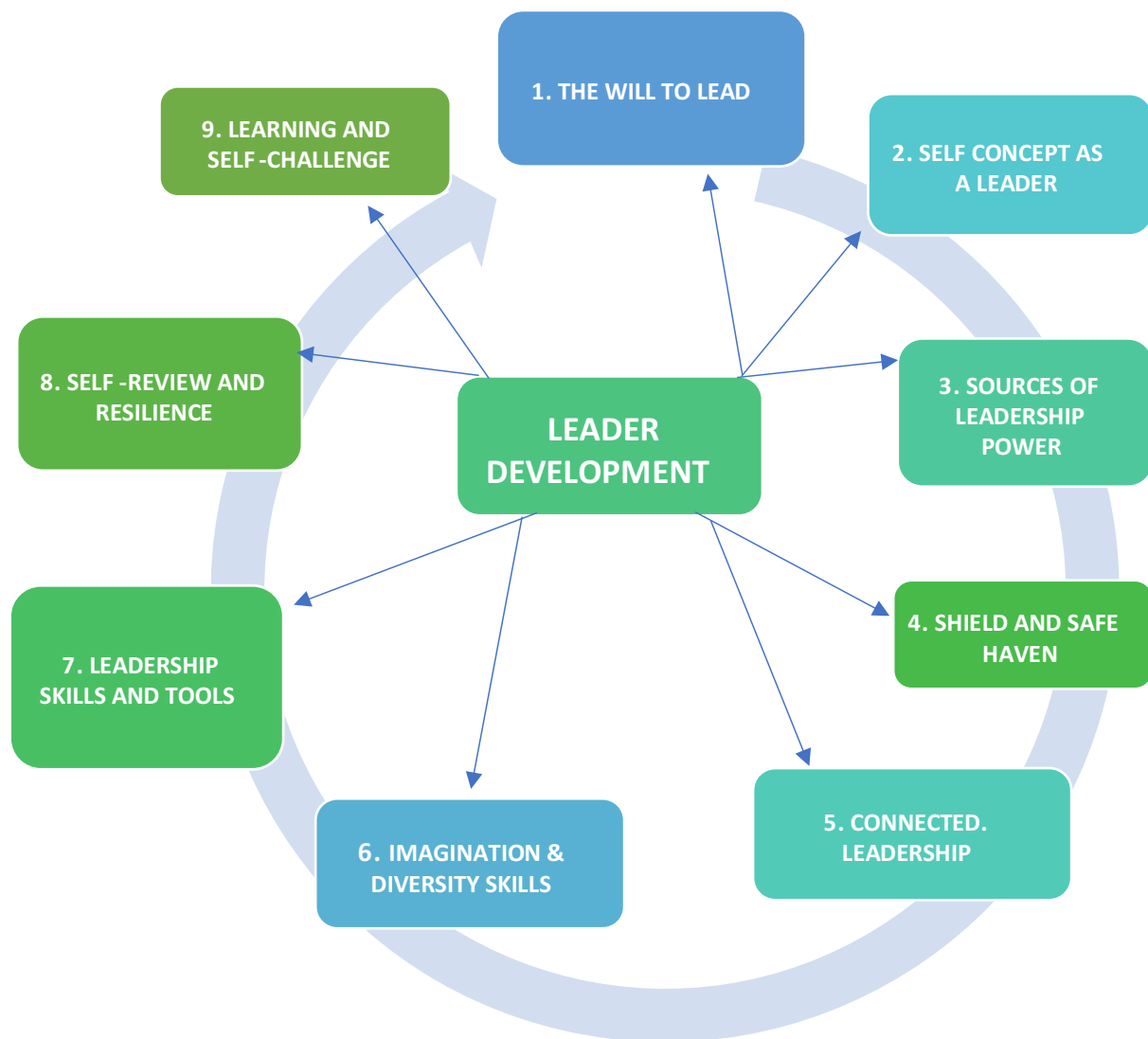
FIGURE 7.7. THE FINAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK, AFTER THE MODULES HAVE BEEN ADDED.

So, a new, improved version of the Framework has now been developed through a synthesis of the traditional and literary conceptual encounters, proving a wealth of insights and ideas.

Lessons from Chapter 7 will now be explored further in Chapter 8, when the learning, experiences, insights, growth and outcomes of this research will be discussed in detail, along with research limitations and areas for further research.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

At the beginning of this thesis, I outlined serious problems facing both the academic study, and the practice, of leadership development. The literature review of leadership research showed the field to be muddled, diverse and fragmented, leading to questions of its fitness for purpose for the challenges ahead. A global pandemic has now caused imminent economic recession around the world; the collapse of business and service sectors; many deaths; and rising unemployment. Forced reorganisations of processes, delivery and services have put pressure on leaders everywhere. This thesis is timely, then, in experimenting with processes to stimulate the imagination of leadership development specialists to help them think more widely about possibilities and solutions to support leaders, through fantasy literature's incredible range of ideas and alternative ways of being.

Stagnation is not a survival option for our species; nor is lazy thinking; over-reliance on, or blame of, the past; nor just looking the other way. Leadership development has a problem: it urgently needs a paradigm leap to a new way of thinking and developing, yet it is stuck reinventing itself over and over again within the same worn paradigms. This thesis can contribute a small part of the groundwork needed for the growth of more imaginative solutions to accelerate today's leadership development and help it to make the leap to a new paradigm.

This chapter provides a summary of what was undertaken during this research, the importance of the research question; and the methodology and processes used. The research journey has explored a range of issues, strategies and topics to find out if Tolkien's fantasy literature can be used to create a theoretical and practical leadership development framework. I discuss my learnings; and the findings and their implications that have been revealed from the overall process. The uses and applications of the leadership development framework are explored, as well as some consideration

of its main users and beneficiaries. Finally, I outline the limitations of this study, and note some interesting areas for future research.

A) The Literature Reviews

The first literature review was undertaken to examine the current field of leadership and leadership development. It sought to fully expand the topic and uncover any gaps in the literature and in the practice of leadership development. The search did show a sizeable gap. In all the work and investment expended on leadership and its development, little had been done on the use of creative methods, such as literature, art or poetry, and even less using the speculative fiction of fantasy literature or science fiction. Imagination was hardly mentioned in almost a century of leadership theory, although creativity and innovation in leadership are being more researched now (slowly), and contain some notable examples of the creative application of literature, such as that of Urich (2014), and Eastman (2016). But for most of the twentieth century, leadership theorists and developers have had their feet planted firmly on the solid ground of psychology, business studies and organisational theory: arts-based subjects were, with a few exceptions, rarely considered. In later decades, this state of affairs was compounded by frequent complaints about leaders, creating a sense of disillusionment with current theories, and with the leadership development methods of the time.

So, as reported, an uneasy situation was apparent in the field of leadership: leadership and its development were frequently seen as inadequate – even incompetent - for current challenges. Simultaneously, many leaders had been visibly and massively disappointing to their followers by their unethical, self-serving behaviour. Yet a major part of human experience - imagination and the arts, feelings, intuition, and emotions - had been largely dismissed as irrelevant - until later in the century, when things loosened conceptually with Senge's *The Fifth Discipline* (Senge, 1990), and

popular books on emotional intelligence (e.g. Goleman, 1996). There has been a growing and recent emergence of interest in new ways of using literature and the arts for leadership development in the twenty-first century, but this is not yet mainstream, and the gap is still wide and apparent. This needs to change urgently. Consequently, in Chapter 3, I presented the result of a search of fantasy literature, which showed how rich, versatile and flexible fantasy literature is, capable of fulfilling many human needs: from this search, I developed a framework of ten key ways that fantasy literature had been used to support humans and their communities through the ages. Unsurprisingly, nowhere was leadership development or leadership training included!

The teaching of social challenge; the questioning of the status quo; different ways of foretelling the future through scenario planning; multiple perspective-taking; the importance of morality and ethical behaviour; change transformation; greater self-understanding; and hope for a better future – these are some of the topics boosted by studying fantasy literature: skills that are very necessary for today's leadership development specialists. I concluded that the speculative fiction of fantasy and science fiction would work well in stretching and expanding the imaginative boundaries of our leaders.

What an exciting research opportunity this study was, therefore! The inadequate, much-criticised field of leadership development showed a clear, identifiable gap in the use of imagination – yet, not far away, is a rich and fertile source of imagination, easily available through the application and use of fantasy literature. The issue was whether a process could be devised that would bring these two elements together, through a novel and appropriate research methodology. The next section outlines what was formulated; the methodology that was developed for this research; and how well it worked.

