

SPIRITUALITY IN CONTEMPORARY HOSPITALITY: A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL APPROACH

By

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ABSTRACT

Previous research conducted on the topic of workplace spirituality seems to suggest that this concept refers to the personal religious orientations of workers and the principles and ethics they associate with their respective religions. This study, however, presents an alternative approach to the understanding of workplace spirituality.

In this research the contemporary hospitality industry is presented as two metaphorical 'stages' on which 'actors' perform the 'play of hospitality'. One of the stages is the front-stage world. The employees who work in this world observe an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction. The other stage is the back-stage world. This world observes an ultimate concern of profit. Because the ultimate concerns of the front-stage world and the back-stage world stand in contrast to each other, the current spirituality of the contemporary hospitality industry is a spirituality of dissonance and unhappiness.

Though both the front-stage world and the back-stage world are part of the contemporary hospitality setting, the constructions of these worlds are unique. This study aims to explore the different elements that affect the understandings of these two worlds. It is important for contemporary hospitality employees to understand the constructions of the front-stage world and the back-stage world for only when they understand which elements shape these worlds, will it be possible for them to de-construct and to re-construct these worlds.

In the de-construction and re-construction of the front-stage world and the back-stage world lies the hope for an alternative spirituality for the contemporary hospitality industry. The purpose of this study is to explore the possibility of an alternative spirituality that can help create a preferred working environment for workers of the contemporary hospitality industry.

KEY TERMS

Contemporary hospitality industry

Workplace spirituality

Religion

Ultimate concern

Language of religion

Front-stage world

Back-stage world

Narrative

TABLE OF CONTENT

CHAPTER 1	1
1.1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.2. MY NARRATIVE AND HOW IT CAME ABOUT THAT THE NARRATIVES OF HOSPITALITY WORKERS BECAME IMPORTANT TO ME	2
1.3. INSPIRED BY PASSION BUT LAMED BY NOT KNOWING	5
1.4. THE TWO WORLDS OF THE CONTEMPORARY HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY	8
1.5. CONTEXT OF THIS STUDY	10
1.6. RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY	12
1.7. RESEARCH PROBLEM	15
1.8. RESEARCH QUESTION	16
1.9. STATISTICAL OVERVIEW OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA	17
1.10. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND	18
1.10.1. Postfoundational Practical Theology	18
1.10.2. Social Constructionism	22
1.10.3. Epistemological positioning	23
1.10.4. Postfoundationalism	23
1.11. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH	27
1.11.1. Narrative inquiry	28
1.12. THE DANCE OF NARRATIVE INQUIRY	29
1.12.1. Listening	30
1.12.2. Interpreting	31
1.12.3. Discerning	32
1.12.4. Poetry (re-authoring)	32
1.12.5. Embracing – Listening: A never-ending dance	33

1.13. THE INTERVIEWS.....	33
1.13.1. Semi-structured interviews.....	34
1.14. SAMPLING.....	37
1.15. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	40
1.16. DISSERTATION OUTLINE.....	41
CHAPTER 2.....	44
2.1. INTRODUCTION.....	44
2.2. HOSPITALITY: A BRIEF HISTORICAL REFLECTION.....	45
2.3. HOSPITALITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.....	46
2.4. HOSPITALITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.....	51
2.4.1. Respecting 'the other'.....	56
2.5. COMMERCIAL HOSPITALITY IN CLASSICAL GREECE: THE GENESIS OF AN INDUSTRY.....	59
2.6. COMMERCIAL HOSPITALITY IN CLASSICAL ROME: AN INDUSTRY OF DIVERSITY.....	61
2.7. HOSPITALITY DURING CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY.....	64
2.8. MONASTIC HOSPITALITY.....	65
2.9. <i>UBUNTU</i> : AN AFRICAN CONCEPT OF HOSPITALITY.....	70
2.10. A WESTERN PHILOSOPHICAL VIEW OF HOSPITALITY.....	72
2.11. CONCLUSION.....	75

CHAPTER 3	77
3.1. INTRODUCTION	77
3.2. TWO WORLDS – TWO DIFFERENT CONSTRUCTIONS	81
3.3. THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY	82
3.4. WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY	87
3.5. THE FRONT-STAGE WORLD	92
3.5.1. The workers of the front-stage world	92
3.5.2. The spirituality of the front-stage world	93
3.6. BACK-STAGE WORLD	94
3.6.1. The workers of the back-stage world	94
3.6.2. The spirituality of the back-stage world	96
3.6.3. ‘Spiritual’ leadership	99
3.7. THE PARADOX OF THE CONTEMPORARY HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY	102
3.8. IN HOPE FOR A SPIRITUALITY OF GRACE	103
3.9. CONCLUSION	104
CHAPTER 4	106
4.1. INTRODUCTION	106
4.2. ESTABLISHING THE RESEARCH TEAM	107
4.3. THE PROCESS OF NARRATIVE INQUIRY	109
4.3.1. Semi-structured interviews	110
4.4. THE DANCE OF NARRATIVE INQUIRY	112
4.4.1. Movement one: Listening	113
4.4.2. Movement two: Interpreting	113
4.4.3. Movement three: Discerning	114
4.4.4. Movement four: Poetry (re-authoring)	115

4.4.5.	Movement five: Embracing: A never-ending dance	115
4.5.	INTRODUCING THE CO-RESEARCHERS.....	116
4.5.1.	Meet Alex.....	117
4.5.2.	Meet David	117
4.5.3.	Meet Cindy	118
4.5.4.	Meet John.....	118
4.6.	THE LOGIC OF THE INTERVIEWS.....	119
4.7.	MOVEMENT ONE: LISTENING.....	120
4.7.1.	Alex’s narrative	120
4.7.2.	David’s narrative.....	124
4.7.3.	Cindy’s narrative.....	129
4.7.4.	John’s narrative	133
4.8.	MOVEMENT TWO: INTERPRETING	137
4.8.1.	Incorporating art in the interpretation of the narratives.....	137
4.8.2.	Making meaning through art.....	140
4.8.3.	Behind the mask of hospitality.....	141
4.8.4.	Inviting the co-researchers to respond to the film	144
4.9.	MOVEMENT THREE: DISCERNING.....	145
4.9.1.	Discovering the ultimate myth	146
4.10.	MOVEMENT FOUR: POETRY (RE-AUTHORING)	148
4.10.1.	The crucifixion of two gods	149
4.11.	MOVEMENT FIVE: EMBRACING	150
4.11.1.	The resurrection of a new spirituality of hope	150
4.12	IDENTIFYING THE THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE NARRATIVES.....	151
4.13.	CONCLUSION	151
CHAPTER 5	.....	153
5.1.	INTRODUCTION.....	153

5.2.	FOLLOW THE LEADER – OR PERHAPS NOT.....	156
5.3.	LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE EYES OF THE FRONT-STAGE WORKERS.....	158
5.3.1.	The importance of effective leadership in the hospitality industry	161
5.3.2.	Corporate bullying and the effect thereof on the general wellbeing of the workers of the front-stage world	162
5.4.	INVITING THREE PROFESSIONALS TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS POSTFOUNDATIONAL TRANSVERSAL DISCUSSION.....	168
5.4.1	An interdisciplinary discussion about the effect of work-stress on contemporary hospitality workers	170
5.4.2.	Inviting the co-researchers back to the conversation	174
5.4.3.	A final word from the co-researchers	176
5.5.	CONSIDERING THE PERSONAL RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF HOSPITALITY WORKERS	180
5.6.	DRIVEN BY ‘RELIGION’	182
5.6.1.	The language of religion.....	183
5.7.	THE RESURRECTION OF A NEW SPIRITUALITY OF HOPE	184
5.8.	CONCLUSION	185
CHAPTER 6	.....	189
6.1.	INTRODUCTION.....	189
6.2.	UNMASKING THE FACE OF HOSPITALITY	190
6.3.	INFLUENCES THAT MIGHT EFFECT THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FRONT-STAGE WORLD’S SPIRITUALITY	191
6.3.1.	Biblical stories of hospitality.....	191
6.3.2.	Greek and Roman mythical stories of hospitality	193
6.3.3.	<i>Ubuntu</i> : African tribal stories of hospitality	195
6.4.	INFLUENCES THAT MIGHT EFFECT THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BACK-STAGE WORLD’S SPIRITUALITY	196
6.4.1.	Voices that echo in the back-stage world	196
6.4.2.	Religion and the construction of reality	198

6.5.	THE POSSIBILITY OF A NEW SPIRITUALITY OF HOPE.....	199
6.6.	IN THE LIGHT OF HOPE.....	201
6.7.	IN THE BRIGHTNESS OF LIGHT THERE IS YET A SHADOW	202
6.8.	AN ALTERNATIVE PREFERRED SPIRITUALITY	204
CHAPTER 7	.....	206
7.1.	TRANSITIONING FROM MODERNISTIC TO POSTFOUNDATIONAL THINKING	206
7.2.	MÜLLER'S SEVEN-STEP POSTFOUNDATIONAL PRACTICAL T HEOLOGICAL APPROACH	207
7.2.1.	The relevance of Müller's seven-step postfoundational practical theological approach to this study.....	210
7.3.	MEYLAHN'S DANCE OF NARRATIVE INQUIRY.....	210
7.4.	REFLECTING ON THE INTERVIEWING PROCESS	211
7.4.1.	The strengths	212
7.4.2.	The challenges and suggestion for future research	212
REFERENCE LIST	.....	214
ADDENDUM	.....	235
BEHIND THE MAKS OF HOSPITALITY:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2gpwBDMDpk	

CHAPTER 1

A PLAY CALLED HOSPITALITY

This study will unfold within a specific subjective narrative paradigm. As a result, all the research conducted centers around the storyline of this primary narrative. Therefore, in order to understand the reasoning for the study, it is important to start this journey with the story that inspired this venture.

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Most of us have had the opportunity to stay at a hotel. While some visits are business related, others are for leisure. Regardless what the reason might be, there are certain expectations that one associates with staying at a hotel. Some of these expectations include friendliness, helpfulness and, in general, a welcoming and homely ambiance.

On arrival at the porte-cochère, a gentleman will open the door of the vehicle, assist you to climb out and welcome you with a friendly smile. A porter will be quick to help you with your luggage while another will park your vehicle as you make your way to a welcoming receptionist where you will check in. As you make your way through the lobby on your way to your room, more friendly faces will greet you – all ensuring you that they will endeavor to make your stay as pleasant as possible. However, there is a part of hospitality that is unknown to guests.

Being the spouse of a hospitality employee has given me first-hand exposure to the emotional, physical, and spiritual challenges that hospitality workers have to endure while attempting to make the stay of guests as pleasant as possible. Somewhere on the ‘stage’ of hospitality, between the shiny decorations and the marble pillars, reality becomes blurry and the distinction between act and actuality, confusing. Even during off time some

workers find it difficult to connect with their true character and often this confusion leads to yet another act. It is as if time spent at home is not long enough to wash off all the stage makeup before having to return to the stage yet again.

My husband spent the majority of his hospitality career working at a world-renowned holiday resort. During the first three years at the resort, I worked at the resort's Fire and Emergency Department as a senior medical officer. Through the course of my paramedic career, I met many of the resort's hospitality employees.

Every day I responded to medical emergencies that occurred at the resort. Many of the emergencies I attended to involved patients complaining of chest pains, heart attacks, strokes and anxiety attacks. These patients were mainly hospitality employees. I also responded to an alarming amount of emergencies involving domestic violence and medicine, drug, and alcohol overdoses. During my time as a medical officer, five hospitality employees committed suicide. One of them was a close friend of mine.

1.2. MY NARRATIVE AND HOW IT CAME ABOUT THAT THE NARRATIVES OF HOSPITALITY WORKERS BECAME IMPORTANT TO ME

My initial impression of the hospitality industry was that it is a glamorous occupation where hospitality workers get to work in fine establishments and meet famous people. To an extent, I was correct. However, as the years passed, I realized that the hospitality industry is not all glitz and glamour. Amongst the grandeur, hotel staff are working tirelessly to provide the best possible service to guests. After all, staying in a fine establishment is expensive, and guests will only be satisfied with excellent service.

During my career as a medical officer, I attended to numerous emergencies of domestic violence. These emergencies almost always involved hospitality employees. At these particular scenes, patients were usually eager to articulate their personal challenges. However, I did not pay attention to their stories. Being a paramedic in itself is emotionally demanding, so I did not want to burden myself with unnecessary detail. After all, what

could I possibly do about the working conditions of hospitality employees? But this all changed when I responded to an emergency that would change my life forever.

It was the 21st of October 2003. I was driving back from town – about a forty-minute drive from the resort – when my cell phone rang. I never answer a phone when I am driving, and I did not make an exception for this particular call. Just before I entered the resort, about ten minutes after I received the first call, my cell phone rang again. I had a quick look. It was Susan (alias), a friend of mine. As I stopped my car at our apartment, I immediately responded to Susan’s phone call.

Susan was at work at the pharmacy of the resort. Because Susan was pregnant with twins at the time, I thought she might want me to make a turn at the pharmacy to take her blood pressure. But that is not why she called. Susan wanted me to make a turn at the pharmacy because she was concerned about her husband.

For some inexplicable reason, I took my hand-radio – a communication device to the emergency control room of the resort – and I asked my husband to come with me. When we got to the pharmacy, I asked my husband to hold my hand-radio and wait for me outside while I speak with Susan. Inside the pharmacy, Susan told me that her husband is at home and that she is concerned about him because he told a fellow worker who accompanied him home that he will not see him again.

I knew Susan’s husband well, and I was aware that he had an addiction to prescription medication. I also knew that he attended a rehabilitation program a week ago and that today was his first day back at work. My initial thought was that he might try to overdose on medication.

As I arrived at the pharmacy, Susan asked me if I would please make a turn at their apartment to see if her husband, Mike (alias) is alright. At that moment, I *knew* something bad has happened.

While Susan was fiddling in her handbag to find her set of keys to the apartment, a sense of *tremendous* urgency built up inside me. I couldn't wait for her to find the key. I had to go *now!* I confirmed with Susan that Mike was at the apartment. Thus, the door will likely be open – at least, so I prayed. Again, for some inexplicable reason, I made Susan promise to stay in the pharmacy until she saw me again. I also made her promise that she would not follow me to their apartment. She was confused, but she agreed. As I walked out of the pharmacy, my husband noted that I was extremely distressed. “What’s wrong?” he asked. All I could say was: “We must run, I think Mike might be dead.”

Susan and Mike’s apartment was not far from the pharmacy – about three hundred meters. As we approached the apartment, I saw Susan’s domestic worker and their neighbor standing outside Susan’s flat. They were clearly in a state of shock. I asked: “Is Mike inside? Is the door open? Can I go in?” None of them answered me. They just stood and stared at me. Once again I asked: “can I go in?” Then Susan’s neighbor answered: “Crystal, we’ve just heard two shots.”

I felt as if I was going to faint. Somehow I remembered that I had my hand radio with me. I took the radio from my husband. I had to hold it with both hands because I shivered too much to press the activation button. I contacted the security control room and requested *immediate* assistance. Within no longer than thirty seconds, a member of security, Dave (alias) stopped at the scene. “What’s wrong Crystal?” Dave asked. “I think Mike shot himself” I replied. Dave went up to the door of Susan and Mike’s apartment and slowly turned the door handle.

The door was unlocked. Dave cautiously pushed the door open. A ray of sunlight shone from the lounge window through the entrance. In the glaze of the afternoon sun hung the curly blue-grey patterns of gun smoke. As I entered behind Dave, I recognized a smell that I have smelt many times during my medical career – the smell of burnt flesh.

We found Mike’s body on the bed in the main bedroom. As he pulled the trigger of the large caliber hunting rifle that was still gripped in his lifeless hands, he decapitated

himself. At that very moment, while I was staring at my friend's body, I realized that my paramedic career has come to an end. Fifteen years before the suicide of Mike, another traumatic event – another death – changed my life. It was this event, a traumatic death of a schoolboy on a rugby field that steered me into becoming a paramedic, and it was Mike's death that ended this chapter of my life.

After Mike's death, I spent many hours reflecting on the numerous conversations Mike and I shared. I was aware that Mike struggled with some personal issues – just like I knew in so many other cases concerning hospitality employees – but I did not pay enough attention to what Mike was trying to tell me. Most of the challenges that Mike faced was work oriented.

Mike was an introvert, and he found it difficult to stand up for himself when he was victimized or belittled by members of executive management. Perhaps, like in cases of alcohol abuse (Naudé 2015:25), Mike might have taken prescription medication to make him feel better about himself or perhaps he just wanted to escape from reality. Whatever the case might have been, one will never know how Mike's story might have ended if he felt safe to speak to somebody about the challenges he faced.

1.3. INSPIRED BY PASSION BUT LAMED BY NOT KNOWING

Recourses on a holiday resort are usually fairly limited. While the resort's emergency services were excellently equipped for medical emergencies, there were no counsellors whom the staff could consult if they needed emotional support. Once, and sometimes twice a week a psychiatrist visited the resort. Most of the workers who consulted the psychiatrist ended up being treated for depression. For this reason, many workers did not want to consult the psychiatrist because most of them were unhappy at work, not depressed. This is something that some of the employees shared with me.

After I resigned from the fire department, hospitality workers started to tell me their stories. Some of the workers I did not even know, but they made appointments with me because

they wanted to speak to somebody that could relate to their circumstances. This is what resulted in me becoming interested in the stories of hospitality workers.

Approximately a year after my resignation at the emergency department, I received a phone call from the Resort Human Resources Manager (RHRM). He wanted me to meet with him. I was quite surprised but I didn't have any preconceived idea about the reason for our meeting. Our meeting was scheduled for a couple of days later. Great was my surprise when he told me that it came to his attention that I am 'counselling' many of the hospitality staff and that the consensus among those who 'consulted' me was that they benefited from the 'counselling'.

I was astonished. On the one hand, I felt good about the fact that some of the workers felt that our conversations benefited them, but I also felt a bit scared. Me being seen as a 'counsellor' is like referring to a first-aider being a paramedic. I realized that the terms 'counselling' and 'counsellor' were used because this might be how the employees experienced our conversations, but I had no misconception about the fact that counsellors are specialized individuals who go through formal training to obtain their status.

I relayed this information to the RHRM and told him that I am not a trained counsellor and that I am not creating an impression that I am. He was not deterred at all. Whatever I did, seemed to help. And then he dropped a bombshell. Every Wednesday, the senior executive management of the resort have a meeting. The RHRM wanted me to address these executives the next Wednesday regarding my observations regarding the emotional wellbeing of the hotel workers who I spoke with. He realized that my opinion is exactly that – my opinion – but because most of the people on the resort knew me as a medical officer, they valued my opinion.

It was about mid-morning the next Wednesday that the door of the boardroom opened, and the RHRM invited me into the room. In front of me, seated in the shape of a half-moon were about twenty senior executives. On a table, in the middle of the half-moon

stood a table with a projector. On the boardroom table, in front of each executive stood an open tablet. I quickly realized that it was set up for my 'presentation'.

Forty eyes pinned me to a standstill next to the table with the projector on. For some reason, I did not feel intimidated at all. All that went through my mind was the thought of how many hotel employees workers would like to address these executives at the moment, but they cannot dare to do so out of fear of the consequences of their honesty.

I never touched the projector. All I did was speak from my heart. I spoke about the emotional challenges that hospitality workers face. I also spoke about how line staff (junior staff) experience the conduct of certain members of executive management. I spoke calmly and my intention was not to blame anybody but rather to raise an awareness of the current situation. My passion for the challenges that hotel workers face gave me the courage to address the executives, but my lack of knowledge hindered me to suggest a solution.

Not one of the executives touched their tablets while I addressed them. They truly listened. Perhaps they even had concern for the current situation. I would not know because none of them said a word. One-by-one they released me from their stringent stares. The blank screens of their tablets seemed to provide more solace at the time.

The next day, the RHRM phoned me. He thanked me for addressing the senior executives the previous day and articulated that I have mentioned many issues that the human resources department have been trying to resolve for some years. Unfortunately, while I might have created some level of awareness about the challenges that hotel workers face, nothing that I said resolved any of these issues. I felt extremely helpless. I was determined to educate myself further in the hope to someday make a valid contribution to resolving the unhappiness that so many hospitality workers face every day while they 'act' their parts in this play called hospitality.

1.4. THE TWO WORLDS OF THE CONTEMPORARY HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

In this study, the contemporary hospitality industry will be presented as two worlds that attempt to function together. The one world is the front-stage world. It is in this world where most guest-interaction takes place. The ultimate concern of this world is unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction. This is also the world that many hospitality workers see as a 'stage' where they, the 'actors' have to 'perform' their daily duties.

Because guest satisfaction is of utmost importance, it is necessary that the workers of the front-stage world have to portray a constant façade of happiness. But authentic happiness is not always possible. In an attempt to show true hospitality and kindness, the workers of the front-stage world have to wear 'happy-face' masks. However, under these happy-face masks are workers who face tremendous emotional challenges. Much of the challenges that these front-stage workers have to endure are because of the workers of the back-stage world.

The workers of the back-stage world represent corporate executives. The ultimate concern of the back-stage world is profit. It is also in this world that corporate policies and procedures are decided. Most of these policies are to be respected by the workers of the front-stage world. Thus, while workers of the front-stage world attempt to observe their ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction, the rules of the back-stage world require that a price is attached to each act of hospitality.

The construction of both the front-stage world and the back-stage world might be influenced by voices and traditions of the past. For example, it is possible that ancient stories of hospitality might play a role in the front-stage workers' construction of their world – a world that observes an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction. In an attempt to explore this possibility, Chapter Two will reflect on some of the ancient hospitality traditions and narratives. An African tradition of hospitality, known as *Ubuntu*, is also discussed. It is important to consider cultural stories and traditions

because they, too, might play a role in how front-stage workers construct their understandings the front-stage world.

As the ancient stories of hospitality might influence the front-stage workers' understand of their world, so might some interpretations regarding capitalism influence the construction of the back-stage world – a world that observes an ultimate concern of profit. Some of the most prominent influences of capitalism will be discussed in Chapter Three.

Thus, the front-stage world and the back-stage world observe two very different ultimate concerns. These two conflicting ultimate concerns are the reason for the current spirituality of hospitality – a spirituality of dissonance and unhappiness. The hope of a new spirituality lies in the crucifixion of the current dominant myths – a myth of unconditional hospitality as well as the myth of profit. Only when these myths are crucified can a new spirituality of hope and grace come to be (Meylahn 2014:6).

From the above, it is clear that this study situates itself within the social constructionist view of reality. However, many of the challenges that socially constructed realities are confronted with is associated with dominant discourses. These discourses need to be challenged (deconstructed) in an attempt to create space for alternative preferred constructions. It is only when one examines the constructions and one's stories that one will realise how these multiplicities affect one's way of understanding (Freedman & Combs 1996:35).

The purpose of this study is to attempt to assist hospitality workers to understand the social construction of the front-stage world and the back-stage world because only if they understand the constructions of these worlds will it be possible for them to de-construct and re-construct these worlds.

1.5. CONTEXT OF THIS STUDY

Hotel guests expect of the workers of the front-stage world to show unconditional hospitality. These expectations place tremendous stress on the front-stage workers to 'perform' at their best all the time. However, authentic hospitality is not always possible.

There are numerous factors that challenge front-stage workers emotionally every day. For one, guests expect of the front-stage workers to always serve with a smile. But it is not always possible for the workers of the front-stage world to show authentic kindness. In an attempt to compensate for their emotional challenges, these workers often wear 'happy-face' masks to create an impression of kindness. For guests, these 'masks' might look authentic, but for the front-stage workers, these masks are part of their 'stage make-up' as they 'perform' their daily duties on the front-stage.

Another aspect that challenges the front-stage workers emotionally is the demands of the back-stage world. For the workers of the back-stage world – who observe an ultimate concern of profit – it is important that the workers of the front-stage world accomplish their duties – to show unconditional hospitality – as economically as possible. This means that the front-stage world is often understaffed and the workers often overworked.

In addition to the abovementioned factors, there is yet another aspect that places emotional pressure on the front-stage workers. That is the management styles of some of the back-stage workers. In their interviews, the co-researchers articulated that they have witnessed incidents where members of the back-stage world treat workers of the front-stage world disrespectfully. Because the workers of the front stage-world fear victimization, they are reluctant to report incidents that implicate back-stage workers. For some of these front-stage workers this is too much to bear and for them, the only reasonable option is to resign.

In the early nineties, Zohar (1994:1) noted that scholars showed increasing interest in occupational stress. However, little research was conducted on occupational stress in the

hotel industry. In her article, 'Analysis of job stress profile in the hotel industry', Zohar (1994) elaborates on how occupational stress affects hospitality workers. Her concern was noted and in the past twenty years, much research has been done concerning the effect of occupational stress on hospitality workers.

Recent research showed that occupational stress is not only associated with reduced work output, increased accidents on duty, absenteeism, employee turnover and poor employee performances. It also affects the private lives of employees, causing marital, friendship and community problems (Kahn & Byosiere 1992; Mulvaney, O'Neil, Cleveland & Crouter 2007).

Consistent with stressors associated with the hospitality industry, shift work and the number of hours worked also have a significant effect on the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of employees (Presser 2004:95). Shift work is notably related to greater marital disagreements and child-related problems so too are work schedules that involve weekends and holidays (Almeida 2004:127). Shifts are common in the hotel industry and poses challenges for people trying to negotiate work-family interface. These outcomes evidently result in significant economic and social costs for both employers and employees.

Another aspect that further contributes to the emotional stress of hospitality workers is intensive customer interaction (Haynes & Fryer 1999:34). All these situations impose on hospitality employees a concept that some refer to as 'emotional labour'; a requirement for employees to act in an empathic, professional, positive and friendly manner at all times when dealing with customers to make them feel wanted and welcome (Rafaeli & Sutton (1987:25). According to Rafaeli and Sutton (1987:25), such constant faking of emotions can result in heightened dissonance.

Some hospitality employees also find it spiritually challenging to host prostitutes, adulterers and adulteresses, and guests whose conduct stands in direct contrast to the

spiritual beliefs of an employee. McGuire (2009:2) refers to this disposition as spiritual labor and argues that it can lead to inner spiritual conflict.

Work stress is a phenomenon that is costly to organisations due to voluntary turnover (O'Neill & Davis 2011:1). Work stress also has a negative effect on quality customer service, that is, less stressed employees deliver better quality service than those who are exposed to prolonged stressful situations (Varca 1999:1). Work stress has also been linked to increases in exhaustion, decreases in work ability, depressive symptoms, hostility towards co-workers and guests, and general withdrawal (O'Neill & Davis 2011:1).

A growing number of organizations are implementing programs that encourage employees to provide a higher level of internal service quality. Some of these programs focus on workplace spirituality. The primary aim of these programs is to encourage the personal spiritual growth of their employees (Crawford, Hubbard, Lonis-Shumate & O'Neill 2009:4).

Because the hospitality industry is mainly driven by service delivery, the manner in which hospitality employees interact with guests has a direct effect on the success of an establishment (Smith, Gregory & Cannon 1996:3). However, Pizam (2004:315) points out that the constant demand for hospitality workers to maintain a positive demeanour can be emotionally devastating. According to Pizam (2004:316), it is imperative to investigate the effect of workplace spirituality in the hospitality setting, not only to benefit hotel employees but also to assist human resources in their efforts to better the working environment for hospitality workers.

1.6. RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

During my medical career, I often spoke to hospitality workers – mostly workers from the front-stage world. These workers articulated that the front-stage world is a world that presents tremendous emotional challenges. According to these workers, some of the greatest challenges that they are confronted with include the uncivil behaviour of some of

the back-stage workers to members of the front-stage world. These acts of maltreatment often happen in public areas. Some workers of the front-stage world referred to this mistreatment as bullying.

For the workers of the front-stage world, respect, kindness and integrity are important. This language of the front-stage world is in accordance with the ultimate concern of the front-stage world – that being unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction. To disrespect these concepts is to disrespect the ultimate concern of the front-stage world.

Some of the front-stage workers that I spoke to explained that their religious upbringings have a definitive effect on the way that they construct the front-stage world. Many of them talked about Biblical examples of hospitality and that a guest should be treated as if he or she is a representative of God. In most religions, such as Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, to name but a few, hospitality is highly regarded. Thus, it is possible that hospitality workers from various religious denominations might refer to religious customs of hospitality in their understanding of the front-stage world.

Some of the front-stage workers referred to this association with religious principles as workplace spirituality – a phenomenon that is receiving growing interest amongst scholars (Crawford *et al.* 2009; Tischler, Biberman & McKeage 2002; Harrah 2014; Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson 2003). However, empirical research concerning the role and value of spirituality in the contemporary hospitality industry has enjoyed less attention.

According to Spillane and Sanata (2001:1), hospitality, by its very nature, has a spiritual dimension that can neither be ignored nor hidden. For this reason, argues Spillane and Sanata (2001:1, 2) it should be a priority to help hospitality workers find true meaningfulness in their work “so they experience the peace and joy that God has prepared for them.” Thus, to assist hospitality workers to find spiritual meaning in their working environment; one will have to determine what religious stories and traditions and philosophies might influence the construction of both the front-stage world and the back-stage world.

In antiquity, hospitality was mainly a religious obligation. The guidelines regarding hospitality were stipulated in certain religious scriptures¹. However, while certain scriptures of different religious traditions stress the importance of hospitality, the face of hospitality has changed tremendously throughout the years. As the demand for lodging grew, commercial hospitality started to develop. Establishments such as hotels, inns and brothels were erected. For these institutions, profit rather than religion, was the driving force. It can perhaps be argued that it was during this time that the back-stage world of hospitality was founded.

While some might argue that it is possible to distinguish between religiously motivated hospitality and profit driven hospitality, the hosts, or the ‘actors’, in both these scenarios often have to create the impression that their kindness is authentic. For instance, in antiquity, the host had to be kind to protect his honour and to ensure the safety of him and his household, and in the commercial setting, the host has to be kind to secure profit.²

In the contemporary hospitality industry there is a ‘stage’ where the actual play of hospitality takes place, and then there is a ‘back stage’ – a place of exposure, chaos, and turmoil. In the midst of this mayhem, there is a team at work. The team members of this back-stage world are not actors, and they do not wear ‘happy-face’ masks because they hardly ever go on ‘stage’. Their function is administrative and unlike the ‘actors’ who thrive on applause, they thrive on profit. In these corridors behind the stage, there is no trace of the euphoric nuance that the audience experience during the ‘play’. Here hospitality turns into a business – a very lucrative business.

According to Holjevac (2003:130), the tourism and hospitality industry is in the process of becoming one of the biggest world industries in the 21st century. Each year spectacular establishments are erected all over the globe, providing ample work opportunity. While this is an exciting thought for investors and guests, it places immense pressure on

¹ In Chapter 2, I will discuss some of these scripts, from both the Old and New Testament.

² The customs of hospitality, as it evolved through the centuries, is discussed in Chapter 2.

establishments to outperform the competition. One can thus assume that the emotional challenges that hospitality workers will have to endure in the future will only increase.

1.7. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Shortly before the start of the new millennium, articles were published in journals such as the Wall Street Journal, Business Week, and Fortune in which workers expressed their growing desire to find meaning and purpose at work, indicating the need for a spiritual dimension to organizational life (Duchon & Plowman 2005:807). The desire for such a spiritual element was concurred during multiple conversations I had with hospitality workers throughout the years. For these workers, hospitality was not merely an occupation. For them, hospitality had a strong spiritual dimension – referring to their understanding of the concept of hospitality concerning their religious orientation.

Although previous workplace spirituality research has primarily focused on work attitudes, as well as organizational effects (Gatling 2015:187) much still needs to be explored concerning how hospitality employees view workplace spirituality and how they incorporate this concept in their working environment.³ It is the intention of this study to shine light on this void.

The hospitality workers who participated in this study are all members of management who work in the front-stage world of the contemporary hospitality industry. It is required of these workers to show unconditional hospitality to guests. The objective of this study is to acquire an understanding of the lived experiences of the participating members of the front-stage world regarding their understanding of workplace spirituality as perceived through their lived experiences in the front-stage world.

³ In Chapter 3, a literary review is given of the following concepts: Religion, spirituality, workplace spirituality and contemporary hospitality.

1.8. RESEARCH QUESTION

The contemporary hospitality industry consists of two worlds – the front-stage world and the back-stage world. The workers of the front-stage world observe an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction. On the other hand, the workers of the back-stage world observe an ultimate concern of profit. In this diversity, there currently reigns a spirituality of conflict and discontentment.

This spirituality poses many emotional challenges for the workers of the front-stage world because it is expected of these workers to show authentic hospitality to guests. Because the workers of the front-stage world are emotionally burdened, they often have no choice but to wear ‘happy-face’ masks to create an impression of hospitality. However, behind these ‘happy-face’ masks hide the real face of hospitality – a face that speaks of great unhappiness.

The research question is thus:

Is there a possibility that a spirituality of hope can help create a preferred working environment for workers of the contemporary hospitality industry?

Secondary research questions:

- What are the dominant influences shaping the construction of the front-stage world’s spirituality?
- What are the dominant influences shaping the construction of the back-stage world’s spirituality?
- Does religion play a role in the construction of these two realities?

1.9. STATISTICAL OVERVIEW OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA

In an attempt to get an estimation of the national number of hospitality workers, I contacted the Culture Arts Tourism Hospitality and Sports Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA) to provide me with their latest statistics. The statistics reflect the data obtained during 2014. The information was sent to me via e-mail. The corresponding person was Shivanthini Nagalingam (2015), a research manager at CATHSSETA. The statistics refer to levy-paying hotels in South Africa who submitted a Mandatory Grant Application in 2014 only. The hotels have been categorized based on the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes:

- Code 64101 – hotels, motels, boatels and inns registered with the SA Tourism Board.
- Code 64104 – hotels, motels, boatels and inns not registered with the SA Tourism Board.

CATHSSETA statistics for 2014

Total number of levy paying hotels in South Africa who submitted a Mandatory Grant Application in 2014	Total number of employees of levy-paying hotels in South Africa who submitted a Mandatory Grant Application in 2014	Average percentage of payroll spent on training as reported by levy-paying hotels who submitted a Mandatory Grant Application in 2014
226	31 749	4,23%

It is important to note Sun International does not fall under hotels based on their SIC code. It falls under the SIC code 96494: Gambling, Licensed Casinos and the National Lottery and, but not limited, to Bookmakers, Totalisators, Casinos, and Bingo Operator.

I contacted an executive manager of Sun International, Herman Swart, about their current employee statistics. After a telephonic conversation with Mr. Swart, he sent me the statistics via e-mail. In 2014, before the restructuring of their employees, Sun International had approximately twelve thousand employees employed at their thirteen national establishments (Swart 2015). The current 2015 statistics have not yet been released.

1.10. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

1.10.1. Postfoundational Practical Theology

At the end of the previous millennium, Heitink (1999:XV) remarked that the discipline of practical theology is going through a global transformation. According to Heitink (1999:XV), practical theology should no longer be seen as the “application of findings and guidelines developed by so-called foundational theological disciplines of exegetical, historical, and systematic theology.” For Heitink, the primary focus of practical theology should be that it is indeed practical. In 2012, Macallan and Hendriks (2012:194) supported Heitink’s statement, arguing that practical theology has progressed from merely being applied theology to the point that it should be viewed as “the natural way of doing theology.”

Traditionally, practical theology searched to bring Christian belief and cultural-religious understandings into normative or transformative conversation (Meylahn 2013:1). Initially, it was a linear conversation where historic theology focused on facts, and systematic theology was tasked to capture these facts into understandable dogmatic assertions which could be applied to the context of practice (Meylahn 2013:1). This philosophical transformation resulted in a new understanding of theology and particular; namely practical theology (Meylahn 2013:1). With this linguistic turn, practical theology, which is primarily concerned with the correlation of Biblical text and context, advanced from the parameters of theology to the core of theology as the hermeneutical thought and conversation became the quintessence of theology (Meylahn 2013:1).

Another transformation of practical theology was the shift from being church-centred, to the public domain (Meylahn 2013:1). After the philosophical turn, practical theologians started to explore the different religious dimensions of various human practices. As a result, postfoundational practical theological research became interested in how different people describe particular contexts, and how these interpretations influence their lives (Müller 2004:300). However, practical theological research is not only concerned with the description and interpretation of experiences but also in how the different stories that emerge through the research process can be developed into new theories of understanding (Müller 2004:304). Van Huyssteen (2007:5) calls this paradigm a postfoundationalist approach.

For the postfoundationalist, argues Van Huyssteen (2007:5), “human experience is embodied, embedded in, and filtered through complex networks of belief.” Thus, all our radically contextual experiences have hermeneutical elements that cause us to relate cognitively to the world, and to one another by means of interpreted experience (Van Huyssteen 2007:5). So, how can one thus understand postfoundational practical theology?

Meylahn (2014:3) explains that postfoundational practical theology can be understood as being a theology where God’s actions, revealed through Christ, is not merely a theme to be reflected on, “but a certain postmetaphysical interpretation of God informs the spirituality of the whole approach. A postmetaphysical interpretation of God, where the shift is away from ‘transcending patterns of action’, has the possibility of being a non-religious method to interpret and engage *lived religion* critically.”

Osmer (2006:328) further points out that: “Practical theology constructs action-guiding theories of Christian praxis in particular social contexts based on four interrelated forms of research and scholarship – the descriptive-empirical, the interpretive, the normative, and the pragmatic.” Considering these thoughts, it can thus be said that practical theology places itself within the multiplicity of human experience, establishing its roots in the

complex network of relationships and experiences that shapes the fabric of all that we know (Swinton & Mowat 2006:155).

Practical theology involves the interpretation of a specific field of social action (Osmer 2006:328) – as in the case of this study, the showing of hospitality by contemporary hospitality workers. Interpretation usually requires an empirical investigation such as narrative inquiry. The primary goal of narrative inquiry is to interpret the information gathered during the interviews. It can thus be said that the aim of practical theology is to perform empirical investigations regarding human activity, to interpret the findings, and to provide models of practice and guidelines for future conduct and transformation (Osmer 2006:328, 329).

Considering that practical theology focuses on human experience and endeavours to explore faith as an embodied act, Browning (1996:10) points out that “religious narratives and metaphors can function to enliven, liberate, and make more effective the workings of practical reason.” Thus, practical theological inquiry is crucial as it provides insight as to how various practices, such as hospitality, are performed and understood by the Christian community, not only in the Church, but also in the world we live in (Swinton & Mowat 2006:212). As Swinton and Mowat (2006:452) point out:

...all human practices are historically grounded and inherently value-laden. Practices such as prayer, hospitality and friendship contain their own particular theological meanings, social and theological histories, implicit and explicit norms and moral expectations. The ways in which we practice and the forms of practice in which we participate are therefore filled with deep meaning, purpose and direction. Put slightly differently, the forms of practice that we participate in are theory-laden.

Thus, the way in which people construct their realities, are influenced by historical, religious, and cultural influences. From a postfoundational practical theological narrative approach, emphasis continuously shifts from individual to social, and from subjective to discourse, forcing the researcher to listen to the narratives of the co-researchers

concerning real-life situations (Ganzevoort 2014:215). If approached from such an angle, practical theology becomes part of “doing theology” and as a result respects the contexts of lived experiences (Müller 2004:295).

Müller (2013:1) further explains that practical theology “is known for its fluidity and dynamics which enables it to move eloquently between various fields of study.” For Müller practical theology has the ability to move on a continuum of polarities, allowing it sometimes to lean to the side of dogmatics while at other times to the side of arts. The motion behind this movement, says Müller (2013:1), “comes from the specific and localised context, which creates both an imperative and directness of movement.”

Perhaps this is why Ballard (1992:34) compares a practical theologian with an artist. Ballard substantiates his comparison by pointing out that as an artist, the practical theologian often stands in the view of the church and the world, seeking a way to articulate and inform faith. Thus, one can perhaps say that the same artistic process that creates the artist, also creates the practical theologian.

Through the process of creation, both the practical theologian and the artist, display their inner spirit to be transformed to a new image. Thus, through art – as in the case of this study in which the researcher produced a film – the practical theologian communicates, in a creative genre, his/her perspective of experienced theology, overbridging the obstacle of language.

When practical theology leans to the side of the arts, it should be considered that it is the interpretation of the artist, or the researcher, regarding a particular topic or phenomenon that one will observe. Louw (2003:44) points out that such hermeneutical interpretation in qualitative research assists to establish how people understand God and how one’s God-image affects one’s quest for meaning and hope. This approach of individual understanding is supported by the principles of social constructionism.

1.10.2. Social Constructionism

Since the early 1980's a number of alternative approaches to sociology emerged, namely critical psychology, discursive psychology, discourse analysis, deconstruction and also postfoundationalism (Gergen & Gergen 2004:7). All of these approaches focus, in some way or another on social constructionism (Burr 2015:1; Gergen & Gergen 2004:7). Social constructionism, in its turn, is influenced by a number of disciplines, such as philosophy, sociology and linguistics, making it multidisciplinary in nature (Burr 2015:2).

The purpose of this particular paradigm is to encourage us to rethink practically everything we were taught about the world and ourselves (Gergen & Gergen 2004:8) and "to be critical of the idea that our observations of the world unproblematically yield its nature to us, to challenge the view that conventional knowledge is based upon objective, unbiased observation of the world" (Burr 2015:2).

Social constructionism stands in opposition to what is known as positivism and empiricism⁴, epistemologies that are characteristic of 'hard' sciences such as physics and biology and it cautions one to be suspicious of one's assumptions about how we see the world (Burr 2015:3). While the agenda of mainstream psychology is to discover universal values of psychological performance, social constructionism argues that the way one understands the world is influenced by history and culture (Burr 2015:4).

An efficient manner in which to apply this paradigm in research is through the process of narrative inquiry. By listening to the stories of people, one can attempt to make sense of how people experience the worlds they live in.

⁴ Positivism, and empiricism assumes that the nature of the world can be discovered by observation and that what exists is what we perceive to exist (Burr 2015:2, 3).

1.10.3. Epistemological positioning

The epistemological positioning of this qualitative empirical, practical theological study will be that of postfoundational narrative inquiry. The qualitative paradigm, according to Merriam (2009:5), is interested in discovering how people interpret their specific life experiences and what meaning they attribute to these experiences. As Morgan and Sklar (2012:73) point out; reality is socially constructed and, therefore, constitute of multiple realities.

A distinguishing factor of qualitative narrative inquiry is to encourage rich, in-depth descriptions of a specific phenomenon (Morgan & Sklar 2012:73). As Van Huyssteen (2000:437) points out, one should keep in mind that different people experience situations differently due to their diverse cultural traditions.

1.10.4. Postfoundationalism

The choice of the researcher to position herself in a postfoundational epistemology required of her to distance herself from a modernistic manner of thought, typically associated with Western medical thought. The reason for this epistemological shift is because this study is not interested in factual evidence, but rather in the lived experiences of the co-researchers.

