

## Chapter 3

### IDENTITY AND WISDOM

*Joining up the dots for social, economic and environmental wellbeing*

#### 3.1. RETHINKING BOUNDARIES: FLOW AND CO-DETERMINATION

Rational knowledge is a process of ongoing critical interpretation among 'fields of interpreters and decoders. Rational Knowledge is power-sensitive conversation (King, 1987, cited by Haraway, 1991, p. 196)

The notion that international law is a specifically European concern could be countered by saying that a sense of *the law as a universal means to protect the earth*, is deeply felt by all Indigenous people or First Nations, internationally<sup>1</sup>. Similarly, the notion of usury is one that is abhorred by all those who stress that people and the land should be treated as ends in themselves and not as a means to an end. This is understood by the indigenous wisdoms and religions of all peoples. New physics echoes the wisdoms of indigenous cultures internationally, **namely that we are part of one energetic interface (Raynor, pers comm. 2010).**

Transformation could be assisted by considering the liberative potential of four cultural wisdoms from African, Indigenous and Asian culture. They are respectively, namely:

- **The African principle** of Ubuntu, namely 'we are people through other people' (Adelaide Dlamini, per comm., cited in McIntyre-Mills, 2000, Mbigi & Maree, 1995)
- **The Indigenous first nations understanding** that we are the land

<sup>1</sup> See Koskenniemi, M. 2005 International Law in Europe: Between Tradition and Renewal. *The European Journal of International Law*. Vol. 16, No 1, pp, 113-124 for a discussion on international law as a counter to universalist arguments.

(Rose, 1992, 2004) or the earth is our mother (Atua Tupua Tamasese Tai'isi Efi<sup>2</sup>, Peter Turner, pers. comm. 2009, Morgan cited in McIntyre-Mills, 2006)

- **The Buddhist notion** of thinking about our thinking to enhance mindfulness, based on an understanding that peace is attained through mindfulness: “ Indeed the human condition is unsatisfactory so long as it lacks the lasting harmony and balance of the mind which contacts the transcendent (Cousins in Hinnells, 1984: 304-306)
- **The Islamic notion** that profiting at the expense of others to the extent that we do them harm is sinful (Hassan, 2008)<sup>3</sup>. **In other words we ought not to treat people as commodities or units of labour. Under extreme forms of capitalism workers and the land can be treated as resources from whom we extract profits to fund the obscene life styles of some at the expense of the majority and the next generation of life. This is unsustainable.**

On returning from giving a paper entitled ‘Wellbeing, Mindfulness and the Global Commons’<sup>4</sup> I reviewed how it is related to individual needs and collective interests. Koestler (1964; 1978) developed the notion that truth is constructed or understood in terms of where we are located. If we look upwards or downwards we will have different views. We all have to grapple with the ‘Janus-like’ nature of truth. But this does not mean that we can abandon striving for enlightened decisions that are based on considering the consequences for ourselves, others and the next generation of life<sup>5</sup>.

Greenfield (2000<sup>6</sup>, 2008, 2009) has stressed that consciousness is about making connections across many neurons and that the larger the assemblage

<sup>2</sup> Key note address; New Zealand Families Commission Pasifika Families’ Fono, cited by Gualofa Matalavea-Sa’aga, 2010, January in a paper submitted for a Critical Systems Thinking and Practice assignment,, POAD 9114 at Flinders University.

<sup>3</sup> “ To understand what is driving a larges segment of those involved in jihardi movements would require and understanding of the political nature of the jihardi action....If, as argued in political theory, war is a failure of politics, then it would seem that political action is a prerequisite to prevent war....The sense of humiliation is a major underlying cause of Islamic militancy and terrorism” ( Hassan, 2008: 308)

<sup>4</sup> 2009McIntyre -Mills, J ‘Wellbeing, Mindfulness and the Global Commons’ *Toward a science of consciousness: Investigating Inner Experience Brain,, Mind and Technology* June 11-14, Hong Kong, China at the Hong Kong Polytechnic School of Design in collaboration with the Centre for Consciousness Studies, University of Arizona.

<sup>5</sup> The work of Koestler (1967; 1978) ‘the ghost in the machine’ and ‘Janus’, respectively and the work by Bohm (1981) on holons are helpful in understanding consciousness. We have the ability to ‘see in terms of *compartments* and *webs*. All these points have been made in ‘Systemic Governance and Accountability: working and re-working the boundaries’ (McIntyre-Mills, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> According to Greenfield’s (2000) research human brains do not have a single site of consciousness. Consciousness comes about as neuronal connections are made across neurons. The notion of holons remains of interest because it is based on the idea that what

of neurons the more conscious we can become. This is important, because Koestler despaired that the human brain was driven by limbic instincts and that it seemed unlikely that the later evolutionary layers of animal and human brain would be unable to override these instincts to survive at the expense of others.

If people can develop the capacity to think through scenarios and to develop the capacity to empathise and care for others, it will facilitate co-operation rather than merely imposing decisions based on environmental colonialism (resulting from powerful and privileged international positions). People who are struggling to survive have different views. This needs to be appreciated. But even in the worst of circumstances<sup>7</sup> people CAN and DO choose to do things differently<sup>8</sup>.

Co-determination recognises that organic and inorganic life form an integrated whole mediated by boundaries that are both open and closed. Boundaries are conceptual and spatial.<sup>9</sup>

We can construct boundaries to be inclusive or exclusive or as I argue in this chapter, we can argue that boundaries can be both open and closed,

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we human beings are part of a wider whole and that we can make choices about how we will relate to one another and to the environment to the extent that those decisions do not undermine our common future. We have reached a stage of human civilization where we will need to make a rapid change to our personal and interpersonal lives.

<sup>7</sup> As I write the conclusion my student John Mugabushaka knocks on the door. He has just returned from the Congo doing PhD fieldwork. His life was threatened because he explained he was from Australia and that he was doing research on gender, human rights and development. He was asked where Australia was located and he explained that originally it was a British colony. This led to him being threatened with imprisonment for being a spy. The antipathy with Britain and those associated with a colonial heritage is a reminder that we see the world in terms of narrow pragmatism which is filtered by our values, level of education and history. Government ministers did not want Mugabushaka asking questions around the corridors of power. All the locals understood that being in power gave the opportunity to “eat the resources” for a few months. Representing others in a democratic state was merely window dressing. See The Human Rights Report, 2008 ‘*We will Crush you*’ and ABC documentary on mining in Congo and the networks of military who support the exploitation of the locals.

See, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/02/17/2493102.htm> Also see ‘Mobile phone metal funding DR Congo conflict’ Posted Tue Feb 17, 2009 12:44am AEDT ‘Metals used in mobile phones are financing atrocities in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)’, a London-based lobby group alleged. Also Global Witness, Embargoed until Monday 16 February 2009 ‘Metals in mobile phones help finance Congo atrocities. Annual industry meeting highlights need for due diligence on supplies’

<sup>8</sup> Mugabushaka’s thesis aims to show how despite the legacy of colonial disadvantage from the Belgians and the British, despite the patriarchal system and despite money politics some people choose to do things differently.

<sup>9</sup> They can be understood in both realist and constructivist metaphors. Boundaries simultaneously include and exclude. They can also help us to decide what is acceptable and what is beyond the pale or unacceptable.

depending on the context. The way we draw and re draw boundaries is profoundly important in an ethical sense. I argue that we have misunderstood the nature of the universe. Those who fear systemic approaches ask: How can we maintain space for difference if we deny the existence of boundaries? The answer is: ‘We can be free and diverse to the extent that we do not undermine the freedom and diversity of others’ and our responsibility to consider the implications of the way we live<sup>10</sup>. He understood the importance of dialogue to match responses to areas of concern, based on using the ‘right kind of knowledge’ to help make appropriate responses to a specific issues.

### **3.2. FROM BINARY OPPOSITIONS TO MOBIUS BANDS AND MANDELBROT SETS**

The process of participation is subject of this book. It can be summed up as a metaphor for systemic praxis, namely the Mobius band.

#### **Reconceptualising boundaries based on Kauffman, 2000:97**

##### **Insert diagram**

The feedback loops can be regarded as being continuous and having a boomerang affect. What goes round comes round. Clearly we are all outside and inside the boundaries of the Mobius band. The boundaries are porous. This could mean that the choices that we provide within regions are across a range of sustainable options that are guided by a global covenant (Held et al, 1999). The next steps will be to test out the software in more contexts with participating organisations.

<sup>10</sup> This argument is about reconstructing our understanding of our relationships across self-other and the environment. The process of exploring one argument, listening to another and then creating a synthesis is in itself an answer. A study of Nichomachean Ethics reveals that Aristotle was more than an essentialist guided by a limited understanding of categories. See McIntyre-Mills, 2009 for a discussion of the process of exploring one argument, listening to another and then creating a synthesis is itself an answer. This is the so-called ‘liberative potential’ of what Aristotle meant by eudaimoinia or the happiness generated by engaging with others in dialogue so as to match appropriate responses in context. His work has this liberative potential and is not merely rooted in the categorical limits.

In a previous paper<sup>11</sup> I discussed the potential of Mobius bands and Mandelbrot sets to be used as metaphors for systemic praxis (McIntyre-Mills 2008). In preparing this chapter I was fortunate to correspond with Alan Rayner, whose work on transfigural mathematics provided a 'light bulb' moment as I read his notion that each number or category should be seen as overlapping with the next<sup>12</sup>.

Instead of seeing boundaries as fixed we can see them as Mobius bands that can be explained as:

an elaborate circular form that intermediates between an inside and outside where in reality the inside is the outside .... Note that in viewing the band this way the boundary of the band has both an inside part and an outside part, each connected to the other through the twist! One can see that all distinctions share the structure of the Mobius band. The distinction is maintained only at the expense of limiting one's viewpoint to a part of the whole. Taken whole, there is no distinction in the Universe and there is no distinction between inner worlds and outer worlds, or between the worlds of thought and the worlds of perception, or between the self and that which is not the self..... (Kauffman, 2006, p. 97).

Expanded pragmatism is an open system in so far as it considers the consequences for all life. But it is a closed system in so far as it draws a line and says that decisions have to be taken to ensure that we can be free and diverse to the extent that our freedom and diversity does not undermine the freedom and diversity of others. This domain of understanding is 'the sacred'. To re-iterate, we can be free (to reconceptualise and reconstruct categories) to the extent that we respect the freedoms of others. At this point the line needs to be drawn, in the interests of ensuring that we maintain

<sup>11</sup>McIntyre-Mills, J., 2008e 'Mobius Bands and Mandelbrot Sets as metaphors for Systemic Praxis', *Systems Research and Behavioural Science*. Volume 25: 323-329. The paper explores the way to move away from binary oppositions by means of using metaphors such as Mobius Bands and Mandelbrot sets. This essay explores a 'Linkage proposition' (Troncale 2007, pers. comm.) that the universe – both social and natural is a feedback /feed forward loop. Mathematically it can be described as recursive Mobius Band (see Kauffman 2006). Energy transfer and communication link social and natural systems.

<sup>12</sup> He sums up the paradigm shift in transfigural mathematics as follows:

"From Discrete Contradiction to Continuous Flow- through the natural inclusion of space in form and form in space" (Rayner, 2009, p. 111). This is the basis for his concept of inclusionality. "At the heart of natural inclusionality is a natural logic and geometry – based on similar perceptions to the 'transfigural mathematical logic and geometry discovered and elaborated by my friend Lere Shakunle – in which all form is understood as *flow-form*, an energetic configuration of space in figure and figure in space. And the simple truth underlying this logic and geometry is that *space does not stop at boundaries*." (Alan Rayner, 26 Oct 2009, pers. comm.).

diversity and freedom or the common good<sup>13</sup>. One of capabilities as Homo Sapiens Sapiens is to create meaningful concepts. Our values need to be reflected in the price tags we place on pollution and greed.

### **3.2.2. Ongoing iterations of thinking and practice create flowscapes across all forms of life**

Hill Collins (2000) addresses the interrelatedness of many aspects of knowledge and how the intersections of power shape our understanding, consciousness and relationships with one another. Researchers interested in the ‘science of consciousness’ are re-discovering the importance of interconnectedness. Greenfield (2000) does not believe that consciousness is located in any one part of the brain<sup>14</sup>. Also, she argues that it is possible to be conscious (but not mindful) because one is ‘out of one’s mind’ because of extreme emotions, pride, drugs, elation achieved through sporting exertion or high risk activities (Greenfield 2000, 2008). Perhaps stock market traders could be considered to be less than fully aware of the decisions they are taking, if we apply this understanding? Arguably we need to take time to reflect on the sorts of decisions we are taking at the local, national, regional and global level.<sup>15</sup> This systemic approach to science, democracy, ethics and governance (McIntyre-Mills, 2006, 2008) addresses multiple variables and considers future generations can be assisted by means of a participatory testing process that includes those who are to be affected by the decisions in an open regional testing process (aided by electronic agoras) supported by

<sup>13</sup> This is part of the paradox that we need to be both part of a collective and to maintain individuality and diversity.