Consequently, the creation of a new methodology was devised, to explore whether and how Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* might be a fruitful source of idea stimulation for leaders and leadership development. A range of potential methodologies was considered – some were excluded because of a poor fit with the research question. Grounded theory, for example, could not provide the answer to the research question: the degree of creativity needed to construct a new solution was not present. What was needed was a new structure and methodology for investigating a selection of fantasy literature in a way that could bring out useful insights for leaders, then turn them into a theoretical and practical framework for development. The methodology could not be prescriptive, needing instead sufficiently flexibility to explore different points of view in depth. It also had to provide rigour and repeatability, from a research perspective. It must be able to help me create a framework, share the framework with potential users (a group of leaders), and then synthesize the many points of view into a coherent and useable 'product'.

i)Practical Applied Literature.

A new methodological process was needed to achieve the research objectives – one that provided structure and techniques for working with literature, so this was developed and called *Practical Applied Literature*. Practical applied literature can be used with any well-written work of fiction to boost thinking, help solve a problem or find a solution, through combining the researcher's experience and knowledge, with the author's insights, with those of senior, experienced practitioners. It is a structured way of drawing out ideas, insights, thoughts, speculations, and doubts from literature to form a practical outcome. Two data collection techniques and one analysis strategy were incorporated into the new practical applied literature process: two were designed

specifically for this study (Literary Conceptual Analysis and Conceptual Synthesis), and one was the established, if little-known, technique of Traditional Conceptual Encounter.

The practical applied literature process stimulates creativity through the collision of ideas from different disciplines and sources: in this fantasy literature worked example, it provided a wonderfully vibrant series of images and events through which to view and think about leadership. I used fantasy fiction because it is so rich in imagery and imagination, particularly useful to stimulate solutions with and for leaders. The process could also be used with a well-written piece of science fiction, such as Huxley's *Brave New World;* or with Gothic fiction, such as Bronte's *Jane Eyre;* or the psychological fiction of Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers.* The choice of which piece of literature and which genre to choose depends on the desired outcome or goal; for example, Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* might help create a remedial strategy to improve poor communications in dysfunctional families. *Jane Eyre* could similarly help develop an action program for greater self-reliance and self-worth.

First, the researcher starts by building an initial conceptualisation (model, framework, strategy, action plan, set of tactics, etc) using *literary conceptual encounter* with her chosen novel, and identifying *potential insight events* to stimulate thinking. Second, *traditional conceptual encounters* are held with experienced individuals to generate insights about the topic and the conceptualisation. Third, these insights are grouped, analysed and sifted using *conceptual synthesis.* Fourth, certain insights are chosen to incorporate into the final conceptualisation, which has been improved and made excellent.

So, practical applied literature is a flexible and straightforward four-stage process that can be adapted for a wide range of purposes. As this process gets used increasingly, people will share their

experiences, discussing which novels they used, for what desired outcomes. The process has potential in building strategies to understand other cultures and nationalities when people work globally; or developing an action plan to manage refugees better, for example. Customer focused training plans could be devised; action plans for better conflict management created. The list of potential uses is restricted only by the imagination and goals of the researcher.

ii) Literary Conceptual Encounter

The first stage of the conceptual encounter process, also known as the *conceptualisation*, is the development of a framework for leadership development. This must be done before the traditional conceptual encounter stage with the leaders.

Literary conceptual encounter (explained in Chapter 5) was used to generate insights and imaginative ideas from Tolkien's trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*. In this process, the researcher investigator explores the topic with the author through the writing, interrogating and analysing the narrative in the same way that traditional conceptual encounter does with the spoken narrative of living people. New techniques were added: the *potential insight event* (when analysing books) and the *potential insight moment* (when analysing discussions and encounters with others), and a structured process was charted and described (as in Figure 4.3, The Literary Conceptual Encounter process).

I liked the process of applying an intelligent 'lens' to the work, observing, considering and watching what the author was saying through the narrative. I found the process easy, fun, and quick, resulting in new ideas, concepts and thoughts every time – too many, perhaps! It is always necessary to keep the research question uppermost in the researcher's mind, and not disappear down a tangential, tangled and tortuous path of the author.

I investigated Tolkien's past familiarity with the topic of leadership early on in his life. It is not necessary to do so for this process. In fact, it might be 'cleaner' to do it without knowledge of the author's life. After all, the objective is for the literary work to stimulate ideas of, and by, itself. Knowing the author's life and experiences might even get in the way of that outcome, leading the research investigator to make assumptions or leaps that are not in the writing itself. However, a familiarity with Tolkien's life and beliefs also helps the researcher to recognise themes and concepts within his writing, as well as surmising what might have been his internal Implicit Leadership Theories, trying to track them through the novels.

The literary conceptual analysis gave me energy and enthusiasm for the rest of the thesis, perhaps because understanding the world through literature is one of my sources of power. It is also easy because practical applied literature is straightforward for me, working well in this research. The process consists of seven steps, which can be flexibly used by any researcher wishing to harness the creative power of literature.

iii) Traditional Conceptual Encounter

Traditional conceptual encounter is a little-known technique by de Rivera (1984) normally just called *Conceptual Encounter*, in which a leader, or 'research partner', has deep discussions (or a '*conceptual encounter'*) with a 'research investigator', who asks relevant open, searching questions about a 'phenomenon' or topic, so that they can jointly arrive at its *essence,* developing new thoughts and ideas. The research investigator must have constructed a model or framework of the topic, a 'conceptualisation', to consider, discuss and improve, after the more general discussion. The result is greater understanding from the combination of the wisdom and experience of both parties, and the insights they create between them. Deep learning and close connections emerge, and the understanding of the phenomenon is gradually developed with each 'encounter'. As more conceptual encounters are undertaken, insight about the phenomenon increases. The investigator

changes the questions as each successive research partner moves understanding along, helping to create a cognitive broadening of perceptions and wisdom. By the end of the conceptual encounter process, there are many insights and 'aha!' moments. This technique seemed perfect for an inter-disciplinary study that needed to generate a unique and creative solution from literature, and then further improve it with the help of senior, experienced users.

The values inherent in conceptual encounter also match the values of the twenty-first century workplace, in terms of equity, access, and respect. It could almost be a technique developed today, not the 1970's! I chose to use two forms of conceptual encounter. I created one to 'encounter' or to 'interrogate' fantasy literature, and used the original after this stage, to hold discussions with real-life leaders in a more traditional way, to see how they would illuminate leadership and the framework. I named my first adaptation of conceptual encounter for use in literary interrogation, literary conceptual encounter; and the second unaltered conceptual encounter technique from de Rivera, was called traditional conceptual encounter, to keep the two distinct and separate (but related) techniques.

Having created the initial Framework, and devised some techniques, de Rivera's original and traditional conceptual encounter technique was used to explore the perceptions and opinions about leadership and the framework with fifteen senior, experienced leaders. This resulted in deep discussions between me, as research investigator, and these leaders, the research partners, producing co-created insights about our experiences and opinions of leadership in general, and my framework (or 'conceptualisation'), in particular. The data from these encounters is summarised and considered in Chapter 6, producing valuable co-created insights for each encounter.

In Chapter 7, these insights were grouped into seven core themes of similar concerns, issues and insights that had emerged, including groupings of suggested changes for the framework. Next, a way must be devised to make sense of all of the insights, and to make them useable for the framework. There were a lot of them! The answer was a new technique, Conceptual Synthesis, developed especially for this research.

iv) Conceptual Synthesis

Conceptual synthesis was used to analyse each theme through different sets of lenses, to provide a wide understanding of opinion and ideas: the insights from the leaders' conceptual encounters; Tolkien's narrative perspectives; scholarly, academic perspectives; and finally my own perspective, integrating from my professional experience with a culmination of all of the others. I then made an informed decision about whether, and how, to incorporate the theme into the framework. At the end of Chapter 7, a final version of the framework was re-drafted in accordance with these decisions.

Conceptual synthesis is a comprehensive way of considering all of the 'voices' in the research, showing the importance of all of the contributions to reaching an improved result. It now needs to be used in more research generally to examine the boosting of imaginative and innovative outcomes. I believe that it has great potential as a tool for developing creative collaboration.

The adaptation of de Rivera's conceptual encounter technique has been worthwhile: literary conceptual encounter can be used individually, with one chosen novel, to stimulate ideas and reflection. Many problems could benefit by conducting an analysis in this way. However, by incorporating traditional conceptual encounter with a group of knowledgeable individuals, the quality of thinking can be checked and improved - thus capitalising on the thoughts and experiences of more active and thoughtful minds. The two techniques together make the process

very strong. This is especially so when the conceptual synthesis (analysis) stage is added. The diagram in Chapter 4, Figure 4.1, illustrates the steps in the practical applied literature process.