The postfoundational paradigm, explains Van Huyssteen (2006:10) embodies persons rather than abstract beliefs. Thus, postfoundationalism encourages us to acknowledge contextuality by always reminding us of the crucial role of tradition and that experiences are individually interpreted, thus urging us to venture beyond the borders of culture, in reasonable forms of inter-subjective, cross-contextual, and cross-disciplinary conversations (Van Huyssteen 2006:10).

A postfoundational transversal perspective is different to foundationalism and non-foundationalism as these epistemologies open up the possibility of “multiversal rationality”

and “universal rationality” (Müller 2011:3). The aim of a postfoundational transversal approach – a paradigm that is strongly associated with social constructionism – is thus to move *beyond* claims of universal rationality. It is for this reason it is called *postfoundational* and not *anti-foundational* or *nonfoundational* (Müller 2011:3; Van Huyssteen 2006:12). Müller (2004:299) argues that once the practical theologian realises that identity and rationality are socially constructed, can he/she be liberated from the need to defend theological rationality against other scientific rationalities. This is when the practical theologian recognizes “that our understanding of reality (rationality) is a co-product of a broader community and not the idiosyncratic product of theologians with their own isolated rationality” (Müller 2004:300).

Transversal rationality is characterised by “the dynamics of consciousness, the interweaving of many voices, the interplay of social practices...that points to a sense of transition, lying across, extending over, intersecting, meeting, and conveying without becoming identical” (Van Huyssteen 2006:19). Thus, transversality identifies multiple, but equally important ways of looking at concepts, not with the intention to contradict but rather to interact dynamically with other people (Van Huyssteen 2000:429).

Transversality or postfoundational rationality “represents a distinct move from seeing the human self as a pure epistemological point to seeing the self as resituated in the space of communicative praxis” (Van Huyssteen 2000:430), constantly striving to venture beyond the constraints of social structure and tradition toward a credible configuration of interdisciplinary conversation – a paradigm that Van Huyssteen also suggests to be considered in the interpretation of theology (Müller 2004:300).

In the following table, Müller provides his “translation” of Van Huyssteen’s description and summary of postfoundational theology (left column) for practical theology. In the right column, Müller rephrases the theory of postfoundational theology in order to develop an alternative practical theological research process, consisting of seven movements (Müller 2004:300). Although not specifically structured according to these seven movements, the

development of this study will broadly correlate with these movements. Phrases in bold represent Müller’s emphasis (Müller 2004:300).

Postfoundational theology versus postfoundational practical theology.

POSTFOUNDATIONALIST THEOLOGY	POSTFOUNDATIONALIST PRACTICAL THEOLOGY
<p>... a postfoundationalist theology wants to make two moves. First, it fully acknowledges contextuality, the epistemically crucial role of interpreted experience, and the way that tradition shapes the epistemic and nonepistemic values that inform our reflection about God and what some of us believe about God’s presence in this world. At the same time, however, a postfoundationalist notion of rationality in theological reflection claims to point creatively beyond the confines of the local community, group, or culture towards a plausible form of interdisciplinary conversation.</p>	<p>The context and interpreted experience</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A specific context is described. 2. In-context experiences are listened to and described. 3. Interpretations of experiences are made, described and developed in collaboration with ‘co-researchers’. <p>Traditions of interpretation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. A description of experiences as it is continually informed by traditions of interpretation. <p>God’s presence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. A reflection of God’s presence, as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation. Thickened through interdisciplinary investigation 6. A description of experience thickened through interdisciplinary investigation. <p>Point beyond the local community</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. The development of alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community.

According to Van Huyssteen (2007:1), a postfoundational theological reflection is “radically shaped by the enduring influence of its own traditions, and thereby by its social, historical, and cultural embeddedness.” Van Huyssteen compares postfoundational theological thought to the evolution of human cognition. For this reason, he refers to postfoundationalism as an evolutionary epistemology because “the process of evolution is the principal provider of the organization of all living things and their adaptations” (Van Huyssteen 2007:1).

From a theological perspective, this evolutionary epistemology is groundbreaking for helping us understand the evolutionary impact of our ancestral history regarding the evolution of culture, and eventually in the development of disciplinary and interdisciplinary reflection (Van Huyssteen 2007:3, 4). The relevance of these considerations of Van Huyssteen will become evident in this study when the different elements are discussed that might contribute to the construction of the front-stage world and the back-stage world.

Also essential to the epistemology of postfoundational rationality is the theory of experience that enables one to reason sufficiently about the multiple facets of one’s life (Van Huyssteen 2007:5). Thus, from a postfoundational perspective, our experiences are exemplified, embedded in, and filtered through an intricate network of beliefs. Against this background, Van Huyssteen (2007:5) argues that a postfoundational theological approach frees us from “epistemic narcissism and epistemological tribalism, and allows theology to become *public, interdisciplinary theology*”, placing it on the same platform as the intellectual integrity and legitimacy of the natural, social, and human sciences, while it defines its own sphere of thought that is distinct from the thought of the sciences. This enables theologians to enter interdisciplinary conversation, or transversal reasoning, keeping their own thoughts intact, while being empowered to venture into the domains of their own contexts and traditions (Van Huyssteen 2007:6).

It can thus be said that postfoundational transversal reasoning is a definitive parting from the hierarchical ways of configuring various disciplines and thinking strategies because it helps us to understand that different forms of human thinking are often complex, though

non-hierarchical, and as such, emphasising the differences between various fields of rationality (Van Huyssteen 2007:7). As a result, transversal reasoning allows for the “emergence of paradigmatic interdisciplinary networks and opens up the possibility that different disciplines, although never fully integrated can learn from one another and actually benefit by appropriating insights presented in interdisciplinary dialogue” (Van Huyssteen 2007:7). A methodological approach that is well suited for this paradigm is that of narrative inquiry.

According to Müller (2013:3), the methodology of narrative inquiry has gained popularity in the study field of practical theology, especially concerning the epistemological approach of qualitative postfoundational inquiry. Müller (2011:5) explains that practical theologians are “part of a transition which makes us more dependent, more fragile and more needed than ever.” Thus, the practical theologian plays an important part in the facilitation of people’s narratives regarding their experiences as it relates to God. For Müller (2011:5), it is important that the practical theologian engages in interdisciplinary dialogue so that emphasis can be placed on the human condition concerning the community of faith.

1.11. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Qualitative research involves a variety of methods and approaches, such as phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, case study, and narrative inquiry (Swinton & Mowat 2006:631). This postfoundational qualitative study will rely on the method of narrative inquiry.

In the field of practical theology, postfoundational narrative inquiry has gained much popularity (Müller 2013:3). One of the aspects that attract researchers to employ this methodology is because it relies on the individual understandings and realities of people and how they experience God – or the presence of God – rather than the theories of theologians who argue for their respective reasonings and interpretations of specific veracities. Thus, postfoundational reasoning helps us to understand the complexity of

individual thought, reminding us of the differences and uniqueness of individual rationality (Van Huyssteen 2007:7).

1.11.1. Narrative inquiry

Salkind (2010:2) defines the epistemological grounding of narrative inquiry as “a continuum of postmodern philosophical ideas in that there is a respect for the relativity and multiplicity of truth in regard to human sciences.” In this regard, Müller (2004:297) points out that practical theology is a discipline that is in proximity to several other fields, including anthropology, sociology and psychology. In the recent past, all of these areas have been showing signs of development regarding the methodology of narrative inquiry.

Humans are interpreting beings who constantly seek to make meaning of their daily experiences (Morgan 2000:5). The narratives of our lives are shaped by the amalgamation of individual events in a particular order across a period, and we all have an urge to make sense of these events (Morgan 2000:5). Thus, a narrative is like a thread that weaves the events in our lives together, shaping our unique individual stories. Swinton and Mowat (2006:799) refer to narratives as personal tales that shape the foundation of our understanding. As Clandinen and Connely (2000:20) point out:

Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is collaboration between researcher and co-researchers, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in this same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experience that make up people’s lives, both individual and social. Simply stated...narrative inquiry is stories lived and told.

Narrative inquiry relies on the ongoing development of the interviewee’s perspective during the course of the interview. For this reason, understanding the co-researchers’ unique and changing perspective as it is narrated within a specific context takes precedence over questions of fact. It is thus of utmost importance that the interviewee

feels comfortable in the presence of the interviewer to speak freely as a relaxed environment can enhance the quality and thickness of the interviewee's story. According to Miller and Brewer (2003:2), the interplay between the interviewee and interviewer is at the core of this approach.

Furthermore, narrative inquiry is more interested in description and understanding than measuring and predicting, rather focuses on meaning than causation and frequency, interpretation rather than statistical analysis, and recognizes the importance of language and discourse rather than reduction to numerical representation (Salkind 2010:3).

Thus, narrative research desires to explore the experiences of people, whether represented in verbal or textual form. However, although there are many possibilities to interpret experience, no interpretation is actually true. As Freedman and Combs (1996:35) put it: "when we say that there are many possible stories about self, we do not mean to say 'anything goes'. Rather, we are motivated to examine our constructions and stories – how they have come to be and what their effects are on ourselves and others."

1.12. THE DANCE OF NARRATIVE INQUIRY

The narratives that will be discussed in this study will unfold according to five 'dance movements'. Meylahn (2012:56-63) talks of a metaphorical dance that consists of five steps to explain the methodology of narrative inquiry from a postfoundational perspective. In this dance, the researcher is somebody who facilitates the opportunity for listening and interpreting. Meylahn explains that his reasoning for this particular metaphor is because a dance is repetitive and circular.

The researcher chose to follow this particular paradigm because this model's metaphorical perspective has a natural and logical flow. By envisioning the circular movements of this methodology throughout the interviewing process, one is inclined to 'circle' between the different layers of the narratives. This constant reconsideration of the different layers of the narratives results in a deeper reflection on the narratives in totality.

1.12.1. Listening

According to Clandinin and Rosiek (2007:42), the starting point for narrative inquiry is

... an exploration of the social, cultural and institutional narratives within which individual's experiences are constituted, shaped, expressed and enacted – but in a way that begins and ends that inquiry in the storied lives of the people involved. Narrative inquirers study an individual's experience in the world and, through the study, seek ways of enriching and transforming that experience for themselves and others.

To listen implies the entering into the narratives of the co-researchers – listening to the numerous layers of their stories. The first layer represents the freely shared narratives where the co-researchers briefly talk about their personal lives and how it came about that they became hoteliers.

In the second layer, the co-researchers shared more individual experiences regarding their working environment. In this layer, the co-researchers revealed the “cracks, discrepancies and wounds of the dominant common language” (Meylahn 2012:57). Here the unheard and unrevealed narratives emerged from under the dominating authority of the shared language of the front-stage world.

According to Meylahn, this level of narratives can only be shared if the co-researchers trust the researcher because often, hidden in the layer, are stories of vulnerability that do not fit in the typical values of the particular environment. It is usually not easy for co-researchers to talk about these narratives because one can easily be judged and condemned because one's narrative might deviate from the norms and values associated with the hospitality industry.

1.12.2. Interpreting

In this step, the researcher placed the narratives of the co-researchers in context and identified the dominant narratives that have influenced the co-researchers' understanding of religion, spirituality, and workplace spirituality. In order to answer the research question, it was important to identify the different layers of narratives that influenced the co-researchers' construction of the before mentioned concepts.

The co-researchers' metaphorical reference to the front-stage world as a 'stage' where they, the 'actors', have to 'act' their parts, lent itself out to be interpreted in a creative way. As a result, I decided to produce a film in which professional actors act the parts of the co-researchers as they 'act' their parts in the front-stage world.

The analysis of narrative research texts is primarily aimed at inductively understanding the meanings of the co-researchers' stories and organizing them at some more conceptual level of meaning making. As Gergen (1985:273) puts it: "The sciences have been enchanted by the myth that the assiduous application of rigorous method will yield sound fact – as if empirical methodology were some form of meat grinder from which truth could be turned out like so many sausages."

Situated in postfoundational narrative inquiry, this research will not rely on the tradition of analysis and the codification of information. Such methods are usually associated with the methodology of grounded theory where the researcher uses coding, comparison, memo writing and theoretical sampling to acquire a hypothesis (Heppner & Heppner 2004:148, 154). Instead, the researcher will view each interview individually, and as the process of interviewing unfolds, discern which topics might be relevant and which themes might be present.

1.12.3. Discerning

In this step, the dominant ideologies that emerged during the interviewing process are recognized, not judged, from an objective perspective. However, it is also important to reflect on the less dominant, or shadow stories. By listening to the shadow stories, the cracks in the dominant stories was revealed. These shadow stories might be strengthened by the voices from religious traditions.

According to Freedman and Combs (1996:169), it is through the reflection of different experiences that the notion of multiple possibilities arises. Putting it differently, to reflect can also mean that one needs to look at ideologies, not necessarily from a different room, but from a different perspective. However, even though one looks at a room from a different corner, the elements in the room will inevitably influence the way that one observes the room. As Dewey (1987:251) put it:

Because every experience is constituted by interaction between “subject” and “object”, between a self and its world, it is not itself either merely physical nor merely mental, no matter how much one factor or the other predominates. The experiences that are emphatically called, because of the dominance of the internal contribution, “mental”, have reference, direct or remote, to experiences of a more objective character; they are the products of discrimination, and hence can be understood only as we take into account the total normal experience in which both inner and outer factors are so incorporated that each has lost its special character. In an experience, things and events belonging to the world, physical and social, are transformed through the human context they enter, while the live creature is changed and developed through its intercourse with things previously external to it.

1.12.4. Poetry (re-authoring)

In this step, the researcher identifies with the narratives of the co-researchers. During this movement, the dialogue of the co-researchers need to be brought into the context in the

attempt to discern what is happening. Here, the researcher can explore the possibilities that have to be considered for the co-researchers to re-author their stories. In this step, the power of the dominant myths are broken and the possibility of hope is explored.

1.12.5. Embracing – Listening: A never-ending dance

In this movement, according to Meylahn (2012:63), space is created that is filled with possibilities of transformation, liberated from the dominating myths. Thus, once it becomes clear what can be changed, and what cannot be changed, new redemptive ideas will emerge. These ideas can ultimately result in practices that can be adopted by the hospitality industry in the attempt to change the current dominant myths. However, change does not mark the end of our stories. Change only gives new direction for our future stories. As Dyson and Genishi (1994:242-243) put it:

... stories help to make sense of, evaluate, and integrate the tensions inherent in experience: the past with the present, the fictional with the 'real', the official with the unofficial, personal with the professional, the canonical with the different and unexpected. Stories help us transform the present and shape the future for our students and ourselves so that it will be richer or better than the past.

1.13. THE INTERVIEWS

According to Seabi (2012:89), interviews are the most important tool for collecting data in qualitative research. Interviewing is a process through which the researcher asks open-ended questions about a specific topic or phenomenon, to learn about the interviewee's ideas, beliefs, views, and opinions. One of the goals of interviews, according to Seabi (2012:89), is to obtain "rich and descriptive information that will enable the researcher to understand the social reality of the participants and to saturate data." When talking about narrative inquiry, many scholars refer to stories as a means of collecting data. However, from a postfoundational perspective, one should perhaps rather refer to it as the sharing of experiences.

Silverman and Gubrium (1994:179-198) point out that the personal characteristics of the interviewer can greatly influence the nuance of the interview and that the interviewer should guard not to react openly to remarks of the interviewee. Thus, the manner in which the interview is constituted is central to authentic narrative inquiry. Salkind (2010:6) argues that no matter how much the interviewer attempts to put aside his or her biases or associations to the interview content, the researcher will inevitably have an impact on the interviewee. The implication is that with, the emphasis on stories in research from a postfoundational perspective; it cannot be merely a data collection technique. It is rather a collaborative construction of meaning.

1.13.1. Semi-structured interviews

The primary methods of in-depth qualitative interviews are semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Rubin & Rubin 2012:31). In the semi-structured interview, the researcher will ask questions related to a specific topic. A limited number of questions will be asked, and follow-up questions will develop from the conversation.

Semi-structured interviews are neither fully fixed nor fully free and are commonly viewed as flexible (Seabi 2012:89). For this reason, Seabi recommends that researchers using this method should begin with a defined questioning plan, yet attempt to implement a more conversational style of interviews.

Questions should be sufficiently open-ended to encourage co-researchers to explain themselves fully. However, it is not necessary that every question elicits a story. The success of using interviews as a technique for gathering data relies on several factors (Seabi 2012:90):

- Establishing rapport: To gather rich data, you must ease the participant into the main questions. For this reason, sensitive or threatening questions should be avoided at the start of the interview session. Keep eye contact.

- Non-verbal cues: Be conscious of the participant's non-verbal cues, for they may reveal significant information.⁵
- Open-ended questions: Avoid leading questions and close-ended questions with yes/no responses as they will prevent you from accessing or gathering correct data.
- Keep it flowing: Make use of prompts, probes and encouraging words such as 'tell me more', 'really', 'why?'
- Listening: The golden rule of interviewing is to listen more and speak less: Remember the interview is about gathering information and if you talk too much yourself you may end up with surface information only.

One of the most important aspects, if not the most important, of narrative inquiry is the skill to ask good questions. Theron and Malindi (2012:102) list some of the most important qualitative skills. However, in respect of skills, one needs to remember that some notions were derived from modernistic thinking. Accounting for it here, it serves as a guideline.

- Setting the stage: Although you have already discussed the purpose of the study and how the interviews will proceed, it is important to make the interviewee feel comfortable and at ease. Encourage the interviewee to address you by your first name.
- Showing appreciation: Keep in mind that the interviewee sacrificed time to be interviewed. Thank the interviewee before and after the interview and assure the interviewee that his/her participation is appreciated and valuable.
- Listening: During qualitative research, the focus is on the interviewee and the story he/she is sharing with the interviewer. The interviewer should do as little talking as possible and should listen attentively. It is important that the interviewee feels that you are following the story. The interviewee can make

⁵ The purpose of non-verbal cues is not to make an expert conclusion regarding the emotional state of a participant, but rather to contribute to the framework of narrative conversation in such a manner that the reader can understand the nuance of the conversation at that particular point.

comments such as ‘what did you say then?’ It is also important to continuously clarify that you understand (‘do I understand you correctly?’).

- Asking only open-ended questions/using open-ended prompts: Avoid questions that can be answered with ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Use words such as what? Why? How?
- Asking non-threatening questions: Avoid asking questions that will make the interviewee feel uncomfortable. It is not only unethical but also disruptive to the report. It is advisable to start the interview with gentle questions and to build the interview from there. Try not to sit opposite the interviewee, but rather at left or right corner of the interviewee. Sitting directly opposite a table from the interviewee can create a barrier.
- Probing responses: It is important to explore the interviewee’s responses. The interviewer should not assume to understand a response. Probe the interviewee to elaborate on remarks. Ask questions such as, ‘how did it make you feel?’ or ‘give me an example’.
- Being flexible: The layout of an interview cannot be carved in stone. In the event, that an interviewee gets side-tracked, the interviewer should be flexible enough to adjust to such a situation. Do not interrupt the interviewee to remind him/her what your question was. Allow the interviewee to finish what he/she is saying and gently guide them back to the issue at hand.
- Really seeing: A good interviewer is attentive to non-verbal messages. It is important to make notes of such events to incorporate it in the transcribed interview. This will give depth and greater meaning to what the interviewee is saying.

According to Rubin and Rubin (2012:63), one continues, “interviewing others as long as each additional interviewee presents more refined or somewhat different perspectives on the matter.” Eventually, when no new information is supplied, one has reached, according to Glaser and Strauss (see Rubin & Rubin 2012:63), the ‘saturation point’. However, in narrative research, the saturation point is not the acknowledgement of truth, neither is it a statement that everything has been said. It merely indicates that at that point, the co-researcher has nothing more to say.

1.14. SAMPLING

At the onset of my study, I arranged an appointment with a senior executive manager of a hotel group in Cape Town. The purpose of the meeting was to invite the particular hotel group to participate in this study. The reason I chose this specific group was because they place much emphasis on their employees' physical wellbeing. They also regularly invite medical professionals to address their workers regarding specific health issues. For these reasons, I thought that they would agree to participate in a study that could benefit the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of their personnel.

While the executive showed interest in the study, head office had to make the final decision. Two weeks after our meeting, the executive informed me via email that head office declined the invitation. It was a great disappointment to me. Perhaps if the company showed support for this research, more hospitality workers might have felt comfortable to participate in the study.

Through the introduction of my husband, I approached several members of management who work in the front-stage world. The managers were based in a number of hotels in Cape Town. The reason I chose to work with these members of management is because they all started their hospitality careers as line staff (junior staff) who worked their way up to the positions they currently hold. Thus, the participants are familiar with the challenges that the front-stage workers are confronted with. In a topical study, it is important to identify co-researchers who have a distinct perspective on the topic that is being investigated (Rubin & Rubin 2012:61).

The co-researchers consist of three gentlemen and one lady. To protect their identities, the co-researchers chose aliases. Alex, a Caucasian man, is a senior manager. He is in his mid-forties and has been in the hospitality industry for seventeen years. His religious background is Roman Catholicism. David, an Indian man, is also a senior manager. He is in his mid-thirties and has been in the hospitality industry for twelve years. David observes Hinduism. Cindy is a Coloured lady in her early thirties. She is a member of

middle management and has been in the hospitality industry for four years. Cindy is a Christian. John is a Caucasian man in his early thirties. He is a senior manager and has been in the hospitality industry for seven years. John is also a Christian.

During the selection process, I had a personal conversation with each co-researcher in which I explained the purpose and nature of the study. The co-researchers were also informed regarding what concepts will be discussed during the interviews. However, the co-researchers were requested not to research any of the concepts that were to be discussed as it is important for the purpose of this postfoundational study to establish their unique understandings.

Before the interviews started, I obtained written consent from each co-researcher. A hard copy of the consent form was printed and given to each respective co-researcher. The co-researchers were informed that they had the right, at any time, to withdraw their participation from the study if they chose to do so. After the completion of the legal documentation, I contacted each co-researcher to make an appointment for their interviews.

The co-researchers were given the opportunity to choose where he/she would like to be interviewed. None of the co-researchers wanted to be interviewed at work due to the possibility that their identities could be exposed. Neither of the co-researchers wanted to be interviewed at their residences either. Alex, John and Cindy did not elaborate on their reasons why they did not want the interviews to be conducted at their residences. However, they were content to come to my home to do the interviews. David explained that he has pets and children that he argued might distract him, he also has extended family members staying with him on a permanent basis, making the house very crowded and 'busy'. Thus, it was ultimately a collective decision between the co-researchers and me to conduct the interviews at my residence. This arrangement created an opportunity for me to extend hospitality to the co-researchers.

With the arrival of each co-researcher at my home, I welcomed them and thanked them again for taking the time to participate in the research. I made sure that they were comfortable and offered them a beverage (non-alcoholic). This gesture made them feel at home and relaxed, and while preparing the beverage, we spent time talking about general matters.

By the time we started with the interview, the co-researcher felt relaxed and ready to proceed with the interview. I explained that all interviews will be recorded as it is necessary for me to reflect back on the information that was gathered during the interviews, and that it is a legal requirement from the University of Pretoria that a recorded version of the interviews has to be submitted with the research documents. None of the co-researchers felt uncomfortable about the fact that the conversations were recorded.

During the interviews, I addressed the co-researchers by their chosen aliases. The duration of the interviews varied between one and two hours. After each interview, I informed the co-researcher that I will transcribe our conversation in dialogue form and that I will email it to them within two days. I did this to provide the co-researchers the opportunity to reflect on the information they shared with me. I ensured the co-researchers that, if for some reason they would choose to extract any of the information they shared with me, that they were entitled to do so. However, none of the co-researchers subtracted or altered any of the information from their interviews. At the end of the interview process, all the interviews were copied to a compact disk (CD) that was submitted to the University of Pretoria with all the relevant legal documentation associated with this study.

No second interviews were scheduled with the co-researchers. However, the co-researchers were informed that if they wish to elaborate on any of the topics that were discussed during the interviews, that they would be able to do so. After the completion of each interview, I asked the co-researcher if he/she would want to participate in a group discussion. They declined. Confidentiality was of great importance to all the interviewees. This factor also made the prospects of a group discussion impossible.

Once the interviews were transcribed, I thought it would be interesting to invite a clinical psychologist and a medical doctor to participate in the conversation. However, before I contacted these two professionals, I phoned the co-researchers to obtain their permission to do so. I ensured the co-researchers that their identities would be protected at all times. All the co-researchers agreed that the participation of the two professionals might bring an interesting dimension to the conversation. It was arranged that I would send the reports of the professionals to each co-researcher to give them the opportunity to continue their participation in the conversation.

Once I obtained the permission of the co-researchers, I contacted James Weideman, a clinical psychologist based in Cape Town and Nicola Roos, a medical doctor based in Pretoria, Gauteng. Because Weideman is locally based, it was possible to make an appointment with him at his consulting rooms. The conversation I had with Roos was telephonically. During each meeting, I discussed the themes that emerged during the conversations with the co-researchers. Both the professionals requested to send me their reports electronically. Once I received the reports of the two professionals, I forwarded it to the co-researchers as arranged. Within a week, all the co-researchers responded to the reports of the professionals.

The same procedure was followed for the production of the film. When I received the film from the production team, I loaded it onto YouTube. The co-researchers were asked to view the film and to email me their responses. This ensured that the voices of the co-researchers were continuously heard throughout the research process.

1.15. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

At the core of a research relationship lies the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the co-researchers do not come to any harm during the research process (Rubin & Rubin 2012:85). Under no condition should the researcher be deceitful. It is important that the co-researchers feel safe to participate in the study. All appointments and agreements should be honoured. If an appointment has to be rescheduled, the co-researcher should

be notified at least forty-eight hours in advance. If a co-researcher needs to travel or the appointment is scheduled during the co-researcher's lunch hour, the co-researcher should be compensated for this discomfort. A co-researcher should never be pressured to say or do anything that makes them feel vulnerable (Rubin & Rubin 2012:86, 87).

A participant information sheet was given to each co-researcher before the study. The participant information sheet indicated the name and purpose of the study, stating what is expected from the co-researchers. In this document, the co-researchers were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. The document also provided my contact details. This was done to allow co-researchers to contact me if they had any queries and also if they required a detailed exposition of the results. An informed consent form was included with the participant's information sheet.

The co-researchers were permitted to keep the participant information sheet, and the completed informed consent form was returned to me. A copy of the consent form was given to each respective co-researcher. The original consent forms were submitted to the administrative department at the Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria.

The co-researchers were also informed that they have the right to decline participation and that they may withdraw from the study at any point without any adverse consequences. The research was conducted without any withdrawal of any of the participants and any ethical matters.

1.16. DISSERTATION OUTLINE

Chapter Two

A brief historical background of hospitality is presented in this chapter. The purpose of this historical reflection is to show how ancient stories of hospitality and hospitality customs might influence the way in which hospitality workers construct their understandings of the front-stage world. The chapter also presents some philosophies

about hospitality which will later in the study prove to be relevant to the contemporary hospitality setting.

Also discussed in this chapter is the African concept of *Ubuntu*. In sub-Saharan Africa, hospitality, or *Ubuntu*, is taught by tribal elders through metaphorical references to nature. Because of South Africa's cultural diversity, the concept of *Ubuntu* might also influence the way in which workers understand the contemporary hospitality industry.

Chapter Three

In this chapter, a literary review is presented concerning contemporary research conducted on the topic of workplace spirituality. In the light of this research, the spiritualities of the front-stage world and the back-stage world are discussed. Also presented in this chapter are the dominant influences that shape these two respective spiritualities. A further development in this conversation speak of the role of religion in the construction of reality.

Chapter Four

Here the narratives of the co-researchers are presented through the five movements of a metaphorical narrative dance (Meylahn 2012:56-63). Through the circular movements of this narrative dance, dominant stories emerged. However, as this dance continued, cracks started to appear in the dominant stories. Emerging through the cracks of the dominant stories, were shadow stories. These shadow stories deconstructed the dominant stories. This auto-deconstruction of the dominant stories creates the possibility of an alternative story – a story of hope and grace.

Chapter Five

During the interviews with the co-researchers, certain themes emerged. Some of these themes include corporate bullying, subordination and disrespect. In this chapter, attention

is given to the effect that uncivil behaviour has on the emotional wellbeing of the workers who work in the front-stage world. Also discussed in this chapter, are different managerial styles and the effect it might have not only on the workers of the front-stage world but also on the holistic wellbeing of the entire organization.

Chapter Six

This chapter serves as a critical reflection of the research journey. Much of the volume of this chapter is a repeated version of the contents of the previous five chapters. The importance of this approach is to bring all the different themes of the research together in the section of the work where the primary and secondary research questions will be answered.

Chapter Seven

Any long journey requires extensive planning and preparation. To ensure that one arrives at one's destination (the answering of the research question/s), one needs to choose a specific road (methodology) and a vehicle (epistemology) that is suited for the terrain. Though meticulous preparation can help prevent unnecessary hindrances, few journeys present no challenges. This chapter is a critical reflection of the methodology and the epistemology that was chosen for this particular journey.

CHAPTER 2

FROM STABLE TO PORTE-COCHÈRE

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher presents a brief historical view concerning the development of hospitality from the times of the Old Testament to our current era. This historical reflection of hospitality is important as these ancient stories of welcome might influence the construction of the front-stage world – a world that observes an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction. As Meylahn (2009:1) puts it: “the sacred texts of the Judaic-Christian tradition offer not only an understanding of the wholly otherness of God, but also form the basis of our understanding and perception of humanity (anthropology), the world and ourselves (personhood/identity).” O’Connor (2005:267) also points out that “only once an understanding of hospitality’s origins and its place in human nature is achieved can one expect to discover what hospitality means today, and more importantly what it will mean to those entering the industry in the future.”

Seeing that Christian theology is influenced by Hellenic culture – especially Greek philosophy (Allen 1985:1), the researcher also reflects on some mythological examples of hospitality. In this section, it will become apparent that the mythical gods, Zeus and Jupiter, and the Christian God played crucial roles in the ancient customs of hospitality.

While canonical teachings and mythological myths are relevant to the Western understanding of hospitality, here in sub-Saharan Africa some of the most valuable examples of hospitality are taught by nature⁶. In the rural parts of Africa, folk traditions play a primary role in education. In the villages elders refer to the mannerisms of birds

⁶ In section where I discuss *Ubuntu* (2.9), examples are mentioned as to how tribal elders refer to the collaboration between little birds and cattle regarding their sustainability.

and animals to teach the youngsters about hospitality – a concept known as *Ubuntu* (Gathago 2008:275).

Hospitality can be seen as a colourful work of art, a multidimensional masterpiece painted on the canvas of human history, framed by religious, mythological, social and traditional principles. However, how this painting is interpreted depends on the stories, fables and traditions that make up the social construction of people's knowledge, and the significance this construction has for them within this social-cultural-religious context.

2.2. HOSPITALITY: A BRIEF HISTORICAL REFLECTION

During the time of archaic societies, hospitality was predominantly seen as an organic, integral part of society that revealed much about cultural values and beliefs. Muhlmann (1932:113) argues that the principles that directed the people's attitudes towards hospitality were mainly religious practices and beliefs; trade and commerce; transactional expectations; social status and the household; and the fear of strangers.

Hotels and Inns in Mesopotamia date as far back as 2000 BC. These inns provided drinks, women and accommodation for strangers. Although archeological remains of these inns have not yet been discovered, in Crete there is evidence of a hostel that was built around 1500 BC. It was a small elegant structure alongside the highway next to the palace at Knossos (O'Gorman 2010:19). In Egypt, some characteristics of tourism can be found from about 1500 BC.

The provision of hospitality dates back to the beginning of the Old Testament. The oldest recorded text regarding hospitality is from a genre known as Ancient Near East texts (O'Gorman 2010:18). These texts form part of the Eastern Mediterranean traditions from Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, Syria-Palestine, and Egypt and is frequently seen in parallel with the Old Testament.

2.3. HOSPITALITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In the desert, amongst the nomads, hospitality was a highly esteemed virtue. Guests were sacred, and it was viewed as an honor to provide in the needs of a stranger or foreigner. The guest was entitled to three days of hospitality, and after leaving, the host was obligated to provide protection to the guest (De Vaux 1997:10; Hobbs 2001:3). The period of protection varied from tribe to tribe. Some tribes measured this period to the time that it took for the salt that the guest consumed during his stay at the host to leave his stomach, whereas in larger tribes, according to De Vaux (1997:10), this period was either for another three days or within a 100-mile radius.

In the Old Testament, several references are made to the practices and laws of hospitality (Lv 19:33-34). The first example of hospitality that is found in the Old Testament is where God offers His creation as a living space to Adam and Eve (Gn 2). However, Abraham is the main figure in Old Testament hospitality. In Genesis (18:1-16) Abraham and his wife are hosts to three apparent nomads. At their arrival, Abraham washes their feet and prepares a banquet for them. Only as the story unfolds does it become obvious that his guests are divine creatures (O’Gorman 2010:39-43).

Abraham’s encounter with these three ‘men’ is repeatedly cited in Jewish and Christian literature, including Jubilees, Philo, Josephus, 1 Clement, Testament of Abraham, Apocalypse of Paul, Origen, John Chrysostom, Augustine, Genesis Rabbah and the Babylonian Talmud (Runia 2012:236). Philo, in particular, viewed Abraham as “a living law, whose example of hospitality was to be emulated” (Runia 2012:236).

One can assume that the writer of Hebrews probably referred to Abraham’s encounter with these ‘men’ when he warns, “Do not neglect hospitality, for by this some have unknowingly hosted angels” (Heb 13:2). Establishing the intention of one’s guest was important as traveling in antiquity was dangerous. As a result, hospitality was not extended to all travelers, particularly with regard to threatening foreigners (*nokrîm*) or resident aliens (*gērîm*) (Hobbs 2001:23).

The extension of hospitality was usually associated with some welcoming rituals. Guests were provided with water to wash their feet (Gn 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; 43:24; Jdg 19:21; 1 Sm 25:41; 2 Sm 11:8) while the host and his servants prepare a meal. Feed was also provided to the animals of the guest (Gn 24:31-32). The principles of hospitality, as shown in the Abrahamic narrative, is also notable in the following texts: Genesis 19:1-11; 24:15-61; 29:1-11; Exodus 2:15-22; Judges 19; 1 Samuel 25; 2 Samuel 12; 1 Kings 17:8-16; 2 Kings 4 and 2 Kings 6:22-23.

In the book of Exodus, one can view God himself as host to Israel, who flee from Egypt to the Promised Land (Ex 15-17). During their forty-year journey through the desert, God provides for the needs of the Israelites on a daily basis. Later in Exodus (Ex 25-31; 35-40) the construction of the tabernacle the symbol of hospitality takes place. Here, once again, God is the host and receives Israel as His guests (O’Gorman 2010:39-43).

Although there are examples in the Old Testament where women extend hospitality to strangers (Gn 24; Ex 2; 1 Sm 25; 2 Ki 4), it was the men who were responsible for providing for the needs of the guests (Martin 2014:3). In the case of Abigail, Nabal’s wife (1 Sm 25), there is an exception to this tradition. In this narrative, David asked Nabal for provisions for him and his men. Seeing that both men were Judean, this was an acceptable request. However, according to Nabal, David was outside his moral community. Therefore, he had no obligation towards David. Nabal’s rudeness and disrespect antagonized David and as a result, he plotted revenge on Nabal.

Abigail immediately realized the implications of her husband’s foolishness and without her husband’s knowledge, she adhered to David’s request by providing him ample provisions. Under normal circumstances Abigail’s actions would have been disrespectful to her husband; thus bringing shame upon him. However, her efforts resulted in the protection of Nabal’s honor and his household (Nicol 2008:131-132). Hospitality could only be offered by the male who was the head of the household, or a designated male

citizen of a town. However, there are narratives that tell of women who acted independently (2 Sm 20:16-22; 2 Ki 11:1-3).

According to Matthews (1991:13), even though hospitality played a central part in the Old Testament narratives, it was seldom practiced according to protocol. Matthews also points out that hospitality was more often shown in a negative sense – either deliberate or unconsciously. It is only in Genesis 18 and 24 where one finds examples of proper Biblical hospitality (Matthews 1991:13).

In his article, 'Hospitality and hostility in Judges 4' (1991), Matthews points out that there were spheres of hospitality which comprised of zones, for both individuals and towns, in which they were obligated to show hospitality to strangers. The zone for individuals were understandably smaller than that of the towns. However, Matthews points out that there is no set example for the size of these spheres.

In ancient Near East, hospitality was viewed as reciprocal. By providing food, water and shelter to strangers, one lessened the chances of theft and homicide (Matthews 1991:14). The typical protocol of hospitality was to give back to God (meaning the guest) what He has given to you (Dt 16:17), to treat the guest in a manner in which you would appreciate being treated – should the roles ever be reversed (Dt 23:24-25), and to protect yourself, your family and your property from any violence. This meant that the stranger had to be welcomed and transformed from being a potential threat, to being a friend (Matthews 1991:14). Hospitality could also be refused (Jdg 19:9-10; Gn 19:2). However, refusing the kindness of a host could result in hostility (Matthews 1991:14, 15).

In the case of Genesis 19, Lot extends his hospitality to two strangers. However, as mentioned earlier, hospitality is extended from a particular zone. In this case, Lot is outside the gate of Sodom and not in the borders of his encampment. Matthews (1992:4) points out that Lot might have extended hospitality to the strangers because no citizen of Sodom did. According to Matthews, it is unlikely that Lot was sitting alone. Thus, Lot's bridge of protocol was no worse than the fact that no citizen showed kindness to the two

travelers. Matthews further explains that Lot's inappropriate action might have been the reason the angels initially declined his invitation. Alternatively, the angels could have exercised their right to refuse Lot's offer. Ultimately, the angels do accept Lot's hospitality.

According to Matthews (1992:5), the citizens of Sodom might have viewed the actions of the angels as being inappropriate and disrespectful and that that might have prompted the male citizens from Sodom to demand sex from the angels. In an attempt to save the angels from being abused, and to protect the honor of his household, Lot offers his daughters to the men. However, Rashkow (1992:71) points out that there is no evidence in the Hebrew Bible that condones sexual abuse, or any other form of violence, in the service of hospitality. Nonetheless, the men refused Lot's offer. Matthews explains that their refusal could be viewed as a way in which they portrayed their discontent with Lot's conduct. Lot was not a citizen of Sodom, and he had no right to offer hospitality to travelers outside the city gates. Ultimately, the conversation between Lot and the men became argumentative, and it is Lot's *guests*, the angels, who save him, the *host*.

There is a similar story to that of Lot narrated in Judges 19. In this chapter, the audience is introduced to a Levite from the Ephraimite hill country who travels to Bethlehem with his concubine and servant to retrieve his wife who fled from his house to return to the house of her father. On arrival, the father is joyful to see the Levite. According to Matthews (1992:7), the father's happiness is not entirely authentic and refers to his kindness as a "host's face." The father, according to proper hospitality customs, invites the Levite to stay the night. For four consecutive nights the father convinces the Levite to stay.

On the fifth day, the Levite departs. It was late afternoon. As the sun was setting, the servant suggested that they overnight in Jerusalem. But the Levite did not want to stay in a "city of foreigners, who are not of the children of Israel" (Jdg 19:12). The Levite suggested to the servant that they must overnight in Gibeah. On arrival at Gibeah, they entered the town and went to rest in the open square in the city. While sitting in the square, an old man who returned from the fields approaches the Levite and invites him and his entourage to spend the night at his residence.

That evening, as in the case of Lot, men from Gibeah surrounded the old man's house, demanding that the old man to deliver the Levite and his servant to them so that they could have sex with them. Like Lot, the old man tried to protect his guest by offering his virgin daughter and the Levite's concubine to the men to "do with them as you please" (Jdg 19:24). Though the men were not satisfied with this gesture, the Levite took his concubine to them. Throughout the night, the men raped and abused the woman. The next morning the Levite discovered her lifeless body on the doorstep of the old man's house. In this narrative, as in the case of Lot, it was the guest who saved the life of the host.

In the Old Testament the possibility of housing a godly being served as an inspiration for the host to present the best he has to offer. But what if it was possible for the host to distinguish, without a doubt, that his guest was a mere commoner. Would, or should, it affect the manner in which the host shows hospitality? Kearney (2011:4) suggests that holiness is always present, but we don't always see, or hear, or touch it.

In his book, *Anatheism: Returning to God after God* (2011:186), Kearney gives an anatheistic perspective about God:

Anatheism is more than a question of faith. In addition to belief (with, for some, its voluntarist connotations of choice), anatheism is a matter of hope, love, and wonder. Hope that the stranger is more than we expect. Love of the stranger as infinitely other. And wonder at the very strangeness of it all.... For this is the shared founding experience of the spiritual, the philosophical, and the poetic – the spiritual epiphany of welcoming, the philosophical *thaumazein* of questioning, the poetic shudder of imagination.

Kearney (2011:248) argues that only if one acknowledges that one knows virtually nothing about the Divine can one begin to discover the presence of holiness in one's fellow man. Such holiness, says Kearney, was and is, in our presence but because we cannot see, hear or touch it, it eludes us. According to Kearney (2011:248), this was the reason Jacob, only after his struggle with the stranger, realized that he had seen the face of God (Gn

32:22-31). The same happened to the disciples after they walked with the stranger down the road to Emmaus, before they realized, looking back, that the man they were traveling with was the risen Christ (Jn 20:16).

In the Old Testament, God often presented himself in the disguise of messengers. This presented a challenge for hosts. One could not dismiss the possibility that one was dining with divinity. However, in the New Testament, the Son of God is presented in the flesh. This made it possible for the host to know that he was hosting Jesus.

What follows, is an overview of New Testament examples and customs of hospitality – some of which Jesus himself established, and some which he rejected.

2.4. HOSPITALITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

It might be said that for the majority of people, hospitality is associated with relaxation, safety, and refreshment. Our images of hospitality may include the company of friends, family and even friendly strangers who extend only the appropriate amount and degree of hospitality necessary for acquainting one another. While hospitality can be associated with services received from a specific establishment, it can also refer to a non-physical space where mutual respect is shown to each other. In the New Testament, there are several examples of both physical and moral hospitality.

All social activity in the first-century Mediterranean world was associated with honor and shame (Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:369, 370). The only people who were truly trusted were blood relatives. Outside the family circle, all people were viewed untrustworthy until proven otherwise. Strangers visiting a village, that is people of the same cultural group who is not residing in the same town, were viewed as potential enemies, while foreigners, those of other cultural groups, were considered as certain enemies (Malina 2001:36, 37).

Because each family was embedded in a community, the entire community could be dishonored by one person. This was due to the interdependence, cooperation and shared

enterprise within each community. In the first century, such extra-familial cooperation took the form of a contractual agreement or 'covenant' (Malina 2001:37). To 'qualify' for entering a covenant, one's honor had to be unblemished. Thus, a good name and a virtuous family reputation were of utmost importance. Therefore, although being obligated to provide for the needs of strangers, one had to be very cautious that the guest does not dishonor one's family in any manner.

