

Curtin University Sustainability Policy (CUSP) Institute

**Spirituality and Environmental Sustainability:
Developing community engagement concepts in Perth, Western Australia**

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DECLARATION

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any degree or diploma in any university.

Signature:

Date: 1st September 2014

ABSTRACT

Communities and organisations are rarely engaged in conversations encompassing physical, relational and spiritual dimensions of life. Even fewer incorporate these conversations into governance processes. This research is attempting to address this gap. It trials three concepts developed by this researcher: The Connectivity Matrix; Five Dimensions; and Combined View. Each provides a different lens and entry point into the spirituality and environmental sustainability conversation. They are used to engage communities in conversation about their corporeal and metaphysical relationship with nature and spirituality: to ascertain the link between these phenomena with decision making in life and work; and to analyse the influence of these dynamic experiences, or the lack of them, on environmental sustainability.

The views of 31 professional from diverse sectors and 78 participants in six workshops from a variety of socio-cultural backgrounds, all based in Perth, Western Australia, inform this research. The inquiry builds on a range of theories from contemporary spirituality, philosophy, environmental science, neuroscience, psychology, economics, management, law, the arts, social science and sustainability policy, which cover physical and metaphysical realms.

Factors that cause resistance to or enable connection with the dynamic dimensions of life are identified. The findings contribute to new multidimensional definitions of nature and spirituality. New concepts to illustrate and explain the different modes of spirituality are developed by identifying the dichotomy as self and selfless and spiritual modalities as doing, hoping and being. The tools and approach trialled in this research provide a model and process for the dominant theoretical engagement with environmental sustainability to consciously include the dynamics of both tangible and intangible dimensions.

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PREFACE

Background to the development of the First and Third Person concept from which this research has grown.

This preface serves to provide some background to the First Person and Third Person Systems concept (Krempf 2006). This concept is the foundation on which this research has grown, and references are made to it at various points through the study.

I developed the First Person and Third Person System (Krempf 2006:10) as a process for community engagement and planning in the 1990s. The concept was conceived through learning from life experiences informed by my complex heritage and growing up in multicultural Singapore during its transition from colonial rule to independence. It evolved over several decades of working in arts, culture and broadcasting in developed, developing and underdeveloped countries. I developed the concept to guide me in working through the biggest challenge I faced. This was with bridging sensory learning experiences with professional systems, information and knowledge required in the corporate world without devaluing either. I observed that often those skilled in the processes of the professional or corporate world tended to treat communities rich in oral traditions¹ as inferior. This appeared to be because of a lack of appreciation and understanding of different ways of learning and knowing. Recognising the intrinsic value of both oral tradition and corporate approaches, I often found myself playing a facilitating role, fostering awareness of the strengths of the oral tradition and professional communities, and the role that both play in diverse situations.

¹ I define oral tradition as being a sensory process because it involves more than the spoken word. In communicating orally the person speaking or listening engages several sensory skills at the same time (Krempf 2006:146).

My heritage

My heritage stories provide some background and understanding of how and why the First and Third Person Systems came to be.

The Dayak people — a South-East Asian indigenous group — was my mother's dominant heritage line. My mother was brought up by the Dayaks. Her paternal grandmother, a Dayak, became her guardian because my mother's mother (who was part Balinese and Danish) died soon after she was born. Adding to the complexity, my mother's paternal grandfather was Chinese. At around the age of twelve, mother was taken from her grandmother and her Dayak home, to be 'civilised' in a convent in Singapore. This was the beginning of her urban life and mother used to tell many stories of traumatic transition times, her feisty resilience, and her pride in being Dayak.

My father was Austro-Hungarian from many generations of classical musicians. He was a Hungarian citizen, living and performing in Budapest until 1933. His parents were Austrian. The bleak situation in Europe in the thirties resulted in my father leaving Hungary with an orchestra for better work prospects overseas. During those years Hungary underwent numerous upheavals. It became communist in the late 1940s whilst my father was performing with the orchestra in Singapore. He died never seeing his homeland again.

I grew up in colonial Singapore with parents who had reconstructed their identities, cultures and sense of belonging but they also held strongly to values, skills, learnings and stories from their cultural upbringing. Apartheid laws were alive and well in colonial Singapore as were racial tensions and unrest. I seemed to live between different worlds: Asian and European, oral and written cultures. It could be said that my positioning, because of my heritage, could give me the right to speak on behalf of each side because I had a 'legitimate' foot in each. However, this was not the case. From a young age I learnt the importance of growing trust and respect across diverse socio-cultural contexts and the value of establishing common ground.

The learnings from these experiences have informed my working life in South-East Asia, Papua New Guinea and Australia. This was across a number of industry sectors but predominantly within arts, culture, and community development, and later in the environmental field. I learnt to value the corporate system elements in my various roles in arts and cultural organisations working locally, nationally and internationally. Much of my successes could not have been achieved through oral tradition alone, or solely with corporate systems². The oral tradition elements in my life have crisscrossed with systems, rules, procedures that are by necessity more rigid and inflexible. The characteristics of each are reflected in the development of the First and Third Person concept seen in Table P.1.

The First Person and Third Person concept

Formalising the First Person and Third Person concept occurred when I was heading up Community Arts Network WA (CAN WA). My reason for clarifying the concept was because I saw the potential benefit of developing a program around it to assist marginalised communities engage in arts and culture, and provide high arts communities with an understanding and appreciation of oral tradition culture. The First and Third Person System, as it was called, became the guiding philosophy of the CAN WA cultural planning program of that time (Sonn et al. 2002: 11). The First Person is so called because it is direct contact with another person. It can be described as one on one communication. The Third Person context is when a person is not in direct contact with another and information is conveyed third hand via a document, media, or some other means. Further details of this program can be found in my master's thesis (Krempf 2006). Sonn et al. (2002:11) described the First and Third Person orientations as follows:

The third person orientation privileges professional knowledge and undervalues local knowledge. In this orientation people are seen as independent from their environments and objective modes of inquiry

² Examples of the application and outcomes of employing a balance between oral tradition and corporate systems in Papua New Guinea and in Western Australia can be found in Appendix P.1

are valued. In contrast, the first person orientation values local knowledge; it has a spiritual basis for thinking and behaving, and favours multiple ways of knowing. This orientation is holistic – people and their environments are seen as intertwined; that is, social, cultural and psychological phenomena are co-constructed and interpenetrating. In a sense, the third person orientation reflects a mechanistic view of the world.

According to Sonn et al. (2002), the program that used the two orientations created a setting that enabled local councils and community to come together to plan, implement and achieve sustainable individual and community outcomes (2002:18). Below is a table (Table P.1) showing how the First Person and Third Person System was depicted when it was first introduced (Krempf 2002:30).

Table P.1 The First Person and Third Person System (Krempf 2002).

| First Person | Third Person |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Oral communication | • Written word |
| • Listening / observing skills | • Writing / speaking skills |
| • Involvement | • Detachment |
| • Visions / ideas / beliefs | • Management processes |
| • Trust and respect | • Facts and figures |
| <i>Sense of belonging</i> | <i>Budgets</i> |

The Cultural Planning Program that was based on the First and Third Person philosophy was well received across various states and territories of Australia including Western Australia from 1998, Cocos and Christmas Island in 2002, and the Northern Territories in 2006. It was developed into an accredited short course in 1999 and delivered across Western Australia. It was also delivered in Queensland and New South Wales in 2001 and 2002 respectively.

Cultural planning was used by different sectors for varying purposes. In urban planning in the late 1990s and early 2000s, cultural planning was used to enable economic growth through creativity, diversifying lifestyles, livelihood and local distinctiveness (Landry 2000). Sandercock (2003) used it to bring the socio-cultural diversity of what she terms 'mongrel cities' into planning frameworks. Mills (2003) saw the origination of cultural planning in Australia in the nineties as a tool for local government to develop policy to better link them with their arts community. There were many who pioneered cultural planning in Western Australia in the mid to late nineties including Andra Kins and Brian Peddie (1996). However, none to my knowledge, involved the bringing together of oral tradition and corporate systems which enabled people steeped in oral cultures to be included on equal terms. This is not a system based on ethnicity, it recognises different ways of knowing.

Using the First and Third Person concept in community engagement and planning

The First and Third Person concept is applied as a community consultation tool in cultural planning. It enables individuals to reflect on various aspects of their own identity and that of their community. Based on the emergent data, which includes qualitative information such as ideas and aspirations for quality of life and sense of place, a strategic plan is developed reflecting a collective vision created through the conversations with communities, business and government. The conversations are guided by the concept used, which acts as the common reference point between the different sectors. A condition for undertaking the First and Third Person Cultural Planning Program was that it was linked to the commissioning organisation's strategic plan, thus providing a corporate outcome as well. The following Table (Table P.2) shows how the First and Third person approaches aligns with strategic planning (Krempel 2006:97).

Table P.2: Community Spirit and Strategic Planning

| Community Spirit and Strategic Planning | |
|--|--|
| Cultural planning process (First Person) | Strategic or business plan (Third Person) |
| Future-picture vision as a creative writing piece | Corporate vision statement |
| The creation of settings, practices and processes to inspire and enable a community to work together | Establishment of targets in corporate terms — whilst this is now extending beyond economics, it is still outcome-focused |
| Supporting elements | |
| Principles | Policy |
| Protocols | Procedures |
| Story | Laws |

When and how the First and Third Person System changed: A process that led to me undertaking this research

Following a realisation of the importance of contextualising community sustainability within the realm of natural environment, I started experimenting with developing a Nature column to add to the First and Third Person System concept (see Table P.3). This came about as a result of my heading up a leading Western Australian environmental organisation over a four-year period from 1997 to 2010. This immersion in the environmental sector was vital to my own learning about the natural environment. To develop the third or Nature Column, I observed leaders within and related to that organisation and also took part in numerous activities to rehabilitate degraded Western Australian land. The Table below (Table P.3) shows the inclusion of the Nature Column to the First and Third Person Systems concept.

Table: P.3 Nature in our community and corporate lives

| First Person | Third Person | Nature |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Oral communication | • Written word | • Being in nature |
| • Listening / observing | • Writing / speaking | • Flow |
| • Involvement | • Detachment | • Interdependence |
| • Visions / ideas / beliefs | • Management processes | • Creation / Destruction |
| • Trust and respect | • Facts and figures | • Time and Space |
| Sense of belonging | Budgets | Sustainability |

In 2010 I was given two opportunities to conduct environmental sustainability presentations and I used them to trial the concept with a focus on nature in our community and corporate lives. One workshop was for professional development of a local government’s staff, the second was for staff professional development of a not-for-profit organisation (see Appendix P.2 for details). After the three columns were workshopped, I asked the participants how much time they spend in each area. Some noted that the exercise made them aware of how little time they were spending ‘being’ in nature. The workshops raised what can be called spiritual aspects of the natural experience. It also brought to the fore comments that one could access these spiritual aspects through ways other than nature.

At this point I realised that I needed a fourth column called spirituality in order to cover representations of experiences that participants were describing. This led to the establishment of the four-column concept, presented in Table P.4, entitled Connectivity Matrix: Spirituality and Nature in our community and corporate lives.

Table: P.4 Connectivity Matrix: Spirituality and Nature in our community and corporate lives

| First Person | Third Person | Nature | Spirituality |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| • Oral communication | • Written word | • Being in nature | • Universal wonder |
| • Listening / observing | • Writing / speaking | • Flow | • Silence / still |
| • Involvement | • Detachment | • Interdependence | • Transformation |
| • Visions / ideas / beliefs | • Management processes | • Creation / Destruction | • Belief |
| • Trust and respect | • Facts and figures | • Time and Space | • Compassion |
| Sense of belonging | Budgets | Sustainability | Love |

The Nature and Spirituality columns are the subjects of this research. The First Person and the Third Person columns were researched previously (see Krempel 2006). The new concept, namely the Connectivity Matrix (refer to Table P.4), was developed as a continuation of the First and Third Person investigated earlier. It is further refined through this research and is one of three concepts used as tools to collect data for this study. All three concepts are detailed in Chapter Three.

While the above-mentioned workshops were not conducted as part of formal research, for me, they raised an important question: If there is such disconnection from nature, how could a sustainable planet be valued and appreciated? I began to question the reliability of biophilia described as the love of nature that is inherent in all of us – as stated in Flannery (2010:108) in his quoting the work of Wilson and Fromm. Research done by Nettle and Romaine (2000:5) on the death of languages shows that once an application of words is lost, the context changes, or the focus of a community shifted from an earth rich way of life to a more common global language, the nuances and locally specific words can be lost within as little as one or two generations. If, then, communities have been detached from nature for two generations, could we lose this inherent love of nature forever? It is a possibility. However, it is also a possibility that a sense of spirituality can de-commodify nature to ensure that the innate connection is revived where it is being lost. These observations required further investigation and are important considerations in this study.

Conclusion

As I embark on this research I am driven by a belief that there is a deeper story that needs to be heard — that is beyond the culture, heritage and community planning stories that the First and Third Person concept drew out.

Oral tradition continues to be an important area for me to investigate. There appear to be more dimensions to understand and clarify. I turn my attention to nature and the metaphysical or spiritual to explore the abilities of these to support collaborative initiatives that bring about environmental sustainability. I take this next step with great anticipation, excitement and hope.

CHAPTER ONE

AN INTRODUCTION TO THIS RESEARCH: SEARCHING FOR THE DEEPER STORY

Global agendas such as climate change and environmental sustainability are multifaceted problems facing our world. Scientists and members of the broader public have had reason, through emerging knowledge or changes happening to the biophysical world, to rethink many aspects of what they previously held as true across a range of issues. These could include reflection on matters of existence — spirituality, beliefs, ethics, morality, values, meaning and purpose — and also the sustainability of customs and traditions, processes and policies. These considerations are reflected in the chosen title of this thesis, which is Spirituality and Environmental Sustainability.

The last couple of decades have seen the emergence of considerable information regarding environmental sustainability (see Chapter Two). Discourse on spirituality and its role in providing meaning to sustainability is also growing (see Chapter Two). New contributions to knowledge are occurring in many fields including science and policy. However it is also important to know how this information is filtering down to the wider public and adopted in everyday living. The emphasis on collecting primary data is at the heart of this research which focuses on the development and trialling of tools to enable conversations in mainstream contexts on metaphysical experiences in relation to spirituality and nature. This main task of the PhD study is reflected in its research objectives (see page 14) which reflect the need to address the lack of available appropriate tools enabling diverse mainstream communities to engage in conversations about their beliefs. As such this research aims to develop and trial such tools. This research provides local perspectives on matters to do with spirituality and environmental sustainability. It seeks to know whether the wellbeing of the planet is important to Western Australians, and whether their philosophies and actions demonstrate this. The importance of community views to this research is captured in the subtitle of this thesis, which is: Developing community engagement concepts in Perth, Western Australia.

This chapter contains a brief review of literature on the complexities of spirituality, divergent views of environmental sustainability and some existing globally accepted frameworks that guide decision-making. The aims and objectives of this research are presented along with a brief description of the eight chapters making up this thesis.

1.1 The complexities of spirituality

This thesis finds ways to capture a deeper layer of stories and thinking in relation to the biophysical world. It looks to explore whether there is a detachment from metaphysical understanding and knowledge in mainstream community and corporate systems, and if so why. This study of the metaphysical includes the coming together of the ontological (being) and the epistemological (knowledge underpinning our understanding). The analogy of metaphysics is informed by Cohen and Omery's discussion on Husserl and Heidegger (1994: 140). Heidegger's major contribution to metaphysics is centred on the understanding of 'being' interpreted hermeneutically. On the other hand, Husserl's approach is largely based on epistemology – "the nature and grounds of knowledge" – and eidetic or descriptive accounts of phenomena (1994: 140). These aspects are further explored in Chapter Five.

This study covers how these philosophical aspects that are beyond what is perceivable to our five senses, are described, not only by philosophers such as Husserl and Heidegger, but by every-day people. There is very little empirical evidence on how contemporary society deals with the complex issue of spirituality and this is the focus of the PhD research. Therefore, through this research I hope to encourage conversation on these metaphysical matters in mainstream contexts to better understand whether and how these phenomena underpin the decisions we make and actions we take. This is an intricate task given the multicultural nature of the Western Australian community which is the focus of the research. To best achieve this and maintain a neutral stance, the research focuses on metaphysical phenomena experienced by the participants rather than engaging with discourses around religion, secularism, secular religion or other forms of spirituality.

There is also another aspect to this search for the foundations of meaning in our lives and that is to go to the roots of the stories about a sense of place. This relates to how we view nature. Therefore, this thesis explores: whether there is a detachment from nature; whether this detachment is related in any way to the disconnection from spirituality; and whether a possible disconnection from spirituality and nature impacts on environmental sustainability.

Based on my experience of talking about this research topic, I have observed that spirituality is not a popular word and that it evokes discomfort in many. The reasons for this discomfort are explored in Chapter Five but they include the seemingly ingrained belief that spirituality belongs solely within the confines of religion. There are views that promote the connection and others that call for a separation of the two. There is also an observed hostility towards anything that is unscientific and unprovable. On the other hand, there seems to be a growing interest in spirituality when it is defined more broadly in a contemporary context (Tacey 2004:n.p.) and based on current scientific knowledge (Birch 1990: 90). This is investigated further in Chapter Five. In the Webster online dictionary, 'spiritual' is defined as: 'relating to, consisting of, or affecting the spirit', and the definition of 'spirit' is 'an animating or vital principle held to give life to physical organisms – the sentient part of being.' It would appear that the definitions fall into two categories – one to do with religious beliefs and the other relating to a broader sense of understanding and engagement with the essence of life. For the purpose of this research, both first person and third person orientations³ of spirituality are explored, however the focus is on contemporary spirituality — defined as spirituality that exists in today's workplaces or in diverse socio-cultural contexts.

1.2 Divergent views on environmental sustainability

As with 'spirituality', the words 'environmental sustainability' have different interpretations within environmental and sustainability professional circles. In the

³ First and third person orientations are described in the Preface.

examples cited below, environmental sustainability appears to be an agreed goal, however the boundaries governing limits between human centred development and biophysical world focused approaches to sustainability are often unresolved.

The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development formulated a model known as Agenda 21 (United Nations 1992). It refers to sustainability as requiring social, economic and environmental dimensions. In this document the importance of development is emphasized. Appropriate social, economic and technological development is stated as critical to environmental sustainability.

According to Giblett and Lester (2008), the notion of 'environmentally sustainable development' has gained international usage since the 1987 Brundtland report⁴. However, it is now not considered the correct term because of the perceived embedded contradiction in the phrase. This is because development is identified with the destruction of nature. The preferred expression is 'environmental sustainability' without 'development' attached to it (Giblett & Lester 2008: 167) and this is the terminology adopted in this thesis.

Morelli (2011) does not refer to the term as conflicted. He uses the term environmental sustainability to bring awareness to the need for provision of clean air, clean water, and clean and productive land as foundational to a responsible socioeconomic system (Morelli 2011: 22). He suggests that the word 'environment' implies human impact on natural systems (Morelli: 22). Kellert (2012) refers to the word 'nature' in preference to environmental sustainability when he applies it to a first person orientation in relation to the biophysical world. Further discussion on the complexity of terminology in environmental sustainability and nature and how they relate to personal experiences and objective views of the biophysical world can be found in Chapter Two and Chapter Four.

⁴ The Brundtland report refers to the publication titled "Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future" that resulted from "A global agenda for change" called by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

1.3 Questioning existing frameworks

The social, economic and environmental dimensions recognised as essential for environmental sustainability in the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda 21 Report (1992) have also become known as the Triple Bottom Line. However, according to Savitz and Weber (2006), the Triple Bottom Line is about the environment in relation to trade. Therefore it is not about sustainability in the best interest of nature. Additionally, spirituality is not represented in the Triple Bottom Line or Agenda 21, which could imply that it is not necessary. This research puts forth and seeks responses to an alternative model or standard for environmental sustainability – one that includes nature and spirituality.

As mentioned above, economics is one of the three aspects of the Agenda 21 model. Global and local focus on economics has been challenged from within economic circles. Jackson (2009: 3) suggests that it is no longer feasible to see prosperity in economic terms of continuing economic growth. Problems in health and other related social areas are increasing despite the best efforts of economics and economic policies (Jackson 2009: 53-55). In referring to the work of Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett titled *The Spirit Level* (in Jackson 2009: 55), Jackson draws a link between spirituality and economics. Therefore, it could be asked whether economics needs to be underpinned by spiritual values. Applying this question to the global financial crisis, it could be reasoned that it is not financial but a crisis of values and ethics – a loss of spirituality. If this is so, a loss of spirituality could have a broader impact. As modelled in Agenda 21, the economy, society and environment are connected. A seeming lack of spirituality applied to the economic area could impact on society and the environment.

An underpinning philosophy in economics is the role of money however, as stated by Economist Satyajit Das (2011:25): “In truth, money only exists in the mind. It is a matter of trust. With trust, comes the possibility of betrayal”. This statement highlights deep spiritual and emotional experiences and responsibilities that come with money. Das also points out that humankind has mistaken money for an end in itself (2011:21) showing a disconnection from the values that are stated as required

to undertake transactions responsibly – and sustainably.

Our society is certainly more comfortable and knowledgeable in dealing with money than with spirit. This could be because of a lack of contemporary tools for engaging in spirituality. Tacey (2004:2) refers to past perceptions and spiritual tools as something the world has outgrown. This research intends to explore that argument further and produce contemporary tools to assist organisations to rethink the role of spirituality in their work, particularly from the point of view of environmental sustainability.

1.4. This thesis

The thesis' aim and objectives are detailed below followed by the scope and limitations of this inquiry as well as the structure that it takes.

1.4.1 Research question, aim and objectives

The aim of this thesis is to improve community engagement in environmental sustainability agendas and actions. In order to achieve this it poses the following research question:

Is there a detachment from spirituality and nature in our contemporary communities and how does this impact on environmental sustainability?

The research question is investigated through the following objectives:

- a) To explore worldviews on the importance of spirituality and nature with regard to corporate systems and sustainability.
- b) To research Western Australian community discourse on spirituality and nature and the relationship of these phenomena to work and life, and in enabling a more sustainable future.
- c) To develop and trial concept models that can be used by diverse communities and industry sectors to better address spirituality and nature in community and corporate settings.

Three concepts have been developed as the instruments for this research: The Connectivity Matrix, the Five Dimensions, and the Combined View. These concepts are described in Chapter Three along with information about the people interviewed in this study.

1.4.2 Limitations of this study

This study does not research the phenomenon of spirituality as it pertains to human beings or to all life on our planet. It focuses on how contemporary spirituality is experienced by humans in order to shape the principles and values that guide our life. Therefore individual spiritual practices and faiths that may be the foundation of the spiritual expression are not the focus of the thesis. The terminology used to express any phenomena may vary and should be taken as representative of the data and the discussion rather than definitive. Narratives of faith and religion may however be included and discussed in the collected empirical materials where there are relational aspects to community and corporate engagement with spirituality and nature.

Further limitations include the difficulty for this research in capturing and interpreting tacit knowledge (Collins, H. 2010), and the metaphysical experience that is often related to spirituality (Abram 2011, Tolle 2004). The translation or written interpretation of quality and depth of phenomena such as endurance, resilience, hope, love and peace will inevitably be lost in many instances. These expressions are founded on lifetimes of experience and reflection that will not be possible to adequately express in summary. However attempts are made to reflect some of these qualities. The challenge is to acknowledge spirituality and not unduly apply reductionist terminology and descriptions.

This research is limited to exploring the link between nature and spirituality in relation to corporate governance impacts. There are other important areas where spirituality plays a significant role, for example in health and wellbeing (George et al. 2000). This is not covered in any significant way in this research.

1.4.3 Structure of the thesis

There is a Preface and eight chapters. The Preface captured personal experiences and early concepts leading to this research. The first three chapters represent the introduction, literature review and methodology for the study. Participants' responses to the concepts being trialled are contained in Chapters Four to Seven. This is followed by Chapter Eight which concludes the research. Below is a brief outline of the chapters.

Preface: Background to the development of the First Person (oral tradition) and Third Person (corporate systems) concept upon which this research has grown.

The Preface captures personal experiences and information relevant to the establishment of the First and Third person concept that inform this study. Experimental changes to the concept leading to the undertaking of this research are also documented.

Chapter One: An Introduction to this research – searching for the deeper story

This chapter provides background information to the complexities of spirituality, divergent views of environmental sustainability and how these theories lead to a questioning of some existing frameworks which guide decision-making; it also gives the aims and objectives of this research, and a brief description of the Preface and eight chapters making up this thesis.

Chapter Two: Literature review — the shifting global paradigm

In this chapter literature is reviewed to inform the key areas of this research: nature, spirituality and governance and their impact on environmental sustainability. It includes trends, theories and new discoveries related to spirituality, environmental sustainability and corporate governance. The literature includes First and Third Person orientations.

Chapter Three: Research design

Research methods and methodologies are described in Chapter Three. The reasons for choosing phenomenology, phenomenography, grounded theory and case studies methodologies are discussed. This is followed by a description of the research tools and processes used including an introduction to the three concepts: The Connectivity Matrix, the Five Dimensions, and the Combined View. Details on how they were developed and how they have been used as research instruments in this project are presented. The participants selected, the questions used and the coding of responses are also explained.

Chapter Four: Nature

In Chapter Four, participants' responses related to nature are analysed. Words and phrases describing nature that cause tension are also covered, along with views on whether nature and spirituality are one and the same or two separate entities. The participants provided their views on whether there is a detachment from nature and whether and how this impacts on environmental sustainability. Causes of alienation are stated, as well as suggestions on how to model the change. An original concept by the participant Hugo Llopis, referring to the two marathons of life is also included in this chapter.

Chapter Five: Spirituality

Participants' responses in connection with spirituality are the focus of this chapter. There are links made to a spirit that appears to animate physical forms and organisational structures, as well as to a state of being – an 'otherness' —that appears to be completely detached from the corporeal world. A third aspect, representing hope and resilience is identified as not belonging to either form or otherness, but representing the link between the perceived limitations of the physical world and the sense of liberation and wonderment in 'otherness' or 'being'. The three emergent categories result in the development of a new concept called The Three Modalities of

Spirituality. Tensions between religion and spirituality capture divergent but informative points of view. All responses are analysed to answer the question about whether there is a detachment from spirituality, and whether spirituality and nature are one and the same or two separate entities.

Chapter Six: Priorities within the Five Dimensions

The Five Dimensions concept represents different layers in a physical place: firstly the three-dimensional, visible, physical world; then the relational experiences that occur in the place. The latter is called the fourth dimension and it represents the emotional connections to people, other living things and objects. The final dimension — the fifth dimension — is the realm for the phenomenon describable as moments of uncontainable joy and wonderment. The Five Dimensions concept provided the study participants with a different entry point to the conversation about spirituality and nature. This chapter contains analysis and findings of responses about favourite places and prioritisation of the most important aspect in each dimension. This information is collated and presented as graphs to assist in determining whether there is a detachment from nature and spirituality.

Chapter Seven: Governance

This chapter describes the trial of a method to engage participants in quantifying the time they spend in community culture, corporate systems, nature and spirituality. The trial results are analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. Opinions were sought on governance matters related to nature and spirituality. Respondents provided their definitions and perceptions of corporate systems. These included the tipping points between sustainability and toxic governance, governance systems that promote environmental sustainability, re-evaluating the true costs of business and changing the way we work. Through conversations regarding engendering paradigm shifts a balance between 'self' (community culture and corporate systems) and 'selfless' (nature and spirituality) come to the fore and are covered in greater

detail.

Chapter Eight: Towards a multidimensional sustainability paradigm

This final chapter summarises the progressive steps through the thesis identifying the key points from each chapter. It then proceeds with a synthesis of the emergent definitions of spirituality and nature, and includes a table of key findings from this research. It reviews the thesis' research question and objectives to ascertain the final conclusions on these matters including possible application of the research findings. Ideas for further research areas are also included.

Having briefly introduced the complexities, challenges and opportunities involved in researching spirituality and environmental sustainability, and having stated the aim, objectives and structure of this research, the PhD thesis continues with the next chapter, which covers the literature review that informs this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW: A SHIFTING GLOBAL PARADIGM

In this chapter, literature on the progress made in scientific knowledge in relation to spirituality, nature and sustainable development is reviewed. Information regarding the impact of corporate systems on spirituality and the biophysical world is also included. The literature discussed is not intended to theoretically frame and define concepts such as 'spirituality', 'secularism', 'environmental sustainability' or other related areas. This research explores how the participants define these areas. Therefore more detailed definitions are empirically generated and included in the research findings. The literature canvassed in this chapter is important in its role in prompting the investigation into contemporary spirituality and covers significant changes, identified in the opening paragraph of Chapter One, and new or re-emergent concepts causing a rethinking of sustainability. The discourse on each area provides a different entry point, or lens, into a shifting global paradigm.

Maarten Hajer (2002:44) defines discourse as a "specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories that are produced, reproduced and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities". Through discourse, diverse storylines punctuate stages of a journey that enable different dimensions, ranging from the physical to the incorporeal, to be interpreted, represented or described. In the following quote, Hajer (2002) refers to the different players as actors, using the term metaphorically, to show that each plays a role in the story. This approach to understanding literature related to this topic is seen as suitable as it has the potential to capture different layers and dynamics pertinent to a study that focuses on the material world as well as the metaphysical. Hajer (2002) gives an example of how a big picture can emerge through a collection of storylines gathered around a theme. The theme he provides as an example is the rainforest— an appropriate one for this thesis:

The systems-ecologist might insist on the importance of the rainforests as an essential element in his or her mathematical equations that model the world

as a biosphere, as an integrated and self reproducing eco-system; the World Wildlife Fund is more concerned about the moral problem of forest destruction; while the singer Sting connects the fate of the rainforests to that of the culture of the indigenous people, thus stretching the idea of habitat protection to its limits. NASA may add the credibility of the storyline through the publication of satellite photography showing the change of forest cover over time... [a]ll actors speak about the rainforest but mean (slightly) different things. If examined closely, the various actors have rather different social and cognitive commitments, but they all help to sustain, in their own particular way, the story-line of the destruction of the rainforests in environmental politics” (2002:13).

The rainforest, in the above quotation, was the theme to which many storylines could be linked. It provided the framework that enabled different players to tap into their diverse experiences, knowledge and skills and contribute to the big picture. According to Hajer, the key function of the storylines is “that they suggest unity in the bewildering variety of separate discursive component parts of a problem...”(1995:56). Based on Hajer’s use of storylines to build a multidimensional picture, this chapter proceeds in a similar fashion to investigate the discourse around spirituality and environmental sustainability. In the above quote by Hajer (2002), spirituality seems to be implied but not articulated. However the approach he uses to build a big picture with differing entry points provides the opportunity to include the metaphysical alongside the corporeal.

In addition, this literature investigation looks to include thick descriptions of the experience wherever possible. Geertz (1973) describes the value of thick descriptions in differentiating the intention of two similar motions. He uses the example of a wink, which can be a twitch or a signal. Without a description of the context, a wink can be misinterpreted (Geertz 1973:6). Describing the context means capturing the surroundings and situations, thoughts and feelings, actions and processes (Sergi and Hallin, 2011: 197-198). These descriptions assist in conveying the emotion and intention behind actions. The analysis of these

descriptions can bring to light types of experience and different ways of knowing that enable some people to be more conscious and actively involved and connected in environmental sustainability and / or spirituality, and for others to be either less interested, detached and even opposed to these themes. Different dimensions and existential links underpinning conceptual, practical and personal discourse are part of all storylines as described in the following sections.

2.1 Environmental sustainability

In this section literature on various aspects of environmental sustainability are reviewed. These include the connection with and detachment from nature; the impacts of anthropocentricity; sustainable development in connection with the challenges of market dominated corporate systems, and linked to spirituality and ethics.

2.1.1 Experiences of connection and disengagement with nature

The cultural historian, Thomas Berry (1999) centres his storyline around what he calls the 'The Great Work' that humankind should engage in. He makes no reference to the word 'sustainability' although it is implied in his statement about how: "History is governed by those overarching movements that give shape and meaning to life by relating the human venture to the larger destinies of the universe" (Berry 1999:1). Berry infers the need for a consciousness and a connection to a greater whole and a move away from the self serving and narrow: "The Great Works now, as we move into a new millennium, is to carry out the transition from a period of human devastation of the Earth to a period when humans would be present to the planet in a mutually beneficial manner" (1999:3). Berry's connectedness to nature began in his childhood. He shares a story with a detailed contextual descriptions about this connection when he talks about how his family moved to a house on the edge of the town and he experienced a natural spiritual phenomenon that became the foundation for his life's work. This description and others like it are not often selected for inclusion in research. However it is important to this study as it states how significant moments like these

which can only transpire through a connection to the natural environment, can inform life decisions.

The house, not yet finished, was situated on a slight incline. Down below was a small creek, and there across the creek was a meadow. It was an early afternoon in late May when I first wandered down the incline, crossed the creek, and looked out over the scene.

The field was covered with white lilies rising above the thick grass. A magic moment, this gave to my life something that seems to explain my thinking at a more profound level than almost any other experience I can remember. It was not only the lilies. It was the singing of the crickets and the woodlands in the distance and the clouds in the clear sky. It was not something conscious that happened just then. I went on about my life as any young person might do.

Perhaps it was not simply this moment that made such a deep impression upon me. Perhaps it was a sensitivity that was developed throughout my childhood. Yet as the years pass this moment returns to me, and whenever I think about my basic life attitude and the whole trend of my mind and the causes to which I have given my efforts, I seem to come back to this moment and the impact it has had on my feeling for what is real and worthwhile in life.

This early experience, it seems, has become normative for me throughout the entire range of my thinking. Whatever preserves and enhances this meadow in the natural cycles of its transformation is good; whatever opposes this meadow or negates it is not good. My life orientation is that simple (1999:12-13).

In the above statement, Berry appears to convey the importance of the need to maintain sensual connectedness with nature. This description of a treasured idyllic moment, a favourite place, seems to encapsulate the different layers of place that will be described in greater detail in Chapter Three and also in Chapter Six. The weight of the description of this multidimensional experience and its impact on life cannot be underestimated. Berry himself states how important this multi-layered

phenomenon, this connection to nature and to a very spiritual moment, is in his life decisions. In fact, he makes it a norm for his thinking and living.

The view, provided by Berry that places the minuteness of our being against the vastness of the universe can, however, be scary if it is viewed from a feeling of disconnection from the universe (Giblett 2011:348-249). Giblett, whose work is in environmental humanities, refers to connection and disconnection from nature. He describes the process of growing up as a gradual “growing away from the normal state of human symbiosis, of ‘one-ness’ with the mother... Similarly, modernity entails a gradual growing away from the ‘normal’ or traditional state of human symbiosis, of ‘one-ness’ with the earth” (2011:248-249) and he further describes how that growing away from the “one-ness” of the earth plays out. Giblett (2011:248) includes a description of a psychotic child who experiences the world as a hostile and threatening place when seen through the eyes of someone separated from the world

This mindset of an alone-ness rather than a one-ness can be amplified in urban living where there is little or no intention or opportunity for knowing and connecting with the earth and to a universal picture referred to by Berry.

Another experience of a powerful reconnection to a nature moment resulting in a changed view on sustainability is found in Jane Caputi’s (2011: 411) recounting of Aldo Leopold’s ‘green fire’ encounter:

“Leopold opened fire on a mother wolf and six or so grown pups. Approaching the downed ‘old wolf’, he arrived in time ‘to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes’. Leopold’s biographers and environmental scholars have repeatedly marked the significance of this tragic and visionary moment of regret, realization, and transformation. At the time, Leopold was following an accepted game management practice of wolf extirpation, but this experience led to his realisation of the folly of such behaviour.”

Berry (1999), Giblett (2011) and Caputi (2011) appear to represent sustainability as a process of symbiosis, benefiting all parties through a conscious and connected

reciprocity. It is the detachment from opportunities to experience these spiritual moments and the impact of this on sustainability that is the focus of this research.

2.1.2 Anthropocentrism

It could be a very complex task to change direction and rethink sustainability in terms of all living and non-living forms of the whole planet because a dominant mindset seems to exist to plan for human survival above all else. Evidence of this can be seen as far back as the 1798 Malthusian Essay on the Principles of Population:

[L]et us but look for a moment into the next period of twenty-five years; and we shall see twenty-eight millions of human beings without the means of support; and before the conclusion of the first century, the population would be one hundred and twelve millions, and the food only sufficient for thirty-five millions, leaving seventy-seven millions unprovided for. In these ages want would be indeed triumphant, and rapine and murder must reign at large: and yet all this time we are supposing the produce of the earth absolutely unlimited, and the yearly increase greater than the boldest speculator can imagine (Malthus 1798:60).

Whilst Malthus refers to the capacity of the earth, he makes this statement in the context of the earth as the provider for human survival. He also continues and argues that the sheer growth in size would bring about pestilence and plague that would impact on population numbers. This has obviously not come to pass to the degree anticipated, and Flannery (2010: 209) suggests that this process, referred to by Malthus, may have occurred ‘if our genes were still in full control of our bodies’. Instead however, a new logic appeared: “[o]ne of the most important mnemes of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is that the individuals... are important and have the right to improve their lives” (Flannery 2010: 209). This self-interest mnemonic focus on the individual, is represented in an account by Ridley (1997:45):

In almost every other race of animal each individual, when it is grown up to maturity, is entirely independent, and in its natural state has occasion for the assistance of no other living creature. But man has almost constant

occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is in vain for him to express it from their benevolence only. He will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their self-love in his favour, and show them that it is for their own advantage to do for him what he requires of them... It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages. Nobody but a beggar chooses to depend chiefly on the benevolence of his fellow citizens.

There are those who contest this theory on self-interest and speak in support of human compassion and selflessness as is explored further on in this chapter. However, whatever the basis of the belief, it is an anthropocentric survival focus. According to Flannery (2010), planning to increase the human focus is still seen as trendy. Growing human populations are required to support businesses seeking greater profitability and governments looking towards increasing their tax bases (Flannery 2010:204). The population debate is a complex one but perhaps it is not only the growth of population but also the mnemonic principle that has been established that locates humans above all else. This seems to be a critically important issue concerning environmental sustainability.

The word 'sustainability' seems to be found in connection with policy but not so readily with story. The blending of sustainability and story appears to be as complex and challenging as blending oral tradition and corporate systems (as was mentioned in Chapter one). This struggle with terminology is expressed by Giblett (2011) whose seemingly close connection and love of nature are gleaned in his preference for a more intimate and mutually beneficial engagement with the earth. Rather than applying the term 'environmental sustainability' which, he says is more 'institutionalised' and has a tendency to separate subjects from the bigger dynamic 'whole', which is familiar and known. Giblett (2011) sees an unsustainable master-slave relationship between the human race and the earth. He defines sustainability as "enough for all forever"(Giblett (2011:9). "All" he stipulates as including all earth

creatures (Giblett 2011:9) suggesting that anthropocentricity should not continue to guide science, economy and policy in order for society to accept its place and responsibility on earth.

2.1.3 Sustainable development

It could be argued that another mneme of the last fifty years⁵ is the concept of 'development'. The original meaning of the word, according to the Online Etymology Dictionary was to 'unfold', has evolved. The understanding of the word has evolved far from its root. Social enterprise advocate Ernesto Sirolli (1999) questions the appropriateness of the word 'development' and its application in the context of his experiences working in Africa. He purports that what is done in the name of development is often counter-productive, unsustainable and implemented without sufficient knowledge and understanding of local practices that have evolved over time for very specific reasons (Sirolli 1999:10). Development in the Sirolli case applied Third Person orientations with little consideration for First Person practices and ways of knowing their environment.

Kerr (2012) appears to agree with Sirolli (1999) regarding the importance of local input but for a different reason. According to Kerr (2012:1), advocating entrepreneur and inventor led approaches in dealing with ecological threats often does not take socio-cultural impacts and local knowledge into consideration. In relation to a Fremantle⁶ based project, he states:

The reduction of an ecological threat, such as climate change... may support the mediated representation of global governance but attempts are likely to be met with the resistance and antagonism of local citizens. Attempts to reduce complex environmental challenges to a universal ecological threat should be seen as political acts to be met by political acts of resistance to

⁵ Sachs (1999) states that in 1949 the term development was first used to describe the world in two blocks – the developed world and the underdeveloped world with the developed world being the model for the whole world to follow – the standard for the underdeveloped world to attain (Sachs 1999:28).

⁶ Fremantle is located at the banks of the Derbal Yirrigan (Swan River). It is a port city bounded by the Indian Ocean (www.fremantle.wa.gov.au).

such reductionism. This is the task of an ethics of ecological threat representation (Kerr 2012:268).

The above situation reflects a community accustomed to standing up for what they believe. However the processes applied to the development proposals, as in the Sirolli (1999) case, do not seem to consider the First Person orientations and the value and role that ethics can play. Kerr (2012) explains the underlying principles involved in “ecological ethics” as:

Recognition of the legitimacy of other ways of knowing... awareness of practical reason not being free of affective investment... This ethical position would not seek a way out of ecological crisis through an attempted sterilization of the aesthetics of environmental problems, but rather, through acknowledgement of the operation of affect in discourse... Such an ethics — working towards an impossible horizon of environmental justice — would recognise affective investments in environmental objects, and antagonisms produced when these investments are threatened (Kerr 2012:268).

Kerr refers to the consideration of ethics and socio-cultural relationality to natural and built environments as critical in relation to development.

The word ‘sustainable’ is often used in connection with ‘development’.

Environmental scientist Wolfgang Sachs (1999) questions this combination of words. He prefers not to use the two words together as he conceives the term development, in the sustainability context, as flawed (1999:28). Development according to Burke (2012), means growth or expansion used with different motives dependent upon socio-economic positioning. However Burke alludes to development driven sustainability as having negative impacts across socio-cultural spectrums (Burke 2012: 66). This indicates that even consultation with all parties would not achieve the intended outcome implied through the words used. He claims that sustainable development is a result of modernism and that it has intended consequences that work in opposition to “neoclassical economics and sustainability perspectives” (Burke 2012:114).

Rachel Carson (1999:62) brought the dark side of development to light in connection with environmental sustainability when she made a passionate cry about the compromise of scientific truths to “serve the gods of profits and production”. It was not a wonder that, according to Lear, the author of the *Afterward* in the 1999 reprint of the book, Carson was the target of numerous attacks from the business and scientific community. She was not deterred, and at a National Press Club, boldly spoke her truth: “When the scientific organisation speaks, whose voice do we hear, that of science or of... industry?”(1999:262). Carson pointed out that profit driven aspects of development were mercilessly killing the other than human life forms – “to still the song of birds and the leaping of fish in the stream, to coat the leaves with a deadly film, and to linger in the soil” through the use of poisons such as DDT – so that humans could have a ‘better’ and ‘safer’ existence (1999:25).

It is difficult for me to see Carson’s life work in the self-interest terms described by Ridley and Smith (in Ridley 1997) because she persevered in spite of all the negative impacts on her life resultant from her fight to protect the ecosystems. Could it rather be that a connectedness and oneness with nature as previously described by Giblett (2011) and Berry (1999) is the reason behind Carson’s undertaking rather than self-interest? Would someone undergo the constant abuse and attacks by industry (Lear in Carson 1999:262), and continue to believe she had to get her truth out because of self-interest?

Carson gives us a clue into the phenomena that sparked her life journey in Chapter one of her book (1999) The chapter is titled “A Fable for Tomorrow”. Hers was not a beautiful vision of a peaceful lily field but rather a terrifying image of a town where something horrendous had happened and illnesses were sweeping over the livestock and families that cared for them, a town without the song of birds. “It was a spring without voices”(Carson 1999:21-22). It would seem impossible to have such a vivid fear without first knowing and loving the voices of spring. It would seem that

this connection to nature underpinned Carson's decisions and coloured her choices and interpretations of development.

In 1992, the term sustainable development was used by the United Nations in the Earth Summit in Rio, which Sachs (1999) claims to be a way of reconciling 'environment' with 'development'. The Rio Declaration became the protocol that launched the term as significant and sacred (Sachs 1999:27). Sachs considers that "development is, above all, a way of thinking... Yet the lessons to be drawn from 40 years of development can be stated bluntly: the issue of justice must be delinked from the perspective of development. In fact, both ecology and poverty call for limits to development, [and that] [t]he tragic greatness of 'development' consists in its monumental emptiness" (Sachs 1999:33).

This same concept of emptiness is reflected, within environmental sustainability, in a paper by Orr (2002:1457-1459) whose work is in environmental science and politics. He proposes that a spiritual emptiness is one of four major reasons for our failing to transit to sustainability. While anthropocentrism can occur without explicit violence and national hatred, Orr (2002) makes his point touching on some of the toughest human conflicts on this planet. He says that we have to find a way to recognise and transcend the national hatred and violence, draw a line in the sand and move on. This he sees as only possible through what he calls a spiritual renewal and the *sine qua non* of sustainability. In quoting Ernest Becker, Orr writes that: "The urge to cosmic heroism, then, is sacred and mysterious and not to be neatly ordered and rationalized by science and secularism" (Becker in Orr 2002:1459). Orr states the other three areas as: the need for better models and better ways to evaluate human activities in relation to the biosphere (2002: 1458); a reframing of citizenship and governance (2002: 1458); and education that includes "the study of relationships between energy, environment and economics" (2002:1459).

E.O. Wilson who is known for his contribution to sociobiology and biophilia, expresses concern that the "drive toward perpetual expansion" and caring for the living world are seemingly conflicting goals. He gives this opinion on what he sees as

the driver of change but adds: “In the end, I suspect it will all come down to a decision of ethics, how we value the natural world in which we have evolved...”(1988:16).

It would appear that sustainability is as much about principles, values, connections and morals as it is about science and policy. The key storylines informing the sustainability discourse tell of our disconnect from nature that results in a disregard of it, a preoccupation with human survival, at personal and corporate levels, at the expense of all other living or non-living forms.

Such a detachment from nature enables a more anthropocentric approach. While needing further research, there could be some link between a detachment from nature and what has been described as ‘self-love’ (Ridley 1997), ‘individual right to a better life’ (Flannery 2010), and attitudes cited as an entrenched mneme in contemporary society (Flannery 2010). The link between nature and spirituality is not clearly identified but implied. A link between ethics and caring for others has been offered as one that is possibly transferable from human to human, and human to other living and non-living species. Further clarification on how nature and spirituality are perceived is pursued in the following sections.

2.2 Nature

It could be argued that nature and environmental sustainability are different ways of saying the same things. However, as Giblett (2011) suggested, the words ‘environmental sustainability’ tends to imply a more objective, reductive institutionalised approach that separates elements out rather than viewing them as a whole. The literature reviewed in this section includes observations on whether the uses of the words ‘nature’ or ‘environmental sustainability’ alter the senses of engagement or detachment from the biophysical world. Investigating how the word ‘nature’ is perceived commences with a review of literature on landscape.

Landscapes can be perceived as part of nature depicted in the following storylines. The word ‘landscape’ conjures up images of the countryside according to cultural

geographer David Couch (2010:6). In the USA, landscape is often applied to ‘wilderness’ spaces where there is no human presence according to Denis Cosgrove (2006:52) who also works in human geography. This seems to be the everyday perceptions of landscape – gravitating to the romantic concept of vast open spaces far away enough not to encounter the reality of living with things untamed. For the humanistic geographer, landscape is interpreted as spaces that are dynamic in themselves and through human influences. Creative representations of landscape capture meanings expressed in values and beliefs, and through experiences of connection and usage (Couch 2010:7). Couch (2010) continues by stating that landscapes can be the built environment representing popular culture or cultural diversity, and it is where land and life meet (Cosgrove 2006:50). This appears to extend the definition of nature to encompass everything on the planet. Cosgrove takes that concept further:

Landscapes have an unquestionably material presence, yet they come into being only at the moment of their apprehension by an external observer, and thus have a complex poetic and politics (2006:50).

In critiquing Edward Burtynsky’s⁷ photography, Phillip Goldswain (2008:1,4,) refers to “manufactured landscapes” – words coined by Burtynsky to represent his photographs that draw attention to the “inverted ziggurat” of Western Australian mining landscapes, and how these massive “residual landscapes” give rise to the built up transformation of the City of Perth and the culture that is Perth. Through these landscape photographs the ‘poetics and the politics’ is portrayed.

Through the photographs of Burtynsky, we, as an external observer, can start to appreciate the scale of the human communities’ footprint on this earth, get the bigger picture and once again we become a part of the environmental sustainability debate. The photographs draw us in as though giving us a first hand connection with these elements of the manufactured landscapes – both residual and cityscape.

⁷ Edward Burtynsky is the recipient of the Officer of the Order of Canada. His photographic works are housed in leading museums around the world including the Guggenheim. Examples of his work can be found at www.edwardburtynsky.com

Burtynsky states that his “images are meant as metaphors to the dilemma of our modern existence; they search for a dialogue between attraction and repulsion, seduction and fear. We are drawn by desire – a chance at good living, yet we are consciously or unconsciously aware that the world is suffering for our success” (Burtynsky 2014:n.p).

The Burtynsky photographs show our intrinsic connection with the earth although this is a very different relationship to that expressed by Berry (1999), Giblett (2011), and Carson (1999), as described earlier in this chapter. It still, however, can move us in the same way that a piece of art or music or performance can and in so doing connect us to the experiences of these places and their spirit. The Burtynsky photographs seem to draw awareness of the self-interest agenda as stated by Ridley (1999), but they also bring home the reality that we are not only observers but also active participants in it. These photographs appear to shatter the image of nature as representing idealistic places in the countryside or the bush.

The above discourse on landscape provokes an awareness of nature and the role it plays in creating the urban context and also how the urban context impacts on ecosystems. However, it does not capture the day-to-day experience of engagement with nature. The social ecologist Stephen Kellert (2012) expresses the relational and metaphysical qualities of the natural world in the categories listed below. He states these as the ways humans generally apply meaning and attach benefits to nature (Kellert 2012:xii):

- *Attraction*: appreciation of the aesthetic appeal of nature, from a superficial sense of the pretty to a profound realization of beauty
- *Reason*: the desire to know and intellectually comprehend the world from basic facts to more complex understanding
- *Aversion*: antipathy toward and sometimes fearful avoidance of nature
- *Exploitation*: the desire to utilize and materially exploit the natural world
- *Affection*: emotional attachment, including a love of nature
- *Domination*: the urge to master and control the natural environment

- *Spirituality*: the pursuit of meaning and purpose through connection to the world beyond our selves
- *Symbolism*: the symbolic representation of nature through image, language, and design.

Kellert (2012:14) describes the aesthetics of nature as “touchstone memories”. He compares this to what Wordsworth called “spots in time” (in Kellert 2012:14) that decades later would continue to inspire through remembering, but only etched in memory when there is a deeper level of engagement. The reverse of which, through a detachment from nature, is a dulling of our senses, a flattening of emotions and “our capacity to find meaning in our lives is replaced by cynicism and pessimism” (Kellert 2012:17).

Of the scientific link between nature and human beings, E.O.Wilson states (in Kellert 2012:99):

Other species are our kin... All higher eukaryotic organisms, from flowering plants to insects and humanity itself, are thought to have descended from a single ancestral population... All this distant kinship is stamped by a common genetic code and elementary features of cell structure.

This level of kinship with other earth communities is often expressed in indigenous cultures. It is reflected in the words from an Australian desert country Aboriginal Elder, recorded by Robinson (2010:56):

Listen carefully this, you can hear me. I’m telling you because earth just like mother and father or brother of you. That tree same thing. Your body, my body I suppose, I’m same as you... anyone. Listen carefully, careful and this spirit ‘e come in your feeling and you will feel it... anyone that. I feel it... my body same as you.

Berry (1999:14-15) reflects on this strong link between indigenous peoples and nature to show how the urbanised world has distanced itself from this connection.