C) Strengths and Limitations of the Methodology

The research strategy worked well, with no stage being considered redundant or erroneous. Every aspect moved the research goal along in a logical and timely way. The resulting framework integrates literary and academic theory, with practical observations from fifteen real-life senior leaders, with my own insights from my international leadership development work. The research question of whether fantasy literature can stimulate creativity, ideas and insight is illustrated by the value of this final 'product', the framework. This outcome was dependent on the various tools and processes that were developed or used to conceptualise the framework, and experimentation with these methodologies provided a considerable benefit itself.

The original research question provided me with the opportunity to design two, and experiment with three, different methodological techniques in order to use fantasy literature to solve a real-life problem. In addition, Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* was a rich, well-written and highly imaginative fantasy that contained many examples of leadership, battles, quests, failures and successes, real pressures, frustrations, along with the diverse cultural background of Middle-earth to contextualise and 'ground' all of the leadership action.

The effectiveness of the practical applied literature process rests on the experience and willingness of leaders to take time to think deeply, and become aware of their thoughts and feelings – yet many real-life leaders are 'action-junkies', not given to regular deep analysis or lengthy deliberation. This process requires thoughtful leaders prepared ready to pause and consider something at length - an

approach necessary now with the complexity of modern demands. While some leaders gave occasional quick and non-considered comments, the culture of the organisation encouraged deep thinking, so overall the leaders were thoughtful, perceptive, self-aware and self-reflexive.

The philosophers, Heidegger and Gadamer, stress the importance of pre-understanding the research topics and phenomena (Warnke, 2011, p.92), for the researcher to consider and establish our 'fore-having', our 'foresight' or 'fore-projections' and our 'fore-conception' before proceeding to interpret a research situation (p.93). The 'hermeneutic circle' is a way of seeking to understand these pre-conceptions clearly, so that they may be evaluated and amended., or at least, identified and accounted for, in the way that the researcher understands what she or he is seeing from the research data: 'we are already immersed in everyday concerned involvements, and these pick out meanings for us, including the meanings of our texts' (Warnke, 2011, p. 99). In hindsight, I should have spent more time considering my expectations and assumptions about leadership, and leadership development before commencing on the study. I was aware of them more during the research, as a need to utilise structure and order onto leadership development processes. This, no doubt, arises from my consulting work experience and success criteria. However, that also may result in an inability to let solutions just arise spontaneously, or a need to over-structure the process. However, Gadamer argues that dialogic processes can counter these presuppositions and help expose them to scrutiny (Warnke, p.104-5): the insertion of traditional conceptual encounter in this research was all about holding Gadamerian dialogue and exploration of assumptions, of both the researcher and the senior leaders. So, to some extent, the methodology of De Rivera supplements and counteracts any lack of pre-examination by the researcher. Insufficient examination of pre-assumptions and beliefs before the research starts can be rectified to some extent by the methodology used: traditional conceptual encounter is very helpful to the process, adding a conceptual counterbalance if this has been fully or partially omitted to ensure understanding occurs finally.

The traditional conceptual encounter process also requires a mindful research investigator, as de Rivera's process requires that the questions must closely follow the direction of the discussion, changing with each conceptual encounter as understanding and insight develop. This requires concentration and focus, as well as strong questioning skills. Research investigators need to be self-reflexive at all times, to not influence the discussion more than necessary with their own opinions. I found this difficult, being an extravert, but made a strong conscious effort to collaborate and listen during the discussions, using Senge's concept of '*inquiry*', rather than '*advocacy*' skills (Senge, 1990). The result was that many insights and recommendations were generated for the framework. This process is also transferrable for future researchers seeking new approaches to literary analysis, or in creating new methodologies to generate creative solutions.

D) The Detailed Leadership Development Framework

The framework is the most visible outcome from the methodology used, and a product of literary conceptual encounter, traditional conceptual encounter, and conceptual synthesis. It has new sections from the previous versions: every one of the stages has been altered to some extent, except the first three stages, which had no need to change. Each of these nine stages is fully outlined in Chapter 7, but a summary may be useful to elucidate again here.

Module 1, Stages 1-3: The Internal Landscape and the Commitment to Lead

This module contains the main three stages to do with the 'internal landscape' of a leader, and an examination of her or his commitment to lead through: *The Will to Lead, Self-Concept as a Leader, and the Sources of Power*. These are the Pre-Leadership Stages. This module asks leaders whether they want to lead, if they see themselves as leaders, and what their main motivators and values are - those things that spur them into action if they are threatened or withdrawn. These questions are

crucially important to leaders, yet rarely does anyone ask a leader about them. No matter how much work is done on leadership skills training, people will not put it into practice if they do not want to lead, do not see themselves as a leader, or are not motivated to take the time and effort to lead. I have seen many people in leadership positions pay 'lip-service' to being a leader and to the organisation's strategic plan, then go back to their teams and do nothing, or worse, criticise everything that their leaders seek to do. This results in widespread cynicism, lack of energy in the team, and a withdrawal of discretionary effort and innovation. Like many Leaders, I believe that these three stages should be undertaken before the individual takes on any leadership responsibilities, or else they risk the danger of operating from their inner anxieties, and not on a conscious, informed level.

Stage 1: The Will to Lead

It is often assumed that everyone wants to lead, but that is not necessarily the case. Nor will all reluctant leaders speak out, for a variety of reasons to do with their personality, agenda, pride, or many other motivations. The question, 'do you wish to lead here now, and in this way/job/level?' should always be asked, as a normal part of the process of recruitment or promotion. Even when people wish to lead, there may be doubts or hesitation. Individuals may have been heavily influenced by parental influences, and the role-models they observed while growing up in their families, or in their social culture. Some feel that it is not their job to lead, whether they wish it or not. Surprisingly, the converse may also be true. This stage encourages individuals to reflect on whether this is what they want right now, whether they are ready for leadership responsibility, and why they want to lead. They are encouraged to reflect on their experiences in previous leadership roles, how they felt then, and the outcomes that were produced. These are vital questions, which must be clarified and explored before moving on to further stages in the Framework.

Stage 2: Self-Concept as a Leader.

If an individual had bullying or mistreatment early in life, then a lack of confidence in leading others may be common: 'Why should anyone listen to [or follow] me?' This can also be the result of a rigid culture at home, or in a community where minority groups are not encouraged to take on leadership roles, for various reasons. There are many influences that will determine how individuals sees themselves: this stage is about exploring and challenging them. A sense of self-identity is critically important to any leader, in terms of confidence and the ability to take unpopular or difficult decisions.

The conceptual analysis also considered the importance of childhood attachment issues on a leader's self-image, which can cause many problems for leaders later in life. All of these aspects should be tackled early in the development process if a leader is to be effective and resilient. Aragorn's self-doubt and anxiety after Gandalf's death may have been a reflection of his own childhood grief at losing his father when very young, then being sent for his protection to live with the elves at Rivendell. As an adult, he lived a lonely, hard life, almost always alone. His relationship with Gandalf is as an adopted son, and although he has much emotional support later in life, the early loss of his father, his home and people, and then, while young, his mother too, would have affected his leadership style considerably. Frodo too is an orphan, losing both patents to a drowning accident: perhaps unacknowledged attachment anxiety explains part of his gradual disintegration in Mordor, adding to the destructive power of the Ring. Tolkien himself was no stranger to grief and loss, as his biography in Chapter 5 showed.

Stage 3: Sources of Power

Leaders need to understand what is important to them; what causes they need to protect, and what will motivate them (or 'push their buttons') more than anything else. This knowledge helps leaders to know themselves, and to act and make decisions in accordance with their own, inner values, because if they do not, then stress and pressure builds up inside: leaders can become disconnected with themselves, their leaders, or their workplace. Leaders in touch with their Sources of Power usually seem more confident at work, more decisive, more assertive about how they spend their time, and less fraught with anxiety generally. The leaders in this research greatly liked this stage, finding it to be exceptionally important and instructional, both for understanding their own Sources of Power, and those of their colleagues and teams.

This stage can explain many of the conflicts and difficulties that individuals can face at the workplace, appearing unable or reluctant to talk about. People can have a clash of values that cause indecision or inaction. Even mature leaders find this stage useful and strengthening.

Module 2 - Stages 4-5: Shielding, Connected Leadership.

