

A journey in search of wholeness and meaning:
Investigating a harmonious ontology which could
facilitate the conditions for holistic, transformative
epistemologies within the structures of a community
with a view to creating a sustainable future for all
beings

Rupert Clive Collister

BAVE (University of Tasmania), MEd (Australian
Catholic University)

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England.*

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Dedication and acknowledgements

Dedication

This document is dedicated to all of those individuals, groups, communities or societies world over who are marginalised by the perception that they are insignificant, inadequate or irrelevant to the dominant worldview. It is particularly dedicated to those who have been neglected by mainstream education and are then either simply ignored or, more likely, exploited for the benefit of dominant societies. Marginalisation can affect anyone, anywhere, at any time. It breaks down the relationships the individual has with themselves, with each other, with their environment, with their culture and with their world. It creates of self-encapsulated people rather than spiritually rich interconnected beings.

The human personality is inexhaustible; each may become a creator, leaving behind a trace upon the Earth. ...There should not be any nobodies-speck of dust cast upon the wind. Each one must shine, just as billions upon billions of galaxies shine in the heavens. (Sukhomlinsky, 1987, p. 116)

It is my hope that in some small way this work may help someone shine.

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Abstract

In framing this investigation I intuitively sought to minimise the mutual exclusivity which can occur in qualitative research by initially grounding it in my own social, cultural, vocational, educational and spiritual experiences. Throughout this investigation I sought to identify sources of wisdom, insight and praxis which may assist humanity to create a vision for its future which is sustainable, not only for humanity itself, but also for the Earth. In order to do this I utilised a mode of inquiry that is inductive, emergent, reflective and iterative. This mode of inquiry which could also be called *Creative Inquiry* “approaches the universe as itself a creative process” (Montuori, 2008, p. 19) anchored in “the desire to create one’s own universe of meaning, personally defined” (Barron, 1995, p. 75). Through this process I explored a wide range of seemingly diverse meta-narratives by immersion in texts and through crystallisation by collaborative conversation. It allowed me to frame my investigation in the space of the sacred (Heron, 1998; Montuori, 2008) and this resultant document is reflective of the nexus between *Kosmos*, *Community*, *Cosmology* and *Consciousness*.

All over the world there are individuals, communities and organisations, what Petit et al. call ‘Pioneer organisations’ (2008), working to create a sustainable future for the Earth. I believe this document and the journey it represents can contribute to the overall effort being made by such pioneer organisations since it explores the interconnectedness and relationships which bind the Kosmos and the roles and relationships of humanity within that interconnected Kosmos. It also explores the relevance of my journey in search of wholeness and meaning to the understandings of community, adult learning, meaningful work and sustainability that emerged for me during this journey; relevance which is integral to the development of a sustainable future, not just for humanity but also for the Earth itself. Finally, I believe that in some small way this document can contribute to the dialectic which Oliver and Gershman (1989, p. 63) called for since it continually moves from the individual through the familial, communal and the societal, to the universal and spiritual and back again.

Certification

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.



Contents

Section one: Contexts	9
Chapter one – Introduction	11
Overview	11
Contexts	12
Methodology	13
Structure of this document	17
Worldviews	19
Western worldview	20
Mythology and archetypes	21
Summary	24
Chapter two – My story	27
Overview	27
Transformation and Transformative Learning	27
Wholeness or oneness?	30
My story	31
Summary	54
Section two: Literature review	57
Chapter three – Holism	59
Overview	59
Holism	59
Modern holistic education and holistic epistemologies	64
Eight orientations	66
Cosmology and spirituality	67
Nature	68
Contemplative practice	69
Myth, story and legend	71
Aesthetics	72
Learning	73
Leadership and community	74
Physical activity	75
Summary	76
Chapter four – Indigenous cultures	79
Overview	79
Eight orientations	81
Cosmology and spirituality	82
Nature	83
Myth, story and legend	85
Aesthetics	86
Contemplative practice	84
Leadership and community	90
Practical activity	92
Learning	88
Summary	93
Chapter five – Eastern traditions (or ontologies)	95
Overview	95
Eight orientations	96
Cosmology and spirituality	96

Nature	100
Contemplative practice	101
Myth, story and legend	103
Aesthetics	104
Learning.....	106
Leadership and community.....	109
Practical activity	112
Summary	115
Chapter six – Common themes, cosmology and cultural forms	117
Overview.....	117
Exploring a participatory approach to a literature review.....	117
Common themes	121
The interconnected universe	122
Roles and responsibilities	123
Perennial philosophy	125
Cosmology.....	128
Ubiquitous Sapience.....	131
Summary	132
Section three: Collaboration and crystallisation	135
Chapter seven – Collaborative conversations	137
Overview.....	137
Crystallisation	137
Co-creators	139
Approach to the collaborative conversation process	142
Themes.....	143
Approach to interpreting the conversations	145
Summary	147
Chapter eight – New and clarified understandings, assumptions and working theories.....	149
Overview.....	149
Discussion	149
Approach to the investigation	149
Perennial philosophy	151
Ubiquitous Sapience.....	151
Migration of spiritual traditions and ontologies.....	153
Shifts in consciousness	155
Orientations	155
Social action, change and transformation.....	157
Communities, networks and meaningful change	158
Temporal perception and myopia	161
Whole individuals and their experience of the Western worldview	163
Transformative learning	164
Transformation within the formalised and institutionalised structures	168
Summary	168
Chapter nine – Archetypes and structures, harmonious ontology and holistic, transformative epistemologies	171
Overview.....	171
Recapitulation.....	172
Archetypes and structures	174
The spiritual warrior	174
Structures	177
Harmonious Ontology	178

The role of holistic, transformative epistemologies in relation to the archetypes and structures identified in Section two	187
The role of a harmonious ontology in potentially facilitating a sustainable future for all beings	191
Section four: Reflections and applications	193
Chapter ten – Reflections and applications	195
Overview	195
Reflection (a emergent understanding of a holographic life)	195
Evolving understanding (the concepts of community, adult learning, meaningful work and sustainability as they reflect my investigation to date).....	201
Community.....	202
Adult learning.....	207
Meaningful work.....	212
Sustainability.....	219
What does all this mean? Implications and applications for this investigation	223
The physical, the emotional and the spiritual health and well-being of each individual	223
The role of learning and its connection to shifts in consciousness and shared consciousness	225
The way human beings interact with each other in their families, communities and societies.....	227
The role of organisations and the activity they undertake	229
Communal, societal and organisational leadership	229
The way human beings interact with the environment.....	231
The roles and responsibility of humanity within the immediate holarchy of the Earth and the greater holomovement of the Kosmos.....	232
Opportunities for further investigations	232
Summary	235
Reference list	237