[T]he indigenous peoples of the world. They live in a universe, in a cosmological order, whereas we, the peoples of the industrial world, no

longer live in a universe. We... live in a political world, a nation, a business world, an economic order, a cultural tradition, a Disney dreamland. We live in cities, in a world of concrete and steel, of wheels and wires, a world of unending work. We seldom see the stars at night or the planets or the moon. Even in the day we do not experience the sun in any immediate or meaningful manner. Summer and winter are the same inside the mall. Ours is a world of highways, parking lots, shopping centres. We read books written with a strangely contrived human alphabet. We no longer read the Book of nature.

Giblett (2011) offers a story with similar sentiments in describing Australian Aboriginal Country:

Aboriginal country is not constructed, so it cannot be deconstructed. It is not a discourse, an institutionalised way of seeing, saying and doing, but a symbiosis, an intimate and intuitive way of being (2011:219).

Jennifer Sabbioni et al, (1998:xx) from the Kurungkurl Katitjin School of Australian Indigenous Studies at Edith Cowan University, states that Australian Aboriginal people have “the longest continuous cultural history in the world” – believed to be 40,000 years. Deborah Rose (1996:7) explains that Aboriginal country is recognised as “a place that gives life” She continues by saying that country is a familiar place with strong connections: “Country is home”. A contrast is provided by Giblett in viewing the city as ‘not home’, ‘the place of the unhomely’, ‘the homeless’, “City is necropolis, *polis* is necropolis, the dead landscape”(Giblett 2011:225-226).

Naess (1973) represents nature in ecological terms characterising the connections as shallow and deep ecological encounters. Deep ecology is depicted as: “rejection of the human-in-environment image in favour of *the relational, total-field image*” (Naess 1973:95). He states that the deep ecology experience is where “the ecological field-worker acquires a deep-seated respect, or even veneration, for ways and forms of life” (Naess 1973:95). In a more recent publication, Naess (2008:127) links ecology with wisdom: “According to Spinoza, what refers to the whole of the body also refers to the whole of the conscious mind and to the whole

of the universe or, more generally, to the whole of Nature, insofar as we know it". The position we assume in connecting with nature and the depth to which we engage determine the understanding and wisdom gained from the encounter.

The subject of deep ecology is furthered through Bron Taylor's (2011) on nature-based spirituality. In this he analyses "the spirituality of earth-based religions with the 'radical environmental' movement, a movement that numbers in the tens of thousands of participants in the United States and that has had an influence significantly greater than even these numbers suggest" (Taylor's (2011: 178). Taylor (2011: 178) continues by providing a label of "pagan environmentalism to convey the countercultural spiritualities, especially those based in mystical experiences including pantheistic and animistic perceptions, that motivate most of its supporters". In this he is claiming that the disconnect from nature inferred by Berry (1999) is already manifesting quite significantly.

The writings on deep ecology convey a strong metaphysical connectedness to nature. Its first person story enables the audience, who is in a sense disconnected from the natural environment at the point of reading, to feel as though they are in the moment in nature. This is demonstrated in the work of David Haberman (2012: 132) who talks about facing "unprecedented environmental destruction these days; our remaining forests are being razed at alarming rates, and the high levels of mass extinctions are unravelling the vital fabric that sustains all life on the planet". The narrative continues and includes an uplifting description:

How does a sensitive person endure in the face of such devastation to stand strong and do the right thing in a manner that keeps the heart soft, open, and responsive?... a new and special kind of love is available to us during these challenging times — a love that is both astonishingly sweet and extremely necessary (Haberman 2012: 132).

Haberman (2012) unwraps the story of observing 'tears in the forest' through becoming more connected and communicating with nature through being there and experiencing it deeply.

In this section, nature was explored through various voices expressing personal experiences and interpretations of connections with eco communities.

Environmental sustainability can be viewed as enabling similar storylines that have both a connection to nature and a way to bring it into policy and planning realms. If there were to be a separation, nature, it would seem, supports a first person connection, and environmental sustainability enables third person elements. However, it is this very separation that my thesis is about in investigating whether we can have environmental sustainability without a connection to nature.

2.3 Corporate systems

According to Flannery (2010: 217), neoclassical economists are of the view that economic systems are underpinned by: “a trinity of human rationality, greed and equilibrium”. He goes on to ask the question whether the selfish gene impacts on market systems and in so doing places the planet at risk. This section examines whether this self-interest drive can be mitigated, not through reason alone, but through values and ethics and a connection to nature. Corporate systems are underpinned by legal systems. As such, some legal terminology is reviewed to understand its impact on sustainability. The growth of modern free market mentality and the power and status of money are also traced.

If the 20th and 21st century mne — referred to by Flannery (2010) as a threat to sustainability— was that everyone had the right to improve their life, then financial prosperity would be the next step in the ascendance of human rights to continually improve living standards. Prosperity and population appear to be a double assault on sustainability if Jackson’s questions are to be heard: “What can prosperity possibly look like in a finite world, with limited resources and a population expected to exceed 9 billion people within decades?”(Jackson 2011:3).

This sounds very similar to the 1798 Malthusian theory posed earlier in this chapter. Jackson’s questions continue: “Do we have a decent vision of prosperity for such a world? Is this vision credible in the face of the available evidence about ecological limits? How do we go about turning vision into reality?” (Jackson 2011:3). Jackson

(2011) suggests solutions that include strengthening social capital to dismantling a consumerist culture. He goes so far as to propose stronger regulations in relation to commercial media, citing Sweden and Norway as leading in this initiative and having already banned advertising to children under twelve years of age (2011:182-183). There is however nothing about increasing a connection to nature. His are interesting concepts but even if they became policy there is no guarantee that the change would happen.

Amartya Sen (2010), an Indian economist and Nobel laureate, provides some insight into the foundations of his thinking through sharing the wisdom from ancient Sanskrit writings on ethics and justice as it applies to the world of business:

Consider two different worlds – *niti* and *nyaya*..... among the principal users of the term *niti* are organisational propriety and behavioural correctness. In contrast with *niti*, the term *nyaya* stands for a comprehensive concept of realised justice. In that line of vision, the role of institutions, rules and organisations, important as they are, have to be assessed in the broader and more inclusive perspective of *nyaya*, which is inescapably linked with the world that actually emerges, not just the institutions or rules we happen to have... We are warned that avoiding *matsyanyaya* [justice in the world of a fish where big fish can freely devour a small fish] must be an essential part of justice, and to make sure that the ‘justice of the fish’ is not allowed to invade the world of the human beings... [*N*]yaya is not just a matter of judging institutions and rules, but of judging the societies themselves. No matter how proper the established organisations might be, if a big fish should still devour a small fish at will, then that must be a patent violation of human justice as *nyaya* (2010:20-21).

Through the above, Sen makes us aware that it is insufficient to simply perform duties (*niti*) – a deontological approach – without considering the consequences (*nyaya*). He draws attention to justice by suggesting that “the question we have to ask here is: what international reforms do we need to make the world a bit less unjust?” (Sen 2010:25). Sen states that the work of Rawls, Dworkin and Nagel, all of

whom have written extensively about morals and justice, have emphasized rules as a key element in establishing justice. This is *niti* rather than *nyaya*, which Sen says requires more engagement with philosophy that encourages reflection on values and an awareness of suffering that prevails across the world (2010:413). While reason and its objectivity are recognised as a good and necessary foundation, on their own they are not reliable in all situations. Sen reminds us of an over-reliance on reason as something that the “European Enlightenment tradition” instilled into our consciousness. Subscribing to reason as a tool to ‘scrutinize ideology and blind belief’, Sen asks where the remedy to bad reasoning is to be found and also for consideration to be given to the relationship between reason, emotion, compassion and sympathy (2010:xv11, 34-36).

There is a reliance on and trust in legal frameworks to underpin reasoning, and the environmental attorney Cormac Cullinan (2011) draws our attention to this. From an upbringing in apartheid South Africa, he became aware of the role of law in controlling society and that law was a view of those in society with power (2011:62). Cullinan is convinced that: “Our legal and political establishments perpetuate, protect and legitimise the continued degradation of Earth by design, not by accident”(2011:62). The ‘subjects’ and ‘objects’ clauses in law are an example he uses to demonstrate this:

Animals, plants and almost every other aspect of the planet are, legally-speaking, objects that are either the property of a human or artificial ‘juristic person’ such as a company, or could at any moment become owned, for example by being captured or killed. For as long as the law sees living creatures as ‘things’ and not ‘beings’, it will be blind to the possibility that they might be the subjects (i.e. the holders) of rights. It is simply legally inconceivable for an object to hold rights (2011:63).

Similarly to Sen questioning reason as the final arbitrator of ethical beliefs (2010:39), Cullinan (2011) asks why the only recognised rights are those enforceable by a court of law. Sen searched out ancient wisdom to support his argument, as did Cullinan in drawing on the words of Cicero, the first century BC Roman philosopher:

True law is right reason in agreement with nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting; it summons to duty by its commands, and averts from wrong-doing by its prohibitions. And it does not lay its commands or prohibitions on good men in vain, though neither have any effect on wicked. It is a sin to try to alter this law, nor is it allowable to attempt to repeal any part of it, as it is impossible to abolish it entirely. We cannot be freed from its obligation by Senate or People, and we need not look outside ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of it. And there will not be different laws at Rome and at Athens, or different laws now and in the future, but one eternal and unchangeable law for all nations and for all times..."(Cicero in Cullinan 2011:69).

The law on subjects and objects as presented by Cullinan (2011) is a far cry from the Cicero law. Around two thousand years later, in 2008, the people of Ecuador took steps to bring back the foundational principles of law that Cicero spoke of as being in keeping with nature. They have introduced the Rights of Nature into their Constitution (Cullinan 2011: 160). Ecuador is not alone in this. According to Cullinan (2011: 160), Germany and Switzerland recognise animals as 'beings'. Cullinan (2011) provides an account of the history of changes to the legal systems through the ages. He states (2011:65) that corporations first become legal entities in Britain as 'not-for-profits', set up to benefit the whole of society. Further evidence of this can be found in the History of Corporations in Frazer's Magazine for Town and Country (Maginn 1835: 322-325).

This notion of corporations working for the common good, Cullinan posits, was changed when the East India Company created shares in the Company and in so doing started profit making on behalf of its members (2011:65). The Tribune Business News (2002) carries a story about the enthusiasm and success connected with the floating of the first shares of the Dutch East India Company, claiming this model of profit making for its members as the prototype for today's business markets. This information is supported in Bowen (2000). The trading practices in selling shares, according to Cullinan (2011), were not constitutional and therefore

were originally illegal. Changes were eventually made which according to Bennett (in Cullinan 2011:65) gave corporations wide-ranging powers, resulting in declining roles and responsibilities for those governing the law.

According to Sandel (2012), in the 1980s, Ronald Regan and Margaret Thatcher supported the growing of a market-dominated society by claiming that it was markets, rather than government, that enabled prosperity and freedom. This approach, Sandel states, continued on into the 1990s with Bill Clinton and Tony Blair who “moderated but consolidated the faith that markets are the primary means of achieving the public good”(2012:6). Sandel (2012) brings us up to date with the situation when he refers to Alan Greenspan, the former U.S. Federal Reserves chairman, as admitting that in reference to the 2008 global financial crisis, it was a mistake to believe that free markets were a self-correcting system (2012:12). In his argument about the role of markets in everyday people’s lives, Sandel sees failure in markets in their “non-judgemental stance towards values”(2012:14). He also sees this non-judgement as part of the appeal: “Markets don’t wag fingers. They don’t discriminate between admirable preferences and base ones” (2012:13). Linked in with markets Sandel lists politics that he claims to be “overheated... empty of morals and spiritual content” (2012:13), and more importantly, for this thesis, is his comment: “Even if you agree that we need to grapple with big questions about the morality of markets, you might doubt that our public discourse is up to the task” (2012:11).

It is that doubt that has prompted this research. Not so much a doubt that the public is not capable of dealing with such issues but rather that there are no credible settings and therefore no opportunity for such a discourse. There are no known settings, particularly within the corporate sphere, for such dialogue to take place and this would seem to be because there are no accountability measures or standards in place in the western world for morality. Apart for strategic plan corporate statements that include values or principles, there are no international standards or quality management tools for ethics or morality. However it would seem that these qualities are embedded within ‘risk management’ standards.

According to a UK collaborative alliance comprising of the Association of Insurance and Risk Managers, the public sector risk management association and the Institute of Risk Management, these standards have changed because of the global financial crisis in 2008, which demonstrated the fall-out from inadequate risk management. Since that time, new risk management standards have been published, including the international standard, ISO 31000 'Risk management – Principles and guidelines'. Included in the performance criteria for ISO 31000, according to Purdy (2010:883), are the following clauses: create and protect value; and take into account human and cultural factors. Ethical risk factors however are not included. The corporate storylines stated above reflect an anthropocentric stance and make no mention at all about care for the planet despite there being more than 20 years since the Rio Summit (United Nations 1992).

Agenda 21, which commenced as a result of the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, continues to be a key model for corporate accountability in sustainability. For the corporate sector, its implementation translates into the Triple Bottom Line reporting, which requires companies to disclose their economic as well as environmental and social performance. This is also linked to sustainability reporting. According to Anna Rowe (2005), Triple Bottom Line reporting is well known both to management and accountants. Gray and Milne (in Rowe 2005) are quoted in saying that sustainability reporting has generated more paper and shown few results because business and accounting are seen as diametrically opposed to sustainability. According to Rowe (2005) the 2001 Corporations Act does include requirements for compliance with environmental regulations, disclosure regarding pollutants and ethical considerations with regard to environmental protection and biodiversity conservation. There are sections relating to intangible assets (Rowe: 2005). It would appear that the Triple Bottom Line is a good first step towards environmental sustainability, but it has a long way to go to be effective, as the goals between sustainability and profit can often be in conflict with each other.

Satyajit Das, a financial market veteran, captures this conflict well in describing the mental conditioning as follows:

In Lucy Prebble's play *Enron*, the character Jeffrey Skilling, Harvard MBA, CEO of Enron and soon to be convicted felon, outlines the basis of the new economy: 'the only difference between me and the people judging me is they weren't smart enough to do what I did.' Money and brilliance are synonymous: 'One of our culture's deepest beliefs is expressed in the question, "If you are so smart, why ain't [sic] you rich?"... people in finance are rich – so it logically follows that everything they chose to do must be smart.' John Kenneth Galbraith's caution would prove well founded: 'Nothing so gives the illusion of intelligence as personal association with large sums of money. It is alas an illusion' (2011:357).

It would appear that money became the tool that enabled the individual interest man to foster. Das (2011) posits that it was in the later half of the twentieth century that a 'money culture' took hold. Money no longer was an exchange mechanism. It was something in its own right, a way of creating wealth and encouraging consumption. A system of debt and financing was created to support the new money culture. Nature became simply a resource. Countries became 'financialised' and media had a new agenda – promoting money matters (Das 2011:23). Our new 'belief' became that people without money or without the appearance of money are stupid and worthless. Yet even money markets appear to be based on trust. Das (2011) refers to it as 'faith' which he defines as "confidence of belief based not on proof but trust in a person, thing or teaching"(2011:23). This implies that even money has metaphysical dimensions that underpin it.

Sen (2010) draws on ancient stories to teach values and ethics and he emphasises that rules alone without understanding the consequences from other than a self-perspective can be very harmful. Cullinan (2011) draws on Cicero who defers to the laws of nature as foundational and able to override all other laws. Nations continue to build on 'free markets' into the 1990's at which time the Earth Summit started to promote cultural change and a consciousness of the finite nature of the planet. However, the Triple Bottom Line and the most recent 'Quality' international standards do not require an underpinning of values and ethics.

With only a few exceptions, the corporate systems' storylines have been quite detached from nature even though their historic origins appear closely aligned. Spiritual values such as faith and trust, and a consciousness of consequences are cited as determining how money, accountability tools and corporate systems are perceived and used.

2.4 Spirituality

Spirituality is referred to, implied, represented, described and interpreted in the previously cited literature on sustainability, corporate systems and nature. In this section the spirituality storylines of leading experts including economists, environmentalists, physiologists, philosophers are reviewed. The definitions and scope of spirituality seem to be changing, because of new discoveries in scientific fields such as psychology and neuroscience. The conflict between science and nature regarding ways of knowing appear again between science and spirituality. Philosophers' divergent interpretations on how we think add to these storylines. Life narratives are explored and analysed as to their meanings in terms of human existence and purpose. The literature is reviewed to see how connected or disconnected it is from nature, whether spirituality is a separate entity unto itself and whether an engagement in spirituality fosters environmental sustainability.

Spirituality is a field of academic scholarship. David Tacey (2004) whose area of study is spirituality and religion, speaks of a contemporary spiritual revolution. He states that some ideals and values of times past are no longer relevant and that "recent discoveries in physics, biology, psychology and ecology have begun to restore status to previously discredited spiritual visions of reality and... the ways in which we might uncover a universal spiritual wisdom that could transform our splintered world" (2004:1). However, Tacey states that there are a number of challenges. One of them is that there is a perceived connection between spirituality and religious fundamentalism and this causes some to believe that the world is better off without the sacred. Yet Tacey (2004) observes that spirituality is on the rise whilst participation in organised religion is declining. The rise is said to be

because individuals are seemingly searching for meaning in their lives. As evidence, Tacey (2004) presents research conducted by the BBC in 2000 showing that 76 per cent of the population admitted to having a spiritual experience. This was up 59 per cent from 1990 and 110 per cent from 25 years ago (Tacey 2004:12,15). A changing spiritual identity is said to be emerging. It is one where 'spirit' has been detached from its past form or associated context.

Spirit without form is described as liberating but not without challenges. Spirituality is said to be difficult to express in the collective or community situation without a common form or context (Tacey 2004:31). Tacey (2004) regards this liberated state of spirituality as the reason for its demise. Spirituality is seen to have become invisible. It is implied rather than expressed. Tacey believes that spirituality requires a form (2004:31). This being the case, it must be asked whether sustainability could be this form in a contemporary world – a point that will be pursued through Chapters Five and Seven.

There are other storylines around the emergence of spirituality in contemporary society. Zohar and Marshall (2001) researched Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) that they claim is the ultimate Intelligence not previously identified (2001:4). Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and Emotional Intelligence (EQ) have been recognised by psychologists for some time (Zohar and Marshall 2001:3).

Spiritual Intelligence however is relatively new within the intelligence discourse. It is described as the centre of meaning providing an overall context to our lives (Zohar and Marshall 2001:7). It is also credited with being our moral compass with which we underpin rules and regulations, imagine, motivate ourselves, and it connects us to places beyond ego (Zohar and Marshall 2001:5). Zohar and Marshall go on to state that the overemphasis on IQ has been likened to creating a spiritual emptiness devoid of meaning:

We have reasoned ourselves away from nature and our fellow creatures, and we have reasoned ourselves beyond religion. In our great technological leap forward we have left traditional culture with its embedded values

behind. Our IQ has diminished labour, increased wealth and longevity and invented countless trinkets, some of which threaten to destroy both us and our environment. But we haven't found a way to make it all worthwhile (Zohar and Marshall 2001:22).

Although not referring to IQ, Levinas (1999) draws attention to the difference between *cognitatio* and *cognitatum* – thinking and the result of thinking – and he states that knowledge in pursuit of itself, has the effect of dulling or reducing knowledge. Taking this into consideration an over-concentration of IQ could be perceived as a dulling of knowledge by detaching us from the creative centre which is also stated as the centre of meaning (Zohar and Marshall 2001). However Levinas (1999) links the consciousness of time to the birth of knowledge. He does not separate cognitive and conative thinking, instead he states that knowledge is intentionality (1999:3,13-14). Levinas also says that the recognition of alterity is the birth of justice. He links the relationship of intentionality not only in an 'I – You' relationship but also in an 'I-It' or 'I-That' relationship moving it one step beyond from the second person to other - to alterity. He states that it is in the 'face' of alterity that justice is found: "I have the order to answer for the life of the other person. I do not have the right to leave him alone to his death"(1999:103-104). It must be asked, in light of the thesis' research question, whether this same engagement in alterity fosters justice only for humans and whether it can apply to justice for all earth communities. It would seem that additional steps are required for human justice to translate to justice for all life on planet earth.

As was mentioned earlier from Tacey (2004), creating this new spirituality without its traditional 'form' can be challenging. 'Otherness' is one aspect of the myriad of intangible concepts to grasp. Whilst previous mention was made of a partnering between science and spirituality, this relationship often causes tensions. Paul Collins (2010), a historian and theologian, quotes Iranian-born writer Seyyed Hossein Nasr as saying that:

[H]e [Nasr] is not hostile to Western Science, but its claim to be the only valid science of the natural world. There are other ways of 'knowing' We

can't save the natural world except by rediscovering the sacred in nature (in Collins 2010:12).

Collins also states:

While modern environmental consciousness arises from the interconnection of a number of scientific disciplines and it is obvious that these will continue to influence it deeply, it is also true that belief, spirituality and ethics will have to become an essential part of our rethinking (2010:15).

He however holds the environment as central to the whole and if we do not confront the ecological environmental crisis, he sees no future for us as ethical and spiritual beings (Collins 2010: 13). Birch (1990:90) suggests a faith in a scientifically credible cosmic purpose could lead to greater harmony between human beings and the rest of nature. This concept is not a new one. Hindu Swami Vivekananda, in the late 1800s, said that "art, science and religions are expressing the same truth if you understand it through *advaita*" (Belurmath: 2012: 12 mins). The word *advaita* means viewed using the Vedic philosophy that everything is one whole, not separate or divided entities that are seemingly detached from each other. Tu (1996), an ethicist and Confucian scholar, questions our current ethical thinking asking whether it is morally strong enough to work towards global stewardship and world peace. He states:

Our awareness of the dangers of civilizational conflicts, rooted in ethnicity, language, land, and religion, make the necessity of dialogue particularly compelling. An alternative model of sustainable development with emphasis on the ethical and spiritual dimensions of human flourishing must be sought (Tu 1996:72,74).

The conceptual unpacking of religion and its role in spirituality is not a focus of this study. However research in this area is thriving and there is a rich body of literature on this and related topics. For example, Carole Rakodi's (2012) and Emma Tomalin's (2013) examine the link between religion and development. Kelly Besecke's (2014) work is about the search for meaning in contemporary society and deals with the place of religion within this.

The role of religion in development was taken up by Narayanan (2008) in her research on the impact of spirituality and sustainability in Delhi because of its rapid growth as a secular capital city. Her decision to undertake this research there was also because Delhi had become a multidimensional space where politics, science, history and spirituality — in particular what she refers to as neo-Hinduism — were being included in planning the future (2008:251-252). She found that the connection between sustainability and spirituality was more apparent among the women she interviewed. It was the women in Delhi who noticed the gradual loss of the spiritual from the public discourse and they linked unsustainability with corruption (2008: 254-255). Amongst development professionals, Narayanan found there was a lack of language to articulate the discourse. She notes this as ironic because spirituality had lost its authority in the corporate context (2008: 256). In this case it would appear that the loss of spirituality in corporate systems was seen as a direct result of the lack of suitable language in them, and perhaps therefore, also the lack of suitable tools and credible settings to engage spirituality. In the Preface, an example was provided of a setting or framework to better engage stories in corporate systems. The Narayanan (2008) study gives reason to believe that there is room for tools and frameworks to be developed to include spirituality into corporate systems.

The Delhi experience, as recorded by Narayanan (2008), captured a similar essence to renowned economist E.F. Schumacher (1977) who stated a need for higher levels of self-awareness to solve what he called “divergent” problems that cannot be solved by logic and method. He points out that this higher level of self-awareness includes “love, empathy, participation mystique, understanding, compassion – these are faculties of a higher order than those required for the implementation of policy of discipline or of freedom” (1977:123). According to Schumacher, the higher level of self-awareness cannot be applied on an occasional impulse but has to be cultivated to be a permanent consciousness underpinning all decisions and actions (1977:123). It is at the centre of spiritual intelligence and from this place, policy, science as well as economics could be enhanced. This transcendence to which Schumacher refers can be applied to all life on earth.

It is no coincidence that Schumacher could embody a holistic approach that included the natural world, as is seen in this my personal communication with Barrie Oldfield OAM who directed the documentary based in Australia that featured Schumacher. The documentary film is titled "On the Edge of the Forest"(Oldfield / Schumacher 1977) and Schumacher provides his interpretation of the impact of government policies on the Western Australian ecosystems. The film was part of a campaign to save Western Australian native forests. In preparing for the filming, Oldfield researched Schumacher. He informs that Schumacher, at the time, was Chairman of the Soil Association in the United Kingdom and also a member of what was then called the United Kingdom Men of The Trees society. However, it is the following story at the more personal level that Oldfield relates that provides deeper insight into Schumacher's life:

"During the research it brought out wonderful things for instance he was an enemy alien in England during the war and therefore he was put to work on a farm in Northamptonshire. He was a farm labourer and at the same time he was writing the economic papers that were to do with the formation, after the war, of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund... I knew he had a four-acre garden in Forest Row in Sussex and often his essays refer to some garden activity. He used to grind his own corn, grind his own wheat, make his own bread"(Oldfield. personal communication. 2 May 2012).

This insight into Schumacher's life shows a very hands-on approach to nature. Evidence of engagement with spirituality was seen in the quote about higher consciousness (Schumacher 1977: 123). Add to this the role that Schumacher played in formulating national and global economic strategies and in lecturing in this area (Schumacher 2011.n.p.). The three elements combined together provide some evidence of how nature and spirituality combined can mitigate the more negative aspects of corporate systems to make them more sustainable.

Other storylines that relate to spirituality include representing the 'space' associated with it. Andersen and Braud (2011) use the word 'liminal' to describe going beyond the threshold to a space where ego does not exist, or where it barely exists. This implies having the skills to cross the threshold, experience a different dimension and then return to everyday reality (Andersen and Braud 2011:133). Anderson and Braud cite Hopcke (1991), Hall (1987) and Turner (1987) as other authors whose work is reflected in the above interpretation of the liminal space.

The words 'freedom' and 'faith' enter this literature review on spirituality through the works of Satre (1963). He interprets self as 'entirely free, unstable and impermanent' (Satre 1963:xvi) and this causes fear and often results in acts of what he calls 'bad faith'. This he says is because we know that we are free and do not know how to maximize the freedom. He also explains that freedom is enjoyed once meaning is found (1963:xvi – xvii). Once again meaning is thought to be a key element in spirituality or existentialism, and if so, this requires time for reflection. A question to explore is whether there is time in contemporary people's lives for reflection leading to spiritual awareness that negates the fear and acts of bad faith that Satre refers to.

Within the conceptual storylines regarding spirituality, there are some that see a strong link between spirituality and the environment. However, there are others that make reference to a whole, which appears to be perceived through anthropocentric lenses. Awareness and concepts such as compassion and justice are heightened through spirituality but that the metaphysical ways of knowing may not result in environmental sustainability. On the other hand, without spirituality and its ability to transcend complex issues, the human race would not have the tools to go beyond anthropocentricity, the socio-cultural and political barriers, in order to tackle the environmental crisis.

2.5 Conclusions

This chapter began with Hajer's concept of discourse as storylines that help to build our appreciation of a bigger multidimensional picture. His rainforest theme included

diverse ways of knowing. It blended human stories and included views from beyond the earth. Through this chapter storylines on spirituality, environmental sustainability and corporate systems were portrayed. Some stories were included to assist in identifying the metaphysical and the structured forms that play a part in the story about spirituality and its impact on environmental sustainability. This investigation raised many questions and gaps, which now inform the design of the PhD research.

In Chapter Three, methodological approaches are discussed along with the method and processes employed in undertaking the study. The key tools used in data collection and the selected participants are also described.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter elaborates on the technical aspects of the PhD inquiry which includes: identification of the methodology for this undertaking; the concepts developed as tools to encourage conversations on spirituality and sustainability; the selected participants for the study; details of the process and approach used to collect the required information; and the way in which the gathered material is analysed.

3.1 Methodology

To be appropriate for communities of diverse socio-cultural backgrounds and cover tangible and intangible dimensions of life, this research requires the flexibility of a multi-methodological approach. This includes: 1) phenomenology — in studying spirituality; 2) phenomenography — when describing spirituality through narrative enquiry; 3) grounded theory — to develop an understanding; and 4) case studies — in connection with particular units of interest. The definition of each of these methods, along with the reason for their selection, and their application are provided below.

3.1.1 Phenomenology

This research intends to find ways to express the phenomenon of spirituality as a concept and to frame its position in our lives. Phenomenology, as described by Ray (1994:131) is a process that brings together two forms of evidence: a person's first hand experience of being in this world; and deep reflection as a result of the experience. Not only are diverse manners of experiencing spirituality covered in this research, but also ways to describe the metaphysical in a theoretical form. This is in order to explore the possibility of including spirituality into mainstream community and corporate planning, if it is found to be important. An appropriate method in this context is phenomenology. In an article by Case and Light (2011:199) phenomenology is the suitable approach when the phenomenon is referred to as the subject of the research rather than an experience as is the case in this research.

3.1.2 Phenomenography

A large aspect of this study is based on representation of experience as evidence. Phenomenography is indicated as an appropriate methodology for this purpose. Bowden (2000:2) states that Phenomenography is well adapted for recording the different ways in which people experience, interpret, and understand the different aspects of phenomena as it appears in the world around them. The suitability of this method is further emphasized in the description by Case and Light (2011: 199) who state that the main focus of phenomenography “is the investigation of the different ways in which phenomena, or aspects of phenomena... are experienced or understood”. Case and Light (2011:199) point out that phenomenography is used when the intention is to capture the possible variations of the experience. This research plans to investigate how people experience spirituality, recognising from the literature reviews that some people link it to nature whilst others do not. Therefore variations are to be expected. Phenomenography allows for diversity to be captured in categorisation of experiential evidence.

3.13 Grounded theory

This research does not start with a hypothesis but seeks to develop a theory through the collection and analysis of data. According to Case and Light (2011:193) this approach fits well with grounded theory. Taber (2000:470) explains that this methodology requires the researcher to keep an open mind and to be “coloured as little as possible by expectations based on existing theories”. Grounded theory has been found to be valuable in challenging preconceptions and enabling alternative theories to emerge (Case and Light 2011:193). This is pertinent to the study given that the literature reviewed suggests significant changes are required in order to transit to environmental sustainability. Case and Light (2011:194) suggest semi-structured interviews as an instrument for collecting data to enable diverse issues to surface. The relevance of grounded theory for this research is also found in Oktay (2012) who states that it was:

designed to create theories that were empirically derived from real-world situations. The methodology grew from a view (in sociology) that because the grand theories developed by “armchair theorists” could not be

empirically tested, a less abstract level... of theory (called “middle range” theory) was needed. Because grounded theory creates theories that are derived directly from real-world settings, it has the potential to produce theories that can... guide practice. This theory can also be used to develop theoretically based interventions that can be tested in practice settings (Oktay 2012: n.p)

The above description of grounded theory reinforces its suitability and application for this research which intends to understand whether and how spirituality and environmental sustainability are experienced in daily life. Based on the participant responses, grounded in real-world settings, theories will be developed.

3.1.4 Case study

Case study as a method is often linked to preliminary exploratory research, according to Yin (2009). It can however be applied equally to exploratory research as to studies that are explanatory and show how different theories and approaches occur in practice. It can also be used to capture descriptions of contexts and experiences (Yin 2009: 6). For example, this would be relevant in case studies when, an organisation or a project is stated as the structure enabling an experience of the natural environment or the existential. Yin (2009) explains that research fits under the case study approach when it meets certain conditions. Aspects deemed to be fitting this type of methods respond to “how” and “why” research questions as well as cover contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control (Yin 2009: 13). “How” is present in the research question, and both “how” and “why” questions are likely to be framed in reviewing responses provided by the participants in this research. Therefore the case study approach is relevant.

All methods are used simultaneously and in some instances in parallel depending on the nature and opportunities related to the collected empirical evidence. The research tools and the data collection techniques are explained below.

3.2 Research tools

This research used three concepts as the main tools to address the research aim. The concepts were developed to encourage conversations to articulate the intangible aspects of nature and spirituality. Observations arising from the literature review informed the designing of the tools. These included: allowance for diverse representations of spirituality and nature; perceptions of time available for spirituality and nature and how this impacts on environmental sustainability; and divergent views about the suitability of corporate governance systems and measurement standards for transitioning to sustainability.

These three concepts are: (1) the Connectivity Matrix; (2) the Five Dimensions; and (3) the Combination View. Each of the three has a specific orientation and is intended to provide a different lens to the inquiry. The three tools or concepts offer an opportunity to triangulate the responses and provide not only different observation lenses but also a variety of entry points for participants to engage with the research topics. They are designed to allow for multiple methodological approaches described earlier to be accommodated. Concept 1 asks for experiences in nature and spirituality; concept 2 looks at the layers of 'place' and how spirituality and nature fit into these dimensions; concept 3 draws in governance (organisational and national rules) and how it impacts on nature and spirituality. Each concept enables a different entry point for reflexivity and conversation. Whilst these concepts are tools to seek responses to explore Western Australians' views on the place of spirituality and nature in their lives, they are also being trialled as tools that can be applied in mainstream community or corporate situations in order to include spirituality and nature into planning, community engagement or social service processes.

These concepts were developed in a similar way to how I have created works of art. The process involved my engaging with the topic reflexively and being informed by the requirements of the research, in the same way as an artist would respond to a commissioning brief. It is intended that participants engage with the concepts as they would with an artwork. That is, participants see into it and take from it what

they are ready and willing to see and draw from it. There is no judgment, no right or wrong connected with how the concepts are viewed. In the same way as an artwork would, the concepts are intended to stimulate thought, notions of relationality and wonderment. Through this process of engagement, the concepts developed for this research are intended to enable conversations about spirituality and environmental sustainability. While the First and Third Person system (refer to the Preface) is a useful approach as a first stage of community engagement for planning purposes, the tools developed here are recommended for the next stage which involves a deeper level of conversation.

The same three research tools were used for both interviews and workshops because the concepts were designed to apply equally to individuals and groups. The interviews allowed for a deeper conversation whereas the workshops enabled a broader sharing of perspectives. The workshops also allowed for synergies between the participants to emerge stimulating new ideas to appear from the exchange of views which is not possible in a one-to-one interview setting.

3.2.1 Concept 1: The Connectivity Matrix – Spirituality and Nature in our community and corporate lives

The Connectivity Matrix: Spirituality and Nature in our community and corporate lives (see Table 3.1 and Table P.4) is referred to later in the text as ‘The Connectivity Matrix’. It is so named to show the relationship between all four elements. The original ‘First and Third Person System’ (Krempf 2006)⁸ is represented in the Community Culture and Corporate Systems columns, and two new columns titled ‘Nature’ and ‘Spirituality’ are added. This research is based on the ‘Nature’ and ‘Spirituality’ columns. They are being trialled as a second stage of community consultation to see whether this enables conversations on the metaphysical representations of spirituality and nature in mainstream contexts after an introduction to the First Person (community) and Third Person (corporate) columns is conducted first.

⁸ The First and Third Person System is described in the Preface.

There are six aspects stated on the far left of the matrix. These aspects refer to each of the four columns and they cover:

- The mode of communication that applies in each section;
- Skills required to engage in the respective section;
- A description of the process;
- The foundation of the column in question⁹;
- The essential conditions for the realm to exist; and
- The intended outcome if all the elements were in place.

Table 3.1 Concept 1: The Connectivity Matrix

| | Community Culture (1st Person) | Corporate Systems (3rd Person) | Nature | Spirituality |
|--|--|--|--|----------------------|
| Communication | Oral Communication | Written Communication | State of Being | Universal Wonder |
| Skill required | Listening / Observing | Writing / Speaking | Flow | Silence / still |
| Process | Involvement | Detachment | Interdependence | Transformation |
| Foundational element (Foundational element's aim) | Vision & Tradition (identity) | Management & Governance (stability) | Creation & Destruction (change) | Belief (hope) |
| Essential conditions | Trust & respect | Facts and figures | Time and space | Compassion |
| Intended outcome | Belonging | Money | Environmental Sustainability | Love |

The Connectivity Matrix was used as a tool to allow the participants to reflect on and represent their own experiences and perceptions regarding what the name of each column means to them and how they experience the six aspects within the columns. It was a starting point to enable the research participants to tell their stories and give their preferred choice of words for each section of the table together with the reasons for selecting them. The tool is not intended to segment life into silos but rather for the sections to be like lenses focusing on each different area in turn as part of a whole.

⁹ Foundation is defined as the base on which the whole dimension sits and if this base were taken away the dimension would collapse or cease to exist.

Percentages exercise

Once the participants responded to the Nature and Spirituality columns in the Connectivity Matrix, they were engaged in the percentages exercise by responding to the following question:

How much time do you spend in each of the four areas of the Matrix? Can you allocate a percentage to each column so that they add up to a 100% total?

An additional part to this question was asked of Group 2, the 3 workshop groups that allocated 2 hours to this research project (see Types of workshops on pages 66-66). They were asked:

In an ideal situation, how much time would you like to spend in each of the four areas. Can you allocate a percentage to each so that they add up to a 100% total?

After the percentages exercise, the following questions were asked:

- 1) Comment on the strong, medium and weak links between spirituality and nature?
- 2) Are there any other thoughts you have on spirituality, nature, corporate system and in particular — time spent in these areas. Is there anything that is not covered?

In introducing the Connectivity Matrix I first provided an overview using the First (Community Culture) and Third Person (Corporate Systems) columns and then proceeded with engaging the participants in their responses to the Nature column followed by the Spirituality column. Through this progression the participants became familiar with how the Matrix worked. It allowed them some time to work out which of their experiences fitted in each column and what the differences between columns were through their eyes. No further information of each area was provided. The Connectivity Matrix guiding words and columns were not expanded or defined further to ensure there was no transference of bias or agendas from the researcher to the participants. They were encouraged to look at the other columns of the matrix to guide them.

3.2.2 Concept 2: The Five Dimensions

The Five Dimensions concept was originally introduced in my Masters thesis (Krempf 2006) and was developed to represent my own life experiences. It has never before been used as a research tool.

One way of explaining the Five Dimensions is through 'places' that the mind wanders to through the process of everyday living. Individuals would consciously or unconsciously travel between these different dimensions many times a day. For example, when a person prepares a meal he or she is working within the three-dimensional world with physical objects that can be touched and seen. Similarly, when one is catching a bus or a train one is engaging with the three-dimensional world of visible and tangible objects. Strolling through a laneway or road you have tactile references to the type of ground you are walking on and the visual guiding points of trees, greenery, paths, public art, signage, and buildings. Food, cooking utensils, busses and trains, paths, structures and forms that guide you are three-dimensional objects that you can touch and see.

When a person relates feelings, stories and opinions either in their mind or in conversation with another, he or she is, for the purposes of this exercise, in the fourth dimension, which is a space of intangible relational realities with the self as the centre of the relationship experience. In this space there is a variety of emotional links. These could be expressions of friendship, collegiality, companionship with other individuals or communities. In this space you are aware of your relational connections, how you feel about others and also how they feel about you. The relational aspects are in focus and the physical world recedes from your mind.

The fifth dimension can be said to exist when a person walks along the beach and is 'carried away', for example, by the wind and the sound of the waves and is in a moment of infinite bliss, seemingly in tune and as one with the universe. In this state he or she is, for the context of this research, in the fifth dimension. This is different from being in the relational space which is self-centred and in relationship

with other living or non-living physical forms. In the fifth dimension we are in a space beyond ourselves. It is a liminal space. One crosses a threshold into a state of heightened wonderment or perhaps peacefulness that leaves the consciousness of the physical and relational worlds behind.

The following description was used in the interviews and workshops to introduce the Five Dimensions to the research participants to enable them to enter into this narrative of dimensions and weave their own storylines into the picture. This description of the Five Dimensions appears in a Heritage 2012 Conference publication co-authored with Dora Marinova (2012:1257):

Imagine yourself being in your favourite place in the world. It can be a current existing place or a place that exists now only in your memory. It is often the three-dimensional place that you first recall. The colours, forms and textures you once saw and touched come to mind. However there is more to the place that makes it special. This place triggers, for you, a point in time in your life. You may recall the happiness or sadness that was with you then. Perhaps it conjures up relationships and experiences at that period of time. This space of identity, family and community is the fourth dimension. Are there other qualities attached to your favourite place? Perhaps you felt the wind when you were there, or saw a sunset or heard sounds that sparked a sense of universal wonder, and you were transported, in an instant, into a spiritual dimension. All these five dimensions make places special to you personally but also for any community.

The Five Dimensions concept is displayed in a table form below (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 Concept 2: The Five Dimensions

| | |
|---|---|
| The three dimensional world ¹⁰ | The material world that can be seen and touched |
| The fourth dimension | Relationship: self, family, community |
| The fifth dimension | Universal wonder |

¹⁰ The three dimensions include the first and second dimension. It refers to three-dimensional elements that have height, width and depth.

Because of the intangible nature of the topic of this thesis, the Five Dimensions concept was used as one of the research tools assisting participants to look at the different dimensions of life from another view. This concept explored the interpretation of the relationship between people, nature and spirituality. It is different from the Connectivity Matrix (see Table 3.1) in that it is not about describing the elements involved in experiencing nature and spirituality. It is about identifying the tangible and intangible layers of any place. This concept explored whether, as a tool, it would lead to different or similar responses to those that resulted from reflecting on the Connectivity Matrix.

Following the engaging in the Five Dimensions exercise, the participants were asked to state what their favourite place was to gauge any trends such as built, natural environments or community related spaces. This was followed by a series of questions, namely:

- 1) What is the most important object in your life, by time spent, in the three dimensional world? If you could change or enhance it, would you?
- 2) What is the most important relationship in your life, by time spent, in the fourth dimension? If you could change or enhance it, would you?
- 3) What is the way in which you engage most in the fifth dimension? If you could change this or enhance it, would you?

The aim of the above questions was to collect data about how the participants spend their time in the different dimensions and to use their responses to determine whether there was a detachment from nature and spirituality.

3.2.3 Concept 3: The Combined View

This concept links the Connectivity Matrix with the Five Dimensions concept. The joining of the two poses challenges that we encounter in everyday life. Dreams and visions require plans and milestones that usually have to comply with many levels of rules and regulations. Linking the two provides an opportunity for the participants to review their previous responses in relation to rules and regulations, governance and management issues that they confront, are limited or enhanced by.

The aim of this Combined View concept was to seek participants' responses to governance issues that could limit or enhance their experiences and engagement in nature and spirituality. Their views were also sought on how governance trends in the corporate world currently impact the realm of nature and spirituality.

Two possible combinations were put forward that are relevant to this research exploring views and experiences of spirituality, nature and the corporate world. The intention of this concept was to have an indirect line of questioning that gained insight into community perceptions about the position of nature and spirituality in relation to governance. Concepts 3A and 3B were developed to draw out opinions of these implications and to learn how individuals and organisations are dealing with these perceptions. In Concept 3A, Corporate Systems and Nature come under the same laws, whereas in Concept 3B, the governance of Nature is separated from Corporate Systems and linked with laws of Spirituality. The participants were asked which of the two Combined Views they related more too and why.

Table 3.3 The Combined View concept

Concept 3A – Combined View, first combination

| | | | |
|--|--|--------|---------------------------|
| Community Culture (1 st Person) | Corporate Systems (3 rd Person) | Nature | Spirituality |
| 4 th Dimension | 3 Dimensional world | | 5 th Dimension |

Concept 3B – The Combined View, second combination

| | | | |
|--|--|---------------|--------------|
| Community Culture (1 st Person) | Corporate Systems (3 rd Person) | Nature | Spirituality |
| 4 th Dimension | 3 Dimensional world | 5th Dimension | |

The Connectivity Matrix (Concept 1), the Five Dimensions (Concept 2) and the Combined View (Concept 3) were the key concepts for research and discussions. These three concepts served as a measuring tool to gauge priorities or lack of priorities assigned to spirituality and nature. They allowed the participants to contribute to the research, as they felt comfortable to do. The concepts were intended to enable diverse conversations regarding the possible importance of spirituality and nature in the participants' lives.

Through trialling the concepts in interviews with various sustainability professionals and in different workshop contexts, this research provides some indication of the transferability of the concepts for use in socially and culturally diverse industry sectors and communities.

3.3 Data collection methods

Interviews and workshops are the instruments used for data collection in this study. They were selected because of the importance of linking “knowledge and context” in understanding society (Flyvbjerg 2001:9). Flyvbjerg also states the importance of counterbalancing theory with “what is desirable according to diverse sets of values and interests” (2001:167). These social science approaches to research, as explained by Flyvbjerg (2001), complement the community engagement aims and objectives of this research. To this end, the direct approach of interviews and workshops are used. Interviews provide opportunity for in-depth personal conversations, while the informal, participatory nature of workshops encourages group discussions on the topics.

There were 31 individuals interviewed and six workshops conducted for the purpose of this PhD study. The research interviews and workshops commenced in December 2011 and were completed by October 2012. All but one interview, and all workshops were conducted in Greater Perth¹¹, which includes Mandurah¹². The

¹¹ According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census, Greater Perth is an area from Two Rocks (61 kilometers north of Perth city) and includes Mandurah in the South. The total population was 1,728,867 at that time.

interview, which was conducted outside of this region, was with a person who had retired from work that was predominantly Perth-based and now no longer lives there. More information about the interviews and workshops is provided further on in this chapter.

Ethics approval was required to undertake this investigation in order to ensure that participants in the research are not placed at risk of harm, not disadvantaged, and aware that they may withdraw without prejudice. A detailed description of the project, interview and workshop questions, and participant consent forms were submitted as part of an application to the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee in September 2011 to obtain their approval of processes used to conduct research involving humans. Approval was received on 1st November 2011. Extensions to this approval were applied for and approved annually. All participants signed the approved consent forms agreeing to their participation in this research.

Two techniques were used to record the data for this research: 1) An audio recording device was used for interviews and small workshops. The researcher then transcribed these recordings manually; 2) Butcher's paper and post-it notes were used for larger workshops. These were collected and collated by the researcher into a report. Further details are provided in the Interview and Workshop sections below.

3.3.1 Interviews

Thirty-one professionals were interviewed for the purposes of this study. They currently are or were previously professionals from government, business, academia and not-for-profit organisations. All belong to a range of professions which have a direct involvement with the natural environment, sustainability and /or spirituality, including environmental conservation, horticulture, land management, urban planning, media, arts and culture, education, transport,

¹² Mandurah is a coastal city in Greater Perth, it has a population of more than 80,000 and is 72 kilometers from Perth.

community development, spiritual development, faith organisations and health service providers. The interviewees were chosen on the basis of their involvement with communities and corporate systems and at least one of the following three areas: the natural environment, sustainability or spirituality. There were no particular preferences, real or perceived bias in selecting the professionals to be interviewed; in fact in the majority of the cases I had no prior knowledge of the religious or spiritual inclination of the interviewees (and later on workshop participants). A list of the interviewed participants is provided in Appendix 3.1. Out of the 31 interviewees, 13 were involved in not-for-profit groups, 9 in business (small, large and multinational), 5 in government (state and federal), and 4 in education. The diversity of sectors covered is shown in the first two columns of the list in Appendix 3.1. Appendix 3.2 shows the list of workshop participants with the diversity of participants identified again in the first two columns. There were 2 workshops conducted with not-for-profit organisations, 1 with an education organisation, 2 with government agencies and 1 with participants engaged in business and not-for-profit organisations.

Three A4 sized charts of the Connectivity Matrix, the Five Dimensions of Community, and the Combined View concepts were used as the visuals for the interview process. Further details of the concepts and the questions relating to each are described under the Research Tools section of this chapter.

At the commencement of each interview, permission for its recording was obtained. Audio recordings were made for all interviews. The researcher then transcribed these and a copy of the transcription was provided to the interviewee who then had the opportunity to correct any transcription errors.

Details of the concepts and the questions asked in relation to each interview is detailed under 3.2 Research Tools. Interviews were generally scheduled for one hour. In some cases, time became short, due to the depth of the information provided in response to Concepts 1 and 2. In these situations the Combined View concept was left out of the conversation. This happened in four of the 31 interviews.

Despite these interviews only covering the first two concepts they were valuable because of the richness of the provided material.

In one of the 31 interviewed, Concept 1 resulted in a wealth of historical information in relation to the environment and spirituality. This was highly relevant to this research. As such, I took the decision to abandon the formal line of questioning to allow the information and personal experiences to be narrated without interruption. In this particular interview Concept 1 was covered, and the remainder of the interview recorded, with permission, as personal communication with the sustainability professional.

3.3.2 Workshops

Six workshops were conducted and attended by a total of 78 participants. The workshops included: a sustainability department in a university; a not-for-profit disability services organisation; an arts community; an environmental community; and a not-for-profit multicultural services organisation. As with the interviewees, workshop groups were selected to participate based on their involvement with communities, the corporate world and at least one of the three areas: the natural environment, sustainability or spirituality. The organisations that participated in this research are identified in Appendix 3.2. Workshop participants responded to the same research tools — the three concepts — as the interviewees. Before the commencement of each workshop, the participants signed the Ethics Committee approved consent form.

Types of workshops

Workshops differed by size and by the time allocated according to the participants' availability:

- Workshops according to participant numbers: There were 4 large workshops and 2 small workshops totalling 6 workshops

- Workshops according to allocated time: Of the 6 workshops, there were 3 two-hour workshops (called Group 2¹³) and 3 one-hour workshops (Group 1).

There were two small workshops (with two persons in each), and four large workshops (with between 13 and 25 participants). The two small workshops are listed under workshops, rather than as interviews, because they were originally arranged and agreed as such and because there was interaction between the participants. These workshops were conducted using the process described under interviews. That is they were recorded, transcribed and the record of the workshop emailed to the participants as agreed for their comments.

In one of the small workshops, the two participants' responses to Concept 1 resulted in a wealth of oral tradition and cultural knowledge pertinent to this research. No further concepts were tabled. The information provided in response to Concept 1 was extensive, in depth, highly relevant and valuable to this research.

Delivery of concepts to larger workshops

The larger workshops were conducted using a process refined through applying and adapting some of Sarkissian's (2005) community facilitation workshop strategies, training resources on her website (2011), as well as through attending her workshop titled the Artistry of Community Consultation organised by the Community Arts Network Western Australia (2005). At this workshop Kawakita Jiro's Affinity Diagram method was introduced by Sarkissian (2005) and it has shaped my process (described under Research Tools) in relation to the three concepts. Detailed below is how each concept was presented at the larger workshops.

¹³ Group 2 is specially identified because, given the 2 hours allowed for the workshop, the opportunity was taken to ask this group an additional question in the percentages exercise. This is detailed under the Research tools section.

Presenting the Connectivity Matrix concept

Where Power Point presentations were not suitable, an A1 size sheet of the Connectivity Matrix was displayed for the first part of the workshop. In addition A4 sheets of the Connectivity Matrix were also made available to each workshop attendant. Participants were grouped in tables of no more than seven. A supply of butcher's paper was arranged for each table and these were pre-labelled with the specific aspects of the Connectivity Matrix already listed in readiness for the responses.

Each participant was provided a bundle of post-it notes and marker pens. It is my experience from facilitating community workshops that when each person has their own supply of post-it notes and pens they are more likely to contribute. This way, participants did not have to feel uncomfortable or self-conscious about stretching out over a table and writing directly onto the butcher's paper. All post-it notes were placed onto the relevant butcher's paper labelled with the name of the Connectivity Matrix aspect they were responding to at the time.

Through this process, there could still be group conversations but there was less chance of one or two voices dominating the responses. It allowed all participants' views to be recorded. In all situations a prior meeting was arranged with leaders, managers or elders, to explain the research, how the workshop would be recorded, ethical and the copyright implications and processes involved.

Presenting the Five Dimensions

Concept 2, the Five Dimensions was conducted as a survey, once the narrative was read out (see Research tools), and the graphic of the three dimensions displayed. Forms (see Appendix 3.7) were handed out with the questions relating to the concept (see Research tools) and participants wrote their responses.

Presenting the Combined View concept

The Combined View concept was left out of the conversation in five out of the six workshops as the first two concepts generated conversations not only of personal

experiences but also related to work and community contexts. These were rich conversations and made valuable contributions to this research. In the one workshop where the Combined View concept occurred, it was communicated visually through displaying Power Point slides and responses recorded, with permission, on an audio recording device, transcribed and included in the workshop report.