This module is about helping leaders connect with their followers, enabling them to feel safe and secure to explore and take risks in their work. Interpersonal, skilled, and collaborative, these leadership; styles reflect the common values of most people and organisations today, but also are connected to our oldest, evolutionary needs: increasing the confidence and capabilities of tribe members provides greater survival opportunity for everyone. These two stages are important skills if leaders want their staff to innovate, take risks, and experiment on new products. Module 2 consists of 2 stages:

Stage 4: Being a 'Shield', and Establishing a Secure Base for Followers

Research listed in Chapter 7 pointed out the considerable need for people to feel safe at work, so that they can innovate and explore new possibilities. If staff do not feel safe, they cannot focus on achieving outstanding work, or think ahead about future opportunities. If leaders make their staff feel they will be defended against unjust criticism, be forgiven if they make mistakes, and protected against aggression, they feel they belong in the team, and perform at their highest levels. They are also more likely to defend and support the leader's initiatives if they are criticised unfairly. This stage includes reflection about current practices – how do you as a leader make your team members feel safe and secure? Do they feel unsafe? What specific behaviours could you use to shield them so that they can reduce their anxiety? (or are you making them anxious, yourself?). This stage is vital to their health and well-being, as well as their ability to learn and grow.

Stage 5: Connected Leadership.

Leaders lead people with feelings and emotions, responses and reactions, not as robots driven only by logic or instructions. To lead well, we must foster the skills that connect with, and inspire real, emotional people. The skills in this module include emotional intelligence, positive leadership, and authentic leadership styles, all that helps a leader be effective when dealing with people and their emotions at the workplace. In the conceptual encounters, several Leaders asked for emotional intelligence to be included, and others referred to authentic leadership skills and positive leadership as useful and desirable. Figure 7.2 shows the areas of overlap and similarity of these styles, which encouraged me to merge these areas in this stage, reinforcing them with 360 degree feedback, so that leaders and followers can feel strong and capable in their interpersonal, people-focused skills. They help leaders connect with people more strongly and empathetically, building bonds of trust and friendship between them. This is important in an age where collaboration, shared co-creativity, stakeholder relationships, new products and processes, must be established, and the new resulting

connections made to work. Distributed leadership is becoming more common, as jobs and responsibilities are devolved and geographically dispersed: this requires better people skills, and stronger interpersonal capabilities. Trust is then needed more than ever.

Module 3: Stages 6-7. <u>**Imagination and Diversity Skills, and the Leadership Toolbox**</u>.

This module helps the leader to become effective and confident in the use of leadership tools and techniques, to be able to lead and follow in any situation. It is about enhanced thinking, imagining and synthesising skills, so that exciting new futures for technologies, organisations and communities are well-planned and achievable. Commonly, it is the place that many other leadership development programs start, but I argue that it is half-way through the process. The skills in this module will as new tools, techniques and human systems are invented, or workforce needs change. The capacity for top level thinking and imagination, with the support of tried and tested tools can help leaders stay effective in any future environment.

Module 3 consists of 2 stages (Stage 6 and Stage 7):

Stage 6: Imagination, Thinking and Diversity Skills

This is about stretching the mind and perspective of leaders to imagine and speculate more widely and easily; to consider where the future may be heading, to anticipate and prepare, and take control of the issues that we face, such as climate change and global pandemics in a successful way. To connect with new developments and possible futures, diversity of perspective and cognitive style is needed. Difference must be recognised, respected, understood and celebrated, so that it can seed and foster new initiatives and perspectives.

Maximising diversity to boost energy and ideas must be built into the culture of organisations, and into the daily consciousness of our leaders. This stage is about understanding the value of diversity, providing tools to do this, such as diversity enhancement, personality measures, and the Kirton Adaption-Innovation Inventory (Kirton, 1983), to help understand individual and cognitive style.

Stage 7: Leadership Skills and Tools

This stage incorporates teaching and communicating a range of helpful tools and techniques to support leaders in how to lead and follow better. The latest tools and techniques will be included at the time, and might cover leadership styles, the importance of strategic planning and vision, future forecasting, dealing with unexpected crises, coping with unforeseen situations, scenario planning, change management, creating change 'visions', working in teams, creating organisational culture, implicit leadership and followership theories, etc. I strongly believe that these tools and techniques should be taught when leaders are ready for them, which may be after the first two modules: understanding oneself, understanding and connecting with others, and knowing how to think, imagine and create an imagination culture.

Introducing these practical tools too early in the development of leaders may mean that while they know the words for leadership tools, they may not know try out how to make them work; or truly understand why to lead in a certain way. From the perspective of health and wellness, care should be taken with these highly visible leadership and followership tools: they must be introduced at the correct stage or risk failure, lack of confidence, cynicism and actual hurt to employees. In my experience, poor or inexperienced leaders can wreak havoc on their staff by using these tools incorrectly: humans must learn how knives can hurt and damage others, before being let loose on any cutting and shaping in the kitchen! Stages 1-3 need to be in place first.

Module 4: Stages 8 and 9: Leadership Self-Review and Learning

Module 4 reveals the importance of reflexivity, learning from actions and results, thinking deeply about how leadership is being done, and what could be better, and about the need for personal transformation. It is about being honest, and seeking honest feedback, to make genuine, authentic change, on a personal and organisational level.

Module 4 consists of 2 stages:

Stage 8: Self-Review and Resilience

This stage reveals the leader making the time for self-review and progress assessment as a leader: how am I doing, how could I do better? What are my strengths and weaknesses as a leader? How do my team member or stakeholders see me? Am I leading upwards more than across and downwards? How is the team leading others? Could they do better? Self-review and requests for feedback are important, as is an honest review of two other things. The effectiveness of balance is important for physical and mental health for both leaders and followers; and this is also about resilience. Resilience comes from health, balance and lifestyle, as well as shared commitment to clear goals, and organisations with healthy conflict of ideas, rather than unhelpful conflict. By focusing on resilience, the leader can ensure they are maximising wellness and flourishing.

Stage 9: Learning and Self-Challenge

This final stage is encouraging leaders to be continually learning and challenging themselves, as well as ensuring the organisation is a true learning organisation. Effective learning processes are the only way to manage constant, radical change, and leaders must ensure their organisations are constantly at the forefront of their industry, with continuous learning at every level.

Knowing where the organisation is going, and what learning is necessary to help the team get there is essential. Every member of an organisation should have personal learning plans, and be actively broadening their skill bases and capabilities. Transformational learning will make all the difference to which leaders and teams survive, and which will not.

E) The Findings

The research strategy and the practical applied literature process worked well, but research is only as good as the quality of its findings, so it is necessary now to explore the four findings that resulted from the study. The four findings from this study are that:

1. **Fantasy Literature can be used successfully** to solve problems and generate solutions, as shown by the creation of a useful framework for leadership development. Its use represents a new paradigm in the developing of leaders;

2. **The new Practical Applied Literature Process**, **literary conceptual encounter and creative synthesis** are valuable techniques for stimulating ideas and imaginative solutions from fantasy literature;

3. **The three stages of Module 1 are essential** to leadership development activities, and could be an invaluable pre-requisite for any leadership training or coaching programs;

4. **The shielding and 'safe haven' behaviours and skills of leaders are essential** to today's workplaces, in providing individuals with the security they need today to counteract the anxiety of turbulent change.

I will now explore each of the findings in more detail.

Finding 1: Fantasy Literature can be used successfully to solve problems and generate solutions, as shown by the creation of a useful framework for leadership development.

The finding suggests that fantasy literature has considerable potential for leadership development and to stimulate imagination to tackle leadership problems. The research shows that it is possible to use a piece of fantasy literature to create and improve a leadership development framework, and to do so successfully. The existence of the framework is evidence that the process developed for the research can result in useful outcomes. Using the right enabling structures, fantasy literature could be applied to other problems and challenges, as a means to boost mental stimulation and imagination. This study has provided sufficient evidence to warrant further investigation.

This has both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, there is a new process that should be explored. Replicability should be explored for future applications. It should widen perceptions of how fantasy literature could be used in an interdisciplinary way, perhaps even broadening the study to speculative literature in general, including science fiction. The potential synergy of using fantasy literature to explore problems in any discipline is an exciting area of possibility.

The study could represent a new direction in leadership development. The founding of a new research movement to stimulate idea generation from fantasy literature would be a logical implication from this finding. A centre for further research and application, set up in a leading university, could spearhead a new discipline, collecting people of many other fields to work together on this exciting innovation. Although other writers have begun to emerge about this topic in the past two decades, academic work is currently scattered and somewhat diffuse, according to the preferences and backgrounds of the researchers. A UK centre could provide a central focus for all the excellent research needing to be done. International conferences could explore the direction

that further work should follow. In addition, I will certainly be using the framework as a basis for my own leadership development programs, convinced that it will become a popular way of teaching and developing leadership in the decades ahead.