In the first century, the rules of hospitality, as Pilch and Malina (2009:116, 117) put it, required that a guest: (a) must abstain from insulting the host (when Jesus ate with sinners he never accused them of being sinners, nor did he expect them to change: Mt 9:10; Lk 5:29), (b) refrain from making oneself at home before the host invites the guest to do so (while being a guest, Jesus only heals once he is asked to do so: Mk 1:30-31); avoid commanding the dependents of the host (Jesus refuses to command Mary: Lk 10:40-42); avoid demanding anything that is not offered (Lk 7:36-50), (c) refrain from refusing something that is offered by the host, especially concerning food; refusal will imply disrespect to the host.

Pilch and Malina (2009:117) also discuss the rules of the host. These rules required that the host; (a) must refrain from insulting the guest, (b) protect the guest's honor in order to protect his (the host's) own honor, seeing that the guest is embedded in the honor of the host, (c) provide for all the needs of the guest.

Judeo-Christian hospitality had a strong ethical component. First-century hospitality was primarily the process that changed an outsider's status from stranger to guest (O'Gorman 2010:56; Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:369). However, both guest and host had a duty towards each other. As it was the duty of the host to protect the honor of his guest, so was it the duty of the guest to protect the honor of the host. Because the host was embedded in the community, the honor of the entire community was at stake when a member of the community accommodated a stranger. Thus, the duty of the host was not only to protect his honor but also the honor of the entire community (Van Eck 2011:5).

Malina and Rohrbaugh (2003:371) point out that there were two types of challenges to one's honor – positive and negative. When one received a gift, the proper reciprocation would be to show one's gratitude. An insult was viewed as a negative challenge. The "game of challenge and response" was deadly serious and acts of violence often occurred (Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:371). According to Van Eck (2011:5), there were also two types of shame – positive and negative. Positive shame was associated with one's concern about one's honor. Negative shame was when someone acted in a shameful manner.

In his article 'When neighbours are not neighbours: A social-scientific reading of the parable of the friend at midnight (Lk 11:5-8)', Van Eck (2011) discusses several cultural aspects of New Testament hospitality. The parable tells about a peasant villager who, in the middle of the night, receives a visitor. Because the villager had no food in his house to give to the visitor, he goes to his neighbor and asks him if he has bread that he can give to his guest. However, the neighbor, who is already in bed with his children is reluctant to assist his neighbor. Eventually, he gets up and provides his neighbor with what he needs – not because he wants to, but rather to preserve his good name.

Van Eck (2011:4) explains that, from an ethical perspective, this particular parable evokes several cultural values of the first-century Mediterranean world of which one is hospitality. In first-century Palestine, there was no system of inns and hotels where guests could seek shelter or purchase food and drink for themselves and their animals (Van Eck 2011:4). Travelers were dependent on the hospitality of strangers to accommodate them. Van Eck (2011:5) refers to Hultgren who explained: "Hospitality was considered a sacred duty throughout the Mediterranean world of antiquity, even when the visitor was a stranger."

A guest, whether a stranger or a friend, served as a challenge to the community. It was important that the host showed concern for the needs of the guest and his entourage (Van Eck 2011:5). In return, the guest was expected to reciprocate the host's hospitality with respect. This was a matter of great importance for while the guest received welcome from

the host, he, the guest, was imbedded in the honor of the host and the community of the host. Thus, a guest was in fact not only the responsibility of the host but of the entire village in which the host found himself (Van Eck 2011:5).

In the New Testament, Luke, in particular, showed keen interest in hospitality. Luke's gospel includes the narratives of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37), the friend at midnight (Lk 11:5-13), the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32), the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31), Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10), and the Emmaus appearance story (Lk 24:13-32). One of the best-noted stories of first-century hospitality is that of the birth of Christ. In a land where hospitality was of such great importance, Mary had to give birth to Christ in a stable.

Decades later, when Jesus started with his teachings, he repeatedly emphasized the importance of hospitality, specifically concerning the meek and the homeless. In the parable of the last judgement (Mt 25:32-7), Christ separates the sheep from the goats, based on hospitality extended or refused. This view correlates with the Old Testament view that those who will show hospitality will be blessed, and those who do not, will be in danger of God's wrath.

Jesus' teachings of hospitality are narrated throughout the New Testament. There are numerous scenes in the Gospels that depict Jesus in a meal setting. Jesus' fellowship with the marginalized, however, caused great dismay among the Jewish hierarchy (Yao 2001:25). In Matthew 11:19, Jesus is referred to as a "glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners."

In all four the gospels (Mt 14:13-21//Mk 6:30-44//Lk 9:10-17//Jn 6:1-15) mentioning is made of an occasion where Jesus fed a crowd of approximately five-thousand people. In Matthew 15:32-30 and Mark 8:1-10, a story is told where Jesus feeds another group of four-thousand people. Because this event took place in the gentile Decapolis, it is probable that members of the crowd were inhabitants of the district. Yao (2001:29) also points out that the leftovers of the meal were placed in gentile baskets (*spuridas*), and not in wicker baskets (*kophinon*) that were typically used by the Jews for carrying their food.

This suggests that Jesus violated the sphere of hospitality by including the gentiles in the Kingdom of God.

In the first century, society was strictly group-oriented. An example of this societal structure was earlier discussed in the narrative of Lot. However, Jesus extends his hospitality to the outcasts, discarding the social spheres that prohibit such actions. Two prominent instances of this behavior of Jesus are the banquet in Levi's house (Mt 9:9-13//Mk 2:13-17//Lk 5:27-32) and the meal in Zacchaeus' house (Lk 19:1-10). Understandably, the Pharisees and scribes strongly object to this behavior of Jesus (Mt 9:11//Mk 2:16//Lk 5:30).

In Matthew 26:2-15, Mark 14:3-11 and John 12:1-8 the story of Simon the leper is told. Simon's former malady makes him an outcast of society. According to first-century legislations, the unclean had to be quarantined, typically outside the city gates (Lv 13:1-46; 14:1-31; Nm 12:10-16). However, when Simon invites Jesus for a meal, Jesus accepts. While sitting at Simon's table, Mary enters with an alabaster jar of expensive perfumed oil to anoint Jesus. The disciples are greatly displeased with Mary's action and view her action as a "waste" of the precious oil (Mt 26:8//Mk14:4-5//Jn12:4-5).

Throughout the New Testament, Jesus continuously identifies with the marginalized and the outcasts. He discards the social spheres of inclusivity – thus challenging the dominant myth of the time – and preaches of his Fathers love for all who seek His love. In his article, "Common Judaism", Jesus and Judaism: Practice and Belief', Sanders (1995) discusses the constant conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. This conflict is understandable seeing that Jesus showed continuous disregard for the Jewish customs of the time. One can perhaps view Jesus' action as the 'unmasking' of the Pharisees⁷.

Close to the end of his life, Jesus hosts the Last Supper with his disciples (Mk 14:13-16 and parallels). During the Last Supper, Jesus anticipates his role as eschatological host

⁷ In Chapter 4, the symbolism of Jesus' crucifixion and his resurrection becomes relevant in the interpretations of the co-researchers' narratives.

at the messianic banquet. Even his grave site was an act of hospitality from Joseph of Arimathea (Mk 15:43-46 and parallels). In his post-resurrection appearance to the disciples, Christ takes the role of the host when he invites his disciples to have breakfast with him (Lk 24:13-43//Jn 21:1-14).

During the last days with his disciples, Jesus tells them to “take nothing on their journey” (Mk 6:8 and parallels). Thus, Jesus is encouraging the disciples to depend on the hospitality of strangers. Jesus further states that anybody who receives his disciples, receives him (Jn 13:20). Paul, in his teachings, also talks about the importance of hospitality (Tt 3:13-14; Phlm: 22; Rm 12:13; 1 Tm 5:10; 1 Pt 4:9; Heb 13:3). While these teachings of Jesus took place in the first-century Mediterranean world, the principles first-century hospitality is still very relevant in our contemporary era.

Unless we live in isolation, we are likely to encounter strangers in our everyday lives (Koenig 1985:125). Because of this, we need to grow in our ability to identify potential situations where we can practice New Testament hospitality (Koenig 1985:125). Though centuries have passed since the time of Jesus’ teachings, times remain troubled, and we remain pilgrims just like the disciples of old.

No matter how strong our faith and how skilled we’ve become in our roles of guest and host, we are wonderers still. Koenig (1985:145) refers to Walker Percy who states that while we are “lost in the cosmos ... we are also searched for and known and met. Indeed, the mystery of God’s welcome is that it so frequently encounters us when we most need to be, but cannot allow ourselves to be, guest.”

2.4.1. Respecting ‘the other’

According to the teachings of the Bible, the manner in which one shows welcome to ‘the other’ will benefit one’s total well-being (Koenig 1985:5). At the end of the previous century, Henri Nouwen and Parker Palmer (Koenig 1985:5) gave much attention to the concept of the stranger. Nouwen, in particular, focused on the duty of the host, without

whose friendliness not even a divine stranger will be able to award the host's blessings. Keeping the previously mentioned Biblical scriptures in mind, Nouwen explains how everyday guest-host relationships can take on sacramental quality (Koenig 1985:5):

When hostility is converted into hospitality then fearful strangers ... become guests revealing to their hosts the promise they are carrying with them. Then, in fact, the distinction between host and guest proves to be artificial and evaporates in the recognition of the new found unity. Thus the Biblical stories help us to realize not just that hospitality is an important virtue, but even more than in the context of hospitality guest and host can reveal their most precious gifts and bring new life to each other.

Koenig (1985:6) refers to Palmer, who reminds us that the stranger, or 'the other', may adopt the role of "spiritual guide" which serves to remind us where God can be found in our private and public lives. According to Palmer, we need the stranger if we truly want to know and serve God – in truth and love. The visiting stranger should not be seen as a threat or a burden but rather as a being who can teach us the deeper lessons of life. Palmer defines hospitality as follows (Koenig 1985:6):

... inviting the stranger into our private space, whether that be the space of our own home or the space of our personal awareness and concern. And when we do so, some important transformations occur. Our private space is suddenly enlarged; no longer tight and cramped and restricted, but open and expansive and free. And our space may also be illumined. ...Hospitality to the stranger gives us a chance to see our own lives afresh, through different eyes.

Strangers do not necessarily have to be from different cultures, races, or socioeconomic status. In fact, in most cases 'the other' is someone from our "own kind of people" (Koenig 1985:7). For this reason, it should not be surprising that the strangers who received the most attention in the New Testament are indeed disciples or church members.

In ancient Greece, hospitality was also viewed as a highly valued custom that was expressed through other religious traditions (Lorencin 2008:168). For instance, as Lorencin (2008:168) explains, it was believed that Zeus' wrath would be on any transgressors. In his *Odyssey*, Homer discusses numerous fundamentals regarding the host's reception of the guest, for example; seating and sleeping arrangements, the exchanging of gifts and the chaperoning of guests to their next destination. Only when the guest was properly received and fed was it appropriate of the host to inquire about his guest's identity (Lorencin 2008:168).

Homer speaks of his hero, Odysseus, a prominent Greek leader during the Trojan War, who was always searching for hospitable reception in a variety of situations (O'Gorman 2005:143). Homer talks about the gods, as well as human characters, such as Telemachus and Odysseus, who served as role models for the people in ancient Greece. It was expected of the people to emulate these character's admirable interactions.

In ancient Greece, the approach of a stranger could either be friendly or hostile and could either a godly creature or man (O'Gorman 2005:142). However, it was not expected of the host to identify whether his guest was a god or human for man does not have such capacity. It was of greater importance to impress and honor the gods by showing welcome to a stranger (O'Gorman 2005:142).

As Zeus presided over Greek hospitality, Jupiter was the custodian of the hospitality laws in the Roman Empire (O'Gorman 2005:145). Both in Greece and Rome, violation of hospitality customs would displease the gods. In *Metamorphoses*, Ovid (43 BCE-ADC, see O'Gorman 2005:145) narrates the story of the gods Jupiter and Mercury who visited earth in human disguise, searching for a place to rest. After being denied a thousand times, the gods found themselves at a simple thatched cottage of Baucis and Philemon, who, though they had little to offer their guests, generously shared what they had.

As reward, Jupiter and Mercury requested Baucis and Philemon to accompany them up a mountain from where they had a panoramic view over a valley. In the valley were the

homes, now flooded, of all their neighbors who denied the strangers welcome. Their humble little home, on the other hand, were transformed into a temple, of which they then became the priests (O’Gorman 2005:145). The generosity of the gods to Baucis and Philemon is a classic example of the anguish one could expect when one displeased the gods, and it is also an example of the ancient custom of rewarding or respecting, the efforts of the host.

Reciprocation of the guest towards the host was seen as an obligation (Lorencin 2008:168). Thus, hospitality called for the exchange of roles. This custom of reciprocation, which had to be balanced, was intended to benefit both parties – making hospitality a relationship of equals. The exchanging of gifts were also important. While hospitality in itself was seen as a gift (Lorencin 2008:168), Herman notes (see Lorencin 2008:169) that

Gifts beg counter-gifts, and fulfill at one and the same time a number of purposes: they repay past services, incur new obligations, and act as continuous reminders of the validity of the bond. Non-reciprocation is in this context frequently interpreted as relapse into hostility.

Personal hospitality held the benefit of possible reciprocation. However, for those who did not have such a structure in place – and also for travelers – commercial hospitality provided an alternative means of lodging, food and beverage.

2.5. COMMERCIAL HOSPITALITY IN CLASSICAL GREECE: THE GENESIS OF AN INDUSTRY

With the increase and expansion of settlements, the need for commercial hospitality rose. However, not all guests were treated equally. Plato, in his *Laws*, identifies four types of strangers/visitors from abroad who are to be accepted but treated differently, depending on their purpose, rank and station. O’Gorman (2007a:24) summarizes them as follows:

- Merchants on trade or business. These relationships were limited, formal and business-like.
- Cultural visitors' purpose was to attend artistic exhibitions and musical performances. These guests were usually received at temples where friendly accommodation was provided for a reasonable time. These relationships were formal and business-like, and the priests and temple keepers were to attend to the guest's needs.
- Civic dignitary on public business. These guests were received at civic receptions by the generals and public officials. These relationships were also formal and business-like.
- Occasional high-status cultural visitors. These visitors had to be older than 50 years, and the purpose of their visits was usually of an artistic nature. These guests were viewed as being rich and wise and were therefore welcomed by hosts who were rich and wise; usually those in charge of education or who have been rewarded for their artistic contributions. These relationships were formal but friendly.

Plato also suggested that there should be conformity with the 'Laws' concerning all guests/strangers who visited from abroad and that the 'Laws' also apply when the state's citizens visited other countries (O'Gorman 2007a:25). The observance of the 'Laws', according to Plato, pleased Zeus and was therefore seen as the only appropriate behavior.

Due to urbanization, the demand for commercial hospitality increased throughout ancient Greece. Regrettably, information regarding the growth of commercial hospitality in Greece is limited. Fortunately, Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War* wrote about historical events that occurred from 431BC to 411BC. Included in Thucydides' writings is the word *katagogion*, which is understood to refer to inns or hostels. This is regarded as one of the oldest references to large-scale hospitality (O'Gorman 2010:68). The word *katagogion* also appears in the writings of Xenophon. However, he focused on

the potential economic benefit that could be derived from the visiting ships if more inns and shops were to be built close to the harbor (O’Gorman 2010:68).

By 400 BC, commercial hospitality in Greece was considered necessary to attract tourists and traders. Commercial hospitality, unlike domestic and civic reception, provided large provisions of food and beverage, accommodation, and work opportunity. Commercial hospitality was also utilized by those who did not have a network of private hospitality. Ultimately, commercial hospitality became an important means of developing the influence of Greece beyond its borders (O’Gorman 2010:69).

While commercial hospitality in classical Greece provided much needed accommodation for travelers of all sorts, the status of the guests, and the purpose of their visit determined the manner in which they were received. Because this period lacks historical records, not much was elaborated on the commercial establishments as such. Fortunately, more historical information is available regarding the development of commercial hospitality in classical Rome.

2.6. COMMERCIAL HOSPITALITY IN CLASSICAL ROME: AN INDUSTRY OF DIVERSITY

The first mentioning of public hospitality between Rome and another city is after the Gauls left Rome (O’Gorman 2007a:25). It was decided that the city of Caere (273 BC) should be rewarded for its good services and for the shelter it provided to the sacred treasures of Rome and her priests (O’Gorman 2007a:25). The hospitality between Caere and Rome expanded to other states, giving rise to what was viewed as commercial hospitality (O’Gorman 2010:79).

The Roman Empire (27 BC – 467 AD) was an immense center of consumption. In addition to the large amounts of food that was imported and exported, there were also market expansions as well as the exchange of services and cultural ideas O’Gorman (2007b:44). Contemporary western cuisine still shows evidence of classical Roman culinary practices,

such as pizza and paella (O’Gorman, Baxter & Scott 2007:6). The study of classical Roman cuisine relies on an Apician viewpoint. Up to today, it is unclear who Apicius was. It is known that he lived in the early Empire (30BC), and it is believed that he kept a cooking academy (O’Gorman 2010:81).

Roman celebrity cooks were usually viewed as being morally disreputable. However, they were also seen as fashion leaders. One such a celebrity cook was Petronius. He was the *arbiter elegantiae* (arbiter of good taste) at the court of Emperor Nero. Petronius authored ‘*Cena Trimalchionis*’ which describes the typical food and beverage of a Roman feast (O’Gorman 2010:82).

Extensive commercial hospitality existed for travelers, merchants, and sailors. In secondary literature, there is evidence that women working in the hospitality trades were mainly prostitutes. Some reckoned that inns and taverns served primarily as brothels. It is indisputable that commercial hospitality in Rome included brothels (*lupanar*) (O’Gorman 2010:82).

Copious amounts of information can be gained from literary analysis. As a result, archeological investigation can provide a clearer understanding of certain practices. Of all the archeological sites associated with commercial hospitality, Pompeii is the most significant. For a thorough analysis of Roman commercial hospitality, Pompeii and Herculaneum, near Naples, offer a unique perspective (O’Gorman *et al.* 2007:3).

Because Pompeii was a major center of commerce and entertainment, commercial hospitality was highly organized. However, living accommodation required basic utilities to ensure the hygienic preparation and consumption of food. This requirement fueled subsequent development, growth and entrepreneurial activity in the sector (O’Gorman 2010:85).

Commercial hospitality in ancient Rome was categorized in four principal categories: *hospitiae*; *stabulae*; *tabernae*; and *popinae*. The *tabernae* and *popinae* had no overnight

facilities while the *hospitiae* and *stabulae* usually did (O’Gorman 2010:86). These establishments were often situated close to each other to provide in all the needs of the travelers (O’Gorman 2010:87). The following table lists the above-mentioned facilities and their primary functions.

Commercial hospitality establishments in Ancient Rome (O’Gorman 2007b:46).

Latin names	Decryption and facilities	Modern equivalent
<i>Hospitium</i>	Larger establishment that offered rooms for rent, and often food and drink to overnight guests; often specifically built for business purposes.	Hotel
<i>Stabula</i>	Buildings with open courtyard surrounded by a kitchen, a latrine, and bedrooms with stables at the rear. Often found just outside the city, close to the city gates; offered food, drink and accommodation.	Coach Inn
<i>Taberna</i>	Sold a variety of simple foods and drink. They usually contained a simple L-shaped marble counter, about six to eight feet long.	Bar
<i>Popina</i> Or <i>Caupona</i>	Served food and drink, offered sit-down meals; these terms were often used to describe public eating-houses and sometimes included a few rooms.	Restaurant
<i>Lumpanar</i>	Provided a full range of services of a personal nature.	Brothel

These establishments were most frequently utilized by travelers, merchants, and sailors. These establishments rapidly escalated to more sophisticated institutions to provide more luxurious accommodation and facilities to higher class guests (O’Gorman *et al.* 2007:9).

Besides the fact that the provision of hospitality has now ventured into the commercial domain, personal hospitality was still operational. However, for businessmen and

travelers, commercial hospitality was convenient as not all of them had established personal hospitality networks. Thus, trade and commerce played a pivotal role in the development of commercial hospitality in the first century.

From what was earlier discussed, it is evident that commercial hospitality in classical Rome influenced some of the means and methods of contemporary hospitality. For instance, it was during this era that different types of establishments were founded. This diversity made it possible for guests to choose an establishment that best suited their needs. Because of the amalgamation of cultures, people were able to experience a variety of customs and cuisines – of which many are still evident in contemporary cooking.

The fall of the Roman Empire marked the end of classical antiquity. It also marked the beginning of the Western monastic tradition and the beginning of the Middle Ages that would ultimately lead to the period of the Renaissance.

2.7. HOSPITALITY DURING CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

History honors Emperor Constantine with the transition of the Roman Empire to Christianity. With Constantine's support, Christianity became richer and undertook substantial responsibilities, especially concerning providing hospitality to the needy (O'Gorman, Conti & McAlpine 2008:29). In 362 AD Emperor Julian, after failing to reintroduce paganism across the Empire, urged his governors to espouse Christian practices of hospitality. In a letter to the Hellenic Archpriest Arsacius, Julian emphasizes the importance of charitable hospitality and requests Arsacius to "teach those of the Hellenic faith to contribute to public service of this sort" (O'Gorman *et al.* 2008:30). Julian also accentuated the moral obligation of Christians to provide in the needs of the meek and weary (O'Gorman 2010:131).

Christians continued to establish many more *xenodochia* in the fourth century to particularly provide for the poor (O'Gorman 2010:131). Over time these establishments differentiated into separate institutions depending on the needs of the person; for

instance, orphans, widows, strangers, sick and poor. Perhaps the most important of these establishments were the monasteries which were established after the fall of the Roman Empire (O’Gorman 2010:131).

2.8. MONASTIC HOSPITALITY

The New Testament teachings laid the foundation for the western monastic traditions. Some of these teachings are parallel to those found in early Buddhist and Hindu writings, and research has shown that there was extensive contact between India and Alexandria, which was, at the time (c 200 AD), the main commercial and intellectual center in the Mediterranean (O’Gorman 2011:7).

During the periods of the Middle Ages and classical antiquity, hospitality continued to be a central part of community life. It served an important purpose in the sustainment of healthy relationships within the community and contributed to the enrichment of moral and social bonds among family, friends and neighbors. However, the face of hospitality was about to change.

At the end of classical antiquity, the Roman Empire was overthrown, and the whole of Europe entered a period of decline. During this period, the sophisticated network of commercial hospitality suffered massive dereliction. For travelers, the only safe alternative lodging was provided by the monasteries (O’Gorman 2010:141). It was at the beginning of the Middle Ages that St Benedict took it upon himself to compile a comprehensive rule book that would provide the necessary guidelines for specific monastic traditions to maintain a continuation of good standards (O’Gorman 2010:143). It is notable that St Benedict leaned heavily on the teachings and rituals regarding hospitality as portrayed in both the Old and the New Testaments.

St Benedict is widely regarded as the founder of Western monasticism. For Benedict, a monastery was “a school for the Lord’s service” (O’Gorman *et al.* 2008:30). Benedict lived a life of a Christian recluse in an extreme Egyptian pattern. His main objectives were to

establish a coenobitical lifestyle and to discourage all private ventures in austerity. In 530 AD he wrote the *Monastic Rule of St Benedict*.

The Rule's main purpose was to govern lay individuals who strived to live a life in accordance with the will of God. Recent research and analysis of St Benedict's Rule confirm a taxonomy of hospitality principles that corresponds to contemporary hospitality practices. These rules served to structure and support the provision of hospitality in Europe for at least the next 900 years, until the Protestant Reformation (O'Gorman *et al.* 2008:30).

In St Benedict's Rule, religious hospitality is covered in Chapter 53, entitled *De Hopitibus Suscipiendis* (The Reception of Guests) (O'Gorman 2010:144).

¹All guests who arrive should be received as if they were Christ, for He himself is going to say: 'I came as a stranger, and you received me', ²and let due honor be shown to all, especially those who share our faith and those who are pilgrims. ³As soon as a guest is announced, then let the Superior or one of the monks meet him with all charity, ⁴and first let them pray together, and then be united in peace. ⁵For the sign of peace should not be given until after the prayers have been said, in order to protect from the deceptions of the devil. ⁶The greetings itself, however, ought to show complete humility toward guests who are arriving or departing: ⁷by bowing of the head or by a complete prostration on the ground, as if it was Christ who was being received. ⁸After the guests have been received and taken to prayer, let the Superior or someone appointed by him, sit with them. ⁹Let the scripture be read in front of the guest, and then let all kindness be shown to him. ¹⁰The Superior shall break his fast for the sake of a guest, unless it happens to be a principal fast day; ¹¹the monks, however, shall observe the customary fasting. ¹²Let the Abbot give the guests water for their hands; and ¹³let both Abbot and monks wash the feet of all guests; ¹⁴after the washing of the feet let all present say this verse: 'We have received Your mercy, o God, in the midst of Your church'. ¹⁵All guests should be received with care and kindness; however it is when receiving the poor and pilgrims that the greatest care and kindness should be shown, because it is especially in welcoming them that Christ is received. ¹⁶There

should be a separate kitchen for the Abbot and guests, so that the other monks may not be disturbed when guests, who are always visiting a monastery, arrive at irregular hours. ¹⁷Let two monks who are capable of doing this well, be appointed to this kitchen for a year. ¹⁸They should be given all the help that they require, so that they may serve without murmuring, and on the other hand, when they have less to occupy them, let them do whatever work is assigned to them. ¹⁹And not only in their case but a similar arrangement should apply to all the jobs across the monastery, ²⁰so that when help is needed it can be supplied, and again when the workers are unoccupied they do whatever they are required to do. ²¹Responsibility for the guest house also shall be assigned to a holy monk. ²²Let there be an adequate number of beds made up in it; and let the house of God be managed by wise men and in a wise manner. ²³On no account shall anyone who is not so ordered associate or converse with the guests, ²⁴but if he should meet them or see them, let him greet them humbly, as we have said, ask their blessing and pass on, saying that he is not allowed to converse with a guest.

Skrabec (2003:15) explains that Benedict's Rule was an ingenious way of integrating community, hierarchy, and organization. Benedict recognized that for productivity, happiness, and spiritual self-actualization to occur, individualistic and organization goals have to merge. Benedict's ultimate goal was to establish a form of equilibrium between personal needs, organizational structure, leadership, and administration to ensure long-term success (Skrabec 2003:15).

Benedict's Rule focuses on the community before structure. Three principles are core to Benedict's community: "camaraderie, communal welfare, and stability" (Skrabec 2003:15). These principles, explains Skrabec (2003:16), had a significant impact on productivity. Benedict's Rule was formulated in such a way that it brought employees together. For example, he stipulated that the monks had to enjoy a meal together before they left to work in the fields.

In Chapter 51 of the Rule, Benedict prohibits members from eating any place else besides the monastery without obtaining permission from the abbot (Skrabec 2003:16). For

Benedict meals served an important function. In total, five of the seventy-three chapters of the Rule contain guidelines regarding meals. It was during mealtimes that members and guests were able to share information. Skrabec (2003:17) points out that: “It is a fundamental physiological fact that eating together helps people work together.”

Benedict also had a unique approach to communal welfare (Skrabec 2003:17). For Benedict, it was important that profits made had to return to the community. Thus, one can view it as a welfare system similar to contemporary social security. The Rule also required of the monks to be content with authority. If an employee was found to be unhappy, the abbot was responsible to assign a mentor to counsel the particular individual (Skrabec 2003:17).

The happiness of employees was a matter of importance as petulant employees would destroy the spirit of the community. Benedict also made provision in his Rule to deal with individuals who were disobedient, proud or who’s murmuring were disruptive for the community (Barry 1997:32). The Rule stipulated that these matters were to be addressed by the seniors for consideration. After two warnings by the elders, the offender, if no remorse is shown, was to be publicly rebuked. If such a reprimand is still ignored, excommunication was enforced. In extreme cases, corporal punishment considered (Barry 1997:32). However, excommunicated employees were always given the opportunity to return to the abbot if they so wished (Skrabec 2003:18).

After seeing the fall of Rome, Benedict felt obligated to reestablish order in society (Skrabec 2003:18). His Rule was so effective that, though it is 1,500 years old, it is still used in organizational studies. Eventually, the Rule became self-regulating. The methodology of the Rule, being routine, provided security for individuals. Centuries later, Maslow (footnote that he will be discussed in the following chapter) will concur the principles of Benedict’s Rule when he developed his theory of self-actualization in which he points out that the key to organizational productivity is not achieved through organizational motivation, but rather through self-motivation (Skrabec 2003:19).

Monastic hospitality greatly influenced the manner in which society understood and extended hospitality. The monastic principles were adopted and modified by the nation-states, secular organizations, and society in general as their responsibilities regarding hospitality expanded (O’Gorman 2010:155). This modernization of hospitality would change the social structure of hospitality forever.

Though the face of hospitality has changed, there are still some similarities between ancient and contemporary hospitality. These include the provision of food, drink, entertainment, and accommodation. As in antiquity, contemporary hospitality workers are sometimes required to be hospitable to arduous guests. In ancient times, such challenging situations were overcome by the implications associated with dishonoring a guest.

Perhaps one of the most significant differences of the contemporary lodging industry lies in the interaction between the host and the guest. In Biblical hospitality, the head of the household was the primary person with whom guests interacted. Servants hardly had any personal contact with guests. If such a scenario had to be pictured in the contemporary hospitality setting, it would mean that the hotel manager will have to take the role of the host. But, with establishments that houses hundreds, and even thousands of guests, this would be an unrealistic scenario. This important task now mainly rests on the shoulders of the front-stage workers. While some front-stage workers attended formal hospitality schooling, others have to rely on their tribal teachings of hospitality.

Here in sub-Saharan Africa, formal hospitality schools are not the only method of education. Here, hospitality, also known by some as *Ubuntu*, is taught through the reference to nature Gathogo (2008:277) and the practices of community drama Gathogo (2008:282).

2.9. UBUNTU: AN AFRICAN CONCEPT OF HOSPITALITY

The word *Ubuntu* is most frequently used by the black traditional societies below the Sahara. These communities are renowned for their interconnectedness (Bell & Metz 2012:79).

The objective of African hospitality is that no one should be seen as an isolated individual; we are all part of a large community (Gathogo 2008:276). Gathogo (2008:276) refers to the French philosopher Rene Descartes' quote that states, "I think, therefore, I exist" and suggests that an African version should rather read, "I am because we are", or "I am related, therefore, I am."

The interdependence of African hospitality is described in several African proverbs. In his article, 'Some expressions of African hospitality today' (2008), Gathogo shares some Kikuyu proverbs. One proverb states: "*Mugogo umwe nduaraga iriuko*", which means; on one's own, as an individual, one cannot do something substantial. Another Kikuyu proverb reads: "*Mugogo umwe nduaraga iriuko.*" When translated, this proverb reads "one log does not make a bridge." One of the most popular Kikuyu proverbs reads: "*Gutiri gitatuirie kingi*", meaning; "all things are interdependent."

Gathogo (2008:277) grew up in the Mwea plains of the Kirinyaga district, Kenya. He tells of a small spotted bird that is often seen in the vicinity where the cattle graze. The locals have several names for this little bird, referring to it as "the one who shepherds", "the white one who moves here and there", and "the beautiful one." Gathogo explains how this little bird follows the grazing cattle, almost as if it was shepherding the cattle. But the purpose of this little bird is not only to alarm the cattle of any impending danger. It follows the cattle because as the cattle move through the grasslands, grasshoppers and other insects start to move, making it easy for the little bird to feast on them. Sulamoyo (2010:43) further explains that African hospitality is commonly expressed through community drama. Through plays, music, poetry and dance, moral and social lessons are taught to the younger members of the tribe.

Mbaya (2010:369) is of the opinion that all the given explanations and definitions of *Ubuntu* boil down to humanness. Perhaps one of the best-known definitions of *Ubuntu* is that of Desmond Tutu (see Mbaya 2010:369):

A person is a person through other persons.' I would not know how to be a human being at all except (that) I learned this from other human beings. We are made for a delicate network of relationships, of interdependence. We are meant to complement each other. All kinds of things go horribly wrong when we break that fundamental Law of our being. Not even the most powerful nation can be completely self-sufficient.

In Matthew 7:12, the Law that Tutu is referring to is summed up as follows: “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you...” This teaching is also referred to as “The Golden Rule.” The difference, though, as indicated, is that *Ubuntu* is not necessarily associated with religion, but rather with tradition and moral values. Lennick and Kiel (2008:7) refer to this notion as “moral intelligence” and define it as one’s ability to “determine how universal human principles – like those embedded in the ‘golden rule’ – should be applied to our personal values, goals and actions.”

The information presented thus far has shown that our Western understanding of hospitality has been greatly influenced by concepts such as religion, mythology, and culture. However, the phenomenon of hospitality has also received much attention amongst scholars who are interested in the field of philosophy. In what follows, some of these philosophies will be discussed, as they, too, might influence the construction of contemporary hospitality.

2.10. A WESTERN PHILOSOPHICAL VIEW OF HOSPITALITY

In Western society, virtually all ethical perspectives evolve around the ‘other’ (Ogletree 1985:35). However, the ‘other’s’ call for privilege is seldom taken into account concerning the original meaning of morality. Usually, though this phenomenon is given substantial weight, it is integrated into the following; “a principle of rationality, enlightened self-interest, the dynamics of self-constitution, a general theory of values, ‘causes’ to which the self is loyal” (Ogletree 1985:35). Ogletree also suggests that Christian morality can only emerge when egoism is called into question and when the self opens to the world of meaning through the other, prioritizing the needs of the other above personal benefit. Through this, egoism gains its right through discourse with the other enabling the self to experience the gratifications which are associated with moral goodness (Ogletree 1985:57, 58).

In his article, ‘The hospitality phenomenon: philosophical enlightenment?’, O’Gorman (2007c) discusses the philosophies of several accomplished philosophers concerning hospitality. He starts his article with a short historical overview of Jacques Derrida, the French philosopher who is renowned for his work concerning hospitality. Derrida’s thoughts of hospitality will probably always be respected by fellow researchers who do research on the topic of hospitality, especially when referring to hospitality across international borders.

Derrida, who grew up as a Jew in Algeria, was a victim of xenophobia and subsequently concentrated much of his time to research on this phenomenon. During the years, many philosophers relied on Derrida’s thoughts to help them construct their philosophies regarding the concept of welcome.

Derrida views hospitality as the invitation and welcoming of the “stranger.” This occurs on two levels (O’Gorman 2007c:191). The first level is where one welcomes the “stranger” into one’s home, and the second is when the “stranger” is welcomed in a foreign country.

O’Gorman (2007c:191) points out that for Derrida, there was always a degree of hostility present in all forms of hospitality and called it “hostipitality”.

Telfer (2000:39-55) also explores this matter when she writes about the motivation behind hospitality. For Telfer, there is a limitation to the amount of hospitality that a host can offer. Equally important is the intentions that initiate welcome. For instance, the motivation behind hospitality for pleasure and hospitality as duty are not the same. However, regardless the reason for showing welcome, hospitality, according to Telfer (1996:82) is first and foremost a moral virtue.

People often pursue the idea of hospitality because of its social appeal (Telfer 1996:101). This allure is founded “on a sense of the emotional importance of the home and of food, and of the special benefits which sharing them can bring” (Telfer 1996:101). This appeal, says Telfer (1996:101), is common to all kinds of welcoming because hospitality “presents itself as joyful rather than onerous, and provides the inspiration for the pursuit of the virtue or virtues of hospitableness.” While Telfer’s understanding of hospitality can perhaps be seen as individualistic of nature, Derrida (2000:77) offers a more comprehensive understanding of welcome:

... *The law of unlimited hospitality (to give the new arrival all of one’s home and oneself, to give him or her one’s own, our own, without asking a name, or compensation, or the fulfilment of even the smallest condition), and on the other hand, the laws (in the plural), those rights and duties that are always conditioned and conditional, as they are defined by the Greco-Roman tradition and even the Judeo-Christian one, by all of law and all philosophy of law up to Kant and Hegel in particular, across the family, civil society, and the State.*

Derrida’s view of hospitality speaks of a universal understanding of hospitality. O’Gorman (2007c:193) points out that it should be kept in consideration that no matter how efficient and comprehensive Derrida’s understanding of hospitality is, it remains a concept that is subject to man-made rules – whether it be domestic, civic or commercial hospitality.

However, for Derrida (2000:79), even unconditional hospitality “*requires*” the law – it is constitutive:

It wouldn’t be effectively unconditional, the law, if it didn’t *have to become* effective, concrete, determined, if that were not its being as having-to-be. It would risk being abstract, utopian, illusory, and so turning over into its opposite. In order to be what it is, *the* law thus needs the laws, which, however, deny it, or at any rate threaten it, sometimes corrupt or pervert it.

While Derrida explains the importance of the law, for him this law is paradoxical because absolute hospitality requires that welcome must be offered to the guest without any means of reciprocity (Derrida 2000:25). Thus, absolute hospitality can only be shared, not exchanged, neither can be restricted by rules. As Derrida (2000:25) puts it:

Absolute hospitality requires that I open up my home and that I give not only to the foreigner (provided with a family name, with the social status of being a foreigner, etc.), but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, and that I *give place* to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names. The laws of absolute hospitality command a break with hospitality by right, with law or justice as rights.

Thus, according to Derrida’s understanding of hospitality, unconditional hospitality is impossible in our contemporary setting because there can be no invitation without rules. For Derrida (2000:125), “the guest (*hôte*) becomes the host (*hôte*) of the host (*hôte*).” Thus, the unlimited and unconditional hospitality of the guest makes it possible to reverse the roles of the host and the guest. As a result, the guest who is at home, now being the host, when entering from outside, has to enter his home through the guest, who in return becomes the host: “We thus enter from the inside: the master of the house is at home, but nonetheless he comes to enter his home through the guest – who comes from outside” (Derrida 2000:125).

Derrida (2000:151) refers to the Biblical story of Lot, who offered his virgin daughters to the Sodomites when they came to Lot's house, demanding that Lot to send his guest out to them. Thus, by protecting the stranger, Lot stays true to the law of hospitality. Thus, in this scenario, a hierarchy arises between guest and host, as guests become the host (Mersin & Yildiz 2013:27).

In this section, some prominent theories regarding hospitality were discussed. However, it seems that authentic, unconditional hospitality remains a paradox, not because it is a philosophical enigma, but rather because hospitality cannot truly be conceptualized as an objective matter of understanding. As O'Gorman (2007c:201) puts it, "Hospitality exists within lived experience; it is a gift given by the 'host' to the 'guest', and then share between them."

2.11. CONCLUSION

The way we construct our realities are influenced by narratives and traditions of the past (Van Huyssteen 2007:5). Thus, ancient stories and traditions of hospitality might influence the way in which hospitality workers construct the front-stage world of the hospitality industry – a world that observes an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction.

In this chapter, several stories of ancient and mythological hospitality were discussed. These stories – as in the case of the front-stage world – speak of the expectation of unconditional hospitality. However, as in the case of the front-stage world, the hosts of old were also sometimes required to wear 'happy-face' masks.

Like the front-stage workers are embedded in the community of the front-stage world, the hosts of antiquity were also embedded in their respective communities. These communities expected of those who hosted strangers to consider the honor of the entire community. Sometimes hosts even placed their households in danger to accommodate

strangers (Gn 19; Jdg 19). Similar sacrifices, such as emotional sacrifices, are still made by contemporary hospitality employees.

According to the ancient stories of hospitality, it might be said that the ultimate concern of those communities was unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction. This same ultimate concern is observed by contemporary hospitality employees who work in the front-stage world. This can be said because the language that ancient communities spoke in the observance of their ultimate concern – an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction – is the same as the language that the workers of the front-stage world speak in the observance of their ultimate concern – an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction. This language speaks of sacrifice, devotion, respect, the acceptance of how things should be done, ethics, and the hope of being recognized for one's good deeds. However, this language is not unique to communities who observe an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality because this is the language of *religion*. Thus, regardless of what the community decides to be their ultimate concern, the language of religion will come into play.

In this chapter, attention was given to elements that might influence the way front-stage workers construct the front-stage world. However, as in the case of the front-stage world, there are also elements that influence the way in which the back-stage workers – workers who observe an ultimate concern of profit – construct the back-stage world. In the next chapter, some elements are discussed which might have an influence on how back-stage workers understand their world.

CHAPTER 3

WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY: PERCEPTIONS AND POSSIBILITIES

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The way in which we understand hospitality is through the telling of stories and traditions that were passed on to us. Some of these stories include the old narratives of Biblical hospitality, Greek and Roman mythology, and folk traditions. In Chapter Two, some of these ancient stories and folk traditions were discussed.

In the Old Testament, hospitality was understood to be a religious and spiritual obligation. These hospitality stories tell tales where hosts sometimes had to make difficult decisions and where households were even exposed to danger (Gn 19, Jdg 19) when strangers were welcomed into a home. One of the reasons why it was so important for the host to accommodate the guest, was because of his and his family's embeddedness into the community. Thus, the honor of the entire community was at stake. For this reason, neighbors were sometimes required to assist the host in his efforts to accommodate a guest (Jdg 19). While these efforts of the host were seen as a duty, there existed an understanding of reciprocation (Lorencin 2008:168). Thus, if the opportunity would ever arise that the host was to be accommodated by the stranger – who at the time was his guest – the same dedication and welcome were expected.

In ancient Greek mythology, hospitality was also seen as a highly valued and religious custom (Lorencin 2008:168). It was believed that the conduct of the host was carefully examined by the gods, Zeus and Jupiter. As in the case of the Christian God, Zeus and Jupiter, too, would bless those who showed kindness to strangers and lash out to those who neglected their duty of hospitality.

In his *Odyssey*, Homer speaks of Odysseus, a prominent Greek leader during the Trojan War, who was renowned for his hospitality. In this period, as in the narratives of the Old

Testament, it was believed that a stranger was either a godly creature or a mere mortal man (O’Gorman 2005:42). However, it was not required of the host to identify between the two. The main purpose was to impress and honor the gods by accommodating the stranger (O’Gorman 2005:142).

As Zeus presided over Greek hospitality, so did Jupiter govern the hospitality laws of ancient Rome (O’Gorman 2005:145). In *Metamorphoses*, Ovid (43 BCE-ADC, see O’Gorman 2005:145) narrates the story of the gods Jupiter and Mercury who visited earth in human disguise, searching for a place to rest. After being denied multiple times, eventually, these gods were welcomed into the simple cottage of Baucis and Philemon. The generosity of these two men impressed the gods so much that they transformed the meager home of their hosts into a castle, and flooded the homes in the valley of those who denied them.

During the time of classical Greece, settlements expanded and the need for commercial hospitality increased. While information of this era is fairly limited, the principle aspect was considered the crossing of thresholds (O’Gorman 2010:69). During this period, Plato established his *Laws*, in which he identifies four types of guests who required different levels of hospitality (O’Gorman 2010:69). Depending on the status and purpose of the guests, the hospitality standards were to be accustomed. According to Plato, Zeus was pleased with these *Laws* and, therefore, it was seen as the only appropriate behavior (O’Gorman 2010:69). The hospitality trade expanded and by 400BC, commercial hospitality in Greece was considered necessary to attract tourists and traders.