After each workshop, the information was compiled and emailed either to the liaison person for distribution to participants, or sent directly to participants as per the agreed arrangements.

3.4 Analyses of information

There were two main stages— tasks and processes — in the analyses of the data from the interviews and workshops. Processes for analysing qualitative data follow Atkinson and El Haj (1996), and Samani’s (2010) Collative transcript analysis system. This informed the articulation of the stages identified in Table 3.4.

The coding of the responses from the interviews and workshops were primarily informed by the Kawakita Jiro’s Affinity Diagram method. Sarkissian (2005) explained that Jiro originally founded this method for the purposes of archaeological digs as it was impossible to know what would be found. As things were found they were grouped under headings and these headings could be altered, subdivided, or otherwise changed as new information emerged. This method was selected because it best fits with the grounded theory approach of this research. NVivo data analysis software was used to ascertain trends in words used by participants to describe nature and spirituality. The information transcribed from the interviews and workshops was entered into NVivo. Text searches were then completed and the results in the form of NVivo generated word trees and tag clouds provided a good impression of the most important topics identified by the participants.

Initial cursory reviews of the transcripts and workshop notes occurred, as part of a familiarisation with the data, prior to the commencement of Stage 1 listed below (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Stages, tasks and processes for conducting the data analysis

| Stage | Tasks | Processes |
|--|---|--|
| Stage 1 | Coding and analysing the data | |
| | 1.1 Analyse and code the Connectivity Matrix data | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify emergent categories in the Nature and Spirituality columns of the Connectivity Matrix. | Using the Affinity Diagram method, group responses into categories. The Nature and Spirituality columns to be done separately. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate data on the percentages of times spent in each area of the Connectivity Matrix | <p>Calculate percentage data from interviewed participants to arrive at an average percentage of time spent in each Connectivity Matrix area. Responses from each workshop are calculated separately and then results from all workshops combined to achieve the average time spent in each Connectivity Matrix area.</p> <p>Group corresponding dialogue from this exercise into categories</p> |
| | 1.2 Analyse and code Five Dimensions data | |
| | <p>Collate findings regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Favourite Places Three dimensional object with which most time is spent Fourth dimensional relationship where most time is spent Most used tool to engage in fifth dimensional reflection | <p>Categorise and develop a graph to show the number of responses for each place type</p> <p>Categorise and graph</p> <p>Categorise and graph</p> <p>Categorise and graph</p> |
| | 1.3 Analyse and code data from the Combined View concept | |
| Collate findings pertaining to Concepts 3A and 3B. | Using the Affinity Diagram method, group responses into categories. | |
| Stage 2 | Cross-referencing the data | |
| | Determining inter-relationships between findings from the three concepts | <p>Undertake cross-referencing of categories that emerge through responses to the three concepts as stated above to establish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants' attachment and /or detachment from nature and |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | spirituality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants' definitions of nature and spirituality • Effectiveness of the three concepts as tools to encourage dialogue on existential matters • Key emergent themes • Generation of definitions |
|--|--|--|

Stage 1 of the above stated coding process (see Table 3.4) is in keeping with the phenomenography methodology (Case and Light 2011:199, Bowden 2002:2) as its intent is to capture a range of existential experiences. Experiences are represented or described through narrative stories of life or in ways that transcend the self. Examples of the application of existential experiences or values are also expressed in relation to how they are applied within organisations or programs and explained through case studies. In stage 2 the reductivity of phenomenology (Ray 1994:131, 2011:199) comes into play as the experiences are translated into theories and concepts, and definitions of key words are generated through the research findings by using the Affinity Diagram method (refer to page 69). Whilst the research question explores whether or not there is a detachment from nature and spirituality, the emergent theories are trusted to be unlocked through grounded theory.

3.5 Conclusions

The technical elements of this research were determined and explained. A multi-methodological approach was designed as appropriate for researching communities from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds and industry sectors, including tangible and intangible dimensions of life. Three research instruments suitably link local knowledge and context in order to draw out the different sets of values and interests. The rigour of scientific evidence is addressed through the systematic processes applied through each stage of this research. This is balanced with the capacity within the research tools to enable community participation as determined by their own experience and ways of knowing.

This design includes original contributions to knowledge by way of the creation of three concepts: The Connectivity Matrix, the Five Dimensions and the Combined

View. These can be applied in community and corporate sectors to encourage community conversations on spirituality and sustainability.

In the following four chapters the effectiveness of this research design is demonstrated through reviewing the participant responses, analysing the findings and determining the emergent themes.

CHAPTER FOUR

NATURE

Chapter Four is the first of four chapters based on reviews of the amalgamated interview and workshop responses as outlined in Chapter Three. Each of these chapters ends with a section titled Emergent themes in which the key findings resulting from participants' views are assessed alongside concepts of other researchers in the field.

The review of responses is in keeping with the research question, which is to see whether there is a detachment from spirituality and nature in our contemporary communities, and how this impacts on environmental sustainability. The thesis objectives will also be considered. These are: exploring worldviews on the importance of spirituality and nature with regard to corporate systems and sustainability; researching Western Australian community discourse on spirituality and nature and the relationship of these phenomena to work and life; and trialling concept models to better address spirituality and nature in community and corporate settings.

Chapter Four concentrates on the findings about nature and focuses on responses to the Connectivity Matrix. It analyses how and why contemporary the participants describe, interpret and engage with nature. Through the use of the Connectivity Matrix – Concept 1 (see Chapter Three), respondents make known their views on nature. The words in the Nature column of the Matrix were used as a starting point for the workshop and interview conversation. The questions asked to introduce each line of the nature column are tabled in Chapter Three.

The participant responses are categorised into five sections under the following headings: 1) Defining nature; 2) Communicating with nature; 3) Using the senses to engage with nature; 4) Mindsets determining the level of engagement with the earth's biodiversity; and 5) Detachment from nature.

Where participants have specifically asked to be identified, their name has been identified as they have requested along side the interview number. Where participants have not made a specific request to be identified, only the interview number is provided.

4.1 Defining nature

Participant descriptions of nature varied from “everything” to “outdoors”, “the living part of the world”, “life”, “a safe haven”, “the universe”, and “cosmos”. From most responses it would appear that nature was something described as innately known but taken for granted. One participant stated that: “Nature just is. It obeys the laws of physics. Anything beyond that I would see as just human interpretations” (Interview #14). Another participant gave reasons for limiting the scope to what was within our range of experience:

“I always think of nature as the rest of the space but it is hard to think of space as nature. I don’t experience it. I don’t feel it. An astronaut may describe nature to be beyond the boundaries of this Earth. But because I have never been outside of this Earth it is just my knowledge of the rest of nature and I only experience this nature. So [nature is] the planet and its inhabitants” (Interview #21).

For some, however, the seeming lack of first hand knowledge of the space beyond was viewed differently, and a connection to the universe appeared to be an experienced phenomenon. In this case, nature was described as “being part of the larger cosmic realm”. It was also represented as “a phenomenon beyond definition”. Other perceptions of nature included the “physical form of the earth around us”, as well as an imagined or remembered place where things are “the way they are meant to be”, or a place from childhood remembered as magical and safe.

From the responses, it would appear that nature could be defined as being or involving physical forms found on planet earth and in the universe. This corporeal entity referred to as nature is said to have the capacity to evoke a sensation in humans of being closely connected to it.

4.2 Being physically connected to nature through sensory engagement

This section captures views on the importance of engaging children with nature, the language used to communicate with nature, various senses involved, the role of stories in enabling an understanding of nature, and the requirement of action or 'doing' as a means of getting to know nature.

There was general agreement that physical engagement with nature (described as not referring to built structures created by humans) was essential in appreciating and valuing nature. However defining nature to not include built structures created by humans was problematic as dialogue continually returned to everything being nature. A participant explained this saying that all our activities could be considered to be in nature, and that even driving down a freeway was an experience of nature (Interview #21). It was stated that "even third world people who are still living in a very natural state" have constructed forms and human made elements (Interview #11). The difficulty participants had in finding a dividing line between what is nature and what is not could be interpreted as recognition that humans and all they do are part of nature and therefore humans are inherently connection with nature. It also implies an existence of other factors that make us question this relationship. Some of these factors are considered below.

4.2.1 Nature and childhood

Most participants in both the interviews and workshops could describe positive experiences of engaging with nature. However, there were some exceptions. In one of the workshops, a participant's comment was that some people had "an inbuilt fear of nature"(Workshop #1). An interviewee who said that she loved nature but was not knowledgeable enough about it also echoed this fear. The participant preferred to go into nature only if she knew she could opt out at any time and go back to her 'safe' urban comforts (Sofia, Interview #30). This she put down to not having childhood experiences of growing up in nature.

Many participants had spent time in nature in their childhood but do not do so in their current stages of life. “I think you also need the skill of still being a child because it is as children that we actually connect with [nature] more. We grow out of it” (Interview #7). It is suggested that these experiences are strongly remembered. With these positive experiences in nature as a child, opportunities to connect with nature in later life would “bring people back to that more intuitive state of mind or consciousness where they connect with those feelings they had as children at play in the natural world” (Interview #7).

There were participant suggestions on how to foster the connection to nature in childhood. Among examples given were that schools could include bush experiences such as bush or farm camps as part of the education curriculum and children could be taught how to protect nature. Western Australian activities in a similar vein were shared by various participants and included an annual children’s planting activity in the Children’s Forest of Whiteman Park¹⁴ in which the contribution by children are acknowledged on a plaque on a wall in a little house in the forest with the child’s first name. Activities for children at Perth City Farm¹⁵ were also cited. At this location, it is said that children could interact with “chooks” (chickens) and geese, worm farms and vegetable gardens. Winter tree planting activities to improve degraded land were also mentioned. A variety of organisations that undertake this activity with volunteers were named.

The following participant shares his story of growing up in rural Australia without the perks of city life. It expresses what we take for granted and what the children living in this modern world may never connect with unless they learn of or somehow experience situations like this:

“I observe that people in Africa will walk five kilometres to get water. We walk five kilometres to loose weight. How ridiculous. But maybe we should

¹⁴ Whiteman Park is a 4,000 hectare bushland area located 22kms north of Perth. It is in the Swan Valley (Whiteman Park website).

¹⁵ Perth City Farm is a community garden close to Perth’s central business district.

all walk five kilometres to get water. My upbringing of hand carting water to use makes me respect water. We don't respect water now. We don't respect fresh air. We don't respect the clean food we've got. If we just respected these things, everything would take care of itself. I was brought up on a cattle station in Central Queensland and we had very basic living conditions. And our running water was a 44 gallon drum chained to a tree fork which my father would drag down to the local dam once a week and fill up with a bucket and drag it back and park it out the backdoor of our shack. And that was our water supply. And all that water had to be boiled to drink. So sometimes if you didn't have any water boiled ready to drink you didn't drink until it had cooled down. We take many things for granted. Every time I turn the tap on in the house I think it is a miracle of water flowing. We take it for granted and these are the basic things we don't teach our children" (Interview #12).

An example of engaging children with nature is captured well in the words of a grandmother describing her time with her grandson:

"[W]e always go down [to the ocean]. And when we are down there, we always go to the beach ... and [my grandson] and I can walk around and not say anything but there's a wonderful sense of being together and kind of love and companionship with that without words. ... And one of my greatest joys, whether I am down in the garden or down the beach or whatever, is when he'll suddenly run up and hug me and then he'll run back and play with his pebbles or the weeds. And to me I've realised how important it is not to have that articulation in words but to actually have that wonderful, unsaid, soulful things that happen between two beings. But also it's about understanding other life around you – which is fascinating anyway and it's constantly a wonder" (Interview #25).

It would appear that nature provides the context for that wordless connection between two beings and in the sharing with nature the link between the two appears to be enhanced.

According to the responses, there is no shortage of opportunities to engage children with nature. There are other constraints causing a perceived detachment as explained by the participants, and these become more apparent as this chapter unfolds.

4.2.2 Communicating with nature

A form of communication is required in order to connect with ecological communities. In response to a question about communicating with nature, about fifteen per cent of the interviewed participants stated that they used spoken words to do so – at least part of the time. These participants referred to talking to snakes that crossed their path, to plants and trees or to negotiate boundaries with kangaroos. Through the interviews, it seemed that this action of talking with flora and fauna was to convey the underlying feeling of empathy and connectedness. However eighty five per cent of participants expressed their communication with nature as unspoken and requiring skills to look beyond the physical. Nature was said to be “a presence as well as being present” (Interview #4). Following is a description of the unspoken connection with nature:

“It is unspoken communication but it is very real – like a recognition of being in the space. It flows in and out. It is a very active energy... It impacted on me very recently – driving into the Kari Forest – it is as though the air has a colour to it and going into that space you become one with the world you are going into” (Ferber, P., Interview #3).

Another participant said she would prefer not to speak but instead to play certain kinds of music to express her communication with nature. Music was part of nature in her representation and was described as the far better way for interpretation than words (Interview #25).

The synergy within the wordless communication and the seeming ability of nature to influence a situation is described below:

“You can sit in a coffee shop and enjoy a form of communication but when you remove yourself out of a heavily constructed environment into

something else, the communication you are sharing ... is ...non-verbal...
You're sharing it together and you don't have to acknowledge that, and you don't even have to consciously realise it most of the time. It is another form of communication that we are experiencing together. It is that experience in a natural space" (Interview #11).

The above statement seems to capture dynamism in the atmosphere that results from a close proximity to the natural world.

This representation of nature as dynamic appeared in 10 out of the 31 interviews and three out of the six workshops. This indicates that dynamism is perceived as a key element of nature, and an awareness of this energetic aspect is part of what is required to commune.

4.2.3 Other senses used in engaging with nature

Engaging with nature is described as a sensory act that can involve listening, observing, smelling, touching, tasting.

In the excerpt below, a participant recalls listening to the sounds of nature. In this quote the participant expresses a concern about detachment from nature in everyday work and life:

"...nature speaks to us. So if you are out there and you are actually listening, you will find that there are all kinds of sounds which are alien to you and which are fascinating. Even in starkness there is something happening. It may be a natural thing, a leaf hitting the ground or maybe the wind through the leaves or maybe a bird flying across the snow and you hear the fluttering of the wings. We don't have these experiences in our urban environment anymore" (Workshop #3).

It would appear that the reference to not having the experiences in the urban situation is linked to a diminished awareness of these natural activities in cities, rather than the activities not occurring. It may be that cities evoke a different focus relegating nature out of the picture.

Observation skills used to navigate through nature seem to be coupled with local knowledge of ecosystems in Aboriginal communities. This is seen in the description of observing nature provided by Professor Len Collard, Noongar¹⁶ Elder and Noongar language specialist at the University of Western Australia:

“If you use the *Beeliar Boordier* – the Swan River – as the centre of the world and for me, I guess it is, you head north of the river and the further you travel from the centre of my world to other places, you suddenly see the landscape change as you go. That is telling me that there are things that are happening. New people’s country. Different people. Or if you come back the other way from up north you come back down or you come up from down south, the closer you get to home, the more familiar the trees become and the more it feels like home. That’s my people. That’s my trees” (Collard, L., interview #10).

In the following example, another participant comments on the loss of contact with the natural environment because of a perceived desensitizing caused by urban living:

“I think we have lost quite considerably, our ability to hear different registers and that is one of the things, in a less urban environment, you do get that opportunity to hear more. A few years ago when I was living up in Carnarvon, one of the Aboriginal men I was working with took me out bush near Gascoyne Junction. We were heading toward Gascoyne Junction and there was this little creek that was running through. It was part of the Gascoyne River but it was a smaller version of it at that stage. It was the dry season anyway. The landscape was like a lot of our north-western landscape – very, very bare. A few scrubby trees here and there. Lots of red rocks. What he was showing me was the old camel trade route. And the funny thing was, as he walked along this river bank with nothing, nothing literally – just a few scrubby bushes and that’s it, you’d see the wheel tracks of the old

¹⁶ According to Kim Scott and Hazel Brown (2013) the Aboriginal people of the South West coast of Western Australia identify themselves as Noongar. Kim Scott is an Aboriginal Western Australian author and Professor of Writing at Curtin University. Hazel Brown is described as Scott’s elder.

traders so deeply imbedded in the stone and rock there that you could see man's passing literally. I thought it was an amazing metaphor. But by listening and observing [we notice] the marks of our progress, and also the marks of where we haven't been. The contrast of where the tracks were and the rest of that bare parched land was immense" (Workshop #3).

There were numerous participant responses regarding the sense of touch such as "getting your hands dirty". References to the sense of smell included "the smell of the earth" and the smell of coming rain. One story of a sensory connection with nature stands out as beyond the normal but it does demonstrate what is possible:

"I remember one time we were going up to the glacier that is where the Ganges starts. It's called the Gomukh, which means the mouth of the cow. It is water pouring out of this, maybe six-foot diameter hole in the ground. And just about a kilometre down from there, there was a *Sadhu* – a Hindu holy man. He was just in his loincloth and he was up to his waist in icy water. He was dipping himself, his whole head and coming out and doing his *namaskar*¹⁷ to nature ... I think human beings have evolved into weakness and nature is going to be there all the time in its strengths and its weaknesses" (Workshop #3).

The research participant narrating the story of the *Sadhu*, interprets the experience of seeing the holy man in the icy waters as the ability of the human species to adapt to extreme natural conditions without the need for anything other than the human form engaging with the fullness of the sensory capacity of the body, mind and perhaps spirit. (The spirit aspects will be explored further in Chapter Five.) It also implies the weakness of the human form because of the continual reliance on external factors and technologies to create an unnatural context of comfort. The narrator of the story seems to imply that whilst this context with the Hindu holy man was considered extreme, it serves as a reminder of what our human bodies and minds are capable of – but do not use.

¹⁷ *Namaskar* was explained, by the participant, as a spiritual greeting in prayer embodying an attitude of surrender and gratitude to the Divine.

The memories of sensory engagement with nature represented by participants were strong images. Many were current images and therefore recent sensory experiences. However, for the most, these strong sensory experiences were in the past implying that their current situation is detached from a deep connection with nature.

4.2.4 Actions resulting in engagement with or detachment from nature

One participant, who spoke knowledgeably about her experiences of caring for people, did not initially appear to have a positive connection with nature (Workshop #1). Yet by the end of the workshop, the participant acknowledged that through taking part in the workshop, and listening to other people's experiences, it made her aware that she had experiences of nature but had not identified them as such before. This participant was not alone in expressing such a situation. It was a comment raised in several interviews and workshops. It appeared that these experiences did not previously have a name or a place because they did not come up in daily interactions and therefore the link with nature did not seem to exist. This resonates with what another participant states. He says that nature is inherent in us: "Sometimes when you tell a story about the land or share with people about the land it opens their eyes to the land or [to their] experience of the land"(Interview #5).

A detachment from nature could be linked to actions in the name of education and professional development training that people go through, which instruct an undivided focus on the job at hand. This same attitude seems to apply to organisational culture, which does not appear to include involvement with the surrounding ecosystems. This is reflected in the next example.

A staff member in one organisation took the opportunity of the workshop to review her work practice in relation to nature and she asked her peers to 'give permission' to carry out some work outdoors – for example under a tree. Prior to this workshop, the staff said she felt guilty about carrying out some of her work

outdoors and closer to nature because she believed that work was meant to happen indoors (Workshop #1). It became known that one unit in the organisation actively encouraged, and had processes and programs in place for working close to nature, and that management supported this. In this situation, the workshop provided an opportunity for a conversation about nature to occur across the organisation.

One participant sees the passive engagement with nature as insufficient: “We must do and not just write about it and talk about it” (Interview #12). This act of doing was a common point made by many participants although the representation of ‘doing’ took different forms. It included a realisation of what needed to be done. Reference was made of the work being undertaken to promote biophilic cities¹⁸ through projects that bring nature into the urban context. As part of the conversation on biophilic processes there was a questioning of what is a daily dose of nature and how the body prompts actions to meet what it needs to survive:

“At a [xxx] meeting a couple of weeks ago we sat in an inside room, working day and night for five days and after a while we just got so out of touch. We just had to go outside even though there was a storm. We know that we need a daily dose of vitamin D levels, as a start, that we get from daylight. If you don’t get that daylight you start to feel it. But I think there is more to it and I think it is about wind and sounds of nature and seeing nature. Seeing the green colours and the movement of it. It is about hearing birds. That lifts the spirit. Now that is not just an aesthetic thing. It actually is needed because that is how we evolved, that’s how we grew and we are not so out of touch with nature ... I think we need to build nature into the city and into our daily lives” (Interview #17).

In the above humans are represented as having an inbuilt requirement to engage with nature. This is also supported in the following examples. This participant capitalises on the accessibility of nature in the city. She cites getting a dose of

¹⁸ According to Tim Beatley (2011) a biophilic city is “biodiverse” and “a city full of nature” (2011:45)

nature as compared to “washing your hair”. She advised that she routinely took short stops at Kings Park¹⁹ “probably twice a month – by myself – for an hour. I pull in off the road and I park in that 30 minute parking and go to the boab tree or somewhere close by and I just get back in my car” (Interview #22).

The next example tells of a simple action of walking in open spaces with an aware mind:

“Here is a narrative of place and ... when you, for example, walk through a street, a park, or wilderness, it is that full experience that you are wanting to try to take in.... an understanding of a sense of narrative of the place – of where you fit within the story of a place”(Interview #27).

4.2.5 Maintaining a sensory connection to nature through stories

Australian Aboriginal communities’ connection to nature through stories is seen in the following responses. Collard states that the engagement is retained “by sharing stories of country, by creating values and connecting people to the natural environment” (Collard, L., Interview #10).

Noongar Elders Morton and Vivienne Hansen, promote their knowledge of Noongar culture within their family and to the wider community at local and national levels. Morton Hansen states that the stories vary from one Aboriginal community to another but the commonality is that they are the basis for teaching about the connection to nature:

“Knowledge comes from different areas and knowledge is not always what is written. The written stuff is probably evidence of what is there. But there is a lot of oral knowledge. And with our people, the Noongar people and of course you talk about the *Wongai*, the *Yamaji*, the *Mari*, and the *Kuri*²⁰ – our knowledge is handed down through stories and through teachings” (Hansen, M., Workshop #5).

¹⁹ Kings Park is a botanical garden on the edge of the Perth central business district.

²⁰ Names of Australian Aboriginal communities from different parts of the country.

Vivienne Hansen shared many nature stories from the Noongar culture. They included how the Milky Way was formed and how fire came to be, involving the formation of the first grass tree and the *Mudja* or Australian Christmas tree. She has told these stories to schools and communities across Western Australia, emphasizing that these stories are from her family group and that other family groups have their own version of creation stories. In the following quote Vivienne Hansen expresses that a pre-occupation with money results in a lack of respect for the land:

“All these beautiful trees that they are chopping down - some of them have been in Australia for hundreds and hundreds of years. If they take those big Tingle trees, for example, we’ll never see one grow in our lifetime. There’s only a few left now. It’s like a lack of wanting to engage the people with the knowledge. You can’t change what has happened but had the English people been more open to the Aboriginal people, and learn from them their wisdom of why Aboriginal people didn’t farm the land, they would not have changed it so harshly. Aboriginal people did not need to clear the land. They were true environmentalists because they learnt to live with nature. They learnt to live with the land. Unfortunately European people did not see that they had a different outlook. They just wanted to see what could be cleared and what profit would be made, how much money they can make from those trees, how much money they can make from the oceans. They don’t think about how they are going to return that when they chop those trees down, how long it takes for those trees to regenerate” (Hansen, V., Workshop #5).

In the above response, the European perspective was seen as money and the biophysical world as a resource. The Aboriginal community’s focus is described as being as one with nature. Through stories an appreciation of the longevity of many communities of nature is fostered and sensory experience recounted.

The above views on sensory engagement with nature reflect different approaches that all lead to the same seeming innate desire for connection. However the

question must be asked if it is the norm for communities to view activities in nature as important or if there are reasons for people not to want a connection with nature. This is answered in the following section.

4.3 Mindsets determining the level of engagement with earth's biodiversity

Participants described various mindsets as factors that knowingly or unconsciously frame our approaches, decisions and actions regarding nature. Responses have been categorised under the following headings: city versus bush mentalities; words and phrases that cause tension; and sacred views about nature.

4.3.1 City versus bush mentalities

The seeming contrast between urban versus nature appears to bring about conflicting views of what is an acceptable aesthetic standard. It draws attention to the prevalent anthropocentric mindset that exists in cities. There is also dialogue about a counter movement to bridge the gap between cities and the bush through greening cities which is said to be happening locally and globally.

Differing views about aesthetics is expressed in the following story communicated by Thomas Scott. It tells of how a seven or eight year old dragon fruit tree in a community garden was destroyed in the name of 'neatness' and aesthetics:

"I had been nurturing the dragon fruit tree for a number of years in a slightly obscure but, to me, it was a sacred space in the community garden. It was... under the shelter of a beautiful tree and we had a week of work experience students from [xxx] school... On the last day they had some parents that had come in and they wanted some tasks to finish their week off. I said they could clean up the area... in a general area of the community garden... Before they had finished I went out there and witnessed this medusa of a dragon fruit tree which was 1.2 meters high, had many tendrils – arms of a dragon fruit tree – and I had been nurturing it for seven to eight years. And this particular parent had deemed that it was a mess and had absolutely destroyed it and cleared it away and put it in a pile against one of our compost bays and it was smashed to smithereens" (Scott, T. Interview #1).

The conflict in the above situation appears to be between an anthropocentric and nature based approach to determining aesthetic standards. The perceived differences between bush and city mindsets and theories are expanded in the Emergent themes section of this Chapter.

On the other hand, city mindsets appear to be influenced by a growing number of activities to reproduce and represent the city narrative to include nature. Community gardens are one of several nature based city initiatives identified by the interviewees. Others talked of biophilic urbanism and being involved in projects to green walls and green roofs. One such participant said:

“Nature is not an optional extra. It is often seen that way. It is a bit like the landscaping is an optional extra in housing developments these days. For an extra two or three thousand dollars you can have the landscaping done for you” (Interview #17).

The story of biophilic urbanism is one that is said to not only be happening in Australia but around the world (Interview #17). The need for such a program denotes that there is recognition of an existing detachment or impartiality to nature in cities that is seen as important to transcend. It also indicates that a greater bridging, rather than a division, between city and bush cultures is needed to better understand the environment and systems that are the enabler and foundation of human and other life forms.

The dialogue about the dragon fruit tree and biophilic urbanism serves to show the anthropocentric mindset that appears to be dominant in urban contexts. A way to transcend the urban and bush difference was stated by a respondent as a shift away from being human centric to becoming better engaged with the bigger system that we are a part of (Interview #16). There was an opinion expressed that science had contributed to this anthropocentric mindset. It was stated that a trust in human resilience – linked to an opinion of human superiority – could falsely lead to a belief that science can fix anything including nature (Interview #15).

Mindsets based on a lack of engagement in nature can result in rather superficial decisions that are not responsive to the dynamics of the biophysical world. This could be expressed as organising nature to fit anthropocentric outcomes that perhaps include the elimination of unpredictability. Doing so appears to desensitise people to the signs of natural occurrences.

4.3.2 Words, phrases and positioning causing tension

This discussion is placed separately because it relates to beliefs and mindsets underpinning words rather than about the mode of communication. The two words which caused tension are ‘creation’ and ‘sustainability’. Both of them appear in the Connectivity Matrix under the Nature column.

Creation

The phrase ‘creation and destruction’ were provided as a starting point to explore what is believed to be the foundation of nature. Foundation is defined as something without which nature would not continue to exist. The combination of the two words was contested by a number of participants. Some supported ‘creation’ but not ‘destruction’. This phrase prompted some participants to declare that they were not creationists²¹, they were evolutionists²² or the reverse. One suggested that creation was not only a ‘beginning of life’ term but used in the arts to represent a creative process. The advancement of science as stated, by a number of participants, supports evolution as the foundation of nature. There were other arguments about science and creation as expressed by a respondent:

“My point here is not to deny or to undermine the huge leaps and bounds that have been made through science but I feel that it is all because of what nature has to offer. It is not the other way around. It comes from nature. You’re adding to whatever exists in nature because it helps you to do it.

²¹ The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines creationism as a belief that God created all things out of nothing. A creationist would therefore believe that the theory of evolution is wrong.

²² According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, evolution is a biological process of slow change and development. An evolutionist would then be a person who supports the theory of evolution.

People might not be comfortable with the word Creator so we will use the word nature” (Interview #20).

Most participants tended to steer away from the debate about creation and evolution, opting for words and phrases like ‘web of life’, ‘cycle of life’, ‘change’, ‘feeling’, and ‘life’. One participant quoted Dun Scotus, the thirteenth century Franciscan theologian, in stating the foundation as: “It is there. It’s ‘Isness’ ” (Interview #4).

The word ‘dynamic’, previously mentioned in relation to communicating with nature, came up again in this context. Dynamism was described as “always in flux, always changing, always adapting” (Interview #5). It was stated to exist at all levels of nature including subatomic. The interviewee said “not even dead rocks would exist without subatomic activity” (Interview #28).

In one instance, the word ‘creation’ was linked to religion which in turn was referred to as the easy way out in answering the question: “If I was religious I would say it is God or something - and that is easy”(Interview #29). Another word that was suggested as a descriptor of the foundation of nature was ‘immutable’, with an accompanying narrative about mountains that appear to have been there forever. The interviewee states that it places us in awe of nature and possibly triggers some related fear of nature that has the ability of putting us in our place. This positioning of seeing ourselves as a speck within the vastness of the universe was considered an important basis for appreciation of the foundation of nature (Workshop #3).

The unease regarding nature and religion as conveyed by some participants, appears again in Chapter Five, which focuses on spirituality. This issue is discussed in greater depth at that point.

Sustainability

The use of the word ‘sustainability’ in connection with nature resulted in some resistance as well. ‘Environmental sustainability’ (see Concept 1) appeared as a

prompt. But it was sustainability on its own that seemed to cause tension amongst some participants. There were those who accepted it but it was not their chosen word: “In a sense [nature is] recognising who we are and sustainability is part of that” (Interview #4). Some identified sustainability as a scientific word that conjured up scientific information and caused a detachment rather than a connection because of the methods of undertaking science. It appeared that most tried to avoid the word ‘sustainability’ in representing nature. Preferred words were “mutual wellbeing”, “symbiosis” and “balance”. Symbiosis is also a scientific word but perhaps because it implies a connected state, it was seen as more acceptable in relation to nature.

There was a strong objection, from one participant, to linking sustainability with nature. It was interpreted as narrowing the complexity of sustainability:

“I do think it is important that we understand nature as part of understanding ecological systems. For some people that may be the spur to really get them to be concerned about sustainability. We would certainly get them to understand sustainability better because they would understand, for example, that there is no waste in nature. You don’t actually consume anything in nature. It is a completely cyclical thing... For me, nature per se isn’t what inspires me or drives me to be concerned about sustainability. For me it’s a simple calculation that life is good. What we are doing at the moment threatens life as we understand it. Therefore we have to change what we are doing. And when I say life is good, it is not just nature, it is everything. Sustainability is a worthwhile goal. I just wouldn’t link it to nature” (Interview #14).

The above definition of sustainability as life is possibly made because of a familiarity with the complexity of sustainability in matters other than the biophysical world. In this case metaphorically speaking, sustainability was seemingly positioned as the centre of the worldview. Whereas nature was also defined as life and as including everything (see defining nature towards the start of this chapter.) This could be explained with the intricacies within the ecological sphere. Nature, in this instance

appears to be situated as the centre of the worldview. The common word, in both arguments, is 'life'.

The two terms, 'nature' and 'sustainability', appear to be referring to a multiplicity of interrelated agendas. Sustainability seems to be associated more with science and governance whilst nature is seen as something that has greater personal connection.

There was a view offered by one participant that goes some way to resolving the perception of the word 'sustainability' as detached and objective through suggesting personalising sustainability:

“Sustainability applies to the natural system that we are considering. [We] ... would choose to retain it if we value it highly enough – provided that it doesn't get in the way of us living. Neurochemistry would bear this out - that you must have times of not being the actor, but being the observer – and sustainability would be still true in that sense. It's personal sustainability” (Interview #13).

The above point of view suggests that sustainability requires a reflective space as well as an analytical framework.

Human life expectancy

Hugo Llopis (Interview #21) tabled an original concept in relation to nature. It is stated here with permission. The concept is titled Llopis' Marathons of Life²³. Llopis is involved with the delivery of multi-levelled urban regeneration projects and he is also a marathon runner. He has developed a marathon-based analogy of the stages of life. The concept is based on averaging the life expectancy of human beings from Neanderthal times (30,000 years ago) up to the Victorian times (1850 - 1900). This average, achieved through applying creative licence, is said to be 42 years. Llopis equates that to the duration of a marathon — 42 kilometres. The age expectancy is now almost double that to about 84 in Australia - hence the concept of life as two

²³ More information on Llopis Marathons of Life can be found in Appendix 4.2

marathons. Reflecting on autopoiesis — the self-reproducing and self maintaining role of living beings to ensure the species survives — Llopis raises an important point: “We have twice as long to do more or less the same job”. This argument opens up an important consideration in the relationship of the human species in regard to their longevity, use of resources over this extended period, and whether or not this prolonged life span has any benefit to any other animate or inanimate form.

It is not so much that scientific words or scientific developments are inappropriate but rather that a stronger experiential component is included to represent the metaphysical dimensions in frameworks in which the words are used.

Anthropocentricity is also seen as an issue in the way a connection with nature is viewed.

4.3.3 Sacred views of nature

There were differing opinions amongst the participants about creation and evolution. The dialogue on the theme allowed for various opinions to be raised about the impact of religion on nature. One participant stated: “My mum used to say ‘we have got dominion over the earth’ so I guess a lot of Christians grew up feeling that the earth is here for our service”(Interview #2). This was a point she raised as to why Christians were not generally more open to a mindset of being part of nature. Another response in the same vein, states that particularly in “white European society”, there is a culture of dominance over the environment. In addition, the respondent explains that the Christian tradition is imbued with “the idea of ‘go forth and conquer’ – and nature is there to be conquered”(Interview #28).

A more accepted point of view on nature as sacred was expressed as follows: “nature is a way of talking about the character of the universe ... the character of God” (Interview #4). Another participant suggests that limitlessness and the boundlessness of nature may have lead people to start believing in nature as God. “I mean all of our original Gods are nature – whether it’s fire or worshipping the sky.

Only much more recently modernised religions have come around. Even Hinduism in its ancient forms – it wasn't called Hinduism then – did a lot of nature worshipping" (Interview #31).

The reverence of nature was seen in the research responses when it prompted reflection on values and attitudes. One respondent saw the sacredness of nature as teaching humility recognising that we are but a speck in the vastness of the universe (Interview #29). Nature as the enabler of values is seen in the following response in which the participant states that there is a sense of honesty when she is in nature. She claims that the best and most open conversations with family have been in the open paddocks surrounded by the vastness of nature. This environment is said to provide space for reflection that is not distracted by chores and outside mechanised or technological influences (Interview #9).

Such divergent views of the positioning of nature carry many assumptions. These matters will be explored further in the Emergent themes section at the end of this chapter and also in the Chapters on Spirituality and Governance.

4.3.4 Nature and spirituality as one and the same

The question of nature and spirituality being one and the same or two separate entities was asked in relation to the Connectivity Matrix. Participants were asked if the two columns (Nature and Spirituality) should remain separate or joined together.

For Australian Aboriginal participants, nature and spirituality were one and the same:

"Part of the old peoples' way of living with nature was their spiritual side that helped them live amongst their surroundings without destroying it. For example, the story about the Christmas tree. Because it flowers around December – the European Christmas, they called it the Christmas tree. But to Aboriginal people, the souls of Aboriginal people entered the tree so you didn't cut it down" (Hansen, M., Workshop #5).

Spirituality was also represented as a means of being in-tune with and aware of the presence of departed souls. The memory of the departed souls in Aboriginal culture is in this context recalled as the spirits of the “old people”:

“And the Sheok tree, we call the *Quell* tree. When you sit under that on a really hot day, because the leaves droop down and you get a little bit of a breeze under there, and when the wind blows through you can hear the spirits of the people talking to you. And if you are not feeling well and you sit under that tree, it is like a spiritual healing and all the little needles that fall off that tree, because it is similar to a pine tree, well my mother’s story is that it is the tears of the old people crying because you are taking time out and you are sitting there and you are listening to them – it is tears of happiness to heal you” (Hansen, V., Workshop #5).

Participants generally agreed that there was a strong link between spirituality and nature, however, only about a quarter of all participants suggested that spirituality and nature were one and the same. Three quarters suggested that the nature and spirituality columns should not be collapsed into one. This link between nature and spirituality is explored further in the next chapter.

4.4 Detachment from nature and ways to reconnect

This section focuses on how participants represented a detachment from nature occurring because of urban society pressures. Causes of alienation from nature are cited along with ideas for reconnecting with ecological communities.

4.4.1 Emotional links to nature

Participants’ responses indicate that a connection to or detachment from nature seems to inform how central the biophysical world is in decisions made in both work and life situations. In the earlier dialogue about the contrast between the city and the bush, some participants preferred the city. They believed that their views were correct and this resulted in tensions with participants who favoured the bush. This is a case where an emotional link to nature sees it stated as the true reality, as is expressed below:

“Nature is real life and all the other things are extra to requirement. To me nature is the basis. There is nothing bigger or more important...To me sociality feels a little false – the urban environment, the massive shopping centres” (Interview #18).

In the above statement, there appears to be an established connection with nature - an emotional intelligence²⁴. It therefore stands to reason that without this familiarity and comfort with nature there would be an emotional detachment from nature.

This following response picks up on the theme of emotional intelligence in stating the capabilities we seem to have lost though not engaging with nature:

“I think we have sharpened one intelligence too much to the detriment of the other – which is more the intuitive. I don’t know but maybe 30,000 years ago, an Aboriginal person interacting in an environment would have been in so many different levels of engagement with that environment whereas for us it is much more intellectual. Think of all the special intelligence that they would have had to be able to read the signals. They probably had sharper hearing and sensory [ability]” (Interview #29).

This disconnect is also linked with prioritisation of time: “I think people struggle with [time for nature] because of the pressure of life and technology. So there may be a will but they don’t know how to do it - particularly in the urban environment” (Workshop #1). Nature was expressed as an innate part of our being, also as a need to feel connected but the majority of people did not allocate time to this: “Nothing we are developing at the moment is about spending more time in nature. Everything is artificial now or becoming artificial and virtual. People don’t talk anymore, they text” (Interview #6).

Engaging with nature does not seem to be related to having an intelligence quotient, which according to Zohar & Marshall (2001: 39) is about “rational, logical, rule-

²⁴ Emotional intelligence or EQ is discussed in Chapter Two and in the Emergent themes section of this chapter

bound thinking". It may be that the associative, emotional experience of being in nature has not been allowed to develop because of a detachment from it. Consider the following comment from a participant that expresses a need for a guide to be able to navigate nature:

"I am not very skilled in being outdoors ... I love being in the desert but I don't feel I could be out there on my own because I don't know how to navigate that kind of territory. Even in the bush, I feel better if I have someone who is comfortable in nature" (Sofia, Interview #30).

A participant comfortable in and knowledgeable about nature suggested that the emotional connection is linked to being able to first identify the names of the different local flora and fauna. This participant also offers suggestions how, through existing processes, greater connections can be made:

"It is very hard to know anything unless we can name it ... It is a very deep thing. If you have a friend and you don't know their name, it is ridiculous ... I think this whole business of environmental sustainability is about being friends with nature, re-establishing that relationship that has often been cut off. So that means you have to learn a few skills about the nature of botany and zoology and so on. But this is not hard to teach. Just the popular names are enough. You don't have to have a Latin name. In the city we have weather reports and people talk about the weather all the time. Weather is part of nature. It is being able to understand that weather - why Western Australia doesn't get rain for six months of the year and if it does it's coming from the north and then suddenly like today we get our first rain from the south. It should be a period of great rejoicing. But apart from "it's going to rain today" – there is no difference made about it in the weather reports or anything. So understanding the weather and understanding what that means for nature here are needed"(Interview #17).

Collard expressed the connection as providing different and dynamic dimensions to objects: "I think it's connectedness and the retention and the capacity to investigate it, communicate and engage it in a meaningful way. Otherwise a tree just becomes

a piece of wood chopped down and turned into an object”(Collard, L., Interview #10). This implies that a detachment and lack of appreciation of the complexity of nature can lead to its demise and to it being a resource, whereas a connection to it increases the respect. Another participant shared a similar view:

“Currently, in thinking of a big system like the Rangelands of Western Australia, the governance is divorced from the nature of the land. The governors have an incomplete understanding and their decisions are dominated by political expediency and self-survival in the system – unconscious of the dynamics of the natural system that they are governing. This is not a judgement that they don’t know the system. They are just unconscious of the dynamics of the natural system. The more there is consciousness of nature and spirituality the better the decisions will be”(Interview #5).

A connection to nature is represented as an emotional link and a familiarity of its forms and cycles. Without this bond and awareness of its dynamism, nature is depicted as an object, a resource. The matter of governance in relation to decisions about nature is further explored in Chapter Seven.

4.4.2 Causes of alienation from nature

Participants responses were not unanimous on decreasing time spent in nature.. This section examines stated causes for alienation from nature along with suggestions that things were improving, and green spaces were now becoming a conscious part of urban planning.

With regard to causes of disaffection from nature, responses ranged from practical personal reasons to the consideration of far-fetched theories:

“I’ve always wondered whether the Caucasian race has come from another planet because we have no connection with the planet like the Indigenous peoples. We have such a separation from nature and I think that’s why we cause so much havoc” (Interview #24).

This estrangement from the planet is a representation of the alienation, and therefore detachment from nature. Westernisation, seen as rampant through most urban centres of the globe, is seen as the cause.

One respondent says that as a boy he was very much a part of nature but that had changed and he no longer spends “nearly enough time” there, saying “[he has] lost way too much contact”. He sates the reason why:

“I have been successfully alienated from it by my culture and primarily by the economic system. To me nature is key but the market economy and the advanced capitalist society are truly alienating and there is no question in my mind that it has done enormous damage to humankind. And it makes it very hard to be part of nature” (Interview #28).

The economic and legal structures that exist also appear to have an ability to erode what humans seem to intuitively need and replace these with economic requirements through creating competition and urgency to win funds, earn money, market goods and services. Even those who work in environmental sustainability feel that their time with nature has suffered: “Although my work is in the environment - I am probably not the right person to even talk about this ... I’m running too fast to really notice things” (Interview #24). This same person tells of extensive time experiencing nature during other phases of her life.

Not only are the regulations, globalised systems and the pace connected with achieving the goals that appear to alienate the Western Australians interviewed. One participant cites the design and management of the built environment as another cause for the detachment:

“When I think of nature, I think of the word ‘natural’: rhythm, flow, birth, life, death, unpredictability, and change. Maybe that’s why I don’t easily connect the built environment with the natural world. Nature to me is alive and thriving, whereas the built environment feels more static, controlled and at its worst can be toxic and life sapping. The more controlled the built environment, the less connected I feel to nature – because it is built to be

predictable, controlled for comfort, ease and security and organised to fit into a time schedule or an idea of how things should be rather than allowing the natural rhythms of the day to determine how we live” (Sofia, Interview #30).

The above statements provide the argument supporting an alienation from nature. However, there were a number of participants within both the interviews and the workshops who believed that the causes of alienation are being addressed in recent years through environmental conservation actions, awareness campaigns and research that has resulted in changes in policy and regulations to protect the environment. One participant states that space for immersion in nature in Perth has “probably increased by the provision of parks, preservation of wetlands where the road was going through” (Interview #4). In relation to this, another participant said it was the affluence of Australia that enabled local governments to invest in parks and other places that make nature accessible in the city (Interview #20). A respondent spoke of an increase in vertical gardens or green walls and a growing awareness of the role of nature (Interview #2). In further support of this view is the following statement: “Look at what is being covered in the news and what the articles are saying. Ten years ago people didn’t market themselves as much as they do now. We see organics or eco-accommodation. Now we look for it” (Interview #11). Changing strategies and rules can be seen in the following lines: “For a while, there were a lot of suburbs being created that weren’t even walkable. I think we might be reversing that quite consciously for people to be more healthy – and I think that allows more time for nature as well”(Interview #13).

While there appear to be many causes of alienation from nature, responses suggest that institutions are starting to address these issues. Investment to counteract the isolation and bring nature into the city is occurring and readily available.

4.4.3 Ideas for reconnecting to nature

Participants’ ideas for reconnecting with nature are grouped into two areas: activities related to going outdoors into nature; and modelling the change

It important to note that being in nature is described, by a number of participants, as having not only the mindset of connectivity but also the skill to let go of people focused networks and allowing nature to fill the conscious thinking space:

“In a sense it is about abandoning the community social structures. In a sense it is about abandoning those corporate systems because you can share nature with a complete stranger who has no relationship to you in a community sense. They come from a different culture, you’ve never met before but can go down somewhere and be confident that you are experiencing a fairly similar reaction. If there is sun shining and the sound of water trickling, it doesn’t matter where you come from, as humans we respond to nature” (Interview #11).

It is this essence that appears to be sought after in the following suggestions of ways to reconnect with ecological communities.

Going into nature

There was a desire expressed to go beyond the traditional approach to business and to include “some outdoor activities to get more direct contact with nature” (Workshop #2). This notion generated some excitement in the room and the ideas started to flow: “We need more camping trips”, “or group surf lessons”, “more visits to Rotto”²⁵. Various outings to other natural locations were also proposed: “We should do a Leeuwin trip – as team building”²⁶. “What about down the Bibbulmun Track?”²⁷. A senior staff member in the organisation regularly coordinated excursions to this woodland trail.

In one workshop there was a drive to get people “out of the urban situation into nature. It’s becoming worse these days with kids locked into their Xbox and computer screens” (Workshop #4). There was a fear expressed that people didn’t actually have a need for nature and that opportunities should be created because of

²⁵ Rotto is the local name given to Rottnest Island which is off the mainland of Western Australia west of Fremantle.

²⁶ Cape Leeuwin is the most south-westerly mainland point of Australia.

²⁷ This is a 1000 km long pedestrian track.

the demise of the home backyard and the lack of access to the natural world from within the urban context. There was a recognition of the extra responsibility in caring for the “continuum of the Swan Coastal plain life community”²⁸ to make sure that this ecosystem is sustainable. Several activities were stated that were currently happening in the region funded by government, business and not-for-profit agencies with the assistance of volunteer groups. Ideas to enhance these were also shared. It was a commonly held opinion that access to nature was the priority issue.

Modelling the change

There were examples of existing activities with a greater engagement with nature. In these situations, participants themselves had chosen to make changes in their life to enable more time in nature. One such person is Patti Ferber, who initiated and manages the Creativity and Cultural Development team at Nulsen Inc.²⁹ Ferber has changed her own lifestyle to maintain a pace and awareness so that she can observe, listen and respond to signs and situations in her work and life that would be made invisible at a faster speed (Ferber, P., Interview #3):

“I see an increase in the engagement with nature because of the places that I choose to spend more time in. The people in those places help create an awareness of both nature and spirituality. It is a personal choice” (Ferber, P., Interview #3).

Others were involved in caring for injured wildlife and many other aspects of environmental sustainability practices. They engaged regularly in favourite places in nature whilst involved in demanding fulltime work.

The knowledge within the workshop participants was in itself encouraging, showing that dialogue on nature enabled a sharing that was largely appreciated and valued. Examples of integrating nature into built environment were talked about. Among

²⁸ The Swan Coastal plain is the name given to a region and surrounds that tracks the Swan River’s path to the Indian Ocean. It comprises of a diversity of soil types and food sources to support flora and fauna unique to the area as stated in McPherson and Jones (n.d), Geoscience Australia, and Mitchell, Williams and Desmond (2000), Department of Environment and Conservation

²⁹ Nulsen Inc. is an organisation that supports people with a range of disabilities including intellectual, physical and acquired brain injuries.

those mentioned by participants were the works of Andy Goldsworthy whose sculptures forge links between nature and cities; Gaudi – whose architectural work became the vehicle for his passions of life, nature and religion; and Hundertwasser whose work to decorate a block of apartments in Vienna incorporates hundreds of trees on balconies and the roof with an interesting exterior façade creating a green oasis in the heart of the city. As part of this conversation, were statements that artists needed to become more involved in bringing nature into urban design in Western Australia (Workshop #6).

Responses regarding reconnecting with nature indicate that an awareness of the situation and a concerted effort is required to balance people focused activities and time in nature.

4.5 Emergent themes

In this section, emergent themes from the chapter on nature are discussed in greater depth. The topics covered are: definitions of nature; the importance of a physical connection to the natural world; and the findings regarding whether there is a detachment from nature. The latter section includes mindsets and ideologies that connect or cause alienation from nature, along with ideas and practices to foster engagement in current times. It is an objective of this research to explore worldviews on spirituality and nature with regard to corporate systems and sustainability and therefore the opinions of authors relevant to the emergent themes are included in this section and analysed alongside the participants' responses.

4.5.1 The resultant definition of nature

The definitions of nature arising from this research are varied but fall into three major categories: nature defined in its biophysical form - and the scope of the physical form ranged from what is found on planet earth to what is known to exist in the universe; a relational sense – in which nature is said to be able to evoke a phenomenon of being connected to it; and nature represented through spiritual dimensions. In some instances, these expressions of engagement with nature are

stated as requiring a particular mindset in order to engage with it. The emergent definition of nature is stated below in Finding 4.1.

Finding 4. 1: The emergent definition of nature

Nature is defined as biophysical forms found on planet earth and the universe. It is a corporeal entity that has the capacity to evoke a transcendent state of being and a sensation of profound connection to it.

This definition of nature complements the term biophilia, which according to Kellert (2012: xii), was first defined by Fromm in its literal Latin translation as 'love of life'. He continues by saying that Wilson later defined it as a more complex, inherent connection to nature. It is this characteristic of a relationship with nature that has been consistently represented through this research. It also reflects Naess' (1995, 2008) deep ecology concepts and the review of Aldo Leopold's (Caputii 2011) profound experience of the new connection he gained through witnessing the dying moments of the mother wolf that he had shot (see Chapter Two).

4.5.2 The value of sensory engagement with nature

Participants found it difficult to find a dividing line between what is nature and what is not. This can be read as recognition of our innate connection with nature and therefore an inability to separate human constructs from nature. Experiencing nature first hand is considered vital. A lack of engagement with nature is stated by participants as stemming from: a lack of childhood experiences with nature; an inability to 'speak' and 'listen' to the language of the biophysical world; limited scope for the inclusion of the dynamics of nature in scientific reporting and in policy and planning process. These aspects are captured in Finding 4.2 as stated below and detailed following.

Finding 4. 2: The value of sensory engagement with nature.

Greater engagement with nature could enhance our physiological and sensory capabilities, increase awareness of nature as dynamic, decrease our reliance on

human constructed systems, and be a catalyst that fosters sustainable lifestyles and technology.

Participants' responses suggesting that children should be introduced to nature is supported in the Louv's (2005) work. Developing habits that create a level of comfort about engaging with nature is said to begin in early childhood and continued through informative years in order to avoid what Louv (2005) calls "nature-deficit-disorder" (2005:109). These activities were thought to be the responsibility of both parents and schools.

The work of Louv (2005) supports participants' opinions regarding the role of nature in the lives of children. Based on studies of the effect of nature on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Louv draws the conclusion that nature therapy reduces ADHD symptoms. He reverses this view in stating that ADHD could therefore be aggravated by a deficiency of nature (2010:109). In his book, he explains in great lengths how new regulations regarding nature reserves keep children from playing in the bush and building tree houses and engaging with other such childhood activities (2010: 146). Louv suggests initiatives such as keeping chickens, adopting a tree and encouraging children to volunteer for conservation projects as a means of getting their daily dose of nature (2010: 363-364). He quotes Gardner's work on intelligences and in particular cites "nature smart" as an intelligence that people like

Charles Darwin³⁰ and Rachael Carson³¹ had in abundance (2010: 72).

