A WORKBOOK AND ONLINE COMMUNITY
for Co-CREATING OUR SUSTAINABILITY ETHIC

Section IV - Mapping the Territory
Chapter 5 - Archetypal Reflections

The conscious emulation of life's genius is a survival strategy for the human race, a path to a sustainable future. The more our world functions like the natural world, the more likely we are to endure on this home that is ours, but not ours alone.

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How might we utilize the Archetypes for Sustainability to maximize the learning that must take place in order to re-achieve sustainability?

My first significant interest in archetypal work was triggered by a very short presentation given by Dr. Betty Sue Flowers at a sustainability conference several years ago. She laid out four basic cultural archetypes - Hero, Religious, Democratic, and Economic, and she characterized each of them in terms of their Ideals, Behavior, Actions, and Communications. Her approach made it very clear why a person of one archetype has such difficulty communicating with people of a different archetype. With regard to Archetypes for Sustainability, I did some of this characterization work when I articulated what I perceived as the Guiding Principles for each of the four P's in The Triple Bottom Line chart in Chapter 3 of this section. From this chart, I think it is quite apparent that two people who operate more or less exclusively in different quadrants will inevitably have difficulty communicating with one another.

In addition, the prevalent Western view of the 'Bottom Line' is a priority sequence of Profit followed by People followed by Planet, with Power too often trumping all three. In order to become sustainable, we need to reverse that sequence without creating a de facto hierarchy. Planet becomes our first concern, since without the Earth's environment and limited abundance we lose our life support system. People become our second concern, because without social order

we don't have the community to embrace either a minimizing of armed conflict or our economic well-being. Therefore, Profit becomes our third concern, a by-product of being in harmony with the Earth and social well-being. Interesting, that Power assumes a different meaning when seen as communal rather than individual, and non-hierarchal relations are established among the quadrants.

From 'Archetypes for Sustainability', lessons are learned both from those quadrants with the most wisdom to share as well as from the synergy that takes place among perspectives.

ARCHETYPES FOR SUSTAINABILITY
Fundamental Paradigms
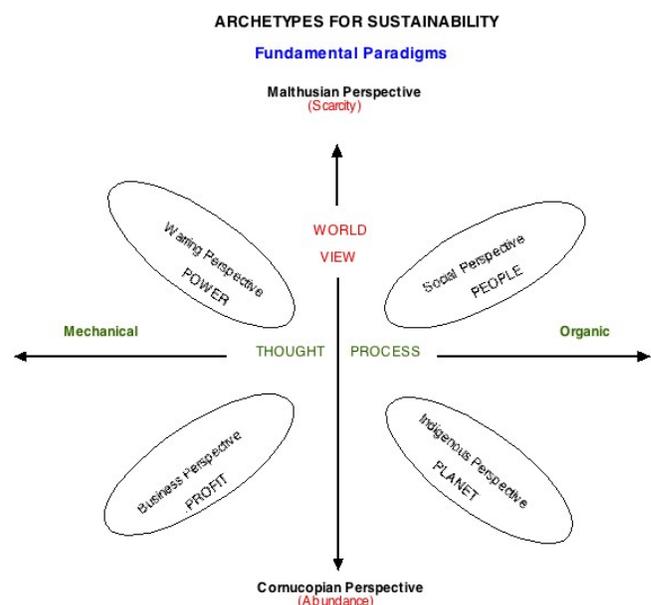
When using Dr. Gladwin's 2x2 representation, I was struck by its inherent power. The x-axis, Mechanical/Organic, is a most fundamental thought process; and the y-axis, Sc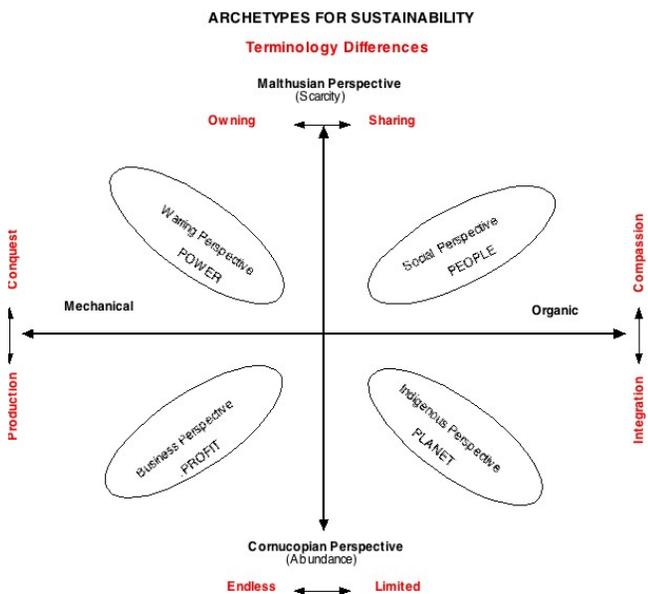arcity/ Abundance, is a most fundamental world view. These axis highlight the two most powerful paradigm shifts in mankind's current transformational awakening. The first, the shift from the Industrial Age mechanical view of the world to an organic view, seems to be well underway. In order to re-achieve sustainability, it is essential that we understand our environment as a living system – one that is necessary for supporting living, breathing species. The second is our discerning the Earth as a source of abundance within the renewal, healing, and cleansing constraints of Mother Nature, rather than through our cultural norm of perceived scarcity. It is essential that we recognize that there are two types of scarcity: when it's real because we have an overused finite resource, and when it's perceived because a fear has been created that there isn't 'enough.'