<sup>14</sup> Greenfield, (2000) argues, for example that mindfulness is enhanced by making more connections across brain neurons.

<sup>15</sup> Human culture needs to once again ensure that we make more connections. Mindfulness can be enhanced by means of encouraging questioning and conceptual thinking to enable the human brain to make more neural connections across larger assemblies of neurons, but also appreciating our emotions as building blocks of consciousness (see Chapter 1 and 6). The more connections we can make within our private and public lives, the more mindful we can become. If we are able to think about the consequences of our decisions for this generation of life and the next we will be able to develop a form of expanded pragmatism, supported by a process that builds the capability of people to think about their thinking. This process requires thinking about the social, economic and environmental aspects of life based on a questioning process that enables us to design forms of inquiry that draw on many domains of knowledge. Mindfulness needs to be informed by knowledge that is professional and knowledge that is based on the lived experiences of people. Mindfulness requires the ability to think about our thinking and to match appropriate responses to an area of concern. The process does not support relativism, instead it supports the development of critical systemic questioning to inform ethical and sustainable policy and practice by decision makers in the public, private and NGO sectors.

federal parliaments that overlap regions. I argue that we can adopt a constructivist approach only within limits. We can be as free and diverse as we like but only to the extent that we do not undermine the freedoms of others. We shape the environment and it shapes us. We can accept that human systems are open systems and that we can choose how we live. We need to limit our creativity to the extent that our creativity does not undermine the life chances of others in this generation and the next. Nature shapes us and we have shaped nature by scaling up our impact across the globe.

### 3.3. METAPHORS FOR COMMUNICATING AND MAKING MEANING

G.O.D, the ‘Generator of Diversity’, in the sense used by Churchman (1979, 1982) can be described as an eternal conversation. The metaphor of the Mandelbrot set is useful as a guide to conversation. It is an iteration generating many and diverse irregular shapes, but guided by geometry of basic co-ordinates. These provide options for each fractal pattern or node to bifurcate<sup>16</sup>.

The structure is guided by norms, but the process is open to allow a divergence. Person A expresses a viewpoint, but Person B listens actively and with empathy, even if she does not agree. The rule for content is that the ideas expressed can be free and diverse, but that the ‘cut off’ point is where freedom and diversity impinges on the rights of others.

Complex local challenges need to be addressed locally and guided from above to ensure freedom and diversity are preserved. What is the geometry of the Mandelbrot set able to tell us about the nature and size of the/a universe?<sup>17</sup> What is the relevance for thinking about balancing individual and collective concerns? What is the relationship between Mobius bands and the Mandelbrot geometry?

<sup>16</sup> Mobius bands can be explained as: “an elaborate circular form that intermediates between an inside and outside where in reality the inside is the outside .... Note that in viewing the band this way the boundary of the band has both an inside part and an outside part, each connected to the other through the twist! One can see that all distinctions share the structure of the Mobius band. The distinction is maintained only at the expense of limiting one’s viewpoint to a part of the whole. Taken whole, there is no distinction in the Universe and there is no distinction between inner worlds and outer worlds, or between the worlds of thought and the worlds of perception, or between the self and that which is not the self. ....” (Kauffman 2006: 97).

<sup>17</sup> Stephen Hawking (see Clarke video) argues that the universe is finite; it seems that atomic particles do have an end. I suggest that this is because the universe is a feedback loop. See Clarke, A. Fractals: The colours of Infinity Video <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=3034959314635185121>

### 3.3.1. The isomorphy of communicated energy

Communication is the basis of ecosystems from the inorganic to organic life and through communication we evolve. Signs are the basis of communication and although symbols are only meaningful when they are developed collaboratively – they could not have developed without signs (see Bausch 2001). The shared assumptions of ‘one biology’ and one planet are based on the linkages created by direct signals of communicated energy.

The most basic dyads are two nodes in a network (Troncale, pers. comm. 2007). The nodes could be subatomic particles, or neurons in the brain, or two animals communicating or two people engaged in conversation. Communication can be regarded as energy transfer (Troncale, 2007, pers.comm.) that is iterative or dynamic.

Closure leads to entropy (Carson & Flood, 1993). Openness without making decisions is also unacceptable. This has vital implications for social systems. Human beings and the environment construct each other and co-evolve. Our choices could create an environment that limits the choices for future generations. It is this co-evolution that will shape our future on this planet. Understanding the way in which human and natural systems shape each other is vital. Maturana and Varela (1973, 1980) and James Lovelock in *Revenge of Gaia*<sup>18</sup> and Gore, 2007 have stressed this point.

### 3.3.2. Networks

Networks are based on links across nodes. Network theory maps the relationships that have already been created through the iterations of energy. Nodes can be regular or non-uniform in nature and even in the Mandelbrot computer experiment they can bifurcate at the edges of the set:

“The fractals produced by ... iterated function systems ...are deterministic. [BUT] [w]hereas everyone would recognise a maple leaf *no two such leaves [in real life] are exactly alike*” (Crowover 1995, p. 229, author’s emphasis).

Both genetics and environmental influences need to be considered according to Crowover when we consider fractals. Mandelbrot’s fractals provide the geometry to think about complexity and to make a case that the universe is both chaotic and ordered at different scales (time and space)<sup>19</sup>. .

<sup>18</sup> Lovelock, K. 2006. *The revenge of Gaia* Penguin.

<sup>19</sup>Clarke, op cit. <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=3034959314635185121> G. Barnsley found that he had a formula to address complexity after a dream about a matrix – a telephone switch board of wires in a tangle. He dreamed the answer (on the anniversary of the death of his father) and this enabled him to come up with a formula that enables a computer to recognise the pixels in a computer image and to be able to provide the co-



So if red flowers or particular cultural ideas are selected by chance or choice they will need to respond to the environment and the many possibilities that could occur. Thus, reductionist models are inadequate; nevertheless dynamic systems can help us to make better decisions (even if they cannot predict or mirror changing systems exactly)<sup>20</sup>. They can be useful if they are used to enhance critical thinking and consciousness. All models are a function of a number of economic and environmental factors (including social factors such as 'religion, morality, politics and aesthetics' (Churchman 1979b) that act as filters and which also generate diversity<sup>21</sup>.

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ordinates so as to replicate the image. Thus means that he can compress information and so, for example 10 programs could be transmitted over a network. This is a practical application so far – but more profoundly the Mandelbrot set provides a justification for iterative approaches to conceptual and spatial designs. The Mandelbrot sets are important as they enable us to undertake different kinds of research, Instead of thinking that the irregular forms of nature have to be straightened out in order to measure them – thus losing detail, we can maintain the complexity. Mandelbrot found that when he first programmed his computer the image produced was fuzzy and so he magnified it and found that some blobs disappeared- others were perfect Julia sets. Whatever pattern was on the screen had a perfect smaller version with the same dimensions or co-ordinates. But to think of fractals merely as self similarity misses the point- fractals have the potential to bifurcate outwards or inwards through the constant iteration. The pattern at the outer edge of the set can divide and the subsets can move inwards or outwards. So, each has this potential for both change and regularity. As Clarke stressed this notion of choice or free will programmed into the geometry of the universe was challenged by Einstein, who preferred to think of the universe has fixed. So did Newton – who believed in the clockwork universe.

<sup>20</sup> In the animation of a Mandelbrot set the programmed numbers increase or decrease and move outwards or inwards. If we see all life as made up of fractals and these are nodes within the brain, and the connections across the nodes are the communications (transfer of energy or meaning making) then our research needs to provide a way for people to develop a sense of agency by making conceptual connections. Even if the choice is 1 or 2, this combined with the influences of the changing environment (in the real word not in computer simulations) brings in diversity

<sup>21</sup> If we add to this the role of individual and group interactions based on will and desire ( to engage or disengage ) with others (within an environment) then we can understand that life chances (physical and mental) of groups are shaped by many factors. Our thinking and practice can make a difference.

### 3.4. CONSCIOUSNESS AND CONNECTIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABILITY ACROSS HUMAN SYSTEMS AND NATURAL SYSTEMS

According to Murray et al (2007, pp. 90-9) drawing on Von Foerster (1992)<sup>22</sup> ethics is determined by the way we think and interact with the environment. Thus the environment is a teacher from whom we need to learn. Learning from nature is part of the dialectic of life. For me the most important thing to remember is that flow of energy and communication is the basis of ecosystems from the inorganic to organic life. Through communication we evolve.

Signs are the basis of communication. Symbols are only meaningful when they are developed collaboratively. They could not have developed without signs and without trust based on regular feedback. Once it is clear that a sign results in an action and a sound is related to a particular action or idea it is possible to create shared meanings (see Bausch, 2001).

Sentient creatures such as parrots, chimpanzees can and do use human sounds with meaning. Arguably many creatures use forms of communication in ways that have meaning which we have not comprehended (Shanor & Kanwal, 2009). Theories of mind are arguably enlarged through respectful communication within and across species.

#### 3.4.1. Patterns and characteristics of the feedback

Mandelbrot shows how both prediction and chance play a role in the design of his geometric shapes. Mandelbrot geometry (1977b:178) thus provides for **both openness and closure**. Instead of seeing boundaries as fixed we can see them as Mobius bands<sup>23</sup>(Kauffman's 2006). The Mobius band and

<sup>22</sup> Murray et al (2007) cite Von Foerster, H. Ethics and second order cybernetics. *Cybernetics and Human Knowing*, 1(1), 9-19 "This process is called Maturana and Varela call co-ontogenic structural drift. In co-ontogenic structural drift, they say, the system does not adapt to the environment as in classical system environment models (Krohn, Kruppers, and Novotny,1990) but both change over time as they become structurally coupled (Maturana, 2002); either they fit together or separate or disintegrate (Maturana and Verela, 1987; Maturana 2002)...Viewed through Luhman's social frame communication and its environment, which is the consciousness of individuals, change over time as they become coupled in a never ending reciprocal relationship. Viewed through Maturana and Varela's biological frame all living systems and their environments (which include other living systems as well as all communication) become couples so that they grow and change together, each influencing the possibilities of the other ...."

<sup>23</sup> Mathematically Mobius bands (see Kauffman 2006 ) support the notion of auto poesies - it also supports the argument that as human systems we have to be open to considering environmental needs and that we also have to have closure to protect biological diversity

Mandelbrot set provide mathematical responses from string theory<sup>24</sup> and geometry, respectively to support the notion that systems can be both open and closed. These metaphors (or constructions) are compatible with the work of West Churchman (1979a, b, 1982) who advocated a DIS (Design of Inquiring System), which provides some co-ordinates (see McIntyre-Mills 2006 a, b, c, 2007). The more mindful we are of these co-ordinates, the better the decisions.<sup>25</sup> “The will is infinite and the execution confined, the desire is boundless and the act a slave to limit” (Mandelbrot cites Shakespeare 1977b, p. 38).

This is a very limited interpretation of will and desire as power and attraction are the co-ordinates of society and cannot be dismissed at the level of basic drives (see Bogue 1989 on Deleuze and Guattari) who explain that identity and politics are based on transformations in the way we construct the world. We can have fixed or fluid constructions. Where we draw the boundaries, depends on our sense of connection with others (shaped by will

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and human freedom. We can be open to others to the extent that we do not undermine sustainable futures. Consciousness is a continuum across all life (Greenfield 2002). In human systems it is based on being aware of our thinking. It is the communication across many sites in the brain. The dialogical process of exploring one argument, listening to another and then creating a synthesis is in itself an answer. This is what Aristotle meant by dialogue that can help to make appropriate responses to a specific issues (see Nicomachean Ethics, Irwin 1985).