Conceptually, the finding has perspective-broadening properties for the subjects of leadership studies, fantasy literature research, Tolkien studies, and methodological processes. A new use of fantasy literature has been conceptualised and shown to be useful, therefore the disciplines would want to explore what that means for their areas. Interdisciplinary work is the direction of the future for research and for practical solutions, so the mind-expanding processes and skills that accompany it are likely to be in demand and needed.

The Contribution of Finding 1:

-To Leadership Studies:

This may be the most interesting new direction available for leadership thinkers to explore. The use of speculative literature for leadership development is a huge area, with so much source material: working out which fiction works best in which situations could be the research agenda for many scholars for several decades! This new direction could revitalise a tired and slightly disillusioned discipline. Imagination is certainly of the greatest importance now to leaders, as has been shown. A second important contribution is that stronger imagination skills could provide a bridge between leadership theory and leadership practice, quite a serious problem for leadership development as a discipline. From the literature review of the leadership field, I found a clamour of papers and books highlighting the widespread and growing disillusionment with frequent moral leadership deficits, shown by dishonest or greedy leadership actions. It was not only moral leadership but also the overall standards and capability of leadership that have been raised across the globe as a worrying concern. This was reflected in Chapters 1 and 2, and in the literature review.

-To Tolkien Studies:

With the exception of work by Urick (2010), little has been done generally in the area of Tolkien Studies in linking Tolkien's fantasy work to leadership. This research could generate a new way of considering Tolkien's work, and might spark more research studies into leadership. For example, different forms of leadership theory could be compared to Tolkien's leaders and insights gathered in this way. It will be a more applied way of considering Tolkien's work, with real-world and directly practical benefits. This research will provide a broader perspective on analysis of his characters and their motivations. It could expand notions of Tolkien's work, and may provide a future focus for research into his other novels.

-To Fantasy Literature:

The use of fantasy literature in a structured process as a source of imagination and solutions is new and should trigger researchers to consider which other disciplines could benefit from this approach. It may encourage researchers in this area to think more broadly about the potential uses of fantasy literature, as outlined in Chapter 3, and to spur new ideas for further research and application. A stronger emphasis on application may encourage more experimentation with the genre, and a new willingness to serve other disciplines like leadership development. This might result in new forms of fantasy, new collaborations and new interdisciplinary partnerships.

-To Leadership Development Practitioners:

The framework provides an immediate foundation for a modular leadership development program, with contemporary leader feedback to make it relevant, and theoretical underpinning to make it credible. Some may find the concept of using speculative fiction for development exciting and

energising, feeling that they have permission now to build it into their work in a more integral way, and explore new directions with it.

-To Methodological Studies:

The Practical Applied Literature process is useful in itself as a new way to study the use of literature for practical solutions; the tools of *potential insight events*, *literary conceptual encounter*, and *conceptual synergy,* designed specifically for this research, could extend possibilities for applied literature research.

Finding 2: The Practical Applied Literature Process, Literary Conceptual Encounter, and Creative Synthesis techniques are effective and helpful new methodologies for generating ideas and imaginative solutions from fantasy literature

The practical applied literature process, literary conceptual encounter and conceptual synthesis, all explained in detail already in this chapter, were found to work exceptionally well in this research. The practical applied literature process outlines how imaginative outcomes can be obtained from fantasy literature. Literary conceptual encounter generates and stimulates many insights and ideas that may be useful to the researcher; conceptual analysis then examines each one from a different perspective, to make choosing among them evidence-based and more rational. These 'helicopter' ways of thinking are enjoyable and interesting to use, and definitely helpful as a way of synthesising different opinions and insights for further work. This finding acknowledges the usefulness of these tools, recommending that they be used more widely with literary analysis.

These new tools – the practical applied literature process, literary conceptual encounter and conceptual synthesis should be explored for use in many research and practical situations now.

They have considerable potential. It was a considerable surprise for me to see just how much learning and insight I obtained from using these techniques in this research. I already knew literature was a useful source of insight, but the practical applied literature process and literary conceptual encounter helped greatly in generating more and better ideas, and in using my own experience in leadership development to make connections. Later, conceptual synthesis worked equally well in sorting out the themes from the conceptual encounter sessions. I was then able to look at them more comprehensively and objectively, and this made it easier to decide what to do with each theme in terms of the framework.

However, it is important to consider the organisational context for these tools. I reflected during the process that conceptual encounter would not be suitable for all organisations. Conceptual encounters are time-consuming, and severely time-pressured organisations may disapprove about leaders taking time to explore and meander through a topic! It requires an enlightened organisational culture which is not suspicious or punitive. In a badly organised, stressed organisation, research partners may be so distracted that they might not fully concentrate on the topic. This process requires an open, trustworthy, learning-focused organisation if possible, interested in achieving results through discussion, collaboration and exploration, and whose leaders are similarly disposed to such discursive learning. Fortunately, the organisation used for the research was enlightened and learning-focused, so these techniques worked well.

These methods are easily transferrable for future researchers seeking new approaches to literary analysis, wishing to create new methodologies to generate creative solutions. They can now be used to replicate the research, using different fantasy materials to generate imaginative solutions, or for teaching. Tolkien's earlier novel, *The Hobbit,* (1937*)* could be used to generate learning in ethical leadership behaviour. *The Island of Doctor Moreau* by H.G. Wells (1896) could be used to teach the ethics of invention, very apt with the development of artificial intelligence. *The Hunger*

Games trilogy (by Collins, 2008-2020) could be used brilliantly to explore Module 1 of the Framework: the will to Lead, self-concept as a leader, and the sources of power. There are so many opportunities in fantasy literature, not only to teach concepts to leaders, but also to help them generate different ideas and unusual solutions.

The Contribution of Finding 2:

-To Methodology:

From this research, there are now several new techniques available to use in qualitative research that will broaden the range of options, and be especially appropriate where interdisciplinary subjects, or any genre of literature, are part of the research. This finding extends available strategies for leadership research, and can provide new options for boosting imagination to stimulate new theoretical and practical outcomes for leaders.

-To Leadership Development Practitioners

This specialist group now has can access a new way of working with leaders - one that needs to be explored more 'in the field'. These techniques can be useful as part of a new leadership program on generating creativity and imagination through fantasy literature. They could form the way for practitioners themselves to experiment with generating ideas from a piece of writing, to add creativity to their work. They could also be a way of de-stressing groups, by allowing their minds to take a lateral approach – this could be useful for younger leaders and staff, who may already be fans of fantasy literature. Science fiction can be used in this way too, with the same techniques as in this research. Practitioners will know their clients well, so can gauge which types of speculative literature would go best with the outcomes needed.

-To Leadership Theorists

This finding will increase the pressure to discover new creative approaches to leadership theory, ways of incorporating fantasy thinking and interdisciplinary imagination into leadership research papers and scholarly exploration. For the more practical theorists, this research may encourage them to incorporate literary and other arts-based sources into their work.

Finding 3: Module 1, and its first three stages, are essential to Leader Development, and should be a prerequisite to any leadership development work, including coaching.

The importance of the first three stages of Module 1 was discovered early in this research process: during the first literary conceptual encounter with Aragorn, in *The Lord of the Rings*. The literary conceptual encounter triggered my own experience of leadership development of how important these three stages are. The work to be done on whether individuals in leadership positions were actually *committed* to leading, saw themselves as a leader, and knew exactly what motivated them to action through their Sources of Power (to be undertaken even before any formal Leadership Skills training had started), appealed strongly to the Leaders. The framework was well received and considered relevant to current leadership issues and challenges.

The framework provides a good structure for coaching programs. Module 1 represents a commitment to the coaching process, and individual sessions could follow usefully the nine stages of the framework to explore skills, and to set goals for the leader being coached. The use of 360 degree feedback could be incorporated into Module 2, Stage 4, in terms of emotional intelligence capabilities, to provide specific feedback to target areas that need improvement, and to celebrate areas of excellent skills. Th use of 360-degree feedback could also be incorporated into Module 3,

Stage 6, using the KAI (explained in Chapter 7) to consider cognitive style and its implications, useful for devising and targeting strategies to maximise cognitive effectiveness and thinking capability.

Some of the leaders admitted to never having explored any Module 1 issues previously, despite decades of holding leadership positions. Several leaders said that working through them gave them a new confidence and self-esteem, enabling them to be more effective leaders. Leaders consistently highlighted helpful outcomes from working with the Sources of Power, in particular. There was also unanimous agreement about the benefit of tackling the internal sides of leadership right at the beginning of a career, if possible, through these first stages, especially for stressed, demotivated or inexperienced leaders.