Centuries later, the Roman Empire (27 BC – 467 AD) developed into an enormous center of consumption (O’Gorman 2007b:44). Modern western cuisine still shows evidence of classical Roman culinary practices (O’Gorman *et al.* 2007:93). It was also during this time that several different types of lodgings were established. According to archeological findings, Pompeii and Herculaneum, near Naples, offer unique examples of the different establishments (O’Gorman *et al.* 2007:90).

During the time of classical antiquity, when the Roman Empire transitioned to Christianity, the Emperor Constantine placed much emphasis on the importance of hospitality (O’Gorman *et al.* 2008:29). In 362 AD, after a failed attempt to reintroduce paganism in Rome, the Emperor Julian urged his governors to support Christian practices of hospitality, reminding them of their moral obligations as Christians to provide for the needs of the meek (O’Gorman *et al.* 2008:29, 30).

At the end of classical antiquity, after the fall of the Roman Empire, the only safe place of lodging was provided by the monasteries (O’Gorman 2010:141). It was during this period that St Benedict wrote his Rule that would provide guidelines for particular monastic traditions (O’Gorman 2010:143). According to Skrabec (2003:15), Benedict’s Rule is an effective way of integrating community, hierarchy, and organization. This could be the reason Benedict’s Rule is still regarded in contemporary hospitality practices (Lips-Wiersma, Lund Dean & Fornaciari 2009:291).

In more recent times, another example of hospitality has emerged in sub-Saharan Africa. Here, the folk traditions speak of *Ubuntu* – an interdependent form of African hospitality (Gathogo 2008). In the tribes that reside in sub-Saharan Africa, tribal elders teach the principles of *Ubuntu*, often expressed through community drama, by referring to the examples set by nature (Gathogo 2008:277).

While all the above-mentioned traditions speak of different philosophies regarding hospitality, they are all religiously constructed, or put differently, driven by an ultimate concern. From a social construction paradigm, religion does not only refer exclusively to theistic beliefs but rather incorporates a broader understanding of humanity’s need to create meaning and purpose within a community. Religion can thus be understood as that which offers an individual or communal sense of ultimate meaning or ultimate purpose.

Religion can be seen as the binding power that unites communities as they share a common understanding of an ultimate meaning of life – the ultimate reason for their

existence, the ultimate good that needs to be followed. In these religious constructions are figures of power that dictates what the ultimate meaning and good are. While some religions rely on specific religious authorities, like sacred texts, methodological gods or characters in folk traditions, other might see economists as the authorities in the economic world where the ultimate concern is profit.

Each religion associates with a specific spirituality. Perhaps spirituality can be seen as one's loyalty to one's religion, thus, the sacrifices that one is willing to make in one's observance of one's religion. As Koerie (2006:19) points out, spirituality is "the *raison-d'être* of one's existence, the meaning and values to which one ascribes."

Value structures are conceptualized over extended periods of time through the agreement of the members who belong to a specific community – or industry. Eventually, these value structures become a way of living. An example of such a community is the community to which contemporary hospitality workers belong.

In Chapter One, a metaphor in which the hospitality industry is referred to as a stage, and the workers as actors, emerged. In this setting, two worlds were established; a front-stage world and a back-stage world – each world with its own respective ultimate concern.

The aim of this chapter is to show how both the front-stage world and back-stage world co-exist in the hospitality industry, but each observing a different religion – a different ultimate concern, ultimate meaning, and ultimate reason for existence. However, in a space, as in the case of the contemporary hospitality industry, where more than one value system is observed – as in the case of the back-stage world and front-stage world – conflict of interests can be expected.

In the case of the front-stage world, the reason for existence is to offer unconditional welcome to the guests, to make them feel at home away from home. The back-stage world's reason for existence is to establish profitability. However, unconditional welcome and profit are unlikely allies.

In the current setting, those that are excluded in each respective spirituality are mere objects in the conceptualization of the spirituality of the other. The only way to change objects into subjects is to include them in the conversation. Thus, it is only through the participation of all involved that an alternative perspective of meaning can emerge – a spirituality of hope.

3.2. TWO WORLDS – TWO DIFFERENT CONSTRUCTIONS

As mentioned in Chapter One, this study argues that the contemporary hospitality industry consists of two worlds – a front-stage world and a back-stage world. Each of these worlds observes an ultimate concern. The workers of the front-stage world observe an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction while the workers of the back-stage world observe an ultimate concern of profit. The existence of these two conflicting worlds creates the paradox of the contemporary hospitality industry – a paradox of unconditional hospitality.

Both the front-stage world and the back-stage world are socially constructed. The elements that might influence the construction of the front-stage world include ancient stories and traditions of hospitality. This can be said because as in the contemporary setting, the hosts of antiquity – as was shown in Chapter Two – also observed an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction.

As ancient stories of hospitality might influence the construction of the front-stage world, so are there also elements that affect the construction of the back-stage world – a world that observes an ultimate concern of profit. In the discussion that follows, some of the dominant influences that construct the back-stage world will be discussed.

3.3. THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

Though the workers of the front-stage world observe a very different ultimate concern as the workers of the back-stage world, for the workers of both these worlds it is of great importance to show the utmost respect for their respective religions.

Religion is based on what is communally viewed as the ultimate concern. Durkheim (2001:26) explains that all religions are instructive, and they all share a notion for the respective absolute. Jensen (2014:1) has a similar understanding and argues that “religion is a perplexing social and individual phenomenon” that can be “favorably associated with agreeable human qualities such as ethics, morality and spirituality” – qualities that are not only relevant in the contemporary hospitality industry but also in many other commercial settings. This spiritual approach to the corporate world received much attention during the time of the Enlightenment. According to Bratton and Denham (2014:104), the philosophies of Emile Durkheim, Karl Emil Maximilian Weber and Karl Marx were some of the most prominent during the rise of capitalism.

Durkheim, a French sociologist from the mid-eighteenth century, believed that society needed some religious system of joining beliefs. According to Durkheim (1964:322), “No society can exist that does not feel the need at regular intervals to sustain and reaffirm the collective feelings and ideas that constitute its unity and personality.”

These confirmations of ethics were discussed during assemblies in which individuals were able to reaffirm their shared feelings. While the world was going through a time of transition (Enlightenment), Durkheim (1964:322) argued that: “The ancient gods grow old or die, and others are not yet born,” however, through the collective experiences of people, new formulae emerged to serve humanity.

According to Durkheim (2002:3), moral authority originates from the social groups people live in. However, the group in itself controls the individual members. Thus, “When our conscience speaks it is society speaking within us” (Durkheim 2002:90). It was thus

important that people understand the nature of morality for once they do understand, they will be able to make rational decisions. Durkheim (2002:117) explains:

Now we are able to check on the extent to which the moral order is founded in the nature of things – that is in the nature of society – which is to say to what extent it is what it ought to be. In the degree that we see it as such, we can freely conform to it ... Thus, on condition of having adequate knowledge of moral precepts, of their causes and of their functions, we are in a position to conform to them, but consciously and knowing why. Such conformity has nothing of constraint about it.

Durkheim was of the opinion that if people understood the reasons for moral obligation, they would voluntarily obey. A sure way to establish such obedience was to encourage the education system to teach modern secular morality in schools so that children understand their responsibilities in society (Bratton & Denham 2014:218). While Durkheim's theory gained much interest in the business world, he was not the only one who felt passionate about this new moral order.

Besides Durkheim, Marx and Weber also studied religion. According to Bratton and Denham (2014:250), these philosophers' conceptions of religion were in some way compatible. It was Marx' understanding that religion has conceptual implications that can justify social inequality (Bratton & Denham 2014:250). Durkheim gave emphasis to the role of religion regarding social cohesion and Weber focused on the "economic ethics" found in the major world religions and cultures (Bratton & Denham 2014:250).

In Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the "Spirit" of Capitalism* (2002), he aims to distinguish the significance of ascetic Protestantism concerning the development of modern capitalism in the West (Weber 2002:121-122):

The task before us is to indicate the significance of ascetic rationalism for the content of the *ethic* of the *social* economy, that is, for the type of organization and the functions of social communities, from the conventicle to the state. Then its relationship to humanist rationalism and its ideals and cultural influences, to the

development of philosophical and scientific empiricism, and to technological development and the arts must be analyzed... [I]t must be shown in what way Protestant asceticism itself was influenced in its growth and character by the totality of the cultural, and especially *economic*, conditions of society.

In short, Weber proposes a new attitude to work and the pursuit of financial prosperity in which work becomes a way of demonstrating godliness, giving rise to the rationalization of capitalism.

Weber relied much on Benjamin Franklin's work which emphasizes the link between religiosity and entrepreneurship. Weber refers to Franklin's theory as the ideal-type "spirit" of capitalism (Weber 2002:9, 10 [italics by author]):

Remember, *time is money*. He that can earn ten shillings a day by his labour, and goes abroad, or sits idle, one half of that day, though he spends but sixpence during his diversion or idleness, ought not to reckon *that* the only expense; he has really spent, or rather thrown away, five shillings besides. Remember, that *credit is money*. If a man lets his money lie in my hands after it is due, he gives me the interest, or so much as I can make of it during that time. Remember, that money is the *prolific, generating nature*. Money can beget money, and its offspring can beget more, and so on. Remember this saying, *the good paymaster* is lord of another man's purse. He that is known to pay punctually and exactly to the time he promises, may at any time, and on any occasion, raise all the money his friends can spare. This is sometimes of great use. The most trifling actions that affect a man's credit are to be regarded. The sound of your hammer at five in the morning, or eight at night, heard by the creditors, makes him easy six months longer, but if he sees you at a billiard table, or hears your voice at the tavern, when you should be at work, he sends for his money the next day... It shows, besides, that you are mindful of what you owe; it makes you appear a careful as well as an *honest* man, and that still increases your *credit*.

For Weber, this mantra of Franklin emphasizes that individuals have a *duty* to accumulate wealth. Franklin argues that this "spirit" is more than just "egocentric maxims." According

to him, these actions are established in religious conviction and the quest for salvation (Weber 2002:12). Weber summarizes Franklin's words as follows (Weber 2002:12):

The '*summum bonum*' (great good) of this 'ethic' is the *making of money* and yet more money, coupled with a strict avoidance of all uninhibited enjoyment. Indeed, it is so completely devoid of all eudemonistic, let alone hedonist, motives, so much purely thought of as an end *in itself* that it appears as something wholly transcendent and irrational, beyond the 'happiness' or the 'benefit' of the *individual*. The aim of a man's life is indeed money making, but this is no longer merely the means to the end of satisfying the material needs of life. This reversal...of what we might call the "natural" state of affairs is a definite leitmotiv of capitalism, although it will always be alien to anyone who is untouched by capitalism' aura.

Followers of this belief were of the opinion that wealth was to be understood as a manifestation of God's grace, thus rationalizing the desire for material gain. As a result, Protestant preaching emphasized that followers had (Weber 2002:77 [italics by author]):

... a duty to *regard* themselves as elect, and to dismiss any doubts as a temptation from the devil... The exhortation of the apostle to 'make one's calling sure' was interpreted as a duty to strive for the subjective certainty of one's election and justification in daily struggle ... And...*tireless labour in a calling* was urged as the best possible means of *attaining* this self-assurance. This and this alone would drive away religious doubt and give assurance to one's state of grace.

According to Weber (2002:96), this philosophy led to the rise of what he calls an "ethic of inner convictions" in which the external compliance of the holy laws is replaced by a more self-motivated development of an inner religious state. Herein lies the essential source of ascetic Protestantism's social transforming potency (Weber 2002:117):

Wherever the power of the Puritan philosophy of life extended, it always benefited the tendency toward a middle-class [*bürgerlich*], economically *rational* conduct of life, of which it was the most significant and only consistent support. This is, of

course, far more important than merely encouraging the formation of capital. *It stood at the cradle of modern 'economic man'* [italics by Bratton & Denham].

With the rise of Protestantism and capitalism in the 18th century, these new philosophies gained tremendous industrial support (Ashforth & Vaidyanath 2002:362). This new ultimate concern of profit resulted in the draining of workers' humanity and dignity (Lips-Wiersma *et al.* 2009:292). Furthermore, intellectual inquisitiveness and scientific analysis invigorated the Age of Reason, resulting in the separation of church and state, making it difficult to differentiate between the sacred and secular (Ashforth & Vaidyanath 2002:362).

Eventually, the rejection of papal authority leads to the new complex organizational structures that ensured greater freedom of movement and choice – supported by scientific and technological investigation (Ashforth & Vaidyanath 2002:362). As society became more and more complex, subsystems emerged to deal with critical issues such as health, education, and regulations – all to the cause of secularization (Ashforth & Vaidyanath 2002:362).

As time went by, the transcendental nature of work was replaced with the materialistic greed that dominates contemporary business strategy (Lips-Wiersma *et al.* 2009:292). As a result, "... today's view of work and organizational form leads, at best, to a tough dilemma, and at worst to an intractable paradox when WPS [workplace spirituality] is added" (Lips-Wiersma *et al.* 2009:292).

Another voice in this dialogue is that of St. Benedict. Many practices in contemporary organizations are influenced by the Rule of St. Benedict (Lips-Wiersma *et al.* 2009:291). This Rule, as discussed in Chapter Two, focuses on community-based service, demonstrating one's dedication to God, or what one views as an ultimate concern. It was believed that each person is bestowed with certain talents and that these skills should be applied to a greater purpose (Lips-Wiersma *et al.* 2009:292). Therefore, work as such was considered as the demonstration of one's spirituality and religiosity.

In a similar way that ancient stories of hospitality might influence the construction of the front-stage world, so can it be argued that the philosophies that were discussed in this section might affect the construction of the back-stage world as many of the concepts that are mentioned in these philosophies are still relevant and notable in the work ethics of back-stage workers.

Later in this chapter, the spiritualities of the front-stage world and the back-stage world will be discussed. However, before attention is given to these respective spiritualities, it is important to consider the findings of contemporary research that was conducted in the field of workplace spirituality.

3.4. WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY

The purpose of this section is to provide a literary review of recent research regarding workplace spirituality. This review will show that until now, workplace spirituality has been widely assumed from two main perspectives; that it is a concept that should ideally be understood, and valued, by all employees who work in the same organisation in a similar manner, or, that it should be approached from one's personal religious orientation – that being, for example, one's Christian orientation. Following this literary review, the concept of workplace spirituality will be discussed within a social construction paradigm, with particular reference to the two worlds that have been identified in the hospitality setting – that being the front-stage world and the back-stage world.

During the past few decades it has become apparent that the idea of workplace spirituality has been widely discussed in several research papers (Bell & Taylor 2004; Casey 2004; Fry 2003; Driver 2005; Duchon & Plowman 2005; Hicks 2003; Krishnakumar & Neck 2002; Lips-Wiersma 2003; Neal & Biberman 2003; Fornaciari & Dean 2001; Sass 2000; Harter & Buzzanell 2007).

Many agree that workplace spirituality could play a crucial role in the deeper and more meaningful understanding of employee and corporate reality (Gotsis & Kortezi 2008:576;

Dreyer & Dreyer 2012:1173; Praveen-Parboteeah & Cullen 2003:137-151). While some might argue that this phenomenon is associated with spiritual well-being and job satisfaction (Hagihara, Tarumi, Babasono, Nobutomo & Morimoto 1998; Robert, Young & Kelly 2011; Cropanzano & Wright 2001), others raise the concern that it can result in physical and emotional sacrifices (Presser 2004:95).

According to Gotsis and Kortezi (2008:576), the raised interest in workplace spirituality could be due to the significance of subjective aspects in organizational settings, for instance, the individual pursuit of higher purpose, personal meaning and transcendent values. For some, it is the *spirit* that involves personal development, and others refer to this phenomenon as the *atmosphere* at work (Gull & Doh 2004:129, 130 [italics as per the author]). Guillory (2000:217) argues for the following characteristics of workplace spirituality:

- Comes from one's inner self
- Benefits self and others.
- Creates alignment of purpose/people.
- Comes with surety (validated by the heart).
- Creates inner meaning and motivation regarding work.
- Creates inner peace in one's self; centeredness.
- Is a *natural* desire to help others grow, learn and succeed.
- Respects and values individual and group dignity.

This understanding of Guillory speaks of a very personal approach to workplace spirituality. For instance, he often refers to the 'inner' and the 'self'. However, from a social construction perspective – as discussed in the beforemetnioned work in this chapter – an ultimate meaning can only exist within a community.

Gotsis and Kortezi (2008:587) understand workplace spirituality to be the fusion of “personal and cultural values permeating all levels of organizational life – the organization, the team and the individual.” For Gotsis & Kortezi (2008:587), workplace

spirituality creates a sense of transcendence through one's work while promoting connectedness, completeness, fulfillment and self-actualization in the workplace. Marques (2008:24) associates with Gotsis and Kortezi' view and adds the following to the conversation:

Spirituality in the workplace is an experience of interconnectedness and trust among those involved in a work process, engendered by individual good-will; leading to the collective creation of a motivational organisational culture, epitomised by reciprocity and solidarity; and resulting in enhanced overall performance, which is ultimately translated in lasting organisational excellence.

Corresponding with this understanding, Jurkiewicz and Giacalone's (2004:13) understands workplace spirituality to be:

A framework of organisational value evidenced in the culture that promote employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy.

Further elaborating on the discussion, Garcia-Zamor (2003:325, 326) argues that spiritual practices draw on "prominent ethical theories and moral principles", and claims that "an individual's spirituality will be a determinant factor in that person's understanding and interpretation of ethical behavior." It should, however, be considered that from a social constructionist perspective, an ultimate concern or ultimate meaning can only be established with the agreement of those who also observe the same ultimate meaning because only within a community can rules and ethical behavior be established.

Furthering the conversation of inner contentment, Graber and Johnson (2001:39) suggest that workplace spirituality should identify with the concept of "achieving personal fulfillment or spiritual growth in the workplace" – or put differently, in the pursuit of an ultimate concern.

Other interlocutors to the conversation argue that workplace spirituality might be understood to be the “need to find meaning and purpose and develop our potential” and it should involve “feelings of wholeness and connectedness”, along with “the integration of various parts of individuals’ professional and personal lives in authentic ways congruent with personal values” (Driver 2005:1095). In an attempt to illustrate the effect of moral values in the workplace, Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004:131) compiled the following:

The values framework of workplace spirituality

(+)		(-)
Kindness toward others and an orientation to promote the happiness and prosperity of employees and other stakeholder	Benevolence	Employee feelings have no relevance in the work environment, their happiness and prosperity are their own concern.
Long-term focus, showing a concern for the consequences of one’s actions into the future.	Generativity	Concerned with immediate reward without regard for long-term consequences.
Practices and policies that assert the essential dignity and worth of each employee.	Humanism	Lacking mercy or kindness; cruel; impersonal, unconcerned with the needs of employees as individuals.
Uncompromising adherence to a code of conduct; sincerity, honesty, candor; exercising unforced power	Integrity	Organisational members can act deceptive, politically manipulative, and are inconsistent in following a code of conduct.
Even-handed treatment and judgement of employees; honest; unbiased assignment of rewards.	Justice	Dishonest, faithless; wrongful or biased in judgements.
All employees are interconnected and mutually dependent; each contributes to the final output by working in conjunction with others.	Mutuality	Employees are separate and distinct free agents responsible for their output irrespective of others’ efforts.
Open-minded, flexible thinking, orientation toward calculated risk-taking, rewards creativity.	Receptivity	Enforces one right way to do things, discourages questioning and innovation.

Regard and treat employees with esteem and value.	Respect	Demonstrates disesteem and contempt for employees.
Independently follows through on goal attainment irrespective of difficulty or obstacles.	Responsibility	Evades work and follow through only insofar as forced to do so.
Being able to confidently depend on the character and truth of the organisation and its representatives.	Trust	Character, truth, maintenance of obligations and promises is at the discretion of individual, organisational members as predicated by their personal gain.

Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004:131-135) are of the opinion that these values, if implemented optimally, could assist in resolving ethical dilemmas and conflicts amongst employees and amongst employers and employees.

While these suggested values of Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004:131-135) seem plausible, from a constructionist perspective, values cannot be predetermined by a group of individuals – especially if these individuals are not part of the group that has to implement the decided values because values are socially constructed within a particular world-view, within a certain spirituality or religion to serve the needs of a particular group. Thus, the group’s values are part and parcel in their observance of their absolute concern.

Workplace spirituality could also be seen as the “individual’s perception of spiritual values present in the organisational environment, and the extent to which the work, leadership, policies, business practices and culture of the organisation fulfill the employee’s spiritual needs and values” (Tombaugh, Mayfield & Durand 2011:146). Thus, workplace spirituality could play a crucial role in the deeper and more meaningful understanding of employee and corporate reality – or in the observance of an ultimate meaning (Gotsis & Kortezi 2008:576; Dreyer & Dreyer 2012:1173; Praveen-Parboteeah & Cullen 2003:137-151; Lips-Wiersma *et al.* 2009:288).

Through the discussion that was presented in this section, many valuable aspects regarding the understanding of workplace spirituality have come to the forefront. This dialogue will now continue, with a social constructionist view, when the two worlds of the contemporary hospitality industry – the front-stage world and the back-stage world – and their respective religions will be discussed.

3.5. THE FRONT-STAGE WORLD

3.5.1. The workers of the front-stage world

From the moment that a one arrives at a hotel, one will interact with the personnel who work in the front-stage. These workers include the staff who welcomes the guests at the porte-cochère, the porter that helps carry the luggage to the room, the staff at reception, restaurant and bar personnel, members of security and housekeeping, and maintenance personnel; including the members of management of all these departments.

The primary duty of these employees is to satisfy the requests of the guests and to ensure the overall guest experience to be as pleasant as possible. It is expected of these staff members to be friendly at all times. Because of this, many of this personnel refer to their duties as ‘acts’ on a ‘stage’ where they are required to wear ‘happy-face’ masks.

There are occasions where members of the back-stage visit the front-stage. These visits can be professional or personal of nature. One of the privileges that the workers of the back-stage world enjoy is an entertainment allowance. This makes it possible for them and their families and friends to enjoy the offerings of the front-stage.

Functioning together in the sphere of the front-stage world are personnel from various religions and cultures. However, here in the front-stage world, they become a new community with a mutual spirituality – an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction.

3.5.2. The spirituality of the front-stage world

The construction of the front-stage spirituality – and also the back-stage spirituality – depends on the dominant language of the workers who work in that particular world. This implies that there must be an agreement amongst the workers for the spirituality to exist – there must be a common interpretation of their ultimate good (Griffin 1988:1; Waaijman 2002:1; McColl 2000:218). As in the communities of antiquity, the workers of the front-stage observe – thus have agreed on – an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction.

In the observance of an ultimate concern – regardless of what the ultimate concern might be – the language of religion is spoken. This language includes words such as dedication, sacrifice, respect, the acceptance of how things should be done, ethics, and the hope of being recognized for one's good deeds.

An ultimate concern is established when specific actions occur in a specific space performed by a group of people in the pursuit of a specific goal. In the case of the front-stage workers, the goal is unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction. Thus, while there might not be any mentioning of religion or spirituality, the environment and the actions that take place in the environment associate with the understanding of religion and spirituality. Such understandings, as mentioned earlier, include words such as devotion, respect, consequences, acceptance and reward.

Thus, religion is constructed in a community, where there is mutual dependence in the quest to observe an ultimate concern. The workers who work in the front-stage world can be seen as such a community – a community that observes an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction. Schneiders (2003:168) explains the concept of religion as follows:

Religion involves a recognition of the total dependence of the creature on the source or matrix of being and life which gives rise to such attitudes and actions as reverence, gratitude for being and life and all that sustains it, compunction for failure to live in that

context in a worthy manner, and reliance on the transcendent for help in living and dying.

In this regard, Geertz (2013:18) argues that religion cannot be distinguished from cultural traits. This argument of Geertz is plausible when one considers the similarities between *Ubuntu* (Gathogo 2008) and ancient religious practices of hospitality. Though different groups might observe different ultimate concerns, the language that is spoken in the observation of an ultimate concern is part and parcel of the language of religion.

It can thus be argued that religion “is the capacity of persons to transcend themselves through knowledge and love, that is, to reach beyond themselves in relationship to others and thus become more than self-enclosed material monads” Schneiders (2003:165). As Fox (1990:16) points out; religion is about “heart-knowledge and about awakening the being in us.”

In recent years, spirituality has become a serious concern in the workplace amongst business executives (Schneiders 2003:163). According to Schneiders (2003:173) and Sheldrake (2013:5), this tendency could be due to, especially in the Christian community, the rigid fundamental principles that the Bible teaches regarding an eschatological reward for a specific lifestyle.

3.6. BACK-STAGE WORLD

3.6.1. The workers of the back-stage world

The workers who work in the back-stage, include hotel managers, accountants, regional directors, operation managers, resort managers and senior executive officers. These workers mainly function in offices and boardrooms. It is very seldom that any of these workers interact with guests. The exception is usually made when a distinguished guest visits an establishment. In such a case, the hotel manager, or a manager with equal or more seniority will host the guest.

Distinguished guests are important to establishments because alliances can be established with them which might lead to future business transactions. Such reciprocity can be traced back to the ancient practices of hospitality where alliances were founded between the host and the guest which were to be honored in future encounters.

Because the workers of the back-stage world seldom interact with guests, these workers do not have to maintain a constant façade of happiness. For them, it is possible to retreat to the privacy of their offices if they feel emotionally challenged. Their working hours of the back-stage workers are also not as stringent as that of the front-stage workers. However, much responsibility lies on the shoulders of these back-stage workers, and it is often required that they be available for company purposes during off time.

Part of the responsibilities of the back-stage workers include the establishment of company policies and procedures, strategizing financial growth and stability, and the marketing of the brand. These strategies and rules, to a large extent, dictate the job descriptions and duties of the front-stage workers.

For the workers of the back-stage world – a world that observes an ultimate concern of profit – the workers of the front-stage world are considered as objects whose function it is to satisfy the ultimate concern of the back-stage world. This places much pressure on the workers of the front-stage world because their ultimate concern is unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction.

However, it is not always possible for the workers of the front-stage world to show authentic kindness. In an attempt to compensate for their emotional distress, the workers of the front-stage world are often required to wear ‘happy-face’ masks to create a façade of happiness. Dimitrov (2011:355) describes the challenges of the front-stage workers as follows:

Traditionally, this is a service line of work involving the following aspects: a culturally diverse workforce whose advancement aspirations in the business are a

guarantee for work-life imbalance; face hours of work in front of the client that prevent concern with personal emotions; stress and uncertainty; the unfriendly management style often displayed in the industry with the purpose of increasing organisational profits at the expense of various human needs, the quality of worklife, and the employee moral.

It should be considered, though, that as in the case of the front-stage workers, the workers of the back-stage world are also passionate about their ultimate concern – an ultimate concern of profit. Like the front-stage workers, the back-stage workers also want to feel respected by the members of their community – a community that observes an ultimate concern of profit.

3.6.2. The spirituality of the back-stage world

While the dominant language of the front-stage world speaks of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction, the dominant language of the back-stage world speaks of profit. Though the ultimate concerns of these two worlds are very different, the language of religion is spoken in both these worlds.

In Chapter Two, ancient stories of hospitality were discussed. As the chapter unfolded, it became apparent that these ancient stories share many similarities to the front-stage world of the contemporary hospitality industry. Because our realities are influenced by narratives and traditions of the past (Van Huyssteen 2007:5), it is possible that some of the traditions of antiquity might play a role in the construction of the front-stage world. In a similar way, it can also be argued that the construction of the back-stage world might be influenced by the philosophies of Durkheim, Weber and Marx – philosophies that spoke of the role of religion in the construction of reality, including corporate reality. Though these philosophies are more than a century old, the role of religiosity in the corporate sector seems to be an ongoing debate amongst corporate executives.

In the 1980s, workplace spirituality enjoyed revived attention when religious and quasi-religious themes experienced a revival. The focus was on the “management of meaning”

(Lips-Wiersma *et al.* 2009:289). However, the motives behind this initiative raised concern. Some saw workplace spirituality as a means of manipulation purely for managerial control and instrumental gain (Lips-Wiersma *et al.* 2009:289). According to Gotsis & Kortezi (2008:588), this implies that companies rely on their employees' guilt complex to stimulate integrity in the workplace. Milliman *et al.* (2003:443) also point out that "organizations may attempt to manipulate or use the concept of spirituality at work as a tool to simply increase productivity."

Perhaps one of the biggest consequential challenges of workplace spirituality is that many modern organizations are founded in accordance with the Cartesian-Newtonian orientation (Gull & Doh 2004:128). This implies that organizations are only interested in concepts that can enhance revenue. This fact raises a concern with Gotsis and Kortezi (2008:584) who point out that:

... [M]odern organisations are founded and function in accordance with the Cartesian-Newtonian orientation. Such a system of thought implies that priority is given to the empirical, the rational that is the objective, the external, the material. Thus, everything is evaluated in terms of tangible and measurable outcomes.

Thus, one of the reasons why corporates might support workplace spirituality is because they believe that the principles associated with this concept could enhance productivity. In an earlier publications Gull and Doh (2004:136) raised a concern about this likelihood:

The reason for the initiative is just as important to realising a spiritual workplace as is the change strategy employed. It is either irrational or exploitative to use spirituality as a strategy for the sole purpose of realising greater competitive advantage higher and more efficient levels of productivity and greater profit. Even though these ends will likely be realised in the short term, implementing spiritual programs and policies primarily for these reasons is dishonouring to humankind and counterproductive to the unfolding of spirit.

This inclination, argues Gull and Doh (2004:129), has already resulted in substantial corporate wealth. According to Lépineux and Rosé (2010:30), this disqualifies the majority of models and practices that claim to respect workplace spirituality because “they remain enclosed in a rationalist system of thought foreign to the spiritual.” This is a concerning matter for Pfeffer (2003:42):

An individual’s desire and right to be treated with dignity at work, to be able to grow and learn, to be connected to others and to be a whole, integrated person cannot simply be sacrificed for economic expediency. For once we start down that path, where do we stop in justifying the treatment of people for economic results?

For Gotsis and Kortezi (2008:591) it is important that workplace spirituality should be employed only to nurture employees’ motivation, commitment and adaptability, and not to exploit these qualities of workers to generate greater revenue. Therefore, corporate instrumentality⁸ should be avoided and alternative frameworks should be considered. Dimitrov (2011:355) shows particular concern for hospitality workers and points out that it should be remembered that hospitality:

... is a service line of work involving the following aspects: a culturally diverse workforce whose advancement aspirations in the business are a guarantee for work-life imbalance; face hours of work in front of the client that prevent concern with personal emotions; stress and uncertainty; the unfriendly management style often displayed in the industry with the purpose of increasing organisational profits at the expense of various human needs, the quality of worklife, and the employee moral.

This understanding of Dimitrov summarizes, in particular, the front-stage spirituality of the hospitality industry. However, it should be noted that the back-stage spirituality shares

⁸ “The instrumentality of corporate culture initiatives for managers primarily derives from its capacity to direct the actions of employees to achieve what they define as the ‘corporate good’” (Bagraim 2001:45). “Top management elicit emotional responses from employees to produce commitment and devotion the organization” (Bagraim 2001:45). “Eventually some employees will identify so strongly with the organisation that they begin to believe, almost as an act of faith, that their needs are congruent with the interests of the organisation” (Bagraim 200:45).

similar challenges than those who observe the front-stage spirituality – the only distinction being their respective ultimate concerns.

The workers who observe the back-stage spirituality are mainly members of senior and executive management whose priority lies in the capital growth and sustainability of the organization. This is perhaps why chief executive officers when referring to workplace spirituality, raise the following concern: “Would organizations be more productive and innovative, and individuals be able to live more satisfying lives, if they felt inwardly connected to their work, fellow workers and workplace?” (Sheep 2006:357). Perhaps it is in the light of this question that spiritual leadership is encouraged because if a company has a ‘spiritual’ leader, then most likely the ‘correct’ policies and procedures will be implemented to ensure the benefit of the corporate’s ultimate meaning.

3.6.3. ‘Spiritual’ leadership

In recent years, a trend has advanced amongst some corporate executives to support workplace spirituality. For some, the spirit of a company, or what corporate management views as essentially important, is determined by executives by way of company strategies (Fry, Vitucci & Cedillo 2005:836) and development programs (Milliman *et al.* 2003:444).

The dilemma of this approach is that the front-stage workers are rarely considered in corporate dialogue because corporate procedures and strategies are mostly decided by corporate executives – workers of the back-stage world.

Corporate strategies are mainly designed to serve the ultimate concern of the back-stage world – an ultimate concern of profit. Perhaps in a way, this can be seen as spiritual leadership. However, when referring to spiritual leadership, it should be considered that the ultimate concern of the leader and the community that he/she works in – for instance the back-stage world – is usually the focal point for reasoning and not the collective good of the entire community.

Since that start of the new millennium, spiritual leadership has received much attention (Benefiel 2003a:383). In the past three decades, in excess of seventy books on spirituality, management and organizational life have been published – most of them written by managers who have personally experienced the effect of a spiritual approach and who now strive to introduce this concept to, and the benefits thereof (Benefiel: 2003a:383).

However, some executives are reluctant to support workplace spirituality because they are of the opinion that religiosity is a determining factor in the spiritual approach (Rego & e Cunha 2008:55). Perhaps this reluctance is substantiated by the fact that religiosity might be associated with Christianity, Hinduism, and Judaism. In this regard, Cavanagh (1999:55) argues that workplace spirituality should in no means be associated with any religious tradition, but should rather focus on personal values and philosophies.

While some might find Cavanagh's argument plausible, from a postfoundational perspective, the way we construct our realities are indeed influenced by narratives and traditions of the past (Van Huyssteen 2007:5). Though the epistemological approach of this study is concerned with the narratives of hospitality workers regarding their understandings of workplace spirituality and how it impacts their work-lives, there are also other methodological approaches that have been implemented by scholars who research this phenomenon.

While some scholars are interested in creating instruments that can measure the effect of spirituality on a company's capital growth (Ashmos & Duchon 2000; Reza & Yazdi 2015; Benefiel 2003b), most qualitative studies are interested to determine how spirituality is exhibited in the corporate environment, and how it impacts organizational performance (Milliman, Ferguson, Trickett & Condemi 1999; Mitroff & Denton 1999; Garcia-Zamor 2003; Jurkiewicz & Giacalone 2004). Though different approaches have been followed to study workplace spirituality, it seems that one of the main concerns of this phenomenon shows how it impacts the capital growth of an organization.

For Greenleaf (2002:2), these findings are indicative of moral values in leadership circles. According to Greenleaf, in order to establish economic growth, leaders need to inspire workers through “high-trust cultures and an empowerment philosophy that turns bosses into servants and coaches, and structures and systems into nurturing institutionalized servant processes.” Such an approach to management, argues Greenleaf, will encourage corporate mutualism. In the same breath, Greenleaf (2002:2) warns against the consequences of dictatorship and states that:

High-control management, political posturing, protectionism, cynicism, and internal competition and adversarialism simply cannot compete with the speed, quality, and innovation of those organizations around the world that *do* empower people. It may be possible to buy someone’s hand back, but not their heart, mind, and spirit. And in the competitive reality of today’s global marketplace, it will be only those organizations whose people not only willingly volunteer their tremendous creative talent, commitment, and loyalty, but whose organizations align their structures, systems, and management style to support the empowerment of their people that will survive and thrive as market leaders.

Though Greenleaf’s approach is credible, from a constructionist perspective, a moral law and value system do not exist purely in the self. These concepts can only apply when there is agreement within a group. Perhaps an alternative approach to Greenleaf’s notion might be to say that the spiritual values that one associates in religious traditions, such as Christianity, might not be accepted by all employees. However, when all workers participate in dialogue, religious and cultural values can be considered in the establishing of new values that suit the entire community. Without open discussion and the consideration of the narratives of the whole community, the likelihood of a paradox is a great possibility.

3.7. THE PARADOX OF THE CONTEMPORARY HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Situated in the contemporary hospitality industry, are two worlds – the front-stage world and the back-stage world. The workers of the front-stage world observe an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction, while the workers of the back-stage world observe an ultimate concern of profit. In the divergence of these two worlds lies the paradox of the contemporary hospitality industry.

Hospitality is seen to be the invitation and welcoming of the stranger (Derrida 2000:76, 77). However, there is always a degree of hostility present in all forms of hospitality. Derrida, refers to this opposition as “hostipitality” (O’Gorman 2007c:191). The “hostipitality” that exists in the contemporary hospitality industry is largely due to the disparity that exists between the workers of the front-stage world and the back-stage world.

The root of these differences lies in the opposing ultimate concerns of these two worlds. While it is the desire of the front-stage world to observe an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction, the workers of the back-stage world – a world with an ultimate concern of profit – demand that hospitality must be shown according to the rules of profit. By following these rules, the showing of unconditional hospitality becomes an impossibility.

However, even unconditional hospitality “requires” a law because hospitality “wouldn’t be effectively unconditional, the law, if it didn’t *have to become* effective, concrete, determined, if that were not its being as having-to-be” (Derrida 2000:79). Thus, though the laws of hospitality might be contradictory and though it might deny, threaten, and sometimes even corrupt hospitality, hospitality still needs the laws to be effective (Derrida 2000:25):

Absolute hospitality requires that I open up my home and that I give not only to the foreigner (provided with a family name, with the social status of being a foreigner,

etc.), but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, and that I *give place* to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names. The laws of absolute hospitality commands a break with hospitality by right, with law or justice as rights.

Other elements that challenge the myth of the contemporary hospitality industry is; the limitation of the amount of hospitality that a host can offer, as well as the intention that initiates it (Telfer 2000:39-55). This argument of Telfer substantiates the reason front-stage workers feel they have to wear ‘happy-face’ masks to hide their exhaustion and to create a façade of happiness.

Founded in this paradox of the contemporary hospitality industry is a spirituality – a spirituality of dissonance and unhappiness. However, this spirituality can be crucified (deconstructed), and a new spirituality of hope and grace can come to life through the life-giving words of the community.

3.8. IN HOPE FOR A SPIRITUALITY OF GRACE

The contemporary hospitality industry consists of two communities. These communities consist of the front-stage world and the back-stage world. Each of these communities observes a specific ultimate concern. The ultimate concern of the front-stage world is unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction while the ultimate concern of the back-stage world is profit.

For both the workers of the front-stage world and the workers of the back-stage world, their respective religions are their “*raison-d’être*” (Koerie 2006:19). Because religion is one of the strongest forms of legitimation, the workers of both the front-stage world and the back-stage world are willing to make sacrifices in the observance of their ultimate concerns.

In order not be blasphemous to their ultimate concern – an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction – the workers of the front-stage world cannot show respect for the god of the back-stage world – a god of profit. The same goes for the workers of the back-stage world.

Because of the dedication to their ultimate concern – an ultimate concern of profit – the workers of the back-stage world can also not respect the god of the front-stage world. Thus, at the moment the workers of these two opposing worlds are currently mere objects in the worlds of the other, causing a spirituality of conflict and unhappiness.

However, the narratives of hospitality workers can de-construct – crucify – these gods (Meylahn 2014:7). This auto-deconstruction creates the possibility for a new community. This new community will be liberated from the dominant myth – the myth of unconditional hospitality – and in the life-giving words of this new community lies the possibility for a new spirituality – a spirituality of hope and grace.

3.9. CONCLUSION

Previous research in the field of workplace spirituality seems to view this phenomenon mainly as a continuation of employees' personal religious orientations into the workplace. While one's personal religious orientation might play a role in how one conducts oneself at work, one's dedication to the working community is not necessarily founded in one's dedication to God or any other holy deity. The dedication of the community at work lies in the ultimate concern of the particular community. The similarity, however, in the observance of different ultimate concerns lies in the language of religion. This language speaks of words such as dedication, sacrifice, the acceptance of how things are done, consequence and the hope of reward. In the contemporary hospitality industry, two very different ultimate concerns are observed.

In this chapter, it was argued that the contemporary hospitality industry consists of two very different worlds – the front-stage world and the back-stage world. The workers of the

front-stage world observe an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction while the workers of the back-stage world observe an ultimate concern of profit. For the workers of both these worlds, their respective religion is their *raison-d'être* (Koerie 2006:19).

Though both these worlds exist in the contemporary hospitality industry, their constructions are very different. In the previous chapter, narratives of ancient hospitality were discussed. Through this discussion, it became apparent that the workers of the front-stage world share the same dominant language as the hosts of antiquity – a language that speaks of sacrifice and unconditional hospitality. Because of these similarities, it can be argued that the hospitality customs of antiquity might have an influence on how hospitality workers construct the front-stage world. Like the ancient stories of hospitality might affect the construction of the front-stage world, so are there also elements that might influence the construction of the back-stage world.

In this chapter, the philosophies of Durkheim, Marx and Weber were brought into the conversation. The dominant language of these philosophies speaks the role that religion plays in the construction of corporate reality, and of the importance of profit. This language is still spoken in the back-stage world of the contemporary hospitality industry.

In the following chapter, the narratives of the co-researchers will be presented. The purpose of this narrative inquiry is to further develop the discussion regarding the construction of the front-stage world and back-stage stage world and to determine how the current spirituality of hospitality – a spirituality of discontent and unhappiness, effect the lives of the four co-researchers as they try to observe an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction.

CHAPTER 4

MEETING THE ‘ACTORS’ OF THE FRONT-STAGE WORLD AND LISTENING TO THEIR STORIES

4.1. INTRODUCTION

As discussed in Chapter One, this study argues that the contemporary hospitality industry consists of two worlds – the front-stage world and the back-stage world. Each of these worlds observes an ultimate concern. The front-stage world observes an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction while the back-stage world observes an ultimate concern of profit.

The construction of each of these worlds is influenced by specific elements. In Chapter Two, several ancient narratives of hospitality were discussed. As the chapter unfolded, it became apparent that some of these ancient practices and understandings of hospitality are still relevant in the front-stage world of the contemporary hospitality industry. In a similar way that ancient stories of hospitality affect the construction of the front-stage world, there are also factors that influence the construction of the back-stage world.

In the previous chapter, the philosophies of Durkheim, Webber, and Marx – philosophers whose thoughts had a tremendous influence on the interpretations of capitalism – were discussed. All three these philosophers studied religion, and as one considers their philosophies, it is evident that religion plays an important role in the construction of reality. Thus, while the ultimate concerns of the front-stage world and the back-stage world are very different, the language of religion – a language that speaks of dedication, consequences, sacrifice, respect, and the hope of reward and recognition – is spoken in both these worlds.