<sup>24</sup>[http://soundlearning.publicradio.org/subjects/science\\_health/einstein\\_and\\_god/string\\_theory.shtml](http://soundlearning.publicradio.org/subjects/science_health/einstein_and_god/string_theory.shtml)

<sup>25</sup> We can be free (to reconceptualise and reconstruct categories) to the extent that we respect the freedoms of others. At this point the line needs to be drawn, in the interests of ensuring that we maintain diversity and freedom. This is part of the paradox that we need to be both part of a collective and to maintain individuality and diversity. One of the rights is to create meaningful concepts through participation. For me the most important thing to remember is that communication is the basis of ecosystems from the inorganic to organic life and through communication we evolve. Signs are the basis of communication when they are used regularly based on trusting those with whom one communicates. They become the basis for developing shared meanings. Signs become overlaid with meaning and can be seen as a continuum with symbols. Symbols cannot develop without signs. The shared assumptions of ‘one biology’ and one planet are based on the linkages created by direct signals of communicated energy. Greenfield (2000, p. 21) argues that emotions and feelings are the most basic aspects of consciousness. She calls them ‘the building blocks’ and that when we temper our emotions through thinking through implications of acting out passions we are able to become more mindful or conscious. Emotions, values and perceptions are central to our humanity. They underpin our values, the so-called ‘enemies within’ (Churchman 1979), namely ‘religion, morality, aesthetics and politics’, the human paradox of our potential for passion and compassion. Emotions can limit our consciousness, but they can also alert us to issues that we need to think about. Passion and compassion are the flip sides of one another. The more connections we can make the better our thinking, our policy processes and our governance outcomes will be (see White 2002).

and desire). Mapping alternatives through respectful conversations is helped by means of conceptual diagrams, such as the following:

### Insert diagram

Clarke<sup>26</sup> suggests that Jung<sup>27</sup> was correct and that the ‘collective unconscious’ could be understood as the mandala geometry based on the notion of ‘unfolding values’ and ‘sweeping in’ social, cultural, political, economic and environmental factors. Churchman’s (1971) notion of a critical heuristics based on ‘unfolding’ values and ‘sweeping in’ social, cultural, political, economic and environmental dimensions is demonstrated by considering the Mandelbrot set<sup>28</sup>. It is programmed into every fractal of the universe as the dynamic or dialectic of life.

Frankel (1955) would argue that the ‘collective unconscious’ is indicative of the reality of the spiritual dimension and that meaning is core to humanity, but ‘consciousness as a recursion’ is the next step in the argument which Beer (1994) addresses in his work ‘Beyond Dispute’. This means that we construct our worlds by our actions and interactions with other people and the environment. If we choose to think inclusively we will realise our complicity when using mobile phones that rely on a mineral that is obtained through mining companies that destabilise communities in the Congo, we are making a choice. Our choice is to say- it is absurd to make a link, but is it<sup>29</sup>? We compartmentalise our choice of technology without considering our place in the market or the powerful relationships that support a national government’s ability to make deals with rulers and the military (in the interest of supporting a profitable ICT industry). The way in which resources for the ICT industry is sourced and the way in which toxic waste is created needs to be carefully unpacked. Everyone who uses a mobile phone could think carefully about the implications of advertisers creating false needs that lead to upgrading and dumping toxic waste. Recycling and fair trade need to be addressed. The link drawn between the commodification of people as slaves and the commodification of the environment could be drawn, once again.

<sup>26</sup>Clarke, op cit.

<sup>27</sup> Jung, C.J., 1972, Translated by Hull, R., *Mandala Symbolism from the Collected Works of Jung*, C.G. Bollingen Series, Princeton University Press.

<sup>28</sup> Ongoing iterations of numbers moving inwards (subtracting) or moving outwards (adding) and always having the choice (add or subtract ) fits with the capability theory ( Nussbaum 2006) that people need to make their lives meaningful, in order to be fulfilled.

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/02/17/2493102.htm> “ There is a direct causal link between the metals trade in eastern DRC and atrocities .....Mobile phone manufacturers need to undertake checks all the way up their supply chains to make sure they are not buying from mines controlled by militias and military units.”

Choosing to eat sugar during the era of the slave trade without questioning where the sugar came from or how it was farmed was a similar choice.

### 3.5. SUBSIDIARITY AND FRACTALS

The principle of subsidiarity (Singer 2002) is built into the universe to the extent that freedom and diversity does not undermine the freedoms and diversities of others<sup>30</sup>. The pollution, poverty or pain which is felt by others is not controlled by boundaries of the nation state, social or geographical distance. The isomorphy of feedback to test out ideas in terms of their impact on freedom and diversity applies across social and natural systems. Natural systems and social systems co-determine each other. Clearly we have not listened to nature by responding to her needs. We have overreached ourselves in the way we have used resources (Stern, 2006). The feedback is nature's test of our decisions.

Nodes are fractals in a network (which is just a portion of Mandelbrot geometry). Human thought is made up of patterns that can be explored through the dialectic.<sup>31</sup> They appear to diverge and are irregular, but some underpinning regularities exist such as the importance of being free to the extent that freedom of others is maintained. This has implications for sustainability and social justice.

Somerville (2000) argues for an 'ethical imagination.' She argues that we need to find some common agreement on what is sacred. The sacred, I argue are 'the co-ordinates' that maintain the geometry of social and natural life, but which provide for diversity (as per the ongoing iterations)<sup>32</sup>. The conceptual tools of DIS (and other critical soft systems) can be helpful. West

<sup>30</sup> We need to emphasise not only rights, but responsibility for all forms of life. Thus the environment becomes the principal for the next millennium and people become the caretakers. Governments remain the agents of the people, but people are no longer the principals in this re-framed notion of governance. This is essential for a sustainable future that redresses the current imbalance.

<sup>31</sup> We can consider arguments as patterns. As long as one argument can be considered as a negative and then a synthesis can be considered then emergence can occur.

<sup>32</sup> The geometry requires that people who are to be at the receiving end of decisions are represented locally, regionally and globally by scaled up participation. The principles of subsidiarity and the Law of Requisite Variety (Ashby, 1956) and the work of Aristotle and Nussbaum are supported when considered in the light of Mandelbrot's geometry. This is exciting as it coincides with Aristotle's notion (and that of Nussbaum) that the capability of people to test out ideas rests on the dialectic of exploring one argument and another and then a synthesis. This is important because of Miller's (1956) conjecture, based on psychological research that human beings cannot hold more than a few variables in mind at a time.

Churchman's DIS is based on asking questions that explore different kinds of knowledge: How do I feel about the area of concern, what do others feel? What do they feel about the issues? Are my/their arguments logical<sup>33</sup>; have I explored the data (qualitative and quantitative)? Have I explored one idea, an opposing idea and considered a synthesis with others? Have I thought of the moral ideal and the consequences of my actions for this generation and the next?

These simple questions can make a difference to creating a sustainable way of life and the search for meaning is of vital importance to natural and social systems. Our future is dependent on creating a shared sense of rights and responsibility based on a respect for as much freedom and diversity within our region as the planet can tolerate. Overlapping federalist governance systems that span regions thus need to ensure that people act as the agents or caretakers of the environment and the next generation of life. This shared concern needs to be buttressed by regional parliaments that support the right of all people living within the region to freedom of information, a safe healthy environment and the right to speak out and be heard. The model for this ideal is a scaled up version of the Aarhus Convention spanning the planet (Florini, 2003).

### **3.6. MINDFULNESS AND AN EXPANDED FORM OF DEMOCRACY**

The notion of being able to vote within a region where one lives and works (Maastricht Treaty) could be applied to regions of the planet, not just the EU. Taxes could be paid to regional banks and these regional banks could allocate funds to those in the greatest need and at risk of the worst impacts of climate change. Transformation requires the capability to think through 'if-then' scenarios so as to develop an understanding of shared and diverse emotions and concerns about the extent to which democracy is failing<sup>34</sup> (Participation based on narratives and the use of 'soft systems maps' (Checkland & Scholes, 1990) or 'picturing' enables not merely ownership of ideas, but enables complex relationships across variables to be described,

<sup>33</sup> Rosenberg (2002) argues that people need to be able to think about their thinking in more than a linear manner. They need to be able to explore and examine their lives. In many ways, his contribution parallels that of Victor Frankel (1955) in that we need to be able to make sense of our lives, if they are to make meaning. This requires systemic exploration, however, rather than systematic consideration (as he suggests in 'the not so common sense').

<sup>34</sup> Thus addressing the concerns raised by Gore (2007) in 'Assault on Reason' and concerns by Rosenberg (2002) that citizens are not always rational).

explained and mapped out by service users<sup>35</sup>. Human consciousness is a continuum from compassionate caretakers who are mindful or conscious of the many factors that are required for sustainable governance to passionate fundamentalists in West and East who are ruled by either religion or the market. Zealotry is symptomatic of emotive decision-making that takes into account only some connections and not others. We need to realise that we can project our perceptions onto others. Thinking can change practice. Practice in turn, can and does change thinking. Knowing is a process based on a range of experiences, senses and on communication, whereas fundamentalism can be defined as refusing to accept knowing as an ongoing intersubjective process. Critical and systemic thinking and practice are required for better international relations and governance (McIntyre-Mills, 2006b, 2007c). Global governance requires space for diversity and should operate as a form of checks and balances. Fundamentalism is one of the greatest challenges for the future, whether it is religious or economic. Ideally democratic process ought to enable people to give discursive details about the quality of their lives and details about what works for them, how and why. If they are voiceless sentients they need to be represented by caretakers who are guided by the expanded pragmatism of thinking about the consequences of their decisions for the next generation of life.

Dualist thinking has led to limitations in the way we think<sup>36</sup>. What is the link between mindfulness, wellbeing and the global commons? How can we foster a cosmopolitan consciousness that transcends the local and embraces the global? How can we maintain liberal diversity whilst controlling the use of scarce/fragile resources? How can we achieve a balance between individual and collective needs? Wellbeing is a value-based concept, but we can only be free and diverse to the extent that our freedoms do not undermine the quality of life and freedoms of others or the wellbeing of future generations of life. Based on an understanding of our common, intermeshed fate (Beck, 2005, Giddens, 2009, Held et al 1999) that rational responses need to be systemic. The problem is that the thinking is not translated into practice.

A number of reasons exist for not implementing these overarching instruments to protect the collective good; some are political and some are due to the lack of capability to think in terms of the consequences of

<sup>35</sup> Rhodes argues that governance needs to restore social and state responsibility to counterbalance the market or to shape the market to address social and environmental concerns (Rhodes 2000 in Pierre 2000, p. 54). Held et al (1999, p. 114) argue that the EU provides a federalist approach to decision making which could be worth considering more widely as a means to protect the commons regionally.

<sup>36</sup> We have divided ourselves from others (including sentient creatures) and the environment. Our overweening pride in our enlightened thinking has led to our losing our sense of connection. Consciousness depends on our ability to re-think positivism (see McIntyre-Mills 2006a, b, c) and constructivism and to return to connectives.

decisions. Holistic thinking supports empathy and care. Dualistic thinking supports limiting the terms of reference and thinking in terms of 'us'/'them'. We need a deep understanding of the risks at stake and new forms of organisation including regional parliaments, courts and caretakers with policing powers to address the concerns. The capability to adapt to the convergent social, economic and environmental challenges requires critical systemic praxis (CSP).<sup>37</sup> The Brundtland Report (1987) made the conceptual policy connection across health, sustainable development, wellbeing and peace. Stanley has stressed that the challenges facing children and the most marginalised in the community in Australia are challenges that could be suffered more widely<sup>38</sup> as we face the impact of convergent social, economic and environmental challenges. Climate change will affect the standard of living that is taken for granted by the privileged (Hawke Oration lecture 17 Nov, 2008).

When we erode our consciousness by thinking in a dualistic manner we create so-called 'wicked problems'. Instead if we adopt a systemic approach to rationality we will see the world holistically in terms of many interrelated

<sup>37</sup> We need systemic approaches to address social, economic and environmental sustainability developed in the work of Aboriginal, African and Comanche women scholars, for example: Atkinson (2002), Hill Collins, (2000) and La Donna Harris (2004). We need to avoid thinking in terms of binary oppositions: 'us' versus 'them', as argued by Huntington in 'The clash of cultures' (1996). New approaches to thinking and practice can help us to move beyond the limitations of the zero sum approach. Quality of life requires making connections and matching knowledge to areas of concern. As stressed elsewhere (McIntyre-Mills, 2009a, b, c, d, e, and f) democracy and governance are in need of an overhaul, because citizens and non citizens in large diverse nation states people are not well represented. We need to find ways of achieving better representation and accountability within and across nation states in the interests of a sustainable world. Social and environmental justice policy needs to be implemented, but for change to occur people will need to be able to hold organizations to account. Climate change and poverty are examples of 'wicked' problems, to use Rittel and Webber's (1984) concept in that we have to address many diverse variables that are interrelated and that have a strong value and emotional dimension. People are prepared to make an effort to become engaged in discussions pertaining to essential concerns. Achieving quality of life through health, housing, education and employment within liveable cities are dimensions of a complex, interrelated social justice and wellbeing challenge posed by climate change (Stern, 2007, Flannery, 2005). These are the sine qua non of wellbeing.