Senior leaders commented in the encounters how useful it would be to get this commitment and clarity from new leaders; they discussed how important the concept of needing to see themselves as a leader had been for them. It boosted their 'self-concept as a leader', and only then did some believe they could perform a leadership role. This reinforced the importance of the self-concept of the leader to me, and how people who were leading needed to see themselves as leaders, or they would be hesitant to lead others and take on the role.

The final stage in Module 1 is the Sources of Power. Again, the literary conceptual encounter pointed me towards this, when I observed exactly how Aragorn had overcome his anxiety and self-doubt. It was through reciting and remembering his titles, his duty, the expectations his people had about them, and that he had himself. In that moment, Aragorn remembered why he was there, and what he was meant to contribute. He knew, and wanted to protect, what was important to him, beyond anything. Remembering his Sources of Power as he stood in a threatening situation on the grassy Plains of Rohan transformed him into an energised and confident leader. Strong, powerful

leadership required an internal, direct connection to be made to his Sources of Power, to generate this leadership energy. I found this useful learning, which also held much resonance for the Senior Leaders. They enjoyed the sources of power concept, finding it valuable and using it frequently. Leadership development is about getting in touch with *why* one is leading. If that is forgotten, motivation and commitment suffer. Leaders can lose their energy, and their hope.

These three techniques will continue to be asked for by leaders, because working through these first three stages help individuals feel more energetic, self-informed and self-confident, ready to take on tricky leadership challenges. I argue that effective development programs must deal with these three stages before the others. Exploring the 'internal landscape', involving personal insight and making a commitment to leading, should become the normal way to start development programs, as the most effective place to begin.

The Contribution of Finding 3:

-To Leadership Practitioners:

Practitioners can use this step-by-step framework for their own training programs, to be able to provide well-researched, proven elements to their program, and to use developmental modules in the correct order. The framework can be a useful structure for a one-to-one coaching program also, not just for upfront training, or even for a self-managed, self-directed program of leadership learning, or online learning.

-To Leadership Theorists & Scholars

This could form the basis of a new area of research in leadership theory for theorists and academics. The framework contained in this research study, along with its techniques, can generate a scholarly debate, which could lead to more informed advice from the theorists to practitioners and consultants, thus helping to bridge the unhelpful gap (previously mentioned) between theory and practice.

Beside the wider approach to leadership development, research could be undertaken of the finer details of the work. Very little has been done in the neglected area of the *order* of content in leadership development - yet this topic urgently requires scholarly investigation. Research into which modules should come where in the development process is essential for its effectiveness, yet almost always program content order is left to the judgement of the presenter or program designer. Evidence-based decision-making is required for this issue, which should be based on a justifiable rationale and the logic of research, rather than the whim of a presenter.

-To Methodology

The place of self-knowledge and self-understanding in development courses has been described as influential by some research methodologists in the thinking and decision-making of the researcher. By highlighting the value of 'the internal landscape' up front in leadership development, stimulation of this activity might become more common. This could result in better, more informed, and more self-managed methodological processes during research, leading to better quality research overall, and a richer learning experience for the researcher.

Finding 4: Shielding and 'Safe Haven' Skills and Behaviours of Leaders are Vitally Important to Today's Workplaces

The Conceptual Synthesis analysis showed how important shielding and providing a self-haven for followers had been for the Anglo-Saxon culture, reflected in Tolkien's writing and academic research. The work by John Bowlby on the effects of childhood attachment issues later in life, and the work of Keller (2003; 1999), and Mayseless and Popper (2019; 2007) highlighted the considerable impact of attachment issues on adult leadership and followership behaviour. These activities, while seen as important in earlier historical periods, are often neglected now, yet the importance of trust and a sense of well-being is often reported as being vital to high performance at the workplace.

The widespread loss of jobs, and major change in every sphere, means that employees and leaders together will feel anxious and concerned. While the security of employment is not guaranteed anyway right now, much more can be done to make staff feel more secure (in their own skills and confidence, if nothing else), more cared for, and protected against harm. Some leaders act as if they are bystanders during processes that are insensitive and can cause harm, whereas a different attitude of caring, compassion, support and empathy, can provide an important counterbalance to difficult or painful experiences. The best leaders already do this; the worst do not see it as their job. Leaders who do see this as an essential part of their job are more likely to develop a culture of trust, mutual support, and harmony, which will lead to better performance, lower sickness and accident statistics, and better relationships. Individuals who feel safe and supported are more likely to innovate, to take risks, and to be creative.

The Contribution of Finding 4

-To Leadership Development Practitioners

This may be a new direction for leadership development specialists, as it has not received much attention previously. It can provide additional content for workshops, and leaders will learn through their actions, and attitudes how to lead with this approach. This could transform the way that leaders and followers interact.

-To Leadership Theorists

Academics could be expected to research this topic, in order to validate it, and provide examples of how effective it can be. A mega-study of the impact of insecurity, and a measure of just how common a sense of not being safe at the workplace is, and its impact in terms of performance, wellness, staff turnover, and innovation frequency, could be a useful start. Learning to provide a stronger sense of security, and shielding staff generally (not just from Covid) will be a new area for research.

-To Tolkien Studies.

More could be explored about the impact of the Anglo-Saxon war culture on Tolkien, and the effect that this has on his characters and their relationships. The whole idea of the leader shielding their followers, and seeking to create a safe haven for them, would be a fascinating concept to research in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit.* It could expand current scholarly work in this area, casting new light on Tolkien's work.

-To Fantasy Studies

This finding could expand the study of fantasy literature to include the extent to which leaders shield and protect their followers. It would be interesting to research how much recent fantasy and science fiction display the values of the Anglo-Saxon war culture, how much focus there is on fellowship, mutual male friendship and support, the giving of rewards for loyalty, dying by one's lord in battle, etc. The extent to which protagonist leaders shield and protect their followers would be interesting to research, as well as the degree to which they actively build a loyal community in exchange for psychological safety and belonging.

It would also be fascinating to study bad or evil leaders in this respect in fantasy literature, to see whether they protected their followers, and made them feel safe, or not. This would be an interesting and useful area of further research for fantasy researchers that would cast light on where fantasy literature reflects or distorts reality, perceiving things that are hidden in the 'real', primary world. It could also highlight sources for plots and themes in the genre, illuminating the motives of the characters.

This research is an exploration of what is possible in leadership research at this present time. Much of the process depended on my own interest in fantasy and applied literature. Others may not have that level of interest, nor want to immerse themselves in reading literature, fantasy or otherwise. So this type of leadership development will appeal more to some leaders than to others, which may have an impact on how effectively the process can be taught to a non-specialised group of leaders. How this is taught will need to be considered carefully, if the process is to stimulate impact and useful outcomes in a consistent manner.

I found Chapter 6 and 7, the data collection and the summary stage of the traditional conceptual encounter, to be a slow process. Every comment needed to be considered for what it was saying, every perspective considered. The mini literature-searches took much time. However, it was very beneficial to my learning overall. Enough resources and time must be given to this stage, as it is of critical importance to the quality of the research overall. But expect to be frustrated by the time it takes!

The main limitation would seem to be that the research partners already knew me and may have been excessively positive about the framework and its impact on them to please me. However, because we had already had a strong coaching relationship, they may also have been likely to be honest and straight about the framework. If I had been working with strangers, it might have been more difficult to get inner doubts or valuable suggestions from a distance.

A small sample of 15 self-selected leaders made up the research partners: a larger group would have been useful to see if the same results would have been produced, along with a larger group, from different sectors, and different countries. All of the sample group of senior leaders were

Australian: it would be interesting to see if a British or American group experienced the same response to leadership and the framework.

Face-to-face meetings might also have worked better, especially as there were occasional technical problems and time difference difficulties. The nine -hour time difference was tricky: I had to either start the conceptual encounters at 5am or at midnight, which meant that during some of the middle-of-the-night conceptual encounter sessions, interesting as they were, I was in great danger of nodding off!

G) Areas of Further Research.

Many areas could usefully be explored now, to take these ideas further. Issues relating to the practical applied literature process include whether close contact with the participants is necessary to make the methodology work; and whether frameworks resulting from the practical applied literature process will always, by their nature, be idiosyncratic.

Research would be helpful in whether the literary conceptual encounter should be always done alone, or whether this stage could be done in a group of interested committed researchers. To what extent is a background in literature important, and whether a result be produced with a) little or no background; and b) different kinds of research question; would be as useful. It would be good to know if the traditional conceptual encounter process would work as well with research partners who are not known to the research investigator.