Responses indicated that the dynamism of nature was complex and words alone were insufficient to fully engage with it. It was said to require all the five senses, plus an awareness of a metaphysical phenomenon to engage with nature. While this metaphysical element appears complex, a connection with it is expressed as innate. These multi-dimensional elements of nature lend to it being represented as dynamic.

³⁰ Charles Darwin was a geologist and renowned for his contribution to the theory of evolution (Australian Dictionary of Biography).

³¹ Rachel Carson's work on banning the pesticide known as DDT earned her the reputation of starting the environmental movement (Hawkins 2007: 56-57).

The dynamic quality of music was referred to as a closer depiction of the phenomenon experienced when communicating with nature. This fits well with the work and findings of Walter Ong (2012) who refers to sound as the origin of all language: "Sound cannot be sounding without the use of power ...all sound ... is 'dynamic'"(2012: 32) It would appear that it is the dynamic quality of sound that makes it able to capture the fullness of expression and intention whereas words, for typographically oriented cultures, "tend to be assimilated to things, 'out there' on a flat surface. Such 'things' are not so readily associated with magic, for they are not actions, but are in a radical sense dead, though subject to dynamic resurrection" (Ong 2012: 33). This takes the dynamic quality of nature into the metaphysical, which will be explored further in Chapter Five - Spirituality.

An engagement with nature has been described as occurring with various levels of sensory skills and capacity. Examples provided by participants range from a desire to spend some time in the sunlight or outdoors and accessing what is easily available, to situations where extreme environmental conditions exist that could test the sensory capacity and experience of a person to engage with the biophysical world. Most of the provided examples of sensory engagement listed with nature were within contexts that were in relatively close proximity to technologically driven comforts. The encounters with nature, in these situations, were incidental and not demanding any high level of sensory skill. These examples however, did indicate a need to maintain contact with nature in order to sustain sensory ability.

4.5.3 Engagement through stories

Many of the stories told by Morton and Vivienne Hansen appear to represent a time when the universe, the land and life on the land come together. The stories emerge as a salient connector to the land and to the interrelated dynamism between all things. A reductionist account of these views and rituals would only partially represent them, and the dynamic metaphysical aspects of the link with the eco communities would be missed.

Finding 4.3 Links to nature through stories

Stories engage us in nature's dynamism, provide us with occasions to use and develop our sensory and reflexive skills and provide us the ability to be more aware of eco-communities to which we are a part.

The stories told by Morton and Vivienne Hansen and indeed by many of the participants, could be considered larger than everyday life – giving them memorable qualities. Ong (2012) refers to qualities that make stories outstanding as an important part of oral culture, and essential for remembering and recounting them. The oral tradition practice of story telling seems to include what Ong (2012: 138) refers to as “noetic³² structures and procedures of a sort quite unfamiliar to us and often enough scorned by us”. In describing oral culture mnemonics, Ong (2012: 34-35) points out that to enable thoughts to be recalled in societies where oral communication is key, the communities have to create an impression through techniques such as selective choice of words, reference to visual contexts and symbols, as well as dynamic, captivating delivery.

There were stories that applied to the urban context and were used in relation to exploring narratives of place. In these cases, the participants were applying sensory skills to unravel the stories of place in order to find or create a sense of connection. To explain this in a different way, the stories of connections with nature, be it in the bush or in narratives of urban place, seem to demonstrate reflectivity, the ability of stories to engage a person in the narrative and become a part of it. To do this, the narrative appears to capture a more holistic appreciation of place through engaging in a ‘thick description’ that includes the surroundings, experiences, relationships and dynamics that occur in the space in great detail (Geertz 1973: 6; Sergi and Hallin 2011: 192). This is in sharp contrast to the urban management systems that, according to Deming (quoted by Senge 1990), foster a focus on short-term metrics or measurements, devalues the intangibles, and only measures three per cent of

³² The science of ‘noetics’ is explained as “knowing how we know”(Hartley in Ong 2012:xx).

what really matters (Senge 1990: xiv). However, no supporting information is provided about how that percentage is arrived at.

4.5.4 Nature's ability to prompt multilayered and divergent conversations

The need to recognise our interdependence or co-existence with the biophysical world rather than the anthropocentric approach appeared in a number of the interviews. However there were elements that challenged this inter-relatedness such as: ethnocentric attitudes towards the city versus the bush; the use of certain words such as sustainability that seem to cause tensions; sacred views about nature; and differing positions regarding spirituality and nature as one or as two separate entities. Nature is the common ground within the divergent perceptions.

Some representations of views in connection to nature focused on the intangible aspects such as skills that teach us to empty our thoughts, be open-minded, and able to shift our mind into a different consciousness – perhaps akin to what Schumacher calls a higher consciousness required to transcend divergent thinking (1977:123). However, other attitudes are linked to physical representations of the biophysical world as depicted below.

The city versus bush divide

A city versus bush divide impacting on what could be seen as unnatural aesthetical standards in cities may cause tension. Its cause is detachment from nature. Some city dwelling participants who had strong connections to the bush did not see a barrier separating the two areas. Although there were responses which indicate that the city was causing a false reality.

Giblett (2011) states that the city is defined against the bush and therefore its difference is emphasized. He also claims that the city defends itself against the bush (2011: 129). In the light of Giblett's argument the destructive action on the Medusa dragon fruit tree, as cited earlier, can be understood as a city dweller's defence of the aesthetic 'standards' of the city and a line drawn to keep the bush out. There are currently movements to bridge this divide. Biophilic design is one such strategy.

According to Beatley (2011), an example of a biophilic design indicator used to gauge the level of nature in the city is a “bird-friendly rating system” for new buildings (2011:19). In this scheme, builders and developers receive certification on the status of their buildings with regard to the opportunities they create for a bird presence, this can also be a marketing strategy.

The separateness of the city from nature in the wider Australian context can be observed in ABC’s Lateline television program of 21st October 2013. In this case urban dwellers are said to have opted to move to the bush for lifestyle changes. However, they do not have the knowledge and experience of the bush resulting in devastating consequences. On that program, fire scientist Professor David Bowman of the University of Tasmania emphasized the importance of knowing our natural environment. He talked about the choice people make about living in the bush without understanding the fundamentals of the Australian bush and essentially what it means to be an Australian. Bowman said that Australians “are a people who live in the land of fire” (Lateline 2013). He also implies a mindset of reliance on science to solve things when he stated: “no science can give us certainty of what is going to happen” (Lateline: 2013). In relation to this The Age, on 19th April 2009, quoted Dr Angela Rasuga of Charles Stuart University as saying that only two per cent of people making a ‘tree change’³³ lifestyle move, had researched the new location and ninety per cent of those surveyed said they were disenchanted as it was not what they had imagined. Only 14 per cent moved for environmental reasons (Munro 2009).

Opinions based on a lack of engagement in nature can result in rather superficial or romanticised decisions about nature, as they do not sufficiently consider the dynamics of the ecosystems. This could be expressed, as organising nature to fit anthropocentric outcomes, including the view that it is possible to be detached from its unpredictability. This apparent disconnectedness from nature can have implications for humans’ ability to acclimatise to the new conditions of the changing

³³ A ‘tree change’ is a term used to describe relocating from a metropolitan city to an inland location in regional Australia in search of a new life style.

climate. It can also impede the prioritisation, development and implementation of sustainable resources, designs and technology.

Words that caused tension

In investigating responses to the Nature column of the Matrix, two words stood out as a cause of tension. These were 'creativity' and 'sustainability'. Participants seemed tired of debates on concepts and terminologies about 'creativity' and 'evolution' and disputes around the word 'sustainability'. Most were searching for ways to transcend the divides rather than to get trapped in the politics around them.

The word 'creation' was challenged but that was in relation to unacceptance of towards some aspects of religion. With regard to divergent views about religious and sacred associations with nature, there appeared to be a wanting to go beyond the divide and to find common ground in values, ethics and an awareness of nature as engendering qualities such as humility and honesty in people. This is covered in more detail in the next chapter, which focuses on spirituality.

The word 'sustainability' was not the word of choice for participants when relating to an intended outcome of engagement with nature. The reason for this appeared to be because it does not immediately imply connection or collaboration, as do words like symbiosis and mutual wellbeing.

The issues of sustainability, according to Sachs (1999) range from the oil crisis to reliable long-term availability of natural resources. He states that the concern about sustainability is not so much about the "health of nature" but rather "the continuous health of development" (Sachs 1999: 34). Sachs also links sustainability with what he calls "Western certainties" named as:

[P]rogress, growth, market integration, consumption and universal needs, all notions that are part of the problem, not of the solution. They cannot but distract attention from the urgency of public debates on our relationship with nature, for they preclude the search for societies that live graciously

within their means, and for social changes that take their inspiration from indigenous ideas of good and proper life (Sachs 1999: 28).

As stated above, Sachs supports the need for more public debate on how we relate to nature. Some participants' responses concurred with Sachs's view. The statements that expressed disagreement with the word sustainability appeared to be regarding the current predominant association between sustainability and the detached approach of both science and bureaucracy. The sentiment from participants was presented as a need to move towards connecting on an emotional and spiritual level in order to feel a part of ecosystem rather than separated from it. The word 'sustainability', as is currently perceived by a number of participants, did not appear to achieve that. Through participant responses and the literature reviewed on this matter, the frameworks in which scientific and bureaucratic systems operated appear to require a stronger representation of the experiential and wonderment in order for the different metaphysical aspects of sustainability to be included. This is reflected in the emergent definition of nature that encompasses a physical, quantifiable form as well as a metaphysical dimension.

A change in perception of the word 'biophilia' occurred when Wilson redefined it from the original word coined by Fromm (as stated in Kellert 2012). Perhaps sustainability can be redefined in a similar way.

Finding 4.4: Sustainability redefined to include the dynamic elements of life

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| A redefinition of sustainability is needed to capture areas such as science, governance and policy as well as the dynamic qualities of life. |
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so that future interpretations of the word can capture areas such as science, governance and policy as well as metaphysical dimensions.

4.5.5 Nature expressed as sacred

This section is not about sacredness in relation to religions but rather in connection with the sense of wonderment and transcendence. This experience is described as an innate phenomenon that transcends the elements of socio-cultural and religious boundaries. The innate quality is similar to that described in biophilia (Wilson in

Kellert 2012). However, in this context, it can seem to go beyond a feeling that exists in everyone, to an experience of something that is revered.

Finding 4.5: Nature expressed as sacred

Nature is expressed as sacred when it is associated with an experience of wonderment or transcendence.

Changing anthropocentric mindsets towards one that recognises the interdependence within ecosystems is considered in participant responses as essential to achieving environmental sustainability. There is extensive literature that expresses both sides of the argument of human dominance over nature, some of which is captured in Paul Collins' (2010) writings on the topic. Collins, in a chapter on 'Environmental Thugs', highlights the view of the American historian Lynn White who labels Christians as the greatest of environmental thugs and describes Christianity as the most anthropocentric religion in the world. This is because of the Christian axiom that gives humans 'dominion' over nature, which implies that its purpose is to serve humankind. Collins (2010) says that White's views would still hold sway today, and that is proven to be the case in this research as several participants support the claim that Christianity is perceived as anthropocentric. Collin's argument goes further and takes the dominion angle beyond Christianity stating that all humans, regardless of their religious persuasion are essentially anthropocentric. He states that humans have been destroying pristine environments wherever they settled (in Collins 2010:107-109). This does indicate that the mindset of humans as being above nature is a long-standing trait and most likely an in-built survival mechanism. Perhaps then, confronting this trait is an important transiting step in changing human mindsets to achieve environmental sustainability.

"Nature worshipping" is borne out in the writing of Karen Armstrong (2009: 8-9) who refers to the underground labyrinth in the Pyrenees documented by Doctor Herbert Kuhn in 1926. The artworks in this cave, deemed to be sacred, are "spectacular engravings: mammoths, bison, wild horses, wolverines, and musk

oxen". Armstrong (2009) draws a comparison of the sacredness demonstrated in the cave to Heidegger's concept of 'being' as "a fundamental energy that supports everything that exists". She suggests that documents from Neolithic and pastoral societies provide evidence that this all-encompassing state of 'being' was the transcendental sacred space – and not 'a Being' as pertaining to 'a' God (2009:11). This interpretation of a transcendental spiritual dimension produced through reverence and engagement with nature as a state of being is significant. It shifts what is often perceived as superficial nature worshipping and animistic idol worshipping, to nature becoming an entry point to a different dimension of life – a metaphysical, space.

4.5.6 Defining when a detachment from nature exists

In this section, there is an analysis of participants' responses to the question about whether there is a detachment from nature. This includes observations on selective engagement with and the perceived causes of a distancing from nature and strategies to remedy this. There is discussion about Environmental Technology Management (ETM) as being part of the solution.

Based on the empirical material collected for this study and related readings the following is offered as an explanation to when a detachment from nature exists:

Finding 4.6: When a detachment from nature exists

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| A detachment from nature occurs when there is an inability to let go of human imagined constructs and simply be in nature. |
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According to Kellert, the impartiality to nature is the worst it has been in human history:

Probably no society has been so deeply alienated as ours from the community of nature, has viewed the natural world from a greater distance of mind, has lapsed to a murkier comprehension of its connections with the sustaining environment (Kellert 2012:79).

As evidenced in this chapter, Kellert's view concurs with the findings in this research that there is a perceived detachment from nature.

Just as there were opposing views about the suitability and relevance of terms such as 'sustainability' in relation to nature, responses regarding a detachment to nature were not unanimous. The majority of participants agreed that, through their personal experience and observation, there is a greater detachment from nature in our current society. This is stated as driven by various causes including the demands of the corporate system, lifestyle pressures, the way in which cities are designed, and the attitudinal and physical city versus nature divide. Equally, it is also seen to be about being able to let go of social and corporate structures to simply be in nature. Involvement in nature is said to increase and decrease at different stages of life due to changing priorities and responsibilities.

Engagement with nature appeared to bring the biophysical world front and centre in a person's consciousness. From experiences described by participants, a strong attachment to nature breeds a love of it that translates to a desire to bring nature closer to the living and working environment, and also to immerse oneself in eco-communities.

Based on the information collected in this research it has become clear that there is an overwhelming agreement from the Perth participants of an observed and experienced detachment from nature. There was also a sadness represented in this realisation. Many expressed the feeling that they missed the nature they used to engage with on a regular basis and longed to turn that around.

A detachment from nature was also seen as embedded through educational and professional development training that instructs complete focus on the job at hand. Whilst social wellbeing is now included in some work contexts, nature is not. This is reflected in Berry's (1999) statement which stresses that the four key establishments required to build a sustainable world are: governments, universities, religious traditions and corporations. He states that these institutions "are failing in

their basic purposes. They all presume a radical discontinuity between nonhuman and the human modes of being, with all the rights and all inherent values given to the humans”(1999:72).

Some participants, suggested that the detachment from nature was starting to decrease in both personal lives and working cultures because of conscious individual efforts and decisions, and also because of a greater awareness about climate change, the need to conserve energy resources and eat healthier. However it was agreed that while a connection to nature was seen to be increasing, there still was not enough time spent in nature and access to it was still too distant for most.

4.5.7 Causes of alienation from nature

Westernisation is recognised by participants as providing many educational, health and other benefits. However it is also perceived as the major cause of alienation from the natural world. An observed challenge for Westernisation and its trappings is the apparent conflict with indigenous peoples’ way of life. However there seems to be a growing appreciation of the dynamics and complexities of these strongly oral tradition communities.

Sachs (1999) expresses the anthropocentric approach in economic globalization forces a “new colonization of nature”(1999:147). According to him deregulation and re-regulation of markets are to support free trade. In these actions, he claims, what was created was the legal framework for a global economic space (Sachs, 1999: 147-148). It gave the power to economics over the laws of nature and contributed to ecosystems being alienated with the new regulations seen as the norm.

Cullinan (2011) quotes Swimme and Berry in using the term ‘Cosmogenetic Principle’ which refers to three qualities that are essential in the laws of nature: differentiation, autopoiesis and communion (Cullinan, 2011: 79). In suggesting an approach to counter the way laws have colonised nature and to allow it to operate freely and in an enduring manner once again, Cullinan (2011) states that it is important to create new legal structures. In these new forms, he states, it is

essential to include the laws and principles of the universe (Cullinan, 2011: 78). This appears to be happening in some places as seen with the Rights of Nature being included in the Ecuador Constitution³⁴. Whilst much needs to be done, there is a role for policies, regulations and technologies to counteract the causes of alienation to nature and this is explored next.

A number of practical suggestions were made regarding ways to reconnect with nature as outlined earlier in the chapter. Included in this is the importance of education about nature. Particular reference is made in this section to Llopis' Marathons of Life concept and its inference of an imbalance created by, not only the increase in population, but by the doubling of the life expectancy.

Participants suggested that knowing the names of flora and fauna and being familiar with the basics of ecosystems would help. In either of these situations – an interest or knowledge of the place though knowing the names – there is an inferred feeling of comfort. This makes engagement with nature a positive experience. Such an aspect requires the creation of more opportunities to teach children and adults alike about the ecosystems in the area of their work or in community.

The connection factor could also be linked to associative thinking patterns that Zohar and Marshall outlined in their account of Emotional Intelligence (EQ). This links the various kinds of emotions with sensory experiences with the environment in which they take place (Zohar & Marshall, 2001:50). Zohar and Marshall also state that it is through EQ that we become familiar with routines, patterns and frameworks. It is said to be “the body’s intelligence”, its survival mechanism as well as the mechanism used to achieve well in sports and arts or even navigate within a place. As a context becomes familiar, the neural networks associated with EQ are formed and strengthened if they are used often (2001:50). As stated by Zohar and Marshall: “neural elements that fire together gradually tend to become more strongly interconnected” (Zohar & Marshall, 2001: 52). Therefore a city person

³⁴ The Edmund Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University has produced an English translation of the 2008 Republic of Ecuador Constitution.

would have strong emotional intelligence regarding cityscapes and contexts whilst a person who has strong nature connections will feel at home in the bush. Without the emotional intelligence and neural networks established, the knowledge of the bush would be theoretical without the consciousness of the dynamics of these ecosystems. This could explain the low rate in implementation of theories and policies that require a change of process, as they need regular repetitions before becoming routine. Without this the brain appears not to be 're-wired' to accept the new ways.

The need to have easy access to nature was raised by participants many times throughout the research this has been reinforced by several authors (Beatley 2011, Kellert 2012, Giblett 2011) referred to earlier in this chapter and in Chapter Two. Whilst access to nature might be dependant on several factors outside an individual's control, it is within an individual's power to prioritise time to be in nature. Several participants demonstrated this through lifestyle choices and setting both time and physical boundaries primarily between the corporate and natural worlds. Others have made it possible to bring the natural world into corporate life through nature-based activities for work teams, through encouraging volunteering in environmental conservation areas and through opportunities to share knowledge on how others all over the world have reconnected with nature.

Llopis' Marathons of Life concept was tabled earlier in this chapter. In it, Llopis questions, from a biological standpoint, the purpose of the increased expectancy of human life from one marathon (42 years) to two marathons (84 years). He uses this concept to explore various life issues. However, in applying his concept to this research, it implies not only a burden of population on ecosystems by its exponential growth but also by the impact of the doubling of life expectancy.

Environmental scientists have considered the issue of population. Chetow claims that the IPAT formula (Impact = Population x Affluence x Technology) was developed by Ehrlich and Holdren to emphasize the point that population is a major issue in the environmental crisis. The formula has also drawn attention to the role

of technology in environmental sustainability as a reconciler of economic and environmental goals (Chetow 2001:15,20). There is evidence of changes occurring in technology made through an awareness of the devastation caused to ecosystems. Annandale et al (2006:3) introduces Environmental Technology Management (ETM) as an emerging umbrella technology category that is drawing academic and professional communities together to lessen the impact on the planet's resources. A circular economy referred to by McDonough and Braungart (2006:33) and explored further in their cradle-to-cradle concept³⁵ is one such example of new technology design and policy with environmental sustainability as the core.

These advancements in green technology and policy appear to go some way in addressing environmental sustainability. The advancements in eco-focused technology show that many are working to alleviate the burden on the biophysical environment. The responses indicate that technology creates efficiencies but the time gained is replaced by more production, resulting in more resources used, instead of time for connection to nature.

Finding 4.7: Seeing nature as dynamic is essential in a shift to sustainability

Technology on its own without a shift of consciousness, regarding the dynamics of nature, is sufficient to transit to environmental sustainability.

4.6 Conclusions

The definition of nature established through this research involves a physical form as well as an intangible aspect capable of evoking a transcendent state of mind and a feeling of oneness. Nature is therefore seen as dynamic. The language of communication with nature is described as essentially wordless and dependent on our sensory capacities, which is explained to have lessened with the current state of detachment from nature due to urbanisation and westernisation.

³⁵ The cradle-to-cradle concept promotes technology design of interdependent biophysical and human systems based on regenerative cycles (McDonough and Braungart 2001:35)

A detachment from nature, evident from participant responses was found to occur when there is inability to let go of processes that are of human construction in order to be in nature. There is however a growing awareness of the problem and its consequences.

It would appear that the biggest hurdles are the predominant anthropocentric attitude, human reliance on technology and the security of the built environment. These have the effect of further reducing the human physical and sensory capabilities and adding more burden on natural resources. A deeper and more meaningful connection with nature could assist in creating an awareness of this anthropocentric position that needs to shift.

A repositioning would require opportunities for conversations in mainstream organisations and communities about our relationship with nature including both the biophysical and existential dimensions. It would require ideas to be born and new customs, traditions, policies and procedures to be established to provide greater access to and engagement with nature. When these new practices are used regularly, it would, according to developments in science (Zohar and Marshall 2001), 're-wire' the neural networks and become the new emotional intelligence required to live more sustainably.

The Connectivity Matrix has been able to encourage diverse conversations about nature ranging from the physical to the metaphysical. Both positive and negative experiences to be stated and that resulted in a range of subjects being covered. The findings suggest that if a personal, experiential approach is used to set the scene – as has been the case through the use of this Matrix – it has the ability to enable conversations about memories, experiences, values and beliefs in connection with the biophysical world.

From this repositioned engagement with nature, the objective, analytical, scientific and corporate matters could be enriched and recognised in their physical attributes as well as dynamic qualities. This could be significant in establishing criteria for

bringing the balance that participants and authors alike have expressed in regard to ecosystems and the corporate world. This is expanded in Chapter Seven. However, before that in Chapter Five responses to the Spirituality column of the Connectivity Matrix are analysed. The chapter explores how the participants define spirituality; whether there is detachment from spirituality in their lives; and if so whether it impacts on environmental sustainability.

CHAPTER FIVE

SPIRITUALITY

In this Chapter I explore participants' responses to the Spirituality column of the Connectivity Matrix (Concept 1) presented in Chapter Three. One notable aspect of this relationship with nature is the observed representation of the spirit. This is furthered here: firstly because it pertains to the spirit of nature – the focus of this chapter; and secondly to attempt to gauge whether or not there are comparisons or points of difference as to how participants represent spirituality that is not linked to any identifiable, visible matter. This could be an interesting aspect of the perceived attachment to or detachment from spirituality and have implications for the recognition or discounting of spirituality in connection with environmental sustainability.

The findings in the last chapter place the physicality of nature as a source of credibility that makes it easier to talk about, even if the dialogue is about intangible experiences. The physicality, and therefore the visibility of nature, seems to provide a tangible reference and basis for conversations relating to the various dimensions of the biophysical environment as it pertains to matter or to the metaphysical. In the responses to the Nature column of the Connectivity Matrix, one of the most used words in the interviews and workshops, as determined by the NVivo, was 'trees'. Other commonly used words were 'plants', 'water', 'animals' and 'gardens' – all representations of physical forms of nature. Alongside the choice of examples to indicate the physical aspects of nature, words used to describe abstract experiences were frequent. Examples include 'awareness', 'openness', 'wonder' and 'spirit'. Through analysing participants' representations of nature, they preferred to link the intangible experiences and understandings to a physical form. Given such an observation, this chapter will also investigate whether the requirement for a visible, physical dimension impacts on the engagement or detachment from spirituality and if so how this impacts on sustainability.

The participants' responses to spirituality are presented under the following themes: 1) Defining spirituality; 2) Different positionings; 3) The perceived foundations of spirituality; 4) Spirituality and nature; and 5) Spirituality and sustainability. These themes also capture some of the history of spirituality in Australia (see page 160). With this regard, the First Peoples' perspectives and experiences are included as well as newer forms of spirituality in Australia with examples of how and where they are adding to spirituality in this country.

5.1 Defining spirituality

In this section various definitions of spirituality are presented. These include descriptions linked to physical forms and metaphysical phenomena and a search of meaning. The following (See Box 5.1) are samples from the collected data of what spirituality means to the interviewees:

Box 5.1: Interviewees' definitions of spirituality

"I had an exceptional experience..... I encountered the spiritual in waves of light and love" (Interview #7).

"Connecting to that part of us which is higher" (Interview #8).

"It is the essence of the creation forces that made the world, people and created influences in our lives that we intuitively feel" (Collard, L. Interview #10).

"Spirituality is what we can find within. Although not solely found within, it is often found in community" (Interview #13).

"The narrower definition is more akin to organised religion and the broader is about a sense of transcendence, something that is ethereal and beyond the normal physical experience" (Interview #14).

"I like to believe there is something beyond what we know" (Interview #15).

“I think spirituality is linked to nature. To me when you see a creature, its spirit is as big or bigger than ours because they are more in touch with the universe and the earth than we are. They can tell if an earthquake is coming or a tsunami” (Interview #18).

“Lot of time people do make it synonymous with religion which I believe it isn’t. It is a state of mind that is a connection with your Creator or with something that is beyond the scope of the physical realm... For Muslims it’s the *Taqwa* – God consciousness” (Interview #20).

“Health of mind, health of relationships, health of belonging, health of self-worth” (Interview #21).

“Animation. Spirituality is when the organism, me, anyone else, is alive and confused and open... a scintilla, an animating spark... what are the things in your life and in your work and in your community that enable the little flickering light to flare?” (Interview #22).

“It is the underlying vibration that is everything around us” (Interview #24).

“It is the interconnectedness of everything” (Interview #28).

“I don’t understand it but it’s a connection to the cosmos. So I see spirituality as the spaces in between. So it would be what the spaces in between are – almost the silences” (Interview #29).

“Spirituality is about being alive” (Sofia, Interview #30).

The definitions of spirituality include representations of spirit as: an essence or life force; an enabler of connectivity to self and to other physical forms; providing links

with the cosmos and to that which is beyond understanding; a consciousness that searches for the meaning of life. These are explored further below.

5.1.1 Relating to physical forms through spirit

In participants' responses describing spirituality as a person's characteristics, personality appeared several times through responses to the Spirituality column in both interviews and workshops. One participant explained it as "how we relate to people" (Interview #4). Another described this link to personality differently: "It is what you believe in and who you are. Not your personality, but what people call your spirit (Interview #9).

The description of spirituality as defining personality appeared in relation to a "person's fundamental motivations and the nature of their personality and being. It's the kind of life force that you pick up on as you relate to them" (Interview #17). This same participant provided the etymology of the word 'personality': "The Greek word for Holy Spirit is often translated as personality" (Interview #17).

This representation of spirituality in connection to self or to people's spirit or personality shows connections to the spiritual that people engage with on a day-to-day basis. This clearly implies that spirituality is, on some occasions, based on the physical realm. However it is also defined as a phenomenon that is experienced but not visible as is stated below.

5.1.2 Otherness

Many participants expressed spirituality as 'otherness' but did so in a variety of ways. 'Otherness' is represented as forces we cannot see, gaps in our understanding, beyond the physical, a connection to the cosmos, a space of transcendence, a feeling of connection with all things.

Collard represented spirituality as "forces that we know are there but we can't necessarily point at it" (Collard, Len: Interview #10). Whilst this interpretation draws comparison to a physical action, it does so only to explain the realm of 'other'.

This 'other', which has no physical form, can become a contested point because of divergent thinking on the matter and because there is no physical matter to which the intangible concept of 'forces' can be linked. Collard qualifies his statement recognising that its 'presence' is based on cultural or other belief systems.

Another participant states that "I've always sought, in terms of spirituality, that otherness, these other things, perhaps you could call it gaps in our knowledge ... I believe that there is something far beyond this physical being that is me and that spirituality is that kind of unknown and undescribed energy that exists beyond and between us" (Interview #25). Again in this representation, the 'gaps in knowledge' describe something unidentifiable. It indicates both a consciousness of the thinking self together with another state that is not knowable in a substantive form. The otherness of spirituality as something "beyond myself" is differentiated against experiences of spirituality in relation to nature through the statement that: "Nature is being grounded, connected to the earth. Spirituality is something beyond myself" (Sofia, Interview #30).

For some spirituality included a very personal connection to other. It is represented as a call to something beyond: "a cry for help, a cry for connection. There'll be the cry to know more, to be loved" (Interview #22). Another spoke in the same sentiment referring to this call beyond as a call to God seen as a counsellor who listened to issues on hand. Through this conversation, ideas of how to proceed became known (Interview #20). A similar sentiment is seen in the following response stating: "I'm something more than me and my life is guided by something more than me – if I am receptive" (Interview #5).

The word 'transcendence' was chosen to represent the experience process to 'otherness'. This participant's interpretation of spirituality suggests a development of a style for understanding the spiritual realm.

"... as human beings we transcend the physical by some mysterious way, unquantifiable and unobservable but in a very important way, we are more

than physical. We develop a style of understanding that transcendence ...”
(Interview #4).

Developing a style requires familiarity and perhaps it also implies an accompanying set of practices, precepts or similar to act as a catalyst to enable this process of transcendence.

The duality of spirituality expressed as self and other is manifested in representation of self and the cosmos. Another participant suggests that while he cannot fully comprehend and express the concepts, he accepted that the link to the cosmos is one part of spirituality (Interview #15). This same interviewee also expressed another part to spirituality that he referred to as “human spirituality”. He defines it as: “something that allows us to consciously reflect on who we are, where we are and how we fit into this society, this community, this eco system” (Interview #15). Another example of this duality of spirituality between the earth-bound self and the state of wonderment found in otherness is stated below as encompassing both the immediate environment in which we live and the bigger cosmological link through the “interconnectedness of everything... how interconnected the bugs are with us. But bigger than that as well, how we’re interconnected to all creatures and we’re connected to the planets – and ultimately, I like the idea of us being stardust. Wow, how awesome is that? Whether there’s a creator there or not doesn’t really matter to me. It is just awesome” (Interview #28).

A lack of knowing first hand the depth and scope of otherness and the sense of wonderment that it can enable, is said to run the risk of depriving communities of these experiences:

“The people that I have known who work so well and independently within the cultural field have a sense of spirituality. Creativity is one of those things along with spirituality that we tend to treat lightly and dismiss – for ourselves too. If we don’t see it as important for ourselves then we are not going to acknowledge the importance for others and therefore we have the power to deny others that opportunity and that recognition. So we withhold

part of their wellbeing if we don't provide that space" (Ferber, P., Interview #3).

There could be a link to spirituality and sustainability in the above line of thought articulated by Ferber. The Participants represented spirituality as encompassing a range of concepts that include: a connection to self, the environment, the cosmos, and other areas within metaphysical and epistemological dialogue. By not engaging in and allowing the complexity of dimensions to flow, we as human beings could be hampering society's ability to develop a fuller understanding of how to be sustainable.

5.1.3 Spirituality explored in the search of meaning

In the search for meaning, spirituality is represented as higher-level thinking, an innate understanding of right and wrong, and influenced by our experiences and mentors.

Spirituality is described as "an interest in higher forms, higher thoughts.

Consideration of deeper reasons why we are here, and why the world is here and humankind generally, and the very reason why humankind is as it is, how we came about and why we exist and what does it all mean" (Interview #26). In relation to this, one participant states that how we think and behave is influenced by our life experiences, the people we choose to be with and be guided by and the things that we see (Interview #6). An example of a person's approach influencing actions can be found in the following statement where a participant is actively seeking spiritual opportunities in the work context: "So, my job is to ask the question of how can we 'be spirited' together" (Interview #22).

While there might be socio-cultural diversity in some levels of spirituality, universally appreciated factors could also be present. This is represented in the following statement, which shows sentiments echoed across diverse socio-cultures:

"For me there are two parts to spirituality. One is the connection to nature and being around trees and natural flora and fauna. It is also about the

principles by which you live your life. It is horribly clichéd but it is about being good – doing right and knowing right from wrong” (Workshop #3).

The participants represented spirituality as higher thought, understanding right and wrong, and that experiences and mentors shape our thinking and connection to the existential. However, the definitions of spirituality provide no indication of the level of engagement or detachment from it. Spirituality is experienced as inherent, is understood as important, plays a role in the participants’ search for meaning, and informs their decisions as required. Spirituality is also seen as a realm of disconnect from the physical world and engagement with a metaphysical world that journeys towards a connection to otherness and the cosmos.

The search for meaning implies application of spirituality in day-to-day situations. Yet that same element of spirituality is also said to be abstract and only achieved with letting go of the three-dimensional, visible world. This seeming contradiction is explored further on in this chapter.

5.2 Different positionings: Interpreting spiritual practices from within a like-minded group or from an outsiders point of view

Covered in this section is an analysis of the beliefs and challenges stated through diverse first person accounts that include: Aboriginal perspectives on spirituality; different views of the perceived conflict between religion and spirituality; as well as some insight into the presence of various senses of spirituality found in a Perth based environmental sustainability focused community organisation.

5.2.1 Australian Aboriginal perspectives on spirituality

In starting the dialogue on spirituality, Noongar³⁶ Elder Morton Hansen (Workshop #5) raised the matter of the newness of world religions versus the ancient knowledge and beliefs of the First People of Australia passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years. Recorded below is the dialogue between

³⁶ According to Kim Scott (2013), Aboriginal people of the South West coast of Western Australia identify themselves as Noongar.

Morton and Vivienne Hansen (Workshop #5) in response to what spirituality means to them. In the dialogue they recount Noongar story of creation, as they have been taught, alongside contemporary thinking on what engagement in spirituality means to them.

Box 5.4: Noongar Elders Morton and Vivienne Hansen's perspectives of spirituality.

Morton Hansen: There are things that we have in our world that can be explained and there are things in our world that can never be explained. People talk about religion and a lot of people's concept is that there is a God. In what form is God? What does he look like? Why are we born to go through the problems that we go through and then at the end of it our bodies die? And as you go through all the gathering of this knowledge in your lifetime... where does that go when your body goes? Nobody knows. People experience a lot of things that are unexplainable to other people... In the Aboriginal world, Noongars believe in the *Wargal* or the Rainbow Serpent. He was the one that was supposed to have created everything for us... This is a way that people have of explaining how things started... But nobody can really explain. Nobody, not even professors and scientists can really explain how the world began, what was the purpose of it happening and why people came into being, why each and every individual is different. Nobody can explain that.

Vivienne Hansen: [Spirituality] means part of your way of thinking and your soul and all your beliefs that you were taught and believe in. Soul is not an object that you can see. It is an inner voice that you believe in. It is that intuitive part of your mind and the belief that there is something greater out there.

Morton Hansen: I think on the same lines. I think there is something out there. My personal belief is that there is life after that. I am not prepared to check that out right this minute! But there is a special purpose for it. In our Noongar language *Wirrin* is the word for spirit.

Vivienne Hansen: The old Noongars tell us that when the Europeans first came to Perth, they greeted them and shared everything with them because they thought they were the spirits of their dead. *Niniang* is a white figure – a white spirit and that’s why the Noongar name for white people is *Niniangs*. Then over time when the Europeans started to take the land and not share, that’s when all the conflict started.

Morton Hansen: I guess you can refer to [spirituality] as a type of energy. What form that energy takes is probably hard to explain. In our own bodies we have an energy within us that we have for the time that we are around. I believe that I still get knowledge from people that have past on from our world. I still get knowledge from them wether it is through dream or through doing something that I was taught by those people. It feels to me that this is an energy that is still there. And quite often I say ‘my uncle taught me how to do this’ and in one sense that energy is still there.

To Morton and Vivienne Hansen (Workshop #5), it would appear that spirituality entails an awareness of what they refer to as “a type of energy” and “an inner voice”. There is a deep respect for the essence of the stories handed down through the generations as the vehicle for the energy to be transmitted to benefit future generations. The skilful way in which the stories were told seems to enable the complex energies to be communicated. The story appears to be the process that enables the connection to the different dimensions of nature described by Morton and Vivienne Hansen as the foundation of spirituality. Both believe that nature and spirituality are different dimensions but are part of one and the same as represented in the many stories that they told during the interviews. In these stories, people are considered very much a part of nature. People’s spirits are believed to pass on into special species of trees when they die and then journey to become part of other natural forms. Some stories shared told how the first of special tree species came into being and how fire came to exist. These stories, it was explained, are told to Aboriginal children from young, and seemingly foster a connection to and respect of nature, including its spiritual dimension. Morton and

Vivienne Hansen represent nature and spirituality as one whole that encompasses the earth, stars and the universe.

Len Collard (Interview #10) concurs with this belief that nature and spirituality are one. To clarify his point, he used the Seven Sisters story, a dreamtime story about a group of stars, that was told by Josie Boyle and Bronwyn Goss at a 2011 presentation at the Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute seminar series (2011: CUSP films). Collard states: “Both those women in a cross-cultural way investigated the universal wonder of the seven sisters. They are global stories... So you have to ask yourself: how did that story get translated across the globe in all these different languages and all these different cultures?” (Collard, L., Interview #10). It would appear that Collard is implying that an inherent knowing of the connection of nature and spirituality is globally recognised as evidenced through stories from around the world. This relationship to nature and the cosmos is seen as the basis of spirituality. It is the: “spirituality of nature”(Collard, L., Interview #10), described as an innate phenomenon.

Spirituality, from this above stated view, entails an engagement with and wonderment of nature. It would therefore also require knowledge about nature, the cosmos, and the telling and retelling of the related stories in such a way that the essence of connectedness is not only made known but also has a memorable impact for the listener. This story telling style elaborated on in Chapter Four requires a strong positioning within a like-minded community who share the same ontology and epistemology.

5.2.2 The religion versus spirituality conflict

A participant previously quoted, suggested that an engagement in spirituality requires “an interest in higher forms, higher thoughts” (Interview #26). He also suggests that in our current society we are constantly on a “treadmill of endless requirements” and people only tend to reflect on these matters when faced with “significant change in their life” situations. This could be seen to indicate an absence of spirituality because of modern life style pressures. However, it also

suggests that the ability to connect to spirituality as needed is an innate capability. The representation of spirituality as higher forms and thoughts implies that it is significant. Is the “treadmill” of life less sustainable without a better grasp of these higher levels of thought? If this is a possibility then whose task is it to be the teacher of these higher forms and thought or to ensure that people have time and skills in this area? For some, religion is an important way to teach these ‘higher thoughts’. In other instances, religion is stated as the reason for a detachment from spirituality. In this section the perceptions of participants to religion and its connection or separateness from spirituality are considered.

Challenges arose for some participants in confronting what spirituality means for them. Many stated that they needed to define spirituality by stating their boundaries in relation to the word. Through participants qualifying their positions it became very clear that some words and concepts are rejected outright by some in connection to a description of spirituality, as is explained in the response below:

“To me I interpret [spirituality] as often meaning from our own sense of self or – this is the bit I am struggling with - it is not a head thinking and I won’t default to something like the soul or spirit – it is a sense of one’s own perception of one’s own existence, one’s own self and being part of this huge thing” (Interview #27).

It would appear that the majority of participants had experienced and could represent, interpret and describe a spiritual phenomenon. The experiencing of spirituality does not seem to be in question. Qualifying inclusions and exclusions with which it is defined is the concern. Nineteen per cent of the interviewees expressed, at the start of the interviews, that spirituality was not part of their usual vocabulary and thinking. Ten per cent of them stated at the outset that the spirituality column of the Connectivity Matrix was irrelevant to them. These responses did not result from a direct question about the existence of a spiritual dimension but were freely offered by the interviewees who felt that it was important to state their positioning on this matter at the start of the interview. This is mentioned here under the conflict between religion and spirituality because the

above stated clarifications requested was a separation between spirituality and religion as is expressed below.

A strong disregard for religion came across in the responses to spirituality. Spirituality was accepted as existing in one participant's life as "a small 's' spirituality" (Interview #3), referring to a capital 'S' spirituality as connected to religion. She described a small 's' spirituality as an awareness and an "unspoken sense that is part of me". Several participants stated quite emphatically that spirituality was not religion (see Box 5.2) others made their positions on religion known:

Box 5.2: Positions distinguishing spirituality from religion

"It isn't religion. I think you can be a very unspiritual religious person... It is something overwhelmingly emotional that connects you to the world around, to the stars above, a sense of that largeness, outside yourself that you are just part of something and that you have a connection" (Interview #16).

"I find it difficult to think of spirituality devoid of religion because of my upbringing so I have to think harder because I am aware that spirituality doesn't mean religion. So I have to think harder to say it because consciously I am trying to make a cut between spirituality and religion. For me they are separate. I love the idea of spirituality but I don't like religion" (Interview #29).

"It definitely doesn't mean religion. For me it means connecting to that part of us which is higher, that is not tangible, that I can't see but rather feel inside and it has got nothing to do with the rules of religion or anything like that. I believe the word religion means something like 'to bind again' and initially it was meant as 'follow the natural laws once more'. So, for me, it's really about being in harmony with the natural world and the laws of nature" (Interview #8).

"If you associate spirituality with mainstream religion, spirituality is almost alien to

natural systems ... From a modern point of view I see spirituality as respect for natural systems” (Interview #12).

“What has gone against us in spirituality, is religion. When you look at the history of religion, no matter what it is, the irony is that religion has stopped us from being truly human” (Interview #6).

“[The foundation of spirituality] is probably belief but not a belief in the dogma of perhaps some religions. It is a belief that there might be a higher level being but we do not necessarily have to be pushed into these silos of different religious denominations. So it is belief but not a belief in the policies and procedures – the dogma of religion” (Interview #26).

“I am an atheist. I am someone who believes in science. I believe that you can’t actually prove that a supreme being does not exist and in that respect I suppose I am, in the formal sense, agnostic. I tend not to believe in a supreme being or things that follow on from that like heaven, afterlife or even the notion of a soul – the non-physical part of ourselves” (Interview #14).

“Formal faith as it is in religion is not part of my personality make-up. But I think if you look at faith differently, you should have faith in oneself and you should have faith in others. I’ve always worked on the basis that even the worst of us have got something good” (Interview #31).

The responses tabled in Box 5.2 showed cautiousness in stating a claim about spirituality and care taken to clarify its separation from religion. The seeming disinterest in spirituality, which was presented at the start of some interviews, is not towards spirituality per se but towards aspects of religion. It is also evident that science plays a part in framing the participants’ ontology and epistemology and has bearing on any dialogue about religion and spirituality.

There was support for the word 'belief' in its broader sense, for example in the way it is defined in anthropological studies: "you are always talking about belief systems, the fact that whatever culture you are in, people have beliefs about how the world around them works" (Interview #23). However, the negative emotion connected with adopting a belief that is unexplainable is stated below:

"Everybody says that it was the Big Bang theory and that's how the universe was formed. But why did this happen and who or what was behind it? And when you get to that point I go: Oh my God I can't cope! It's almost like you get to the end of the horizon and that's it. You can't go any further because it's baffling... This eternity issue - what is that? Because there is eternity but what is eternity? The more you go back, back, back, it is terrifying because none the less there has got to be something else or is that our sense of belief that there has got to be something else? Don't want to go there. My father said to me: 'and that is why I believe in God'... And I said that I kind of believe in the fact that we are what we are. We are in a Universe. I don't really want to think about it more than that. I would like to be amazed by it and find it wonderful and also in its wonder it can be destructive and it can be about 'bad' things but it is to be admired for whatever reason. So in that space what happens there in terms of spirituality, I think we have to confine it in some sort of way because we are the beings we are. Otherwise we'd all be completely mad. So it is about having to find a way to deal with that otherness and beyondness that kind of makes sense in our tiny world - in our heads and hearts. But whatever it is, there is something even greater beyond that. And I know that some people find that through religion and I think I find it through just wonderment and confusion" (Interview #25).

The word 'trust' was another word offered to represent the foundation of spirituality. It is to be a way of dealing with the unknowable:

“It is trust in the universe – an openness ‘that all shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well’ (Julian of Norwich³⁷). The thing that destroys spirituality is the Richard Dawkins³⁸, easy to criticize, but saying that there is nothing in the universe for us; that everything in the universe is pointing to destruction and meaninglessness. Whereas spirituality is exactly the opposite, saying: yes you can interpret the world that way, but being a spiritual person, you interpret the world another way. That there is meaning and it is a matter of trust that that is so” (Interview #4).

From a number of the participants’ responses, quoted in this section, it would appear that each person inevitably adopts a stance with regard to the foundation of spirituality and a framework to deal with that which is beyond our understanding. Some are happy to represent it broadly as a kind of otherness whilst some people connect this with God. When representing the outsider view of spirituality, each person seems to interpret the other from a point of reductionism, detachment and even suspicion. Tacey (2004: 104) quotes Paul Ricoeur and states that the choice we face is between a ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ when we call upon our reasoning capacity, and a ‘hermeneutics of affirmation’, which he interprets as ‘faith’. Participants have experienced both suspicion and faith at different times and in different contexts and represent it as inherent to the battle with knowing or trying to understand views of a different position.

Regarding their perspectives on the conflict between religion and spirituality, some suggest a need to explore, reflect and analyse in order to engage in spirituality rather than follow traditions, processes and beliefs or have them imposed. This indicates that the participants experience a duality within spirituality: a

³⁷ According to the Catholic Encyclopaedia, Julian of Norwich, who lived in the fourteenth century, is regarded as an English mystic who lived as a recluse. Her most famous book is the Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love.

³⁸ Oxford Professor Richard Dawkins is an evolutionary biologist. He is author of several award-winning books including *The God Delusion* and *The Selfish Gene*. (Information accessed from http://www.ted.com/speakers/richard_dawkins)

consciousness of self and ego at one end of the spectrum; and immersion in a space of transcendence, at the other. This experience of a spiritual duality is the same for those who profess a religious faith as for those who state they are atheists or agnostic. As the interviews and workshops progressed, I observed that a shift in attitude from a defensive, suspicious one towards a more open approach. This seemed to occur once participants explored and defined spirituality for themselves and recounted their own experiences in this dimension.

5.2.3 Diverse spiritualities: the cultural link

This section covers responses suggesting a link between culture and spirituality with emphasis on the reliance on structures and actions to make the existential visible. Through examples of non-mainstream spiritualities, this often unmentioned part of environmental research is explored by participants.

This section, focuses on observing spirituality in one location – a community organisation. This includes suggestions of spiritual practices in the form of values and ethics applied in the organisation, expressed in art; or practices to enhance food growing and draw awareness to natural cycles. The participants who have brought these aspects of different spiritualities to the fore in the organisation are Rosanne Scott, the organisation’s founder, and Thomas Scott who joined a few years later. This husband and wife team were key players in the operations of Perth City Farm, a community farm close to the central business district of Perth. Perth City Farm is a branch of Men of the Trees³⁹ – a not-for-profit Western Australian environmental organisation with a focus on planting trees on degraded land. There are Men of the Trees organisations in many parts of the world and in other parts of Australia, but each is autonomous and many have changed their names. This location was selected because, through the interviews, it was evident that spirituality was the key element of the organisation and therefore a suitable case

³⁹ The name Men of the Trees seems politically incorrect. On the Men of the Trees WA website, the name is stated as being a translation of ‘*Watu wa Miti*’, from a Kenyan language, which was adopted as the founding name for the organisation in 1922. However, the direct translation from the Kenyan language is ‘People of the Trees’. As such there appears to be an unexplained inconsistency in the translation and the adopted name that has persisted for 92 years.

study on the application of spirituality in an organisational context. Rosanne Scott, the visionary founder and head of Perth City Farm from 1994 to 2011, recounted her experiences of different spiritualities. She spoke of being inspired by Richard St Barbe Baker who in 1922 founded a movement with the Kikuyu warriors of Kenya called Men of the Trees. From there it grew to be a global movement. Rosanne Scott felt certain that St Barbe Baker had been influenced, during his university years, through camping out with the “Canadian Indians learning their stories around the campfire” (Scott, R., Interview #2). This crossing of cultures and spiritualities was attractive to her as she has a mixed Armenian and Indian parentage and childhood upbringing in Calcutta. She stated that St Barbe Baker’s “spirituality and his love of nature seemed to be ever present in his writing” (Scott, R., Interview #2). In her representation of spirituality, Rosanne Scott implies an internal struggle between existing spiritual traditions underpinned by cultural customs within the Men of the Trees organisation and what she felt was needed for her spiritual growth:

“[Richard St Barbe Baker’s] example was most important to me as a coloured person in a white environment. There were no Aboriginal people or other coloured people there at the time. Richard St. Barbe Baker was just such an amazingly deep man, I think, that he transcended the dominant culture of the time that was spreading across the globe, and related with indigenous people and the environment in a totally different way” (Scott, R., Interview #2).

Rosanne Scott’s statement seems to suggest that cultural perspectives can influence spiritual expression. It could also suggest that spirituality is not a constant but something that is reproduced in different ways to be relevant to each new generation or community group. Whilst Rosanne Scott was able to find her way through what she portrays as a culture different from hers, and discover spirituality within herself inspired by St. Barbe Baker, others may not be able to do so and this alienation within the dominant culture could perhaps result in some people being separated from their own spirituality.

The duality of self and spirit can be seen in the example in which Rosanne Scott creates a new branch of the organisation to fit her 'different' spirituality and that of others like her. This is something described by Tacey (2004: 31) as the " 'spirit' has been divorced from its traditional 'form'. Spirit without form is free and spontaneous, but it is also invisible, and of ambiguous social value since it is difficult to harness something invisible for the common good". The traditional 'form' of spirituality that Tacey (2004:31) refers to is religion. In Rosanne Scott's example she harnessed something "invisible" and gave it an organisational "form" to serve what Tacey calls "the common good"(2004:31).

Rosanne Scott made the spiritual values of "respect, non-judgement and compassion" the motto of Perth City Farm. The other guiding principles of Perth City Farm, as stated by Rosanne Scott, were permaculture ethics that she had learnt from Mollison and Holmgren – the founders of permaculture: care of the land; care of people; sharing the surplus (Scott, R., Interview # 2). The new 'form' spirituality took in this situation was that of a community environmental organisation – a farm in the city. The focus was on something that was tangible – the farm and all its activities – but the spiritual approach and values are stated as the heart of the organisation. The tangible activities of the farm are covered as P.E.A.C.E., which stands for Permaculture, Environment, Arts, Community and Enterprise. Rosanne Scott accredits the P.E.A.C.E. acronym to Carey Kneebone who was a key volunteer at the farm for many years until her untimely passing at a young age. It would appear that the acronym enables the intangible spirit of peace to be captured alongside the physical form of the activities that occur at the city farm.

Below are examples of non-mainstream spiritual practices. Thomas Scott who was the Farm Manager at Perth City Farm from 1997 to 2011 recounts them. He (Scott, T., Interview #1), spoke of diverse spiritualities linked to biodynamic practices introduced through workshops conducted at Perth City Farm. Examples of these diverse spiritual practices included: dowsing and divining – in which pendulums and rods are used to find underground water or mineral sources; drumming and music used to "pay respect to the full moon... the equinoxes and other atmospheric that

recognise that human energy resonances can all be part of the spirit of a place..."(Scott, T., Interview #1). Other diverse spiritual practices covered were "earth acupuncture" and "Agnihotra which is an *Ayurvedic* fire meditation that is thousands of years old" (Scott, T., Interview # 1). Thomas Scott represents these diverse spiritualities as collective encompassing earth, nature and spirit and he advises that they are well supported by individuals, who specialise in one or more of these practices, and community groups who meet regularly to honour these spiritualities and conduct workshops for the wider public. These different spiritualities were not stated by Scott (Interview #1) as regular practices but as activities which were welcomed and that were provided space for at the city farm. In all these examples, there is a tangible focus that draws these communities together – the natural environment and growing food without chemicals.