In an attempt to further develop this conversation, four co-researchers were invited to participate in this study. Through the methodology of semi-structured interviews, the co-researchers articulate their understandings of religion, spirituality and workplace spirituality. As the conversations with the co-researchers develop, it becomes apparent how these concepts influence the way they construct the two worlds – the front-stage world and the back-stage world – of the contemporary hospitality industry.

As mentioned in Chapter One, the narratives of the co-researchers will unfold according to five ‘narrative dance’ steps, namely; listening, interpreting, discerning, re-authoring, and embracing (Meylahn 2012:56-63). Through the multiple layers of the co-researchers’ narratives, different stories emerged – dominant stories that speak of a particular world, and shadow stories that don’t make sense in that particular world and are therefore marginalized (in the shadows). However, these shadow stories cannot be ignored as their very existence disrupts and disturbs that world.

While stories are told, we listen, and we interpret. We might even compare the stories to our narrative. This is why the process of interpretation is part of the narrative dance (Meylahn 2014:5). Here, the researcher will attempt to interpret the different layers of each of the narratives – carefully discerning between the ultimate myths and the shadow stories, or the untold stories (Meylahn 2014:6).

4.2. ESTABLISHING THE RESEARCH TEAM

Many departments in the hospitality industry, such as housekeeping, restaurant and bar staff, and general cleaners, are sourced from contractors. This results in a constant circulation of staff. However, members of management are often employees who have made the hospitality industry their careers. This personnel has experienced all the different departments in the hospitality industry, and they are familiar with the challenges that each department boasts. For this reason, the researcher decided to invite members of management to participate in this study.

The co-researchers to this study include three gentlemen – one Indian gentlemen and two Caucasian gentlemen – and one coloured lady. Three of the participants are Christian, and one participant observes Hinduism. All the co-researchers are based in hotels in Cape Town, South Africa.

In an attempt to establish how hospitality workers understand and experience workplace spirituality in the contemporary hospitality setting, the researcher decided to approach employees who have been in the industry for numerous years. This is important because, in a topical study, it is best to choose co-researchers who have distinct perspectives regarding the topic that is being investigated (Rubin & Rubin 2012:61).

All the co-researchers have worked for several establishments in South Africa during their careers. As a result, their extended proficiency enables them to present experienced views, especially regarding the interaction between employees and guests, between management and employees, and between employees and fellow employees.

Once the research team was established, I arranged to meet with each co-researcher individually to discuss the proceedings of the interviews. During my meetings with each of the co-researchers, I informed them regarding the concepts that will be discussed – that being; spirituality, religion, and workplace spirituality. The co-researchers were requested not to research the topics that will be discussed during the interviews as it would benefit the study more if their answers stemmed from personal experience.

The co-researchers were also informed that it is a requirement of the University of Pretoria that they sign an indemnity form before the commencement of their interviews. A copy of the signed indemnity form was given to each co-researcher on the day of the interview. I also informed the participants that they had the right to withdraw from this study at any point in time if they wished to do so. I provided my personal contact details to each participant and ensured them that they could phone me if they wanted to discuss any aspects related to this study.

4.3. THE PROCESS OF NARRATIVE INQUIRY

We are all born into stories (Freedman & Combs 1996:42). Our respective social and historical frameworks continuously invite us to remember and narrate the stories of specific events while we choose to leave others untold (Freedman & Combs 1996:42). It is also through the reflection of stories that we try to understand our working environments. That is why this research relied on the methodology of narrative inquiry to explore the lived experiences of contemporary hospitality employees.

According to Leavy (2015:46), narrative inquiry attempts to co-construct meanings through a process of “storying and re-storying in order to reveal multidimensional meanings and present an authentic and compelling rendering of the data.” Also important to note is that while narrative inquiry relies on small sample sizes, it produces rich case studies (Leavy 2015:46). Thus, it is not about the quantity of the data, but the quality (richness) of the multiple possible interpretations.

The objective of narrative inquiry is to seek interpretations that make more sense to those involved. Thus, a narrative inquiry is interested in the gaining of multiple interpretations while seeking to understand these interpretations within their social constructed realities. Through narrative inquiry, the researcher co-constructs the experiences of the co-researcher who outlines, verbalizes, and reveals life as experienced in a narrative structure (Kramp 2008:105).

According to Morgan (2000:9), “the ways in which we understand our lives are influenced by the broader stories of the culture in which we live.” While some stories will have a positive impact on our lives, others will have a negative impact on our lives. Morgan (2000:9) also states that the meaning we give to particular events that occur in a specific sequence across time does not transpire in a vacuum. There is always a setting in which our narratives unfold, and it is in this specific setting that one gives meaning to events (Morgan 2000:9). White and Epston (2005:89) point out that “since the stories that persons have about their lives determine both the ascription of meaning to experience

and the selection of those aspects of experience that are to be given expression, these stories are constitutive or shaping of persons' lives.”

Through the process of qualitative interviewing, the researcher thus explores, in as much detail as possible, the interpretations of experiences, the meanings they have constructed and the motives of the co-researchers regarding a specific topic or phenomenon. This process also serves to broaden the interviewer's perspective regarding the topic of discussion.

4.3.1. Semi-structured interviews

Once the co-researchers were selected, I arranged to meet with each co-researcher individually. Because of irregular shifts and ever-changing working rosters, the co-researchers and I agreed that it would be convenient if I visited them at work. During this initial meeting, I explained to the co-researchers the procedure of the semi-structured interviews and what their participation entails. It was decided that the interviews were to be conducted at my home⁹.

I chose to conduct one interview per day. This arrangement helped me to remember the ambiance during the interviewing process. With the arrival of each co-researcher, I initiated a casual conversation. I offered the interviewee a non-alcoholic beverage and for the first thirty to forty-five minutes we talked about general matters. This approach helped to establish an unperturbed atmosphere. Once I sensed that the interviewee seemed relaxed, I commenced with the interview. All the interviews were recorded.

During the interviews, I asked the co-researchers a number of questions related to the research topic. Depending on the answers of the interviewee, the researcher should ask follow-up questions to encourage the interviewee to give rich descriptions of the initial questions that were asked (Rubin & Rubin 2012:31). Adapting some of the ideas of Rubin

⁹ The reasoning for this decision is explained in more detail in Chapter One.

and Rubin (2012:38), I identified the following aspects to be important to this specific study:

- Interviewing emphasizes searching for context and richness while accepting the complexity and ambiguity of life.
- The personalities of both interviewer and conversational partner impact the conversation. Because interviewers contribute actively to the conversation, they need to be aware of how their opinions, experiences, cultural definitions, and even prejudices influence what they ask and what they understand. In the conversation between interviewer and interviewee a joint world is constructed, and it is this constructed world that is the material that the researchers work with.
- Interviewing is an exchange that occurs within a meaningful (albeit sometimes temporary) relationship between interviewer and interviewee. The interviewee is treated not as a research subject but as a partner in the research. Interpretations of experiences are made, described and developed in collaboration with co-researchers (Müller 2004:300). Interviewing is usually conducted in a supportive, non-confrontational, and gentle manner. This personal relationship carries obligations for reciprocity. The interviewer is imposing on the time, energy, emotion, and creativity of the conversational partner and owes loyalty and protection in return.
- Interviewing should be flexible, from the first formulation of the research topic to the layers of multiple possible interpretations. In response to what you hear, you can change the questions you ask, the people you talk to, the research sites or conditions, and the concepts and themes that emerge. The issues that you explore the possible meanings in depth evolve as you find more interpretations for one or another of your themes or sets of themes.

At the end of each interview, during a more informal conversation, I thanked the co-researcher for his/her partaking to this study. Once the co-researcher left my home, I immediately transcribed the recorded interview. The co-researchers received a copy of

their respective transcribed interviews within forty-eight hours after the interviews. By providing the co-researchers with copies of their transcribed interviews, it gave them the opportunity to add or subtract information they shared during our conversation. The information obtained during the interviews was not shared amongst the co-researchers. None of the participants changed or added any detail of their interviews.

In this chapter, the narratives of the co-researchers will be discussed according to five metaphorical dance movements (Meylahn 2012:56-63). However, before the actual discussion of the narratives, it is important to understand the purpose of each of the five dance movements¹⁰.

4.4. THE DANCE OF NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Meylahn (2012:56-63) refers to the process of narrative inquiry as a metaphorical dance. This dance relies on five movements; listening, interpreting, discerning, poetry and embracing to explain the circular and repetitive methodology of narrative inquiry. By imagining the circular movements of a dance, the researcher is constantly encouraged to consider and to re-consider the different layers of the narratives. It is eventually through this repetitive reflection that dominant and shadow stories emerge – stories that in their totality paint a specific picture. All of these stories are eventually woven together into an intriguing tapestry, where initially they might be experienced as being overwhelming in their complexity (Moen 2006:56).

Storytelling, according to Moen (2006:56), “is a natural way of recounting experience, a practical solution to fundamental problem in life, creating reasonable order out of experience.” Through our stories we try to make sense of the world we live in, and through our stories we also attempt to make sense of the behavior of others (Moen 2006:56).

¹⁰ The transcribed interviews of the co-researchers can be found in the addendum of this document.

4.4.1. Movement one: Listening

The first layer of narratives is usually freely shared between the co-researchers and the researcher. These narratives form the common shared language of a community, “which tells of the norms, values, histories and dominant themes of a community” (Meylahn 2012:57). In this approach, the researcher should examine and understand how the co-researchers’ actions are related to the social context in which their stories unfold and how these stories develop over time (Meylahn 2013:56).

During this movement it is important for the researcher to listen to the dominant common language used by the co-researcher that he/she applies to describe a particular environment. This dominant common language is the language that is used to construct that particular world.

From the dominant language, the religion of that particular world can be identified. However, there is never only one language, or one story, but always multiple stories. Therefore, attention needs to be given to the alternative stories, and particular attention to the shadow stories that are “suppressed, excluded, ignored and marginalised, but question the dominant common language of the particular context” (Meylahn 2014:5).

4.4.2. Movement two: Interpreting

Stories need to be interpreted and to do so one needs to place stories in the wider narrative context, namely the different narrative settings (Meylahn 2012:58). Sometimes, to do so, it is necessary to consult other disciplines (Meylahn 2014:5). For instance, as in the case of the co-researchers, their stories need be interpreted within the context of the contemporary hospitality setting where two worlds exist – the front-stage world and the back-stage world.

The worldview of a community is conversed and shaped in the community’s common cultural language, thus integrating meaning into an inclusive whole, therefore binding

(*regilare*) a community (Meylahn 2012:59). It is thus a network of binding obligations that legitimizes and justifies the many behaviours of the community as they express to be their collective good (Meylahn 2012:59). Besides the dominant stories, there are also shadow stories – stories that are often overlooked.

Shadow stories haunt the dominant stories, for these stories question the validity of the dominant stories (Meylahn 2014:6). According to the dominant story, shadow stories should not exist, yet they do (Meylahn 2014:6). Thus, shadow stories bring into question the authority of the dominant myth. An example of such a story is the story of Christ which at the time, challenged the dominant myth of Roman authority.

In this regard, argues Meylahn (2014:6), practical theologians should have similar minds as Christ for they, too, open themselves to the marginal, thus risking to be blasphemers because they also challenge – by associating with the marginalized – the dominant myth. By following Christ into the incarnation and crucifixion, the practical theologian “*witnesses the auto-deconstruction of the gods* (Meylahn 2014:7 [italics as per author]). In this auto-deconstruction, a new community can be resurrected, liberated from the dominant narratives. However, this new community is not the solution, for in its resurrection and in its understanding of itself, a new sacred story (dominant story) is created – a story that in itself excludes and creates shadow stories (Meylahn 2014:7).

4.4.3. Movement three: Discerning

Here the sacred stories of the co-researchers need to be discerned as ultimate myth or belief, not judged from an outside objective or higher myth, but from the cracks within the dominant common language (Meylahn 2012:60). These myths have many victims – the workers of the front-stage world. These victims are the source of critical discernment because they expose the truth about the common language and myth of the common language (Meylahn 2012:60).

Here, the practical theologian needs to identify the various divinities that are seen by the co-researchers as the absolute. The engagement with these ultimate myths, “discovering the gods of the contexts”, is necessary to understand the lived-religions of the co-researchers (Meylahn 2014:6). However, the purpose is not to judge these other gods on the basis for some sacred text, or sacred idea, or foundation, but rather to humbly recognize that each situation, even one’s own, has its gods – as part of one’s own social construction (Meylahn 2014:6).

4.4.4. Movement four: Poetry (re-authoring)

The movement of re-authoring, or re-interpreting, already begins with the movement of discernment (Meylahn 2014:6). In this movement, Meylahn (2012:61) refers to the story of Christ which offers a frame of reference for us through which we can understand the world. The crucifixion is a story of an ultimate criminal who was crucified because he treated the dominant myths of the time with irreverence. However, after three days Jesus rose from the dead and this resurrection announces the new life of “impossible possibilities there where the power of the dominating myth is broken” (Meylahn 2012:61). This Jesus narrative needs to be brought into the conversation as one attempts to discern a story of hope.

Meylahn (2012:61) suggests that the story of Christ needs to be declared in the context of the cracks that exist in the stories of the dominant myth and that the resurrection should be seen as the possibility of new possibilities. This identifying proclamation, explains Meylahn (2012:61), is enabled and encouraged by the “hope of the kingdom still to come,” inviting us to “follow Christ into the cracks of the community.”

4.4.5. Movement five: Embracing: A never-ending dance

In this dance movement, new life-giving words are formed and encouraged through the connection with the Triune God within the stories of the co-researchers (Meylahn 2012:62). These live-giving words create a space in the present which are filled with

impossible possibilities of real transformation, liberated from the power and death of the dominating myths (Meylahn 2012:62). This new space with its imaginative possibilities needs to be welcomed and lived to the full for once the minds have been enlightened from the dominant myth; new ideas will emerge within the community (Meylahn 2012:62).

Inevitably, this new life will transform into specific practices within the community (Meylahn 2012:62). As time goes by, these practices will become 'correct practices' and as a result, they become practices that are approved and endorsed by a new dominant story. This dominant story eventually becomes a story that excludes marginalization and pain. Subsequently, these stories, too, will have shadow stories – a dance without end (Meylahn 2012:63). Thus, the new community remains ever changing.

4.5. INTRODUCING THE CO-RESEARCHERS

The co-researchers of this study are all hotel employees who work in the front-stage world of the contemporary hospitality industry. The co-researchers comprise of three gentlemen and one lady. All the co-researchers are based at hotels in Cape Town, South Africa. Their ages vary from early thirties to late forties. Each co-researcher will be introduced to the reader through a short introductory paragraph, which will provide the reader with a brief personal background of the respective participant. The personal information that the co-researchers shared was what they were willing to share at that moment, and it was done so by their free will.

All the interviews started with the co-researchers being asked to explain how they understand the following concepts; religion, spirituality, integrity and workplace spirituality. Concepts, as Rubin and Rubin (2012:116) put it, “are the building blocks of meaning” that indicate how the co-researchers understand and see their world. Depending on each participant’s answers to these questions, follow-up questions were then asked.

Follow-up questions serve to explore the interviewee's answers in order to obtain further depth and detail, to request explicatory examples, and to clarify concepts and themes (Rubin & Rubin 2012:116). If, in response to a main question, the co-researcher refers to an event, a concept, or a theme significant to the research question, it is the duty of the researcher to explore such a statement by asking what happened, who was involved, why did it happen and to whom did it happen (Rubin & Rubin 2012:116). Depending on how each interview plays out, the researcher can also make use of probes, such as 'Go on...' or 'Can you give me an example?' to encourage the interviewee to elaborate on a specific statement (Rubin & Rubin 2012:118).

4.5.1. Meet Alex

Alex is a Caucasian gentleman in his mid-forties. He is married and has no children. He has been in the hotel industry for seventeen years. He never intended to be an hotelier. He started his hotel career as a waiter in a five-star establishment and quickly progressed to the position of *maître d* (restaurant manager) at a fine dining restaurant. While managing the fine dining restaurant, Alex completed his diploma in hotel management. Later in the same year, he got married. Within seven years, Alex advanced to the level of senior management, a position that he still holds today.

4.5.2. Meet David

David is an Indian gentleman in his mid-thirties. He is married and has three children. Initially, David intended to become an engineer, but he never completed his studies. As David puts it, "too many good times." A friend took him to a hospitality recruitment agency, and one week later his career as an hotelier commenced. He advanced quickly through the ranks. After twelve years of working in a number of establishments, David was promoted to the position of senior management, a position he still holds today. Even though David is content with his current occupation, he regrets not finishing his engineering studies.

4.5.3. Meet Cindy

Cindy is a coloured lady in her early thirties. She is in a relationship and has no children. During her matric year, Cindy decided to obtain a national diploma in tourism management. During her second year of studies, she had to complete six months of in-service training at any organization related to the field of tourism. She applied to the local tourism board and sent her CV to a number of hotels. A leading four-star hotel in Cape Town responded immediately and offered Cindy the opportunity to complete her six months of training at the particular establishment. At the end of the six months, the management of the hotel offered Cindy a permanent position as a receptionist. Cindy accepted the offer with the condition that they would grant her study leave and time to attend her lectures. They agreed. Cindy soon became fond of the hotel industry and after four years progressed to the level of middle management.

4.5.4. Meet John

John is a Caucasian gentleman in his early thirties. He is in a relationship and has no children. John never aspired to be an hotelier. John did not know what career he wanted to pursue. All he knew for certain was that he did not want an office job. He could not associate himself with a monotonous working routine. From a young age, John enjoyed cooking, and it is this passion, according to John, which ultimately stimulated his interest in the hospitality industry. John also believed that being an hotelier will give him the opportunity to travel the world. While still being at school John worked as a part-time waiter over weekends. When John finished school, he enrolled at a hotel school in Cape Town. At the completion of his diploma, John started his career as an hotelier in a four-star establishment in Cape Town. Within a period of seven years, John progressed to the level of senior management.

4.6. THE LOGIC OF THE INTERVIEWS

All the interviews started with the co-researchers being asked how they understand the following concepts; religion, spirituality and workplace spirituality. These were the only structured questions that were posed to the interviewees. The rest of the interviews developed through the conversation between the co-researchers and the researcher.

The reason these specific concepts were discussed is because religion is part of our construction of reality. Religion is also the strongest form of legitimation. Thus, wherever an ultimate concern is observed amongst a specific group of people, religion exists. Religion creates a community in which the participants want to feel respected. Religion also speaks of consequences when a deviation occurs, and it promises a reward for dedication. Religion also gives people a sense of righteousness and it integrates all of life by making sense of everything.

In the case of the co-researchers, they all observe the religion of the front-stage world – an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction. However, this front-stage world is unavoidably influenced by elements from the back-stage world because it is in the back-stage world where corporate policies and procedures are decided. Also, because the ultimate concerns of the front-stage world (hospitality and guest satisfaction) and the back-stage world (profit and capital growth) stand in contrast to each other, conflict between these two worlds are inevitable.

Because of the distinction between the front-stage world and the back-stage world, the narratives of the co-researchers will be divided into two parts; narratives of the front-stage world and narratives of the back-stage world. Each of these worlds will tell tales of dominant stories and shadow stories. However, none of the stories told are ultimate stories of either of these two worlds. They can only be seen as the interpretations of the co-researchers in their attempts to make sense of these worlds. After the discussion of the narratives, the next step of the dance of narrative inquiry will follow; the movement of interpretation.

4.7. MOVEMENT ONE: LISTENING

The first layer of narratives is usually freely shared between the researcher and the co-researchers. In these narratives, the common shared languages of the co-researchers emerge. This language tells of “norms, values, histories and dominant themes of a community” (Meylahn 2012:57). In this movement, the researcher should attempt to understand how the co-researchers language is related to the social construction in which their stories unfold (Meylahn 2013:56).

During this step, dominant stories will be told through which the co-researchers describe a particular world – the front-stage world. From the dominant language, the ultimate concern of the particular world might be identified. However, there is never an ultimate story. Thus, particular attention should be given to the shadow stories that are “suppressed, excluded, ignored and marginalised” (Meylahn 2014:5).

4.7.1. Alex’s narrative

4.7.1.1. Alex’s understanding of religion and spirituality

Alex was brought up in a house where both his parents observed Roman Catholicism. However, due to irregular working hours, Alex finds it challenging to attend church regularly. Nonetheless, the life principles that Alex was taught at church, still influence the way in which he conducts himself at work.

For Alex, religion and spirituality are church-based. With this, Alex explains that his religious and spiritual upbringing taught him how he should conduct himself in life. For Alex, the observation of these religious principles is important as God will reward him for his good actions, and God will punish him if he does wrong to others. One should treat people the way you want to be treated – help where you can and give where you can. For Alex, these principles should apply in the workplace.

4.7.1.2. Alex's story of the front-stage world

According to Alex, workplace spirituality is how one conducts oneself ethically in the workplace and for him it is important to stay true to these guidelines. However, the way that Alex is experiencing the front-stage world is that not all hotel employees share his sentiment. However, it should not matter which religious denomination one observed, one ought to show integrity in the workplace – that is to show respect and kindness to others. Thus, it is even possible for atheists to have good work ethic.

While Alex understands religions as different denominations, there is language, as discussed earlier, which is spoken in any religion, or religious situation. This language comes into play when a group of people observes the same ultimate concern. In Alex's case, this group of people includes him and his fellow employees who observe the ultimate concern of the front-stage world – the ultimate concern of hospitality and guest satisfaction.

Alex is of the opinion that 'religious talk' should be avoided at work because it might initiate conflict amongst workers. This conflict that Alex is referring to is conflict concerning the different ultimate concerns of different religions. While Alex understands why conflict might arise amongst different religious groups, he does not seem to be aware that the different religious groups in the workplace are not only those of different denominations such as Christianity and Hinduism, for example, but also refers to workers who observe different ultimate meanings *in* the workplace. The two groups that stand in conflict in the hospitality setting is the front-stage group whose ultimate meaning is hospitality and guest satisfaction, and the back-stage world whose ultimate meaning is profit.

In an attempt to find a more neutral approach to religion in the workplace, Alex suggests that it might be considered to rather talk about workplace integrity instead of workplace spirituality. Perhaps this can be seen as Alex's attempt to find an ultimate concern that can be acceptable for all employees.

4.7.1.3. Alex's story of the back-stage world

According to Alex, the ultimate concern of the contemporary hospitality industry is all about money. This ultimate concern, says Alex, filters down to the workforce and it has a definitive effect on the entire working environment. In his seventeen-year career in the hospitality industry, Alex has experienced several management styles. According to Alex, the manager who leads with integrity makes workers feel like team members where one's feelings and family are considered. However, there are managers who force employees to respect them by means of intimidation.

The workers of the front-stage are under tremendous pressure from the workers of the back-stage. While the workers of the front-stage try their best to observe their ultimate concern of hospitality and guest satisfaction, they seem to be under constant pressure from the workers of the back-stage to make more money and to save money. An example of such cost saving is underemployment.

Alex explains that the current working conditions, referring to extensive working hours and being emotionally drained, effect his personal life. He explains that because of the current conditions, he cannot be with his loved ones over Christmas, New Years and birthdays. While one is supposed to be compensated with an off day if one should work on a public holiday, the high work demand does not always allow one to take a day off.

These long and irregular shifts are often the reason employees want to leave the hospitality industry. Alex explains that the workers of the back-stage often spend extra hours at work and that this is frequently the reason the front-stage workers feel they have to stay longer at work too. The other reason front-stage workers are required to spend extra hours at work is because of insufficient and unqualified staff.

Alex is of the opinion that there is a solution to the current situation. Though there will always be irregular hours, shifts can be better managed and more capable staff can alleviate a lot of the pressure that the workers in the front-stage are currently

experiencing. However, more capable staff will require higher salaries, and seeing that the ultimate concern of the back-stage world is profit, and savings affect the bonuses of the workers of the back-stage world, this possibility, according to Alex, is highly unlikely.

Alex explains that the bonuses of executives – the workers of the back-stage world – are based on cost savings and profit margins. Furthermore, when it comes to the distribution of profit, the back-stage workers do not consider the front-stage workers. Alex is of the opinion that if some of the money that are given as bonuses to the back-stage workers can be used to employ more competent staff in, the front-stage workers will have much less pressure to perform their duties. However, the workers of the back-stage world are of the opinion that if the same job can be done with less staff – regardless if they experience physical and emotional burnout – why sacrifice one’s bonus to employ more workers? Fortunately, there are exceptions, but money, in some way or another, is always an issue when it comes to the compensation of the front-stage workers.

4.7.1.4. Alex’s shadow stories

While workers of the back-stage mainly work in offices, the workers of the front-stage are always in the public eye. These workers do not have the ability to retreat to offices if they desire privacy or when they feel emotionally drained. This causes these workers to wear ‘happy-face masks’ – a façade of happiness. However, this constant expectation to ‘act’ causes tremendous emotional distress for the workers of the front-stage. But if they do not ‘play along’, they stand the chance to be verbally abused and victimized. Such exploitation and bullying, explains Alex, makes a person feel unwanted and unworthy. According to Alex, this is a phenomenon that is common in the hospitality industry.

Alex also points out yet another dilemma of the front-stage workers. Because the front-stage workers are junior to the back-stage workers, they often have to endure verbal abuse from workers of the back-stage. For Alex, such maltreatment is unacceptable, no matter the ranking of the employee. While back-stage workers will not hesitate to accuse front-stage workers of insubordination, front-stage workers do not share the same

privilege – not because the company does not respect their rights, but out of fear of being victimized. For some workers, the only means of avoiding further abuse is to resign.

Alex is determined to change occupation. He knows that some of his colleagues are also planning to leave the hospitality industry. The constant emotional burnout and unrealistic work demand have become unbearable. Unless these issues are addressed, many hospitality workers will seek alternative occupations.

4.7.2. David’s narrative

4.7.2.1. David’s understanding of religion and spirituality

For David, religion is a lot more than just rituals and habits. It’s more about the way one lives, how you treat those around you – that includes nature, animals, and fellow peoples. Religion doesn’t mean anything if it only involves going to a temple of worship once a week.

Being a Christian myself, I am not familiar with the rituals of Hinduism. I asked David to explain the role that hospitality plays in Hinduism. David explains that Hinduism teaches that while we are on earth, we should conduct ourselves in the best possible way – be kind and respectful to others, oneself and nature – because when the soul is reincarnated, the ideal is to be promoted to a higher being. For instance, one can come back to earth in the form of a tree or an animal (this will be a demotion of the soul), or as a superior human being to what one was before one died. However, the ultimate goal is not to be reincarnated as a living being at all but to become part of the cosmic energy.

4.7.2.2. David’s story of the front-stage wold

David is of the opinion that workplace spirituality is particularly relevant in the hospitality industry because of the industry’s service nature. It speaks of how one conducts oneself in the workplace. From a Hindu perspective, showing kindness to others is very important. David explains that from the moment the guest enters one’s home or the hotel, in this

case, the guest is the most important person at that time in your life because the guest could be God walking through the door. This is how spirituality becomes relevant in the workplace.

However, David finds it quite challenging to talk about this particular concept because he is of the opinion that workers might get the impression that they are being converted to a specific religious orientation. I told David that one of the other co-researchers suggested that an alternative way of referring to workplace spirituality might be to refer to it as workplace integrity. I was curious as to what David thought of this suggestion. David agrees with his fellow co-researcher's idea, however, according to David, one is always connected to one's religious roots. Thus, while one does not specifically refer to religion, one's religious understanding will automatically influence one's actions. On the other hand, to speak of integrity makes it more understandable for atheists who do not have any religious background.

According to David, one's religious orientation also influences the way one views the world around you. For example, David finds it very challenging to show kindness to guests who bring prostitutes to the hotel. He feels that the mere fact that he shows kindness to these guests indicates that he supports their conduct. He admits that he tries to avoid dealing with these situations but due to the nature of the hospitality industry, it is not always possible, so one just has to 'act' the part.

For David, the world in which he works is like a 'stage' where one is constantly required to 'act' in a specific manner. But for David, acting and spirituality do not go together. Authentic spirituality should not require acting. David also speaks of a 'back-stage'. For him, the back-stage is the place where the actors can be themselves – where they can wash off their happy-face masks. This constant acting, says David, is very emotionally draining.

Another issue that places much stress on the workers of the front-stage is that guests have so many options these days. In the past, about fifteen to twenty years ago, there

were fewer establishments to choose from. However, the hospitality industry has expanded tremendously, and choices are more versatile. As a result, the workers of the front-stage are required to show an exceptional level of hospitality all the time. If they don't, and guests are unsatisfied, they might not return to the particular establishment.

As a result, the pace of the front-stage world is very fast. David says that it is often his intention to slow down and to have personal conversations with the workers, but the work demand makes it very difficult. He feels it is important to have an understanding of your workers' personal lives and the challenges they might face. When one knows about their challenges, one understands that they might be late because they might have a sick child at home. According to David, a happy workplace is more productive, and people perform better when they know their efforts are appreciated. This alone will make employees more willing to work extra hours when it's required.

It is also important to show employees that you care and that they are not just a number. According to David, this is where workplace spirituality comes in. David is of the opinion that it might help to send workers to workshops where they are taught about emotional intelligence. Perhaps this can improve their management skills because, as David puts it, it is better to lead with integrity than 'with a stick'.

For David, the hospitality industry lacks respect – respect among members of the back-stage world and members of the front-stage world, respect between employees who work in the same world and respect between hotel staff and guests. David also feels that one should have a way to disengage when somebody treats one with disrespect. Nobody should have to endure abuse. David is of the opinion that not even guests have the right to treat staff members disrespectfully and that managers should support the staff in this regard.

4.7.2.3. David's story of the back-stage world

The high demand of the current market requires of establishments to provide excellent hospitality. However, according to David, there are not enough competent staff to ensure superb service. Thus, it is expected of the workers who work in the front-stage world to work longer hours to compensate for staff shortages.

Because workers are under so much pressure to perform, mistakes are often made. According to David, many mistakes can be avoided if workers were able to work fewer hours under less pressure. However, this will mean that more competent staff will have to be employed. And this is an option that the workers of the back-stage are not willing to consider.

According to David, each year hotels spend exuberant amounts compensating guests for mistakes made by tired employees, but in spite of this, executives are reluctant to employ more workers to alleviate the stress and the workload of the workers of the front-stage world. David says that a typical manner of guest compensation would be to compliment the guest's stay – let the guest stay for free. Apparently, these type of incidents happens on a weekly basis. Thus, over the period of a financial year, these losses amount to a staggering sum of money. Also, guests who are dissatisfied with an establishment's service will likely not return to the same establishment. Thus, on the long run, these mistakes cost hotels much more than just a free room.

David also argues that the long working hours of the front-stage world is unnecessary. He admits that there are times that it is required that one works longer, but in general, it can be avoided. One of the ways that this situation can be addressed is by employing more competent staff.

Seeing that David is a member of senior management who often attend financial meetings, I asked him if the abovementioned issues are ever discussed in the financial meetings. In the meetings that David has attended, these issues were never discussed.

Another aspect of the back-stage world that has a direct impact on the front-stage world is when an executive member resigns and another executive is instated. It is David's experience that executive management has an undeniable effect on how the front-stage operates. Sometimes workers follow executive managers to their new establishments because they actually enjoy working with them.

David also argues that the people skills of the back-stage workers can improve. Currently, explains David, more emphasis is placed on how fast and how adequately a task can be done. However, little attention is given to people skills. Managers need to learn how to interact with workers. Sometimes discipline is needed, that's understandable. But rudeness should never be acceptable.

4.7.2.4. David's shadow story

According to David, the long, demanding hours of the front-stage world is very emotionally draining because one constantly has to act and be kind to the people around you. It doesn't matter how one feels inside, all that matters is the act. After these extended hours of acting one feels mentally tired. You just want to drop. For David, it is paramount that managers make time for employees to speak about their challenges. The workers should not just feel like a number who bakes the eggs at breakfast in the mornings. Workers should be respected for the people they are.

This brings another matter to the forefront; that being the rudeness and bullying that front-stage workers sometimes have to endure from members of the back-stage world. David explains that if a worker of the back-stage world was to verbally abuse an employee of the front-stage world, the chances of the front-stage worker taking the back-stage worker to task is very slim. In most cases, front-stage workers will rather try to cope with the abuse of the back-stage workers out of fear of being victimized. Thus, while corporate policies state that all workers have the right to express their grievances, workers are reluctant to speak out. According to David, such a worker will be 'marked' as a 'trouble

maker'. However, if the roles were to be reversed where a worker of the front-stage was to show disrespect to a worker of the back-stage world, he/she will be charged with insubordination.

David explains that all the necessary systems are in place to protect the rights of all the workers. However, these rights are not fully explained to new employees during the induction process. David argues that the reason for this is because the workers of the back-stage do not really want the workers of the front-stage to know how all the policies are implemented. David explains that during the induction period, company policies and procedures are handed out in hard copy format to all the new employees. However, not all employees understand the policies. David feels that more time should be put aside to explain these policies to workers. At the moment, it is more a case of 'it's less troubles...less hassles'. David says that he has witnessed times where workers ask five minutes of a manager's time to explain something to them, just to be told off. According to David, such disrespect discourages and demotivates workers.

4.7.3. Cindy's narrative

4.7.3.1. Cindy's understanding of religion and spirituality

For Cindy, religion is the beliefs and life principles that our parents teach us when we grow up. As we grow up, we mature into our specific religions. These principles include the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, to show respect to others and to lead a life of integrity. For Cindy, spirituality is how one connects with one's religion or to what she refers to as a 'bigger power'.

At the time of Cindy's interview, it was the holy month of Ramadhan. Cindy noticed that the hotel where she is working had gone out of their way to accommodate their Muslim workers by providing areas for them where they can observe the rituals associated with Ramadhan. Arrangements have also been made to accommodate these workers' fasting customs.

Cindy does not have a problem with this arrangement, but she feels unhappy that nothing of the sort is done for any other religious festivals. For instance, why can Christians and Hindus and workers from other denominations not receive the same courtesy so that they, too, can attend prayer meetings or Mass? Cindy feels that staff members will appreciate such a gesture very much. However, Cindy admits that though she has been entertaining this thought for a while, she has not yet posed the question regarding such a possibility.

4.7.3.2. Cindy's story of the front-stage world

When asked as to how she understands workplace spirituality, Cindy, as in the case of David, associates workplace spirituality with different religious denominations. She admits that it is difficult for her to speak about religion at work because so many religions are represented in the workplace. However, according to Cindy, it is a person's religious principles that guide one in the workplace, helping one to distinguish between right and wrong. I told Cindy that two of the other co-researchers feel that it might be an option to speak of workplace integrity, rather than workplace spirituality. I was curious to find out how she feels about this idea. Cindy agrees with this proposal and explains that people are probably more likely to understand what integrity means as to what workplace spirituality means.

According to Cindy, there is not enough integrity in the hospitality setting where she works. For Cindy, being a host requires integrity, however, seeing that the front-stage world where Cindy works lacks integrity, workers don't have a choice but to 'act' their parts. However, every actor needs to be grounded, and it is important to feel that one's fellow workers respect one's efforts. Unfortunately, this is not always the case.

In the front-stage world, the pace is very fast. For Cindy, it is easy to lose herself in the pace, and she often needs to remind herself to take a few steps back just to get her soul in touch with her body again. It is then when Cindy asks herself the question: "Is this what I strongly believe in or is it just imposed on me?"

Recently, Cindy made a decision to pay special attention to her team members. Just because she doesn't receive support from her managers, she felt it would be unfair if she were to neglect her fellow workers as well. She decided that she was going to take an hour every day to interact with her junior personnel. For her it is important to ask: "How is your family?" and "How are you doing?" and not just to say a quick hallo as she passes by.

Cindy says that since she has started to pay more attention to her fellow workers, she has got to know them better, and she understands when they have an 'off' day and why they feel this way. Then she likes to encourage them by saying something like; "You know what, tomorrow you'll feel better." It means the world to them and the moral of the team has increased tremendously. Now, when Cindy asks them to go the extra mile, they don't hesitate to support each other. People appreciate it if their efforts are noticed. However, Cindy does not enjoy the same support from the back-stage world as what she is giving to her team members.

Cindy says that her manager does not know much about her as a person. While her manager might ask; "So, how is it going?", she knows that his inquiry is superficial. A while ago, she mentioned to her manager that she has a family member who suffers from cancer, but her manager has never inquired about her family member's wellbeing. Since Cindy started her career in the hotel industry, it has always been important for her to develop her interaction with fellow workers, but until now, she has never been on any course or attended any workshop that focused on people skills.

It was in the recent past when Cindy worked with a lady who showed great concern for the personal wellbeing of her fellow workers. It was she who taught Cindy to be more attentive to the demeanour of her workers. This lady introduced Cindy to some of John Maxwell's and Jim Collins' books. Cindy found an immediate interest in these authors' books because they argue that *people* are the reason companies are successful. Thus, while hard work will always be required, it is the emotional wellbeing of workers that makes companies successful.

4.7.3.3. Cindy's story of the back-stage world

Cindy pushes herself to work very hard. It is expected of her. But she knows she's overworked. The long and irregular working hours cause staff to lose concentration and as a result, many unnecessary mistakes are made. She knows that she has made many mistakes because she is overworked. These mistakes, argues Cindy, costs hotels millions every year.

As David, Cindy also feels that more competent staff is a good investment for any hotel. She also believes that it will inspire the camaraderie amongst workers. As Cindy puts it: "Why should we host the guest only and not host each other?"

Cindy is also of the opinion the long working hours that the front-stage workers have to endure is unnecessary. According to Cindy, it has become an 'expectation' to work such long hours. This is how the workers of the back-stage ensure that there is always personnel to see to the demands of the guests. Cindy points out that technology is making it possible for guests to make many of their personal bookings. It is her experience that some guests have an understanding for the fact that hospitality workers have personal lives and that they cannot be at work all the time. The problem lies with the demands of the back-stage workers.

4.7.3.4. Cindy's shadow story

Cindy says that she is sometimes so overworked and so emotionally drained that she cannot operate. And when she goes home, it is still expected of her to be part of her household and to be a part of her family life. It is only during the ten minutes when she showers that she truly feels that she is 'off stage'. According to Cindy, hospitality drives a person to the tipping point where one cannot physically or mentally operate anymore. When a person is this tired, one doesn't have the ability to deliver that 'wow factor' to the guest. You just go 'stage and 'act' the part.

Another matter that is causing much unhappiness for Cindy is the manner in which back-stage workers treat front-stage workers. For Cindy, this is a daily occurrence. However, the moment that a front-stage worker speaks disrespectfully to a worker of the back-stage, he/she will be charged with insubordination. These workers get dragged through disciplinary hearings and in most cases, these workers lose their jobs. However, it is so common for workers of the back-stage world to be abrupt and rude to workers of the front-stage world. And then they just turn around and walk away as if nothing has happened.

Cindy often wonders how these workers of the back-stage sleep at night and if they ever reflect on their actions. One would think that they will apologize for their actions once they've had time to think about it, but that *never* happens. But it is expected of the worker who suffered the abuse to go back to work, turn up on stage, and to act his/her required part. This is a matter of serious concern for Cindy. While exit interviews are conducted when workers resign, these incidents are never addressed.

Another matter that is alarming for Cindy is how frequently workers of the back-stage use foul language in the presence of others, especially during meetings. Cindy says that when this happens, she normally looks around the table to observe the faces of the other workers. But nobody says anything. Perhaps it is because they all fear the possibility of insubordination, and ultimately, it will be *you* that will be taken to task.

4.7.4. John's narrative

4.7.4.1. John's understanding of religion and spirituality

According to John, religion is something specific that people believe in – a set of rules that they need to follow in the observance of a higher purpose, a higher being. These rules are usually taught to us by our parents.

Sometimes people define who they are by associating themselves with a higher purpose. Thus, religion, explains John has a tremendous impact on people and the more religious a person is, the more their religion will control them.

Religion influences one's actions – the way one conducts oneself in one's daily living, the way you interact with people, and the way that one perceives things. For instance, religion teaches that we should help others and that we should show respect to the elderly. These principles should be followed, not out of fear of the consequences if one doesn't, because it is the right thing to do – it's part of a person's integrity. Spirituality can perhaps be seen as one's dedication to one's religion.

4.7.4.2. John's story of the front-stage world

For John, workplace spirituality is quite difficult to explain. He sees it as an individual matter. Thus, it is a concept that stands parallel to one's personal religious beliefs. However, if he had to explain this concept to his fellow workers, he would assure them that there is no right or wrong religion and that all religions are accepted in the workplace and that all religions should be respected as such. He also explains that employers should support the specific requirements of different religious groups, for instance, dietary requirements and rituals such as prayer meetings.

When asked how he would explain workplace spirituality to workers who are atheists, John found it difficult to express himself. It seems that John associates workplace spirituality as prayer meetings of various religious groups in the workplace. However, regardless of one's religious orientation, for John, spiritual wellbeing is important in the workplace. Not only does one's spirituality influence one's work performance and one's work integrity, but it also has an effect on one's physical health.

For John, integrity in the workplace is imperative. In the establishment where he works, employees are encouraged to be professional. John explains that it is difficult for employers to regain trust in an employee who, for instance, has stolen personal

belongings of guests. For this reason, John tries to be an example to his junior personnel by always conducting himself with integrity. Another matter that is important for John is to make time to engage in personal conversations with his fellow workers because he knows how challenging it can be for employees to work long and irregular shifts.

During his hospitality career, John has always tried to maintain a balance between work and personal life. According to John, hospitality is a very thankless job. It seldom happens that anybody ever says ‘thank you’. For this reason John feels it is important that he gets to know the personalities of his staff because then he can inquire when he sees that one of his employees is upset. Sometimes when he feels they need professional help, he suggests that they make use of the helpline services that are offered by the company. It is also important for John that all employees should be treated with equal respect. Thus, whether one is a cleaner or the Chief Executive Officer, all staff should be treated with dignity.

In general, John enjoys working in the front-stage world because this world enables him to meet people from all over the world. John’s experience is that some of the guests are very kind and thankful for the efforts of the front-stage workers, but there are also those who are rude and unthankful.

4.7.4.3. John’s story of the back-stage world

According to John, different levels of management have different levels of power. For some workers of the back-stage world, this power enables them to be verbally abusive to workers of the front-stage world.

As in the case of the other three co-workers, John also finds the long working hours of the hospitality industry to be very exhausting and challenging. Especially concerning one’s personal life.

According to John, these long and irregular working hours can be solved. It is his opinion that more competent staff will alleviate this problem substantially. John says that it often happens that staff who work in a department for several years are promoted to more senior positions. This, according to John, does not always solve the problem. Years of experience does not necessarily mean that a worker is competent to take on a senior position. As a result, an impression is created that there is enough competent staff, but in the meanwhile, the incompetence of such workers only places more pressure on the shoulders of the other workers.

John says that the workers of the back-stage prefer to promote existing employees to more senior levels. Not because it is required to consider current employees first, but because an outside candidate will be more costly to employ. And the workers of the back-stage are not willing to make this compromise. Thus, current employees are promoted with minimal wage adjustments. But according to John; if one pays peanuts, one must be happy with monkeys.