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unambiguous. When facilitating conversations using this construct, it was pointed out that the four labels – Mechanical, Organic, Scarcity, and Abundance - are often understood very differently, and in general one's archetypal preference is key to one's particular understanding.

For instance, the two archetypes whose world view is Abundance - Business and Indigenous - discern the term quite differently. The former generally view Abundance as a never-ending, infinite quantity, while the Indigenous peoples view it as limited by the Earth's capacity to produce, cleanse, and heal. With regard to Scarcity, the Warring folks enter into a fortress mentality to take what they have construed as rightfully theirs. They don't intend to share, while the Social intend to share what is scarce.

With regard to the Business and Warring archetypes who think primarily in Mechanistic terms, they may both view life and the universe (or themselves) as operating like a clock or other mechanical device. The Business perspective, however, is one of applying technology to production and economic competition, while the Warring perspective is about conquest. And with regard to those archetypes thinking primarily in Organic terms, the Social' perspective is one of interconnection and justice, while the Indigenous perspective is of a deep energetic connection with all of life that includes social order.

Also, each archetype wrestles with Scarcity in terms of whether it is real or perceived. Business folks, while viewing the world in terms of Abundance, have created their success around the perception of Scarcity – it is at the heart of marketing and consumerism. I suspect that it is the deep internalization of limited abundance that clarifies the difference between real and perceived scarcity, and perhaps it is only the

ARCHETYPES FOR SUSTAINABILITY
Terminology Differences

Malthusian Perspective
(Scarcity)

Owning ←→ Sharing

Warring Perspective POWER

Social Perspective PEOPLE

Conquest

Compassion

Mechanical

Organic

Production

Integration

Business Perspective PROFIT

Indigenous Perspective PLANET

Cornucopian Perspective
(Abundance)

Endless ←→ Limited

In order for these transformations to occur, we're going to need to communicate in ways that are

Indigenous peoples who understand the notion of sufficiency - our real needs - as articulated in the Discovery chapter of Section VII.

It is the 'Indigenous Perspective' that probably has the most to offer us in terms of what we need to understand regarding sustainability, and this is addressed in Section V that follows.

Reflections

We have all been in conversations where we were quite sure we knew the meaning and connotations of words that were being used, and assumed there should be agreement. But there wasn't, and there may have been sharp disagreement. Think about a time when you or someone else was able to surface the differences of what was being understood in such a way that the disagreements vanished.

What was the situation – the initial disagreement and misunderstandings?
What was the learning – one person emerged as right or a mutual set of 'aha's'?