Art is described as a medium for spiritual expression, and this is Thomas Scott's account of activities at Perth City Farm created by young people in the 1990ies:

"I remember a piece that Stormie⁴⁰ did on the big wall on the east facing side of what was known as the art studio. It had a dark green background - and it had three of his figures on it. It had a simple statement on the wall, which was quite controversial for a lot of people. It had a quote that said 'Get behind me Satan' which people interpreted as satanic which is quite bizarre as it is a quote from the Bible"⁴¹ (Scott, T., Interview #1).

The implied negative perception of urban art as stated by Thomas Scott is yet another example of the outside observer's focus on the literal without an appreciation of symbolism and metaphor. This seems to be emerging as strong elements in spiritual reflexivity and expression. It could also be deduced that representation of spirituality can be a barrier if not in accordance with a particular person's taste in aesthetics.

⁴⁰ "Stormie Mills is perhaps one of Australia's most internationally recognized and celebrated graffiti artists" (Filocamo 2011).

⁴¹ The Biblical quote is taken from Matthew 16:23. It reads: Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns"(Bible:New International Version).

Thomas Scott made references to other urban art pieces that were on the walls of the buildings in Perth City Farm. He made reference to a work by an artist he named as 'Dash'⁴². The work was based on the concept of 'Laws of Gold' that depicted the conflict between the capitalist and the spiritual world: "[It] talks about an Armageddon world, a place laid waste and the home boy, homey, sitting there with his peak cap and a bulldozer in the background... with charred remains of trees and he is holding a fistful of green notes – dollars – and out of the smoke of the bulldozer is mother nature – a voluptuous, abundant spirit" (Scott, T., Interview #1).

The above examples of different spiritualities seem to capture some of the free spirited sense of reflection, exploration and expression. Thomas Scott did not go into detail about the practices involved with the earth, nature, spirit rituals or their underlying philosophies. However, the described spiritual diversity in this one location provides some indication of the different spiritualities practiced in Perth.

5.3 The perceived foundation of spirituality

What has been expressed as the foundation of spirituality has been categorised, not as a duality of connection to or disconnection from a physical world, but under three areas: the importance of a state of 'being'; the representation of values and beliefs through actions - the 'doing'; inspiration seen as the catalytic state of spirituality – 'hoping'. Included in the three areas is what is represented as the *sine qua non* of spirituality – stated as the need to experience spirituality first hand in order to know it.

5.3.1 Being

'Being' appears to be represented in several different ways in the narratives. These include time, universality, symbolism and metaphor, and transformation. When describing the foundation of spirituality, the word 'being' occurred numerous times. The link to time, and its temporality, is represented in participant descriptions of

⁴² The footnote states: "No further information provided about Dash. However the following link provides a photograph of the art piece referred to by Thom Scott.
<http://perthgraffscene.deviantart.com/art/Dash-399373607>

being. According to one, spirituality is seen in moments of reflexivity. He uses a jazz musician in his analogy and states that: “it would be wrong to say that it is about composing a classical piece or composing a pop song or something. It would be about using music in a way that you would improvise and you would allow yourself to connect and express – of the moment” (Interview #27).

The next example explains the phenomenon of being in its ontological form – an understanding of the nature of being, and in an epistemological mode – the body of knowledge that underpins the ontological positioning. This participant interprets the core of spirituality as follows:

“The shorthand I use for myself is ‘being in the presence of’. In the Old Testament, there are advantages of learning Hebrew, there is a phrase ‘lip’nu’ which means come before the ‘face of’ God. So we come before the face of God with thanksgiving in Psalm 100. So in order to know God you must come before His face – into the presence. Like into the presence of a king – going into the throne room but I think in the Bible it means more than that; it means daring to look God in the face and live. A sense of trying to open your eyes enough to glimpse reality and knowing that is a dangerous thing to do” (Interview #4).

The above example contains symbolism and a metaphor. It also expresses brief glimpses of the bigger ontological experience of being.

The same participant explains the how to be in the presence.

“Stillness is a way of shutting down all the busyness of the mind and the brain and the physical movement in order to be in the presence. Without it we are too busy looking at our self than to reality” (Interview #4).

The above can be considered to be something that is universally experienced as it captures the essence of the phenomenon of being without reference to cultural orientations and symbolism. The previous two quotes presented a theist’s view. However, the universality of appreciating stillness is evidenced in the next example from a participant who stated that he is an atheist. The different ontological

leanings are mentioned here to make the point about universal experiences within spirituality.

“I think that people often feel more compassionate as a result of going through this kind of experience. They don’t necessarily have to start with compassion but often they will experience compassion at the end of it for two reasons. One is because they will discover a lot of goodness in the world in people. That is compassion in itself but it probably also engenders compassion in them. But also that stillness and recognition of a transcendent part of life can help to get other stuff out of the way that stops people being compassionate” (Interview #14).

The following example demonstrates how a participant moves away from the word ‘belief’ and finds an innate universally experienced phenomenon:

“So the foundation for spirituality is belief but there is also something in us that is innate in us. I am not sure if it is absolutely dependent on having a belief. Again, because I just think even the most determined researcher there to show that the spiritual doesn’t exist and is not relevant, still fights against the fact that human beings feel it is a reality even if they don’t believe in any particular spiritual tradition. I think it is in there. It is inherent. And whether that is something because there is a greater being that we know exists and continue to respond to or whether it is in us – I don’t know. This is where I consider myself to be a spiritual person but don’t believe in a God – but I believe in a spiritual life. I believe that human beings are there to engage, feel something beyond” (Interview #11).

In the responses there is reference to the process of ‘being’ as transformational – a reaching out and becoming more than one normally is (Interview #4). However, another participant describes the limitations of transformation:

“It might or might not be a transformative experience. It might just be an experience that makes a person think ‘wow’! And it’s different from nature... It’s more that a person suddenly feels some sense of connection with something that’s outside of them and bigger – but then they move on. So it

may be temporarily transforming but not necessarily long term” (Interview #16).

Conflicting points of view are part of the challenge of intellectualizing the state of being. According to one participant:

“Your realisation of your spirituality is much easier than when you put up these barriers of needing to have good evidence or something because this is beyond that. If you have a scientific mind it relies on proof and evidence. It is unlikely that you will connect – even though your spiritual experiences themselves can be the proof to reinforce that there is something” (Interview #20).

The presence within this “state of being’ is represented by some as God, and for others it has no name or a diversity of names. Whatever this ‘state of being’ is called, this research is confirming that the phenomenon of being is recognised as existing and innately known to participants.

5.3.2 Doing

The ‘doing’ elements of spirituality represented by participants includes actions that leave a legacy for future generations, actions influenced by spiritual values, and ritualistic actions that are created to enable a consciousness of the metaphysical.

It appeared to be incomplete for participants to represent the phenomenon of ‘being’ without linking it back to the influence of ‘being’ on the day-to-day life. This is represented as spiritually influenced activities through the values that underpin them, and also the importance of talking about spirituality in universally accepted ways.

The overall sense of spirituality in day-to-day life is captured in the following response: “Not everything in spirituality has to be overtly seen. It is about the doing as well as the talking” (Interview #6). This participant continues by stating that it is not only about the higher thinking but it is also “about the legacy that we want to

leave through our sense of being and our sense of inner self". This implies that the quality of or lack of higher thinking impacts on our actions.

According to the following participant there is a fine line between leaving a legacy and a need for recognition depending on intent:

"I am wondering if leaving the world a better place is in the spirituality quadrant or not or is that too far down and spirituality is a higher level. I am, in my own mind, trying to work that through. Sometimes leaving the world a better place is about you as the first person and wanting people to say nice things about you at your funeral but I think this is a higher level if you know what I mean" (Interview #26).

'Doing' is linked to learning in the following statement: "You don't have to be religious to be spiritual but growing up in a religion has had an advantage. If I compare myself to my husband who doesn't have a religion, and wasn't allowed to do Religious Education at school, I find myself being a lot more open-minded and accepting of other people's beliefs because I've learnt about them" (Interview #9).

Frequently used words connected to 'doing' were compassion and openness, with the latter standing alongside love as the most used word in describing spirituality when measured using the NVivo data analysis software. It is seen below (see Box 5.3) in relation to activities while Box 5.4 contains examples of the use of compassion to underpin decisions and actions.

Box 5.3: Spirituality experienced in relation to activities

"Spirituality is constant as it drives all my actions. Though I wouldn't say I am a spiritual person (overtly). It is unconscious and linked to things such as understanding, openness and integrity" (Workshop #2).

"Music is very community oriented and spiritual... as a way forward to openness – alignment – self-actualisation" (Workshop #2).

Box 5.4: 'Doing' influenced by compassion

"I don't do compassion. I do common-passion for" (Interview #22).

"Coming from a strongly Buddhist influenced spiritual bent, I think compassion is important, next to hope and love. It is a corner stone, metta - loving kindness – which translates as compassion. And metta is the foundation of Buddhist practice" (Interview #8).

It would appear that many of the faith communities teach of love and caring for others. For example: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" as stated in the Christian Bible (Luke: 6.31); "Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire" which is in the translated writings of Confucius (Analects: 15.24). These underpinning of values seen as the foundations of actions also apply to those who don't follow a religion:

"Because I am very, very much an atheist, I simply reject the notion of a God and the norms in society of the principles people have and the basis of our laws 'Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not commit adultery' All those things come from a religion and if I reject a God and I reject a religion then what replaces it for me? And for me it is simply the principles by which I live my life, which I conduct myself, how I behave. And those things are personal and intrinsic to me. They are informed by a lot of my early readings. So a lot of the information I have is about Hinduism, Christianity and Buddhism, which are three religions that I have looked at in some depth. But spirituality, for me, is not any of those religions. So for me spirituality is where I stand in the world and how I behave in the world" (Workshop #3).

The above belief and principles are also reflected in the response below. This participant states that religion is more than just a foundation and teacher of values but is also a base for uplifting community activities:

"I am not a religious person but I was reading about Archbishop Hickey saying that he thought religion should come back into the schools in a non-compulsory level. I think it is all right not to have a formal religion but it has been taken out without another code, example values and ethics, to replace

it. And there is a very human side to religion. It brings communities together. People sing together and all that. So if you don't go to a church, you don't belong to a choir where do you go to get that sense of shared and uplifting?" (Ferber. P., Interview #3)

For people of faith, doing was also represented in the complexity of the practising of their faith through attending places of worship as a means of keeping that faith connection. One participant suggests that attending a place of worship was essential to keep the awareness going and he equated it to taking a kind of refreshment. "You have a shower every day even though you are not really dirty" (Oldfield, B., Interview #19). He also reinforced the social element of belonging to a religious community and stated that you had to get involved in it. In the following (see Box 5.5) thick description of a story of active involvement in practicing a faith, the challenges and learnings of actively engaging are expressed.

Box 5.5: Ritualistic actions that enable the metaphysical dimension.

This is a bit of a paradox. I always thought that silence was something you needed to be able to communicate with The Creator. When I went for Hajj and it was during the last few days that we were in Mecca, at the *Kaaba*⁴³ and I just wanted to get away. I needed the peace ... I thought to myself I am in the right place. I am in Mecca and if I want peace I just have to go into the *Haram*. *Haram* is the Mosque and I just need to sit in front of the *Kaaba* and communicate with God and I'll have a lot of peace. So I went in there and I sat down. The *Kaaba* is a cube and you can sit anywhere around it and you circumambulate. So I sat on one side and I was looking at the *Kaaba* and I thought I am just going to concentrate looking at the *Kaaba* and communicate whatever my needs are to God and I just really needed to find a nice quiet spot. I thought I was getting there and suddenly this whole group of people came along. They were Shia and Shia is a sect of Islam and their theology is based

⁴³ The *Kaaba* was explained by the participant as being a cuboid building located within the Holy Mosque in Mecca and the most sacred location for Muslims who face in its direction when performing their five daily prayers. Circumambulation around this building is a part of the performance of Hajj, one of the five pillars of Islamic practice.

around martyrdom. So for every occasion for them they have to be commemorating that. So this whole group sits next to me and of course their priest started and all of them started crying and all of that. They do *maatam* - that is mourning. So I thought this is not the spot for me, I'll move to another side and I sat down there. It is a cramped-up space. People all want to be there. So somebody came next to me and plonked themselves right there and wanted to do their two *rakat of salah* [prescribed movements and words used in offering prayers]. Usually you would do as much as you can in prayer. So I thought it was right onto my knee so I better move away. So I had moved from here, to here, to here and I thought this is not the spot. There is no silence. There is no stillness. Then I started to think... is it that I really don't need the outside silence? I need an inner silence. Despite what goes around me, the outside doesn't need to have any influence in my communication with You. So it was the inner silence not the outer silence (Interview #20).

It is in the repeated 'doing' that the complexities and nuances of the metaphysical are discovered. This implies that a style of practice is needed to achieve a deeper level of engagement with spirituality. Spiritual 'doing' appears to be value-based actions that are informed by formal or informal learning of the values stated as openness, understanding, integrity, love and compassion.

5.3.3 Hope and inspiration

The participants identified hope and inspiration as part of a suite of spiritual phenomena. In the following discussion, the roles of these feelings are considered.

In the dialogue on spirituality so far, there has been a representation of the duality of spirituality. On the one hand it is represented by the quest for meaning and through value-based actions. On the other hand, spirituality is described as the realm that is experienced through letting go of the physical dimension and cultural orientations and becoming part of an otherness. What has not been represented so far is a bridge between the two. From the participants' responses, hope and inspiration appear to emerge as the link between the self and otherness aspects of spirituality.

'Hope' and 'inspiration' are represented by some participants as two very different words and by others as one and the same. In the following example, the participant interprets the word 'hope' as an expression for use in the corporate context whereas 'inspiration' is described as a personal motivator.

"Hope is one of the great expressions of spirituality in our institutions, in our politics. If you have decisions being made in our politics because of despair and fear you get bad decisions. If they are based on hope, that is a visionary thing. It is attempting to say that human beings can improve things. They don't necessarily have to degrade and deny and destroy. Then that is the fundamental spirituality that seeps through society. So I think hope is a social word. Inspiration is the individual's word" (Interview #17).

In a similar vein, this following participant shares the view that hope is an aspiration – a visionary process. He also shares the view of inspiration as a personal catalyst.

"Hope is sort of an aspiration. If I think about the foundations of spirituality, there is something about who we are. In fact the word I would use is a driver – an inspirer – inspiration. The foundational aspects of your spirituality is what drives you. It is an incentivisor" (Interview #6).

"Hope is a spiritual word" (Ferber, P., Interview #3) and Ferber also suggests that it is more than words that are the catalyst. She suggests that it is through experiencing the dark points of life that the phenomenon of hope arises to make change possible.

It would appear that 'hope' recalls a different state of mind – reminiscent of the freedom and peace enjoyed in the state of being. That remembered feeling becomes the catalyst that drives the process to create the context for that phenomenon to exist. There is evidence in the research that hope and inspiration are innately known and experienced phenomena.

5.4 Spirituality and nature

The participants were asked whether or not there was a link between nature and spirituality. There are two reasons for this question: to find out whether there are elements that divide nature and spirituality, and if so, to identify them. The question resulted in the majority of participants saying there was a strong link. However it did not provoke further discussion or comments. Hence the question was revised as follows: Would you collapse nature and spirituality into one column or leave it as two separate columns. This approach resulted in much conversations and debate. The reasons given for keeping the Nature and Spirituality columns separate include the following (see Box 5.6).

Box 5.6: Reasons given as to why the Nature and Spirituality columns should remain separate

“I definitely wouldn’t collapse the two. For me nature is something that is ecological. It existed before humans and it will exist after humans. It is about ecological relationships of which humans are also a part. But spirituality, for me, is my lived experience of the natural world. So one is a personal and socio-cultural construct that doesn’t exist outside of humans’ spirituality” (Workshop #2).

“If you look at what various religions have done, they’ve created temples and they’ve created churches or mosques to make them actually spiritually charged places which are different in a way from nature. To me, there is an overlap but there is some difference” (workshop #2).

“No, I wouldn’t collapse them. I think they are very much the same but I believe that nature is the physical environment and spirituality is there all the time whereas the physical environment might not be. And you can still have spirituality without the natural environment around you. You can still have it in a prison cell” (Workshop #2).

“You are saying that spirituality is able to exist on its own without nature? I can see

that, yes” (Workshop #4).

“The more you blend them together, the more it becomes a little bit of a catch all – almost like a miscellaneous column” (Interview #26).

“I think it is better to make it separate to tease it out more so that it becomes an entity in itself; so that I see the gaps in my life” (Sofia, Interview #30).

Following are some responses as to why nature and spirituality should be combined into one column (see Box 5.7).

Box 5.7: Reasons supporting the merging of the Nature and Spirituality columns

“I would say that they are pretty much one and the same. There are different ways of looking at it. You can look from an ecological perspective. That is just a way to describe something like that. Every single breath we take as we’re moving through this fluid medium is like universal life and everything. In my experience it is all spiritual. It makes sense to separate them out here but when you look at it from individual experience then it is all a spiritual experience” (Workshop #2).

“I think to engage in spirituality you have to understand the importance of the place of nature and to engage with nature as well so that is the reason I see spirituality and nature as pretty much entwined. If we don’t look after the nature part of our lives, all the rest of it is under threat” (Workshop #4).

“I think from a practical point of view, a pragmatic point of view, you better combine it. But it depends what it is for. Is it for a completeness? Do you want them as a complete theoretical picture or is it to try to achieve something? I’m always thinking of how it can be used and achieving an awareness, a respect, a devotion – almost – to nature, then I think it is there as a single stream which incorporates spirituality, because I think spirituality could put people off and I

think it could run the risk of diverting the debate” (Interview #15).

Some of those who were asked the question were unsure. Spirituality could exist without nature and therefore is a separate entity in its own right. For others nature is the material world whilst spirituality is an intangible phenomenon. This has been interpreted as being separate as well as different dimensions of the same entity.

Linking the question back to the Connectivity Matrix proved to be a better way to generate conversation about spirituality. The Matrix appeared to be a sufficiently neutral tool that provided access for diverse points of view. It is also seen as assisting participants to view their lives through the different dimensions of nature and spirituality. The advice suggesting the collapsing of the two can be an option in some workshop circumstances where, for example, there was insufficient time to properly explore spirituality. In these cases, the Nature column could capture some of the essences of the metaphysical. These findings inform objective three of this research, which is to develop and trial concepts to encourage conversations about the metaphysical in the community and organisations.

5.5 Spirituality and sustainability

This section takes into account the views about the link between sustainability and spirituality. The connection between the two initiated much debate which ranged from the former seen as the foundation of the later (Workshop #2), to sustainability seen as a word that has been overused by “corporates” (Interview #3).

The following (see Box 5.8) is a conversation from one workshop (Workshop #2). It arose in connection with a question raised as part of the workshop about teaching spirituality in sustainability. The participants appear to be well versed and comfortable about the topic of sustainability.

Box 5.8: Participants views regarding teaching spirituality in sustainability (Workshop #2).

Spirituality was seen as “something that is very individual”. The participant continued by expressing that the interface with different personalities would make this exercise tricky. However, some benefits were stated: “When you want to teach about sustainability, then you fall into the ecological side, then a lot of time it becomes negative. And it is important to keep it positive and spirituality is like a vehicle to access that ability to see positively. And then you see that everything is connected and all the little steps are connected. But it is a difficult question in terms of what you teach”. Another participant responded: “Isn’t it implicitly there in the concept of hope?”

There were suggestions of nature being the conduit for spirituality to which one response was: “From my first degree which was nature tourism we talked a lot about relationships with nature and it varies so much. Some see nature as a playground and may not necessarily be spiritual at all. So if you bring nature into an agenda I don’t know whether it necessarily brings anything to do with spirituality”.

The importance of direct experience was brought up suggesting that: “That is what sustainability should be about”. Another participant put forward that: “sustainability has to involve a combination of cognitive aspects of ecological literacy with the effective aspects that are to do with art and appreciation of the aesthetics of the natural world and connection to it – so the daily practice of caring for an actual beach or an actual garden or whatever. And those three come together to enable sustainability and I think the best we can do is to enable the experience and expression of spirituality in people. Some of my most revered teachers of environmental ethics who are deeply connected with nature would not describe themselves as spiritual people. So I think that is an emergent property of our relationship with the natural world rather than something we have to teach didactically. And I am concerned whether the didactic teaching of spirituality is something that just becomes a religion that gets forced on people.”

“The thing about sustainability is that despite our good intentions it is very much

human-centred. Even when you look at all the definitions, it's all the human wellbeing and the human use of resources so that humans continue to use them whilst there are other things that are also important. This is where to me nature and spirituality have to be included because it is not just about people. It's bigger than just human wellbeing".

In the above context, the word 'sustainability' was never questioned and no definition was considered necessary. There were other responses where this level of comfort was not apparent as in the case of the following participant: "I would prefer some word that is more alive" (Interview #3), inferring that the concept of sustainability is understood to be objective and impersonal. Another participant viewed sustainability as a scientific word (Interview #9). 'Sustainability' was not the preferred word as the intended outcome for the Nature column. Those who accepted it did so with comments like: "I don't have a problem with 'sustainability' being there but it needs some explanation" (Interview #14).

For some, the choice of the word 'sustainability' got in the way of the discussion about the link between sustainability and spirituality. It would appear that there are as many assumptions about the word sustainability as there are about spirituality. In the previous chapter, there was a conflict between those who preferred to see sustainability as the umbrella word for the many facets of life, and others who chose nature in that central role. The same occurred in considering spirituality and sustainability. In this context, as in the sustainability and nature dialogue, the central word appears to be life. How life is expressed seems dependent on the context the participant is familiar with and how they have each constructed their ontology and epistemology.

5.6 Emergent themes

The key emergent themes from analysing participant responses based on the Spirituality column of the Connectivity Matrix, is the identification of the three modalities of spirituality. This is tabled as Concept 4 – an emergent concept from

this research (Table 5.1). Other emergent themes are related to spirituality and sustainability, and the outcome of trialling the Spirituality column of the Matrix.

The duality of the physical world is stated again with nature (including humans) having a physical form and an invisible essence. There was reinforcement that the physical forms were often used to represent spirituality. This was through the use of symbolism or metaphors, to guide a meditative process aimed at transcending into a realm beyond, or to assist in describing what is beyond comprehension. Jane Caputti (2011:419) states that the dualism of nature includes 'night and day, birth and death, light and darkness and also Wendell Berry's source and destination. These capture not only the physical and invisible but also imply another mode which is explored further below.

5.6.1 The Three Modalities of Spirituality

Initially participant responses implied a duality of spirituality. One part of the duality is represented as a consciousness of self and ego through our choice of actions and how we behave. The other aspect is spirituality described as a transcendent mode. This space of otherness, or selflessness, is stated as a liberated space of light, love, peace, wonderment, oneness and connectedness to something bigger than the life we know and understand. However, the characteristics of the duality do not represent several other existential phenomena – such as hope, inspiration, resilience and creativity, which imply that a transiting process is occurring. Therefore a third characteristic seems necessary to represent this catalytic quality of spirit.

As a result, this research finds that there are three modalities of spirituality:

- the representation of values and beliefs through actions - the 'doing';
- the catalytic element of spirituality expressed as 'hoping'; and
- the transcendent form – 'being'.

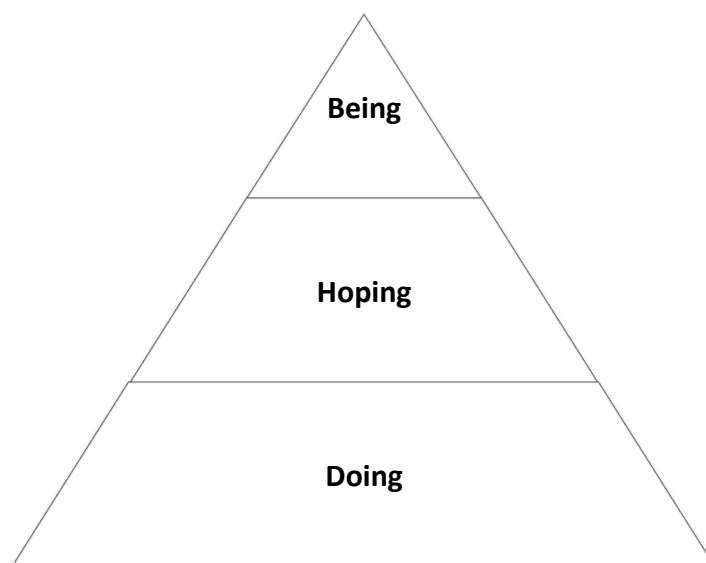
These three modalities are underpinned by the *sine qua non* of spirituality – stated as the requirement to experience all three elements first hand. From the research

findings, these three modalities of spirituality are innately known and experienced. The central word to sustainability and spirituality is 'life' (see page 153). Therefore without engagement in a transcended state of 'being' there would be limited 'hoping'. 'Doing' would become mechanical and self-centred.

This concept is illustrated (see Table 5.1) as a pyramid. 'Doing' is represented by the largest space because it includes actions we engage in day-to-day living. The desire to create a better world is represented in the next tier with 'being' symbolised by the smallest by time spent. In Chapter Seven, the impact of small amounts of time in a state of 'being' is explored further. However, it is represented in this illustration as having the least of time devoted to it.

While the concept has the three elements in a particular order, it is not intended to represent all people or all situations. As with the three concepts in this thesis, the illustration is presented as a starting point for conversation. The representation of the three modalities can be reordered to fit different contexts, or simply to provide different lenses to view the modalities and whether different conversations, experiences and analysis would arise. However that is beyond the scope of this current research.

Table 5.1: Concept 4: The Three Modalities of Spirituality



| | |
|----------------|---|
| Being: | a transcended state, liberated, a space beyond limitations |
| Hoping: | The catalytic mode that remembers the wonderment of the state of being and wants this to be replicated in our lives |
| Doing: | Spirit embodies in the self – responsible for actions that impact on life and living in this world. |

The Three Modalities of Spirituality concept locates the role of transcendence and its flow-on effects within sustainable living, planning and working. The above three modalities of spirituality are captured in the definition stated in Table 5.1. Each modality – doing, hoping and being – is then explored in the order stated. Key findings within each element are presented and discussed.

Finding 5.1: The emergent definition of the three modalities of spirituality

Spirituality is defined as having three distinct modes of relationality and it is seen in how a person behaves and acts; as a catalyst engendering compassion, resilience and hope; and in the transcended phenomenon experienced as a sense of oneness in a realm beyond the known.

5.6.2 Doing: How a person acts and behaves

In this section ‘doing’ is considered through many expressions ranging from how the spirit of a person is represented to how we organise ourselves in collectives. The topics include: the personality or the spirit of a person; the practice of story telling; the spirituality and religion debate; and also in the link between culture and spirituality.

Finding: 5.2: ‘Doing’ as a mode of spirituality

The doing mode of spirituality is represented in how a person acts and behaves. It is positioned in customs and traditions, beliefs and practices, through acquired knowledge, and influenced by community leaders. It is represented in the systems

people establish and the services they deliver.

Regarding personality or the spirit of a person

Spirit as personality trait is part of the 'doing' mode as it is connected to living in the physical world. For some, life is represented with a focus on the 'spirit' of a person, described as their personality, whilst others see it as referring to all life forms. With regard to spirituality stated as personality, there is a cautionary word from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (2003). He claims that there is a tendency to "confuse individuality with personality. In trying to separate itself as much as possible from others, the element individualises itself; but in doing so it becomes retrograde and seeks to drag the world backwards towards plurality and into matter" (2008:263). Teilhard de Chardin goes on to state that "to be fully ourselves it is in the opposite direction, in the direction of convergence with all the rest ... towards the 'other'" (2008: 263) that the spiritual journey should be travelling. His statement implies that spiritual insight and experiences can flow towards the physical and towards an intangible 'other' with a tendency to flow to self. It could also imply that the exploration of a detachment from spirituality should not focus on the spirit of self but include consideration of whether the person, and indeed the society, prioritises the individual or the greater whole – the 'other'.

Religion versus spirituality conflict

Religion and ways of structuring beliefs also fit within the 'doing' aspect as they are about collective or community approaches. The expressed opposition towards religion that occurred in responses to the Nature column was also apparent in participant comments regarding spirituality. Official statistics and different views on these trends are explored further on in this section.

Finding 5. 3: The perceived conflict between religion and spirituality

- The resistance to engaging in spirituality appears to be hostility towards religion.

- Many participants expressed a need to explore spirituality rather than have it imposed on them.

This same cautiousness about engaging in spirituality as seen in some participants is described by Porritt (2002:1465) in a paper on sustainability and spirituality. In the paper Porritt refers mainly to the rejection of spirituality within environmental circles in what he calls a “deep and sometimes virulent hostility to those who promote a spiritually inspired perspective on today’s sustainable development challenges”(Porritt 2002:1465).

A possible reason for this disaffection with religion is seen in the Whitehead statement quoted by Birch (1990:161):

Religion will not regain its old power until it can face change in the same spirit as does science. Its principles may be eternal, but the expression of those principles requires continual development.

According to Tacey (2004), society thrives on challenges and religion is not moving with the times and does not provide this impetus in today’s world. Religion is said to be not representing the capacity of dynamic spirituality, which responds to change (2004:37). He suggests that religion could be responsible for shutting out spirituality to give the constructed religious form a perceived enduring stability (Tacey 2004: 33-34). In continuing this line of thinking, Tacey purports that idolatry and narrow-mindedness can occur when religion sees itself as beyond change.

There is a seeming discontent amongst many participants with what is perceived as the narrowness of religious dogma but there appears to be an acceptance of the phenomenon of spirituality – if it is qualified as separate from religion. This changing trend in the affiliation with religion is evidenced in the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census (2011) article that states that whilst Christianity is still the predominant religion in Australia, the numbers of people claiming any religious affiliation have dropped from 96% in 1911 to 61% in 2011. This includes a 7% decrease in the last 10 years. The increase in people reporting ‘No Religion’

increased from 15% to 22% in this same 10 year period with 28% of younger people (15-34) stating that they had no religious affiliation. The data on new arrivals stated an increase in the 'No Religion' category, up more than 5% since 2001(ABS: 2011).

The same article from the 2011 Census titled Cultural Diversity in Australia states that there were inadequate descriptions of supplementary codes for religions (ABS: 2011). This lack of suitable classifications covers a section that makes up 22% or more of Australia's population. A person who has spiritual experiences and believes these are important, but does not believe in a religion could well be recording their status as 'No Religion' in the census form.

There are examples of surveys that have been conducted on spiritual experiences. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the 2000 BBC survey quoted by Tacey (2004:15), showed a 17 per cent increase over previous 10 years, from 59% to 76% of people stating that they have had spiritual experiences. However is it important to know how a country, region or organisation is tracking spiritually, as opposed to how many people are practicing different religions? Different concepts are being trialled as part of this research to track this information and the findings are expanded on in Chapters Six and Seven.

Porrit's (2002) argument that there is hostility, and therefore a detachment from spirituality, could be seen as true, because the findings show a strong resistance to spirituality unless it is separated from religion. This suggests an unresolved impasse that is causing a detachment from spirituality. However the attendance at these research workshops, in four of the six workshops conducted, was much higher than anticipated, indicating an interest, renewed interest, or new positionings regarding the topic of spirituality – and perhaps a readiness to engage in dialogue.

Tacey (2004) suggests that spirituality is compatible with religion but it is on an existential rather than a creedal level (2004:8). The findings in this research, from people of faith, atheists and agnostics alike, appear to support that statement.

Zinnbauer et al. (1997: 550-551) provide more evidence of a growing rift between spirituality and religion. They state that the division between spirituality and religiousness came about as a result of the rise of secularism. In this context, religious institutions were considered as hindering the “personal experiences of the sacred”. Zinnbauer et al. (1997:551) emphasise that spirituality is differentiated from religion which is becoming perceived as narrow and less inclusive. “Spirituality is now regarded as an individual phenomenon and identified with transcendence, supraconscious sensitivity, and meaningfulness”, and religion in contrast is described as pertaining to “the formally structured and identified with religious institutions and prescribed theology and rituals” (Zinnbauer et al. 1997:551). They also explain that baby boomers defected from organised religions in large numbers and are less likely to “hold a ‘theistic’ belief about God”. These observations concur with the participants’ responses within this research.

Further evidence of these trends as they apply in Australia is found in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights referenced in Bouma et al. (2011:4) about freedom of religion and belief which states:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his [sic] religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his [sic] religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

In the report commissioned by the Australian Human Rights Commission, Bouma et al. (2011:4) point out that freedom of religion and belief was formally adopted by Australia in 1980, when the country became party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The report acknowledges Australia as a spiritually diverse place and traces its spirituality throughout the ages. It starts with the ancient Indigenous roots and later on covers the early Chinese traders and the Muslim Makassan people from Sulawesi who were connected with peoples of the Arnhem Land. The next arrivals were the First Fleet in 1788. Contemporary 20th and 21st century Australia includes Buddhist, Confucian, Hindu, Humanist, Islamic, Sikh, Taoist beliefs alongside various denominations of Christians (2011:5).

The Bouma et al. (2011:6) report presents results from a 2009 survey which asked Australians:

“How important is religious faith or spirituality in shaping your life’s decisions, such as career, relationships and lifestyle?” Thirty-eight per cent said it was either very important (13%) or important (25%); almost a quarter (23%) said it was of little importance. A very substantial number (38%), especially men, said it was not important.

The research findings, supported by the literature, show that the religion and spirituality concepts are not cut and dried. They generate much debate and could be supported by facilitated conversations to explore these topics in community and corporate settings.

The role of culture in spirituality

Culture can be expressed as how we dress our imaginings, creating from all around and within us to make ourselves visible and unique. These actions of identity include customs, rituals, dress, the landscaping of surroundings, the choice of buildings and interior decorations.

The role of culture and spirituality focused on the operations of Perth City Farm during the time that the founder Rosanne Scott was also the head of the organisation. Perth City Farm operated, at that time, on the universal spiritual qualities of respect, non-judgement and compassion.

Finding 5. 4: The importance of naming and documenting spiritual values

- It is important to name universal spiritual values and to understand the role that spirituality plays in every day life and work, just as it is important to identify and name plants and other living things and have an understanding of ecosystems in order for nature to be appreciated.

- Individuals and organisations that value the role of spiritual principles that underpin their work should take responsibility to document this and make these underpinnings known. Without this the role of spirituality may continue to be disregarded.

Perth City Farm is included in Beatley & Newman's (2009) book about green urbanism in Australia. The book captures many activities of the city farm but, even though it could be seen as implied, there is no mention of the importance of the role that spirituality plays. Beatley (2011:1) talks of the importance of identifying and naming biological and botanical species in order to maintain an "intimate contact with nature"(2011: 2). Learning from his example in connection with nature, perhaps the naming of spirituality-related identifiers is necessary in order to make visible the spiritual foundations or lack of spiritual foundations in organisations. Without these identifiers, spirituality may be subjected to the same fate as nature, resulting in a loss of intimate contact. This could result in spirituality being dismissed and even lost in time. It could be that in the Beatley & Newman (2009) brief account on Perth City Farm, it is seen as irrelevant to enquire, identify and document the spiritual foundations. It is not the norm to do so in accounts about environmental programs. However, the absence of spirituality in the case example, and in any document for that matter, gives the appearance that there is a detachment from spirituality at City Farm when in fact it is stated as the cornerstone of the organisation and the reason for its existence according to the founding director Rosanne Scott. The lack of identifying and documenting spirituality in research, reporting and planning generates a perception that spirituality is not important. This seems a difficult challenge. Because the existence of spirituality in environmental sustainability is not often talked about its existence is not recognised and therefore not deemed to be credible.

In the same way, individuals and organisations could take responsibility for documenting the role that spirituality plays in their work in order to make this known and set an example.

Culture, spirituality and aesthetics

Culture, spirituality and aesthetics came together in City Farm during the tenure of Rosanne and Thom Scott and the values of respect, non-judgement and compassion subjected to dominant culture biases. Statements of aesthetic standards can be a kind of spiritual xenophobia.

Finding 5. 5 Aesthetic 'standards' and spirituality

Without understanding the underpinning stories, symbols as representation of spirituality can be a barrier.

The implied negative perception of urban art as stated by Thomas Scott, previous Farm Manager at Perth City Farm, is yet another example of the outside observer's focus on the literal without an appreciation of symbolism and metaphor – which seem to be strong elements in spiritual reflexivity and expression. It could also be deduced that visible representation of spirituality can be a barrier if not in accordance with a particular person's taste in aesthetics.

The neuroscientist Ramachandran (2011:198) refers to both, the use of metaphor as well as its link to aesthetics, when he states that:

[T]he metaphorical nuances of Indian art were lost on Western art historians. One eminent bard, the nineteenth-century naturalist and writer Sir George Christopher Molesworth Birdwood, considered Indian art to be mere 'crafts' and was repulsed by the fact that many of the gods had multiple arms (often allegorically signifying their many divine attributes). He referred to Indian art's greatest icon, *The Dancing Shiva, or Nataraja...* as a multiarmed monstrosity. Oddly enough, he didn't have the same opinion of angels in Renaissance art – human children with wings sprouting on their scapulae – which were probably as monstrous to some Indian eyes".

It would appear that cultural intolerance is alive when seen through what is perceived as accepted society standard and aesthetic representations of the spirit in the dominant culture. These divergent points of view are part and parcel of the 'doing' modality that spirituality is meant to assist in mediating.

5.6.3 Hope and Inspiration: The catalytic mode

The participants suggested a number of words that fall within the catalytic or what is being referred to here as the 'hoping' mode of spirituality. It is a transitory state that acts as the conduit between the physical world with limitations and the transcended world of where boundless peace, liberation and joy are felt.

Finding 5.6: The catalytic mode of spirituality

The catalytic mode of spirituality is represented in hope, resilience, empathy, and in the search of meaning.

"Hope is a spiritual word" (Ferber, P., Interview #3). That statement by Ferber is a point worth reflecting on. Hope cannot be readily classified as an economic, scientific or cultural term. The word 'hope' can be described as a spiritual word because it suggests that there is life and a belief in life. It raises the point that there could be many words in our vocabulary that fit within the spiritual classification. Another question that emerges with regard to language is that further inquiry is needed to see whether the use of spiritual words has reduced in current trends. It is beyond the scope of this research, however, Nettle and Romain (2000: 5) cite that languages are very different from physical objects that can be viewed. Language, they say, exists only when communities use them. They also state, that languages will die if the reason for their use disappears. A perceived lack of focus and credibility ascribed to spirituality could impact on the use of spiritual words in the language. It could also be that spiritual words are reinterpreted to favour economic or other frameworks that are deemed to be the priorities of society.

Many participants, as documented in this chapter, represented the foundation of spirituality through hope and related words. They refer to hope as being derived from experiencing and knowing the dimension of transcended otherness. The phenomenon of otherness seems to be captured in hope and carried into activities in the physical world. When fears, obstacles and other limitations are encountered in every day life, through drawing on hope, the liberating phenomenon of otherness

is experienced. Hope, seen in this context, can be described as a transitory state of spirituality applied to the planning of actions in the physical world. It is not a state of full liberation because of the limitations of the physical world we live in and our physical form curtails it. Hope, in this instance, can be seen as the conduit between the liberated and joyful world of otherness and the physical world where limitations are endured.

It could be that the stronger the experience of the transcended realm, the greater the ability to maintain hope. This is implied in the work of of Auswitch concentration camp survivor, Viktor Frankl (2006) when he says: “the consciousness of one’s inner value is anchored in higher, more spiritual things, and cannot be shaken by camp life. But how many free men, let alone prisoners, possess it?”(2006: 62-63). In an earlier passage (2006: 36) he writes of the survival of the most unlikely prisoners because of the strength of this same capacity.

It would appear that hope recalls a different state of mind – reminiscent of the freedom and peace in the state of being and becomes the catalyst that drives the journey to create the context for that phenomenon to exist in other forms.

Spirituality explored in the search for meaning

The search for meaning appears to also pertain to this catalytic transitional process It could be seen to be a hoping for a better life through a quest to find life’s purpose and how it is connected to the greater whole – the universe. It is a process. Frankl (2006:99) refers to a search for meaning, not as a secondary rationalisation based on instincts, but as humankind’s primary motivation in life. He suggests that meaning is unique to each person.

Frankl (2006:100-101) describes the existential in three ways: (1) existence – the mode of being; (2) the meaning of existence; and (3) the will to exist. Comparing Frankl’s definitions and categories against the Three Modalities of Spirituality, his first point is in line with the state of ‘being’, whilst the second and third modes, meaning and will relate to living in the physical world and therefore fit within the

catalytic mode. There is strong evidence that hope and inspiration, including a search for meaning are innately known and experienced phenomena amongst the participants in this research.

5.6.4 Being: Experiencing transcendence

The state of being is described as experiencing transcendence – going beyond the liminal and seemingly completely separate from the physical world. It is known by other words such as ‘otherness’ and ‘alterity’ (described in Chapter Two). The quality of the experience of ‘being’ impacts on the other spiritual modalities.

Finding 5.7: Being as a spirituality mode

- The state of being is defined as a mode where transcendence is experienced. It is where the phenomenon described as oneness, peace, love and joy is experienced.
- The quality of the experience of ‘being’ impacts on how a person engages in ‘doing’ and ‘hoping’.

Heidegger’s statement that ‘being’ is a phenomenon which is understood by everyone, rings true in participant responses to ‘being’. According to Heidegger (2010:1), the concept of ‘being’ is universal but it is not easily definable. There are two main states included in what Heidegger (2010:15) describes as ‘being’: the ontic being – the ‘self’; and the ontological being – represented as the furthest away from us and describing the phenomenon of being in its greater whole – or the transcended state. This seems to have commonality with the concept of spirituality as a duality.

Transcendence and otherness

The participants described the state of being as ‘otherness’ either through using this exact word or through related terms. In this section, the suggested importance of transcendence and the experience of otherness are explored further.

'Otherness' is a concept that has been analysed by a number of literati. The notion is also known by the word 'alterity' described by Guillaume (Baudrillard and Guillaume 2008: 20) as occurring in two forms: an ordinary alterity – represented as diversity, such as cultural diversity; and radical alterity – expressed as a mental provocation of thought that journeys outside of reason. Baudrillard, according to Guillaume (Baudrillard and Guillaume 2008:20), writes of alterity as a way of inhabiting the world and a way of diving "into the mental depths and metaphoric waters, into the murky universe of concepts" into otherness. This is described as a space that enables creativity liberated from self-imposed or societal rules and precepts (Baudrillard and Guillaume 2008:20). Levinas (1999:ix) speaks of alterity as transcendence which he represents "as a movement of crossing over (*trans*), but also of ascent (*scando*)... a gesture that moves beyond itself" into an implied otherness. He represents this as a "paradox of a relation with what is separate" (Levinas 1999:ix) stating the importance of the link to subjectivity in this gesture and the "*modality* [italic emphasis] of the metaphysical"(Levinas 1999:x).

This space of otherness is described through the use of various concepts and choice of words. For example transpersonal research psychologists Anderson and Braud (2011:133) represent this dimension as "*a liminal realm* [italic emphasis]... a space beyond ego". This creates an image of crossing a threshold and a space that is entered only by discarding the framework and rules imposed by the ego and possibly also by cultural or societal orientations. The implication is that there are skills involved in activating or enabling this process of transition to otherness, along with the ability to identify and understand intangible concepts, required to undertake the journey. One participant (Interview #4) adds that in addition to skills, we require a style or method to activate the process of transcendence.

The representation of spirituality in terms of everyday environments and situations is reflected in a claim by Ong (2012:49) in which he states that it is common practice in oral cultures to interpret concepts and experiences as closely as possible to human life contexts rather than use abstractions. This seems to be the case with regard to explaining matters of metaphysical phenomena. If this is so, the emphasis

and dependence of contemporary society on scientific evidence without recognising and allowing for time to fully experience ‘the moment’ or ‘alterity’ or ‘a transcended state’ could be limiting our understanding and capacity rather than enhancing them.

5.6.5 The link between spirituality and sustainability

The link between spirituality and sustainability seems clouded with perceptions and misperceptions of both words. In Chapter Four, a tension was identified between those who preferred the term sustainability and those who chose nature to be the overarching word to describe life. The same occurred again in relation to spirituality and sustainability — as was the case with nature and sustainability, the central word is life.

Finding 5.8: Spirituality and sustainability

- The word central to the spirituality and sustainability discourse is ‘life’
- Closer attention to the complexities and nuances of oral traditions may be something to consider in engaging with multilayered concepts such as sustainability and spirituality.
- It may be that a holistic, inclusive approach to sustainability including spiritual and scientific dimensions could bring about more of the change that is sought.

It would appear that words have the same effect as symbols when they are used without the layers of meaning attached to them – as in the case of ‘spirituality’ and ‘sustainability’. In these situations the words seem to cause tensions in communities that don’t commonly use them. According to Ong (2012: 46-47), this response can be explained as the psychodynamics of orality. He states that individuals and communities need to find homeostasis in having words make sense in their lives in keeping with their embedded ontology and epistemology. It would appear that if words do not make sense they are rejected and replaced with ones that do make sense. This situation emerged time and again in this research in

representations of spirituality. Ong's (2012) references are mainly made in connection to oral communities. However, these arguments seem to hold true in reflecting the spiritual components of the lives and thinkings of urban dwelling communities. Ong (2012: 46) quotes Laura in stating "the oral mind is disinterested in definitions". It would appear that this same oral mind is activated in dealing with existential matters even in urban communities. It would seem that we need both the objective scientific mind that calls for definitions and evidence, and also the time out into otherness beyond the known.

In contrast to the orality that Ong refers to, the requirement for definitions in the scientific and corporate world has to be catered for because it is an important and unavoidable part of life. In these contexts the arguments of Guillaume (Baudrillard and Guillaume 2008) and Husserl (1994) should be considered with regard to sustainability. This is explained below.

Marc Guillaume (Baudrillard and Guillaume 2008:25) writes about the spectrality of the 'other'. He states that reducing alterity to the social 'other' is unavoidable because "alterity is unthinkable and is therefore destined for reduction"(Baudrillard and Guillaume 2008:25). This raises the question whether the complex spiritual experience exists sufficiently in society for the spiritual reduction terminology to be fully appreciated, and if a lack of this impacts on environmental sustainability. Different entry points to sustainability are required just as different entry points are required for spirituality. Collaboration between the two may be able to bring about more of the change that is seen to be required.

The topics of self, transcendence, reductionism and science are captured in Husserl's eidetic phenomenology, as quoted by Cohen and Omery (1994:137-8), Husserl reduces existential phenomena to four universal constants: the first is a deep respect for science and the need to restore the link between phenomenology and science; the second is to be able to reduce down and draw out from the study of phenomenology clear analysis descriptions that can be applied in life and living; the third is about self – that people are responsible for creating their culture and

philosophy; and the fourth is a healthy respect for wonder. Husserl's four constants are stated as centralised with the essence of 'being' changing from the experiences of self to the phenomenon of the transcended. They appear to emphasize the duality of existentialism but not the catalytic transitory process of hoping – although this could be seen as implied through people creating their own cultures and philosophy, and in the movement from self to the transcended form. What is emphasised is the collaboration between science and the existential. This could be interpreted as the foundation of sustainability as it links the concept of sustainability to the dynamism of life.

5.6.6 The Connectivity Matrix trial

Keeping the Nature and Spirituality columns separate has the advantage of allowing different entry points into the conversation. It also caters for diverse opinions, enabling the application of the Matrix in different contexts. It is said to also serve to assist participants view their lives through different lenses. There may be contexts where combining the columns would be more appropriate. Suggestions for this will occur in Chapter Eight when a recommendation for a next stage of the Matrix is made.

A few participants who suggested that the spirituality column was irrelevant to them at the start of their interview, expressed a change of heart by its end. They accepted that the spirituality column had more value than they had originally attributed to it, as is expressed in the following (see Box 5.9).

Box 5.9: Changes of mind regarding the relevance of the Spirituality column

When you first introduced this concept I didn't think I needed a fourth column. I don't mind the existence of the fourth column the more I think about it (Interview #21).

Whilst I have not been prepared to give [spirituality] too much credit, I must say when you sit back and reflect, even if I'm not giving it too much time, it is having

much more impact on what I do and on what society does. I'm not an accountant, but I've looked at life from a balance sheet approach and in a balance sheet as long as the assets and the liabilities are balancing each other you don't need to lose too much sleep. And the way I look at life is precisely that. I look back and look at what I may have contributed by way of positives and some of the things I should not have done but I did – that's the liabilities (Interview #31).

The above serves to reinforce the idea that spirituality is innate. Therefore it could be said that no disconnection from spirituality has been noted in the responses to the Spirituality column of the Matrix – although the connection is not always a conscious one. It could even be described as a reluctantly stated connection with some participants recognising its existence but preferring that spirituality remained unnamed and therefore unconstrained. However, leaving it unnamed and undocumented could also imply that it is not important. This research process has shown that with time for reflection, an open facilitation approach and neutral tools respectful of all views within the Australian society, meaningful conversation about spirituality can occur in community and corporate contexts.

5.7 Conclusions

The data from interviews and workshops presented in this chapter suggest that spirituality has connection with both the physical and metaphysical. While the physical links – such as a person's personality or spirit are easier to relate to and represent, different invisible aspects of the metaphysical come across as challenging and contestable. All participants knew, have experienced, and could describe dimensions of spirituality relating to both physical and intangible forms.

Analysis of responses to the Nature column of the Connectivity Matrix showed that detachment from nature could be clearly identified as a detachment from the biophysical world. This detachment is not obvious in the responses to spirituality which is seen as innate and able to be called upon as required. However, in tough situations, the level or quality of spirituality that is inherent is said to determine the

amount of resilience that can be withstood or the level of inspiration and hope that can be applied.

What has emerged through reviewing participants responses on spirituality are three key areas that collectively make up The Three Modalities of Spirituality represented as 'doing', 'hoping' and 'being'.

Connection to the 'doing' spiritual element, the first modality, is plentiful because it is visible in the very essence of everyday life and living. The risk in this mode is the tendency to focus on self and disregard the other spiritual aspects. It would appear that cultures that actively engage in traditional practices of dynamic story telling, are able to use this medium to maintain a link between the spirit of the individual and an awareness of the relationship to the cosmos and beyond. Culture is seen to be an enabler or an alienator of spirituality depending on the person's familiarity with the symbols, aesthetics and practices. It is identified as important to articulate and document cultural values. A failure to do so can result in spirituality being deemed unimportant in the day-to-day context.

The second form of spirituality is described as a transitory form. It is a catalyst set in motion, working to improve the limitations of physical and constructed systems. The 'hoping' dynamic desires to create a better, more sustainable world. The catalytic spirit does this through remembering the feelings of wonderment, liberation and joy experienced in the third modality. This second mode is expressed as an important spiritual modality, the source of hope, an enabler of resilience, a medium that facilitates the search for meaning and purpose. It is not known how strong this is amongst participants but it is a known phenomenon.

The final of the three spiritual elements is the state of being – the realm of transcendence, beyond societal norms and rules, beyond the need for hope. This existential place, beyond creedal differences, is said to be an important realm of wonderment that defies definition and is therefore prone to reductionism and misconception. It is implied that quality time in this zone determines the level of

spirituality that is applied in the first and second modalities. There was no clear evidence of the amount of time or the quality of time that participants spend in each modality, only that the different modalities are experienced and known.

These dynamic spiritual modalities are described as different life or energy sources in the same way that sustainability can be described as being about life. Given this, it would appear that sustainability divorced of spirituality would not be represented as dynamic. It would seem that sustainability seen only as scientific is as discordant as spirituality that does not have a deep respect for science.

In Chapter Six participants' responses to Concept Two – The Five Dimensions – are presented. The Five Dimensions provides a different lens to encourage conversations about the relationship between the physical world and the existential.