<sup>38</sup> "...Some of the things that our less advantaged Aboriginal communities are experiencing could be a talisman of the future for us all.... The global warming parallel is a recurring analogy... as the complex web of causality spreads out from a handful of life-threatening illnesses to encompass a whole scaffold of social determinants... If you look at a civil society, it's one that is equal, that values trust, that values community above individual greed, that preserves the environment...."An uncivil society is one that is driven by an economic bottom line only. ...."<http://www.theage.com.au/news/entertainment/tv--radio/suffer-the-little-children/2008/10/01/1222651093091.html?page=fullpage#contentSwap1>



variables and we will appreciate that our perceptions have an emotional and value dimension which need to be addressed through critical reflection.

Consumption by individuals has driven unsustainable social, economic and environmental choices. We need to rethink the way that we see ourselves, our relationships and our place in the environment (Harris, 2004a, b). Achieving social and environmental justice requires addressing complex, wicked problems. Awareness of the implications of our choices is a first step in developing and implementing change. Nation states need to be guided by global covenants that can be interpreted and implemented within regional federations to translate the thinking into practice and to embed the changes.

Within our region we face challenges as a result of climate change. Indonesia faces the challenge of implementing Decentralisation Law 22 of 1999 and Gender Mainstreaming Law 9/2000 and Law 23/2002 to ensure greater opportunities for minorities, women and children, respectively (Barton 2002 and Kami 2006, Bessel in McLeod and MacIntyre, 2007). In both Australia and Indonesia the need to address these concerns could provide common ground across diverse religions and interest groups (Suedy, 2008, pers. Com, Director of Wahid Institute and Prof Dr Gumilar, rector of University of Indonesia). A way to achieve this balance is to involve people in policy making so that they feel engaged and committed to the policy that ensures the wellbeing of their children.

By enabling people to make sense of their own experiences and to communicate this 'sense making' to others we can help them to build connections and to establish rapport with each other. Culture and politics are linked constructs that can and do change! The plasticity of the brain is such that it shapes the environment and it in turn is shaped by the environment. This two way feedback is well known in cybernetics (Beer 1994, Von Foerster, 1995). This mutual co-determination is something that we need to remember in all our policy and management endeavors.

It is widely assume that the brain shapes our conscious experiences (and perhaps even more widely assumes- with less justification that the brain 'creates' consciousness). It is also known that the brain is in turn shaped by experience (one feature of brain development, for example being characterized as 'survival of the useful': Changeux, 1985, Edelman, 1992). So to the extent that collective representations shape the nature and contents of consciousness, we expect that these cultural constructs would also shape the functional anatomy and microstructure of the brain" (Turner & Whitehead, 2008, p. 45).

“Emotions shape the landscape of our mental and social lives. Like geological upheavals in the landscape, they mark our lives as uneven, uncertain, and prone to reversal. Are they simply, as some have claimed, animal energies or impulses with no connection to our thoughts? Or are they

suffused with intelligence and discernment, and thus a source of deep awareness and understanding? "If the latter then emotions cannot be sidelined in accounts of ethical judgment as they often have been.... (Nussbaum, 2001, prologue). [unclear what is quote and what paraphrase here] "Indeed the great advantage of a cognitive/evaluative view of emotion is that it shows us where societies and individual have the freedom to make improvements. If we recognise the element of evaluation the emotions, we also see that they can themselves be evaluated - and in some ways altered, if they fail to survive criticism. Social constructions of emotion are transmitted through parental cues, actions and instructions long before the larger society shapes the child...." (Nussbaum, 2001:173).

Emotions, values and perceptions are central to our humanity<sup>39</sup>. They underpin the so-called 'enemies within' (Churchman, 1979), namely 'religion, morality, aesthetics and politics', the human paradox of our potential for passion and compassion. Emotions can limit our consciousness, but they can also alert us to issues that we need to think about. Passion and compassion are the flip sides of one another. The more connections we can make, the better our thinking, our policy processes and our governance outcomes will be (see White, 2002). Nussbaum (2006, p. 85) makes the point that quality of life pertains to both personal and public life: "the capabilities approach takes its start from the Aristotelian/Marxian conception of the human being as a social and political being, who finds fulfilment in relations with others".<sup>40</sup>

By drawing on and extending Cornelius (1996) it can be argued that emotion can be better understood from a systemic viewpoint that draws on many (not incommensurate theories of emotion)<sup>22</sup>.

Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) argue that status plays a role in wellbeing. If we feel respected and included in society we are healthier and happier. If we are made to feel ashamed we will be more likely to take actions that harm ourselves or others. In unequal societies where the gap between the richest and poorest is wide and where there is disrespect, ill health and conflict are likely to occur. When undertaking research with Aboriginal service users we mapped and discussed some of the things informants thought to be essential for wellbeing (McIntyre-Mills, 2008). One of the elders who contributed to the publication on our research entitled '*User-centric Policy Design to*

<sup>39</sup> Research demonstrates that emotions trigger the amygdale and that when we are exposed to information that seems relevant we react emotionally to it because it is salient: "In neuropsychology the term representation has become commonplace for the action of the brain in forming material counterparts for mental processes, and is it is attractive to consider the relationship between these two types of representation: the collective and the cortical." (Turner and Whitehead, 2008: 55)

<sup>40</sup> Nussbaum (1995: 83) is concerned first about quality of life and then human rights, which are defined in terms of the ideals needed to support quality of life and a development of capabilities (Crocker, 1995).

*address complex needs*’, stressed that cultural law is central to her sense of identity and wellbeing. Social inclusion or exclusion according to her cultural map, depend on family connections and respect for the law. Her constructions have been challenged by other elders who stress the need to be more inclusive and that she needed to think about her story as a way to examine her emotions and to make meaning out of her experiences

Culture means wellbeing. I suffer emotional abuse, because I want compensation and sovereign rights. They were given to my great grandmother who was a British subject, she married before federation. After Federation she was not a citizen and they took away her land. I have traced all the documentation. The dear old darlings (at the elders meeting) do not want to look back or hear. But young ones like K. *do* want to hear. I want to assert my rights because I am Kuarna. I can demand my rights. I want my place this is my politics. Before the others came we could be free. It does not win friends to say this. The other elders are afraid of this. Many years ago on NAIDOC day, or Remembrance Day with the Church People, we stood at the cairn made by the Aboriginal people to remember Tjilbruke, their ancestor. “He sang the permanent springs and the song cycles at the time of the season of food. He was about the law and Kaurna land and part of the peace and keeper of the law. The ancestor who broke the law saw tracks of a family member and killed them. He sung up a fire. He sung them to sleep at the camp and he speared them all. Those who survived dived into the sea and became the carpet snakes. I read the archaeology and brought the stories back to the people. Jealousy led to that clan murder. Tjilbruke, wept and his tears revived us and the streams remind us of this. We need the story and the law. I worked to help declare a heritage site at Walpiringi. I got no acknowledgement. I am angry so I talk. I can remember right back to when I was a child. I can remember the strong Phenol disinfectant and how when I left the hospital we had it at home as well...

But I cannot forget. Decisions in the past would be equitably decided upon. No one could take more that they put in. That is communism and it was drawn from tribalism.

I have no recognition and that makes me angry. It raises my blood pressure. Anger drives me to do things and it makes me creative.

I grew up in Port Pearce on the York Peninsula. I grew up on a mission station. I left at 10 to be educated to fit into white society. My parents said this was necessary. I was sent to learn – how can you get rid of that anger? I do not know how you forget and say “Oh that was in the past....”

I read all over the place. I taught myself. I was kicked out of primary and secondary school, because I was always asking difficult questions and disrupting class that way. I do not like hierarchy. That is not the Nunga way. My mission family also did not like it. I write stories and plays – but I did not do anything with them, it was before my time. I need to be heard”. [citation required?]

### 3.7. COMMUNICATION ACROSS CONCEPTUAL AND SPATIAL BOUNDARIES TO CONSTRUCT THE FUTURE

As emphasised elsewhere (McIntyre-Mills 2006b, 2007a, b) trust is the basis for communication. The central paradox for democracy is that trust is a risk for all people who make themselves vulnerable to others (Warren, 1999); but without trust that is developed through *hospitable rather than merely respectful communication* (Borradori in conversation with Habermas and Derrida 2003) democracy is unsustainable. Derrida stresses that cold tolerance is insufficient for building relationships with others. Similarly trust is a risk for all creatures. The notion that life is at the expense of others has driven much of our thinking. The notion that life exists *because* of others and *within an environment* requires a shift towards a stewardship approach, based on minimising the size of our carbon footprint and respect for all. The carbon emissions from breeding cattle and sheep as a major source of protein need to be factored into our choice of diet (Singer, 2002) and the way that we farm.

Seeing the world in bounded conceptual (disciplinary) and spatial (organisational and geographical) silos supports limited, compartmentalised thinking and practice. Accountability is about the big picture, not the interests of one department, discipline or organisation at the expense of others<sup>41</sup>. Once we are mindful that the consequences of our actions cannot be quarantined we become systemic practitioners. Feedback or the ‘boomerang affect’ (Beck 1992) stresses that pollution, poverty and social injustice do not respect national boundaries. Even if through national boundaries and the

<sup>41</sup> The old fragmentation approach is ‘divide and rule’. The new systemic approach is based on ‘link and thrive’ (McIntyre-Mills 2006b, 2009a, c, d, e, f, g, 2010 a). Responsibility and blame can be apportioned to others. It is very useful for powerful decision makers in the public and private sectors who think merely in terms of the next board meeting, the next election or only in terms of the economic bottom line (at the expense of environmental and social considerations). Consciousness of the opportunity costs of these decisions could lead to more systemic policy decisions concerning the way we relate to others (especially the voiceless, the powerless and the very poor) within and beyond our nation states. The bureaucrat’s who are required to think systemically (in terms of laws that promote social and environmental justice) will shape the future in a more positive manner.

barriers of class or privilege we could protect ourselves, eventually the impact of our social and environmental actions would affect us. Accountability needs to address economic irrationality by considering the opportunity costs for the next generation.<sup>42</sup> Internationally the two greatest challenges are climate change and the so-called ‘war on terror’. These are linked concerns (McIntyre-Mills 2007b, Gore 2007, Borradori et al 2003).

The energy future of industrialized nations depends on finding alternative forms of energy that are carbon neutral. The competition for scarce natural resources such as water and the last of the non renewables could be problematic. The challenge is to balance the individual interests of nation states and the collectivist interests of wider regions. A shift is needed in the way governments make use of resources. Accountability needs to avoid externalising the risks in single bottom line economics. It needs to extend accounting by means of indicators based on deliberation about social, cultural, political, economic and environmental factors<sup>43</sup>

As argued elsewhere (McIntyre-Mills 2008f, 2009a, e) this goal could be achieved through a federalist system along the lines suggested by Singer in ‘One World’ (2002). Environmental concerns (with impacts on social and economic aspects) are the concerns of everyone and need to be protected by means of overarching covenants that are supported by watchdog organisations, supporting regional biospheres and international criminal courts. Bonds of connection need to be buttressed by global covenants (see Held, 2004).

We need democratic /and governance processes<sup>44</sup> based on questioning and an ability to think in terms of scenarios to enable people to make

<sup>42</sup> See McIntyre-Mills (2006c) ‘Pay back’ or ‘feedback’ cannot be ruled out of policy decisions. Social and environmental pollution spreads and affects us (eventually) irrespective of our socio-economic power or where we are located. Similarly (and this is our hope for the future) understanding the opportunity costs of not living sustainably on the next generation of life can make a difference.

<sup>43</sup> Adapted from Elkington (1997), Gallhofer and Chew (2000) to achieve better decision making. This could be based on testing out the ideas (not only by experts) but by people who have lived experience of issues (McIntyre-Mills, 2003, 2005a, 2006a, 2006b; Edgar, 1992; Polanyi, 1962) and with future generations in mind. This is essential to address the interests of the less powerful, but also to ensure that the ideas of what works, why and how as far (as the principals are concerned) is addressed in the interests of environmental sustainability, accountability and socio-economic well-being (National Economic/ALGA, 2002, 2003; Edgar, 1992; Cox, 1995).

<sup>44</sup> Open communication enhances representation and accountability at the local, national and international level). It supports the dialectic of exploring one argument, posing oppositions and then achieving syntheses. This has implications for a new form of democracy and for ‘Rescuing the Enlightenment’ (see McIntyre-Mills, 2006a) from its failings, such as ‘the iron rule of oligarchy’ (Michel’s 1915) notion - that democratic organisations tend to shift towards top down decision making over time. Dialogue needs to ‘unfold’ through the dialectic of one argument, an opposing argument and a synthesis the values of the

decisions that support a sustainable future. This requires an ability to work across conceptual and spatial boundaries. The Design of Inquiring Systems (DIS) addresses many domains of knowledge, namely logic, empiricism, idealism, the dialectic (which addresses thesis, antithesis and synthesis of ideas) and an expanded pragmatism, based on thinking about the consequences of policy for all life in this generation and the next (as explained in McIntyre-Mills, 2006b)<sup>45</sup>. Knowing is a constructivist process that has implications for researchers, practitioners who acknowledge that a liveable world entails stewardship. The benefits of being involved in knowledge making and learning are that people extend the testing process to those with lived experiences but that they are also transformed in the process of participating. The argument about fixed and fluid sense of identity has been developed elsewhere (McIntyre-Mills 2006b). When we draw the line or take a decision, we play god. We need to ensure that we protect the global commons and hold it sacred.