Research to discover whether using research partners from a university background makes a difference to the results would be fascinating, to see if the process would work as well with

teachers, civil servants, engineers or production managers. It would be important to undertake this research with larger groups, using the same methodology, to see if the themes and concerns match those of this study, and to research this framework within the UK, the USA and Europe, for the same reason. It would be interesting to know whether a national 'flavour' or culture would influence the results. It would be fascinating to link this process with the cross-cultural work of Trompenaars, or Hofstede, to see whether certain types of cultures found this process easier. Different literary genres could be also researched to gauge their comparative usefulness for this purpose, especially with science fiction and young adult literature. Both these genres tend to contain large and well-written amounts of imaginative material, as well as displaying a strong leadership focus, thus providing many examples of good and bad leadership within their pages. It would also be interesting to see if this process could be adapted to teach leadership or solve problems for adults and young adults, using popular novels such as *The Hunger Games* Trilogy (Collins, 2008-2020), or the *Harry Potter* series of novels (Rowling, 1997-2007), or even to younger school children.

More research could be done on the elements and processes of the framework, and to generate more interest and activity into the use of fantasy literature for teaching leadership and solving problems. Further research would be helpful about the different stages, and the interplay between the research and the research investigator. For example, it could provide a useful indication about whether the match between the research researcher and the chosen literary work is predictive of outcome.

It would be interesting to know whether there is a link between the researcher's cognitive style or personality, and the type of speculative fantasy preferred. One could speculate whether high innovators might prefer to use more extreme or experimental fantasy or science fiction than more adaptive thinkers. Similarly, it would be fascinating to know if certain academic disciplines work

better with fantasy literature as a source of imagination, and whether the experience of the researcher might dictate which type of problems are tackled.

Finally, it could be helpful to know which type of speculative fiction is most effective for which problems – perhaps there is a strong link here, for example, using H.G.Wells' *The Island of Dr Moreau*, as a stimulant to developing a strategy for interspecies research and experimentation, very relevant now.

H) Personal Reflection on the Research Process

This research is at the vanguard of an exciting, very new development in leadership development: it is a slowly emerging movement of using speculative literature (fantasy and science fiction) to expand possibility-thinking, creativity and wider perspectives, to identify and consider alternative scenarios for the future. The leadership of imagination is gradually coming to the forefront of leadership development techniques, and this new type of interdisciplinary research will support the quality of leadership in the demanding years ahead.

I started this research by wanting to examine some selected works of Tolkien, to see if he had made sense of leadership in his fantastical books, and if I could learn anything to help me create better leadership development processes. I found that he did make sense of leadership for me, in a subtle but quite powerful way. I learned much about leadership in this research, as well as developed tools and processes to extract Tolkien's leadership lessons from his novels.

'*Fantasy thinking*' is my term for a willingness to imagine, speculate, consider different futures and outcomes, while '*interdisciplinary imagination*' is my term to see things from multiple perspectives, as differently as possible, in order to understand something holistically and from many angles. These ways of thinking make conceptual synthesis easier, and collaborative effort more likely to succeed. They are needed, but rarely taught.

A personal finding of the research is that the process can not only provide imaginative solutions to tough, real-life problems in an effective way, but also help provide the inspiration and energy to relax a tired mind, become refreshed, and then go back 'into the fray' with increased motivation and hope. Adapting an existing technique has been exciting. Devising and testing my newly-invented literary conceptual encounter provided me with the opportunity to enter a rich, secondary world, crammed with interesting ideas and fascinating possibilities, in order to solve a problem that really needs to be solved now.

The challenge, of generating a new source of leadership development, is an important, serious issue - but it was enjoyable too. To use a domestic analogy, the use of fantasy literature for real-life problem-solving was like eating a huge block of delicious chocolate in order to get the much-needed, long-neglected washing-up done: it was hardly a chore! In other words, working through this methodology has been fun; the literary analysis was inspiring; and in some ways, it felt like 'play'. Speculating, considering, talking, imagining, sometimes arguing, reading, thinking, imagining, and then reading again – interspersed with huge amounts of writing - have all been an excellent way of hunting down a solution for leadership development. For me, this methodology, and the use of fantasy fiction for practical purposes, has been both beneficial and engrossing. Through its unique clarity of focus, fantasy literature can illuminate most vividly the real character of a phenomenon, and perhaps, ultimately, it is this which attracts the seeker of new worlds to

chase bold imaginings, the unexpected twists and turns, and the endless possibilities -. because it provides a type of truth about something which is important. Or perhaps it is a quality of strangeness and opportunity, and of new beginnings alive with possibilities, that makes fantasy literature so apt for leadership development in this new and anxious world that is no longer predictable, no longer safe, and no longer easily led.

Reeves and Fuller write that: 'people conquer despair through stories of hope. By looking for inspiration, people find their imaginations' (Reeves and Fuller, 2020). Stories can certainly provide hope, but perhaps they can offer humanity more than hope, at this tough time. Used effectively, the energy, ideas, and sense of challenge inherent in fantasy literature can perhaps illuminate a path for us across the deep fissures of this increasingly anxious, divided world, to help us imagine and create vibrant new communities of innovation, collaboration and inspired leadership.

I hope that this research may be a step towards that exciting vision, as well as supporting a new and emerging paradigm in leadership and leadership development. In the twenty-first century, it is time for the human mind to free itself of its narrow`` separate domains of arts and science, of rationality versus emotion, to bring all of its creativity and wonder into an ever-curious, ever-speculating, constructivist and interpretivist consciousness. Why should humans limit their much-needed problem-solving capacity by using self-limiting thinking? It is a time now to build new cognitive structures, and broad new conceptual 'space highways' to bridge the chasms of narrow and over-controlled thinking processes that do not fit human needs anymore. New paradigms can help us find unexpected sources of inspiration, to renew the energy and development of the leaders who will help us create the future. The fantasy genre, supported by the structures and tools of *Practical Applied Literature*, would be a rich and energising place to start.

Appendix 1: The Pre-Interview Documentation: The Invitation Email

Invitation to Participate in Research

<div align="right">Date: 8th May, 2019</div>

Dear   ,
You may remember The Leadership Café Leadership Program for (…). that you were part of during 2016, and also that, besides designing and delivering the program, I had started a Ph.D in Leadership Development at (…) in the UK. You kindly agreed to be part of the research, and we held an individual interview at the end of the program to seek your views about the new leadership model that we used. Since that time, I have changed university, and am now with Oxford Brookes University, in my final year, engaged in finalising my research.

As a doctoral student at Oxford Brookes, I wish to explore the further development of this leadership model, and to refine it further. To do this, I would like to invite you to take part in a 90-minute conceptual encounter interview via Skype in the follow-up leadership research relating to this model. This would investigate what your views are on leadership now, how you have used the model during the past 2.5 years, whether it has been helpful to you, and whether you have taught others to use it, etc. The details of this research are given in the Organisational Information Sheet [attached].

Participation in these interviews, which are anticipated to take place in April and May, is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from participation at any time until the final writing of the actual thesis, later in 2019. However, I also expect that the research interview will be useful, refresh your thinking about the model, and provide a chance to discuss your views on your leadership experiences more generally. All interviews will be confidential, and the taped transcripts of our Skype interviews will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet in my office.

On completion of the thesis, I will be pleased to send you a copy of the results of the interviews, for your information. The Chief Operating Officer will be given a summary of any important issues relating to leadership here, in a completely anonymous way.

I am, of course, very happy to discuss any of this in more detail; my contact information is given below. In the meantime, I would be grateful if you could respond to (…)'s email about this, to let her know if you are prepared to be involved, and to agree a date and time with her that suits the international time differences.

Many thanks, and with warmest regards,

Liz Wright

PhD Student, The Business School, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK.
(Email and Skype addresses provided).

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet

Study Title: *Making Worlds Collide: Using Tolkien's fantasy literature to create a theoretical and practical leadership development framework for twenty-first century leaders.*

Hello again!

You have been invited to take part in an updated PhD research study to explore leadership in more detail. This document provides information about that study that will help you decide whether you wish to take part, or not. Please take time to read the following information carefully. If by the end of reading this, you have questions that are not answered on this sheet, and wish to speak to someone, please contact me, the researcher, on (email address provided), and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

What is the Purpose of the Study?
The aim of this study is to see whether it is possible to create a new leadership framework using fantasy literature as a stimulant for imagination, i.e. to see whether some of the novels of JRR Tolkien can be useful in thinking about leadership and generating new ways of developing leaders from them. The outcome will be a practical and theoretical framework that leaders and leadership development specialists can use in their work, which will also contribute to the academic study of Tolkien literature and methodology.