CHAPTER SIX

PRIORITIES WITHIN THE FIVE DIMENSIONS

The preceding chapters were based on responses from the Connectivity Matrix, the first of three concepts developed and used in this research. The Five Dimensions was the second concept being trialled to encourage conversations about the existential in our lives. It was also used to see whether there is a detachment from spirituality and nature in our contemporary communities, and to gauge the impact of these on environmental sustainability. Concept 2 comprises the three-dimensional world (3D), it introduces a fourth dimension (4D) and a fifth dimension (5D). Collectively this is called the Five Dimensions:

- The three-dimensional realm – represents the physical world that we can touch and see;
- The fourth dimension – symbolises the relationships that we have in our lives;
- The fifth dimension – relates to the zone in which wonderment is experienced.

Responses to the Five Dimensions provide insight into how participants spend time in each dimension and how this is prioritised. This offers a different view of the connection participants have with nature and spirituality from that gained through The Connectivity Matrix.

6.1 The Five Dimensions concept

This Five Dimension's concept was introduced in interviews and workshops using a narrative style to engage participants in imagining their favourite place through: firstly remembering its physical form in detail; then through the role the place plays in relation to self, family and wider community; and finally whether and how the place holds memories of a sense of wonderment. A detailed description of the narrative used can be found in Chapter Three. The engagement of the participants in this 'favourite place' exercise is intended to provide them with an experience and understanding of the existential dimensions of the concept through providing it

with a 'real' place as a point of quantification, and then relating the other dimensions as layers of experience linked to it. Through associating the different dimensions with this common notion of place and also by naming the dimensional layers, the participants are familiarised with the framework for this exercise.

Based on this understanding and experience of the Five Dimensions concept through engagement in the narrative, the participants were then asked to:

- Name their favourite place;
- Identify the most important three-dimensional (3D) object in their life according to the time they spend with the object. Suggest what they would like to change this object to if change was possible;
- Respond to the fourth dimension (4D), the relationship element, by answering what is the most important relationship in their life according to time spent in the relationship. Again participants were asked if they would change this relationship, and if so to what.
- Express the way in which they engage most in the fifth dimension (5D). If they could change this process, would they, and to what.

6.2 Favourite Places

The favourite places identified by the participants covered a range of past and present places, urban and country locations, built and natural environment. Nature was by far the most stated favourite place response with a variety of specific locations named including "a hill in a place in Stanley, Tasmania", "camping at Jamieson", "the penguin rookeries at Macquarie Island, Antarctica", "it used to be Drakensberg Mountains in South Africa, now it's the Stirling Ranges", "Karijini – so arid but you get blue pools and ferns". Nature in constructed places is categorised separately from nature in the countryside because it was identified as accessible and part of everyday urban life. These are referred to as 'Park' in Figure 6.1. Some favourite constructed places included the East Perth parkland and Kings Park. Some identified places were driven by a love of family: "family home in home country", "the ocean or river is important to me for my emotional sustenance but my favourite place is Melbourne where my friends and family are", "where I met my

wife and watching children being born”, “my granny’s caravan”. For others, the favourite place was their home: “curled up in my bed reading”, “my music room”, “home in Fremantle – the broader Fremantle home”. There were sacred places represented through identifying religious sites as well as work places: “places where I have invested a lot of myself”.

Figure 6.1: Participants’ favourite places

The y axis represents number of participant responses.

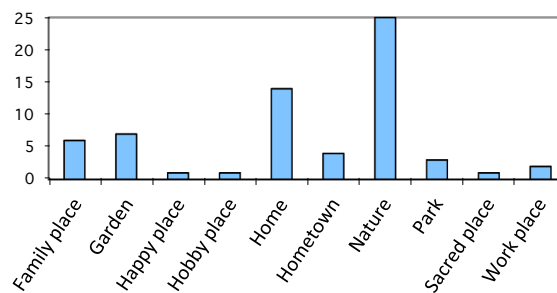


Figure 6.1 illustrates the types of places that were identified as favourite places, indicating the importance of nature, home, gardens and family – in that order. This favourite place exercise is not necessarily an indicator of connection to these places by time spent. However, it does provide some insight into the range of places that hold special meaning for the participants.

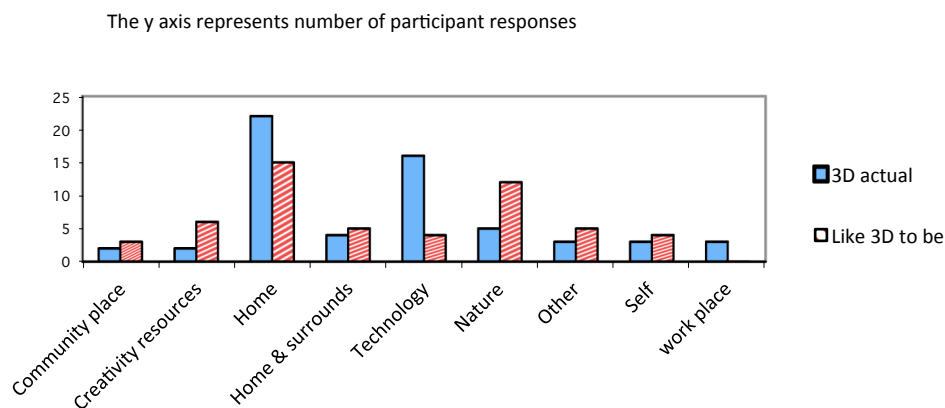
6.3 The three-dimensional world (3D): the physical world

The home emerged as the most important three-dimensional object in the participants’ lives – particularly by time spent there. Whilst a few participants were concerned about clarifying whether time spent was in waking or sleeping hours, there is evidence that a familiar sleeping place that one is involved in creating or adorning to one’s taste is an important part of a home (Strassler 2012). The findings show the importance a home plays in people’s lives. This is explored further in the Emergent Themes section.

Selected technological tools used for communication and organisation are next in the rankings. More specifically, the computer was identified in this category and to a lesser extent the mobile phone. Some referred to the technology use as the

workstation. The third ranked object category in the three dimensional world is natural forms such as “green plants”, “my dog and garden”. These appear as ‘nature’ in Figure 6.2. The area titled ‘self’ comprises of responses such as ‘clothes’ and ‘my body’ as the object most used. “Work place” represents descriptions of the place of work rather than the technology involved.

Figure 6.2: Summary of responses to the most important three-dimensional object in each participant’s life



The solid coloured columns in the graph (See Figure 6.2) illustrate what is stated by participants as the actual three dimensional objects that they spend the most time with. The stripped columns (stated in the legend as ‘Like 3D to be’) show what participants have stated as the object they would like to spend more time with – if they could change things. ‘Home’ and ‘home and surrounds’ are listed separately because in the latter the garden or environment around the home is identified as an inseparable package unlike the descriptions of the former that were specifically about the home itself. This is noted as it has implications for consideration of a conscious attachment to nature.

There were noteworthy decreases in the ‘Like 3D to be’ columns. Technology as an object to spend time with fell sharply. Home as a preferred object to spend a lot of time in also reduced but still remains the most named area. The work place was not considered at all as a preferred object in the participants’ wishes for what they would like their ideal three-dimensional object to be.

In the 'Like 3D to be' column, home retains its place as the most significant object. However, there is also marked increase in the 'nature' column represented through a range of objects including 'vegetable garden', farm, bush and domestic animals, various beach and bush locations. A noticeable increase is also seen in resources for creative activities as objects to spend time with. Examples of this include music, visual art tools and studios. There were small increases in 'home and surrounds', an example of the response for this is: "The ideal home: secure, strong, open, light, easy to get to, keep cold and hot out, embedded in vegetation and connected to the natural world". There were small increases for community places, and self – representing objects like clothing. Miscellaneous others, which included religious objects and food also increased slightly.

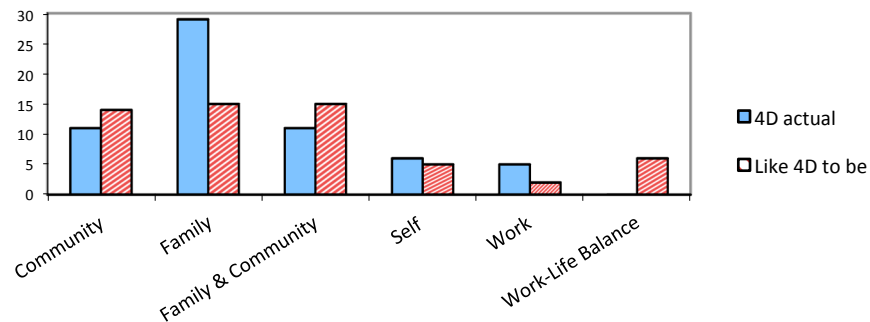
An emergent theme is that workplaces are not represented in the ideal context, indicating that they lack the qualities that could make them a preferred three-dimensional form. Therefore to emulate those forms chosen as the ideal objects, workplaces need to include access to and time for nature, creative resources and opportunities, and perhaps become more like a home away from home. This is explored further in the Emergent themes section.

6.4 The Fourth Dimension (4D): the relational world

Responses to this question are about the most important relationship in the participant's life – by time spent. Because the earlier question regarding favourite places was about relationship to the environment both built and natural, this question focused on self, family and community. It resulted in categorisation into six groups: 1) Community – includes consideration of time spent in community, diversity of community, monetary resources required for community networking, and general comments about the value of community. 2) Family – which includes intergenerational aspects, spouses, partners, and extended families. 3) Family and community – is purposely separated from 'family' and from 'community' because the focus in these responses is on the importance of activities that engage family and community as one; responses in this area include immediate family and close friends, pets, and partaking as family in community activities, events in nature, and

in spiritual or religious activities. 4) Work – referring to work colleagues and networks. 5) Work-life balance – with comments including the relationship between work and community, family or both.

Figure 6.3: Summary of participants’ responses to the most important fourth dimensional (4D) – relational aspects in their lives



As indicated in the responses (see Figure 6.3), family was by far the most important relational representation by time spent. This was followed by equal rankings for time spent with community and relationships involving both family and community, including pets. It could be that in some instances work colleagues are included as community, but the participants did not explicitly clarify this. The responses grouped under the work category specifically used terms such as “my colleagues”, “my clients” or described work as a relationship to the whole process: “work is huge”.

In response to what participants would ‘Like 4D to be’, there was a need to create a new category called work-life balance. Participants used the term balance implying that they spend too much time at work resulting insufficient time for other important relationships. This was followed by an increase in the family and community category: “bring my community interests and family together”, “get involved with neighbourhood community”, “spending time with family and pets, grandchildren and friends, doing activities for example walking, recreation, relaxing”. These findings could imply that there is a separation from nature and

spirituality, as identified in previous chapters, but that there is also a separation from the practice of socialising as a community. The common factor seen as requiring change appears to be a work culture and an embedded social mindset that places job outcomes above family, community, nature and spirituality.

The change wished for is indicated by a significant decrease in the 'family' category, and lesser decreases in 'work' and 'self' categories. However it must be noted that the 'work-life balance' responses includes self, family and community as a whole as demonstrated in this response: "more balance between self / family / [work] and community".

The increase in responses from 'family' or 'community' to 'family and community' as a desired change does suggest a consciousness of the need for a collective or community spirit. It implies that current community activities do not bring families and communities together. The need for work-life balance indicates that work demands, or culture is a contributing factor to the lack of time available for community. This finding may suggest an intuitive knowing that the current imbalance it is not sustainable. The breakdown of social wellbeing is implied but will not be explored here as it is outside the scope of this research.

The need for widening collaboration networks has certainly emerged as something seen to have benefits through the participant responses to the fourth – or relational dimension. However, the relationship with family and the wider community is only a wish at this time, and the reality is still limited to the narrower family situation. The limiting of socialising to family may be all that people can do with the demands imposed by work. On the other hand, it could be that the desire stated by participants to increase the time spent with their social network is reason to hope that improvements in community socialising will grow.

This detachment from community is further evidence of a general culture of detachment, which extends to also include the distancing from nature and spirituality as was identified in Chapters Four and Five.

6.5 The fifth dimension (5D): the world of wonderment

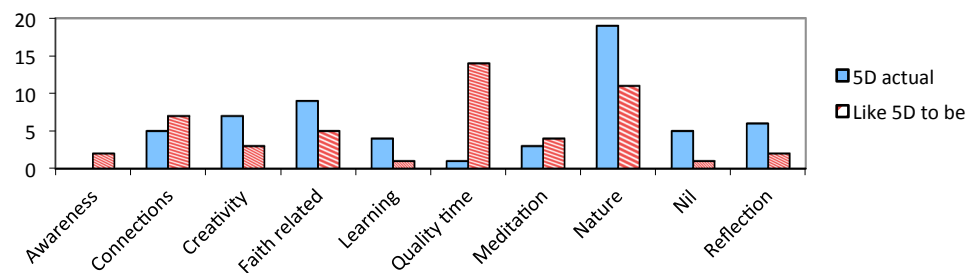
Responses to the fifth dimension indicate the most used way in which the participants engaged in the realm of wonderment or spirituality. Ten groupings emerged:

- 1) Awareness - which did not seem to be present in the responses on actual experiences but is present in the '5D like to be' column represented as: "waking up instead of always looking", "I was looking for a place, it is not there, it is within you";
- 2) Connection – this category was stronger in the '5D like to be' column. It is represented through responses such as "holidays in other countries"; "interaction with fellow human beings"; "sharing and showing the farm with more people – for them to wonder"; "enjoying the universal wonder – meditation, music, books, food celebrations with families and friends";
- 3) Creativity - which is expressed in comments such as "time for myself – imagining things", "internal process – opening up through creative processes – painting";
- 4) Faith related practices - with various forms being shared. For example: "Do the *Gussal* [preparing the corpse for burial] – as part of a faith community committee - a reminder of our mortality"; prayer time; opportunities for worship; "As an atheist who occasionally indulges in being an agnostic – I promote inter-religious awareness and understanding";
- 5) Learning – learning about spirituality expressed as a form of spiritual engagement. This was mainly related to reading about other ways of thinking and the interconnectedness of it all;
- 6) Quality time – featured more in the '5D like to be' column than in the actual. In the responses about actual experiences "more quality time" was stated which does imply a wish rather than an actual;
- 7) Meditation – includes specific meditation practices, for example yoga and silence meditation;
- 8) Nature – featured strongly in this dimension and representations included: "watching sun coming up and going down and birds in bird bath", "being on the beach to watch the sunset and smell the sea air and feel it enveloping me", "Bibbulmum Track";

9) The category titled ‘Nil’ represents comments such as: “don’t have anything at this point”, “no time for 5D”, “not making enough time”, “not having time and space for spirituality – time to quiet things down”, “at the moment I don’t – and that is the problem”;

10) Reflection – different from meditation in which specific meditation practices were mentioned. Under reflection were conversations with self and thinking in a quiet space.

Figure 6.4: Summary of participants’ responses to the activity they spent the most time in, within the fifth dimension (5D) or realm of wonderment



Whilst knowing and experiencing the fifth dimension was evident, the two points of note in Figure 6.4 are 1) the unrivalled dominance of engagement in nature expressed as providing the most actual time of engagement in spirituality and 2) the general statements of the need for quality time – which indicates that whilst there is time, there is a lack of quality time for participating and connecting to spirituality.

This implies that whilst the phenomenon of spirituality is known, there is insufficient time allocated to it to be able to unwind, let go and engage in what has been described as a transcendence into a state of being (see Chapter Five). Below are some of the comments categorised under ‘quality time’. They indicate lifestyle adjustments in order to achieve the quality time. These include more time alone in meditation or reflection. They indicate recognition of the importance of spirituality.

Box 6.1: Making quality time for spirituality

“Have set times to be alone. That is two days at a time away from commitment and demand”(Workshop #1)

“Moving to quieter place” (Interview #11)

“I would spend more time and have to work through how that happens. I think the Western world is spending less and less time in this area these days. I am one of those culprits” (Interview #26)

The question of belief or a search for meaning did not emerge in the comments regarding time spent in the fifth dimension. They were mainly about recalling experiences of flow and wonderment and how to gain more time in this zone. This implies that while the phenomenon is known, there is insufficient time in it, which signifies a preference allocated to factors of life other than spirituality. It also shows that the Five Dimensions concept could be the better tool, of the 2 concepts used so far, for encouraging conversations about the wonderment experience.

When relational matters emerged in the dialogue there appeared to be more empathy and appreciation of diversity: “if you are serious about wonderment, isn’t it the fact that someone else can see the same thing in a totally different way – multiple realities”(Interview #31). This empathic view could be because participants were positioned closer to the realm of otherness and the competitive and political aspects of the material world were therefore further away. It could suggest that positioning in the fifth dimension might be important in informing and establishing collaborative processes.

6.6 Emergent themes

The emergent themes cover: the importance of home; the indication that workplaces could embrace qualities found in favourite places or forms in order for them to become fully participatory in the dimensions of life and therefore, perhaps, also more sustainable; the evidence that a culture of detachment is endemic, not

only across nature and spirituality but also within communities; and the importance of making time for wonderment as a requirement in engendering empathy.

Advancements in neuroscience and psychology have uncovered new knowledge about brain functions (Zohar and Marshall, 2001:3-4) and this is said to have resulted in new theories and findings regarding human attitudes, behaviours and spiritual experiences. These new discoveries provide different viewpoints that inform the analysis of the emergent themes from this chapter. Zohar and Marshall's (2001) theories cover three intelligences: the intelligence quotient (IQ), the Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and the Spiritual Intelligence (SQ). The work of Howard Garner (2006) and Daniel Goleman (1996) provide different perspectives on Intelligence and their work is drawn upon to further inform this study. The contributions of Snow and Farr (1987) and Snow and Swanson (1992) regarding cognitive, affective and conative thinking convey different but related information on analysing, behaving and motivational workings of the brain.

Of the three intelligences stated by Zohar and Marshall (2001), the intelligence quotient, or the logical thinking capacity was covered in greater detail in Chapter Two. Their definition of the emotional quotient as the relational intelligence was explored in Chapter Four. Spiritual intelligence, according to Zohar and Marshall (2005: 96), is one of the newest areas of the brain to be identified and studied by neurologists. They propose that metaphysical experiences and thinking pertaining to values and a deeper sense of meaning belong to the realm of the spiritual. Zohar and Marshall (2001: 5) claim spiritual intelligence to be a separate area and function of the brain.

The three areas: logical thinking, emotional links and spiritual awareness – proposed in the three intelligences by Zohar and Marshall (2001) emerged to some degree in the responses by participants. These responses also support Snow and Swanson's (1992) knowledge acquisition skills, which embrace the cognitive, affective and conative functions of the brain (1992: 584). Snow and Swanson relate the cognitive as ability and knowledge constructs requiring analysis (1992:592 -594),

and conative thinking is represented as the motivation and volition capacity. In their work, affective thinking is described as being a part of conation (1992: 599).

However, the work of Goleman (1996) appears to have significantly added to the body of knowledge regarding emotional intelligence (EQ) as a separate function of the brain. He describes emotional intelligence as a guide to how we behave, feel, and relate to each other. The Table below (Table 6.1) is provided to show the two theories, explained above, side by side. They may have a number of differences but seeing them together does show the commonalities.

Table 6.1: Viewing the commonalities between the categories of two psychology-based theories on the dimensions and capabilities of the mind.

| | |
|-----------|-----------------------------|
| Cognition | Intelligence Quotient (IQ) |
| Affection | Emotional Intelligence (EQ) |
| Conation | Spiritual Intelligence |

The Five Dimensions concept has some areas that overlap with the above theories. However, its purpose is not to study the workings of the brain. The Five Dimensions concept is being used to engage in conversation to see whether there is a detachment from nature and spirituality. It must be clarified that the Five Dimensions concept is not science based. It has its roots in intuitive oral tradition knowing and its aim is to use creative narrative to assist with unlocking conversations about the different layers of experiences within participants' lives. The psychology-based theories mentioned above are referred to in analysing some data from the Five Dimensions responses.

The summary of results from using the Five Dimensional narrative approach is stated below in Table 6.2. Included are: the three highest ranked categories provided by the participants as their favourite place; and in each of the five dimensions – the three dimensional or physical (3D), the fourth dimension or relational (4D), and the fifth dimension or wonderment (5D) elements. The rankings

for the 3D, 4D and 5D include a row for actual time spent in the context and another stating the categories that participants would ideally like to spend time in.

Table 6.2: Summary of the three highest ranked categories for favourite places, the three-dimension object, fourth dimension relationship, and fifth dimension activity

| | Highest ranked | 2 nd ranked | 3 rd ranked |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| Favourite Place | Nature | Home | Garden |
| 3D - Actual | Home | Technology | Nature |
| 3D Ideal | Home | Nature | Creative resource |
| 4D - Actual | Family | Community | Family & Community including pets |
| 4D Ideal | Family & community including pets | Family | Community |
| 5D - Actual | Nature | Faith related | Creativity |
| 5D Ideal | Quality Time | Nature | Connection |

Nature was the most favoured place by responses. It was also seen as the most favoured way to engage in the spiritual dimension. Home was stated as the three-dimensional object in which the participants spent the most time. There was no change in the '3D Ideal' column. Home remained the object of choice reinforcing the importance of a home and what this means to people. The issue of sleeping and waking times is explored a little further on.

In the fourth dimension – the relational realm, family was stated as the relationship that involved the most of participants' time. However, in the '4D Ideal' column there was a change with participants wishing for more time in relationships that comprised family and community, including pets.

The greatest change between the actual and the ideal was seen in the fifth dimension – described in this exercise as the wonderment realm. Nature was listed as the most popular way to engage in this realm. In stating what the ideal situation would be, approximately 30 per cent of participants identified quality time as the most important thing for engaging in the realm of wonderment. This is the

strongest indicator so far of a detachment from spirituality. However, it is not indicating an absence of spirituality but a lack of priority given to spirituality because of other pressures. Spirituality, it would seem, requires quality time in order to reap sufficient benefits.

6.6.1 The importance of home

The favourite place exercise was designed specifically to provide a known physical place for participants to connect to, in order to experience and become familiar with the Five Dimensions concept. The existential quality of favourite places can be seen in the theory put forward by Svetlana Boym (2014: 7). She suggests that experiencing is possibly not a longing for a place but rather a different time that was spent in the past – reflected on as “a slower time – time out of time, not encumbered by appointment books”. Boym cites nostalgia as a sense of remembered belonging that can be a “restorative nostalgia”(2014:9). This perceived ‘slowing down of time’ through this exercise, and through similar experiences, could enable the awareness of the complexities and possible dimensions within our lives that might otherwise be taken for granted or overlooked.

Finding 6.1: Engaging in processes that ‘slow time down’

Without processes in place that allow time for reflection, the awareness of the complexities, richness and benefits of the different layers of our lives and lives of others could remain untapped, and the layers or dimensions of life fall victim to reductionism.

The importance of home in the participants’ lives emerged as the most significant finding in the responses to the three-dimensional object that they spend the most time with or in.

No distinction is made between waking hours and time spent sleeping because the experience of sleeping at home is said to be an important reason for having a place of shelter (Strassler 2012). Having a constant place to sleep and making it feel like home are stated as critical, even for theatre professionals that require extensive

time away from home (Strassler 2012:9). He says this is important even if the time spent in a home is negligible and mainly for sleep. It would appear that the need for a sense of familiarity with a surrounding is strongly connected to home as a place in which to feel comfortable and safe enough to sleep in.

This provokes thoughts about not having a home – homelessness. According to Shumsky (2012) even the “tunnel dwellers” of New York’s Grand Central Station fashioned a place they called their home – a place where they return to sleep (2012:xii). Shumsky continues by saying that people with a million dollar condo could consider themselves homeless even though not “houseless”. However this enters into the fourth dimension – the relationship realm as it links a home as a place where there are other factors like love and support with the presence of more than just the object. It could well be that relational, values and belief factors influenced the selection of the object that the participants spent most of their time with. This indicates a multilayered way to perceive the three dimensional world, which can be seen in the definition of cognition given by psychologist Saul McLeod (2009:1). He suggests that the cognitive brain makes decisions based on beliefs indicating a level of inseparability of the various functions of the brain.

6.6.2 Reshaping workplaces

In the three dimensional world, technology, including computers and smart mobile phones, was rated as dominant, second to the home. This concurs with Zohar and Marshall’s (2001) theory of intelligence quotient being about computer-like logic. However, for many participants, computers were tools not only for organising but also for communication and creativity. Again this shows the interrelatedness of the different facets of thinking. For some, thinking objectively is a practiced skill, for others, the mind moves straight away to the imaginative or connective processes.

The responses show that in the three-dimensional world it is important to develop an awareness of and obtain knowledge of objects and how to use them. These skills are what Snow and Farr (1987:4) state as cognitive brain workings. The responses to what object is most important to participants – by time spent with it – seems to be

reasonably aligned to Zohar and Marshall's (2001) theories about intelligence quotients and to Snow and Farr's (1987) interpretation of the cognitive brain. This could suggest that the cognitive brain and intelligence quotient are required to navigate the three-dimensional realm. However, there has to be other reasons that participants chose the categories they did. They involve the emotional and spiritual intelligences or the affective and conative workings of the brain, in other words engagement in the fourth and fifth dimensions. For example, why didn't participants choose workplaces to spend most of their time in? This is explored below.

It is interesting to note that workplaces did not appear at all in the three highest ranked categories – not even in the ideal contexts. Workplaces do not contain what participants like. According to the data, they would not appear to be a home away from home: if there is no access to nature; where families and communities, including pets are not included; and if it is not policy and practice to schedule or encourage credible time to enjoy wonderment and creativity.

There were only a handful of participants who perceived work to be a spiritual activity. For the overwhelming majority, therefore, it would seem that work is perceived as devoid of, or to be divorced from spirit. The work environment and culture, it could be said, is one of the leading factors causing a detachment from spirit. Work is also seen as the cause of the lack of time to engage with family, community and nature, which are represented as very important in participants' lives. The findings from the favourite place and three-dimensions questions give rise to the following emergent theme about reshaping work culture to enable work-life balance.

Findings 6.2: Reshaping work culture

- For workplaces to be included amongst favourite places, they would need to include access to nature and to the opportunity to be creative. They would also need to embrace processes which include family and community.

- Individuals would need to take responsibility to ensure they have quality time in nature and spirituality and these practices would be assisted if they are valued and recognised as credible by organisations.

6.6.3 A culture of physical detachment – a symbol of our time

The fourth dimension in the Five Dimensions concept is where participants are asked to express the relational aspects in their life. The work of Goleman (1996, 2006) and Zohar and Marshall (2001), with regards to emotional intelligence, lends support to the importance of a dimension focused on relationality.

In Daniel Goleman's (1996) work on emotional intelligence, describes emotional intelligence (EQ) as the person's ability to review a situation that they are in and then choose an appropriate response(1996:4). In a later work, Goleman (2006: 26-27) states that there are five main areas of emotional intelligence and that individuals have varying levels of ability in each of them. The five elements are: self-awareness – knowing your own feelings and why they are so; managing emotions; motivation; empathy – a personal ability 'to intuit what another is feeling or experiencing; and social skills – interacting in relationships. Zohar and Marshall (2001) describe emotional intelligence as learned responses from repeated experiences within a similar context (2001:50). The repetition is said to lead to what neuroscientists describe as a new 'wiring' in the brain resulting in future recognition of this relational experience.

The highest responses for the relationships that involve the most of participants' time are stated as family, followed equally by community, and then a collective of family and community including pets. The point to note is that the 'actual' strong connection, by time spent is represented as the family, shifts in the 'ideal' to a combination of family and community including pets. This could imply that there is recognition that the actual, is not sustainable. There are several authors whose work supports these findings regarding the breakdown and rebuilding of community. These include Cox (1998) and Putnam (2000).

This detachment could imply that not only is there a separation from nature and spirituality but that there is also a separation from community making it a more general mindset of detachment that is prevalent in society. The common factor as indicated by the findings is the work culture. From the findings so far, work priorities, consciously or unconsciously, are positioned as more credible and important than family, community, nature and spirituality. Nonetheless, there appears to be a desire to change this.

Finding 6.3: A culture of detachment applies to community, nature and spirituality

- A culture of separation is strong and in its wake is a culture of detachment from community, nature and spirituality.
- However, the desire to turn this around to have stronger relationships in all dimensions, rather than to exist in isolation and be dominated singly by the demands of work, is also convincing.

Zohar and Marshall's (2001) interpretation of emotional intelligence as well as Goleman's work (1986, 2007), both suggest an empathic learning through observation as a way of gaining emotional intelligence. It could be interpreted that there are insufficient opportunities and therefore experiences for learning how to engage family and communities together. In a similar way as expressed in connection with nature in Chapter Four, the wish for the affective relationship for family and community might be there, but changing theory or ideas into practice requires not only volition (ascribed to conative thinking by Snow and Farr (1987)), but examples, leadership and regular guidance in undertaking the processes so that these new beginnings can occur through 're-wiring' of the related emotional intelligence neurons in the brain.

In the mid nineties, scientific advancements identified the neurons responsible for empathy, which were named as mirror neurons (Rifkin, 2009: 82-83). That is,

according to Rifkin (2009), not the neuron responsible for the direct action of pulling or pushing or similar, but the mirror of those neurons that enable the observer to see how someone else is performing or reacting to the pulling, pushing or to a spider crawling up an arm. For example, the empathy is in the observer's feeling the same as though the spider was crawling up their arm. Rifkin (2009: 83) quotes Rizzolatti in saying it is: "By feeling, not by thinking". Ramachandan (2011: 121) states this is "as if mirror neurons are nature's own virtual-reality simulations of the intentions of other beings". Learning of empathy, according to Rifkin (2009), is the hope of moving from community to global collaboration:

Collaborative working environments have long been standard fare in commercial fields and in the civil society. Scientists, attorneys, contractors, people in the performing arts, not-for-profit organisations, and self-help groups traditionally engage in collaborative work environments... collaborative learning, with its emphasis on mindfulness, attunement to others, nonjudgemental interactions, acknowledgement of each person's unique contributions, and recognition of the importance of deep participation and a shared sense of meaning coming out of embedded relationships, can't help but foster greater empathic engagement (2009:606-607).

It would appear that development of empathy, collaboration and emotional intelligence is critical to breaking the culture of detachment. Perhaps this is where the conative and its motivational and volition ability, or the spiritual intelligence with its search for meaning and creativity comes to the fore. The Fifth of the Five Dimensions, however, focuses on wonderment.

6.6.4 Making time for wonderment

It must be noted that the realisation of making time, connecting and working collaboratively emerged in responses when contemplating the realm of wonderment. Could it be that positioning within this realm is required for decisions and actions related to collaborating beyond established boundaries? The following responds to the question.

In Chapter Five, the Three Modalities of Spirituality were identified along with the finding that time spent in the state of being (referred to here as wonderment) impacts on the capacity to hope, endure and act compassionately. It was also established that if this connection to a higher consciousness was not recognised by a person, then he or she could be, not only depriving themselves, but also others, of the benefits. Based on the responses to this Five Dimensions exercise it would appear that experiencing the phenomenon of wonderment helps people transcend difficult collaborations. A participant (Interview #14) was quoted in Chapter Six explaining how people start to see the good in others by going through the experience of 'being'. However, according to the participants, this wonderment can only occur if time for this is prioritised.

Finding 6.4: Making time for wonderment

More time in the wonderment dimension may enable people to be more open and compassionate to others and overcome barriers of difference.

The fifth dimension could be linked to what Zohar and Marshall (2001) call spiritual intelligence. However, having reviewed the work on multiple intelligences by Howard Gardner (2006: 20) the argument of intelligence applied to spirituality may not be the best fit for all contexts. Gardner prefers to refer to spirituality as a phenomenological experience rather than as one of the intelligences (2006:20). Intelligence, according to Gardner (2006) is common to not only humans but also to rats, birds and even computers. He states that intelligence is "the ability to solve problems or fashion products that are of consequence in a particular cultural setting or community" (2006:6). It is this problem-solving capacity that is required before a phenomenon can be called an intelligence (Gardner 2006: 6). Gardner continues suggesting that existentialism has some, but not all, of the requirements to be deemed an intelligence. He posits that existential intelligence is founded on the human tendency to question the meaning of existence. He is not convinced that even existentialism meets all the requirements to be called 'an intelligence' because it does not appear to solve anything. Intelligence, he considers, to be different to

the phenomenon of flow and wonderment that could, he says, be experienced by a mathematician in the process of their work (2006:20), but the mathematician could solve problems without experiencing the phenomenon.

Gardner is referring to the phenomenological experience of being, as the total experience and capability of spirituality. Whereas, according to findings from this research, it is the 'hoping' mode that the problem solving capacity is envisioned. It follows that the 'doing' mode of spirituality is where the action of solving problems takes place. However, the 'hoping' and 'doing' modes require to be 'fed' by the flow and experience of wonderment.

Zohar and Marshall state that included in the functions of spiritual intelligence are the will to change and the ability to be creative (2001: 13,9). Volition and creativity are claimed to be the functions of the conative brain as defined by Snow and Farr (1987:4). Using the Three Modalities of Spirituality concept, these descriptions belong to the 'hoping' mode and are made without sufficient focus on 'being' as the nurturer of the volition to change, be creative or solve problems.

In the fifth dimension responses, there was no 'search for meaning' or anything related to what Gardner (2006:20) includes in the existential intelligence. What he calls the "bigger questions of life" came up in the responses to the Connectivity Matrix that provided opportunity to represent beliefs and reasoning behind the beliefs. The question of beliefs did not emerge in connection with the Five Dimensions exercise which generated more of what Gardner suggests as the phenomenon of flow and wonderment. It drew out opinions about how to achieve more of these experiences.

There appeared to be a more empathic position adopted by the participants in responses to the Five Dimensions. This reason for the empathic view requires further research, however it could be because the setting of the exercise was through story that linked participants to their experience in the realm of wonderment. Therefore the competitive and political aspects of the material world,

associated with corporate systems cultures, became more detached. This suggests that positioning in the wonderment realm of the fifth dimension might be important in establishing collaborative processes.

6.7 Conclusions

The Five Dimensions concept facilitated responses about what the participants are attached to, and how they engage in the different realms. It provided a different lens into their relationship, or lack of, with community, the corporate world, nature and spirituality.

Through this Five Dimensions exercise the importance of the home emerged as the most significant physical form in the participants' lives. Attachment to technology is evident. Both a culture of detachment and technology are represented as the identifying lifestyle symbol. However technology, a new way of connecting, appears to have caused a detachment from human communities and nature, and participants indicate that they want that situation to change. There were no references to new, sustainable technologies in this exercise, however this area was covered in Chapter Four. There is also a longing for more creative resources possibly implying a desire for more inspirational activities to lift the spirit.

The fourth dimension, the relational element of spirituality, seems critical in making intended social and environmental connections a reality. The culture of detachment is represented as rampant. Not only does it exist in relation to nature and spirituality, but it is present in family and community life as well. Workplaces and processes are constructed to be detached, objective and it is this work culture that is seemingly dictating the way that relationships should function. However, there is recognition that work cultures require more balance, access to nature, and need to be inclusive of families and communities.

The fifth dimension seemed to engage with the phenomena of wonderment, volition, resilience and creativity. However the lack of time in this spiritual realm

was clearly stated and this could impact on the quality of the 'hoping' and 'doing' activities.

It would stand to reason that dependence on the intelligence quotient or cognitive brain without considering the capabilities of multiple intelligences and the other workings of the brain – namely, affective (or emotional intelligence) and conative (or spiritual intelligence) – could result in limiting the understanding of the dynamics of these other dimensions, all of which are required for sustainability. The Five Dimensions concept, as trialled, can play a role in creating the new connected workplaces and communities of the future through bringing an awareness of the different relationships and experiences of each element.

Through the findings so far, there have been references to governance related matters. For example, achieving a balance between ecosystems and corporate world, the need for a new economy and way of valuing biophysical wealth. Value-based actions and systems have been proposed as best practice for organisational leaders, and hope as a foundational element in policy and planning. These governance and related corporate system agendas are the focus of Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GOVERNANCE

This Chapter commences with the findings of the Percentage exercise. In it the participants consider the Connectivity Matrix and provide an indication of the portion of time, as a percentage, they spend in activities related to each of the columns: community, corporate systems, nature and spirituality. The conversation that this exercise provokes is important to this research, and in particular to this chapter on governance as it enquires into the possible detachment from spirituality and nature and the impact governance and corporate systems have on these areas.

Following on from this the participants' responses to Concept 3A and 3B – the Combined View concept (see Chapter Three) are tabled and analysed. The Combined View concept is the third and final model being trialled in this research to encourage conversations about the physical and metaphysical aspects of life. It is used as a visual aid to stimulate responses on the perceived relationship between nature, spirituality and governance.

7.1 The percentages exercise: Time participants spend in community, corporate systems, nature and spirituality

The percentage exercise is an exploratory study to engage interview and workshop participants in quantifying the time they spend in community culture, corporate systems, nature, and spirituality categories shown in the Connectivity Matrix (see Chapter Three). The resultant statistics should be treated only as informative. The exercise is a reflective tool which assists the participants to think about how much time they spend in each area. Both the statistics and conversations resulting from this exercise are presented as they support each other as part of the analysis. All but one interviewee and two participants in a small workshop were asked to take part in this exercise. These exceptions were described in Chapter Three.

Getting the participants to consider the percentage of time spent in each of the four areas of the Connectivity Matrix proved challenging. Of the 30 interviewees, 24 who took part in this exercise were happy to state specific figures for each of the four areas. Two interviewees were of the opinion that they would not choose to label their lives by those categories. Nevertheless, this exercise prompted comments (see Box 7.1) about the division of time spent in each of the four categories.

Box 7.1: Examples of participants' justifications of the way they allocated percentages of time spent in each of the four categories of the Connectivity Matrix

"There is no time in my life that is exclusively any of these things. I am sitting here now. The sunlight is coming in. There's a bit of greenery – that's nature. We've been talking about spirituality. It's bringing spiritual things into my mind. We are here as a result of the fact that [name of organisation] is a corporate system. In a sense [name of organisation] is also a real community with a strong culture. That would be true in any moment in time. There's a kind of mix of all of those. But the question is still valid because it is important to ascertain how much of people's lives are, not so much in terms of time, but in concentration either mixed with other things or exclusively focused on something" (Interview #14).

"Some people might actually say that's high [referring to the percentage the participant has given for time spent in community] but I think I do spend a bit of time in this area because I have actually realised that, in some respects, you need some of this [community] to be good at that [corporate]" (Interview #26).

"Community, I will have to say, that a lot of that revolves around family - so my immediate community. Corporate system is the work that pays me. Nature is my experience being out in the public domain and spirituality are those moments when I am reflecting..." (Interview #27).

Spirituality is in all of them. During the day there might be little bits that are bigger than time. In terms of practice it might be 5%. The time for spirituality transforms the others (Interview #5).

At this stage I'm not spending much time in nature. It is the stage of life – it's either family or work now (Interview #8).

Since I've lived [in this bush block] I'm immersed in nature. It would not have been the case 18 months ago. In the city it is about accessibility [to nature] (Interview #8).

By reflecting on the four categories in connection with time spent in each, participants seemed to become aware of the layers in their lives and were teasing out these complexities. They began to identify gaps and the reasons for them. Stages-of-life is seen as one factor for the lack of current engagement in nature – suggesting that at a different life stage there is more time spent in nature. Accessibility to nature was also indicated as important in enabling more time spent in this area. Spirituality is stated as not requiring a lot of time, but through an implied small amount of time for recharging spirit, it is said to be able to transform other aspects of life. There was recognition that, in some cases, whilst the main aim of their work was embedded in corporate systems, this task involved considerable engagement with communities.

Six interviewees found that adding the four categories up to 100% was not suitable for them and provided their explanations as follows:

Box 7.2: Participants' explanations regarding the difficulty in allocating percentages to each of the four areas

"I have to say I am 100% in all four at one time. I could not separate out spirituality from corporate or community or nature. Nature has to be there the whole time and I am much more aware of nature being there even right now and it is very hard for

me to separate that out. I'll be in a board meeting and yet that is drawing out of me every ounce of my spirituality and it is helping me to put into practice the community culture that I am a part of and inform who I am and what I represent. And the sheer act of breathing and laughing and seeing other people is part of that natural experience as well because all around us is that natural world and if we have shut it out, we are not often looking for it either, and the best board meetings are those where you have open windows and you can see the clouds and you can see the ocean and whatever" (Interview #17).

"If you can sum it to more than 100% then you can overcome the problem of permeation" (Workshop #2)

"My answer is going to add up more than the whole as there will be times when I would be sharing and spending time in both" (interview #21).

"It could even have been 1% [of spirituality]. You had one wake up moment at your grandmother's vege patch and your life changed. And you never went again, you never grew vegetables but you are indescribably different. You are open and you have stopped being 1 dimensional" (Interview #22).

"Spirituality does miss out and I think it often is combined with nature. So when I manage one I manage both... For me spirituality just ticks along there. It is not something I do on a regular basis or have particular commitments in" (Interview #23).

In the above cases where there was difficulty expressed and a variation requested, it was accepted. A formula has been applied to standardise the variations as follows. If participants have stated figures for the categories totalling more or less than 100%, the figures were recalculated to reflect a total of 100%. Where, for example, nature and spirituality were combined and given one percentage, that percentage figure was divided equally in the combined columns and entered into the data. Details of original figures and the recalculations are tabled in Appendix 7.

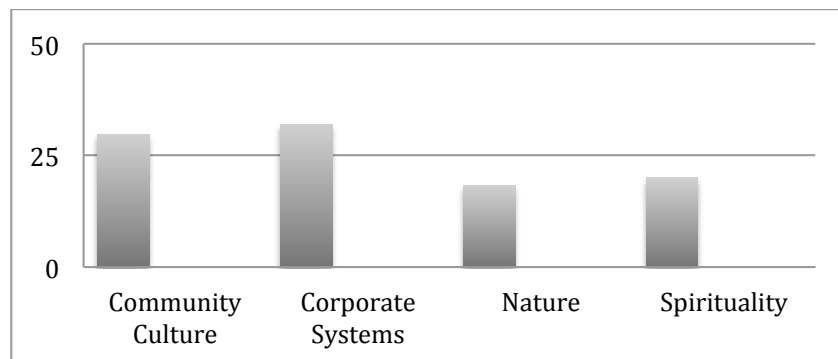
7.1.1 Participants' responses to percentages exercise

Following is a summary of responses to the percentages exercise. It reflects the attempt by participants to quantify time spent in community, corporate systems, nature and spirituality

Figure 7.1: Average time spent in each category [percentages]

| | Community Culture | Corporate Systems | Nature | Spirituality |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Interviews | 30.5% | 32% | 18.5% | 19% |
| Workshops | 29% | 32% | 18% | 21% |
| Combined Average | 30% | 32% | 18% | 20% |

Table 7.1: Average time spent in each category



From these findings, time spent in corporate systems is only marginally higher than that in community. Whilst the time spent in nature and spirituality is approximately 10% lower than the estimates for community and corporate systems, the data does not indicate a detachment from these areas. They imply acknowledgement of the presence of nature and spirituality in everyday life. However if consideration were to be based on an equal 25% applied across the four areas as a gauge of balance, considerably more time is spent in corporate systems and community (rounded to

62%) than in nature and spirituality (rounded to 38%). In this respect, it could be said that there is a lesser connection with nature and spirituality.

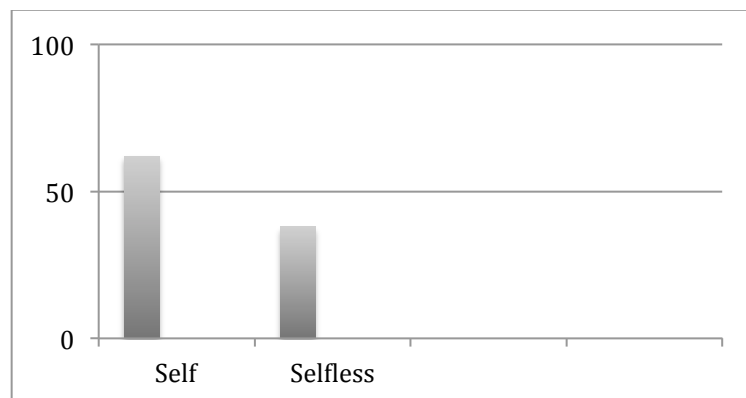
7.1.2 The identification of the ‘self’ and ‘selfless’ fields within the Matrix

Reflections on the four areas of the Connectivity Matrix resulted in the following observations. One participant (Interview #27) described community culture and corporate systems as both being about “self” or ego-based activities that benefit self rather than others. Nature and spirituality were described as “selfless” activities⁴⁴. Using this definition, the areas of self-interest take up the biggest percentage of time. Another participant articulates the similarity between community culture and corporate systems and the difference of these two areas from nature and spirituality as follows: “in the first two columns [community culture and corporate systems] we are actors and in the next two columns [nature and spirituality] we are passive” (Interview #13).

Figure 7.2: ‘Actual’ time spent in ‘Self’ and ‘Selfless’ activities [percentages]

| | Community Culture | Corporate Systems | Nature | Spirituality |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Combined Interviews and workshop | 30% | 32% | 18% | 20% |
| | Self | | Selfless | |
| | 62% | | 38% | |

Table 7.2: ‘Actual’ time spent in ‘Self’ and ‘Selfless’ activities



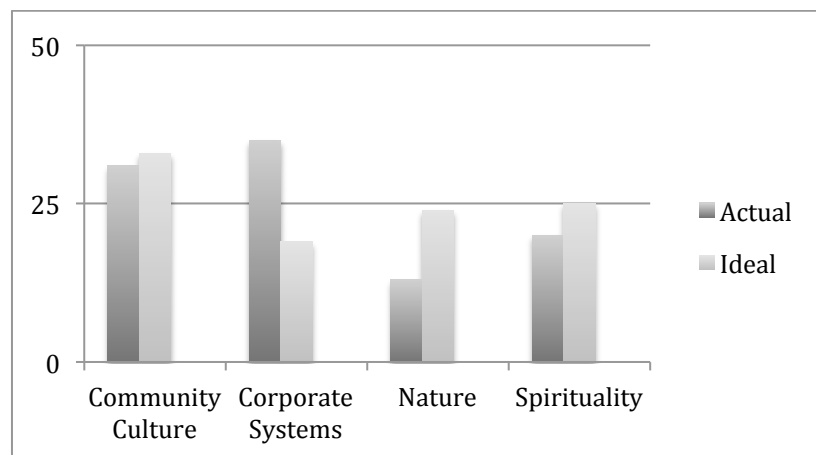
⁴⁴ The terms ‘self’ and ‘selfless’ are defined and explored further on in this chapter.

There were two types of workshops. In one it was possible for participants to commit two hours to my research project. This group is denoted as Group 2. The other is where only one hour was available and is referred to as Group 1. For the sample of thirty-five Group 2 participants, the question regarding the time spent in each category was taken a step further. Participants were asked what they would like the percentages to be if they could change their life situations. The results are presented below (see Table 7.3) along the ‘actual’ time spent data for this same sample of participants.

Figure 7.3: Group 2 – ‘Actual’ and ‘Ideal’ time spent in each category data [percentages]

| | Community Culture | | Corporate Systems | | Nature | | Spirituality | |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| | Actual | Ideal | Actual | Ideal | Actual | Ideal | Actual | Ideal |
| Workshop # 1 | 34 | 35 | 29 | 16 | 16 | 24 | 21 | 25 |
| Workshop # 2 | 28 | 23 | 35 | 20.5 | 13 | 24.5 | 24 | 32 |
| Workshop # 3 | 33 | 40 | 41.5 | 19.5 | 10 | 23.5 | 15.5 | 17 |
| Percentages | 31% | 33% | 35% | 19% | 13% | 24% | 20% | 25% |

Table 7.3: Group 2 – ‘Actual’ and Ideal’ time spent in each category



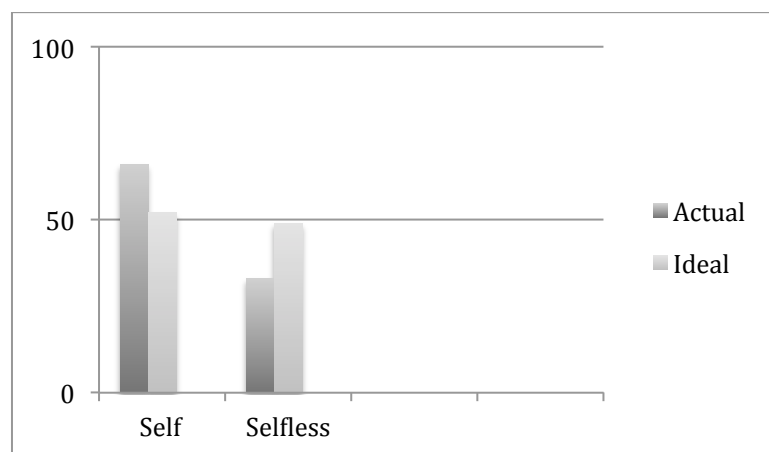
This data shows that there is a 2% rise in what is seen as the ideal time for community culture, there is a 16% drop of time in corporate systems, a 11% rise for nature, and a 5% rise in spirituality to bring about what is perceived as an ideal situation. The findings indicate that there is greater disconnect from nature than from spirituality but time spent in both areas is considered to be less than the ideal.

Using 25% as an average gauge for each column it is noted that in the ‘ideal’ data the figures for nature and spirituality almost reach that figure. They make 49% when combined; whereas the figure for community exceeds the average by 8% – reaching 33%. However the combined community culture and corporate systems figures achieve a relative balance. Collectively community culture and corporate systems make 52%. There is an apparent innate desire to achieve a balance between ‘self’ and ‘selfless’ activities.

Figure 7.4: Group 2 ‘Self’ (Community and Corporate combined), and ‘Selfless’ (Nature and Spirituality combined) [percentages]

| | Self | | Selfless | |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Actual | Ideal | Actual | Ideal |
| Percentages | 66% | 52% | 33% | 49% |

Table 7.4: Group 2 ‘Self (Community and Corporate combined), and ‘Selfless’ (Nature and Spirituality combined)



Overall, a vaster amount of time is spent on self-interest activities. Do these findings have implications for environmental sustainability? This is explored further in the next section of this chapter.

7.2 The impact of governance on nature and spirituality

The Combined View model was used as the prompt for conversations analysed in this section. It is a series of two tables titled Concept 3A and Concept 3B (see Chapter Three, Table 3.3 on page 62-63). It brings together both the Connectivity Matrix and the Five Dimensions concept. There is a variety of ways to combine the two charts together, however the focus, for the purposes of this research, is limited to the two variations as depicted in Concept 3A and 3B. The two selected variations assume different underlying principles of governance. One favours the wellbeing of corporate systems as best placed to support the natural environment, whilst the other positions spirituality-based ethics and values as more sustainable.

The following areas are covered in this section:

- Perceptions of corporate systems and governance;
- Tipping point: sustainable corporate systems versus toxic systems;
- Governance frameworks;
- Spirituality as the overarching requirement in sustainable governance.

The findings from the responses are identified through the course of the chapter but are discussed in greater detail at the end in the section titled Emergent Themes.

The participants provided their positive and negative interpretations of the corporate system, and alluded to the factors and experiences that caused a tipping point between sustainability and toxicity. The term toxic is usually associated with chemicals and pollution. However organisational behaviour specialists and management consultants are using it more and more to identify dysfunctional, top down leadership styles and processes that appear to contaminate the spirit of organisations (Goldman 2011, Padilla Art et al. 2007). The term is being used here to describe imbalances that may be causing spirituality to be crushed.

Using the “self” and “selfless” analogy, it would appear from the findings, that selfless attitudes are seen as more sustainable whereas unmitigated self-interest is

described as what tips the balance of governance systems to the negative and with the potential to do harm. The following section explores this further.

7.2.1 Perceptions of corporate systems

It was important to obtain participants' definition of the term 'corporate system'. Following are examples of their responses (see Box 7.3).

Box 7.3: Perceptions of corporate systems

"If this [Community Culture] is about engagement and this [Corporate System] is about being clear and objective, I am not sure about detachment, but certainly objective. This [Corporate Systems] is about facts and data and it's all those things that drive good decision making as we know it" (Interview #26).