For John, being a manager is more than just having a title. John is of the opinion that all managers should attend management courses to improve their management skills and to teach them to interact with the staff in a professional manner. According to John, this is a void in the establishment where he works.

4.7.4.4. John's shadow story

For John, it is important to attend church regularly. He is still a young man, and he would like to participate in the youth activities of his church. While it is often required of John to work overtime, he hardly gets compensated for these extra hours. The main reason for this, says John, is because there are not enough competent workers to fill the shift if he takes a day off.

At the moment, John's extensive and irregular shifts are causing much unhappiness in his life. For John, it feels that the workers of the back-stage world do not care about the

personal lives of the workers who work on the front-stage. Like the back-stage workers, the front-stage workers also have family events that they would like to attend, like birthdays, funerals, Christmases and Easter. But this does not seem to be a concern for the back-stage workers. All that matters to them is that enough competent staff should cover a shift. Fortunately, according to John's experience, guests often express their gratitude to the staff who has to work on Christmas Day and Good Friday.

Conditions like this drain a person emotionally and as a result, it is not always easy to show authentic kindness to the guests. But the back-stage workers expect the front-stage workers to *be* happy. John says that he was once taught by a member of the back-stage that guests don't care if your dog just died or that you are working extra hours. They pay for a service; they expect the service, and that is what they must get.

4.8. MOVEMENT TWO: INTERPRETING

Throughout this study, the hospitality industry has been referred to as a stage where actors perform their daily routines. This metaphorical reference to the hospitality industry inspired me to interpret the narratives of the co-researchers in a creative way. Perhaps this visual illustration will portray a clearer understanding of this 'stage world' and its 'actors'.

4.8.1. Incorporating art in the interpretation of the narratives

The decision to produce a film was not part of the initial methodology of this research. It was during the interviewing process when the co-researchers referred to hotels as 'stages' where they, the 'actors' perform their daily 'recitals' with their 'happy-face' masks, that I decided that this metaphor lends itself to be explored in a creative way. I also thought that the multi-layers of the accumulative narratives could be well expressed in a visual presentation¹¹.

¹¹ The electronic link to the film is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2gpwBDMDpk>. - 'Behind the mask of hospitality'/ YouTube.

It was at a family gathering where I was introduced to Esther. At the time, Esther was in her final year as a drama student at the University of Stellenbosch. I phoned Esther and told her that I would like to produce a film as part of the research that I was busy conducting for my Ph.D. She was very excited. We started to work on the project immediately.

While I was busy writing the script for the film, Esther arranged the actors and the production crew. I must admit, I was not aware of how much effort and detail is required to plan such a project. Fortunately, Esther knew several drama students who were eager to participate in the production of the film. As luck would have it, two of Esther's friends were starting off their filming company. They, too, were eager to partake in this venture.

After two months, Esther managed to arrange the venues for the different shoots. Because we were on a tight budget, we had to make do with what was made available for us. The first scene where the porter awaits the guest at the *porte cochère* was shot at an administrative building in Stellenbosch. Because we could not pay for exclusivity, the scene had to be shot when no members of the public were exiting or entering the building. Because of this, the scene took us about two hours to complete.

The second scene where the guest checks in at reception was shot at the entrance of a gymnasium in Stellenbosch. This was probably the most challenging scene. Because of the tremendous public activity, the shooting of this scene took us about six hours.

In the third scene, the porter escorts the guest to his room. This scene was shot at a guesthouse in Stellenbosch. While this was one of the most controlled scenes regarding public activity, it, too, posed some unique challenges to the production team. Just as the scene was about to be shot, there was a power failure. Thus, no additional lights could be used to light up the scene, and all the equipment was now functioning on battery power. The only way that the production team could get more light in the room was to use reflectors. Fortunately, it was a sunny day, making it fairly easy to overcome this stumbling block.

The fourth scene was shot in a cloakroom at the University of Stellenbosch. Because Esther and the rest of the cast members were students at the University, this location was arranged with little difficulty.

The final scene was shot at my cousin's house in Gordons Bay. Because this scene depicts the porter coming home late in the evening after work, darkness had to be created. The mere drawing of curtains was not enough. The subtle light streaks that managed to pierce through the curtains made the night scene unrealistic. The alternative was to cover all the windows with black garbage bags. This idea solved the light problem quite efficiently.

Which made the final day very special, was the young boy who played the part of the porter's son. Fortunately, these two actors knew each other thus it was not difficult to convince the little star to go to his 'daddy'. However, this young star had unique requirements. After each scene he wanted 'the aunty', referring to me, to take him to the chickens. So, after about four visits to the chicken coop and a chocolate treat, the shooting concluded.

At the end of filming, the whole crew enjoyed a lunch on the patio. It was the first time that all of us had the opportunity to sit and engage in casual conversation. It was during this conversation that I got to know how much effort the entire crew put in to complete this production. The little boy and his aunt travelled an hour by train from Cape Town, Dean, who plays the role of the porter travelled two hours from Malmesbury for the final scene while he was busy with two other productions. For his roles in these productions, Dean was nominated for two Loerie Awards¹². Without any exception, each and every person who participated in this production went through great lengths to make the film a reality and I will forever be indebted to them for their dedication and support.

¹² The Loerie Awards Company (also known as the Loeries) is a non-profit company dedicated to the recognition of creative excellence in the brand communications industry, in Africa and the Middle East.

The next day, Esther and the production team started with the editing of the shoots. After about two weeks, Esther sent me the completed film. I was astonished. After many late evenings and much deliberations, the final product was cut. Now the music had to be composed.

I approached a friend of mine, Ryno, who I have known since primary school to compose the soundtrack of the film. He happily agreed. It took Ryno about two weeks to decide on the final composition. The music was perfect. I sent the soundtrack to Esther, and she and the production team incorporated the soundtrack into the film. And this is how the film *Behind the mask of hospitality* came to be.

4.8.2. Making meaning through art

Implementing art in research makes it more creative and offers creative alternative interpretations. Leavy (2015:1) points out that academic articles are often only read by scholars in highly specialized academic genres. Before she introduced art in her research, Leavy (2015:1) she found her articles to be “sterile, jargon-filled, and formulaic.”

Art makes research accessible. Perhaps, by creating a conscious drama – as in this case, a film – the researcher and the co-researchers create a space where they can reflect on the various constructions of their stories and become more aware of these constructions because it is presented to them as a conscious construction.

For some scholars, the using of art in research might be a new or a rather unfamiliar methodology. According to Chenail (2008:10), art can play a valuable role in research. Researchers who have utilized art in their research methodology include Ricci (2003), who used poetry to share his childhood story, Davis (2005), who learned to show love towards his father through his father’s love of pictographs, Mittapalli (2008), who discussed the role of Madhubani art in arts-based self-study methodologies, Wong-Wylie (2006), who made use of photographic images in her narrative inquiry, and Klinker and

Todd (2007), who explain how they utilized autoethnography to help them understand their decisions to become professors.

Imagination and creativity are suitable criteria for the assessment of qualitative research (Patton 2015:547, 548). As Heikkinen, Huttunen and Syrjälä (2007:16) put it, “art awakens and provokes a person to think about things in a new and different way.” For these reasons, I felt inspired to produce a film.

4.8.3. Behind the mask of hospitality

The purpose of the film is to reflect, as in a mirror image, the narratives of the co-researchers about how they construct the front-stage world and the back-stage world of the contemporary hospitality setting. Thus, the film is a visual interpretation of their narratives.

When narratives are interpreted, it is important to consider the settings in which they play off (Meylahn 2012:58). In the case of this study, all the narratives are told from workers who work in the front-stage world of the contemporary hospitality setting.

The dominant stories of the co-researchers are constructed around the front-stage world and the back-stage world. The dominant common language of the front-stage world speak of integrity, respect and showing hospitality to guests – in this lies the ultimate concern of the front-stage world. It is in this common language that particular values and themes were explained (Meylahn 2012:59). In another layer of the narratives, stories were told about the back-stage world.

The dominant common language of the back-stage world – a world whose ultimate concern is profit – speak of disrespect, bullying and the expectation of unrealistic working hours. These stories cause much emotional unhappiness to the workers of the front-stage world, forcing them to wear happy-face masks in an attempt to show kindness to guests.

Another layer of the co-researchers' narratives speaks of shadow stories. The language of these shadow stories speaks of the emotional drain, accusations, fear of subordination, unhappiness and wanting to leave the industry. These themes make it difficult, if not perhaps impossible for the front-stage workers to observe their ultimate concern of hospitality and guest satisfaction.

All these different stories – the stories of the front-stage world, the stories of the back-stage world, and the shadow stories – integrate meaning into the inclusive whole of the front-stage world.

For the practical theological researcher, it is important to have a similar mind as Christ because the co-researchers open themselves to the marginal, risking to be blasphemers because, as in the in the Jesus narrative, they, too, challenge the dominant myth – the myth of unconditional hospitality. It is only when the practical theological researcher follows Christ into the incarnation and crucifixion, that the practical theological researcher witnesses the auto-deconstruction of the different *religare* (Meylahn 2014:17).

Through this deconstruction, a new community is resurrected from the dominant myths – a myth of unconditional hospitality. However, this new community should not be seen as a solution to the crucified community, for in its mere existence, a new sacred story is created in which new shadow stories will emerge (Meylahn 2014:7). In the film, the struggles that are associated with the dominant myth is depicted.

The film plays off in the world of the front-stage. In this world, a constant façade of happiness is required to observe the ultimate concern of this world – that being hospitality and guest satisfaction. But it is not only for the guests that these workers have to wear happy-face masks. They also have to show the greatest respect for the workers of the back-stage, because these workers are senior to the workers of the front-stage.

The front-stage world and the back-stage world are two very different worlds, each with its ultimate concern. Each of these worlds is a construction with particular narratives that

develops into dominant discourses, each with its specific values, norms, ideals, and expectations. However, the values and norms of the front-stage world and the back-stage world are not reconcilable. It is in this conflict that much unhappiness surfaces. In the film the unhappiness of the front-stage workers are shown as ‘bleeding hearts’. Perhaps when emotional wounds are shown in such a manner will it receive more attention.

The film is in a sense an acting of acting – the construction of a construction. The film makes it possible for the co-researchers to see their roles being acted by professional actors. This creates a space where the employees have a chance to respond to the acting (film) while they construct their stories regarding their experiences of hospitality and the roles that they play as hospitality workers.

In the film, several layers of construction are displayed. In the one layer hospitality is perceived as an act of kindness while another layer shows the urgency of the business side of hospitality. Thus, the impression is created of two different ultimate concerns – the one being the ultimate concern of profit (the back-stage world) and the other, the ultimate concern of hospitality (the front-stage world). The film depicts the contemporary hospitality industry as a play that plays off in a pretend space – a space that is created where workers with happy-face masks pretend to show ultimate kindness.

Because the co-researchers to this study all work in the front-stage world, the back-stage world is constructed through the lens of front-stage workers. The film should not be seen as an attempt to advantage either one of the two worlds but rather as an interpretation of how employees are driven by what they might perceive as an ultimate concern.

This brings me back to the reason I asked the co-researchers how they understand workplace spirituality. Through the collective work that was discussed in Chapter Three and according to the narratives of the co-researchers, it seems that some might understand workplace spirituality to be the ‘connection’ one has with one’s specific religious orientations, such as Christianity. However, as shown in the previous chapter under the discussion of the construction of reality, it has been demonstrated that religion

does not only imply to religions such as Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and so forth. Religion is the observance of an ultimate meaning.

An ultimate meaning is constructed through the agreement of a group of people who function together in the attempt to observe an ultimate concern. However, this does not imply that a person's personal religious orientation does not play a role in the constructions of one's reality because all the stories that one encounters through one's lifetime play a part in the construction of one's reality. For example, the way in which hospitality workers show kindness to the guests might be influenced by the ancient stories of hospitality.

4.8.4. Inviting the co-researchers to respond to the film

The intention of the film was to portray a mirror image of the co-researchers' narratives. Thus, the storyline is based on the combined experiences of the co-researchers. After the completion of the production, I requested the co-researchers to look at the film and to send me their replies in writing. Though John mentions that it was like "looking in a mirror", it was not mentioned to the co-researchers that the film was constructed as a mirror image or their narratives.

Alex

"I could definitely relate to the emotions of the characters and I feel that anyone who has been in the industry, or still is, would be able to relate to the characters and their situations. In my opinion, 'the mask' is always on and at times one forgets to take it off, or worse, it becomes a permanent facial feature. And that is when it starts to affect one's private life."

David

"I could definitely relate to the character of the concierge, having worked as one. The part of coming home and having those few moments with your wife and child

brought back painful memories. The one picture that really hit hard was the closing moments of the film with the washed, but stained, shirt hanging ready for the next day's wear. It re-enforced the point that you may try and wash out the effects of the emotional trauma you experience, but it will leave a lasting scar (stain).”

Cindy

“The video portrayed everything perfectly. It has been a source of motivation for me as a manager and employee at the same time.”

John

“I must admit, the first time I watched the video it seemed a bit strange, almost like looking in a mirror but not really recognizing what you are seeing. The second time it became so clear that the emotions portrayed in the film was exactly how it was in hospitality. Continuously ensuring that others' needs are put before your own and that your loved ones have to accept second best.”

4.9. MOVEMENT THREE: DISCERNING

In the movement of discernment, the sacred stories of the co-researchers need to be distinguished, not considered from an independent objective or higher myth, but from the cracks within the dominant common language (Meylahn 2012:60). In these myths, many victims will be identified. These victims are the source of critical discernment as it is they who expose the truth about the common language and the myth of the common language (Meylahn 2012:60).

The sacred stories of the co-researchers speak of their desire to observe the ultimate concern of the front-stage world – the ultimate concern of hospitality and guest satisfaction. As the narratives unfolded, it became apparent that these workers of the front-stage world are victims to the myth of unconditional hospitality. Through the cracks of this dominant myth, other truths about the common language of the contemporary

hospitality industry emerged. These truths spoke of bullying, high work demand, emotional drain, accusations, the fear of subordination, and wanting to leave the industry because of the effect the industry has on the lives of the co-researchers.

These themes are mainly associated with the workers of the back-stage world. For these workers, the ultimate concern is profit. As a practical theologian, it is important to discover the “gods of the contexts” in an attempt to understand the lived-religions of the co-researchers (Meylahn 2014:6). However, the aim is not to judge but rather to humbly recognize that each situation has its gods (Meylahn 2014:6). Thus, while there are two different worlds with two very different ultimate concerns, each religion requires dedication and commitment.

4.9.1. Discovering the ultimate myth

According to the narratives of the co-researchers, it is expected of them and their fellow front-stage workers to provide unconditional hospitality to the guests. It does not matter how tired they are – both mentally and physically – what is important is that they put on their happy-face masks and that they deliver the service that the guests pay for. Alex articulates that while the front-stage employees are concerned about hospitality and guest satisfaction, the workers of the back-stage are only concerned about making money and saving money. The co-researchers are in agreement that the lack of enough competent staff has a detrimental effect on the working conditions of the front-stage workers as well as on their emotional wellbeing.

As one listens to the narratives of the co-researchers, unconditional hospitality is not possible because firstly they have to put on ‘happy-face masks’ to portray a façade of happiness, and secondly, the back-stage world requires that there is a price attached to it. This is understandable as the contemporary hospitality industry is a profit industry. However, this makes unconditional hospitality impossible. Thus, hospitality is shown through the violation of the self. This is what Derrida calls “hostipitality” (O’Gorman 2007c:191).

Derrida (2000:79) also argues that even unconditional hospitality “*requires*” a law in order to be effective. This is indeed the case of the contemporary hospitality industry because without a law there will be no price to pay for hospitality making the hospitality industry an impossibility. Derrida (2000:25) further explains that “absolute hospitality requires that I open my home and that I give not only to the foreigner ... but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, and that I *give place* to them ... without asking them ... reciprocity.” Thus, absolute hospitality requires that one distances oneself from hospitality through the justification of the law.

The front-stage workers are required by the back-stage workers to give unconditional hospitality. However, they are also compelled to respect the rules of the contemporary hospitality industry – rules established by the workers of the back-stage world. For the workers of the front-stage, this impossibility of hospitality might result in the understanding that they have failed their ultimate concern, leaving them to feel helpless and emotionally drained. During his interview, David articulated that there are days that he is so emotionally drained that it feels that he will just drop. For him, the constant façade of happiness is tremendously draining. Cindy says that the pace of the front-stage world is so demanding that she often needs to remind herself to take a few steps back just to get her soul in touch with her body.

Another ultimate concern that influences the world of the front-stage workers is the ultimate concern of the back-stage world – the ultimate concern of profit. For the workers of both the back-stage and the front-stage, it is important to observe their respective ultimate concerns because as in ancient times, these workers are embedded in a religious community and their actions affect the entire community. Sometimes, in an attempt to maintain one’s respect in the community, one has to make personal sacrifices – such as working longer hours to support the rest of the community.

The narratives of all the co-researchers speak of extended and irregular working hours and how these hours impacts their personal lives. Alex articulated that he was determined to leave the hospitality industry because the long shifts deprive him of quality time with

his family. All the co-researchers agreed that these extended hours can be avoided. However, that implies that more competent staff must be employed – a compromise that the back-stage workers are not willing to consider because their ultimate concern is profit.

Two gods cannot be served in one temple without causing conflict. However, workers from the front-stage and the back-stage will argue for their respective ultimate concerns – this is to be expected. Thus, in the current situation chances of a trues is slim. Only when the two gods of these two worlds are crucified, can there be a resurrection of a new ultimate concern that can be observed by both these worlds.

4.10. MOVEMENT FOUR: POETRY (RE-AUTHORING)

This movement a continuation of the third movement (Meylahn 2014:6). In this movement, Meylahn (2012:61) refers to the Christ narrative as an example through which we can understand the world. The crucifixion is a story of an absolute criminal who was crucified because he did not respect the dominant myths of the time. However, his resurrection proclaims a new life of “impossible possibilities there where the power of the dominant myths is spoken” (Meylahn 2012:61).

In the case of the contemporary hospitality setting, there are two gods – the front-stage god of unconditional hospitality and the back-stage god of profit – both gods are crucified by the shadow stories that emerged through the cracks of the dominant story. The god of the front-stage world expects of hospitality workers to show unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction. However, unconditional hospitality is impossible (Derrida 2000:25) because the back-stage god – a god of profit – requires that hospitality is shown according to rules and measured against reciprocity and profit. Thus, even unconditional hospitality “*requires*” a law to be effective (Derrida 2000:79).

It is important that this Christ narrative is seen through the cracks that exist in the stories of the dominant myth. This identifying assertion is enabled and invigorated by the “hope

of the kingdom still to come”, inviting us to “follow Christ into the cracks of the community” (Meylahn 2012:61).

Thus, through the double crucifixion of the two gods of hospitality – the front-stage god of unconditional hospitality and the back-stage god of profit – a new community can arise, free for a moment from the hold and power of these two dominant myths. While this newly arisen community might speak of hope and impossible possibilities, this is not a new ultimate myth because even in this story, too, there will appear cracks, inviting the community to follow Christ to deconstruct this newly emerged community in time. .

4.10.1. The crucifixion of two gods

The ultimate concern of the front-stage world, and perhaps the contemporary hospitality industry as such, is to show unconditional kindness and to ensure guest satisfaction. However, because of the rules that are established by the workers of the back-stage world, showing kindness is not always an authentic act. This requires that the front-stage workers have to ‘act’ their parts in an attempt to give the impression of authentic hospitality. This ‘act’ of kindness violates the ultimate concern of the front-stage world, making it an ultimate concern that is impossible to observe, yet required to observe.

The back-stage world of the hospitality industry, observes an ultimate concern of profit. However, to ensure this profit, the workers of the front-stage have to be blasphemous to their ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality because the god of the back-stage requires that hospitality must be sold to ensure profit.

Because the back-stage god controls the front-stage world, it might be said that the back-stage god is the superior god of the two worlds – the criminal god that has to be crucified because it treats the dominant myth – a myth of unconditional hospitality – with irreverence. It is this god of profit that requires of the front-stage world to measure kindness against financial gain, making it impossible for the front-stage workers to observe their ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality.

The crucifixion of these gods allows for the resurrection of a new possibility – as in the narrative of Christ’s crucifixion. By identifying with the Christ narrative, hospitality workers can be encouraged by the thought that there is hope in a kingdom yet to come, inviting the community to “follow Christ into the cracks of the community” (Meylahn 2012:61).

4.11. MOVEMENT FIVE: EMBRACING

In this movement, words of life are spoken by workers of the front-stage world and the back-stage world, encouraged through their identification with the Triune God, creating a space, which is filled with the impossible possibilities of transformation (Meylahn 2012:62). This transformation will break down the walls that separate the front-stage world and the back-stage world, and in this new communal space, both worlds can function together, observing a new ultimate concern that will be identified through the community.

This new space has to be welcomed and lived to the full for once the minds of hospitality workers have been enlightened from the dominant myth of unconditional hospitality, new concepts will emerge within the community (Meylahn 2012:62). As a result, this new life will transform into specific practices within the hospitality industry. Eventually, these practices will become acceptable practices, endorsed by the new dominant story. This new dominant story excludes marginalization and pain. However, as time goes by, this new dominant story, too, will have shadow stories – a dance without end (Meylahn 2012:63).

4.11.1. The resurrection of a new spirituality of hope

The resurrection of a new life or a new spirituality is only possible through the life-giving words of hospitality workers. Thus, nobody but they can re-write their story for them. Once the minds of hospitality workers, both front-stage, and back-stage workers, have been liberated from the dominant myth, new ideas will emerge – a new spirituality will arise.

Over time, this new spirituality will transform into specific practices and these ‘correct practices’ will become practices that are approved and endorsed by the new dominant story of hospitality. In this new story, there are no tales of exclusion and emotional suffering. However, this new story should not be seen as the ultimate story because as time goes by, cracks will appear in this new story, exposing the shadow stories of this new story of hope. Thus, the new myth remains ever changing, always inviting dialogue and new ideas.

4.12 IDENTIFYING THE THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE NARRATIVES

During the interviews of the co-researchers, specific themes emerged. Some of these themes tell stories of bullying, public humiliation, and injustice. Though it is suggested that two worlds exist in the hospitality industry and that each world observes its respective ultimate good, deeds of maltreatment should never be expectable and should never be tolerated. If these themes are not addressed, there is little chance that a new story of hope can surface because in this new community mutual respect is important. In the following chapter, attention will be given to these themes.

4.13. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the four co-researchers were introduced to the reader and through the methodology of five dance movements, their stories were told. Each narrative spoke of tales concerning the front-stage world and the back-stage world – two worlds that stand in conflict to each other because of their respective ultimate concerns.

While the front-stage world observes an ultimate concern of hospitality and guest satisfaction, the back-stage world observes an ultimate concern of profit. The divergence that exists between these two religions causes conflict and suffering amongst hospitality workers to the extent that the front-stage workers have to wear ‘happy-face’ masks to portray a façade of happiness.

Through the cracks of the dominant myth, shadow stories emerged. These shadow stories exposed the truth about the myth of the common language – the myth of unconditional hospitality – and told tales of emotional drain, unhappiness, accusations, fear of subordination, and wanting to leave the hospitality industry. Through the multiple layers of the narratives, the true god of the context was discovered – the god of the back-stage world, the god of profit.

However, if a new story is to emerge, both gods – the god of the front-stage world and the god of the back-stage world – will have to be crucified. As in the narrative of Christ, these gods treat the dominant myth – the myth of unconditional hospitality – with disrespect and it can only be through the crucifixion of both these gods that the resurrection of new possibilities is conceivable. Once these gods are crucified, hospitality workers will be temporarily liberated. This new resurrected life will be the new spirituality of hospitality. This spirituality will speak of mutual respect, devotion, integrity, and the acceptance of the new order's rituals and ethics.

Also emerging from the cracks of the dominant stories, were certain themes. These themes tell tales of bullying, public humiliation, and injustice. According to the co-researchers, it is the workers of the back-stage world who are guilty of these acts of maltreatment. The co-researchers articulated that the workers of the back-stage world represent their management and that some of these managers treat some of the front-stage workers with disrespect. These issues need to be addressed because such victimization might prove to be detrimental to the possibility of transformation. In the following chapter, attention will be given to these indicated themes.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSING THE THEMES THAT CAME TO LIGHT THROUGH THE NARRATIVES OF THE CO-RESEARCHERS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the co-researchers were introduced to the reader, and their narratives were discussed according to the five dance movements of narrative inquiry Meylahn (2012:56-63). These dance movements include listening, interpreting, discerning, and poetry and embracing.

During the movement of listening, different layers of stories emerged and the common shared language – the language of the front-stage world – was identified. This language speaks of specific norms, values, histories and central themes. As the interviews progressed, dominant stories emerged through which the co-researchers described their understanding of the hospitality industry. From these stories, the ultimate concern of the front-stage world was identified – an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction.

The narratives of the co-researchers also spoke of dominant stories of the back-stage world. The workers who work in this world, include members of executive management. This world observes a very different ultimate concern than the front-stage world, that being an ultimate concern of profit.

Because of the seniority of the back-stage workers, these workers decide on corporate policies. Another duty of the back-stage workers is to decide on the financial value that is attached to the showing of kindness, thus making it impossible for the front-stage workers to observe their ultimate concern, that being an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction.

The stories of the co-researchers also spoke of shadow stories. According to the dominant myth – the myth of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction, shadow stories should not exist, yet they do. These shadow stories told tales of emotional drain, accusations, fear and subordination, bullying, and wanting to leave the hospitality industry. Many of these stories relate to the leadership styles of some of the workers of the back-state world.

Leadership style in the hospitality industry is of absolute importance because not only is the hospitality industry one of the fastest developing industries in the 21st century (Holjevac 2003:130), it is also a ‘people’ industry that is very labour intensive (Pittaway, Carmouche & Chell 1998:408). For this reason, argue Pittaway *et al.* (1998:411), more effort should be put in research regarding leadership styles and leadership effectiveness in the hospitality industry. This concern of *Pittaway et al.* seems to be justified by the co-researchers who spoke of managers whose leadership approaches are uncivil and disrespectful.

This should be a matter of profound concern because research shows that workers who are exposed to incivility in the workplace are likely to suffer both emotionally (King 1995:227) and physically (Presser 2004:95). In an attempt to show why such pathologies might occur, two professionals, James Weideman, a clinical psychologist, and Dr. Nicola Roos were invited to participate in this conversation. This interweaving of different disciplines and the collaboration of other voices makes sense in a postfoundational transversal rationality as these other voices can thicken the stories told by the co-researchers Van Huyssteen (2006:19).

Dialogue with other disciplines and the consideration of different philosophies and cultures are important because human experiences are “embodied, embedded in, and filtered through complex networks of beliefs” (Van Huyssteen 2007:5). Thus, the way in which the front-stage workers understand the front-stage world, and the emotional challenges that they face in this world might be influenced by the ancient stories of

hospitality. Other factors that might influence one's understanding of specific phenomena are the interpretations offered by other disciplines such as social and medical sciences.

To determine this likelihood, the reports of the two professionals were sent to the four co-researchers to give them the opportunity to respond to the theories of the two professionals. The responses of the co-researchers indicated that they do indeed relate to the ideas of the professionals.

An editorial theme that emerged during the interviewing process was that of personal religious orientation. For Cindy and John, the personal religious orientations of hospitality employees should be respected by their employees. For both these co-researchers, it is important that hotel management should consider the fact that front-stage workers are not always able to attend religious ceremonies due to shift work. For both Cindy and John, it is important that hospitality workers of all religious denominations should be able to observe their respective religious ceremonies at the workplace if they are required to work over weekends and during times of religious celebrations.

Though personal religious orientation plays a role in how people construct their realities, in this study an ultimate concern, or religion, does not refer to any specific religious denomination such as Christianity or Hinduism but rather to the language of religion – a language that speaks of devotion, respect, the acceptance of how things are done, and ethics. This language of religion is spoken in both the front-stage world and the back-stage world.

Because the ultimate concern of the front-stage world – an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality – stands in contrast to the ultimate concern of the back-stage world – an ultimate concern of profit – the workers of the front-stage world suffer tremendous emotional unhappiness. Perhaps if the workers of these two worlds understood why their respective communities observe different ultimate concerns, may a new ultimate concern – a spirituality of hope and grace – emerge through the life-giving conversations of the entire community.

Since the workers of the back-stage world, due to their seniority, are in control of the front-stage world, transformation lies in the hands of the back-stage workers. If these workers were to recognize the division that currently exists between the front-stage world and the back-stage world, and if they are eager to reconcile these two worlds, a process of re-authoring will have to be initiated by the back-stage workers and maintained by the entire community.

5.2. FOLLOW THE LEADER – OR PERHAPS NOT

Leadership can be explained in terms of how and why employees identify with their leader/s (Testa 2007:471). In general, employees have perceived ideas of what a leader should be (prototypical behaviors), and consequently, these images are compared to what is observed in leadership behavior (Testa 2007:471). As a result, leaders are associated with either being a leader or a non-leader which can influence the control and authority maintained by the leader. However, more positive group outcomes have been indicated from those who were viewed as leaders. On the other hand, being seen as a non-leader may hinder one's ability to influence the behavior of employees (Testa 2007:471).

As the co-researchers articulated, the workers of the front-stage world are often challenged to maintain a balance between showing kindness to guests and maintaining control over service transactions. While the workers of the front-stage are hospitable to guests, they must also respect the establishment's standards and requirements while keeping an emotional equilibrium and self-esteem – a struggle that has been well documented (King 1995:227).

Perhaps these challenges might be more tolerable if the workers of the back-stage world would show greater appreciation for the efforts of the workers of the front-stage world. As Testa (2007:471) points out, workers have certain expectations from managers and if these expectations are disappointed workers might feel abused and disrespected.

During her career in the front-stage world, Cindy has witnessed several incidents where managers from the back-stage world bully staff of the front-stage world. Most of these events go unnoticed and are never reported because the workers of the front-stage world fear that reporting workers from the back-stage world might result in them being – the workers of the front-stage world – victimized. Sometimes the workers of the front-stage world find these conditions unbearable and see no option but to resign.

All four of the co-researchers articulated that the establishments where they work are understaffed. Being understaffed and overworked places tremendous pressure on all the employees from the front-stage world, making it difficult for them to observe their ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction. The solution to this problem, according to the co-researchers, is to employ more competent staff. However, this decision lies with the workers of the back-stage world whose ultimate concern is profit. However, these issues do not receive the required attention from the workers of the back-stage because larger financial layouts stand in contrast to the ultimate concern of the back-stage world – that being profit.

Through the narratives of the co-researchers it also came to light that though procedures are in place for workers of the front-stage world to report inappropriate behavior from members of the back-stage world, the workers of the front-stage world are reluctant to follow these procedures. According to David, corporate policies and procedures are handed out to new employees during the induction period, but these policies are not adequately explained to new employees. Thus, some workers might feel intimidated by the proceedings of laying a grievance against a worker of the back-stage. David is of the opinion that the lack of explaining corporate procedures might be a tactic from the workers of the back-stage to discourage employees to follow these procedures.

Considering the narratives of the co-researchers, it seems that as long as the workers of the front-stage world are disempowered by fear and intimidation, the workers of the back-stage world will face no consequences for the maltreatment and bullying of front-stage workers.

Though the showing of unconditional hospitality is important to any hotel, it is probably of greater importance that establishments show constant capital growth. For this reason, it can be argued that the ultimate concern of the back-stage world is overshadowing the ultimate concern of the front-stage world.

However, while the back-stage god might be superior to the front-stage god, workers of the back-stage world should not be allowed to abuse their authority to bully or intimidate workers of the front-stage world. As mentioned earlier, employees identify with the behavior of their leaders (Testa 2007:471). Thus, if workers were to identify with actions of victimization, the chance exists that 'following the leader' can result in a toxic and destructive trend.

5.3. LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE EYES OF THE FRONT-STAGE WORKERS

The dominant language of the front-stage world speaks of respect and integrity. For the workers of the front-stage world, this language is important because their ultimate concern is hospitality and guest satisfaction. Cindy articulated during her interview that for her as a junior manager it is important to treat her staff with respect. She also said that in the recent past she has made a deliberate effort to interact with her co-workers.

Since Cindy has started this initiative, her team has shown greater dedication, and they show less reluctance when she requires additional duties from them. In the past, workers were unwilling to stay longer hours at work but now that they feel their leader care about them, they are more supportive of each other. This is a quality that Cindy wants from her managers – the managers who work in the back-stage world.

Cindy also mentioned that some of the workers of the back-stage world have the habit of using foul language when they interact with workers of the front-stage world and during meetings. Cindy has observed that such rudeness does not go unnoticed by the other attendees of the meeting. However, as mentioned by all the co-researchers, the workers of the front-stage world are reluctant to lay grievances of rudeness and incivility against

workers of the back-stage world because they fear that they might be victimized by the workers of the back-stage world.

Crampton and Hodge (2008) investigated some empirical studies in which workers were interviewed regarding their experiences of incivility in the workplace. In a study conducted by Ellias (see Crampton & Hodge 2008:1) it was found that 71 percent of the participating employees experienced workplace incivility within the previous five years. Supervisors caused one-third of the incidents. Azulay (see Crampton & Hodge 2008:1) found that 53 percent of employees were impaired to perform their tasks due to worrying about future acts of cruelty while 46 percent considered changing jobs. To be under so much stress for long periods of time causes employees to suffer great emotional distress. As articulated by David, there are times when he is so emotionally drained that it feels as if he is just going to drop.

This type of emotional abuse is what Namie (2003:1) refers to as corporate bullying. In surveys conducted by Azulay, Park and Wickham (see Crampton and Hodge 2008:1), it was found that the boss, of which 70 percent were males, was the primary instigator of offensive conduct. These studies also indicated that workplace incivility is still increasing. The reason for this escalation is not clear. Even though workplace incivility is unacceptable, this phenomenon receives much less attention than workplace violence or harassment and greatly contributes to lawsuits and retention complications (Crampton & Hodge 2008:3). Crampton and Hodge (2008:2) identify the following four ways that rudeness affect employee activity:

- The employee wastes time worrying about the uncivil incident or future interactions with the instigator and tries to avoid the instigator.
- The employee becomes less committed.
- Employees do not involve themselves in tasks beyond the borders of their job specification and expend less effort to meet responsibilities.
- Employees are less willing to help other and reduce their contribution to the organisation.

In the case of the front-stage workers, the exposure to incivility prohibits them to observe their ultimate concern and as a result causes them much emotional unhappiness. For Cindy, it was important to adapt her approach to her personnel because she knows how it feels if a manager does not show regard for one's efforts. In the recent past, Cindy started to thank her workers personally if they perform beyond their duties. However, Cindy does not receive such recognition from her back-stage manager. For Cindy, a mere 'thank you' makes a person feel appreciated and as a result, one tends to perform better.

During their leadership classes, Kouzes and Posner (2003:4) asked the attendees if they feel they need encouragement to perform at their best. Great was their surprise when only 60 percent of the attendees reported that they needed encouragement for optimal performance. However, when they rephrased the question to: "When you get encouragement, does it help you perform at a higher level?" (Kouzes & Posner 2003:4), 98 percent of the attendees said yes. Thus, the workers did not need encouragement to perform their respective duties, but they did gain satisfaction from knowing that their work is recognised and appreciated. Such type of behaviour, according to Kouzes and Posner (2003:4), is directly associated with specific leadership styles.

Kouzes and Posner (2003:5) refer to Paul Moran from Pacific Bell, who realised that he did not give enough recognition to his employees. Moran decided to change his leadership style. He decided to congratulate his staff personally with a handshake every time they achieved a key milestone. He also made personal phone calls to relevant members of his staff to thank them. Soon after implementing this more encouraging leadership approach, Moran noticed that productivity increased, employees showed greater initiative, absenteeism decreased and that a stronger interpersonal bond developed amongst the workers. Furthermore, his job became more enjoyable. Cindy experienced the same positive changes amongst her personnel since she decided to change her leadership style from being distant to being interactive and supportive.

In her interview, Cindy said that she has never been on any leadership course since she became an hotelier – something that she has always desired to do. It was only recently that she worked with a female colleague who thought her to be more attentive to the demeanours of her workers. This female colleague told Cindy about the works of John Maxwell and Jim Collins. What Cindy found inspiring about these authors was the fact that they argue that *people* – referring to employees – are the reason companies are successful.

5.3.1. The importance of effective leadership in the hospitality industry

The hospitality industry is fast becoming one of the biggest world industries of the 21st century (Holjevac 2003:130). As a result, hospitality organizations are pressured to improve their performance, to expect change and to continuously develop new structures. Such demand requires effective leadership performance to ensure that transformation leads to increased effectiveness and profitability (Pittaway *et al.* 1998:408).

In this regard, Pittaway *et al.* (1998:408) raise the concern that the subject of hospitality management have been neglected thus far, especially keeping in mind that the hospitality industry is a ‘people’ industry (Pittaway *et al.* 1998:411). Because the hospitality industry is so labor intensive, and keeping in mind the effect that it has on hospitality workers – especially workers from the front-stage world – more effort should be put in to help hotels to utilize the available human resources more efficiently (Pittaway *et al.* 1998:411).

According to Clark, Hartline and Jones (2008:1) the importance of frontline staff – the workers who work in the front-stage world – and the service that these workers have to show “cannot be overstated” because these workers are directly responsible for “face-to-face customer service, service quality, and customer satisfaction.” The majority of industry observers agree that front-stage workers who experience job satisfaction are more committed to customer-oriented values and in general experience less stress (Clark *et al.* 2008:2). Research also indicates that the leadership styles of executives – the

workers who work in the back-stage world – has a tremendous influence on employees' behavior and dedication (Clark *et al.* 2008:2).

In an extensive study conducted by Clark *et al.* (2008:2), it was shown that transformational leadership can “improve employee dedications, social behavior, role clarity, and satisfaction, while also reducing the effects of job stress and burnout.” Twenty-one years before Clark *et al.*' study, Worsfold (1989:146) came to a similar conclusion – referring to participative leadership at the time.

Clark *et al.* (2008:16, 17) further suggest that effective leadership increases the extent that values are shared between hotels and their employees. However, this implies that hotel managers have to show “personal commitment to serving customers”, and that they should be “able to communicate their expectations to employees in a way that is independent of the manager's leadership style” (Clark *et al.* 2008:17).

Thus, a hotel manager's leadership style plays “a critical role in channeling the manager's commitment to service quality to employees” (Clark *et al.* 2008:17). However, while a supportive leadership style can create encouragement amongst workers, so can acts of rudeness result in workers feeling helplessness and dismay.

5.3.2. Corporate bullying and the effect thereof on the general wellbeing of the workers of the front-stage world

As articulated by the co-researchers, corporate bullying causes tremendous emotional distress and unhappiness amongst the workers of the front-stage world. However, the workers of the front-stage world are reluctant to report workers of the back-stage world who are guilty of such incivilities. This is a matter that needs urgent attention because as Alex said in his interview; the habits of the back-stage world filters down to the entire workforce. Thus, if no action is taken against worker of the back-stage world who treat workers of the front-stage world disrespectfully, this might become – or perhaps has already become – a trend in the hospitality industry.

Namie (2003:1) takes a firm stand against corporate bullying and argues that “the time has come to treat workplace bullying the same way as sexual harassment or racial discrimination, to identify the perpetrators, establish rules of conduct and penalties, and even pass laws prohibiting and penalising bullying.” Namie (2003:1) defines workplace bullying as follows:

‘status-blind’ interpersonal hostility that is deliberate, repeated and sufficiently severe as to harm the targeted person’s health or economic status. Further, it is driven by perpetrators’ need to control another individual, often undermining legitimate business interests in the process.

According to Namie (2003:2), corporate bullying can manifest in either verbal attacks or strategic moves that impair a worker to the extent that it becomes almost impossible for the worker to function efficiently. Namie (2003:2) points out that most bullying is same-sex harassment. Consequently, the victim cannot rely on the laws of sexual harassment for protection. Thus, without laws perpetrators are hardly ever brought to justice. The major risk of workplace incivility is psychological impairment – matter that was concurred by the co-researchers. Even though human resource departments are aware of this, counselling is not offered by companies to the victims of bullying. Reports of bullying are mostly dismissed as mere “personality clashes” (Namie 2003:3).

Corporate bullying is a form of violence that has a direct impact on the mental and physical health of workers (Presser 2004:95). Statistics show that workers who are exposed to workplace bullying will endure this abuse for an average of 22 months. Data further indicates that only 13 percent of bullies are brought to justice (Namie 2003:1, 2). Namie (2003:5) is of the opinion that corporates should hastily change their legislations regarding bullying because it is:

- It is three times more prevalent than sexual harassment. Illegal discrimination and harassment require significant investments of time and money to identify, correct and prevent.

- It is costly: Employment practices liability can be substantial. Bullied targets, often the most talented employees, are driven from the workplace. Turnover is expensive. Increased health care utilisation can result in hefty premium costs borne by employers.
- Data, to prevent bullying-related losses, exist. Because the complaints system gatekeepers (in human resources) hear all the stories, the employer has evidence of bullying's prevalence. Everyone knows who the repeat offenders are.
- Witnesses know when bullying happens, whether or not it was behind closed doors. When a high-performing employee is fired and humiliated by 'exit parade' – given a box to take private belongings, escorted by HR and security – or simply disappears without explanation one day, fear dominates the workplace. Fear-driven workplaces with poor morale undermine employee commitment and productivity.
- Employee recruitment and retention are made more difficult when the employer's reputation suffers from the antics of one or more petty tyrants.

According to Fry (2003:699), the qualities of workplace incivility can be associated with extrinsic motivation which might be the result of early military, religious, and feudal organizations, such as "the Roman Army, Catholic Church, and the Kingdom of England." The primary means of motivation in these organizations was fear (Fry 2003:699).

The benefit of leading by fear is to create a "control system that ensures minimum levels of effort, organizational commitment, and performance" (Fry 2003:699). However, fear prevents workers from feeling content, and it leads to avoidance behaviour, including feelings of "powerlessness and low confidence, low commitment, enthusiasm, and imagination" (Fry 2003:699). But most importantly it leads to feelings of reduced trust and communication, and as a result, important issues are hidden or suppressed (Fry 2003:699).

On the other hand, intrinsic motivation manifests through capability and relatedness and it requires some level of self-management (Fry 2003:699). According to Fry (2003:699), intrinsically motivated workers feel “competence and relatedness through working in empowered teams that are directing team activities toward a meaningful purpose and doing something the members regard as significant and meaningful.” Employees who function in empowered teams show a sense of ownership of the work and are fully engaged in their responsibilities – requiring of them to be creative (Fry 2003:699).

Uncivil and inconsiderate leadership approaches have a detrimental effect on several components of an organisation. As a result, there should be no tolerance for bullying in the workplace. Nothing positive has ever come from treating a fellow human being rudely. Besides, workers will probably function more efficiently when they are treated with dignity and respect.