### **3.9. PARTICIPATION TO ENHANCE REPRESENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Future research directions in public policy require collaborative decision making across local and state government, universities, non governmental organisations, business and the community<sup>46</sup>. Communication processes are

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stakeholders and to 'sweep in' the social, political, economic and environmental aspects, Volume 1 and 3 of the C. West Churchman Legacy and related works focus on an exploration of interorganisational decision making and policy networks as a way to engage citizens and to make governance ethical and accountable. See also McIntyre-Mills 2007a, b, c for an adaptation of West Churchman's 1971 Design of Inquiring Systems (DIS) to participatory democracy.

<sup>45</sup> To know is a process based on the senses, emotions and the contextual experience. It is not merely about representing reality 'that is out there'. Thus I argue that 'knowing is a potentially transformative experience'. West Churchman's (1971) 'Design of Inquiring Systems' has been adapted and applied to enable stewards to strive to appreciate subjective, the objective and the intersubjective knowledges as domains. In other words, to know is transformative and recursive. It is not merely about representation, but about change.

<sup>46</sup> "Democracy, in its most basic sense of majority decision making, requires that those who decide be sufficiently alike that they will respect the will of the majority. Global-level decisions will inevitably have a highly restricted agenda, set by what the majority of the richest nations will tolerate and a much reduced role for the world's publics. The difficulties of global democracy should make us pause when considering the rhetoric about democracy at the national level, for that too, despite the belief that nations are relatively homogenous political communities, is subject to similar limitations as to both agenda and participation. The question is whether one needs to rethink some of the assumptions of

needed to match perceptions to outcomes. Closed oppositional thinking in science (including economics and religion) is defined as fundamentalism (adapted from Kung & Moltmann 1992). Volume 3 of the C.West Churchman Series argues that closed paradigms that are oppositionally opposed to revision and reflection (based on criticism) are more likely to lead to bad decisions than open paradigms that are iteratively tested by diverse stakeholders<sup>47</sup>. Falsification has implications for ethics<sup>48</sup>. The theory of second and 'third order' cybernetics (Beer 1974, 1994) stresses that understanding non linear relationships is a first step to developing policy responses. Democracies need to consider complex issues beyond the boundaries of the nation state. This requires being able to make decisions and work in organisations that span conceptual and national boundaries. So how could this be achieved in practice? An adapted version of the Aarhus Convention that gives people the right to information and responsibility to participate in raising issues of concern could be replicated across the regions of the world. The convention needs to be extended to address freedom of information to all on environmental issues which by their very nature incorporate freedom of information on all issues that impact on the environment. This could provide a way forward<sup>49</sup>, provided it is buttressed by regional courts.

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democratic theory, in order to find ways to widen the scope of accountable government by consent.” (Hirst in Pierre, 2000, p. 17).

<sup>47</sup> McIntyre-Mills 2007 Challenging economic and religious fundamentalisms: implications for the state, the market and 'the enemies within' International Journal of Applied Systemic Studies. Vol. 1 No 1 49-67.

<sup>48</sup> If testing is done by the people at the receiving end of decisions it leads to a better match of services to needs. This wise matching process, based on experience is called phronesis by Aristotle in Nicomachean Ethics (Irwin, 1985) as detailed below. Phronesis as a basis for accountable decisions draws on diverse stakeholders' inputs and is pragmatically good for risk management, because people are less likely to be critical of policies that they have helped to construct and which they own. Openness to ideas is vital for: 'Rescuing the enlightenment from itself' (McIntyre-Mills et al 2006a) by embracing paradox and thus relieving it from its potential for exclusivity and non-representation and Enhancing democracy to make it more inclusive and representative (by taking into account the balance between the human desire for individualism and for collectivism).

<sup>49</sup> A process that helps to enhance connections is adapted from Ashby's Law (1956) of Requisite Variety and the principle of subsidiarity (namely that policy needs to be made at the lowest level possible (without undermining the collective norms to sustain future generations) by those who are to be at the receiving end of the decision (see McIntyre-Mills, 2005b, 2006b, 2007, 2008).

### 3.9.1. The role of values, emotions and consciousness in two-way communication

One-way communication undermines the potential of education and of democracy (albeit always a compromise at best) to pool ideas and to be accountable to citizens on the basis of dialogue, which is by definition at least two-way communication. The challenge for those who wish to address fundamentalism – meaning closed oppositional thinking (economic and religious) is to balance the eternal paradox that:

- openness to debate and to other ideas and possibilities is the basis for both the enlightenment process of testing and for democracy
- for openness to occur there has to be some trust that voicing new ideas will not lead to subtle or overt marginalisation of oneself or one's associates.

As stressed in *Challenging economic and religious fundamentalisms: implications for the state, the market and 'the enemies within'* (McIntyre-Mills 2007), I argue (following West Churchman, that the so-called 'enemies within' 1979b, 1982 are 'religion, morality, politics and aesthetics'. They are our values and perceptions about how the world *ought to be*.

People who share similar ideas and are more 'like us', are regarded as acceptable. People who do not share our ideas and who are different from us can be regarded as less acceptable. But by virtue of our humanity we will make sense and meaning in different and creative ways. We need to accept that people are free to do this to the extent that their freedom and diversity does not undermine the rights of others or the quality of life of others. Open communication is needed to test out ideas and build relationships.<sup>50</sup> Similarly Hassan (2008: 308) argues that

“...jihad is ultimately a this-worldly political action and therefore, amenable to resolution through negotiation with all parties being accepted and treated as equal citizens of a globalizing world. Such dialogue and the negotiations it would entail would also help alleviate some of the mutual suspicions between Islamic world and the West.”

The central paradox (McIntyre-Mills 2007c), namely that trust is a risk for people who make themselves vulnerable to others (Warren, 1999); but without trust that is developed through *respectful communication and hospitality* (Borradori in conversation with Habermas et al, 2003) democracy is unsustainable. Open appropriate communication techniques are needed.

<sup>50</sup> The landscape of democracy has changed from the nation state to one that encompasses all those with whom we identify (see Devji, 2005). Discursive democracy (Dryzek, 1990, 2000) based on a design of inquiring systems (adapted from Churchman, 1971a) could assist in enabling a post internationalist approach that addresses issues that span nation states.



This has implications for democracy and governance.<sup>51</sup> Capitalist markets have concentrated media ownership and via the media limit or shape debates in the interests of the business lobbyists in ways that can be consolidated in public private partnerships that hide or strive to hive off debt (see Manurung on public private partnerships in Indonesia in Jakarta 2006 with British and French water companies cited in McIntyre-Mills 2009b)<sup>52</sup>. The state- market relations are not transparent and this makes it possible to create profit at the expense of others who live in abject poverty.

Culture is lived experience and for human animals it includes how we make sense of the world. It comprises socialised living but also our ability to reshape or design our way of life<sup>53</sup>.

As stressed elsewhere (McIntyre-Mills, 2007b, c) for the purposes of my research, fundamentalism is defined as closed, oppositional thinking (in science- including economics and religion adapted from Kung and Moltmann, 1992). Fundamentalism is one of the greatest challenges for the future. Lack of testing undermines science and democracy, according to Gore (2007).<sup>54</sup>In the wake of the erosion of prisoner rights who are “enemy

<sup>51</sup>We need to see ourselves as others see us (Baruma and Margalit, 2004) and we need to be prepared to revise our ideas in the light of dialogue. Capacity building is needed in many arenas to enhance the capability of people to think about how their constructions of conceptual and geographical boundaries influence policy. Interorganisational decision making and policy networks can be used as a way to engage citizens and to make governance ethical and accountable. Decisions need to be taken quickly to address the concerns of people who will be affected. Ethically decisions are better when those at the receiving end of the decisions are party to the process. It ensures that democracy is not debased by what Michels called the ‘iron rule of oligarchy’, or the notion that powerful stakeholders at the top of political parties can corrupt democratic decision making. Access to the forum of democracy in America is money based – payment for air time. According to Gore (2007) Exxon Mobil, for example paid over 16 million between 1998 and 2005 to 43 advocacy organisations to discredit global warming. Gore (2007: 79-80) argues that Bush administration is beholden to corporations. Ken Lay from Enron was allowed to handpick the members of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and Environmental Protection Agency positions have been filled with the lawyers and lobbyists representing the polluters

<sup>52</sup> Manurung, L. 2006. Jakarta Water Service: The case of an uneasy Public–Private Partnership. Unpublished PhD dissertation, Flinders University, Dec.

<sup>53</sup> This definition of culture is at odds with that of Huntington (1996), as he does not consider human capability to reconstruct the way they see the world and the possibility of systemic governance in the interests of social and environmental sustainability that spans international, regional and national boundaries. Huntington, S.P., 1996, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon and Schuster, New York.

<sup>54</sup> He shows how industrialists and oil companies have shaped the policy agenda to meet their interests and that they have power because they help to fund the election of the Republican leader. An additional 50 million additional barrels of oil are needed each year to sustain the economy as it is currently structured (Gore 2007: 118) The USA administration rationalises their decisions in terms of defending the interests of citizens

combatants” and not protected by the Geneva code, democracy has taken many steps backwards in the name of fear of the other.<sup>55</sup>

All of a sudden, in a single generation, Americans spend...more than 30 hours each week sitting motionless in front of a flickering screen. (Gore 2007: 7)<sup>56</sup>.

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who are in fact becoming poorer as the statistics demonstrate: “ we know that Ken Lay was involved in vetting appointees to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and we’ve seen some of the evidence of what Enron did to circumvent the regulators....Gore (2007) highlights that American democracy is eroding the following: “ ...this administration has attempted to compromise the most precious rights that America has stood for over the world for more than two hundred years: due process, equal treatment under the law, the dignity of the individual, freedom from unreasonable search and seizure, freedom from promiscuous government surveillance” (133-34).Achieving the balance between individual rights and responsibilities and collective rights and responsibilities is challenging post Sept 11.Arguably the erosion of civil liberties could alienate citizens who are subject to the new laws and who are in fact innocent. Gore (2007: 158) stresses that the majority of prisoners in Abu Ghraib were found to be innocent. If we believe that civil liberties can be discarded we are eroding the very basis of democracy: “The power of the executive to cast a man into prison without formulating any charge known to the law, and particularly to deny him the judgment of his peers, is in the highest degree odious, and the foundation of all totalitarian governments whiter Nazi or communist” (Gore 2007: 133).New democracy needs to enable diversity and freedom. As West Churchman (1982) stresses, all decisions “make cuts” and leave out parts of the whole system. Instead, accountable policy-making needs to consider the consequences for those will be at the receiving end of the decision. Democratic freedom and diversity need to be fostered through openness to continuous dialogue and listening. We can be free to the extent that we do not limit the freedoms of others. It is at this point that we need to draw boundaries.

<sup>55</sup> Derrida makes the point (Borradori, 2003: 122) that TV and not the Internet predominates as a medium of digital communication and that less than 5% of the world’s population has access to the Internet and even in America only 50% of the population have access to it. Habermas in the same publication entitled *Philosophy in a Time of Terror*, stresses that the one-way communication. One-way media communication within Western democracies and the rest of the world tends to dominate via TV today.TV shapes the agenda in time slots that have to be bought by political parties or shaped by powerful media owners. (Most time slots are purchased to advertise consumer goods. Political party purchases tend to be clustered around elections and concentrated in swing or tightly contested districts) Gore stresses that images are quickly linked with emotions, whereas reading requires conceptualisation and thinking through ideas. TV enables stereotyping in sound bites and images and fosters Orientalism and Occidentalism according to Baruma and Margalit (2004). The physical effects of watching trauma on television lead to emotive responses (Gore 2007) and can also lead to distancing,, in order to cope (see McLuhan & Powers 1989).

<sup>56</sup> Creating webs of shared meaning and appreciating areas of difference through communication is vital for sustainable democracy (McIntyre-Mills, 2000). Two-way communication (that is respectful of diverse ideas and helps to build relationships that span the landscape from local to international governance) is needed in a globalised world.