"[The corporate system] does not exist unless you have community supporting it and it doesn't exist unless it has spirit supporting it. The others can exist without corporate... Corporate seems to have the overarching [role] at the moment" (Interview #1).

We now live in a corporatocracy. It's corporations that run the planet. Their core essential element is to make money and they will do it whatever way they can without really considering the consequences. If self-interested corporations really looked at it hard, they would realise that the sustainability of this planet was essential for their wellbeing. It seems that we are caught up at the moment in short-term greed with no real vision. Corporates, with the huge resources they command, are able to control decision-makers thereby corrupting democracies and acting against the betterment of society for reasons of unbridled greed" (Interview #7).

"So there's a point at which corporate systems are designed to act on community, there are corporate systems to act on nature and even corporate systems to act on spirituality" (Interview #13).

From the above statements, corporate systems are recognised as significant in that the facts and figures generated through corporate processes underpin decision-making. There is recognition that corporate systems' 'power' or 'life' comes from outside them enabled by community or spirituality. It is suggested that corporate systems are applied, not only within corporate matters but also in matters of community, nature and spirituality.

The word 'money' appeared in the prompts as a description of the intended outcome of corporate systems (see Connectivity Matrix – Table 3.1). There were divergent views on this from participants as seen in the following (Box 7.4).

Box 7.4: Perceptions of corporate systems in relation to their focus on money

“Is it too narrow a way of describing that column [corporate systems]? If it is Third Person and not money then it is much broader. It is a social base as well. It is a third person social base. If you go back to the Roman Empire and the corporate system they introduced, it was multi-layered and it was more than just money. It was set in social and hierarchical and living mindsets. The same thing as the Germans before World War Two. The German people, through the corporate system, were moulded to believe, in the majority, there were exceptions of course. But when you see footage of Hitler going around in his personal train and you see every single person saluting in a particular way I think there was a level of consequence if they did not do it. There was also a level of belief – and that is the corporate system being more than money.

The corporate system is much more than just money. It is a bigger player in the four columns than just a financial system. It moulds and it designs and it establishes so many different elements of life – money is one of them. When we started harvesting wheat and we stopped being nomads, the whole corporate system built from just that one step and that changed completely the spiritual, nature, and the first person — just from that advancement of technology. So instead of being nomads we started harvesting the earth and

that required houses and that required governance and that required taxes. That corporate system changed everything in the other three columns. So it depends on how you define that column” (Interview #21).

“I did feel you are a little hard on the corporate system. Things other than money come out of that” (Interview #23).

“Let me just explain, the corporate system rather than being money. Here is what I notice is the driver. Even if there are a lot of significant corporate clients who you think are just purely driven by the money, you have to remember that the money is a vehicle for acknowledgement or love or sense of being. In the corporate system, only to some will money be that vehicle but at the core to everybody in the corporate system is some sense of having a place and significance. It really is focused on the self at the end of the day – that is the core driver. When we dig down far enough to ‘what is driving you mate’ – no, it’s not just the money. What happens beneath that? What was the relationship with the parents like? Is this a self-reinforcing loop?” (Interview #27).

“The corporate system revolves around ego and the money and the individual wanting to better their own stance in the corporate world. So it is automatically not community oriented. The corporate culture that people talk about - I find difficulty relating to that. I don’t quite understand that. It might just mean a well-oiled machine rather than compassion” (Workshop #2).

“You can use lots of other better words, bigger words, but that [money] is not bad. I think it brings home that they’re not in it for love. They’re not in it for anything else other than returns are they? Some sort of wealth returns – so ‘money’ is pretty good” Interview #26).

The above views reinforces that there is much more than flat, lifeless systems at work in creating effective and efficient corporate systems. The systems that some

of the responses suggest have a social or community culture element. Corporate systems are said to be a framework that lays the foundation for societal hierarchy and thinking. Power and belief are also attributed to corporate systems. In addition relationship and upbringing are similarly ascribed to them. The advent of agriculture is stated as an example of a corporate system that has impacted on nature, society and spirituality. These examples call for due respect for the systems around which so much in life hinges.

It is also possible that the participants are attributing community, nature and spirituality qualities to corporate systems and perhaps giving corporate systems more kudos than what belongs there. A different interpretation is that the layers alluded to in the quotes fit under the spirituality and community columns and collectively represent the bigger picture. If this is the case, is this mindset seeing corporate systems as overarching, causing a detachment from and reduction of the importance of nature and spirituality? This is discussed further in the Emergent themes section at the end of this chapter.

7.2.2 Tipping point: sustainable corporate systems versus toxic systems

A “tipping point” was described by participants in two ways: one refers to a time when the ecosystems are so out of balance that it is at the point of no return and doomed for collapse; the other suggests approaches that can start to make changes in the direction of our current situation. What is emerging from the data is a sense that corporate systems are an essential part of our existence but this has also impacted negatively on individual lives, society and nature. Some participants have grappled with identifying what it is that throws the system out of balance causing it to tip towards the better or the worse.

The point of no return

One participant, quoted below, suggested a way of monitoring whether we have the balance right. His view was that humankind’s ability to adapt around systems to achieve what they want for themselves can be the very cause that drives the system

beyond the brink. Additionally, he provides his views on why we are not going to achieve sustainable changes in the near future:

“Unless we get a transformational issue before us – like survival as we know it – there has to be an imperative for change. If you have an imperative for change – we’ll all adapt. Well, climate change. It’s going to be a bit dry down there. We’ll put a few desal [desalination] plants in. We haven’t got a climate or water issue. We only have an energy issue. We’ll find other ways of energy. So we adapt. Humans are very good at adapting but I’m sure we’ll come to a tipping point when you just can’t adapt because everything is out of balance. But everybody would like to think that’s too far away. So put it on hold for another day” (Interview #26).

Despite advancements in science, this participant is suggesting that it is human self-interest that errs on the side of short-term comforts, that will cause us to fail to transition to sustainability. Projections of where we are heading in the next 30 to 100 years refers to a period too far away – and is perceived, by the wider community, to be somebody else’s problem. This is, yet again, an example of a self-focused attitude.

Organisations acting selflessly

Another interviewee described the quality of selflessness as “the greater good”. The participant reflecting on the use of wealth in some private companies and wondered how it would be if private companies viewed themselves as not-for-profit organisation: “[the company] makes money, and that money went back into the community. Say you got paid a good wage to run the company. No problem about that – but that company had to support the greater good” (Interview #6). The participant recounted a Harvard Business Review’s article written about this way of thinking about companies and depicting a view of the triple bottom line through caring for others before self. The point this participant raises is that it is not just the triple bottom line that is important but also the foundational values that inform the way in which actions are carried out. The participant continued by saying that:

“[Some organisations] contribute to a sense of community and that is not just giving to a charity but to community as a whole. They employ people

and have an influence on their lives. What does their work role do to these people when they go home to their families if husbands are working too much and never see their kids? How is that affecting their employees and what should they be doing about that? So it's not just about the bottom line" (Interview #6).

In this instance the thinking based on selfless principles appears to enable corporate systems to be a positive and sustainable structure. The participant's comparison with how corporate systems can impact negatively on peoples' lives implies that the tipping-point between positive and negative approaches in this instance is whether decisions and actions are based on self-interest or selfless values. Based on the findings from the percentages exercise, it would appear that a way of learning about selflessness is through engaging with spirituality and nature.

Another participant reflected on how corporate systems benefit masses of people showing how the selfless principle can work: "It raised their standard of living. It has brought them out of abject poverty. It has meant that they can be sheltered and educated. And that is a benefit that has come out of the more ideal side of the corporate world. But the ugly sisters have taken over" (Interview #7). The final sentence suggests a feeling of overriding mistrust of corporate systems despite the good that they can do.

These comments suggest that the selfless principle – an ethical value that for the purpose of this research comes under the spiritual category – is seen as underrated in corporate contexts. The balance, it would seem, and as evidenced in the percentage exercise data, is currently tipped towards systems that are self-interested.

The desensitising effect of corporate systems compromising the integrity of services

Corporate culture was described as having multiple personalities. On one hand it was seen to take up so much time that it destroyed quality community engagement. Yet, the corporate system was said to need to demonstrate best practice processes,

which show that customers or clients are the reason for the process. The following statements (see Box 7.5) make the case that these policies and procedures result in embedding confused, artificial behaviours that do not achieve the integrity of connecting and supporting communities as originally intended:

Box 7.5 Examples of corporate best practice processes competing against the provision of services for the common good

“I always wanted to see universities more aligned with community culture and that side of things but what has happened in the last twenty or thirty years is that they have become much more aligned with the corporate systems which makes them very dysfunctional. That includes the people who work there having all these multiple personalities because we need to act as if we are doing things for the community – the common interest, but at the same time we have to align ourselves with certain budgets, and certain policies and things that govern the corporate world” (Workshop #2).

“There is certainly a need for corporate systems. The trouble is when that becomes pre-imminent, and the nature of our system is such that because of grants, funding agreements and that kind of things we do so much paperwork that it is all about corporate systems. It becomes very, very difficult to provide the community culture, forget nature and spirituality – they are almost non-existent... The corporatisation of the product that they provide the community has become an end in itself. It is not actually about the end consumer. It is entirely about this product they have created” (Workshop #3).

“Having personal experience in the community sector, when we write our grants – and I’ll digress to how we do our reporting and how we do our

accounting – it is all in quantitative measures as to how many cases you handled. All the key indicators are based on productivity. So the community sectors are also affected. Our reporting is how many cases did you see. It is not how well you managed a case or how in depth you went. It is just input-output kind of thing. So these things have become so prevalent and so systemic and institutionalised that we don't think twice about it. And the more we operate on that level, we internalise it at institutional levels and we don't even question these things" (Interview #20).

The above quotes show that the battle for integrity of community processes appears lost. This is because the competition for time to provide services is underpinned by a need to measure productivity to justify the dollar spent and how much it can buy for the least outlay. Corporate systems can be self-serving to the extent that the reason for which they were created becomes the secondary consideration. The time spent is also interpreted as a mental conditioning:

Where we are in the economic trajectory that is being imposed because of whatever hegemony there is. Even though people think we are independent and we do things the way we want to, really we are not" (Interview #20).

References to "self" and "selflessness" (Interview #27) was stated in the percentages exercise findings, and it described a holistic approach as only possible if it is informed by a well-developed sense of selflessness. The following quote is the full version of one mentioned previously regarding engagement in community and corporate systems described as being about self, whilst participation in nature and spirituality required a sense of selflessness:

"I think these [Community Culture & Corporate Systems] are very strongly connected because the dysfunctional aspect of the Corporate System is the system itself. It is the fact that it allows individuals who have a self-focus rather than a selfless set of values to thrive and to control others without empathy and regard for them... But the toxicity is probably driven by an absence of this stuff here [Nature and Spirituality]. Toxicity is really a symptom of the self-focused characteristic that we all have, but it is

unmitigated by attempts to put it in some sort of position to start introducing or balancing it by selfless perspectives or the context – the positioning and our place” (Interview #27).

The above responses suggest that our over-whelming tendency is towards self-interest which, if not checked, risks the potential to bring toxicity into our lives. Through the percentages exercise, and participants quoted earlier in this chapter, it would appear that the way to change this is through better inclusion of nature and spirituality in corporate systems, which are seen as the domains that foster an understanding of selflessness. If this is suggested for an individual, then how much more can it apply to an organisation that does not bring nature and spirituality into its corporate processes? This is discussed further at the end of this chapter under Emergent themes.

7.2.3 Views on governance frameworks

Discussion about the right conditions under which corporate systems can flourish in a non-toxic manner started to emerge in dialogue about the governance frameworks of corporate systems. However the negative reaction to corporate systems was still very visible. The selected responses bring to light: information about the operations of the past and present legal process, the process of morality in law, and the challenges for nature and spirituality in this context; finally, the limitations of measurement of material standards according to the Gross National Product. Participants provide insight into governance frameworks and their impact on nature and spirituality.

This participant cites that in the past, judges would go back to morality and nature to argue their cases, whereas in today’s world law is more concerned with matters of ownership:

“The law in early cases had a lot of conversations about morality. The Donahue and Stevenson case, the Lord Atkin’s judgement, is the case that founded the law of negligence and it is based on a definition of who is ‘thy neighbour’ and your duty to ‘thy neighbour’. That was, I think, in the 1930s. I can’t imagine any judges that will come up with any decisions that will go

back to that in terms of law making. With Donoghue and Stevenson, courts were dealing with many issues for the first time. They had to give redress here but on what basis? And they would go back to laws of morality and nature.

These days it is more about ownership and the illusion that what we have created is what has the weight and the capacity of humans to forget how completely ephemeral we all are, whereas the concepts of nature and spirituality are enduring. They are the hardest to capture. In a sense they are almost anti all the things we need to run a society – because it is about silence and about space and it's about shared unspoken experiences. It is about the challenge about how we try and communicate experiences and engagement with nature and spirituality.

They are really, really hard things... And we continually make rules that people can understand, see and feel that we have control over. That is the other thing too with the governance issue. We can have a sense that we can control these things but we don't. This [Nature and Spirituality] is not about control. It is about being part of and acknowledging and sharing and that is just too hard to regulate" (Interview #11).

It would appear that in law there has been a shift from principles of selflessness and the common good towards ownership and control being matters of more concern. This shift supports a recurring theme in the responses that suggest materialism, whilst bringing greater comfort to lives and the appearance of good governance, seems to be a critical factor in determining whether we achieve environmental sustainability or tip towards toxicity in every sense of the word.

In this following response, the participant draws attention to a global standard of measurement for production and services emphasising economics – Gross National Product.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ GNP (Gross National Product) is GDP (Gross Domestic Product) plus balance of trade, which means that the GNP discussion equally applies to GDP.

“The thing that first occurs to me is that when you govern you are doing it in the name of certain goals. The main weakness I see at the moment is that the political and business system is too much focused on our material standard of living and on the question of growth as a goal when all the evidence suggests that once our material needs have been met, and that is the case for people in so called developed countries, getting richer isn’t improving our wellbeing significantly” (Interview #14).

The participant continues by suggesting that there is fear of going beyond Gross National Product, which is a system based on things that are quantifiable. It would appear that the economic measurement basis of the foundation of Gross National Product pushes the self-interest category without a counter-balancing standard that includes the selfless categories of nature and spirituality:

“...it ignores all these three areas [community culture, nature, spirituality] which have been demonstrated to be the source of human happiness – using that word in its deepest sense. People are social beings. Not only do they get quality interactions with other people but that is the way to make things work better as well. That they get great satisfaction out of nature and spirituality is very important. Being absorbed in different activities, contributing to other people – they are all what makes life rich and valuable and yet they are not sufficiently recognised in the corporate system. It is crazy that we give so much attention in workplaces to increasing productivity when it would be much more worthwhile to increasing the sum of human happiness if we focused on the quality of experience of the workers in the workplaces. But not only that, they are not mutually exclusive anyway because research has shown that if people have greater work satisfaction they work better”(Interview #14).

Selfless giving is yet again stated as one way to gain satisfaction and happiness and a way to transform corporate systems. The Genuine Progress Indicator (Hamilton 1997) and the Happiness Index measures (Helliwell 2013) are drawn upon for comparison studies with the above quoted participant findings in the Emergent themes section.

7.2.4 Nature versus corporate systems

The main governance issue in Concept 3A and 3B was seen as the battle between prioritizing corporate systems or the natural environment:

“I think the issue is between nature and corporate systems. So this is an exploitation in lots of ways and you can trace it back to paradigms. And then again, how do these paradigms come about? They are really based on theories. The theory of consumption - the more consumption you have the more your GDP [Gross Domestic Product] will grow. And that also feeds the supply. It is a self-feeding cycle. If we could stop and make a break for a bit and say: hello let’s stop and think about where we are going with this” (Interview #20).

This participant also says that spirituality is not as affected in governance decisions, however the desire to control impacts on nature: “With the corporate systems and capitalists systems what we are seeing is that we need to master resources and resources come from nature. This mastering is done in such a way and it’s all engendered by the capitalist paradigm that we are living in – the material paradigm – and I’m using those synonymously” (Interview #20). The Gross National Product indicator is brought up as the standard used:

“to give that projection on growth. And I guess it is important because that feeds people. It creates jobs. It creates incomes. It creates the ancillary industries around it and that is all really important. But if we are to look at the distribution of the returns that come in, who gets it? It is really very concentrated. One of the disadvantages is that we are looking at destroying the natural environment and all the things that sustainability talks about. If we are to look at the three-tier approach, the economic, environmental as well as social sustainability, where is it that you draw the line and where is it that you find the balance? That is the issue that stands out. Spirituality is not there” (Interview # 20).

A key question that the participant raised is finding a balance so that jobs can be available, people can be fed and the environment can be protected. There is the

suggestion, from the statement, that the triple bottom line is not succeeding in delivering on this because spirituality is not included. From the findings so far, it could be interpreted that the triple bottom line – the three-tiered system referred to in the above quote – cannot gauge when an action is based on self-interest or selflessness. It also appears to be not designed to take into account the dynamics of the biophysical world.

There are several responses stating the nature versus corporate systems conflict as the point of main contention in governance. This one localises it to a very current topic in Australia:

“The climate change debate – fundamentally it is about this [Nature] versus this [Corporate Systems]” (Interview #26).

The next two responses provide a perspective of nature as being much more advanced than corporate systems and that we need to be more observant of its signs because, it is said, nature will dominate regardless:

“The corporate system (in 3A) may think that it is ruling nature. It is like the story of someone telling the king to hold the water and the king saying ‘No I can’t!’ It is similar with the corporate laws allowing the building of houses next to the water in Brisbane. Even the poor folk in New Zealand building houses on unstable ground and then the whole thing sank. People didn’t take any notice of nature” (Collard, L. Interview #10).

The point that nature is bigger than human beings and cannot be controlled has been made several times. Control could be described as the language of self and ego. The counter balance of this, selflessness, has not been widely and publically acknowledged.

Another participant perceived nature to be “far more advanced and sophisticated and fragile than perhaps corporate systems which are very much human made approaches - systems, policies and procedures to allow things to be done” (Interview #26). He saw more alignment between spirituality and nature than

between nature and corporate systems even though he doesn't see either as a perfect fit. He represented the link between nature and corporate as more "survival stuff" whereas nature and spirituality was seen as more linked with "self-actualisation".

The nature versus corporate systems dialogue raised the issue of human inability to follow through with long-term initiatives because of the strongly engrained desire for short-term gratification:

"We are weighing up nature versus community to some extent. One can argue that sometimes by doing we'll allow less damage to [nature] in the longer term. I'm not sure that there are any easy answers and you might argue that people like EPA [Environmental Protection Authority] are best placed to look at it objectively but also realising that our value systems these days is about jobs, growth and prosperity. The carbon tax debate is fantastic. Forget about how they've done it. Years ago when it first came out, we were all totally committed to it. The science has been questioned a bit. But going back we thought that the world has to move on this or we'll lose this [nature]. And what's happened? As soon as we get down to short-term dollars, we throw out some of those higher-level, those wonderful values that are about humankind and our brothers [and sisters] and our future and our children and their children. They go out the door for short-term gain. We are not prepared to have short-term pain" (Interview #26).

These responses suggest that current governance frameworks are more focused on self, humans above other life forms, corporate systems above eco systems, ownership and materialism above moral and natural laws, consumerism, continual growth over happiness. When considering the dialogue of nature versus corporate systems it is apparent that a lack of spirituality – in terms of happiness and higher-level thinking – fosters a focus on short-term gain. It could imply a lack of spiritual principles informing legal processes and measuring standards. What could the scenario be if spirituality was integral to governance process? This question is addressed in following section.

7.2.5 Spirituality as the overarching requirement in governance

In the previous sections nature and corporate systems were the focus of participants' attention. While spirituality was mentioned as a gap that resulted in an imbalance and even toxicity, it was not the focus of the dialogue. In the following discussion, spirituality is positioned as key to sustainable environments. The lack of time to include spirituality in governance is mentioned, as are the dangers of placing nature above spirituality. Corporate systems were represented as essential to spirituality enabling the formation of character and identity. One participant illustrated the relationship between nature, spirituality, community, corporate systems and governance through creating a chart depicting his interpretation (see Table 7.7).

Rosanne Scott (Interview #2) saw the corporate system as the engine room but spirituality as vitally important. She regretted not having enough time to do the work of better infusing spirituality into the corporate system but states that this is generated by corporate system funding requirements that compete for time – and win out:

“In order for churches, temples and all to work we need to have [corporate systems] there. For a community to work we have basic laws... At City Farm I tried to make it holistic so everything influenced everything... People couldn't cope with the magnitude of it... maybe having to worry about funding the place made it difficult to do the work of infusing the spirituality” (Scott, Rosanne: Interview # 2).

This could suggest that Rosanne Scott found that a consciousness and adoption of spirituality did not exist as the norm in governing corporate systems. They appear to be spoken of, yet again, as a clashing culture. Rosanne Scott suggested that spirituality needed to be worked and continually practiced and this requires more time than corporate systems' demands allow. Fostering spirituality through the key principles of “respect, non-judgement and compassion” (Scott, Rosanne: Interview #2) was a key aim of the Perth City Farm organisation in its work to promote environmental sustainability (see Chapter Five).

Another participant did not support the detachment of spirituality from the corporate world in a statement. This response suggests that there is a long-standing relationship between spirituality and corporate systems and the latter play an important role in the formation of a person's identity:

“Corporate systems are very important in shaping our identities – in my case school and church as organisations. But for my cousin whose life story I have just read, in the navy and IBM, they are very corporate things but they are a very deep part of his identity too” (Interview #4).

This representation of corporate systems positions them as the enabler of routine and traditions, rigour and discipline that contribute to a person's identity. The choice of the words “deep part of his identity” implies that there are levels of identity with some more immediately visible and others more intangible – perhaps more linked to spiritual qualities. The corporate systems provide the structure that enables values and ethics to be represented in decisions and actions. It would appear that in some situations, spirituality has required corporate systems to provide the structures that enable it to become visible in the actions and decision of work and life (Interview #4).

The following response disagrees with placing nature and spirituality at the same level, stating spirituality is the main motivator in life:

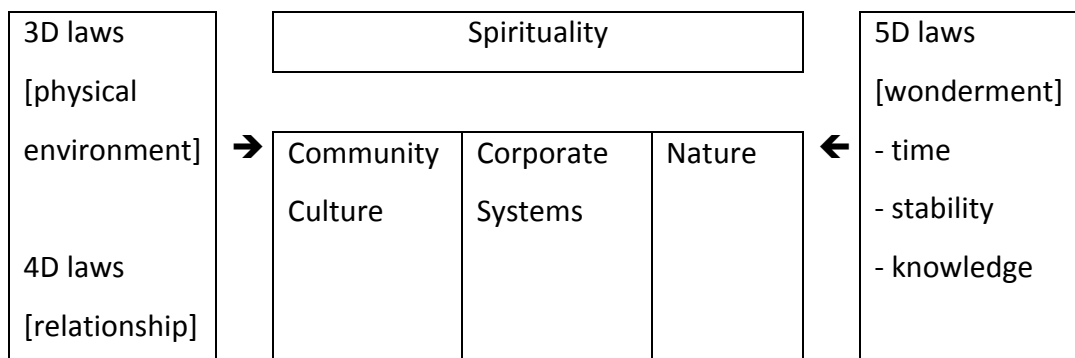
“I wouldn't put nature and spirituality together in the same dimension. It turns nature into something more than it is, and spirituality needs to infuse every element of life” (Interview #17).

The participant continues by representing spirituality as rich, vibrant and motivational. He also suggests that placing nature on the same plane gives the impression that cities are less important and that one has to go outside of a city to be spiritual⁴⁶. He represents spirituality as having the ability to influence and inspire all facets of life and it is this spirituality that is described as enduring. Inspired by spirituality, as stated by the participant, cities can be transformed (Interview #17).

⁴⁶ Nature seen as inseparable from spirituality, and economic reasons identified as a cause of alienation from nature are covered in Chapter Four.

This view (Table 7.5) of spirituality as overarching is captured in an illustration, drawn by the participant during the interview process (Llopiz, H., Interview #21):

Table 7.5: Llopiz' chart interpreting the positioning of spirituality and governance (Llopiz, H., Interview #21).



This section on spirituality interpreted as the overarching element sees it represented as the motivator; the place where values such as respect, non-judgement and compassion are learnt; from which the rigour and discipline enforced by corporate systems are applied to mould our character and identity. Spirituality is also represented as the dimension that can transform places. Perhaps in these qualities spirituality can be seen as the enabler moving the tipping point away from toxicity towards environmental sustainability. In the next section, participants' thoughts about the actions required to follow through with the intention of fostering environmental sustainability are considered.

7.3. Governance systems that promote environmental sustainability

The participants provided a range of suggestions for enabling environmental sustainability. These included: a deeper consciousness about the dynamics of nature and spirituality in corporate systems; re-evaluating the true cost of business by including the work that is done by nature; changing the way we work based on what we now know; and fostering a paradigm shift required to bring about environmental sustainability.

7.3.1 Consciousness of the dynamics of eco-systems in decision-making

The first suggestion of a way to improve corporate governance might seem like an anathema to good business practice. Instead of corporate efficiency measured through clearly articulated goals and objectives that can be quantified, the following participant proposed a holistic and more comprehensive understanding – “a consciousness of the dynamics” – of the eco-systems of the Western Australian rangelands so that sustainable decisions can be made:

“I think of a big system like the rangelands – the governance is divorced from the nature of the land that it is governing so the governors don’t have the understanding of the natural system that they are dealing with. They have a very incomplete understanding and their decisions are dominated by political expediency and self-survival – unconscious of the system that they are governing. So the question I have in that situation – is there a way of allowing consciousness? How could we support allowing of consciousness of the dynamics of the natural system? The more there is consciousness of these [nature and spirituality] the better the decisions will be” (Interview #5).

This participant’s response could be interpreted as asking for decision makers to take on the full responsibility of their task, not just the corporate and political stances. Having a “consciousness of the dynamics of the natural system” could perhaps be metaphorically viewed as having the ability and taking on the responsibility of speaking on behalf of the land. This would mean viewing the land not as a lesser entity to corporate and political systems, but at least as an equal and therefore providing a similar opportunity for the land’s dynamics – its undertakings and tasks – to be ‘heard’ and understood. This could impact negatively on corporate efficiency but not doing so is seen to be causing stress to eco-systems and to the people who know the land intimately. Corporate efficiency is perceived as short-term gain that is not sustainable.

The consciousness of dynamics is related to time for reflexivity and to viewing issues from all sides. The shift in consciousness could also imply a move away from self and instant gratification towards selflessness – previously linked with nature

and spirituality (see the percentages exercise section of this chapter). This can imply that a detachment from nature and spirituality encourages a focus on self and its related agendas that have, earlier in the chapter, been said to include consumerism, materialism and unsustainable growth. Without the link to nature and spirituality, it would seem that our society's default position is towards short-term gain.

7.3.2 Re-evaluating the true cost of business

One participant suggested that the wider Australian community should re-evaluate the cost of agribusiness to Australia citing that the profits do not take into consideration the impact on the land. The implication is that we are using up our scarce resources such as water and not considering our land type in the equation:

“Why is Australia feeding 60 or 70 million people around the world to destroy our own country?... In a sense we are creating deserts and we are calling it corporate agribusinesses”(Interview #12).

The respondent suggested that we were exporting products developed using the very resources that are in short supply or possibly require much longer timeframes or different treatments to be replenished. It may be that more environmentally and technologically efficient ways can be developed to assist people in other countries. Some sustainable technological developments were discussed in Chapter Four.

Barrie Oldfield shares a different focus of the same viewpoint about looking after the land:

“We might pay a farmer \$300 per tonne for his crop and I am only picking a figure as I don't know what it is now but we have to understand that the farmer is [the person] looking after the planet and the crop is the profit. So if we are only going to pay the profit margin – as it were, and not look after the land – then I think we are going to have to re-value what the land produces for us. And that then governs commerce. It then governs industry through commerce.” (Oldfield, B., Interview #19).

Barrie Oldfield emphasizes: “what we should be doing is getting nature right first and whatever that costs we'll find a way of covering that cost”(Barrie Oldfield, Interview #19). He states that we should be providing for the earth: “Whether it be

fisheries or the forests or the farms and the cattle, we have to give it all space and let it all happen” (Oldfield Interview #19). Oldfield stated that he had always put money into a secondary role because things go wrong if we govern using money as the principal measure.

7.3.3 Changing the way we work

How do we implement changes in the work place to foster environmental sustainability? The following responses include suggestions for managing improvements at work and also advise on changes at a personal level.

A management tool and a human resource requirement were put forward by a participant who also said that there needed to be an attitudinal change and a shift from a culture of blame or confrontation to one that is more open-minded with a will to collaborate in finding solutions:

“What we need to do is have quick checks and balances... Who is going to protect this? [Nature]. We’re all in the business of being very good at this [Corporate Systems]. Who is looking after this [Nature]? Some of the difficulties are that people are so good these days at taking strong positions and using so-called facts to cloud the issue. I just think that any poor community member that wasn’t close to these issues would have no chance of making a considered decision because it does become clouded in data that is often misused” (Interview #26).

Another participant took the matter a step further. In it he appeared to take a hard line, and in so doing used the power of governance to enforce change:

“Corporations should be required to restore and recycle just about everything. There shouldn’t be any landfill. Nothing should ever go to landfill. Everything should be reused or recycled” (Interview #28).

This suggests that there is a consequence and obligation placed on consumerism and materialism. Previous comments also emphasised re-evaluating costs to include the value of the work that planet Earth does, and in so doing enable communities to use these resources to grow produce and make products. Those comments focused

on one end of the issue. While the above opinion is suggesting changes that need to be made regarding waste, both comments point out that our vision is too narrow and only focused on making, selling or buying the product. The way forward, it is proposed, is to pay the true cost which includes the work nature does, and to also ensure that all effort has been made to minimise waste, provide appropriate disposal and not to place a second burden on the environment. This highlights that in the current process, what society uses once is a double tax on the environment and is not sustainable. It could imply a detachment from nature and therefore a lack of empathy for ecology. Another possible extrapolation from this response is that there is too much focus by wider society on self-centred activities and insufficient time in the dimension and spirit of ‘otherness’.

There were a number of strategies put forward in a workshop conversation about how to make the workplace more in touch with nature and spirituality. Individuals, it was suggested, could be more aware of their surrounding, or explore opportunities to assist others develop a greater awareness of this. The fear engendered by corporations was cited as affecting workers resulting in their not daring to focus on anything other than work. The proposed strategies for change are tabled below (see Box 7.6).

Box 7.6: Nature and spirituality versus corporate systems

“For me, it is a matter of appreciating what is more immediately around me. We can step out. We can walk down to Bathers Beach⁴⁷. We can go to a park, even see a bird flying overhead. For me it is actually about being mindful that there is this life-force that I can connect with whether it is the people in the room or whether it is a pigeon on top of the building that I can see from my room or take the time to walk down to the beach. It’s actually there if I want it. It is a question of being mindful enough to connect with it” (Workshop #2).

⁴⁷ Bathers Beach is the name of a beach in Fremantle.

“But one thing that corporations can be very good at is enforcing their power and they create this fear. So you have to be able to find that strength not to actually allow them to impose the fear and to see that there are birds, there are other things that are real and they are very important. There are always alternatives to the big hole you feel you are in. It is very important to balance that and not allow that to permeate the way you feel (Workshop #2).

I don't feel that the corporate system takes over. It sort of plants a bit of itself in us and we can choose or not choose to allow it to grow. I don't think you have to give it more power than it has. I think we can choose to what extent we let it grow inside us (Workshop #2).

It could be that the appreciation of surrounding nature and a way to overcome the dominance of corporate systems are irrelevant to a person who has the task of managing corporate processes as it could appear to be completely out of place with work goals. However, these topics were brought up in these responses about nature and spirituality in relation to governance, and this indicates that these moments of inspiration and fears exist in the workplace and have the potential to tip it positively or negatively. The fear of corporate systems was cited in Chapter Four, when a workshop participant (Workshop #1) expressed that she intuitively wanted to conduct some of her services in an outdoor situation believing it would enhance the situation. She feared doing this because it was ingrained in her mind that work was meant to be indoors and separate from nature. These examples show that the innate desire to link with nature, a desire curtailed because of a fear of corporate systems. We appear to have constructed a narrative of our identities in relation to corporate systems as long-term forces rather than as tools for life and living. An alternative could be to use innovative sustainability policies and practices in countering the perceived dominance of corporate systems and providing more balance. Further commentary on this can be found in the Emergent themes section.

7.3.4 Engendering paradigm shifts

A recurring theme through this research is the need for paradigm shifts in order to have an environment that supports the continuation of life as we know it. The participants made observations about changes that were already happening amongst innovative multinationals; major shifts in thinking required; and how the tools used in this research would be refined for corporate use to support the fostering of environmental sustainability. There is mention of a growing awareness of the need for community social responsibility (Interview #15). However, the participant expressed that it is still not significantly holistic and that consideration of community culture on its own is not enough and corporations should include nature and spirituality as well:

“There are some corporations that incorporate those concepts into their planning and activities, some very big ones. I’m in awe of them and I would like to believe, I don’t have evidence for this, but I would like to believe that they are much more successful. The Bosch Corporation - they’re unbelievable. They have their corporate orchestra. They have the Bosch Foundation. They operate hospitals. It’s a very, on the face of it, altruistic organisation. There are small companies, very tiny companies of five to ten people who incorporate this caring approach into their organisation. So I think it is happening. Whether it is increasing or decreasing I don’t know. How we incorporate nature and spirituality I don’t know. Surely even simple things like going for a picnic in the park - up to Kings Park⁴⁸ and sitting on the grass, or setting up chairs, or doing a day trip with them and their families as well” (Interview #15).

The same participant suggested that “the triple bottom line has very different implications and that the Connectivity Matrix – community culture, corporate system, nature – would be a very nice triple bottom line” (Interview #15). This participant was of the opinion that spirituality should be encapsulated into nature

⁴⁸ According to their website, Kings Park is one of the world’s largest inner city parks located on the western edge of Perth’s central business district. Its 400 hectares reserve is committed to the protection of native biological diversity.

in order to make it more acceptable to the corporate world – a first step in the changing of paradigms.

It was suggested by another respondent that in order to apply this model in the corporate environment, changes had to be made to the terminology used. He cautioned that some words risked being viewed as stereotypical: “The words nature and spirituality have suffered by becoming clichéd and also denigrated within the corporate system – I think we need to find other words – so you don’t have the shutters coming down immediately” (Interview #27). Both this statement and the one before (Interview #15), together with the responses in Box 7.6, reflect the power of the corporate system in the existing paradigm. They imply a detachment from spirituality and nature in the corporate world, which is impacting on environmental sustainability. It would appear that nature and spirituality are something out of fashion and not to be mentioned in corporate situations. However from the data tabled in the percentages exercise, there is a perception that too much time is already allocated to corporate systems and most participants suggested that a rise in spirituality and nature was required to balance things out. Such a transition would require taking the different points of view into consideration.

Providing leaders with opportunities to share how they have brought nature and spirituality into the corporate system with them may be a beneficial process. Through the concepts developed for this research, profound stories and experiences of these connections and their impact on individual lives have been articulated. The stories go beyond the scope of this research but the recognition of this fact is pertinent to this study. It would appear that it is the deeper story that needs to be delved into and unlocked. Not only the story of heritage, traditions and journeys between countries but stories of personal experiences, understandings and beliefs about nature and spirituality as well as the impact of these on life-long decisions and actions.

This approach to sustainability was seen as requiring major repositioning in order to be part of the paradigm shift necessary for an enduring environment on this planet:

“The thing about sustainability is that despite our good intentions it is very much human centred. Even when you look at all the definitions, it’s all the human wellbeing and the human use of resources so that humans continue to use them – whilst there are other things that are also important... This is why nature and spirituality have to be included because it is not just about people. It’s bigger than just human wellbeing” (Workshop #2).

The above statement returns, once again, to the argument about ‘self’ and ‘selflessness’; humanity versus ‘otherness’ – a constant thread that has emerged in this research. However, this participant states that it is not about one or the other but rather a changing of the current mindset to view humans as part of a bigger whole. It is not only about employing someone to ensure that nature is included in our plans but that philosophy and policy that articulate this position will need to be created and brought into conversations.

The connection between ‘otherness’ in spirituality and sustainability (refer to Chapter 5, section 5.6.5, page 168) is through the ‘self’ and ‘selfless’ concept that emerged with the percentages exercise (see section 7.1.2, page 202). Without the experience of otherness or ‘alterity’ (also described as wholeness or oneness in the deep ecology), a disconnection appears and the planet and its communities are not seen as interdependent. The experiences of spiritual phenomena are difficult to describe and ‘otherness’, rather than a self focus, has been used by the participants and in the supporting literature as a metaphorical descriptor.

7.4. Emergent themes

Three key themes emerged through the review of participant responses and related literature regarding the impact of spirituality and nature on corporate systems and vice versa. They are:

- 1) That sustainable governance requires the balancing of “self” and “selfless” undertakings;

- 2) That spirituality should be viewed as an independent entity and not a subset of corporate systems. It requires time and fostering independent of corporate systems to enable spirituality to be applied sustainably to corporate systems;
- 3) That ways of including spirituality in global sustainability measurements, governance and legal frameworks are essential in the work towards environmental sustainability. These themes are elaborated below.

7.4.1 Sustainable governance: a balance between self-interest and selfless undertakings

The key finding in analysis of response to the percentages exercise and the Combined View concept is the seemingly innate desire to achieve a balance between activities that focus on “self” and “selfless”. Community and Corporate Systems were identified as activities driven by self-interest whilst Nature and Spirituality were seen to engender principles of selflessness. This theme could be applied to the majority of responses in relation to governance, in that self-interest activities if unmitigated by selflessness, could impact negatively on environmental sustainability. Therefore tools to track “self” and “selfless” balances in governance of organisations could be considered as important.

Findings 7. 1: Sustainable governance requires a balance between “self” and “selfless” undertakings.

| |
|---|
| To achieve sustainable governance, a balance is required between systems that engender self-interest (community culture and corporate systems) and those that foster selfless (nature and spirituality) undertakings. |
|---|

The seemingly innate desire to balance “self” and “selfless” actions and activities rippled through the responses to the percentages exercise and the Combined View concept. Corporate systems together with community culture are represented as a self or ego driven category. Selfless actions appear to disrupt this and enable a person to look beyond their own interest. Spirituality and nature are both represented as enabling qualities of selflessness or altruism. Therefore participants

suggested that a balance between these two aspects is required to deliver better governance and a more sustainable existence.

According to the percentages data, the time spent in corporate systems was only two per cent higher than that in community (see Table 7.1). This could be considered a surprisingly low figure for time spent in corporate systems given the amount of frustration expressed in the responses about corporate systems. However, this situation could be seen analogous to global warming. In climate science, a two-degree temperature rise is said to cause devastating consequences. At the 2009 UN Copenhagen Climate Change Conference, cited by Collins (2010: 31-32,42), the Prime Minister of Tuvalu fought to keep the limit of temperature rise to 1.5°C because even at that level of temperature rise, it would cause devastation to Tuvalu, Kiribati and other Pacific Islands. This plea was not successful and the temperature was set at 2°C. The Briar March and Lyn Collie (2010) documentary 'There Once was an Island' is evidence that the Takuu Atoll of the Mortlock Islands of Papua New Guinea is already facing rises in sea levels that have irreplacably destroyed the food gardens of this community. King tides are at levels that have destroyed homes leaving no safe place on this low-lying island to shelter. There are human costs in that the elders of the community rather die there than move because the island is all they know and love.

A similar case of personal and societal consequences could be mounted regarding corporate systems where even a small rise in the percentage of time spent in them, without sufficient counterbalances, could result in unsustainable levels impacting on the lives it governs. By comparison, it could be asked what the cost of a further 2% rise in self-interest driven activities could be on the planet. This research is only starting to grapple with the issues at hand. From the responses described in this chapter, there is agreement that corporate systems are vital to human existence. However there appears to be concern that self-interested corporate systems are impacting negatively on environmental sustainability. On a more positive note, there also seems to be an innate desire to rectify this imbalance.

7.4.2 Spirituality's role in sustainable corporate governance

As identified in Chapters Five and Six, the spiritual dimension is where the phenomena of wonderment, liberation, peace and otherness are experienced. Experiences of these are said to engender compassion, hope and resilience. It would therefore stand to reason that those spiritual dimensions, if embodied by the leaders and workers, could influence corporate decisions and actions. This research proposes that the corporate system be recognised as the structure or framework. It is – a lifeless plan on a paper or computer. The user gives it life, determines the approaches the system takes, and how it relates to all it comes in contact with.

Finding 7.2: The importance of the spiritual dimension to sustainable corporate governance.

It is in the spiritual dimension (which for some includes nature) where selfless values and philosophies are enabled. These are then applied to decisions and actions in corporate systems. Corporate systems provide the structure, which is lifeless. It is the spirit that gives it life and determines if the system is to be used for selfish or selfless ends or a balance of both.

Spirituality values such as empathy, hope, resilience, caring are considered to be important attributes to have. Yet spirituality does not appear to have a credible position in societal frameworks and structures. These intangible and unquantifiable qualities are mentioned in strategic plans and guiding statements as values and principles (see Chapter Two), however there does not appear to be measurements of these in organisations or programmes to guide staff in engaging in these aspects. However, spirituality – and it must be recognised that for some, this includes nature – is something that participants would like to engage with. They state that it requires consciously making time for it in order to reap the benefits (see Chapter Six). The lack of time for spirituality is said to be because of the dominance of and priority given to corporate systems. Perhaps organisations should explore their role in these areas in more detail to ensure that values and principles, ethics and other such spiritual aspects can be better balanced against the 'self-interest' objectives.

There is evidence in the data of too much emphasis being placed on attaining corporate outcomes – quantifiable only through economic and management measurements. Senge (1990) refers to management by measurement as a flaw in our ingrained corporate systems. Demming (founder of Total Quality Management systems) as stating:

Our prevailing system of management has destroyed people. People are born with intrinsic motivation, self-respect, dignity, curiosity to learn, joy in learning. The forces of destruction begin with toddlers – a prize for the best Halloween costumes, grades in school, gold stars – and on up through the university. On the job, people, teams, and divisions are ranked, rewarded for the top, punishment for the bottom. Management by objectives, quotas, incentive pay, business plans, put together separately, divisions by divisions, cause further loss, unknown and unknowable (Demming in Senge 1990: xiv).

The above quote includes intangible qualities to mitigate the management by measurement approach and shows the flaws in that spiritless method. The Demming quote (in Senge 1990) gives the impression of support for the notion that corporate systems can and should include spiritual attributes. This research finds that applying these values to the corporate system is essential, however there needs to be recognition that spiritual attributes are fostered with different aims and intentions to those of corporate systems. It may be that the seemingly opposite qualities help to maintain a balance. Perhaps corporate systems provide the structure or form, as it is called by Tacey (2004), for spiritual values to be realised. It is spiritual values and philosophies that underpin and drive the actions and therefore spirituality should be recognised and valued accordingly. To create a counter-balance to objective management approaches, it would suggest that spirituality has to be positioned as a separate entity from the corporate systems. Support for this is found in the critique of the work of Kimble and Ellor (2014) in which they interpret Viktor Frankl's view that spirituality is an entity unto itself and the space from which a deeper level of realisation and responsibility is born (Kimble and Ellor 2014: 32). Therefore if spirituality is not deepened, its ability to bring positive vibrancy to corporate systems could be negated.

The lack of belief that corporate systems encompass spirituality could be occurring because there is no globally accepted measure or identifier of the role of spirituality in governance. Many authors refer to spirituality: Senge 1990; Sandel 2009; Sen 2010; Orr 2002; Jackson 2011; Berry 1999; Zohar & Marshall 2001/2005 (see Chapter Two.) They claim it to be the *sine qua non* of a just and sustainable world, and yet spirituality, some participants advise, should not be brought up in corporate circles because it would not be taken seriously. If this is the case, the journey towards achieving a balance between self and selfless actions may not be achieved.

The findings indicate that spirituality should be recognised as a separate dimension and that it is essential to environmental sustainability. Some participants suggested that spiritual qualities such as empathy and selflessness, be identified and included in education, training and development, planning and governance. Others focused on inclusion of nature in these areas. It would appear that with the inclusion of both nature and spirituality, it would lead to a better balance between self and selfless undertakings.

The qualities of best practice governance that Senge (1990) and other authors write about reflect governance with spiritual qualities that are continually present. Schumacher (1977:123) says this higher consciousness is required, not on the occasional impulse, but as a permanent driver of our decisions and actions. This would infer training, time, commitment and role models – all of which the data from this research suggests is not currently the norm in governance standards.

7.4.3 Legal and governance frameworks foster self-interest activities, however there are ways to start to shift this

Legal and governance frameworks have evolved to favour ownership, materialism and continual growth (self) rather than to value and support the common good (selflessness). Even progressive measurements, apart from aspirations in the form of goals and principles, do not seem to include tools to measure intangible areas.

Findings 7.3: Legal and governance systems foster self-interest

Ways of measuring spirituality, or including it in government and legal frameworks are essential in order to support the uptake of selfless approaches seen as required for environmental sustainability.

The type of laws that govern our lives are said to have an impact on the way corporate systems have been moulded. Governance expert and environmental attorney Cormac Cullinan's (2011: 64 - 65) account of the history of corporations (detailed in Chapter Two) states that under English law, the first corporations were 'not-for-profit entities' set up for the common good. These included churches, schools, universities and local governments. Also presented in Chapter Two is Cullinan's explanation that the original basis for making judgement was the laws of nature and morality. He (Cullinan 2011:66) states that corporations and legal systems have changed considerably since their first inception.

One participant gives an example of judgement being made with reference to moral rights. This, she said, had occurred in the 1930s but she also stated that she is not aware of any recent cases that use moral rights as the basis for judgement. This participant also referred to the emphasis of laws shifting to ownership and material items. Cullinan (2011: 63) makes reference to ownership and in his statement he links this to contemporary law's definition of subjects and object. Subjects, he states, have rights, whilst objects being things have no rights (see Chapter Two).

Such an approach has resulted in devastating outcomes alluded to by Collard (Collard, L., interview #10) who gives as an example, the laws and contractual agreements that the First Peoples of Australia often have to comply with. The following interpretation of the law of subjects and objects was responsible for the categorising of Australian Aboriginals as flora and fauna. They did not have voting rights because they were objects – not subjects. In a Sydney Morning Herald article, the Australian politician Linda Burney is quoted as saying:

This is not ancient history. I was a child. It still staggers me that for the first 10 years of my life, I existed under the Flora and Fauna Act of New South Wales (Pearlman & Gibson 2007:n.p).

Measures have been developed that attempt to include what is perceived to be the true costs of doing business and managing corporate systems. The Australian Genuine Progress Indicator is one such system. According to Clive Hamilton (Hamilton 1997:5), it includes variables measurable by monetary units. It covers three of the five areas determined as having capital worth, namely built capital, financial capital and natural capital. There are measurements to cover land degradation, costs of urban water, air pollution and several other natural environment areas such as loss of native forests (1997: 29-32). Hamilton however states that it does not cover human and social capital because of the measurement problems involved (1997:22 -23). Perhaps Spirituality also falls into this area of difficulty.

Participants suggested that the re-evaluation of true costs should go further because as they stand they do not cover the contribution of ecosystems. Without including the role of the biophysical systems, awareness and respect for them would not grow. Another often unnoticed burden on nature was the dumping of waste back into landfill, leaving ecology to deal with it. The inference from participants who raised these issues is that if we do not have the ability to handle waste properly, then we don't have the right to reap benefits from nature. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2010), in 2006-07 Australia generated 43.8 million tonnes of waste. 29% from municipal sources and including domestic waste and council waste, 33% from the commercial and industrial sector, and 38% from the construction and demolition sector. Also stated in the ABS statistics (2010) is that 48% of all waste was disposed to landfill.

The way waste was perceived spoke to what Sen (2010: 216) articulates as "comprehensive outcomes" – effects that have consequences for multiple players, agencies and contexts and require consequence-based reasoning and evaluation.

The responses regarding re-evaluating the costs of production and waste also suggest re-educating people about choosing carefully what they acquire and consume, and also how to recycle and reuse responsibly to ensure that individuals and organisations don't excessively tax the natural environment. Adding consequence-based experience and reasoning to that brings the reality of the situation to the fore. This is another example where thinking of others appears to be driven by consequence rather than spiritual values. However, it uses the existing system to show the inter-relatedness between our own actions and others. The individual, therefore, experiences directly the impact of their actions.

Current reporting frameworks such as the Triple Bottom Line, Gross National Product and even the Genuine Progress Indicator do not include measures for spiritual attributes. The World Happiness Report (Helliwell et al. 2013), a United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network includes a disclaimer from the United Nations implying a distancing from the report. This disclaimer according to the report (2013) was not present in previous editions. The World Happiness report determines happiness through using the Cantril ladder⁴⁹ as a measure, and covers areas such as income per household, freedom to make choices, life expectancy, generosity, social support and perceptions of corruption. The World Happiness Report recognises the existence of "dynamic relationships" in life and work, and the need for greater "cooperation, motivation and creativity". It sees happiness as important to balance economic measures and for personal and social wellbeing. Whilst it is implied, the report does not identify happiness as belonging to a separate dimension requiring nurturing and training, and there appears to be no statistics for time spent in spirituality and nature and how those areas relate to happiness.

The triple bottom line, participants said, was insufficient in establishing and maintaining core foundational principles to enable environmental sustainability. A

⁴⁹ The Cantril ladder is a self determining positioning of where the person sees themselves between struggling and thriving on a scale of 0 – 10.

participant cited recent articles in the Harvard Business Review regarding companies 'doing well and doing good' (Hansen, M.T., et al. 2013). One such article states that such performance is not common and not easy. Of 1,100 companies studied, only five per cent delivered both outstanding financial performances and strong social and environmental outcomes. The article does not identify what motivated these achievements but did link the outcomes to leadership of the CEOs involved. It provided examples of the organisations' underpinning philosophies regarding sustainability in social and environmental areas. These companies worked to alleviate poverty, inequality, change unhealthy food production, protect the environment, and combat deforestation. The activities undertaken in working for the common good are stated, in these cases, as linked to the way the companies develop their products and services, showing it is possible to have a 'self' and 'selfless' balance.

There are aspirations like the Melbourne Principles for Sustainable Cities⁵⁰ quoted in Newman and Jennings (2008), that propose a way forward for sustainable governance. The Principles suggests a conscious regard of ecosystems and people, interconnections with economy, society and the environment, use of appropriate environmentally sound technologies and the importance of hope. This seems to capture community, economy, nature and spirituality.

7.5 Conclusions

The innate tendency to find a balance between self-interest and selfless matters is a common thread in participant responses throughout this chapter. This seemed to come through strongly because the four areas of the Connectivity Matrix were in view, lending support for the argument that the inclusion of spirituality and nature into governance frameworks enables a more balanced approach.

⁵⁰ The 10 Melbourne Principles for Sustainable Cities were developed in Melbourne in 2002 and endorsed by local governments at the Johannesburg Earth Summit later that year (Jenning & Newman 2008: 4)

It would appear that spirituality is not readily recognised as an entity unto itself. This was partially seen to be a result of the difficulty and lack of tools for measuring the intangible in governance processes and standards.

A number of existing global governance formulas appear to be based on the view that corporate systems are the overarching priority rather than a tool: law sees nature as an object without rights; and spirituality is considered non-existent, a topic that is not respected and therefore not seen as connected to governance matters. The Gross National Product measurements foster the worldview that financial growth is the reason and the purpose for the world. Since the Triple Bottom Line came into effect, it has gone a long way in mitigating the imbalance however, even in this framework which has considerable support as a sustainability measure, it is not possible to find the balance between 'self' and 'selfless' governance.