Will it be useful for me to take part in this study?
This research involves you having one 90-minute discussion with the researcher about leadership. It is possible that thinking about your own views of leadership, as well as exploring the new framework with the researcher, will be helpful to you in your own work as a leader: reflection can provide useful insights and new understandings. Taking part is likely to be a pleasurable discussion, led by your views and comments. Taking time out for this type of reflection is generally both relaxing and a positive experience.

Why have I been invited to attend?
You have been invited because you are a senior or middle-level leader, with significant leadership experience, who took part on the (…) Leadership Program in 2016. Because of your unique experience in this process, your views and experiences of leadership are valuable to this study. You will help to make the framework responsive and useful for today's leaders.

Do I have to take part?
It is entirely up to you. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to read this information sheet and sign an Oxford Brookes University consent form. However, you will be free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

What are the criteria for being chosen to take part?
-all participants will be ex-participants who attended one of the 2016 (…) Leadership Programs, and were taught the leadership model as part of the program;
-participants will have had at least five years of experience as a leader, and this will be assessed during the initial telephone conversation;
-participants are reasonably self-reflective about leadership and their leadership experiences, as judged by conversations with the researcher.

What will happen if I take part?

You will be asked to participate in a single 90-minute discussion with the researcher, where you will be asked questions about the nature of leadership, your views and experiences as a leader, and how you have experienced using the model in your own leadership practice since the Leadership Program. Any recommendations for improvement or changes of the model will be welcome.

The questions are a guide to our discussion to help me to keep on track. They may seem fairly broad at first, but that is the nature of the research process I am using (conceptual encounter); they will focus more as we get into the discussion, and gradually become more specific. We may explore a topic if it seems logical and not follow the guide at all, or we may follow it strictly, depending on what you want to say or to explore.

You will also be shown the leadership model again, and asked for your opinion now about it, based on your own leadership experience and insights. Your consent will be asked to record the discussion for ease of later transcription and clarification, but if you do not wish it to be recorded, notes will be taken with pen and paper. Discussions will take place at a location agreed between you and the researcher, or by Skype. If you withdraw at any time, your comments and information already provided by you can also be withdrawn, should you wish.

Are my comments confidential?

All information collected will be strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations) and confidentiality, privacy and anonymity will be ensured in the collection, storage and analysis of the information you provide. Responses by participants may be used and analysed in the final thesis, but individual responses will be not identified. Data generated by this study will be retained in accordance with the University's policy and Academic Integrity. The data generated in the course of this research will be kept securely on the university's Google Drive, and also in paper or in other electronic form for a period of ten years after the completion of the project.

What do I do now if I want to take part in this research?

Please sign the attached Participant Consent Form, returning it to me at (email address provided). If you wish to discuss this by phone, please send me your telephone number, and I will phone you to discuss it. Then, if you are happy to take part, please arrange a time and a date with (name of Administrator), who will be contacting you with this information sheet.

What happens to the results of this study?

The results will form part of this PhD thesis. A summary of the research findings will be made available to you at the completion of the PhD, should you so wish.

Who is organising and funding this research?

I am conducting and self-funding this research as a PhD student in the Business School of Oxford Brookes University.

Who has reviewed the study?

This research has been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee, at Oxford Brookes University, and supervised continuously by a PhD Supervision Team. My Lead Supervisor is (name provided), Oxford Brookes University, Faculty of Business, (email address provided). If you have any concerns about the way that this research study has been conducted, please contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee, on ethics@brookes.ac.uk. .

Thank you for reading this information sheet. I hope that you will feel able to become involved in this research study, and if so, I look forward very much to seeing you again!

Elizabeth A. Wright,
Ph.D. Student,
The Business School,
Oxford Brookes University.
(email address provided)

Appendix 3: Consent Form

Full title of Project: **Making Worlds Collide: Using Tolkien's Fantasy Literature to Create a Theoretical and Practical Leadership Development Framework for Twenty-first Century Leaders.**

Name, position and contact address of Researcher:
> **Elizabeth A. Wright, PhD Student,**
> **Business School, Oxford Brookes University,**
> **Headington Campus, Oxford, OX3 0FL.**

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason. ☐

3. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

Please initial box
Yes   No

4. I agree to the interview being audio recorded   ☐   ☐

5.   I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications   ☐   ☐

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____
Name of Researcher   Date   Signature

Appendix 4: Draft Interview Questions

Preamble:

Thank you for taking part in this discussion today about leadership. You have now received the Participant Briefing Sheet, and signed the Participant Consent Form – many thanks.

In this 2-hour discussion, we will explore the nature of leadership, as well as discuss a framework for leadership development. If you wish to stop the interview at any time, or no longer wish to be involved in this research, that is perfectly fine. Just tell me and we will stop. If any aspect of our discussion troubles or upsets you, please tell me, and support can be provided, either by me or by another coach, if that is your wish. If you wish to discuss any aspect of our meeting afterwards, then I will be pleased to talk with you again. Please email me on (email address provided) and this can be arranged as soon as possible.

The results of this interview will be included in the results of all the fifteen participants, but your views will not be separately identified in the write-up of the research findings, except in an anonymous way.
We will be using a research method called Conceptual Encounter, developed by Joseph de Rivera, in his 1986 book called Conceptual Encounter.

(Explain the process, why it is done this way, and explain why it is being used here.)

These questions are only a guide to our discussion. We may deviate if it seems logical and not follow the guide at all, or follow it strictly, depending on what you want to say or to explore. These questions are simply a guide to help me to keep on track.

Basic information (for me):
Date and Time of interview
Location.
Taped? Yes/ no
Name.
Gender
Job title/Role
Organisation. . . Public Sector/. Private sector / Higher Education / Education/ NGO/ Other
Size. . . 1-10 /. . . . . 10-100 /. . 101- 1000 /. . . 1000 plus

QUESTIONS (for me to adapt as necessary)

A. ABOUT YOUR OWN LEADERSHIP:
1. Do you see yourself as a leader/ Did you expect to become a leader?
2. How long have you held your current leadership role?
3. How would you describe yourself as a leader?
4. What portion of your current role is leadership v management?
5. How have you learned to be a leader?
6. Have you had any leadership role models who were:
   a.   ..Excellent and inspiring? (Why?)
   b.   ..Poor and uninspiring? (Why?)
7. Can you think of some stories about leadership that impressed you at work?
8. Have you had any formal leadership development:
   a.   ..On the job?
   b.   ..Off the job on courses, etc?

9.What skills and abilities do you think will be needed to be a leader in the next 5-10 years?

10.   How do you think the world of work is changing for leaders? Are there gaps and deficiencies that need to be filled?

B.   ABOUT YOUR LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES
1.   What do you like about being a leader?
2.   What do you dislike about being a leader?
3.   Is there anything especially hard or difficult about leadership?
4.   What do you want to achieve as a leader?
5.   Do you WANT to lead others?
6.   What values are important to you to keep upfront as a leader?
7.   What motivates you as a leader?
8.   Do you ever talk to others about your leadership style or behaviour? (If so, who?).
9.   Are you assessed on your leadership skills at work? (How? Perf App? 360' feedback?)
10. Is your organisation good at developing and acknowledging the work of its leaders?

C.   THE LEADERSHIP OF OTHERS
1.   Do you have responsibility for leading others? If so, how many?
2.   How do you judge the leadership performance of your staff? (or colleague)
3.   Do your staff see themselves as leaders?
4.   Do you think it is important to develop the leadership skills of your staff and team members?
5.   Why?
6.   How are you doing that?
7.   What problems do your staff members have in their own leadership performance?
8.   How do you reward your staff for their leadership performance?
9.   What values are important to your staff as leaders?
10. How do you staff feel about being leaders at work? Are they proud?

Is there anything you want to say about leadership that we haven't covered?
Is there anything interesting about leadership that hasn't been discussed?

Questions about the Framework:

Researcher to introduce the framework, describe how she has developed the framework, and explain the five stages and what they mean in developing leaders/ why they were put in the framework.

QUESTIONS
Does this framework make sense to you?
Are all the stages necessary and logical?
Would you find this useful in developing yourself?
Would you find this useful in developing others?
Would you use this with your own staff now?
How do you think leaders will respond to this as a developmental tool?
What results do you think might be obtained from it?
Are there any changes you think I should make?
Have I missed anything out?
Which stage seems most interesting or powerful to you?
Which do you like best?
Which do you like least?
Are there any interesting aspects of the model that we haven't yet discussed?
Is there anything you wish to tell me about this model, or about leadership?

CLOSING THE INTERVIEW:

We have come to the end of this interview now.

If you wish to discuss this more after this interview, or anything else that occurs to you, please email me. We can meet again or Skype to discuss this.

I will send you the results when they are available.

Thank you very much indeed for your help!

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