Decades ago McLuhan and Powers (1989)<sup>57</sup> made the point that “the medium is the message” and that communication technology (if it is design to increase passivity) can have many unexpected impacts, such as dumbing down thinking. Watching TV (unlike reading) does not require conceptualisation (Greenfield, 2009).<sup>58</sup>

If we are encouraged to think about connections we would be able to recognise overlapping identities and connections and rescue democracy from its failings. Olive Veverbrants describes the way in which people (Aboriginal and non Aboriginal) are linked by ties of birth, but that the names of the white fathers were always denied to the children who were taken away from their mothers (see Veverbrandts with McIntyre-Mills, 2010c):

Gloria Lee: In Alice Springs the children who had been taken away and formed part of the ‘Stolen Generation’ were housed in a building known as ‘the Bungalow’. At school they were given names by the white teacher. Names were allocated that denied their Aboriginal heritage and their links with the white families to whom they were related. This was a double treachery and very hard to bear.... [but] The Cs *were* named after a white ancestor of theirs. ‘Stormy C’ covered [himself] in ochre after a carroborie. He said he did not want to be white — they do not want me. ...”

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This is the key point made by Berger (1976) and also by both Devji (2005) and Pape (2005) who studied Islamic fundamentalism. Habermas and Derrida (2003) (in their conversation with Borradori about public philosophy, despite their different perspectives on the nature of representation) both agreed that engagement can prevent alienation and terrorism. They raised concerns about the need for respectful versus hospitable dialogue.

<sup>57</sup> “Hebert Krugman, in experiments conducted for General Electric, seems to have been the first man to discover the relationship between television and the alpha state. Picture yourself sitting down for a night’s viewing. You have had a day’s worth of analytical problems, whether you have been fixing the car or doing actuarial tables. You switch on the set. Almost immediately your left brain slides into a ...neutral state, lulled by the dots flashing sequentially across the screen ...But the right brain remains alert stimulated by the bright...images...and random movement...Freed from the restraints of the watch dog left, your mind is in a condition ...for the non rational sell...” (McLuhan and Powers 1989, p. 87).

<sup>58</sup> New forms of technology and digital communication (TV, Internet) impact on perceptions of space, time and identity. Alternative ways of using communication technology (including TV) in a more interactive way are raised by Banathy (2000) that could enhance questioning and exploration aided by DIS and ‘if then’ scenarios’, supported by interactive technology that could help to rewire our brains. The challenge is to develop a process that is able to engage participation without lapsing into mob irrationality (Fishkin 2000, Fishkin and Laslett 2003). Making closer connections with people who think differently is facilitated by means of hospitable dialogue (Derrida in Borradori 2003).

Developing systemic ethics in our time is possible by means of ‘unfolding values’ and ‘sweeping in’ social, cultural, political and environmental factors in ongoing cycles of dialogue (see Churchman 1982, McIntyre-Mills 2009a,b). The better we will be able to appreciate complex risks and what accountably based on ‘feeding forward’ (or giving in an hospitable way) ought to entail.<sup>59</sup> I do not believe that one shared set of ethics is essential to preserve the sacred as Somerville (2006) argues. We need to preserve space for otherness. Space for diversity and freedom cannot be at the expense of the next generation<sup>60</sup>. We need to acknowledge the importance of recognising our emotions. The potential of mirror neurons to enable us to empathise with others should not be underestimated, simply because they have a survival function. Many species besides human beings are able to empathise with others, because as De Waal (2009) argues co-operation can help survival<sup>61</sup>. But this form of empathy, although a precursor of compassion, is not the same. As human beings and caretakers of the

<sup>59</sup> “In this post 9/11 era we need to look for new understandings of national security and safety. We are all, whether newly arrived or 7<sup>th</sup> generation “white” Australian, of migrant extraction and we have close links with those we colonized. The histories of chosen and forced heritage are written elsewhere and should not be forgotten (Atkinson 2002, McIntyre-Mills 2003) as it has implications for the way in which we understand ourselves and others. By enabling people to make sense of their own experiences and to communicate this sense making (based on making connections across patterns) to others we can help them to build connections and to establish rapport with each other. Culture and politics are linked constructs that can and do change! The geographical continuity of “One World” (Singer, 2002) is an alternative to conceptualizing separate states and regions and the implications for nationality, race, culture, citizenship and democracy (see Beck 1992, 1998). Understanding the “boomerang affect” or the social and environmental “payback” is pragmatic. Idealistically, the more we are able to hold in mind diverse viewpoints

<sup>59</sup> It is based on the idea “A is better off when B is better off” (Von Foerster 1995, p. 494).

<sup>60</sup> In McIntyre-Mills, 2008b, 2009 a, b) I stressed that Gore (2007: 246) writes about the way in which communication is vital for building relationships and creating attachments between people at the individual level and also at the societal level. Participation is inextricably bound to wellbeing and democracy. We need to enhance our capability to understand boundaries by using the design of inquiring systems to consider the implications of where we draw lines of inclusion and exclusion. ‘In Assault on Reason’, Gore cites research that argues that we are wired to feel compassion. Balancing individual needs and collective needs can be achieved through taking into account many different kinds of knowledge and by taking into account the ideas of those who are to be at the receiving end of decisions. This is vital if we do not want to lose the notion of social and environmental justice. Ensuring that values can be diverse and people can be free to the extent that their values and freedoms do not undermine the diversity and freedoms of others. This in turn requires co-creation to achieve reasonable decisions based on personal needs that are balanced by collective concerns for the common good.

<sup>61</sup> Shanor and Kanwal (2009) and De Waal (2009) cite examples of creatures helping other creatures of a different species. For example a duck rescuing a drowning bird from a pond or dolphins helping people who are drowning by pushing them to the surface.

planet we need to develop our capability to think about our thinking so that we are aware that our thoughts shape the environment and the environment shapes us. If we deny that we are part of this ongoing flow of interactions we will undermine our collective future. We can choose not to fall into the prisoner's dilemma by understanding that our common good is at stake if we do not protect the global commons.

### **3.10 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT BASED ON A 'DESIGN OF INQUIRING SYSTEMS' TO ADDRESS RISK AND ENHANCE REPRESENTATION**

Reasonable decisions are based on an expanded notion of what constitutes knowledge and what constitutes testing by those with lived experience within context. Addressing these concerns requires more than merely a 'whole of government' approach or merely co-ordinating across government to achieve excellence. Co-creation needs to occur at the local level to address the most complex and intractable problems, namely social inclusion, poverty of the most marginalised Australians. Improving representation (meaning ensuring that people who are to be affected by the decision act as caretakers for the next generation). This requires a change in democracy, governance and ethics. It requires a capability to hold elections that span regions and generations. This improves accountability and ensures that decisions can be audited by means of ongoing feedback.

### **3.11. A CONVERSATION ON DUALISMS AND RACISM: RECOGNITION OF OUR POTENTIAL COMPLICITY**

Bevin Wilson and Romm (2009) have raised the issue of the potentially complicit role of the researcher and social justice practitioner in constructing racism. We decided to explore the dynamics of racism and that we could contribute to an understanding of this process through engaging in dialogue. We recorded a podcast of an initial conversation which was used to unpack some examples of racism. Further conversations followed on the nature of dualism and racism as we completed a draft of this section of the chapter. The methodology of a research conversation was chosen because it provides a way to explore complexity and which also provides the systemic potential of transforming ourselves, our relationships and our environment<sup>62</sup>.

<sup>62</sup> '...the relationship between the people and their country is understood to have existed from time immemorial- to be part of the land itself' (Rose 1996: 35-6 cited in Atkinson, 2002:29) Rose (1992:220 ) explains this very clearly: "In dreaming ecology there is a

### 3.11.1 Co-created understanding

Bevin and I are colleagues at Flinders University. Bevin is a senior lecturer at Yunggoorendi. We have worked together over the years and I have relied on Bevin for his mentorship. We met on several occasions over the last three months prior to his retirement to talk about racism, in response to this joint invitation<sup>63</sup>. Romm (2002) argues in ‘Trusting Constructivism’ that the way people think, design and undertake research could create racism. She asked us to contribute to her ongoing project by creating vignette for a co-authored book that she mentioned to us.

Bevin’s thinking and practice has been influenced by Kath Walker, Douglas Morgan and the many Indigenous staff, students and community members with whom he has worked. Because racism is ‘constructed’, paradoxically research and policy to address racism can compound the problem. Researchers and co-researchers need to actively engage in praxis that does not deny the potential for their complicity.

Janet’s thinking and practice has been influenced by Indigenous thinking and in parallel the influence of socio-cultural studies along with a more recent discovery of West Churchman (1979, 1982) who was concerned about drawing and re-drawing boundaries. He was concerned about how to make better social and environmental justice decisions. Conversations with Indigenous colleagues over the years such as Adelaide Dlamini (Guguletu, South Africa), Olive Veverbrandts (Alice Springs), Kim O’Donnell (Adelaide), conversations on fractals and the work of Mandelbrot with Len Troncale and members of his workshops (see McIntyre-Mills, 2008c), participating in a workshop by Kauffman (2006) and reading the work of Atkinson (2002) and Rayner (2009) were some of the key catalysts to my understanding that ‘we are the land’ and that our relationships are ‘non local’ and ‘fluid’<sup>1</sup>. This is the concept of ‘the dreaming’. The whole is repeated as a fractal again and again.

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political economy of intersubjectivity embedded in a system that has no centre. The essential points are: the system is self contained and self regulating, parts are interconnected; it is not necessary for every part to be in constant communication with every other part, because information from each part stimulates actions which are themselves information for other parts; the system has the potential to be brought back into balance; there is no hierarchy, no central agency”. See also Pert, C 1997 and Perls, F. S. 1, Hefferline, R. and Goodman, P. 1951.

<sup>63</sup> A copy of the podcast which formed a basis for further conversations and for this paper, is located at the following web link <http://www.socsci.flinders.edu.au/av/pathways/binder.php>. It is not transcribed word for word. Listening to it and reading the paper will provide further insights into the way in which conversation can be helpful as a means to explore values and perceptions

Bevin: What is the biggest phenomenon that underpins racism?

Janet: Power, greed, competing for scarce resources, a lack of mutual understanding, narrow pragmatism and a lack of compassion. Last night I watched an Australian Broadcasting Association documentary on child migrants<sup>64</sup> which illustrates all these dimensions<sup>65</sup> and the same sorts of dynamics that underpin racism. It was screened to commemorate the Rudd apology to the child migrants. This apology followed the apology to the Australian Stolen Generation, a year ago. Aboriginal children were also taken away from their parents and educated for a life of servitude<sup>66</sup>

A South African Rhodes scholar, called Fairburn suggested that they send the children from poor families to the colonies. They were said to be orphans, but many were taken away from their families. They were told that their parents were dead or did not want them. Some of the children were under five. This was a traumatic separation. But it was considered to be good policy for the development of the colonies and a solution to poverty in Britain at the time. The children were taught to be farm labourers and domestic workers and received little education<sup>67</sup>.

<sup>64</sup> “Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Opposition Leader Malcolm Turnbull will apologise today to 500,000 "forgotten Australians" and former child migrants who grew up facing deprivation and exploitation in orphanages and homes. The apology acknowledges the "ongoing suffering" of this group, as a result of experiences in a network of state and church run institutions, almost all of which closed in the late 1970s...Children were sent to Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Many were taken from their families with the promise of a better life, only to end up in orphanages and institutions, but they were physically and sexually abused, or made to work as farm labourers”. <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/politics/rudd-apology-to-former-children-in-care/story-e6frgczf-1225798009998>

<sup>65</sup> In ‘*Frontiers of social justice*’ Martha Nussbaum (2006) has stressed that children, sentient creatures and asylum seekers are not protected by the democratic nation state. The social contract does not extend to protecting those who are powerless, because it is based on the notion of reciprocity. But how can the powerless be excluded from social justice? Asylum seekers have no protection. Refugees and particularly environmental refugees are not protected. The government talks about the people smugglers and the criminality of these networks, but perhaps we should ask ourselves if refugee policy is about justifying social exclusion and buttressing of one group at the expense of the other? Australian Aboriginals have had to wait for years for citizenship rights in their own nation state.

<sup>66</sup> See the report 'Bringing them home: A guide to the findings and recommendations of R Wilson, M Dodson'. Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunities 1997.

<sup>67</sup> The Long Journey Home, 8:30pm, Tuesday, 17 Nov 2009 [Documentary Website](http://www.abc.net.au/tv/guide/netw/200911/programs/DO0909H001D2009-11-17T203000.htm) “From 1938 to 1974 thousands of parents were persuaded to sign over legal guardianship of their children to Fairbridge Farm in New South Wales to solve the problem of child poverty in Britain while populating the colony” <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/guide/netw/200911/programs/DO0909H001D2009-11-17T203000.htm>. Also see transcripts from the child migrants from Fairbridge farm <http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/exhibition/fairbridge/>

The apology made by Rudd on 12<sup>th</sup> of February 2008 is a result of the story telling that informed the Stolen Generation Report 'Bringing them Home'.<sup>68</sup> It is part of the political context of creating bonds of understanding.