Selfless collaborations for the common good are seen to require a greater time commitment involving reflection, personal growth in the ability to be open and compassionate and to transcend problems through collaborative and creative means that go beyond existing boundaries. The participants expressed that guiding life principles such as working for the common good are important in engendering balanced corporate systems and governance processes. This is said to require time in nature and spirituality because these dimensions are bigger than what individuals and organisations can control, and time spent in these assists in reframing things into a multi-dimensional understanding of reality.

There is evidence that changes are occurring internationally and locally, and there appears to be a realisation of what has to be done to tip the balance from toxic governance frameworks and processes into dynamic, sustainable ones. Sustainable governance is therefore seen as one that achieves a balance between self and selfless, the quantifiable and the qualitative, the ego driven, competitive aspects alongside the compassionate and open-minded. This is said to come through quality engagement in spirituality and connection to nature.

In the final chapter, emergent themes from Chapters Four to Seven are reviewed again in specific relation to the research question and objectives.

CHAPTER EIGHT

TOWARDS MULTIDIMENSIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

This concluding chapter provides a summary of the key points that emerged through each chapter followed by a synthesis of the findings from this research in relation to:

definitions of nature and spirituality based on the collective participants' views; emergent concept titled The Three Modalities of Spirituality; a balance between self and selfless processes required for environmental sustainability; and that the link between the Triple Bottom Line and other similar global performance frameworks and a multidimensional approach for environmental sustainability.

8.1 The steps taken so far

The milestone statements and research findings are captured below, progressing through the thesis in chronological order. They include a recapping of the reasons for the research, its structure, and then the key points from each chapter. This study investigates the detachment from spirituality and nature in our contemporary communities and considers the impact of this on environmental sustainability.

Conceptual worldviews relating to this study were investigated in Chapter Two. These included literature on contemporary spirituality, the search for meaning, terminology expressing metaphysical phenomena, spirituality and science, perceptions of nature, sustainable development, anthropocentrism, perceptions about landscape, various philosophies and principles underpinning legal and economic frameworks and guidelines.

A multi-methodologies approach was applied in this research. This included phenomenography and phenomenology. Both are appropriate as they each consider different orientations of the existential experience component of the research. The case study approach was relevant when spirituality was explained in the context of an organisational situation. Because the study did not have a starting

hypothesis grounded theory is appropriate. The theoretical development emerged through analysing participants' responses and related worldviews.

Three concepts were developed and used as tools to encourage conversation about metaphysical experiences as to whether or not there is a connection between them and environmental sustainability. They are: The Connectivity Matrix (the Matrix), The Five Dimensions and the Combined View concepts. Each provided a different entry point for conversations. Part of the tools was the use of the four columns of the Matrix to trial a process that quantifies time spent in each area.

The second part of the thesis detailed and reviewed the participants' responses. Chapter Four focused on the Nature column of the Matrix. The findings conclude that there is a detachment from nature, however this is paralleled with a growing awareness with several strategies currently being undertaken to rectify this disconnection. The Matrix positioned nature within a relational context rather than as an object. It is observed that this approach resulted in nature being acknowledged as dynamic. It is put forward that this multidimensional view of nature is necessary to move towards environmental sustainability.

Anthropocentrism was identified as a major obstacle causing detachment from nature. This human focus was seen to have created a societal default position of growing reliance on comfort and convenience fostering dependence on machines and technology rather than human physical and sensory abilities. This has heightened the burden on nature and furthered the disconnection from it.

In Chapter Five, the spirituality column of the Matrix was unable to draw out any clear determination of a detachment from spirituality from the responses. Unlike the biophysical world, spirituality is innate, making a connection difficult to measure. There is representational link to a physical form in the terms of a personality, which in this research is associated mainly with people and, to a much lesser extent, with other life forms. The emergent various spiritual experiences – expressed as interpretations and also as ways of being and knowing – required the development of a framework to assist in making it visible and giving it some clarity.

Both phenomenology and phenomenography methodologies assisted this. Phenomenography provided the grounds for collecting and identifying the diversity of existential experiences while phenomenology enabled the study of the experience through engaging in reductive processes. Case study was also used to gather information. Overall the emergent concept from the investigation based on responses from the Spirituality column of the Matrix is called The Three Modalities of Spirituality and is discussed further on.

Chapter Six described the use of a narrative tool called the Five Dimensions to draw information about the objects, relationships, and wonderment practices with which the participants spent the most time. Along side technology, detachment emerged as a cultural and lifestyle symbol of our age. It did not only occur with nature, it was present in family and community life as well and has seemingly progressed to encompass nature. Work cultures appear to demand detachment, objectivity and focus on the task. These work-based priorities and detached patterning seem to have been duplicated in other aspects of life. To counteract this is support for better integration of family, community and work with more access to nature. The Five Dimensions concept resulted in the finding that spirituality does exist and is a known phenomenon, but many participants clearly articulated the need to make more quality time for it. This suggests a lack of time for spirituality, and therefore a practical detachment from it.

The relationship between governance, spirituality and nature was investigated in Chapter Seven using the Combined View concept. The percentages exercise resulted in participants drawing attention to the community and corporate columns as representing self-interest, while the nature and spirituality column is seen to characterise selflessness. Using grounded theory and the built in flexibility in this methodology to respond to the progressive findings, a calculation of percentages of the columns identified as self and selfless was undertaken. In the 'actual' time spent in each column, the calculations showed an imbalance between self and selfless activities – 66% to self and 33% in selfless activities. In the figures for the 'ideal' time spent in each the difference was marginal – 52% in self and 49% in selfless

activities. These figures, based on an exploratory trial, together with the accompanying explanation from this exercise and from responses to the Combined View concepts, clearly demonstrate a lack of time in nature and spirituality that participants instinctively wanted to rectify – but cannot because current corporate structures do not enable this.

In Chapter Six, it was shown that respondents saw little time allocated, within self and community contexts, to reflect on how to make these adjustments at a personal level. This is partially because nature and spirituality are not generally identified by organisations and therefore are not deemed to be credible in the corporate world. It was also observed that an awareness of this imbalance is only realised when there is a consciousness of nature and spirituality as part of the whole. This indicates that the detachment from these areas has, in many cases, eliminated it from view.

The Combined View conversations found that qualities such as greed and the paradigm of endless growth can be mitigated through establishing foundational selfless principles. It is suggested that time in nature and spirituality can foster selflessness and bring the bigger world into view and along with it the reality that there is a lot that is beyond what individuals and organisations can control. It is also suggested that time spent in these selfless spheres could help to reposition the anthropocentric view towards humans being viewed as one small part of a greater whole.

8.2 What the journey has unfolded

The following synthesis of this study is based on the learnings and final summative analysis drawn from the emergent findings.

8.2.1 New definitions of nature and spirituality

Whilst participants describe nature as a corporeal entity, they also know it instinctively as having a spiritual capacity that can seemingly enable a person to experience transcendent moments filled with wonder and awe. Spirituality, on the

other hand, was explained in three different modes. One of these modes, outlined as 'being' - the transcended phenomenon, is described in rather similar ways to the phenomenon as experienced in nature.

In relation to spirituality and nature, a question that arose through comparing the literature (in Chapter Two) from environmentalists and those who served humanity, was whether compassion for fellow human beings could transfer to other living and not-living elements of the ecosystem. From the responses, this appears to be dependent on a number of factors. For example, a connection to nature is expressed as necessarily through first-hand engagement. Furthermore, the quality of connection with nature is implied as being commensurate with the time spent immersed in it. This would suggest that a person's engagement with spirituality, without a connection to nature, is no guarantee of that person caring for the environment.

However, there were participants who demonstrated an engagement with spirituality but stated that they were not as close to nature as they would like to be. They were very aware, through various means other than direct engagement, of the dynamics of nature and felt a connection. This would indicate that an awareness of dynamism, which can be developed through various forms of engagement in spirituality, can be applied to nature – but only if there are guides, and if the links are identified, and made known. There is participant support for having access to nature in urban centres, but even in these situations it would seem that attention has to be drawn to the presence of nature.

Is it possible for a person who is close to nature to transfer that empathy towards compassion for human beings? The tendency in the responses of those empathetic towards ecosystems is to defend the biophysical world as a focus of the cause in order to counter the anthropocentric imbalance. This has come across as an imbalanced approach with environmentalists accused of being one-sided. It is suggested, by literati and participants alike, that this anthropocentric dominance is because there is little within global and local community and corporate frameworks

to provide a credible setting to frame and justify humans as one part of the bigger whole of life. It could also be said that the environmentalists' impassioned defence of ecosystems exists because of this gap. This is posited as a major issue and one that the concepts used in this research have attempted to draw attention to and address in a small way.

Another way of reviewing the same question regarding the transference of nature-based empathy to compassion for humans is to ask whether it is possible to engage in nature without connecting to spirituality. Some respondents suggested that it is. My observation is that the Connectivity Matrix process created an awareness, in some situations, of how strong the influence of corporate systems was in participants' lives and how far they had drifted from connecting to the dynamics of 'being' in nature. These participants stated that working in nature with a diligent corporate focus can and has resulted in a lack of attention to its dynamics. This statement must be tempered with awareness that there are degrees of consciousness of the dynamics, and a person working in nature, with a corporate focus and stating their connectedness has been lessened, could well be having a much higher connection factor than a person working on environmental matters in an office in the heart of the city. However, it is the person's perception of the situation of detachment that is important in this context rather than the levels of dynamics.

A consciousness of the dynamics of ecosystems implies an awareness of the complexity of nature including metaphysical aspects – a knowing that comes from feeling oneness with nature. The appreciation of the existential layers, it has been said, requires learning a different language of communication – something other than words. It would therefore also require quality time to be in this dimension of the biophysical world, to become familiar with it and a letting go of the constructs and frameworks that appear to dominate urban living. The entry to this intangible realm appears to be possible through kinetic and sensory engagement with nature or through other spiritual processes. The importance of this realm is discussed in the next section on the Three Modalities of Spirituality.

Considering the arguments around the two emergent definitions of nature and spirituality, it could be said that for environmental sustainability there needs to be a coming together of an engagement with nature and spirituality. It would be better referred to in ways that the multidimensional aspects are included - perhaps multidimensional sustainability – which could imply an inclusion of nature and spirituality, the biophysical and the metaphysical in the sustainability agenda.

8.2.2 The development of The Three Modalities of Spirituality

The analysis of the participants' representation of spirituality resulted in the development of The Three Modalities of Spirituality concept (see Chapter Five). These three modes are 'being', 'hoping', and 'doing'.

The space of 'being' represents a transcended, liberated space beyond the confines of the physical. As stated by participants and also by authors quoted in this thesis, 'being' is an important realm to engage in because it is from where meaning and values are forged. Experiences in that dimension are said to require a letting go of established orientation and frameworks. This ability and knowing are stated as important in enabling a transition from old to new paradigms, for creating new and sustainable technologies and lifestyles, forming new customs and traditions, going beyond known boundaries which then results in the 'doing', putting ideas, theories and policies into practice.

The realm of 'doing' is where the letting go, learnt in the realm of 'being', is enacted. The realm of 'doing' applies to living on earth and relating to all human and non-human, living and non-living forms. The connection to a greater whole in the dimension of 'being' – described by Levinas (1999) as radical alterity (otherness) – can manifest in how we act and behave. For example through appreciation and compassion for different cultural orientations – perhaps including those of other earth communities. Different types of intelligences are cited as required: ones that apply logic, and others that engage with emotional and spiritual capacities. Without the 'being' inspired 'doing', work and life routines becomes mechanical.

There is more than a duality in the spiritual world. There is a type of spirituality that does not fit within the transcended state of 'being'. Neither is it a part of 'doing'. It is not an action in relation to other forms. This is described, in the Tree Modalities of Spirituality a concept as the realm of 'hoping'. It is a creative mode that tries to capture the great scope and feeling of 'being' into earthly processes. This mode can be called a catalytic form of spirituality creating a reaction by using the 'being' phenomenon with the intent of making the 'doing' more meaningful. 'Hope' and inspiration fit in this realm because these do not reflect the final act of doing but capture the transition between the limitation and the possible that shows a way beyond the entrapment. The knowing of the bliss in the realm of 'being' is said to enable resilience through challenging times connected with the conflicts that exist in the physical world. This resilience fits in the doing world but it is born out of hope, dreams, visions for a more sustainable way of living.

At the start of interviews, some participants gave indications of a discomfort about engaging in spirituality dialogue and even suggested that spirituality was irrelevant to them. Nonetheless, without exception – at the end of the process – all of those interviewed agreed that there was some value in the spirituality dialogue. For many, this required a definition of spirituality outside the scope of religion. Some suggested the use of a word other than spirituality. However, if the word spirituality was not used in this research, the positives and negatives perceptions and aspects requiring further clarification may have remained un-confronted and unexplored.

8.2.3 Measuring 'self' and 'selfless' actions and decisions

The apparent innate need to balance self and selfless actions and processes was observed in various ways in this research. It was not only seen through the percentages exercise around to the Connectivity Matrix, but also in responses to the Five Dimensions and Combined View concept. It manifested itself in the ideal versus actual choices of time spent in the physical world, in the identification of important relationships, processes for engaging in wonderment, and in favourite places represented. The dialogue regarding governance frameworks included the

recognition of this requirement for balance but also the very real challenges in working towards achieving such a balance.

The responses suggest there is little doubt, if any, that the world would be a better and more sustainable place with a better balance between self and selfless aspects. It could be said that this finding was as a result of the way the tools were constructed. However, the reverse applies if such an argument was taken to its logical conclusion: the current corporate systems and globally accepted frameworks are shaping and prioritising self-interest and therefore fostering the imbalance between self and selfless.

8.3 Current global framework's seeming inability to transit to sustainability without the dynamics of spirituality

Recognition of spirituality as a separate entity is unlikely to happen even though spirituality is expressed as innate, known and experienced by all participants. As in engagement with nature, guidance is required with the existential. Is it the role of organisations to facilitate the learning and development so that values, meaning, and a higher consciousness can better underpin actions and decisions? Concern was expressed about this process potentially becoming like another religion. Perhaps it does not require teaching as such but credible settings created for dialogue and exploration. A point that recurred through the responses was the need to be able to explore the metaphysical alongside scientific knowledge. This has implications for a rethinking of corporate systems' structures and also policies and processes. Values and principles are already included in business planning processes, and there are expectations of empathy towards clients' and customers' needs. Then it stands to reason that the organisations requiring these standards should provide support and development in these areas. Whilst it could be argued that these are already provided, it could be counter-argued that the provision needs to include the metaphysical layers. Without these what is provided is two dimensional – words on paper, or at the most three-dimensional – when form or physical items are involved.

Without the metaphysical layers, it is an incomplete representation or consideration of living processes.

Applying the above-mentioned thinking to global reporting frameworks such as the Triple Bottom Line and performance measurements such as Gross National Product, the shortcomings resulting from not including the animation layers that spirituality represents can be seen in the ease of capacity to interpret these toward excessive consumerism, self-interest outcomes. This continues despite the development of the Triple Bottom Line concept that includes social and environmental in equal proportions. These shortcomings were described in the reviewed literature as well as in the participants' responses. However, this gap is often not apparent until the 'being' phenomenon is introduced and in so doing, bringing it into conscious view, and allowing it to mitigate decisions and actions.

It could be that past and present tensions related to perceptions about religions being linked to 'conquering' and other fundamental (closed minded) power plays, has caused the relinquishing of spirituality from corporate dialogue. Yet, it must also be observed that these same negative properties apply to corporate systems as well. Best practice quality management processes were developed to moderate these and they have gone a long way in humanising the processes. However, that in itself labels the management as anthropocentric and demonstrates the imbalance that requires correction. The Triple Bottom Line and even measures such as the Genuine Progress Indicator have made some contribution on the journey towards sustainability, yet it must be asked if this transformation can be enhanced through appropriately including spirituality.

The Connectivity Matrix and the two other concepts trialled in this thesis showed that they are capable of engaging people of diverse socio-cultural backgrounds in conversations about the metaphysical resulting in information that can inform community and corporate planning and development processes. There is much to be refined with these tools. It could be argued that these tools are still anthropocentric, but to move to a more holistic approach now could have the

reverse effect as it could be seen as too big a change. A projected next step in this research direction is presented in the concluding section.

If change has to be made it has to be holistic bringing together a new standard that includes all earth communities and spirituality as part of a multi-dimensional approach. There are many who already use spirituality as the foundation for their thoughts and actions. However, the fact that spirituality does not have a credible setting in policy frameworks and measures suggests to the world that it is not needed and that it does not exist. As is argued in this thesis, policy and science on their own are not sustainable. A transition towards environmental sustainability can only be made with a multidimensional approach to ensure the considerations are dynamic.

8.4 Concluding statement and visioning the next stage of the research

This research has met the first objective to explore worldviews on the role of spirituality and nature in relation to corporate systems and sustainability. These storylines have been interwoven through the previous chapters. The second objective was to research Western Australian community discourse on the spirituality and nature in relation to work and life. Thirty-one participants from the Greater Perth region were interviewed and seventy-eight community members took part in six workshops.

Objective three was to develop and trial conceptual models that can be used in diverse community and industry sectors to introduce nature and spirituality within corporate frameworks and to inform sustainability agenda and actions. This was achieved through the three concepts introduced in this thesis, namely the Connectivity Matrix, the Five Dimensions and the Combined View concepts, used as the tools for this research. The concepts trialled in this thesis showed that they are capable of engaging people of diverse socio-cultural backgrounds in conversations about the metaphysical resulting in information that can inform sustainable community and corporate planning and development processes. A list of findings from this research is found in Table 8.1.

Table 8. 1: Key findings from this research

NATURE (Chapter 4)

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|--|
| <p>The emergent definition of nature</p> <p>Nature is defined as biophysical forms found on planet earth and the universe. It is a corporeal entity that has the capacity to evoke a transcendent state of being and a sensation of profound connection to it.</p> |
| <p>The value of sensory engagement with nature</p> <p>Greater engagement with nature could enhance our physiological and sensory capabilities, increase awareness of nature as dynamic, decrease our reliance on human constructed systems, and be a catalyst that fosters sustainable lifestyles and technology.</p> |
| <p>Engagement through stories</p> <p>Stories engage us in nature’s dynamism, provide us with occasions to use and develop our sensory and reflexivity skills and provide us the ability to be more aware of eco-communities to which we are a part.</p> |
| <p>Sustainability redefined to include the dynamic elements of life</p> <p>A redefinition of sustainability is needed to capture areas such as science, governance and policy as well as the dynamic qualities of life.</p> |
| <p>Nature expressed as sacred</p> <p>Nature is expressed as sacred when it is associated with an experience of wonderment or transcendence.</p> |
| <p>When a detachment from nature exists</p> <p>A detachment from nature occurs when there is an inability to let go of human imagined constructs and simply be in nature.</p> |
| <p>Seeing nature as dynamic is essential in a shift to sustainability</p> <p>Technology on its own without a shift of consciousness, regarding the dynamics of nature, is insufficient to transit to environmental sustainability.</p> |

SPIRITUALITY (Chapter 5)

| |
|---|
| <p>The emergent definition of the three modalities of spirituality</p> <p>Spirituality is defined as having three distinct modes of relationality: It is seen in how a person behaves and acts; as a catalyst engendering compassion, resilience and hope; and in the transcendent phenomenon experienced as a sense of oneness in a realm beyond the known.</p> |
| <p>‘Doing’ as a mode of spirituality</p> <p>The doing mode of spirituality is represented in how a person acts and behaves. It is positioned in customs and traditions, beliefs and practices, through acquired knowledge, and influenced by community leaders. It is represented in the systems people establish and the services they deliver.</p> |
| <p>Hoping, the catalytic mode of spirituality</p> <p>The catalytic mode of spirituality is represented in hope, resilience, empathy, and in the search of meaning.</p> |
| <p>Being as a spiritual mode</p> <p>The state of being is defined as a mode where transcendence is experienced. It is where the phenomenon described as oneness, peace, love and joy is experienced. The quality of the experience of ‘being’ impacts on how a person engages in ‘doing’ and ‘hoping’.</p> |
| <p>The perceived conflict between religion and spirituality</p> <p>The resistance to engaging in spirituality appears to be hostility towards religion. Many participants expressed a need to explore spirituality rather than have it imposed on them.</p> |
| <p>Aesthetic ‘standards’ and spirituality</p> <p>Without understanding the underpinning stories, symbols as representation of spirituality can be a barrier.</p> |

The importance of naming and documenting spiritual values

It is important to name universal spiritual values and to understand the role that spirituality plays in every day life and work, just as it is important to identify and name plants and other living things and have an understanding of ecosystems in order for nature to be appreciated.

Individuals and organisations that value the role of spiritual principles that underpin their work should take responsibility to document this and make these underpinnings known. Without this the role of spirituality may continue to be disregarded.

Spirituality and sustainability

The word central to the spirituality and sustainability discourse is 'life'.

Closer attention to the complexities and nuances of oral traditions may be something to consider in engaging with multilayered concepts such as sustainability and spirituality.

It may be that a holistic, inclusive approach to sustainability including spiritual and scientific dimensions could bring about more of the change that is sought.

FIVE DIMENSIONS (Chapter 6)

Engaging in processes that 'slow time down'

Without processes in place that allow time for reflection, the awareness of the complexities, richness and benefits of the different layers of our lives and the lives of others could remain untapped, and the layers or dimensions of life fall victim to reductionism.

Reshaping work culture

For workplaces to be included amongst favourite places, they would need to include access to nature and to the opportunity to be creative. They would also need to embrace processes which include family and community. Individuals would need to take responsibility to ensure they have quality time in nature and spirituality and these practices would be assisted if they are valued and recognised as credible by organisations.

A culture of detachment applies to community, nature and spirituality

A culture of separation is strong and in its wake is a culture of detachment from community, nature and spirituality. However, the desire to turn this around to have stronger relationships in all dimensions, rather than to exist in isolation and be dominated singly by the demands of work, is also convincing.

Making time for wonderment

More time in the wonderment dimension may enable people to be more open and compassionate to others and overcome barriers of difference.

GOVERNANCE (Chapter Seven)

Sustainable governance requires a balance between 'self' and 'selfless' undertakings

To achieve sustainable governance, a balance is required between systems that engender self-interest (community culture and corporate systems) and those that foster selfless (nature and spirituality) undertakings.

The importance of the spiritual dimension to sustainable corporate governance

It is in the spiritual dimension (which for some includes nature) where selfless values and philosophies are enabled. These are then applied to decisions and actions in corporate systems. Corporate systems provide the structure, which is lifeless. It is the spirit that gives it life and determines if the system is to be used for selfish or selfless ends or a balance of both.

A new concept – The Three Modalities of Spirituality emerged through this research as has the “self” and “selfless” focus of the Connectivity Matrix. These all add to approaches that can be used to encourage dialogue on nature and the metaphysical.

The findings of this research show that there is a detachment from spirituality and nature in our contemporary communities, which is seen to impact on environmental sustainability. Without a consciousness of the dynamics of these realms and the inclusion of these attributes into policy, planning, processes and actions, life is treated as lifeless. It is no wonder, therefore, that sensory skills are decreasing, while the reliance on machines and technology can so easily add to a process of disconnection from the natural systems of life.

However, there is hope. The findings suggest that the engagement with nature is increasing through urban greening strategies, new sustainable technologies and programs that create greater awareness of ecosystems and the impact humans are having. This research shows a relative readiness to explore the role of spirituality in the corporate context. The three concepts used are a step in this direction and can be applied in community engagement and collaborative planning processes.

Further research using the models developed in this research is suggested as follows:

- The concepts from this research can be trialled within a particular corporation or type of corporation, for example the mining sector.
- There is also opportunity for applying these tools and findings to study the commodification of spirituality.
- This research itself could benefit from a future longitudinal study of the participants.
- There is scope for further research on religion and spirituality for understanding faith, metaphysics and secularism and how they relate to environmental sustainability.

Already the next conceptual phase of research is emerging along with the recognition that the move to lessen the anthropocentric dominance will take several stages. The next phase in the Connectivity Matrix is presented below (Table 8.2). This is tabled as a concept in development only. It is provided as a vision for where the concepts used in this research can go next. Indeed, further research is proposed to follow on from this study to refine the three concepts used and to trial its implementation in corporate settings.

In the next phase of development the following changes occur in the Connectivity Matrix:

- The Corporate Systems column of the Connectivity Matrix is replaced by a column titled Sustainable Systems;
- The Community and Nature columns are merged together, moving beyond an anthropocentric approach;
- Spirituality is the third column bringing with it an engagement with the different modalities and their applications in life.

The Multidimensional Sustainability concept envisages: Spirituality as the overarching; Sustainable Systems as the tools that order the way we live; and Ecosystems representing all animate and inanimate forms that coexist on planet Earth making up the physical world we live in and collectively negotiate on a daily basis.

Table 8.2: Multidimensional Sustainability

| | Communication | Process | Foundational Element | Essential Condition | Intended Outcome |
|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Spirituality | Being | Transcendence | Letting go (inspiration/hope) | Openness | Oneness |
| Sustainable Systems | Written & sensory | Dynamic and Scientific systems | Collaboration (possibilities) | Experience, knowledge | Multidimensional Sustainability |
| Ecosystems | Doing | Interdependence | Life cycle (change/balance) | Earth's wellbeing | Sustainable ecosystems |

The antithesis of this research could be to suggest that the detachment process from nature and spirituality is a progressive one following on from a detachment from community, and it is one of evolution preparing humankind for intergalactic travel or a planet that is uninhabitable. That may come. However, this thesis is undertaken, with a belief that we can and should play our part and do our very best to right the wrong and leave the planet a better place. This study found that there is a growing appreciation of the need to change to achieve the balance that we know innately.

Corporate changes already include greening policies and programs however they do not as yet formally include spirituality. There are a growing number of voices in this area as well – and this research is put forward to take its place amongst these. The concepts developed through this research and the findings of this study can be applied to engage communities in conversations, learning and collaborative planning in relation to spirituality and environmental sustainability, and in so doing:

- Foster an awareness of the innate desire to balance self and selfless undertakings in order to develop activities that enable this outcome;
- Include spirituality and nature into corporate planning programs and in so doing move beyond the narrower anthropocentric positioning;
- Develop policies to enable a multidimensional sustainability approach in community, business and government.

The vision, inspired by this research, is of a world where the concept of sustainability has moved beyond the conflicts of sustainable development and become known as multidimensional sustainability, a concept that evokes, reflects and represents the oneness of 'being', the inspiration of possibilities, and an interconnectedness to animate and inanimate worlds.

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APPENDICES

Appendix P.1

Examples of applications and outcomes of employing a balance between oral tradition and corporate systems in planning and development programs

The Papua New Guinean experience

The 1986 United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) report (Brook 1986: 22, 25-30) on Small Scale Indigenous Tourism Business Development In Papua New Guinea drew attention to the curriculum from the College of Music, acknowledging my role as its developer (Brook 1986:4). In particular, he refers to the methodology of preparing students for the 'real world'. The curriculum attached in the appendix of the report focused on both oral tradition and corporate system skills to inspire creativity, develop of world standard performance repertoires, as well as undertake planning and organising local and national events to grow the local music industry, as well as international performances. The international work included planning and performances at World Expos and the Opening Ceremony of the 9th South Pacific Games – to name a few. The combination of first and third person systems was critical in achieving the levels of successes because it recognised multiple ways of knowing and had credible frameworks to bridge between oral tradition and professional systems.

The Western Australian experience

In Western Australia the First and Third Person System approach assisted in turning around two arts agencies that had lost all their government grant funding and were scheduled for closure. They were the Multicultural Arts Centre WA in 1992 (now Kulcha) and Community Arts Network WA (CAN WA) in 1996. In the case of the Multicultural Arts Centre WA, new migrants – several of them were refugees to Australia, were encouraged to draw on their oral tradition cultural strengths and supported in working along side community, government and business organisations to coordinate a size of multicultural festival not seen in Western Australia before (MACWA News: 1994:10). This and various other programs gave many, with strengths in oral tradition, the platform to commence careers in the arts

and beyond. At Community Arts Network WA (CAN WA), a partnership across diverse sectors, ages and abilities enabled CAN WA to be trusted to take on the lead organisation role in the establishment of Kings Street Arts Centre (Ciemitis 1997). The established venue is “a home for arts and cultural organisations representing a blend of youth, regional, community and professional arts activity and practice”(Department of Culture and the Arts website).

The First and Third Person process was used to provide artists with opportunity to achieve a greater balance between their oral tradition and corporate systems knowledge and value the strengths of each. This was required to gain credibility for the meaning behind the work of this organisation that was traditionally associated with low socio-economic groups. It was also used to make a statement to the ‘high arts’ world of the importance of oral tradition ways of knowing to the creativity process.

Appendix P.2

Dates for the First and Third Person and Nature presentations /workshops mentioned in Chapter One.

The dates below are taken from diary entries.

| Date | Organisation |
|-------------------|---|
| 12 May 2010 | Nulsen Inc – staff professional development workshop |
| 30 September 2010 | City of Perth – staff professional development workshop |

Appendix 3.1

List of individual participants interviewed by area/s of qualifications or experience and line of work of individuals interviewed

Interviewees were asked to complete the first two columns of the following table as they saw fit and felt comfortable to do. They were given the option of not completing it or leaving any section blank. They were advised that this information would make up a list of people interviewed and included in the thesis without disclosing names. The list is in alphabetical order according to the stated line of work. The third column has been added to show the sectors the interviewees are engaged in through their primary work.

| Area/s of qualification or experience | Line of Work | Sectors |
|--|--|------------------------------|
| 22 years of recycling | Initiating Innovative & sustainability solutions | Business |
| Arts and cultural management & development | Best practice management and organizational development | Not-for-profit |
| B.A. (UWA) B. Social Work (UWA) Community development/ community education | Previously -community learning and engagement in rural WA communities - community gardens action research Current/recent –mentoring program for farming families in transition | Not-for-profit |
| BE (Civil) - Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) MBA - Master of Business Administration Time and space | Getting things done, particularly within government Consultancy Senior management | Business |
| Biological, environmental and social education. Buildings | Community and environmental sustainability | Not-for-profit |
| Community Development | Consulting counsellor and coach | Not-for-Profit |
| Conservation Biology, Sustainable Development | Environmental management / community engagement | Not-for-profit |
| Counselling and training | Healing, counselling and training | Business |
| Degree in economics and Post Graduate qualifications in Social Work | Senior Management and Diversity Management Practitioner | Not-for-profit |
| Disability, art and community culture | Facilitator for art and disability | Not-for-profit |
| Ecology Journalism, Broadcasting, Film making | Community Leadership Media production, public relations | Not-for-profit / Business |
| Environmental Science | Revegetation and Community Events | Business |
| Forestry, natural resource management, nature conservation planning and management, agriculture sustainability | Agriculture sustainability, men's health, teenage rites of passage, communication skills, energy healing | Government |
| Grad Dip Urban and Regional Planning | Senior Associate – Urban Designer, Urban Planner, Planning Consultant | Business |
| Horticulture and | Native plant propagation engaging | Not-for-profit |

| | | |
|--|---|-----------------------|
| Conservation and Land management | volunteers in a community nursery. Revegetation of Urban Bushland and Wheatbelt farmlands. | |
| Human/Community Services | Intellectual/Acquired Brain Injury Disability | Not-for-profit |
| Indigenous | Research | Education |
| Information Technology Dream Builder Not For Profit Community Information | Senior Management Revegetation Senior Management Change Agent | Business |
| Land Management Fauna Management | Revegetation and feral species control (plant and animal) Endangered species breeding/biodiversity management | Business |
| MA Arts Dip Ed | Senior Public Servant | Government |
| MA in Development Studies (third world development). PhD on a 1970s Indian political movement | Community sector; Campaigning and public awareness-raising on third world and environmental issues; Lecturer in politics, sociology and community development | Education |
| MA Sustainability | Arts and Community Development | Not-for-profit |
| Management / Transport | Senior Public Servant | Government |
| Master of Regional Development (UWA) 20+ years in the revegetation field – landscape design and revegetation | Regional Development with a focus on landscape scale revegetation for environmental and commercial outcomes for land managers and their communities | Government |
| PhD and DipEST but mostly 40 years as an academic on interdisciplinary research laced with several periods of government policy work | Professor of Sustainability | Education |
| Public Policy | Life Cycle Consulting and Tree Growing | Business |
| Research Community development Economics and Commerce | Research, Teaching Management (voluntary) | Education |
| Science/Energy Policy | Life Cycle Consulting and Tree Growing | Business |
| Social work, mental health, yoga, deep ecology | Social work and yoga. | Government / Business |
| Teaching, community, environment. | Community empowerment with youth and Aboriginal communities | Not-for-profit |
| Workshops/courses on writing Literature, theology and religious education degrees | Writing (letters to politicians, to media) As priest, as Third Order member | Not-for-profit |

Appendix 3.2

List of workshops.

| Organisation | Type of organisation | Sector |
|---|--|---------------------------|
| Nulsen Inc. | Nulsen is a charitable organisation that supports people with intellectual disability. 19 participants attended this workshop organised by Nulsen. Participants included staff from across the organisation including health professionals, management and administration, carers, arts and culture enablers and volunteers. Nulsen engages in environmental projects including the propagation and care of plants and supporting paddock to plate practices. | Not-for-profit |
| Curtin University of Sustainability Policy (CUSP) Institute | 13 CUSP community members, including staff, and past and current PhD students researching different fields of sustainability, attended this workshop. CUSP researchers are involved in a range of environmental sustainability projects from biophilic cities, climate change, to marine biology and various cross discipline projects. | Education |
| Multicultural Services Centre (MSC) | MSC is a not-for-profit organisation that provides a diversity of services for multicultural communities many of whom are very closely linked to countries suffering extreme environmental stresses. MSC is involved in local land care projects. Two senior staff, with extensive experience in multicultural services, attended this workshop. | Not-for-profit |
| Public Workshop | Whiteman Park offered the use of the Woodland Reserve location for the workshop. 25 participants attended this workshop including Whiteman Park management, environmental teams, museum representatives and park volunteers. | Government |
| Public Workshop | City of Mandurah offered the use of the INQB8 Centre for Contemporary Arts and sent invitations out through their networks. 16 participants attended this workshop comprising predominantly of artists and City of Mandurah staff. The arts community is very involved with environmental care projects and have successfully used the arts to bring about a greater awareness of endangered life forms in the region and towards growing an appreciation of the natural surroundings. | Government |
| Noongar Elders | Morton and Vivienne Hansen are Noongar Elders who are active members in the local community. They support numerous community activities providing a range of services to families, communities, not-for-profit organisations, business, local and state government. They are actively involved in educating wider community about the Western Australian bush and its importance to cultural heritage. | Business / Not-for-profit |

Appendix 3.3

The Five Dimensions and Percentages Exercise survey form

| |
|---|
| 1a) What is the most important 3 dimensional object in your life (by time spent)? |
| 1b) If you could change or enhance it would you? |
| 2a) What is the most important 4 th dimensional part or aspect of your life (by time spent)? |
| 2b) If you could change or enhance it would you? |
| 3a) What is the most important 5 th Dimensional part or aspect in your life? (by time spent) |
| 3b) If you could change or enhance this you would you? And to what? |
| 1c) What is your favourite place? And this can be anywhere in the world and at any time of your life. |

TIME SPENT IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF LIFE

How much time do you spend in each of the following areas?

| | Community Culture | Corporate System | Nature | Spirituality |
|--|-------------------|------------------|--------|--------------|
| | | | | |

Comments:

[This section was only used in the Group 2 workshop]

What would you like it to be?

| | Community Culture | Corporate System | Nature | Spirituality |
|--|-------------------|------------------|--------|--------------|
| | | | | |

Comments

Appendix 4.1

Llopis' Marathons of Life – a concept by Hugo Llopis Dated: May 2013

Background

I run marathons and engage in various other sporting activities. As a result, I often reflect on situations and information using sporting analogies. Through my reflection process, I often come up with random thoughts and concepts to help me clarify my philosophy of life and my reason for being.

The concept of our life span seen as two marathons started as a random thought that has developed. I have found this concept useful in understanding and clarifying the different goals and expectations, attitudes and approaches as I interact with people of different ages and in different situations. It has been a useful tool for me to use in reviewing and planning my life and for encouraging greater consideration of attitudes and values in the work place.

Life as Two Marathons – the concept.

The Neanderthals, who lived 30,000 years ago, had an average life expectancy of 30 years. The life expectancy only increased to 40 years in the late 1800's. In the last 150 years, it has increased to over 80 in the western world.

In terms of a sporting analogy, 42 kilometres equates to one marathon run. On average, we survived for close to a marathon in terms of years for the majority of the time we have existed on this Earth. During the last 0.5% of the time since the Neanderthals, we have increased our life expectancy in the Western World to an equivalent of two marathons (i.e. around 84 years). Our life expectancy has increased almost 100% in a very short time.

Twice the time to do more or less the same job.

We now have two marathons to run in our lifetime. Let's divide these marathons by half and let's consider what happens in each half-marathon and the affects of each on the following ones.

The First Half Marathon – the first 21 years

The first 21 years comprises the dependent as well as the independent phases of youth. The dependent and independent phases determine patterns in terms of how we biologically and socially behave. For example, purely from my observations you can expect a key to turn from dependency into independency at around the age of thirteen for girls. At around this age girls start thinking and behaving differently. At the age of 16 the key turns for boys to start this transition.

The child is dependent on the parent or guardian to provide for them for most of this stage.

The first half marathon is not so much about choices, it is more about experiencing, experimenting, learning and developing under the parents' or guardians' protection.

The Second Half Marathon – 22 to 42 years of age

The second half marathon is hugely important in relation to building the key foundations for the rest of your life. This is the time when you decide, mainly by chance, who you will marry. You also decide on the number of children you will raise.

You develop the capacity and capability to build wealth and networks. Your vocation and career will be set during this half. Most self-made millionaires start early in this half as do leaders in many fields.

The foundations for your overall health for the rest of your life are set. For example, you inculcate lifelong lifestyle habits like smoking, drinking, taking chances with too many partners, as well as exercising and maintaining a healthy weight.

Values and beliefs in relation to the meaning of life, spiritual reality, political philosophies and social principles are also established during the second half marathon.

The complexity of your personality, explored in the first half marathon settles down to what becomes quite clearly you. So the second half of the first marathon is very much about setting the foundations of your life.

The second half marathon is hard work, long-term choices and establishing the rest of your personal, family, professional and spiritual life.

Hard working stage. Foundation-building stage.

The Third Half Marathon – 43 to 63 years

The third half marathon, if you set your second half marathon well, can be the most enjoyable half-marathon. It is the 'lets live it up' marathon. This is where you enjoy the "right choices" and the "hard work" from your first full marathon.

It varies a little from couple to couple, but on average your kids have grown up. You are reasonably well established in your career. Your beliefs and way of life are set and quite often warmly embraced (drinking, smoking, religion and politics). It is difficult to shift beliefs and values at this stage.

Of course, in some cases, despite all the best planning, things can go wrong. Some life style choices may not concur with financial wellbeing. However, in this third half marathon you have the experience behind you to at least recognise what needs to be done and hopefully you have the fortitude to do it. For example, if you are experiencing economic hardship, you should be in a position to maximise the hard-earned experience that you acquired during the second half-marathon to make the most of your financial and social situations and opportunities.

The third half marathon should be the most enjoyable and self-assured stage of your life.

Enjoyable stage. Confident stage.

The Last Half Marathon – 64 to 84 years

The fourth half marathon is when you have your life achievements to reflect on. That is when you contemplate on what you have and have not done. Perhaps regret creeps in and the 'could have', 'should have' elements come to the fore.

You start to become more scared about your health and your mortality. You start to be more disappointed about society and how nobody takes care of you after all the effort you put in.

If you are rich you think you got ripped off. If you are poor you think you are badly done by. So there is a level of being upset and being disappointed (grumpy old man syndrome). There is an inevitable end to it all.

It could on the other hand, again depending on how you have prepared yourself through the previous marathons, be still a productive time for you with enterprises that are still challenging and embracing, particularly during the early years of this half marathon.

**The final half will inevitably be painful as you regress from
independency to dependency**

Wise and cautions stage. Fearsome stage.

Conclusion

Good health is a given in all four half marathons. If health is an issue in any of the half marathons then it becomes the main focus.

There are many potential applications for this concept of Life as Four Half Marathons.

It will be useful to explore further how the first and second half marathons impact on the third and fourth half marathons in different situations. It may be helpful for parents and teachers to ensure they understand the importance of their role during the first two halves.

It may be useful for young people to use as a guide to set goals and standards and understand that hard work in the first two halves is so central to the quality of life in the third and fourth half marathons. For government and organisations to ensure involvement during the second half for those that may get into trouble instead of attempting to fix it during their third and fourth halves.

In treating and helping people in need at any of the four halves by ensuring an understanding of what we can control and what we can't, and how all of these will affect us over the upcoming years. In dealing with different events depending on when they occur, for example, the death of a spouse will be handled differently if it happens in the fourth half compared to the third, particularly with respect to men.

The growing length of married life as well as the growing length of working life are at least two areas worth exploring under this four half marathon scenario. Both of which are pivotal during the growing fourth half creating various challenges and opportunities.

There are so many potential useful implications for this concept. Research opportunities to explore the validity and application of this concept will be explored in the near future.

Life as Two Marathons and Four Half Marathons is a concept by Hugo Llopis © To use this concept written consent must be sought through contacting the author on this address:
<http://au.linkedin.com/pub/hugo-llopis/13/829/214/>

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Appendix 7.1

Percentages of time spent in each of the four Connectivity Matrix areas

A) Interviews:

Standard.

Where it is blank the figures are listed under the Variations list or not completed

| Community Culture | Corporate System | Nature | Spirituality |
|-------------------|------------------|------------|--------------|
| 30 | 20 | 15 | 35 |
| 15 | 5 | 15 | 65 |
| 40 | 20 | 25 | 15 |
| 40 | 10 | 15 | 35 |
| 30 | 40 | 20 | 10 |
| 25 | 40 | 25 | 10 |
| - | - | - | - |
| 50 | 40 | 5 | 5 |
| 10 | 40 | 25 | 25 |
| 20 | 10 | 40 | 30 |
| 15 | 50 | 30 | 5 |
| 50 | 10 | 20 | 20 |
| 30 | 55 | 10 | 5 |
| 40 | 40 | 10 | 5 |
| 40 | 30 | 20 | 10 |
| 70 | 5 | 20 | 5 |
| - | - | - | - |
| 10 | 50 | 35 | 5 |
| - | - | - | - |
| 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| - | - | - | - |
| - | - | - | - |
| - | - | - | - |
| 40 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| 35 | 35 | 20 | 10 |
| 40 | 40 | 10 | 10 |
| 30 | 30 | 20 | 20 |
| 60 | 10 | 20 | 10 |
| 25 | 50 | 15 | 10 |
| 20 | 20 | 10 | 50 |
| - | - | - | - |
| 33% | 29% | 20% | 18% |

Variations

| Community Culture | Corporate Systems | Nature | Spirituality | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 20 | 50 | (30) 15 15 | | 100 |
| (100) 25 | (100) 25 | (100) 25 | (100) 25 | (400) 100 |
| (20) 15 | (33.3) 24 | (33.3) 24 | (50) 37 | (136.6) 100 |
| 20 | (80) 26.5 26.5 27 | | | 100 |
| 40 | 40 | (20) 10 10 | | 100 |
| (95) 47.5 47.5 | | (5) 2.5 2.5 | | 100 |
| 28% | 35.5% | 17.1% | 19.5% | 100% |

B) Workshops

Workshop #1

Actual time spent in each category as stated by participants

| Community Culture | Corporate Systems | Nature | Spirituality | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|---------------------|-----|
| 40 | 40 | 10 | 10 | 100 |
| 15 | 20 | 50 | 15 | 100 |
| 30 | 50 | 15 | 5 | 100 |
| 40 | 40 | 10 | 10 | 100 |
| 55 | 10 | 30 | 5 | 100 |
| 30 | 40 | 10 | 20 | 100 |
| 25 | 10 | 15 | 50 | 100 |
| 20 | 50 | 10 | 20 | 100 |
| 30 | 50 | 10 | 10 | 100 |
| 60 | 25 | 10 | 5 | 100 |
| 20 | 60 | 10 | 10 | 100 |
| 10 | 60 | 10 | 20 | 100 |
| 20 | 10 | 30 | 40 | 100 |

| | | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| 50 | 30 | 10 | 10 | 100 |
| 40 | 10 | 25 | 25 | 100 |
| 35 | 5 | 10 | 50 | 100 |
| 30 | 20 | 25 | 25 | 100 |
| 20 | 20 | 10 | 50 | 100 |
| 70 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 100 |
| 34% | 29% | 16% | 21% | 100% |

Workshop #1

Ideal time spent in each category as stated by participants

| Community Culture | Corporate Systems | Nature | Spirituality | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------|
| 40 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 100 |
| 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 100 |
| 35 | 20 | 35 | 10 | 100 |
| 60 | 20 | 10 | 10 | 100 |
| 55 | 10 | 30 | 5 | 100 |
| 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 100 |
| 25 | 5 | 20 | 50 | 100 |
| 50 | 5 | 15 | 30 | 100 |
| 30 | 10 | 40 | 20 | 100 |
| 35 | 25 | 20 | 20 | 100 |
| 30 | 30 | 20 | 20 | 100 |
| 30 | 20 | 30 | 20 | 100 |
| 30 | 10 | 30 | 30 | 100 |
| 50 | 10 | 30 | 10 | 100 |
| 30 | 10 | 30 | 30 | 100 |
| 29 | 1 | 20 | 50 | 100 |
| 30 | 20 | 20 | 30 | 100 |
| 20 | 10 | 20 | 50 | 100 |
| 30 | 20 | 25 | 25 | 100 |
| 35% | 16% | 24% | 25% | 100% |

Workshop #2

Actual time spent in each category as stated by participants

| Community Culture | Corporate System | Nature | Spirituality | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--|-------------|
| 25 | 60 | 10 | 5 | 100 |
| (50) | (50) | (20) | (80) | (200) |
| 25 | 25 | 10 | 40 | 100 |
| 40 | 40 | 10 | 10 | 100 |
| - | - | - | - | |
| (75) | (12.5) | (22.5) | (70) | (180) |
| 42 | 7 | 12 | 39 | 100 |
| (15) | (40) | (10) | (40) | (105) |
| 14.5 | 38 | 9.5 | 38 | 100 |
| 10 | 60 | 20 | 10 | 100 |
| (10) | (50) | (10) | (10) | (80) |
| 12.5 | 62.5 | 12.5 | 12.5 | 100 |
| - | - | - | - | |
| 40 | 30 | 10 | 20 | 100 |
| (15 hrs a day) (62.5) | (4 hrs a day) (17) | (16 hrs a day) (67) | (16 hrs a day (waking hrs)) (67) | (213.5) |
| 29 | 8 | 31.5 | 31.5 | 100 |
| 40 | 35 | 10 | 15 | 100 |
| (70) | (40) | (30) | (100) | (240) |
| 29 | 17 | 12 | 42 | 100 |
| 28% | 35% | 13% | 24% | 100% |

Workshop #2

Ideal time spent in each category as stated by participants

| Community Culture | Corporate System | Nature | Spirituality | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|---------------------|-------|
| 20 | 40 | 20 | 20 | 100 |
| (100) | (100) | (100) | (100) | (400) |
| 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 100 |
| 20 | 20 | 50 (social) | 10 | 100 |
| - | - | - | - | |

| | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| (90) | (10) | (55) | (97.5) | (252.5) |
| 35.5 | 4 | 22 | 38.5 | 100 |
| (20) | (50) | (30) | (50) | (150) |
| 13 | 33.5 | 20 | 33.5 | 100 |
| 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 100 |
| (30) | (40) | (30) | (20) | (120) |
| 25 | 33.5 | 25 | 16.5 | 100 |
| (100) | (20) | (100) | (100) | (320) |
| 31.25 | 6.25 | 31.25 | 31.25 | 100 |
| 35 | 30 | 15 | 20 | 100 |
| (15 hrs/day) | (4 hrs /day) | (16 hrs/day) | (16 hrs / day) | (213.5) |
| (62.5) | (17) | (67) | (67) | |
| 29 | 8 | 31.5 | 31.5 | 100 |
| | | | 100 | 100 |
| (50) | (50) | (80) | (100) | (280) |
| 18 | 18 | 28 | 36 | 100 |
| 23% | 20.5% | 24.5% | 32% | 100% |

Workshop # 3

Actual time spent in each category as stated by participants

| Community Culture | Corporate Systems | Nature | Spirituality | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------|
| (60) | (30) | (10) | (10) | (110) |
| 55 | 27 | 9 | 9 | 100 |
| (10) | (50) | (10) | (20) | (90) |
| 11 | 56 | 11 | 22 | 100 |
| 33% | 41.5% | 10% | 15.5% | 100% |

Workshop #3

Ideal time spent in each category as stated by participants

| Community Culture | Corporate Systems | Nature | Spirituality | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------|
| (60) | (10) | (30) | (10) | (110) |
| 55 | 9 | 27 | 9 | 100 |
| 25 | 30 | 20 | 25 | 100 |
| 40% | 19.5% | 23.5% | 17% | 100% |

Workshop # 4

Actual time spent in each category as stated by participants

| Community Culture | Corporate Systems | Nature | Spirituality | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------|
| 50 | 10 | 30 | 10 | 100 |
| 35 | 30 | 30 | 5 | 100 |
| 20 | 10 | 50 | 20 | 100 |
| 45 | 5 | 40 | 10 | 100 |
| 75 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| 30 | 5 | 40 | 25 | 100 |
| 40 | 5 | 45 | 10 | 100 |
| (35) | (10) | (50) | (30) | (125) |
| 28 | 8 | 40 | 24 | 100 |
| (5) | (80) | (50) | (5) | (140) |
| 3.5 | 57 | 36 | 3.5 | 100 |
| 40 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 100 |
| 5 | 60 | 10 | 25 | 100 |
| 20 | 45 | 25 | 10 | 100 |
| 20 | 30 | 40 | 10 | 100 |
| (50) | (70) | (50) | (80) | (250) |
| 20 | 28 | 20 | 32 | 100 |
| 30 | 40 | 20 | 10 | 100 |
| 30 | 5 | 50 | 15 | 100 |
| 10 | 60 | 20 | 10 | 100 |
| 30 | 20 | 25 | 25 | 100 |
| 10 | 45 | 40 | 5 | 100 |
| 30 | 55 | 10 | 5 | 100 |
| 15 | 10 | 50 | 25 | 100 |
| (5) | (2) | (48) | (26) | (81) |
| 6 | 2.5 | 59.5 | 32 | 100 |
| 20 | 50 | 20 | 10 | 100 |
| 30 | 50 | 15 | 5 | 100 |
| 20 | 40 | 30 | 10 | 100 |
| 26% | 28% | 31% | 15% | 100% |

Workshop #6

Actual time spent in each category as stated by participants

| Community Culture | Corporate Systems | Nature | Spirituality | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------|
| 35 | 15 | 25 | 25 | 100 |
| 30 | 50 | 10 | 10 | 100 |
| | | (100) | (100) | (200) |
| | | 50 | 50 | 100 |
| 10 | 80 | 7 | 3 | 100 |
| 50 | 20 | 10 | 20 | 100 |
| (60) | (40) | (100) | (100) | (300) |
| 20 | 13 | 33.5 | 33.5 | 100 |
| 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 100 |
| | | 100 | | 100 |
| 60 | 20 | 10 | 10 | 100 |
| (80) | (80) | (50) | (80) | (290) |
| 27.5 | 27.5 | 17.5 | 27.5 | 100 |
| 50 | 10 | 20 | 20 | 100 |
| (100) | (100) | (100) | (100) | (400) |
| 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 100 |
| 15 | 75 | 5 | 5 | 100 |
| 30 | 50 | 10 | 10 | 100 |
| (10) | (60) | (40) | (70) | (180) |
| 5.5 | 33.5 | 22.2 | 38.8 | 100 |
| 15 | 70 | 5 | 10 | 100 |
| 25% | 32.% | 23.5% | 19.5% | 100% |