According to the narratives of the co-researchers, the effect of dictatorship and bullying stretches beyond corporate parameters. The emotional challenges that the workers of the front-stage world experience at work filter through to their family lives. Cindy articulated that when she goes home, she is so drained from the stress of having to ‘act’ all day that when she gets home, she has to perform yet another ‘act’ because her family expects of her to participate in family activities and duties.

Cindy’s experiences are substantiated by previously conducted research which shows that prolonged periods of occupational stress affects the private lives of employees, causing marital, friendship and community problems (Kahn & Byosiere 1992; Mulvaney *et al.* 2007). Consistent with stressors associated with the hospitality industry, shift work and the number of hours worked also have a significant effect on the physical, psychological and emotional well-being of employees (Presser 2004; Zohar 1994; Pienaar & Willemsse 2008; Brymer, Perrewe & Johns 1991; Lam & Chen 2012; O’Neill & Davis 2011). Shift work has also been associated with marital disagreements and child-related problems, so too has work schedules that involve public holidays and weekend (Almeida 2004:127). As Alex mentioned in his interview, these shifts are common in the

hotel industry, and it poses tremendous challenges for employees to try to negotiate work-family balance.

During my time as a medical officer, I witnessed many incidents where the irregular working hours of front-stage workers affect their families negatively. Some of the spouses of these workers were suspicious of their partners long working hours. Such suspicion often resulted in domestic violence.

There were also numerous incidents where hospitality workers were seduced by guests. Not all hoteliers can resist these temptations. And then there are times, as articulated by David, where workers of the front-stage have to show hospitality to guests who commit adulterous acts. For David, it is very difficult to stay professional in situations like this. McGuire (2009:2) calls this spiritual labour and cautions that it can lead to inner spiritual conflict.

Many of the challenges that the front-stage workers face can be resolved if the workers of the back-stage world would show more concern for the workers of the front-stage world. One might think that the ultimate good of the back-stage will make these workers more attentive to unnecessary costs spent on staff being off sick and high staff turnover – resulting from staff being over-worked – but according to David, who has attended several financial meetings, this is not the case. While executives might choose to overlook these issues, research confirms that organizations suffer tremendous financial losses due to absenteeism and voluntary turnover (O'Neill & Davis 2011:1).

Work stress also has a negative effect on quality customer service, thus less stressed employees deliver a higher quality service than workers who are exposed to prolonged stressful situations (Varca 1999:1). Cindy, in particular, spoke elaborately about this matter. She spoke about how work stress increases one's exhaustion, decreasing one's work ability, resulting in unhappiness and withdrawal – issues that O'Neill and Davis (2011:1) confirm in their research on this topic.

On the other hand, studies also show that positive emotions broaden one's thought-action repertoires, stimulating one to discover innovative thoughts and actions and that it creates a feeling of coherency with others (Saroglou, Buxant & Tilquin 2008:166). Also, contemporary empirical studies indicate a significant link between emotional, spiritual and holistic well-being (Koenig, King & Carson 2012; Rippentrop, Altmaier, Chen, Found, & Keffala 2005; Carmody, Reed, Kristeller, Merriam 2007).

Because different aspects of life cannot be compartmentalized, it is inevitable that experiences at work will affect one's life both at work and at home. In the past, not much attention was given to this thought, but several studies show that corporates are beginning to pay more attention to this likelihood (Cartwright & Cooper 1993; Cooper, Kirkaldy & Brown 1994; Bourbeau, Brisson & Allaire 1996).

A study conducted by Price and Hooijberg (1992:642) points out that executives showed great concern about reports that indicated that unhealthy employees – both physically and emotionally – have a detrimental effect on the economy of corporates. Many of these employees who partook in this study were exposed to very high levels of stress in their working environments. A similar finding was presented through research conducted by Danna and Griffin (1999:376) that shows that stress-related disability claims are the most rapidly escalating form of occupational illness, including medical conditions such as coronary heart disease, mental fatigue, general poor health, a decline in job satisfaction, accidents and unnecessary mistakes, absenteeism, reduced productivity, family problems and certain forms of cancer.

During his interview, David articulated that not much – if any – attention is given to the abovementioned concerns by the back-stage workers with whom he interacts in the establishment where he works. It could be that these issues are not addressed because the workers of the back-stage are not aware of some of the challenges that the workers of the front-stage face, or perhaps the workers of the front-stage do not report incidents where workers of the back-stage treat them disrespectfully out of fear of victimization.

5.4. INVITING THREE PROFESSIONALS TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS POSTFOUNDATIONAL TRANSVERSAL DISCUSSION

Socially constructed understandings and meanings are part of the postfoundational paradigm (Müller 2004:299). Corresponding to the postfoundational paradigm, stands the theory of transversal rationality that is characterised by the “dynamics of consciousness, the interweaving of many voices, the interplay of social practices...that points to a sense of transition, lying across, extending over, intersecting, meeting, and conveying without becoming identical (Van Huyssteen 2006:19).

Transversality acknowledges multiplicity, and it encourages various ways of interpretations through the interaction with different disciplines (Van Huyssteen 2000:430). In an attempt to further develop the dialogue of this study, an invitation was extended to three professionals to participate in this postfoundational transversal conversation. The professionals who participated in this study were chosen in accordance with the themes that emerged through the narrative process.

In 2012, I attended a lecture from Dr. Abedian at the University of Pretoria. The subject of discussion focused on the importance of morality in the workplace. At the time, I was just starting to do research for my Ph.D. Though early in my research, I found it encouraging that an executive like Dr. Abedian had such an affirmative opinion about sanctity in the workplace.

Dr. Iraj Abedian is an economist by training and has extensive business and research experience in South Africa. Since 1994, he has been involved in formulating macro-economic policy in South Africa and is a respected adviser to a number of public and private sector organisations. He is also the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Pan African.

In 2014, I decided to make contact with Dr. Abedian because I thought his contribution will add more depth to this postfoundational transversal discussion. As Müller (2004:300) points out; interdisciplinary investigation thickens the description of our understandings.

In my email to Dr. Abedian, I articulated the nature and the methodology of this empirical qualitative study. I discussed the themes that emerged through the conversations with the co-researchers. Seeing that Dr. Abedian is an advocate of corporate ethics, I requested him to share his thoughts on the role of morality in the workplace. In his email to me, Dr. Abedian (2014) wrote the following:

Success in modern economies requires a number of complementary capabilities. Key amongst them are financial capability, skills, infrastructure, appropriate technology and so on. Increasingly, it is evident that sustainable performance, as importantly, requires an explicit set of values that leads to ethical behaviour. The operating environment of business and public life is the cross-section of human communities, natural environment, and business dynamics inclusive of technological change and competitive forces within the marketplace. On each of these fronts, ethical decision-making is the compass for meaningful success.

If one has to place Dr. Abedian in the context of this study, he can probably be seen as a worker who would typically work in the back-stage world. While this world observes an ultimate good of profit, in his letter, Dr. Abedian points out that "...sustainable performance...requires an explicit set of values that leads to ethical behaviour." However, as articulated by the co-researchers, in the establishments where they work, there is currently little evidence of ethical behaviour. In the hotels where they work, they, and the other workers who work in the front-stage world, have to endure much rudeness from the workers of the back-stage world making it difficult for them to observe their ultimate concern of hospitality and guest satisfaction.

5.4.1 An interdisciplinary discussion about the effect of work-stress on contemporary hospitality workers

In the light of the abovementioned research, and in reference to the narratives of the co-researchers, James Weideman, a clinical psychologist with more than twenty-four years' experience, and Dr. Nicola Roos, a medical practitioner, were invited to participate in the conversation. From a postfoundational perspective, it is important to consider the voices of other disciplines because it is through the amalgamation of traditions and philosophies that we make sense of our human experiences (Van Huyssteen 2007:5).

Prior to consulting with the two professionals, I phoned the four co-researchers and explained that I would like to send their transcribed interviews to a clinical psychologist and a medical doctor. I told the co-researchers that both these professionals have consulted workers who have suffered from emotional trauma at work and that the contribution of these professionals might be insightful to the current discussion.

I arranged with the co-researchers that I would send them the reports of the professionals so that they, the co-researchers, can have the opportunity to respond to the reports. By doing this, the co-researchers were able to further partake in this postfoundational transversal discussion. All four the co-researcher gave their consent and articulated that they are eager to read the reports of the professionals. It was agreed that the identities of the co-researchers were to be protected.

After my discussion with the co-researchers, I contacted Weideman and Roos telephonically. Weideman stays in Cape Town, so I arranged to meet with him at his consulting rooms. Because Roos resides in Gauteng, we decided on a telephonic consultation.

During their medical careers, both Weideman and Roos have treated many patients who suffer from occupational stress. Weideman articulated that he has a number of hospitality

employees who consults with him on a regular basis and that he is quite familiar with the challenges that these workers face.

Weideman, who often consults hospitality employees, said that he was familiar with most of the themes that were identified by the co-researchers. During our conversation, Weideman made notes and requested to reply to me via email. What follows, is Weideman's (2015) response to the questions I asked him:

R: *According to your experience, how does one's spirituality influence one's emotional well-being?*

W: From my experience, people with a strong grounding in their spiritual beliefs and values often show more confidence at managing life's ups and downs. It needs to be a mature spirituality, though, combined with emotional maturity.

R: *How will it impact one's emotional and spiritual well-being if one is constantly undermined, either by managers or by guests?*

W: Anybody that finds himself in a position where he is constantly undermined from the top (management) and left feeling helpless will be emotionally affected. To be left helpless can be seen as a form of emotional trauma. Examples include: not to be heard or taken seriously by a manager. Issues or complaints not to be addressed, to ignore employees or not greet them or if the atmosphere is unpleasant. Employees constantly exposed to an atmosphere like above, will naturally find it really hard to be happy inside. They will have to work much harder to stay positive and in touch with their friendly side. This can take a lot of energy and might not be possible for the not-so-tough individuals. In the long term, the result can be emotional problems like burn-out, depression, etc.

R: *The majority of the interviewees referred to the hospitality industry as a 'stage', and them being the 'actors' on the 'stage' who constantly have to portray a façade of happiness. How does such constant 'acting' affect one's emotional well-being?*

W: Healthy and mature management of emotions basically mean to be in touch with, accept and acknowledge what you feel (the emotion) inside (in your body) and not to suppress the emotion but to allow yourself to feel it. We should all aim to be naturally happy inside and to portray that, most of the time spontaneously. That is why psychologists and medical doctors, etc. can survive while facing challenging negative circumstances in the form of their patients. They also have a strong identity and values (internal locus of control) that give them backbone in spite of circumstances.

R: *How does one's emotional well-being impact one's physical well-being and what are the long-term consequences of emotional distress?*

W: It is a well-known scientific fact that emotional stress and trauma has a huge impact on our physical health. The result may be burnout, chronic fatigue, depression, fibromyalgia, etc. Families suffer because you need energy to stay connected to your family.

After I had spoken do Weideman, I had a telephonic conversation with Dr. Nicola Roos, a medical officer who work in the emergency department at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, Soweto. During our conversation, I informed Roos regarding the themes that transpired during the interviews with the co-researchers.

The reason why I chose to invite an emergency physician to the conversation is because trauma doctors frequently deal with patients who are brought to the emergency department who suffer from conditions such as heart attacks, respiratory distress and panic-attacks – conditions that are commonly associated with prolonged and intense

exposure to stress (Danna & Griffin 1999:375). Roos (2015) also requested to respond to our conversation via email. What follows is her explanation of how prolonged and intense levels of stress effect the body – both physically and mentally:

In a medical or biological context, stress is a physical, mental or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension. It is also the body's reaction to any change that requires an adjustment or response. From this, it is clear that stress has physical, mental and emotional effects. And while stress is a normal component of everyday life, and some stresses may even be good, prolonged or excessive stress may have devastating consequences.

Stress induces a fight-or-flight response by stimulating the release of adrenaline and cortisol. This may be helpful, in that it maintains alertness and allows us to avoid danger. However, this response becomes pathological when one ceases to experience periods of relaxation or relief between challenges.

The continual release of stress hormones, in response to constant stress, results in increased blood flow to muscles (and less to organ systems like the gastrointestinal tract), increased pulse and respiratory rate, increased blood sugar levels, pupil dilatation, inhibition of erection, relaxation of the muscles of the gastrointestinal tract, and increased peripheral vascular resistance.

This in turn, may lead to medical conditions such as:

- Hypertension
- Peptic Ulcer Disease
- Delayed wound healing and stunted growth
- Increased susceptibility to infections
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome

- Neurological disorders, such as tension headaches and impaired learning
- Decreased testosterone levels and/or erectile dysfunction in men
- Irregular menstrual cycles in women, and even temporary infertility
- Insulin-resistance and diabetes
- Reduced bone formation, and osteoporosis

Increased cortisol levels have been linked to appetite dysregulation and obesity. There has also been shown to be a link between increased levels of stress hormones and cardiovascular mortality in those with acute coronary syndromes. Many skin conditions and autoimmune disorders are known to be triggered by stress. And this is not to mention the mental and psychological effects. There are many more ramifications to prolonged periods of stress, some as yet to be fully investigated, but it is clear that pathological stress has a significant impact on the health of individuals.

5.4.2. Inviting the co-researchers back to the conversation

While the findings of Weideman and Roos seem to stand in agreement to that of previous research conducted, it was important to establish if the co-researchers agree with the reports of the professionals. I phoned each of the co-researchers and told them about my discussions with Weideman and Roos. It was arranged that I would forward the reports of the professionals to the co-researchers to give them the opportunity to respond to the reports. In what follows are their responses.

Alex

Their findings are spot-on. At least in my case. In one of the documents, the Dr refers to a flight or fight response. The problem comes in when you cannot at that point 'flight', and you are almost forced to 'fight.' And that reaction tends to bring out the bad in one's personality.

David

We spend the majority of our waking hours at work, and this is especially the case in the hospitality industry. The lack of 'me' time is especially taxing, with having to balance the little time left after work between family and everything else. I have seen colleagues lose their 'spark' and just go through the motions. I have seen youngsters start in the industry and then drop out, saying it's just not for them. I believe that the welcome they receive from us 'old timers' can be partially responsible. We often treat them the way we were treated, and the vicious cycle continues. I really hope that this study, and the film, receive a wide hospitality audience and shakes up the status quo. Otherwise, we will continue having a large group of people who are unhappy professionally, personally, and rubbing this negativity onto those they come into contact. It is in our best interest to start changing our habits.

Cindy

Both reports are definitely very helpful and the findings are spot-on as I have personally experienced all circumstances. Physically I am still struggling to control the after-effects of the stress and have received support from a medical practitioner.

John

I would agree with their findings as I can recognise some of the symptoms that they speak of in their findings evident in my life. I am more aware of my well-being versus the business's well-being, and I have realised that whether I am part of the business or not, the business will still continue to function. I am making a point of making more time for family and friends and the important things.

The response of the co-researchers shows that they agree with the findings of the two professionals. According to David, the reports have particular relevance to the working conditions of the employees who work in the front-stage world. David also expressed the hope that this study and the film that was produced receive extensive attention in the hospitality industry; “Otherwise, we will continue having a large group of people who are unhappy professionally, personally and rubbing this negativity onto those they come into contact. It is in our best interest to start changing our habits.”

5.4.3. A final word from the co-researchers

More than six months have passed since I conducted the interviews with the co-researchers. I was curious to establish how their participation to this study has impacted their careers. I phoned each of the co-researchers and asked if they would be so kind to answer a few questions in this regard. They agreed. The following is their responses, as per email, to the particular questions.

Question 1: How did your participation in this study impact you professionally?

Alex

It has made me more aware of how I speak to all my colleagues and strangers for that matter. The topics we discussed gave me a chance to take a step back and look at the industry from an outsider’s perspective. And once I did that, then ‘the mask’ became so much more obvious. In one way it was sad to realise how people’s personalities tend to change at work without realising it, and on the other hand it gave me a sense of relief to know that there are people, like yourself, who care and are doing something about the situation.

David

The interview took me back to when I started in the industry as a line staff, reporting to practically everyone. It reminded me how I felt when a manager or guest actually took the time to acknowledge my existence as a person, and on the flip side, how it felt to be brushed off. It once again reminded me to take the time when dealing with people, especially those that come across as grumpy or miserable; they need it most.

Cindy

It definitely increased my awareness and attentiveness when dealing with junior staff. I always try and speak and treat them with respect, no matter how difficult the situation. I believe that as a leader you need to have empathy and compassion for your staff.

John

I must admit that I have always been attentive in the way I speak or approach junior colleagues. The topics discussed raised an awareness of how some of my other colleagues approach junior staff and the way that they speak to them.

Question 2: Since your interview, what has happened in your life? Do you still hold the position you held during the interview, and what are your plans for the future?

Alex

Yes, I do still hold the position I held during our interview. And, without a doubt, the decision has been made to leave the industry after almost twenty

years to pursue something I can enjoy again where I won't need to act any longer and just be who I am.

David

I am still holding the same position. There has been a personal challenge in my life that has put my career on a back burner for now. I have an opportunity for advance, but I am turning it down, as this is not the right time for further strain on the family or me. I must admit that I am in a sort of comfort zone and the thought of going through the emotional upheaval of trying to prove myself in a new environment is daunting; it brings back memories of being undermined by seniors.

Cindy

In the hospitality world, you hardly have time to reflect in depth. I have learnt to love my job and believe that it may just be my calling to empower junior staff – to become something or someone better in a very cold and cruel environment. I find my comfort at the end of a very tough day in that I shared a warm smile and I try my best to daily teach something new to a junior team member.

John

I currently still hold the position that I had during the interview. It has most definitely made me more aware of my future in hospitality and I have decided that I would like to move towards something more 'normal'. I have also decided not to abuse the power of my position but to rather help others and try and assist them with their issues.

Reflecting on the responses of the co-researchers, it seems that their participation in this study have cultivated an awareness amongst them regarding how they interact with their fellow employees. Alex says that he has become more aware of the mask that he, as a front-stage worker, has to wear every day. He is also hopeful and appreciative of the fact that this study will create an awareness of the current situation in the hospitality industry.

For David, his participation in this study reminded him of both pleasant and unpleasant moments in his hospitality career regarding previous incidents with workers of the back-stage world and with guests. This reflection made him more attentive of how he interrelates with his junior team members.

During Cindy's interview, she articulated her desire to show more appreciation for her fellow workers. She now sees her hospitality career as a calling to show kindness to those who she interacts with, and she finds comfort in the thought that she contributes positively to lives of the other front-stage workers that she works with every day.

Since his interview, John has indicated that he sees himself as a manager who shows respect to his fellow employees. From the time that John did his interview, he has become more attentive about how some workers of the back-stage world speak to some workers of the front-stage world.

It seems that the co-researchers' participation to this study has created a greater awareness amongst them about the challenges that the front-stage workers have to face every day. Their contribution to this study has also provided practical experiences about their struggles to observe the ultimate concern of the front-stage world – an ultimate concern of hospitality and guest satisfaction.

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges that the front-stage workers face in the observance of their ultimate concern is the fact that the ultimate concern of the back-stage workers – an ultimate concern of profit – stand in contrast to the ultimate concern of the front-stage world. It is clear that this conflict causes much discontent for the workers

of the front-stage world. It is also in this disagreement that the current spirituality of the contemporary hospitality industry – a spirituality of dissonance and unhappiness – is founded.

At the moment, hospitality workers might not be aware why there is no peace between the front-stage world and the back-stage world. Perhaps if they could better understand the respective constructions of these two worlds, will it be possible for them to show greater regard for the world – and the challenges – of the other. However, understanding can only be established through dialogue in which respect should be shown to the multiplicity that exists in the contemporary hospitality industry.

5.5. CONSIDERING THE PERSONAL RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF HOSPITALITY WORKERS

During their interviews, Cindy and John, who are both Christians, spoke of their desire to observe the rituals and ceremonies of their personal religious orientations. Both these co-researchers mentioned that the establishments where they currently work have gone through much effort to accommodate Muslim workers to observe the Holy month of Ramadhan. According to Cindy and John, their respective establishments have provided a room – probably one of the conference facilities in their establishments – to serve as a prayer room where the Muslim employees can attend prayer meetings. According to Cindy, the dietary requirements and fasting times of the Muslim employees have also been respected by the management of the establishment where she works.

In principle, neither Cindy nor John has issue with the effort that their establishments have gone through to accommodate their fellow Muslim workers. However, they do raise the point that workers of other religious denominations should also be considered. In her interview, Cindy expressed that hospitality workers should not only host hotel guests; they should also host each other. Cindy indicated that she would appreciate it if the management of the establishment where she works could perhaps also make a venue

available on Sundays for Christians and workers of other religious denominations to attend a short prayer meeting.

Because the hospitality industry is a twenty-four-hour seven-day-a-week service delivery industry, it is understandable that it might be very challenging for executive management to allow staff to leave the premises to attend Mass. However, Cindy's proposal might be achievable, and perhaps this matter should be addressed to the workers of the back-stage world because these workers are usually off over weekends and would thus not have difficulty to observe their personal religions if they wished to do so.

Workplace spirituality, as per the co-researchers, is as a concept that they associate with their personal religious upbringings. It might be through this personal religious lens that many others also understand workplace spirituality. To make reference to John's interview, he understood workplace spirituality to be religious discussions and prayer meetings amongst hospitality workers of particular religious denominations. This might be the reason some people argue that workplace spirituality plays a crucial role in a more meaningful understanding of corporate reality (Gotsis & Kortezi 2008:576; Dreyer & Dreyer 2012:1173; Praveen-Partboteeah & Cullen 2003:137-151).

However, as stated earlier, the purpose of this study is not to discuss workplace spirituality from any particular religious perspective, but rather to explore if and how hospitality workers associate with the language of religion in the workplace – a language that speaks of devotion, respect, and commitment.

While the ultimate concerns of the front-stage world and the back-stage world are two very different ultimate concerns, both these communities are motivated by religion. Thus, though these two worlds serve two different gods, their approach, or the language that they use in the observance of their religions – their ultimate concerns – are the same.

5.6. DRIVEN BY 'RELIGION'

To hold an executive position in an industry that is developing as rapidly as the hospitality industry (Holjevac 2003:130) is understandably demanding. As much pressure as there is on the workers of the front-stage world to show unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction, so too is there pressure on the workers of the back-stage world to ensure capital growth. The reason the workers of both the front-stage world and the back-stage world are so driven to observe their respective ultimate concerns is because religion plays an important role in the construction of both these worlds.

For the workers of the back-stage world, profit is of utmost importance, or put differently; profit is their ultimate concern – an ultimate concern that was greatly established during the rise of capitalism. Some of the most prominent philosophies that might have contributed to the construction of this ultimate concern include the theories of Emile Durkheim, Karl Emil Maximilian Weber and Karl Marx (Bratton & Denham 2014:104). All three these philosophers studied the social construction of religion.

For Durkheim, socialism was the religion of the future. As he puts it: “The ancient gods grow old or die, and others are not yet born” (Durkheim 1964:322), suggesting that society should consider alternative ultimate concerns that can establish social cohesion (Bratton & Denham 2014:250). Durkheim (2002:3) was of the opinion that if children received such ‘moral education’, it would be established from a young age what their contributions would one day be to this new social structure.

Sharing a similar philosophy as Durkheim, Weber (2002:121-122) argued that a new attitude to work – an attitude of financial prosperity – would in itself demonstrate godliness. According to Weber (2002:12), it was one’s *duty* to accumulate wealth and states: “The ‘*summum bonum*’ (great good) of this ‘ethic’ is the *making of money* and yet more money, coupled with a strict avoidance of all uninhibited enjoyment.” For Weber (2002:77), the followers of this new ‘ethic’, or this new religion, should see it as their

... duty to *regard* themselves as elect, and to dismiss any doubts as a temptation from the devil... *tireless labour in a calling* was urged as the best possible means of *attaining* this self-assurance. This and this alone would drive away religious doubt and give assurance to one's state of grace.

People who are convinced of profit, are confident that profit is the best principle by which to judge actions, practices, and regulations. These principles are the only principles that make sense to them, and because they have power, these laws become dominant and other voices silenced. Thus, what separates the world of hospitality (the front-stage world) from capitalism (the back-stage world) is the religion (principles) of the community – their respective ultimate concerns. However, while the ultimate concern of the front-stage world and the back-stage world might differ, the language of religion is spoken in the observance of both these worlds' ultimate concerns.

Religion is part of a particular language world – a linguistically constructed world. In every construction of reality, there are various power discourses and the most powerful discourses have the greatest impact – as was the case with the philosophies of Durkheim, Weber, and Marx concerning the interpretation of capitalism. However, these three philosophers should not be seen as men who manipulated the construction of capitalism, but rather as men who spoke with conviction about their world in the only way that made sense to them.

5.6.1. The language of religion

Religion is one of the strongest forms of legitimation because if God says something it is considered to be an ultimate truth. However, religion is not only about God. Religion concerns whatever the community views to be an ultimate concern.

Different ultimate concerns are part and parcel of a particular language and, therefore, a language world. This language includes words such as devotion, respect, acceptance, that this is the way things are done, rituals and ethics – a way of doing things in agreement

with the ultimate good. As a result, religion creates a community in which one wants to feel respected.

Thus, as the front-stage workers want to feel appreciated and respected in the front-stage world, so do the workers of the back-stage world want to be respected in the community of the back-stage world. Though the ultimate concerns of both these worlds differ, the language of religion plays a role in the social construction of these two worlds.

Only when one understands the paradigm of social construction can concepts be deconstructed and re-constructed. Thus, once the communities of the front-stage world and the back-stage world understand how the ultimate concerns of these two respective worlds are constructed, can they decide to either accept it or to change it.

Until now, the front-stage world and the back-stage world has been described by hospitality employees in a specific manner. However, when one changes one's perception of something, so does one's language of reference. Thus, negative attitudes, or negative language, can be changed to positive perceptions, or positive language.

5.7. THE RESURRECTION OF A NEW SPIRITUALITY OF HOPE

The narratives of the co-researchers consisted of many layers of stories. Some of these stories were dominant stories that told tales about the front-stage world and the back-stage world. However, as the interviews developed, more layers of stories emerged. Some of these stories were shadow stories – stories that should not exist because they stand in contrast to the dominant myth.

The dominant story of the front-stage world speaks of integrity, respect, unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction. But this is not a flawless story. As the narrative of the front-stage world developed, cracks appeared in the dominant story. Through the cracks of the dominant stories shone the light of shadow stories – stories that told tales of destruction such as emotional drain, accusations, the fear of subordination, the toll on

family life, and the wanting to leave the hospitality industry. Thus, the existence of the shadow stories auto-deconstructed the dominant myth of the contemporary hospitality industry – that being the myth of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction. However, the deconstruction of the dominant myth creates the possibility for a new story – a new spirituality of hope and grace. This spirituality of hope and wonder will be the spirituality of the future – a spirituality that is always to come, filled with impossible possibilities.

But this spirituality will not be the ultimate spirituality of the future because eventually, through the cracks of this spirituality of grace, new shadow stories will emerge, crucifying the dominant story of this new spirituality, thus, requiring of the new spirituality to be ever-changing – constantly seeking new hope and new possibilities.

In this new spirituality, hospitality workers can find new meaning and new structure. This spirituality of hope and wonder will tell stories of integrity, mutual respect, reasonable hours, emotional support, justice, the consideration of family life and the desire of hospitality workers to progress in the industry. In these impossible possibilities, lies the hope of the new spirituality of the contemporary hospitality industry.

5.8. CONCLUSION

In this study, the contemporary hospitality industry was presented as two worlds – the front-stage world that observes an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction, and a back-stage world that observes an ultimate concern of profit. The conflicting ultimate concerns of these two worlds causes much unhappiness in the lives of the front-stage workers.

The workers of the front-stage world represent employees from the level of line staff to senior management. The primary purpose of these workers is to show unconditional hospitality and to ensure guest satisfaction. However, corporate policies – which are decided by the workers of the back-stage world – make it impossible for the workers of

the front-stage world to show unconditional hospitality because company policies require that a price is attached to each act of kindness. Thus, unconditional hospitality is impossible because the law requires reciprocity (Derrida 2000:25). However, without the law hospitality will not become effective (Derrida 2000:79).

The back-stage world represents workers from the level of hotel managers to CEO's. The ultimate concern for these workers is profit. Without profit, companies will not be able to exist. These workers write the laws of the front-stage world, requiring of front-stage workers to show hospitality at a price, and also, in a further attempt to observe their ultimate concern of profit, expects of front-stage workers to work extensive working hours.

Because the hospitality industry is a 'people' industry (Pittaway *et al.* 1998:411), front-stage workers are expected to show hospitality with a smile. However, showing authentic kindness is not always possible. Thus, in an attempt to show friendly hospitality, front-stage workers have no alternative but to put on 'happy-face' masks to hide the true face of hospitality – a face that speaks of tremendous unhappiness.

According to the co-researchers, there is also another aspect that causes much unhappiness amongst the workers of the front-stage world. This concerns the managerial styles of some of the workers of the back-stage world. Some workers of the back-stage world treat some workers of the front-stage world disrespectfully – causing emotional unhappiness for these workers. Because the workers of the front-stage world fear victimization from the workers of the back-stage world, they do not report cases of bullying. For some of the workers of the front-stage world the uncivil behavior of some of the back-stage workers are too much to bear and for these workers, resignation is the only viable option.

Corporate bullying manifests in either verbal attacks or strategic moves and can impair workers to the extent that it becomes difficult for them to function efficiently, (Namie 2003:1). Each year, corporates suffer great financial losses to lawsuits filed against them by victimized employees (Crampton & Hodge 2008:3). Such unnecessary expenditures

stand in contrast to the ultimate concern of the back-stage world – an ultimate concern of profit. However, according to the co-researchers, there are no implications for workers of the back-stage world who are guilty of such cruelties.

Because the hospitality industry is one of the fastest developing world industries of the 21st century (Holjevac 2003:130), and because it is such a prominent ‘people’ industry (Pittaway *et al.* 1998:411), leadership performances should receive more attention (Pittaway *et al.* 1998:408). Perhaps if workers of the back-stage world show more consideration for the workers of the front-stage world – a world that is renowned to be extremely labor intensive (Pittaway *et al.* 1998:411) – might the workers of the front-stage world feel more appreciated for their efforts. After all, the service that the workers of the front-stage workers have to show to guests “cannot be overstated” as these workers are directly responsible for “face-to-face customer service, service quality, and customer satisfaction” (Clark *et al.* 2008:1).

Responding to the narratives of the co-researchers in which they articulated the challenges that they experience in the front-stage world, both Weideman and Roos, two professionals that have extensive experience in their respective fields, reports against the danger of physiological and psychological pathologies that might occur due to long-term emotional stress – reports to which all the co-researchers agree.

Both the front-stage world and the back-stage world is driven by religion, or put differently, an ultimate concern. For the workers of each of these worlds, it is important to show loyalty to the ultimate concern of their respective worlds. Thus, workers of the front-stage world might experience the workers of the back-stage world to be disrespectful to the ultimate concern of the front-stage world. However, in the same way, that the front-stage workers strive to be respectful to their ultimate concern – an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction – so too are the back-stage workers dedicated to serving the ultimate concern of their world – an ultimate concern of profit. As mentioned earlier, two gods cannot be worshiped in one temple. However, through the

life-giving words of hospitality workers, there is a possibility of a new spirituality of hospitality – a spirituality of hope and grace.

CHAPTER 6

A CRITICAL REFLECTION OF THE RESEARCH JOURNEY

This chapter serves as a critical reflection of this research journey. As part of the reflection on the journey towards answering the primary and secondary research questions, this chapter will summarize many of the arguments presented in the previous chapters.

6.1. INTRODUCTION

There are some events in life that change one's course of destiny. In my case, it was the suicide of my friend – an incident that brought my paramedic career to an abrupt end. However, the closing of this chapter in my life resulted in the beginning of an exciting new chapter. This new chapter started with me having multiple conversations with hospitality workers about their experiences of the front-stage world. Though each worker's story was unique, most of them included tales of great unhappiness, hopelessness, and frustration.

After listening to so many trouble saturated stories, I developed a sincere desire to help hospitality workers to alter the current spirituality of hospitality – a spirituality of tremendous discontentment. Perhaps if hospitality workers were able to understand the construction of the current spirituality, might they be able to de-construct and re-construct a new spirituality hope. Consequently, this became the research question for my study¹³.

At the onset of this journey, I realized that stories and themes might emerge that will challenge the dominant myth of hospitality. This consideration makes me think of Meylahn's (2014:6) thought that suggests that practical theologians like myself should have similar minds as Christ. This means that one risks to be blasphemous because one challenges – by associating with the marginalized – the dominant myth. Such irreverence

¹³ Is there a possibility that a spirituality of hope can help create a preferred working environment for workers of the contemporary hospitality industry?

might result in one being crucified. What is inspiring, though, is the thought that the result of crucifixion might mean the resurrection of a new community – a community that can be liberated from the dominant myth.

6.2. UNMASKING THE FACE OF HOSPITALITY

The contemporary hospitality industry consists of two worlds – a front-stage world and a back-stage world. The workers of the front-stage world observe an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction while the workers of the back-stage world observe an ultimate concern of profit. In this setting, there can be no peace because two gods cannot be served in one temple. Concealed in the shadows of this divergence is the actual face of hospitality – a face that speaks of great unhappiness and dissonance.

This current spirituality of hospitality places much emotional stress on the workers of the front-stage world because corporate policies – established by the workers of the back-stage world – require of these workers to always show hospitality with a smile. These rules make unconditional hospitality impossible (Derrida 2000:77). However, without rules, hospitality cannot be effective (Derrida 2000:79).

It is this impossibility of unconditional hospitality that causes much unhappiness for the workers of the front-stage world. Consequently, in an attempt to hide their sadness and to stay true to their ultimate concern – an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction – the front-stage workers often put on ‘happy-face’ mask to create a façade of happiness. The workers of the back-stage world do not share the same challenges as the workers from the front-stage world because they observe a different ultimate concern – an ultimate concern of profit.

Both the constructions of the front-stage world and the back-stage world are influenced by voices and traditions of the past. Perhaps if hospitality workers understand how these voices affect their constructions of both the front-stage world and the back-stage world, might it be possible for them to de-construct and to re-construct these two worlds.

6.3. INFLUENCES THAT MIGHT AFFECT THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FRONT-STAGE WORLD'S SPIRITUALITY

As stated in Chapter One, meanings are understood and negotiated through the conversations of groups of people (Freedman & Combs 1996:22, 23; White 1991:27, 28). Thus, realities are constructed through the using of specific words, in a particular setting where particular traditions and practices are followed by a specific group of people.

An example of such a setting is the front-stage world where the co-researchers of this study work. In Chapter Two, several aspects were discussed that might influence the construction of the front-stage world. What follows, is a brief reflection of some of these influences.

6.3.1. Biblical stories of hospitality

According to Meylahn (2009:1), “the sacred texts of the Judaic-Christian tradition offer not only an understanding of the wholly otherness of God, but also form the basis of our understanding and perception of humanity (anthropology), the world and ourselves (personhood/identity).” Thus, the way in which we understand the world, and our role in the world, is influenced by our association with Biblical narratives and traditions.

As in the case of the front-stage world where the workers observe an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction, in Biblical time, hospitality was also seen as a religious obligation, or as Van Eck (2011:5) puts it; “sacred duty.” Some of these ancient stories of hospitality tell tales where hosts – or front-stage workers – were required to make difficult decisions which exposed them and their household to danger (Gn 19, Jdg 19) – all in the quest to observe an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality.

While the stories of Genesis 19 and Judges 19 speak of situations where hosts and their households were confronted with physical danger, the challenges that contemporary

hospitality workers face are mostly emotional. However, emotional and physical challenges can both have devastating consequences on oneself and one's household.

In the above-mentioned Biblical narratives, the hosts of both stories were required to show unconditional hospitality while being under much pressure. When one is in danger – whether it being physical or emotional – and one's wellbeing depends on one's façade, it is sometimes necessary to put on a 'happy-face' mask to create an impression of true kindness.

As in the contemporary hospitality industry, Judeo-Christian hospitality had a strong ethical component that required of the host to change the status of the visitor from being a stranger to being a guest (O'Gorman 2010:56; Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:369).

However, it was expected of the guest to reciprocate the host's hospitality with respect – an understanding that is still relevant in the contemporary hospitality setting – and with gifts. In the modern hospitality industry, a financial interchange is more likely than the exchanging of gifts. Whatever means of reciprocation is agreed upon between the guest and the host, the concept of trading was seen as an obligation (Lorencin 2008:168). As Herman notes (see Lorencin 2008:169):

Gifts beg counter-gifts, and fulfill at one and the same time a number of purposes: they repay past services, incur new obligations, and act as continuous reminders of the validity of the bond. Non-reciprocation is in this context frequently interpreted as relapse into hostility.

Similarly to the front-stage workers of the contemporary hospitality industry who are being controlled by the ultimate concern of the back-stage world, Jesus, in his attempt to show unconditional hospitality, was challenged by the social construction of his time – a construction that prohibited the extension of hospitality to outsiders and castaways. Two instances that tell of Jesus' confrontation with the customs of the time are the banquet in Levi's house (Mt 9:9-13//Mk 2:13-17//Lk 5:27-32) and the meal in Zacchaeus' house (Lk

19:1-10). While it was Jesus' intention to show unconditional hospitality to all people, not everybody appreciated his 'rebellious' deeds. The Pharisees and scribes saw Jesus' actions as blasphemous to the traditions of the time (Mt 9:11//Mk 2:16//Lk 5:30).

Thus, as in the case of the contemporary hospitality industry, it can be said that hospitality in the first century was also divided in a front-stage world – a world in which Jesus observed an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality – and a back-stage world – a world in which the Pharisees and scribes determined the rules of the front-stage world.

Jesus' narrative, as in the case of the co-researchers' narratives, exposed the dominant myth of the time – a myth of unconditional hospitality. Because of Jesus' irreverence to the dominant myth, he had to be crucified. However, Jesus' crucifixion can offer a frame of reference for us through which we can understand the world because his resurrection announces a new life of "impossible possibilities there where the power of the dominating myth is broken" (Meylahn 2012:61).

Seeing that the two most important sources of Christian theology are the Bible and Hellenic culture (Allen 1985:1), it should be considered that the mythological stories of this era might also influence the construction of the front-stage world.

6.3.2. Greek and Roman mythical stories of hospitality

Perhaps one of the best-known stories of hospitality in Greek mythology is Homer's *Odyssey* that tells the story of Odysseus, a prominent leader during the Trojan War, who was always searching for hospitable reception in a variety of situations (O'Gorman 2005:143). In his *Odyssey*, Homer talks of gods as well as human characters, such as Telemachus and Odysseus, who were seen as role models for the people in ancient Greece.

In ancient Greece, the approach of a stranger – who could either be a mortal man or a disguised godly creature – could either be friendly or hostile (O'Gorman 2005:42). This

belief is also narrated in the stories of Genesis 19 and Judges 19. However, because the ordinary man could not distinguish if the guest were a god or a human, all strangers were to be treated with utmost respect (O’Gorman 2005:142).

As in the case of the Christian God, in Greek mythology, the god Zeus presided over hospitality, and Jupiter was the custodian of Roman hospitality laws (O’Gorman 2005:145). In *Metamorphoses*, Ovid narrates the story of the gods Jupiter and Mercury who during a visit to earth were in search of shelter.

After being denied a thousand times, the gods approached the simple thatched cottage of Baucis and Philemon. Though the two men had little to offer to their guests – who they did not know were gods – they were eager to share whatever they had in their cottage. After dinner, Jupiter and Mercury requested Baucis and Philemon to accompany them to a mountain from where they could see the valley below. All the homes in the valley – the homes of those who denied the gods – were flooded.

As a reward for their generosity, Jupiter and Mercury transformed the meager cottage of Baucis and Philemon into a temple where they then became the priests (O’Gorman 2005:145). This mythological narrative that speaks of the destruction of an entire community who denied two strangers hospitality and the salvation of the host who did offer them hospitality stand in strong parallel to the narrative of Genesis 19.

From the above it is clear that Greek and Roman mythology and Christianity share similar stories of hospitality – stories that might influence the construction of the contemporary hospitality setting. However, here in sub-Saharan Africa, not all cultures observe Christianity. Thus, it is important to consider that folk traditions, too, may play a role in how some hospitality workers make sense of the contemporary hospitality industry.

6.3.3. *Ubuntu*: African tribal stories of hospitality

Many of the black traditional societies who reside below the Sahara, refer to hospitality as *Ubuntu* (Gathogo 2008:277). The objective of African hospitality is that no one should be seen as an isolated individual – we are all part of a large community (Gathogo 2008:276). By metaphorical reference to examples of interconnectedness found in nature, *Ubuntu* is taught to younger tribal members through creative genres, such as plays, music, poetry and dance (Gathogo 2008:282).

The interdependency of African hospitality is described in several African proverbs. Gathogo (2008:276) refers to some of the most prominent Kikuyu proverbs; “*Mugogo umwe nduaraga iriuko*”, which means; on one’s own, as an individual, one cannot do something substantial; “*Mugogo umwe nduaraga iriuko*” which, when translated means “one log does not make a bridge”; and perhaps the most popular Kikuyu proverb states: “*Gutiri gitaturie kingi*”, meaning; “all things are interdependent.” Perhaps one of the best-known definitions of *Ubuntu* is that of Desmond Tutu (see Mbaya 2010:369):

A person is a person through other persons.’ I would not know how to be a human being at all except (that) I learned this from other human beings. We are made for a delicate network of relationships, of interdependence. We are meant to complement each other. All kinds of things go horribly wrong when we break that fundamental Law of our being. Not even the most powerful nation can be completely self-sufficient.

Perhaps for some hospitality workers, the interconnectedness and the emphasis that *Ubuntu* places on the importance of effective teamwork, might play a role in the way that they construct the front-stage world.

6.4. INFLUENCES THAT MIGHT AFFECT THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BACK-STAGE WORLD'S SPIRITUALITY

As in the case of the front-stage world, the way in which hospitality workers construct the back-stage world – a world with an ultimate concern of profit – might be influenced by the thoughts of philosophers such as Emile Durkheim, Karl Emil Maximilian Weber and Karl Marx whose ideas received much support during the rise of capitalism (Bratton & Denham 2014:104).

As discussed in Chapter Three, Durkheim, Weber, and Marx studied religion – a concept that is clearly notable in their philosophies. When reflecting on their ideas, it becomes apparent that religion plays a major role in the construction of reality. In what follows, is a summary of some of their thoughts.

6.4.1. Voices that echo in the back-stage world

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, as the world was going through a time of transition – the Enlightenment – Durkheim (1964:322) proclaimed that: “The ancient gods grow old or die, and others are not yet born.” However, through the collective experiences of people, new formulae, and moral standards emerged to serve humanity.

According to Durkheim (2002:3), moral authority originates from the social groups people live in. For this reason, it is important to provide moral education to children from a young age so that they can understand their role in society (Bratton & Denham 2014:218). Eventually, an understanding was created that: “When our conscience speaks it is society speaking within us” (Durkheim 2002:90). Thus, if people understand the nature of morality, they can make rational decisions that will benefit the entire community.