Do you want to reflect on Aboriginal rights which were not achieved until 1967?

Bevin: I want to explore social justice and inequity and I want to talk about binary opposites. They fascinate me. We address these oppositions as part of Indigenous education and social Darwinism. Racialisation theory is taught at Yunggoendi. For example, Assoc Prof Doug Morgan (2006) has talked about binary opposites in human development and in traditional societies. In traditional societies there was less creation of binary opposites and a greater understanding of the fluid interconnections.

Janet: Yes, dualisms and polarisation are based on mutual exclusion, but 'either or' is not the only map we can create. We can once again construct ourselves as part of that the land that sustain us and to which we return when we die<sup>69</sup>. Artificial categorisation is often blamed on Aristotle, but his work has 'liberative potential' to use Gouldner's (1971) term. Aristotle thought in terms of matching the right kind of knowledge and emphasized conversation as a way to co-create meaning. Aristotle cannot be blamed for mere 'categorical' thinking. He made sense of the world in dialogue and matching the right kind of knowledge in context. He called this matching process, 'phronesis'<sup>70</sup>. Darwin's work also has 'liberative potential'<sup>71</sup>. He was really talking about the connections across the species. He was systemic in his thinking. For example Darwin has been misinterpreted by some of his followers, particularly Huxley. According to De Waal (2006) Huxley glossed over the importance of the continuity across the species and that the two capacities - namely the human capacity for both co-operation and conflict are equally important to animal (including human animal) survival.

Bevin: When we write (and talk) about racism we can perpetuate racism. We are trapped in racism. Here we are trapped in a configuring racism!

<sup>68</sup> *Bringing them home*: A guide to the findings and recommendations of R Wilson, M Dodson, Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunities 1997.

<sup>69</sup> New physics and maths recognise continuums and feedback loops (Christakis, 2006, Bausch, 2006, Stafford Beer, 1994, 1996). This is not a new idea, it is about appreciating and drawing on old, indigenous wisdom (McIntyre-Mills, 2000, 2006, 2008).

The circle, the mandala (McIntyre-Mills, 2000), the boomerang (Beck, 1994) and the eternal return (Deleuze and Guattari in Bogue 1989) are being rediscovered. Kauffman (2006) talks of the 'mobius band' (see McIntyre-Mills, 2008) which can be open or closed depending on the context and how recognise in biology that cell boundaries are porous. and that in maths we can consider the categories 1 or 2 but also all intervening fractions between 1 and 2 (Shakunle and Rayner, 2009). These make up a continuous string. We need to see the categories and the in between spaces.

<sup>70</sup> Irwin, T., 1985. *Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics* translated with Introduction and notes Hackett, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>71</sup> See De Waal, 2006)



Janet: *We* can re-construct our reality. We *can* transform it. We can *redraw* our relationships across subject /object, self /other and the environment.

Bevin: We could argue that ‘racism is good’, because people make a living out of it and people will publish as a result of it! Without racism we would not have a social justice industry! This does not just apply to Aboriginal Australians. Aboriginal legal rights organisations were set up specifically for Aboriginal people. If we did not recognise that racism exists then we would not have an organisation that employs only Aboriginal staff! We have to use marginalisation (and marginalise ourselves) to have this industry! [Ironical laughter by Bevin and Janet]

Janet: That is a very systemic observation! It is a feedback loop!

Bevin: Even if we discuss the complex challenges it still gives racism some sort of meaning. Racism is a motivator to perpetuate racism. It motivates people to get a good living out of it! Language structures are part of the huge problem– it is not just in the mind it is in the body. It is like a cancer. We need to do something about it and fortunately we know we are doing it. This awareness provides a way out of the problem. Good conversation can help to make us aware of how we see the world.

Janet: Yes, that kind of thinking is like a cancer. It applies to the kind of thinking that self destructs. In some ways the argument you are making reminds me of an argument made by Beer (1994), Vickers (1983) and Einstein (on whom they draw). To paraphrase roughly they argue that ‘we cannot escape the mind trap’ of a problem (such as the way we see the market/racism) if we approach problems ‘with the same mind set’<sup>72</sup>. I would like to share with you the example of an Australian scientist who argues that we are commodifying the carbon issue<sup>73</sup>. This is the old ‘foxes are looking

<sup>72</sup> This concept of mindfulness or ‘recursive consciousness’ was developed by Stafford Beer (1994:253) who cites Sir Geoffrey Vickers ‘the trap is a function of the nature of the trapped’... their rationality is conditioned to the traps own premises’. Beer (1994) demonstrates that making connections impacts on all levels of the system from the individual to the community to the planet. Being able to ‘think about our thinking’ through ‘unfolding’ values with those who are to be affected by our policy decisions and ‘sweeping in’ social, cultural, political, economic and environmental dimensions is vital (McIntyre-Mills 2006a,b)

<sup>73</sup> We considered whether we need to achieve change through raising taxes on carbon and thus making it worthwhile for people to develop other ways of living and to consume less. See Berkovic, N. 2009 ‘Frank and fearless scientific debate comes with a few too many strings attached. The dispute over a paper by Clive Spash, based at the CSIRO that is critical of the ETS raises the question of censorship’. *The Australian*, Nov 14-15: 13. “Australian National University Professor John Dryzek, who is on the editorial board of *New Political Economy*, says question marks remain over whether the ETS policies are effective in tacking climate change and the paper canvasses some of these issues in an analytical way.” <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/opinion/frank-and-fearless-scientific-debate-comes-with-a-few-too-many-strings-attached/story-e6frg6zo-1225797535057>

after the hen house' problem. We need to reframe our approach to thinking and realise that our praxis shapes our land. Without the land we cannot live (Rose, 2004). An Australian academic called Clive Spash has been trying to criticise the carbon emissions trading scheme that is currently being put forward by the (then) Rudd government. Those who critique the approach argue that *a tax on production costs* — not emissions — could be easier. But if we get the market to address the market, is it enough? <sup>74</sup>

Bevin: We are looking at global society and global market not merely multicultural Australian society. Policies need to address discrimination locally and internationally. To get back to the social aspects in global society we continue to frame 'the other'. When 'the other' comes to Australia for a better life — they could want *to remain the other* — because it can be a way to make a living, for example by opening restaurants to serve different food, for example, Vietnamese food promotes the culture of 'the other'. In Britain whites will be in the minority in 10 years and in Australia in about 30 years.

Janet: Yes, this is also an example of commodification. Different foods can also be linked with racism when people say: 'We cannot eat that spicy or different food'. Xenophobia can be expressed in terms of describing people in derogatory terms such as 'garlic eaters'. But once people realise that eating a range of foods makes life more interesting and it can improve our health, they change their attitudes! The same applies to people who complain that they cannot understand the accent of 'the other'. Once we realise the importance of trying to learn from one another, we all benefit.

Bevin: New racism is very subtle. People play up difference in terms of different culture or different ways of living as it enables them to make a living out of their different food, art and expression. It is an industry that is based on difference. We live in a world where people take their differences with them as they travel or migrate. They want to be 'other', because they make a living as migrants from their differences and they also send money back to their families. The whole industry of social justice is based on this continual marginalisation of 'the other'. People make a living out of it. We are all complicit, including us.

Janet: But recognising diversity can be seen as a very good thing too. Different ideas and different plants are healthy. Monoculture is problematic<sup>75</sup>. Many different plants are important for survival. Each plant needs to 'read the environmental needs' and respond. If we have a one plant culture and it fails to respond appropriately then we could become very

<sup>74</sup> The market could be self-perpetuating — but of course the counter argument is that greed could be employed to foster creativity and an alternative green economy. The report has been embargoed.

<sup>75</sup> Scott (1998) describes how a monoculture of uniformly planted trees for agribusiness can lead to mass extinction of ground cover if the forest is affected by a disease that is specific to one culture.

hungry indeed! The same lesson applies to mass culture which ignores diverse ideas or suppresses them. Of course some diversity is unacceptable if it undermines the safety and happiness of others. In other words diversity and freedom should be fostered to the extent that it does not undermine the diversity and freedom of others. That is where we need to draw the line<sup>76</sup>. I would hope that is what democracy is supposed to do, but democracy also has a bad name when it is linked with new forms of colonial invasion.

Bevin: Another point that you just brought up for me is that identity promotes marginalisation. If we think systemically then we understand the interconnectedness of outcomes: the good aspects and the problematic aspects. Identity is also regarded as important to creating a sense of place. People marginalise others so that they define who *they are*. For example, the English in Elizabeth, the Italians in Norwood, the Greeks in Thebarton. These are enclaves of migrants. The people right out in the suburb of Elizabeth are called ‘the ten pound poms’. They were marginalised by other people in Adelaide who resented their being given public housing, but they also marginalise themselves. It is part of the social justice industry. The marginalised can access social justice grants as a result.

But this otherness creates differences that affect the psyche and this creates racism. Separate identity, othering – anything that looks at dealing with phenomena of racism, seems to use terminology that circles around that. Racism is a perpetuator of itself. It is like a cancer. We promote the factors that create the cancer we are fighting against. We fight against social justice, but the new racism continues to perpetuate difference. At Yunggoorendi we have only Aboriginal students and only Aboriginal staff. Indigenous people who fight against social injustice are motivated by racism to study and they have better ways to articulate their concerns which results in earning a better living. So [wry laughter] racism is a good thing, people use it as an industry.

Janet: Yes, it is a double-edged sword. People in Western society have used identity to define themselves as separate from those who were not considered ‘civilised, rational or enlightened’. But paradoxically those who shared the vision of the Enlightenment in Europe saw themselves as ‘cosmopolitan’ (Darnton, 2002:28). The ‘elitism’, ‘universalism’ and ‘Eurocentrism’ of the Enlightenment have been resisted by the colonised (Darnton, 2002, p. 33). This is understandable because of the associations with top down interventions that threaten one’s own identity, rights and land. Rose (2004) cites an Aboriginal informant called Hobbles who describes

<sup>76</sup> We need to realise that when we are drawing the line or making a decision or cut ( in the sense used by West Churchman, 1979,1982),, it needs to be re-assessed to ensure that we are aware of who and why we are excluding and including in our decision making. Decisions need to be open to re-assessment. See also Christakis (2006) and Bausch (2006) in *Rescuing the Enlightenment from Itself*. Volume 1 of the C. West Churchman Series

Captain Cook as 'a wild man'. In other words the notion of civilised and wild is a matter of cultural perspective. Development has been largely negative because we have stressed power and profit based on the loss to others and the environment. This is why balancing individual and collective needs is best undertaken under the auspices of both local (Rose, 1992, 2004) and wider 'postnational constellations' (Habermas, 2001) or biospheres (UNESCO)<sup>77</sup> that respond to local and regional concerns in an integrated manner (McIntyre-Mills, 2010, forthcoming).

We could recognise that in many Indigenous cultures (like Aboriginal culture) people define themselves in terms of both connection to others and loyalty to their group (Rose, 1992, Darrell, 1988). Many indigenous people and those who are concerned about a sustainable future are redefining themselves in terms of 'earth politics' and 'the planet' (Beck, 1992, 1997) not *divisive*, small interest groups. When we realise that 'the enemy' (Bausch, 2006) is our way of thinking and practising, we could change our attitudes to terrorism<sup>78</sup>!

Bevin: This is not so easy. How do we escape the coil? I teach at Yunggoendi, which exists to ensure greater equality. Recognising racism or sexism or any form of xenophobia also helps to keep the concept of self and other alive. Critical analytical skills can be used to divide us.

Janet: Yes, they can; but alternatively critical systemic skills can be used to draw connections in conversation which explores many domains of knowledge. This was understood by Buber (1947) when he explored the 'I-thou relationship' in respectful conversation. This was demonstrated on many occasions when relationships were fostered at Neporendi by the men and women during their healing conversations to address a range of inter related wellbeing challenges (such as health, housing, unemployment and social inclusion). How can this be achieved if the environment is not liveable? <sup>79</sup>. We exist not merely because of our connection to others and the

<sup>77</sup>[http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=4793&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php-URL_ID=4793&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) See also Takar, B. 2003. *Perspectives in resource management in developing countries*. Concept Publishing. New Delhi.

