

Book Review — *Reimaginative Leadership - Concepts and Applications* by Professor Canute S. Thompson, published in 2024 by UWI Press

Bolapeju M. Agboola

The University of the West Indies, Mona

The book titled *Reimaginative Leadership - Concepts and Applications* by Professor Canute Thompson, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (BUS) at the University of the West Indies, is an insightful exploration of leadership in the modern, rapidly changing world. The author, a scholar with years of leadership experience, introduces the idea of "Reimaginative Leadership," providing far-reaching insight for leaders who are in search of a new transformative approach. The book invites leaders to move beyond traditional frameworks and embrace innovative, adaptable leadership strategies that meet the needs of diverse teams and environments in the Caribbean.

This book's strength lies in part in the fact that leadership is examined from perspectives different from the traditional leadership approach and the Caribbean context, using case studies as practical scenarios to support the discussions. The book situates reimaginative leadership within a transformative framework that prioritises visionary thought, creative action, and collective engagement over traditional leadership with authoritarian control. Central to this conceptualisation is the strategic and ethical reliance on inspirational influence rather than coercive power, a theme that runs throughout the book and is central to reconfiguring leadership in contemporary, pluralistic society. The structural design is divided into 3 parts and subdivided into 12 chapters, with each part-title addressing in-depth the various aspects of imaginative leadership in each chapter.

The introduction provides an overview of what leadership entails and presents good insight into *reimaginative leadership* as different from *leadership reimagination*, as the word "reimaginative" qualifies leadership in terms of action or behaviour. This book is built upon several scholarly works and similar work from the author's previous books, which include "Leadership Reimagination: A Primer of Principles and Practices" and "Locating the Epicentre of Effective Educational Leadership in the 21st Century". The book is thought-provoking and deals with exigent leadership issues, providing a roadmap to reimagining leadership from contemporary to global contexts.

In **Part 1** — "Wither Leadership in the 21st Century", the author posits that leadership in the 21st century contends with major issues of Chaos, Conflict, and Courage (3Cs), thus 21st-century leadership calls for approaches to leadership which differ from previous periods in human history. Leadership must be redefined from a broad context to address complexity; interconnectedness; ethical challenges stemming from globalisation, digitalisation, and socio-political disruptions; and within the context of the apparent need to examine the leadership approaches that may be responsive to the needs and interests of 21st-century workers and citizens. A paradigm shift from the traditional command-and-control model has become necessary in volatile, uncertain, complex, and

ambiguous environments. In the context of the Caribbean's colonisation and history of resistance, reimaginative leadership as responsiveness and radicalism connotes a call for a change of approach.

Drawing on the philosophical roots of reimaginative leadership and Alcoff's (2019) work that aligns with Dussel's non-ideal theory to tackle the limits and dangers of philosophical theorists such as Thomas Moore and John Rawls who focus on "imagined generic thought experiments unconstrained by sociological realities"; the author argues that leaders must cultivate the capacity for adaptive sensemaking, rather than prescriptive solutions, by engaging the place of non-ideal theory in their attempts to come to terms with the realities of Caribbean society. One section of this part includes primary and secondary sources of data drawn from teachers who shared their experiences of leadership using different constructs. These data provide insightful information that could assist education authorities, illustrating how participatory, flexible, and data-driven decision-making yielded better outcomes than rigid hierarchies in leadership that influence and advocate for justice.

Part 2 focuses on "Nine Concepts of Reimaginative Leadership," in which the author examines the major qualities of reimaginative leadership, including alternatives-thinking, people empowerment, influence, mutual accountability, change catalysation, courage, care, justice, and trust. Alternatives-thinking, which is more inspirational than instructional, is the fundamental basis of reimaginative leadership. All these qualities represent its philosophical ideology, personality, and passion — thereby creating an environment for trust between the leader and the led.

In **Part 3** — "Application of Reimaginative Leadership Qualities", the author argues that imaginative leadership is a transformative capacity which empowers individuals and organisations to envision and co-create alternative futures. Rather than reacting to problems, imaginative leaders engage in anticipatory thinking, moral

courage, and symbolic action to redefine what is possible. Imaginative leaders must engage in world-making, offering narratives that contest the status quo and inspire new paradigms of thought and practice. The author defines and defends the reimaginative use of influence as a transformative leadership modality by examining its potential to catalyse systemic change, promote shared ownership, and foster growth of a nation and its institutions. The 3M company's philosophy provides a blend of theory and practical applications, offering readers actionable tools to cultivate creative thinking and become innovative and inspirational leaders who can foster collaboration and drive the organizational transformation that is much needed in the Caribbean and worldwide. The book emphasizes the importance of mutual accountability, adaptability, and trust-building in effective leadership. The Reimaginative Leadership Qualities section elevates the role of creativity, ethics, and relational influence.

The book is both conceptually rich and praxis-oriented. It integrates critical leadership theories and pushes the boundary of imagination from a cognitive skill to a moral and political act, while making a convincing case that reimaginative leadership is essential for nations and institutions seeking to foster equity, resilience, and creativity in the 21st century. "Leadership in the 21st Century" offers a systems-based recalibration of leadership functions. The book contributes significantly to leadership scholarship by offering a holistic, interdisciplinary, and socially conscious vision of what leadership must become to proffer lasting solutions to the complex social, political, and cultural issues facing the Caribbean region. By alternative-thinking influence over power, imagination over compliance, and ethical foresight over expediency, this model can foster transformative leadership across sectors.

I recommend *Reimaginative Leadership* as a must-read and a compelling resource for the general public, leaders, educators, students, and anyone looking to enhance their leadership style and make a meaningful impact in today's fast-paced world. Private and public libraries, and institutional heads are implored to order copies of this book for their libraries.

Bolapeju M. Agboola, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Jamaica, and previously an Associate Professor at the University of Uyo, Nigeria with over three decades of teaching experience spanning secondary and tertiary education. Her expertise encompasses educational planning, policy, leadership, and mixed-methods research. Dr Agboola has an extensive publication record and has served as a reviewer and editor for leading academic journals and publishers, contributing her expertise in assessing research methodology, theoretical frameworks, and the practical implications of studies in the human and social sciences. Her scholarly interests include strategic higher education planning and management, leadership in education, and evidence-based policy development. Dr Agboola earned her PhD in Educational Planning from the University of Benin, Nigeria, and maintains active membership in several professional bodies and associations.

Email: bolapeju.agboola@uwimona.edu.jm