<sup>78</sup> Australian Broadcasting Commission 'Australia Fights Terrorism With Tough Visa Checks' reported visa checks in Australia, tabled in parliament on Feb 23, 2010, also see <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wirestory?id=9915847&page=2> accessed 24<sup>th</sup> Feb

<sup>79</sup> But once we take this further and realise that we have to do more than bridge divides, once we realise our interrelationship with land, water and air we breathe, we will move beyond constructing ourselves and our identity as self /other who live in separate communities, separate regions and separate nation states. Perhaps we could see ourselves as living in biospheres that are fluid and integrated.

environment but because we are part of the environment (Harris & Wasilewski, 2004a, b)<sup>80</sup>.

We need to comprehend the Indigenous notion of existing through the land?<sup>81</sup> We also need to recognise that ‘we are people through other people’.<sup>82</sup> It is a very different way of *being and becoming in the world* (Deleuze and Guattari in Bogue, 1989). Your sister Daphne said to me:

It is part of the Law that we should nurture the earth and nurture one another. .... Health is not just one thing. (Daphne Wilson, community worker, pers. comm., 2008 cited in McIntyre-Mills, 2008, p. 163)

Bevin: I was standing there in a foot ball club having a squash not alcohol. I remember a non-Indigenous white Australian standing there making comments about Aboriginal Australians living on the Riverland out on a mission. The people were actually living on a reserve seven kilometres from the Riverlands. The guy said to me : ‘you are more like us’. I said: ‘ I have news for you. I am not like **them** and I am **not like you**. All you to remember is my name. Then you will always get it right. I may be a little bit British or a little bit French, or a bit German, whatever [ironical laughter]! I am Bevin Wilson. The conversation ended quickly! It was a different way to respond . A lot of people in small towns suffer from small town syndrome. It was only about 220 kilometers from Adelaide, but that small town environment promotes racism and the language that surrounds it.

<sup>80</sup> The capability to do this is clearly needed to operate in terms of international protocols, standards, charters, covenants and laws that span social, economic and environmental concerns from the local to global. I argue that based on an understanding of our common, intermeshed fate (Beck, 2005, Giddens, 2009, Held et al 1999) rational responses need to be systemic. By systemic I mean recognizing that we exist not merely because of our connection to others and the environment but because we are part of the environment. This systemic recognition is mindfulness. Systemic praxis could be helpful in terms of shifting approaches from compartmentalized thinking and practice to matrix web-like thinking and practice that is suited to addressing complexity.

<sup>81</sup> ‘ ...the relationship between the people and their country is understood to have existed from time immemorial- to be part of the land itself’ (Rose 1996: 35-6 cited in Atkinson, 2002:29). Atkinson (1992: 29) describes it as follows: “ The land grew the people and the people grew their country. Human spiritual and cultural processes within this land-scape and with other life forms were, and continue to be, dynamic, proceeding, expanding, changing, growing, flowing, being mediated according to the movements and interactions that are natural to human, and non-human, associations. Rose names, in essence, “ being human”, as transforming processes, continuous movements of activity and energy, as people are involved together in business of making sense of their actuality as they make relationships with both the corporeal and the non-corporeal world ( 1996: 36)

<sup>82</sup> This is the African notion of ubuntu and that ‘we are human through our relationships with others’ (Adelaide Dlamini, per comm., cited in McIntyre-Mills, 2000, Mbigi & Maree, 1995) and the land. This goes beyond any social contract based on reciprocity (Nussbaum, 2006, La Donna Harris, 2004 a, b.

Janet: So the insinuation was that the other guy was making an 'us /them type of distinction. Are you talking about how people side with or against' <sup>83</sup> others for all kinds of reasons depending on the situation?

Bevin: Almost like that.

Janet: Can you tell us a bit about the language that surrounds racism?

Bevin: It is linked to egotism and emotions, by making 'the other' small it makes people feel better or bigger. It allows someone to 'up the ante'. It allows them to justify their actions.

Janet: By thinking in limited ways we **fail to identify with one another.** For example, adults who had attended the Fairburn farm program as children were invited to watch a screening of a documentary about the program. It portrayed the abuse of children under 'the protection' of the program. The former 'child migrants' walked out after watching an account and hearing narratives by some of their peers about the life they had experienced. Some identified with their stories of survival. Others refused to consider that they had experienced ill treatment or learned to be abusive<sup>84</sup>.

Bevin: Is racism a male?

Janet: Good point, you are bringing us back on topic. Gender is constructed -as all introductory sociology books will tell us. It is now accepted by many that sexuality is a continuum.<sup>85</sup> Racism is gendered, but it can be constructed differently by males and females. For example, to return to the case of the child migrants, some sadistic house mothers at the Fairburn farm beat the children. Some were better and read bed-time stories, others called them names, such as 'pommies', at best!

<sup>83</sup> See Bhaba (1994) *The location of culture*. Routledge. London

<sup>84</sup> For example, a male adult said, something along the lines of, 'no I had a good time at the farm. I learned to butcher, to kill and to ride horses' and then went on to mention other farming skills'. He then referred to some of the 'loose girls' and aligned himself (without reflection) to those who were said to have abused the young women. Perhaps it was because in order to survive he had sided with the powerful.

But these are just my reflections and perceptions of someone else's memories. It could be described as a 'cognitive coping strategy' (Cornelius 1991 cites Arnold: 121).

<sup>85</sup> Men and women are made up of X and Y chromosomes. Sometimes doctors decide at birth what to call a baby who has both male and female organs. Choices have been imposed by society. But some cultures provide special roles for those who are different. We learn what it is to be a member of a category. Throughout history men and women have played roles dictated by society and there have been a few famous examples of women posing as men so that they could study and practice a profession from which they had been barred. Similarly men have wished to explore their identity. I recall a memorable afternoon in 1990 when I was visited the Victoria Hotel in Vancouver for afternoon tea. Every one else in the tearoom was part of a holiday tour group comprised of transvestites dressed very formally in women's clothing. Everyone enjoyed themselves. The service was excellent and the joy of a splendid afternoon tea was enhanced by seeing the world at its best, celebrating human diversity. The gay pride parades each year in Sydney have a similar role.

Bevin: the crusaders were male and were fighting for ideas and for land. The powerful dominators are often male. Most of the world leaders today are male. That which is male and white is good. That which is female and black is bad [Wry laughter by Janet and Bevin].

Janet: Yes, we make sense of the world by using divisive categories and by means of synthesising knowledge. Powerful groups justify keeping power and maintaining the status quo<sup>86</sup>—the justification can be based on any category, gender, race, a skill.

Bevin: But there is a trend — males are powerful and racist.

Janet: The basis of discrimination is much wider than gender. Two women can have different life chances because they have different levels of education and thus different employment opportunities.

Bevin: Male dominance has been the problem. They have conquered the powerless and the environment.

Janet: Yes, the market and ‘master narrative’<sup>87</sup> is problematic.

Bevin: How many female leaders are there? Males are aggressive world leaders. Males solve problems in terms of aggression and war – right back to the crusades.

Janet: Yes, these are more examples of binary oppositions, male versus female, Christian versus Muslim and the notion that we profit at your expense. Our nation state will be better at your expense, this is the zero sum. But it is wrong<sup>88</sup>. The decisions we make in self interest result in poverty and pollution which in turn are revisited upon us as conflict and our contribution to climate change<sup>89</sup>.

Bevin: I am thinking back over the arguments about racism, right back to the 60s and 70s. How far has the thinking come? Racism stems from emotions of anger. It is about ego. ‘I am better than them, so I feel better because I am another colour. ‘Race’ if you take the *word* away will you take *it* away? Will you get rid of it?

<sup>86</sup> I recollect and try to paraphrase what Emile Durkheim the sociologist said, namely “that in a community of saints you will find sinners, because the slightest infraction will be regarded/constructed as a sin.”

<sup>87</sup> Alternative narratives can be told in defiance of the master narrative, as suggested by Judy Atkinson (2002) in her book ‘Trauma Trails; Recreating song lines’. Spinifex

<sup>88</sup> I critique the approach developed by Hardin in Chapter 1 (see Hardin, G 1968 *The Tragedy of the Commons* Science, 162:1243-1248.

<sup>89</sup> Murray, J. Dey, C. and Lenzen, M. 2007. Systems for Social Sustainability: Global Connectedness and the Tuvalu Test. *Cybernetics and Human Knowing*. Vol. 14 No 1: 87-105. See Beck, U 1992 *Risk Society Towards a New Modernity*, Sage. London, Beck, U. 1998. *Democracy Without Enemies*, Polity, Cambridge. Beck, U. 2005 *World Risk Society* Polity. Cambridge. Flannery, T. 2005. *The weather makers. The history and future impact of climate change*. Text Publishing, Melbourne. Hulme, M. 2009. *Why we disagree about climate change. Understanding controversy, inaction and opportunity*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Janet: Race is a justification of exploitation and exclusion. It is constructed in many ways. During the Apartheid era in South Africa the racial categorisations could lead to members of one family being classified differently, depending on the decision of an official. This was political and arbitrary, based on superficial appearances.

Bevin: So race can be embedded in both science and the arts.

Janet: Yes, both the sciences and the arts have been used to include and exclude. But if we think about ethics in the interests of everyone, binary oppositional logic needs to be, replaced by inclusionality (Rayner, 2008) and overlaps. Survival is based on co-operation not only competition (McIntyre-Mills, 2009). Social, economic and environmental challenges are convergent.

Bevin: Romm (2009) talked about different kinds of research. Research can be analytical and divisive or it can be synthesized using narratives. We need to understand in terms of narratives. We can use narratives to get a better sense of truth.

Janet: Yes, we need to value different ways of thinking and researching. Narratives are helpful because they enable us to explore many aspects of a situation.

Bevin: We are in the maze. I was trying to find my way out of the maze. I was trying to find the door. I am hoping that this could occur through narrative and through conversation.

Janet: So you are saying that conversation can help us to see the world through the eyes of the person with whom we are engaging? Conversation is itself a way to help us find our way through the maze<sup>90</sup>.

Bevin: Yes, I used to spend time with a kid in our family. This kid used to ask questions all the time. I always tried to answer them, but it was very annoying. Socrates asked questions in similar fashion to this kid, he was raising questions all the time for people to consider.

Janet: Yes, his enemies gave him hemlock, because they did not like to confront the difficult answers that they had to face as a result of their thinking! It was too hard for them to face the issues he raised! It sounds very familiar! [Laughter]

Bevin: I like Socrates. We need to be able to think and engage with one another. We need these skills. It is not only about learning skills to earn money.

<sup>90</sup> According to Margaret Wheatley (2009, p. 30): “Even among friends, starting a conversation can take courage. But conversation also gives us courage...As we learn from each other’s experiences and interpretations; we see the issue in richer detail. We understand more of the dynamics that have created it. With this clarity we know what actions to take and where we might also have influence. ....[w]hat gets lost when we stop talking to each other? Paulo Freire...said...we “cannot be truly human apart from communication...to impede communication is to reduce people to the status of things.”



Janet: Yes, we need to think and feel, in order to become more aware. Narratives help us to explore many dimensions.

Bevin: We need people who are prepared to engage in conversations with one another.

Janet: Yes, we need time for one another.

Bevin: I like conversations that explore meanings and make meanings with others.

Janet: Thank you Bevin, I really enjoyed our conversation and I feel energised by it. Perhaps we could sum up what we have learned?

## REFLECTIONS

Racism can be essentialised by social justice arguments, but we can also continuously deconstruct racism without denying the real pain racism and (paradoxically), the reflection on racism can cause. We have the potential to construct our relationships with others and the environment quite differently. If racist thinking is a kind of cancer, then healing can be said to be a process of thinking and feeling that achieves transcendence, Atkinson, sums it up as follows:

It is the ever-unfolding expression of knowledge of the Self. In the process of transformation the Self is viewed with acceptance and compassion and a curiosity towards the change process....The process of healing is to be able to look at the Self through a different lens... (Atkinson, 2002, p. 206).

Balancing individualism and collectivism is about addressing dualism and recognising that we are the land and knowing is a process that includes both rational and emotional dimensions including irony and humour.<sup>91</sup>

Every process has its limitations, but conversation has the potential of building relationships. **The point made is that we can define ourselves in terms of a small town and narrow affiliations or we can construct ourselves in terms of connections with others and the environment by recognising our interconnectedness.**

<sup>91</sup> Domains of knowing include the subjective, objective and intersubjective such as logic, empiricism, idealism, the dialectic and expanded pragmatism that addresses the ultimate human paradox that cultural ideologies can predispose people to believe that there is only one way to do things (monists ranging from arch capitalists to arch radicals) versus an anything goes (post modernist approach fostered by the internet) or that truth needs to be co-created and tested out. I argue that values can be diverse to the extent that they do not undermine the diversity and freedoms of others, the environment or the next generation of life. Some goods are in conflict, for example individual freedom and equality within and across groups.