Marx, Durkheim, and Weber studied religion. Marx was of the opinion that religion has conceptual implications that can justify social inequality, Durkheim emphasized the role

of religion regarding social cohesion, and Weber focused on the “economic ethics” found in the major world religions and cultures (Bratton & Denham 2014:250).

In Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the “Spirit” of Capitalism (2002)*, he aims to discern the importance of ascetic Protestantism in the development of modern capitalism in the West in which he proposes a new approach to work and the pursuit of financial prosperity in which work becomes a way of demonstrating godliness, giving rise to the rationalization of capitalism (Weber 2002:121-122).

Weber relied heavily on Benjamin Franklin’s work which emphasized the link between religiosity and entrepreneurship. For Weber, Franklin’s theory was the ideal-type “spirit” of capitalism (Weber 2002:9, 10 [italics by author]):

Remember, *time is money*. He that can earn ten shillings a day by his labour, and goes abroad, or sits idle, one half of that day, though he spends but sixpence during his diversion or idleness, ought not to reckon *that* the only expense; he has really spent, or rather thrown away, five shillings besides....Remember this saying, *the good paymaster* is lord of another man’s purse.

According to Weber, this mantra of Franklin emphasizes one’s *duty* to accumulate as much money as possible and in a response to Franklin’s words, Weber (2002:12) concludes the following:

The ‘*summum bonum*’ (great good) of this ‘ethic’ is the *making of money* and yet more money, coupled with a strict avoidance of all uninhibited enjoyment. Indeed, it is so completely devoid of all eudamonistic, let alone hedonist, motives, so much purely thought of as an end *in itself* that it appears as something wholly transcendent and irrational, beyond the ‘happiness’ or the ‘benefit’ of the *individual*. The aim of a man’s life is indeed money making, but this is no longer merely the means to the end of satisfying the material needs of life. This reversal...of what we might call the “natural” state of affairs is a definite leitmotiv of capitalism, although it will always be alien to anyone who is untouched by capitalism’ aura.

This statement of Weber accurately summarizes the ultimate concern of the back-stage world – a world that observes an ultimate concern of profit. As Weber puts it; the “*summum bonum* (great good)” is the “*making of money and yet more money.*” This philosophy of Weber led to the rise of what he called an “ethic of inner convictions” in which the holy laws is replaced by a more self-motivated development of an inner religious state (Weber 2002:96).

The rise of capitalism in the 18th century established a new understanding of workplace spirituality that focused on capital growth (Weber 2002:96). The observance of this new ultimate concern resulted in the draining of workers’ humanity and dignity (Lips-Wiersma *et al.* 2009:292). Eventually, materialistic greed became the dominant force behind contemporary business strategy (Lips-Wiersma *et al.* 2009:292). Today, many contemporary organizations are founded in accordance to the Cartesian-Newtonian¹⁴ orientation that implies that only concepts that can enhance revenue, should be considered (Gotsis & Kortezi 2008:584).

6.4.2. Religion and the construction of reality

Religion is based on what the community views as an ultimate concern. According to Durkheim (2001:26), all religions are instructive, and they all share a notion for the respective absolute. As Jensen (2014:1) points out; “religion is a perplexing social and individual phenomenon” that can be “favorable associated with agreeable human qualities such as ethics, morality, and spirituality.”

Society, according to Durkheim (1964:322), needs some religious system that joins beliefs because: “No society can exist that does not feel the need at regular intervals to

¹⁴ “[M]odern organisations are founded and function in accordance with the Cartesian-Newtonian orientation. Such a system of thought implies that priority is given to the empirical, the rational that is the objective, the external, the material. Thus, everything is evaluated in terms of tangible and measurable outcomes” (Gotsis & Kortezi 2008:584).

sustain and reaffirm the collective feelings and ideas that constitute its unity and personality.”

Religion is one of the strongest forms of legitimation because if God says something it is considered to be an ultimate truth. However, religion does not only concern God but rather refers to whatever one views to be an ultimate concern. In the case of the contemporary hospitality industry, there are two worlds, a front-stage world with an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and a back-stage world with an ultimate concern of profit.

Each of these worlds, the front-stage world, and the back-stage world needs a religious system that joins their beliefs, because as Durkheim (1964:322) points out, no society can survive if the community does not feel as sense belonging. This feeling of belonging is established by what the community understands to be their collective good.

The language of religion speaks of several concepts such as devotion, respect, and the acceptance of how things are, ethics – the way of doing things in accordance with the ultimate concern, rituals, sacrifices, reward and consequences. While the ultimate concerns of the front-stage world – an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction – and the back-stage world – an ultimate concern of profit – are very different, the language of religion is relevant in the observance of each of these worlds’ respective ultimate concerns. For this reason, it can be said that religion plays an important role in the construction of both the front-stage world and the back-stage world.

6.5. THE POSSIBILITY OF A NEW SPIRITUALITY OF HOPE

As mentioned in the previous section, religion is the when the community favorably associates with specific qualities such as ethics and morality (Jensen 2014:1). Also, for a particular religion, or ultimate concern to survive, it is important that the community *regularly* evaluates and reaffirms their *collective* feelings (Durkheim 1964:322).

Through the conversation with the co-researchers – all workers of the front-stage world – it became apparent that there is at present no affirmation amongst hospitality workers regarding the current spirituality of hospitality. It also seems that the community cannot associate favorably with the ethics of the current spirituality.

The narratives of the co-researchers spoke of two dominant stories. These dominant stories told tales of a front-stage world and a back-stage world. The workers of the front-stage world observe an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction while the workers of the back-stage world observe an ultimate concern of profit. Thus, these two worlds stand in conflict to each other. This dissonance causes cracks in the dominant myth – a myth of unconditional hospitality – exposing shadow stories that challenge the dominant myth. The shadow stories of the co-researchers speak of emotional pain, disrespect, belittlement, accusations, unthankfulness, fear of subordination, the toll on family life, and the wanting to leave the hospitality industry.

Shadow stories are mostly “suppressed, excluded, ignored and marginalised” (Meylahn 2014:5) because according to the dominant myth – a myth of unconditional hospitality, these shadow stories of the front-stage workers should not exist, yet they do (Meylahn 2014:6).

While discerning these stories, the practical theologian should have a similar mind to Christ because by associating with the marginalized (the front-stage workers), the practical theologian challenges the dominant myth – a myth of unconditional hospitality. By following Christ into the incarnation and the crucifixion, the practical theologian “*witnesses the auto-deconstruction* of the gods (Meylahn 2014:7 [italics as per author]) – the front-stage god of unconditional hospitality and the back-stage god of profit.

This identification with Christ enables and encourages hope for a “kingdom still to come” (Meylahn 2012:61). In this auto-deconstruction, through the life-giving words of the community, a new spirituality of hope and grace can be resurrected for the contemporary

hospitality setting, telling a new dominant story – an ever-changing story of impossible possibilities that in itself excludes and creates shadow stories (Meylahn 2014:7).

Thus, through the life-giving words of hospitality workers – both front-stage workers and back-stage workers – a new spirituality of hope and grace can come to life. However, to establish this new spirituality, the community will have to decide on new qualities, such as ethics and morality (Jensen 2014:1) that will consider the narratives of the entire community – both front-stage workers and back-stage workers. However, for this new spirituality to survive, it is important that the community *regularly* evaluates and reaffirms their *collective* feelings (Durkheim 1964:322).

6.6. IN THE LIGHT OF HOPE

Research shows that long irregular working hours have a significant effect on the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of employees (Presser 2004:95). Shift work and work schedules that involve weekends and holidays are also related to greater marital disagreements and child-related problems (Almeida 2004:127). These conditions are common to the contemporary hospitality industry.

Hospitality workers are also exposed to additional occupational stress. Some of these stressors include intensive customer interaction (Haynes & Fryer 1999:34). These high levels of work stress negatively affect the quality of customer service (Varca 1999:1). Because the hospitality industry is a ‘people’ industry (Pittaway *et al.* 1998:411), it is expected of hospitality workers to provide friendly service to guests at all time. However, for some workers of the front-stage world, authentic friendliness is not always possible.

In an attempt to create a façade of happiness, front-stage workers often fake their kindness by putting on ‘happy-face’ masks. However, such faking of emotions can result in heightened dissonance (Rafaeli & Sutton 1987:25).

This spirituality of unhappiness and dissonance that currently reigns in the contemporary hospitality industry clearly holds no benefit to the workers of the front-stage world who tries to observe an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality. Neither does it serve the ultimate concern of the back-stage world – an ultimate concern of profit.

However, the dominant language of the new spirituality – as spirituality that is brought to existence through the life-giving words of the community – might speak of impossible possibilities such as consideration, support, understanding, balance, hope, and grace. In these impossible possibilities lies the future of the contemporary hospitality industry.

6.7. IN THE BRIGHTNESS OF LIGHT THERE IS YET A SHADOW

In a different layer of the co-researchers' narratives, several themes emerged – themes that challenge the possibility of a new spirituality; themes that speak of bullying, disrespect, and subordination. Thus, if there is to be any hope of a new spirituality for the contemporary hospitality industry, these themes need to be addressed.

The back-stage world – a world that observes an ultimate concern of profit – include members of executive management. The decisions of these workers establish corporate policies. The majority of these policies determine how the workers of the front-stage world observe their ultimate concern – an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction.

In the current situation, it seems that some of the back-stage workers' conduct to some workers of the front-stage world are at times offensive and vindictive. Unfortunately, though there seem to be procedures in place to address these violations, workers of the front-stage world are reluctant to report any worker from the back-stage world out of fear of victimization. Such bullying can be detrimental not only to the emotional well-being of the front-stage workers but also to the overall welfare of an establishment or organization. In a study conducted by Cramton and Hodge (2008:2), the following four ways were identified in which rudeness can affect employee efficiency:

- The employee wastes time worrying about the uncivil incident or future interactions with the instigator and tries to avoid the instigator.
- The employee becomes less committed.
- Employees do not involve themselves in tasks beyond the borders of their job specification and expend less effort to meet responsibilities.
- Employees are less willing to help other and reduce their contribution to the organization.

Namie (2003:1), who takes a firm stand against workplace bullying, defines workplace bullying to be: "... 'status-blind' interpersonal hostility that is deliberate, repeated and sufficiently serve as to harm the targeted person's health or economic status." According to Namie (2003:1), corporate bullying is driven by "perpetrators' need to control another individual, often undermining legitimate business interests in the process." For Namie (2003:1) the "time has come to treat workplace bullying the same way as sexual harassment or racial discrimination, to identify the perpetrators, establish rules of conduct and penalties, and even pass laws prohibiting and penalizing bullying."

Fry (2003:699) is of the opinion that workplace incivility can be associated with extrinsic motivation which might be a result of early military, religious, and feudal organizations such as "the Roman Army, Catholic Church, and the Kingdom of England." This motivation relies on fear to get people to co-operate (Fry 2003:699). The benefit of leading by fear is that this control system ensures "minimum levels of effort, organizational commitment, and performance" (Fry 2003:699). However, fear deprives workers of contentment and leads to avoidance behavior (Fry 2003:699).

Seeing that the hospitality industry is rapidly becoming one of the fastest growing industries of the 21st century (Holjevac 2003:130), it is important for organizations to improve their performance and to continuously develop new structures. Such demand requires effective leadership performance to ensure that transformation leads to increased effectiveness and profitability (Pittaway *et al.* 1998:408).

In this regard, (Pittaway *et al.* 1998:408) raise the concern that the matter of hospitality management has been neglected. Because the hospitality industry is such a labor intensive industry, more effort should be put into help hotels utilize the available human resources more efficiently (Pittaway *et al.* 1998:408). According to Clark, Hartline, and Jones (2008:1), this is a matter of urgency as the importance of the frontline staff “cannot be overstated” because these workers are directly responsible for “face-to-face customer service, service quality, and customer satisfaction.”

In a study conducted by Clark *et al.* (2008:2), research findings indicated that transformational leadership can “improve employee dedications, social behavior, role clarity, and satisfaction, while also reducing the effects of job stress and burnout.” Twenty-one years prior to this study, Worsfold (1989:146) came to a similar conclusion – referring to participative leadership.

6.8. AN ALTERNATIVE PREFERRED SPIRITUALITY

Previous research conducted on the topic of workplace spirituality seems to suggest that this concept refers to worker’ personal religious orientations and the principles and ethics that employees associate with their respective religions – religions such as Christianity and Hinduism.

While personal religious perspectives might play a role in the way that workers conduct themselves in the workplace, it is rather the *language* of religion – a language that speaks of sacrifice, dedication, respect, the fear of consequences if one should be disrespectful to the ultimate concern, and the hope of reward – that stimulates religiosity amongst workers.

This research suggests that religion plays a role in the construction of the front-stage world and the back-stage world because when a group of people functions together in a

specific place, observing a particular ultimate concern, the language of religion comes into play, demanding of the community to conduct themselves in a specific way.

In the current hospitality setting, two gods – two very different ultimate concerns – are being observed. The one god is the god of the front-stage world – a god of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction, and the other god is the god of the back-stage world – a god of profit. These two conflicting gods cause hospitality workers to suffer greatly. However, in the life-giving words of the entire community – including the workers of the front-stage world and the back-stage world – lies a possibility for a new spirituality of hospitality – a spirituality of hope and grace and endless impossible possibilities.

If a new spirituality is to be embraced by the workers of the contemporary hospitality industry, the whole community – the workers of the front-stage world and the back-stage world will have to show their commitment because it is only through the agreement of the entire community that new ethics can be established (Jensen 2014:1).

CHAPTER 7

A CRITICAL REFLECTION OF THE METHODOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

Any long journey requires extensive planning and preparation. To ensure that one arrives at one's destination (the answering of the research question/s), one needs to choose a particular road (methodology) and a vehicle (epistemology) that is suited for the terrain. Though meticulous preparation can help prevent unnecessary hindrances, few journeys present no challenges. This chapter is a critical reflection of the methodology and the epistemology that was chosen for this particular journey.

7.1. TRANSITIONING FROM MODERNISTIC TO POSTFOUNDATIONAL THINKING

Coming from a western medical background – a discipline that associates more with modern and fundamentalistic thought – I found it quite challenging to adapt to the non-definitive language of postfoundationalism. However, as the study progressed, the transition to this 'new' language became more natural.

The reason I decided to position myself in a postfoundational paradigm is because I was interested in the individual experiences of front-stage workers, and the meanings these workers attribute to their experiences.

Though the co-researchers are all workers of the front-stage world, by listening to their narratives it became apparent that their experiences and understandings of the front-stage world are not the same. The reason for this multiplicity is because the co-researchers come from different religious and cultural backgrounds and because experiences and understandings are socially constructed (Morgan & Sklar (2012:73).

Earlier in this study, it was argued that some ancient stories of hospitality might influence the construction of the front-stage world. As in the case of the front-stage world, it was also argued that the philosophies that shaped capitalism might affect the construction of the back-stage world.

Such multidisciplinary consideration and the interweaving of meaning is what Van Huyssteen (2000:429) calls transversality, also referred to as postfoundational rationality. Thus, the paradigm of postfoundational rationality allows one to view oneself not purely as an epistemological point, but to venture beyond the constraints of social structure and tradition to engage in interdisciplinary conversation.

Van Huyssteen further develops this theory and suggests seven movements to be considered in a postfoundational theological approach (Müller 2004:300). Müller (2004:300) “translates” these seven movements focusing on practical theological research.

Though this study was primarily structured according to the five metaphorical dance movements of Meylahn (2012:56-63), Müller’s seven movements were also considered as these two approaches are very similar and in a sense intertwined. In what follows is how I experienced these two respective approaches during the development of this study.

7.2. MÜLLER’S SEVEN-STEP POSTFOUNDATIONAL PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL APPROACH

1. A specific context is described

The context that was described by the co-researchers was the contemporary hospitality setting, which in turn was divided into two worlds; a front-stage world and a back-stage world. The front-stage world is where all the co-researchers work. This world observes an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction.

2. In-context experiences are listened to and described

The co-researchers' narratives consisted of many layers. The dominant stories spoke of how the co-researchers view and experience the front-stage world and the back-stage world. Each of these two dominant stories, in turn, had multiple layers. These different layers spoke of the challenges that the co-researchers face in their observance of their ultimate concern – an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction.

3. Interpretations of experiences are made, described and developed in collaboration with co-researchers

The interpretation of the co-researchers' narratives was done through the production of a film. Because this study refers metaphorically to the contemporary hospitality industry as a 'stage' where 'actors' with 'happy-face masks' perform their daily duties, a film was produced to creatively portray the experiences of the co-researchers' stories. Once the production was completed, the co-researchers were invited to respond to the film. All four the co-researchers articulated that they could associate with the characters and the story of the film.

4. A description of experiences as it is continually informed by traditions of interpretation

In this step, I tried to understand how the co-researchers' experiences and understandings of the front-stage world might be interpreted through their understandings of ancient stories of hospitality. During this movement, the co-researchers also narrated their interpretations of capitalism.

5. Reflection of God’s presence, as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation, thickened through interdisciplinary investigation

In this step, the co-researchers explained how they understand religion, spirituality and workplace spirituality. Through their answers to these questions, it became apparent that the co-researchers associate strongly with the principles and ethics of their respective religions. The co-researchers articulated that these religious principles have an unquestionable influence on their work ethic.

The relevance of the co-researchers’ association with religion was supported when it was shown in Chapter Three that religion plays a part in the construction of reality. In the contemporary hospitality industry, the language of religion is spoken in two different worlds – a front-stage world that observes an ultimate concern of unconditional hospitality and guest satisfaction, and a back-stage world that observes an ultimate concern of profit.

6. A description of experience thickened through interdisciplinary investigation

In the case of this study, the narratives of the co-researchers were thickened through the theoretical research, and through the various interdisciplinary conversations of the participating specialists.

7. The development of alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community.

Though this study is locally contextual, its relevance is global. Thus, the possibility of a resurrected community presents a possible alternative spirituality of hope and grace not only for local hospitality workers but also for hospitality workers all over the world, who follow a similar journey.

7.2.1. The relevance of Müller’s seven-step postfoundational practical theological approach to this study

It is my experience that Müller’s seven-step movement serves as a valuable guideline for practical theologians who position themselves in the postfoundational practical theological paradigm in narrative research. The seven steps guide the practical theologian systematically through the process of narrative inquiry while showing the value of interdisciplinary dialogue.

Müller’s model is part of the development of a methodology that takes the social construction of realities seriously in practical theology. However, Meylahn’s model focusses more specifically on the social construction of religion, for this reason, Meylahn’s approach was followed in this study.

7.3. MEYLAHN’S DANCE OF NARRATIVE INQUIRY

The methodology of this study relied on the five dance movements of narrative inquiry Meylahn’s (2012:56-63). The five movements include (1) listening, (2) interpreting, (3) discerning, (4) poetry (re-authoring), and (5) embracing. These movements were discussed in Chapter Four.

Because this methodology is structured according to a metaphorical dance, it is easy for the researcher to imagine the natural circular movements of the narrative process. Without this metaphorical reference, the researcher might instead of moving in circular movements, imagine the narrative process to be a straight line – one movement following the other from beginning to end. It is also through the circular movements of this dance that the researcher discovers the multiple layers of the narratives.

What I found very helpful about this methodology, is that Meylahn describes the purpose and the importance of each of movement in detail – often relying on further metaphorical references. The explanation of each movement helps the researcher and the supervisor

to understand how each movement contributes to the development of the narrative process, thus minimizing confusion and misinterpretation.

In another metaphorical reference, Meylahn (2014:6) associates with the Christ narrative. This association makes the practical theologian aware that like Christ he/she risks to be blasphemous to the dominant myth by associating with the marginalized. This association creates a sense of humbleness and hope because by following Christ into the incarnation and crucifixion, the practical theologian “*witnesses the auto-deconstruction* of the gods (Meylahn 2014:7 [italics as per author]).

In a further metaphorical reference, Meylahn refers to shadow stories that appear through the cracks of the dominant story. By visualizing these cracks – for instance, the cracks in a clay pot – the researcher can visualize how the ‘light’ of the shadow stories – stories that have been kept in the dark – expose the dominant myth. This metaphorical reference of Meylahn makes me think of a song that Leonard Cohen sings, “Anthem.” The chorus of the song reads: “Ring the bells that still can ring, forget your perfect offering. There is a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in.”

Perhaps the reasoning behind this methodology of Meylahn is to stimulate the imagination of the researcher to approach the narrative process with greater creativity. Prior to this study, I was not familiar with Meylahn’s methodology. However, now that this study is completed, and I can reflect on how I experienced this approach, I can say with certainty that I will consider this approach in future narrative studies.

7.4. REFLECTING ON THE INTERVIEWING PROCESS

The decision to conduct the interviews at my residence proved to be a good choice. All of the co-researchers were relaxed during their interviews, and there were no interruptions or irritations that influenced the proceedings. However, now that the research draws to an end, it is possible to identify the strengths and the challenges of the process.

7.4.1. The strengths

The co-researchers that participated in this study have all spent several years in the hospitality industry. Because they have all started their hospitality careers in junior positions and advanced to the management positions they currently hold, the co-researchers have a good understanding of the dynamics of the hospitality industry – an element that is important for any topical study (Rubin & Rubin 2012:61). This ensured a relatively balanced perspective of the hospitality industry.

Though the researcher was only able to conduct one personal interview with each co-researcher, they continued to participate in the conversation via email. Through their electronic correspondence with the researcher the co-researchers articulated their agreement and association with the reports of Weideman and Roos.

The production of the film gave the co-researchers the opportunity so see professional actors act their roles in the front-stage world. Through their responses to the film, it was noticeable that the co-researchers were deeply moved by this creative interpretation of their roles in the front-stage world. Perhaps this visual interpretation of the front-stage world might also strike a chord with other hospitality workers – both from the front-stage world and the back-stage world.

7.4.2. The challenges and suggestion for future research

It was quite difficult to get hospitality workers to participate in this study. However, after the four participating hospitality workers narrated their stories, it is understandable that workers of the front-stage world might be reluctant to participate in a study in which they are required to discuss their working conditions and challenges. However, because this was a qualitative and not a quantitative study, it was not necessary to have a specific amount of participants.

Though I spoke to each co-researcher prior to their interviews, assuring them that there are no wrong or right answers to the questions, I got the impression that John attempted to romanticize the hospitality industry to an extent. Perhaps his motives can also stem from a fear of being victimized if it would happen that his identity might become known.

Because the co-researchers were asked how they understand religion and spirituality and how their understandings of these concepts influence the way that they understand workplace spirituality, it would have been interesting to interview hospitality workers from different cultural backgrounds.

If there is one specific aspect that I would like to have done additionally, it would be to interview the co-researchers just before the end of the study. It would have been interesting to hear how they relate to the findings of the research – that being the elements that might construct the front-stage world and the back-stage world.

Though this study specifically focused on workers of the front-stage world, it would be equally interesting to do a similar study with workers of the back-stage world, especially in the light of the suggested elements that might construct the front-stage world and the back-stage world.

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ADDENDUM

This study concludes with the transcribed interviews of the four co-researchers. It is important to note that sensitive and personal information regarding fellow employees or specific establishments were amended by the researcher. This was done to protect the identity of individuals and establishments. Thus, although this is a true reflection of the recorded interviews with the co-researchers, these transcribed interviews are not *verbatim et literatim*. However, each co-researcher received a transcribed copy of their respective interviews, and they are satisfied that the information is credible.

ALEX' INTERVIEW

R: Hallow Alex. I'm very glad that you decided to participate in this study. I appreciate it. Alex, how old are you at the moment?

A: I'm 43.

R: How long have you been in the hotel industry?

A: 17 years.

R: What is the position that you hold at the moment: are you line staff, junior management, middle management, senior management or executive management?

A: Senior management.

R: Did you start, if I may call it 'at the bottom' and work your way up?

A: Like most people in the hotel industry, yes.

R: Okay, did you do any formal training in the hotel industry?

A: Yes, I went to hotel school.

R: Okay. Remember when I had my discussion with you before this interview, we were talking about specific words that I will be discussing with you, that is, religion,

spirituality, and spirituality in the workplace. I would like you to tell me what do you understand when we talk about religion?

A: The way I understand religion would be very much church-based, so in what type of church you were brought up in and are you still involved in that specific church.

R: In what church were you brought up in?

A: The Roman Catholic Church.

R: Are you still involved in the Roman Catholic church, are you still actively going to church?

A: No, I'm not.

R: And is there any specific reason or is that personal?

A: Personal.

R: Do you think that your working hours contribute to that?

A: Very much so.

R: Okay. I would like you to tell me how you understand the word spirituality?

A: The way I see spirituality is almost what you do in life that is right or wrong to you. What you've been taught, what is the right thing to do, and how you will be rewarded. Or if you do wrong, what the consequences would be if you do wrong.

R: Okay, if you say that you will be rewarded and that there will be consequences; who will be the one rewarding you and what consequences are you talking about?

A: God would be the one rewarding me, and the consequences of doing wrong would be God punishing me.

R: Okay, so, in other words, if you do right to other people you would be in God's good books, and if you do wrong, you stand the chance to be punished. Am I correct?

A: Yes, you are.

R: All right. So if I say that you live a life that is based on spirituality; do I understand you correct by saying that these specific ways in which you conduct your life are based on what you were taught in church regarding how you should conduct your life?

A: Definitely.

R: Give me a few examples of living a 'spiritual' life.

- A: You should treat people the same way that you want them to treat you. Help people wherever you can. Give wherever you can.
- R: Do you think that that is only applicable in your personal life, or do you think it is applicable in your professional life as well?
- A: Definitely also in my professional life.
- R: I would like you to tell me what you understand regarding workplace spirituality.
- A: How you conduct yourself at work. Do you keep your same ethics of spirituality in life, do you do the same at work? In other words, if you treat people well outside your work environment, do you do the same in your work environment? Or do you just do the complete opposite?
- R: During my studies, as I prepared for the interviews, I read about quite a view religions and how each of these religions feel about hospitality, I noted that hospitality has a very strong foundation in all religions. So it doesn't matter whether you are Christian or Roman Catholic or Hindu or Muslim, you are usually expected to give to the needy. Whether it is food or shelter or clothing, would you agree with this?
- A: Yes, I would.
- R: Seeing that you are in the hospitality industry, in this very industry that is strongly religious based, would you say that that is also applicable today in the hospitality industry?
- A: No, I don't think so. If so, a very small percentage.
- R: So do you say then that it's purely business?
- A: Its money, that's what it's all about.
- R: And these principles that we were talking about earlier on, are they applicable in the hospitality 'industry', or are they more relevant in your home when you have guests?
- A: Personally, they are applicable in both aspects.
- R: So, people that work in the hospitality industry treat each other and guests with utmost respect all the time?
- A: I cannot speak for others, but I do.
- R: And how do you experience the conduct of others?

- A: Many people don't do it. They do it because they *have* to because it is expected of them.
- R: Because they are in the hospitality *industry*?
- A: Absolutely.
- R: And they get paid to do that.
- A: Without a doubt.
- R: I have also read that the hospitality industry is a very high demanding industry. There's a lot of stress involved, long hours and then the additional demand to always be friendly. You say that spirituality has an influence on how you conduct yourself. How would you say that a non-religious person conduct him or herself? Do you think that they have got the ability to conduct themselves 'well' towards others, and treat others well?
- A: Yes, I think it is possible.
- R: And what would you call that?
- A: It could be their 'spirituality', it could be um...the way that they were brought up...
- R: So according to you, from where do you think non-religious people get the 'guidelines' of conducting themselves rightly or wrongly?
- A: I think it boils down to the person's integrity.
- R: How do you understand integrity?
- A: The way I see integrity is the way you treat other people, the things you do for other people, helping people in need. Pretty much doing what is right.
- R: Okay, so what you do and how you treat people, all those actions are 'positive' actions?
- A: Very much so.
- R: Now, say for instance you work in a large establishment where there's, let's say hundreds of employees and somebody comes to you and say they want to encourage workplace spirituality. Earlier on you told me that you associate spirituality with religion. Am I correct?
- A: Yes.

- R: How do you think the staff will accept that? Do you think that there could be a possibility that it could cause conflict because of the different religious backgrounds of the employees?
- A: Most definitely. We all know that religion is a very touchy subject and because you have so many people there will be so many different religions so it could become a little difficult.
- R: Would you agree with me if I say to you that the core of all religions is about doing good.
- A: Absolutely.
- R: So do you think that it's necessary in a working environment to involve religion or do you think there is a different way that a person can approach this?
- A: I think it is definitely important to bring in, I don't know if it's religion, but spirituality in the workplace.
- R: Okay, but what happens if you have an atheist or a couple of atheists, and you tell them that we want to encourage spirituality in the workplace. How do you think they will associate to being spiritual?
- A: (Laugh) I don't know how atheists think. They could take it up positively, or they could take it up negatively.
- R: Do you know of atheists that have good work ethics, who are kind to others?
- A: Yes.
- R: So where do you think their work ethic comes from?
- A: It could be their upbringing because they might not have been atheists since childhood.
- R: But if they were? Do you think that the only place, or the only conduct that you can associate with 'good' conduct has to be spiritually based?
- A: No, no, no. It doesn't have to be spiritually based.
- R: So from where do you think their good conduct originates?
- A: Integrity.
- R: Okay, so how do you understand the word integrity?
- A: I understand the word integrity as how you treat other people.

- R: Is it the same as you said earlier on with spirituality, in other words, treat people good like you would like to be treated.
- A: Indeed. Exactly like that.
- R: Now let's look. You have told me that there could be a possibility that when you bring religion into the workplace that it could cause conflict. Am I correct?
- A: Yes.
- R: Now, spirituality, according to you, is strongly related to religion. Am I correct?
- A: Correct.
- R: So, if one still wants those qualities associated with spirituality in the workplace, but you don't want to call it 'spirituality', would you say that integrity is a better term to use seeing that you stated earlier that atheists can also relate to the values associated with that of integrity?
- A: Yes. I think integrity is maybe a more 'forgiving' word. If that makes sense, compared to spirituality and religion.
- R: Okay, so you would view integrity as a more 'neutral' word?
- A: Very much so.
- R: Do you think that, especially with regard to the demands of the hospitality industry, it would make a difference if workers showed integrity towards each other?
- A: Absolutely.
- R: Why would you say that?
- A: It just makes your whole working environment so much more relaxed and like you said, it's such a high strung line of work that if you have a very tense environment, it's going to just add petrol to the fire. Where if you have a more relaxed environment, it puts you at ease and if you're at ease you tend to perform much better too.
- R: These long working hours and the stress involved with it, how does that influence you personally? Are you married?
- A: Yes I am.
- R: Do you think it has got an influence on your marriage?
- A: It does, although you try not to take your work home, but eventually you do.
- R: Is it possible for you to attend special occasions such as Christmas, New Year's Eve, birthdays, etc.?

- A: No, public holidays are the busiest days in the hotel industry, so, no. It's not always possible.
- R: Do you get compensated for overtime seeing that you have to work public holidays or extended hours?
- A: Personally, I don't get compensated with overtime paid. However, if you work on Christmas or New Year's Eve, then you would get a day owing. If you can take that day owing, is a different story.
- R: I would like to know, in the hotel industry, where we have said we need to treat people with respect, would you say that management endorses the principles of integrity that we spoke of earlier?
- A: Certain managers do.
- R: Do you think it has got an effect on the staff if a manager does show integrity towards his employees?
- A: Absolutely. The hospitality industry is a filter. If there is integrity, kindness, calmness from the top, it will filter all the way down to the bottom.
- R: Do you think that this will make the challenging hospitality working environment more bearable?
- A: But of course it will.
- R: Have you experienced working with a manager who you could view as a person of integrity and then, say for instance, a manager that has any integrity?
- A: For anybody who has worked seventeen years in the hospitality industry, you have worked with all types of managers. So, yes I have worked with the two extremes.
- R: Explain to me the difference in the working environment where these two types of managers are leading their team.
- A: Once you've got a manager that's got integrity, that understands, that knows you as an individual and not just as a number, it makes a big difference. You feel, (a) you're part of the team, (b) it feels that your feelings and thoughts get taken into consideration, and your family gets taken into consideration. If you've got a manager that's insecure in himself, a manager that does not feel his or her position is threatened, that specific manager will show integrity, will show kindness. One that is insecure will feel that the only way to get things done is by being harsh, by being

demanding, by being in your face all the time. This type of manager enforces respect onto him or herself where a manager who shows integrity; one wants to follow such a manager.

R: That's a very clear description. I understand what you are saying. I would like you to tell me something about the working hours. It is my understanding that management also has a direct impact on that. Am I correct?

A: Correct. Let me give you an example. If you've got your general manager that has come in at 6am and it is 6pm and he is still at work, and you have also come in at 6am and your shift is supposed to finish at 4pm, because your manager hasn't left yet, you almost feel guilty to leave before your manager has because if anybody has the right to leave at the appropriate time, it would be your manager. Who are you, as a more junior manager to leave before your manager? So, what happens is almost a snowball effect. So the general manager stays longer, because he stays longer the food and beverage manager feels he needs to stay longer, and because the food and beverage manager stays longer, everybody under him feels that they too have to stay longer. So, where you were supposed to work a nine-hour shift, you end up working a twelve your shift.

R: Are there any implications, say for instance, you didn't stay for twelve hours, and you did go home when you were due to go home?

A: There are implications. Even if it is just verbal implications such as the following comments: 'So you are working post office hours', or 'you are working half day', or 'you are not committed to your work' and 'you don't understand the hospitality industry – the hospitality industry doesn't have fixed hours', these are the type of comments that you would get that could make you feel unwanted and unworthy.

R: Tell me if I'm using the right word. Do you think this is a type of bullying or intimidation used to force you to do what they want you to do?

A: Yes, I think it is.

R: Are these the only times that you work these long hours or is it sometimes truly necessary?

A: Oh yes, a lot of times it is necessary. Especially depending on your level of management. You get to a certain level of management when it is expected of you

to be able to decide if it is necessary for you to stay an extra two or three or four hours, depending what the situation is.

R: In your opinion, is it possible to solve this problem regarding the long working hours?

A: Yes it is possible. Although you can have more humane hours, you will never have fixed hours. But to have more humane hours, you need more capable staff, and more capable staff is going to cost the hotel more money. And like we said, the hotel industry is very much business related – making money is the bottom line. Unfortunately, nine out of ten times the bottom line will always reflect on the bonuses of executive management.

R: Can you explain that to me?

A: An executive manager's bonus will be based on cost saving and profit margins. So, if he can get the same job done with ten staff members instead of having fifteen staff members, irrespective of how the ten staff members feel after a month's work, the manager is still getting the job done, so the profitability margin is much larger, and because the profitability margin is much larger, it reflects directly on his bonus margin.

R: So, the budget is there, but the budget is carefully utilised so that executive management can get a larger bonus at the end of the year. Do I understand you correctly?

A: Quite often, yes. The ideal is to come in under budget at the end of the year; that's what it's all about. At the end of the financial year, if you come in under budget, you get a good bonus. If you come in over budget, you don't get a bonus.

R: Does that saving benefit all the staff? Does all the staff get a cut of this saving, seeing that they were the ones that did most of the hard work?

A: No, there is a certain level of management that qualify for those type of bonuses. There are certain staff that receive a 13th cheque that is not affected by profit margins and then there are certain bonus packages that are purely savings based.

R: Have you ever worked with a manager that would rather consider the happiness of his staff, rather than the size of his bonus at the end of the financial year?

A: Not really.

- R: So you worked with kind managers but even they were not willing to sacrifice a part of their bonuses to ensure a more balanced working environment.
- A: No, at the end of the day the greed is always there.
- R: So in other words, when we speak about true integrity, it's not just about common decency, it's also considering the working conditions and the long working hours as well as the financial implications that it has on the junior personnel.
- A: Yes, pretty much so. Keep in mind that it's not all executive managers that base their principles on their financial gain, but it is a contributing factor, and somewhere in the financial year, it does come up.
- R: At the beginning of the interview you said that you went to a formal hotel school. Am I correct?
- A: Yes I did.
- R: In the curriculum of the course that you did, was there any subject that focused on integrity in the workplace?
- A: No.
- R: What was thought in the curriculum of management?
- A: How to manage people. Integrity was never really brought into the subject. It was how to get your people to follow you, how you get people to respect you. So maybe, yes, that would be integrity.
- R: Say for instance that a junior member of staff doesn't act with integrity toward a manager, would there be any implications for this staff member regarding his poor conduct?
- A: Absolutely. Most of the time, such a staff member will be accused of insubordination.
- R: And are there any implications for a manager that treats a junior staff member disrespectfully?
- A: Far and few between. Unless, if the manager starts becoming personal. Then you will find that the junior staff member will probably take it further. If the manager doesn't get personal, then normally it's just swept under the rug, and you just go on with the rest of the day.

- R: So, if I understand you correctly, junior staff will have to adhere strictly to the principles of integrity, however, when it comes to management, it's not always applicable.
- A: Yes, generally that is the case. However, it greatly depends on the level of management.
- R: Okay, let's make it your top executive management. You have an executive manager in the lobby of the hotel who witnesses a junior personnel member doing something wrong. The manager approaches the junior in front of the public, and in a humiliating manner, addresses the conduct of this junior member. Have such incidents happened?
- A: It has happened. It's not the norm, but it defiantly has happened.
- R: And would you regard that as being humiliating for the junior staff member?
- A: But, of course. Anybody would.
- R: Do you feel that it should not matter whether it is a junior member or not, one should not address a problem in such a manner?
- A: There is a manner in which you conduct yourself towards a human being.
- R: So, in a case like this, this person is now publically humiliated, what would happen if he or she would want to take this matter further?
- A: It becomes very difficult because they know that if they take in any further, the chances of an senior manager being taken to task because he or she treats a junior staff member in a humiliating way, are very low. So, the junior staff member would feel that they are not going to win the case, so why make it the environment even more difficult than it already is. Because what would normally happen is, if a junior staff member does try and take up a senior staff member, the senior staff member, will, not always but often, go out of his or her way to make the junior member's working environment more difficult than what it is because he or she would not want that person to be around.
- R: In other words, they will be victimized.
- A: They will work them out. Again, not always the case, but yes.
- R: I do understand that the problems that we are addressing are not only related to the hospitality industry and I'm not trying to make the hospitality industry out to being

the worst industry there is. The reason I focus on the hospitality industry is because religion shaped hospitality and I want to find out if some of those religious principles are still applicable in the contemporary hospitality industry.

A: Of course there is, and yes, the hospitality industry is not the worst industry there is. You can also have a lot of fun in the hospitality industry. It's just that there are so many contributing factors that lead toward a perfect recipe for making your working environment tightly strung.

R: I think that there is also a difference between a large establishment of about a thousand rooms in comparison to a boutique hotel of twenty rooms. I think the working environment and the authenticity of the manner in which hospitality is shown in these respective establishments are also different. How do you feel?

A: Of course it is because in a small hotel the spotlight is on you so much longer than it is in a larger hotel. A larger hotel tends to become like a sausage machine where your smaller hotels, besides the fact that smaller hotels tends to be much more expensive, and because of the fact that they are more expensive, the clientele become more demanding and they want more value for their money than is the case in larger hotels that are usually less expensive and the clientele less demanding.

R: Are you happy in your work?

A: No, I'm not.

R: Why not?

A: I like my work. I like my line of work. I don't like the industry.

R: Why not?

A: Because of all the points that we have spoken about. Because people are inconsiderate. Because of the hours. Because of the high expectations and you just lose track of what life is all about.

R: Do you feel that it is emotionally draining for you seeing that from the morning to the night you always have to give the impression that you are happy?

A: But of course it is. Other jobs, if you are unhappy, you generally go into an office, you close the door behind you, nobody bothers you and you work through it. However, in the hospitality industry there is no door you can hide behind. You are pretty much on a stage all the time, so you are acting all the time.

R: How do you get rid of this frustration, what is your outlet?

A: (Pause) there isn't really. Because there is so little time to do other things, there is no way to defuse the whole situation.

R: Do you think that the hospitality industry, with all the factors that we've mentioned, has had an effect on your physical health?

A: Absolutely.

R: Is it possible for you to participate in any specific sport or outdoor activity?

A: Look; it's not office hours so you don't work from Monday to Friday, eight to five, where you can practice hobbies on a weekend. In the hospitality industry, you get seven days off a month, and that's if you're very fortunate. For this reason, it is not always possible to do extramural activities. No, it's not.

R: So how do you defuse? How do you get rid of all these frustrations and unhappiness?

A: It's very difficult. I think that is where you depend a lot on your spouse.

R: Meaning?

A: If you have a spouse that understands the situation it makes things a lot easier, a lot more pleasant for you when you get home. I think that plays a very big role. So, if you are married, your spouse plays a very, very big role in helping you deal with a lot of difficult situations.

R: Is it your intention to stay in the hospitality industry?

A: Absolutely not.

R: So am I correct if I say that you are actively trying to get out of the industry?

A: Yes, I am. And I think for a lot of people that have been in this industry so long, it eventually just catches up to you because you've reached most of your goals. Your chances of growing become lessor and lessor so your enthusiasm and your drive become lessor and lessor.

R: And what would be the biggest reason, if you have to give one specific reason, which you would want to leave the hotel industry?

A: Hours.

R: What would you like to do with more hours?

- A: I would like to spend more hours with my loved ones at home. Be able to do things that I like to do – just have a more balanced lifestyle. At the moment, it's very imbalanced.
- R: I cannot think of any more questions at the moment that I would like to ask you. However, I'm going to type this conversation, and then I am going to give it to you to read. You are free to make any adjustments or add anything that you feel you might have forgotten during our interview. You are also welcome to add anything that you feel we did not cover in our interview. Once I've received your feedback, I will include your additional remarks and I will again send it to you so that you can make sure that you agree with the content. At this moment, is there anything that you would like to add?
- A: No, just thank you for the opportunity.
- R: No, I must thank you.

DAVID'S INTERVIEW

- R: Hi David. Thank you very much for coming here today. I appreciate your participation in this study. As you know, we have spoken about certain topics in the past, so we are just going to talk about them again. Let's start off with religion. What religion are you?
- D: Hindu.
- R: And how do you define religion?
- D: For me, religion is a lot more than just rituals and habits that people follow, for example praying on a Tuesday and going to mosque on a Friday or going to church on a Sunday. It's more about the way you live, how you treat those around you, how you treat everything around you; nature, animals, each other, and yourself. That's more what religion is; it is how you interact with everything around you. And the way you live.
- R: Okay. So for you it is not just about going to the building where you all get together and then leaving from there again.

- D: No. I think that is just, um, it's come through over the ages where people gather to do something. Again society has become more formalised, yes, but if you don't live the way you are supposed to live and do the right things, what does it matter if you go to building once a week and do whatever you have to do?
- R: And tell me, spirituality, how do you view spirituality?
- D: (Laugh). That is a bit of a difficult question for me to answer. Um, for me spirituality is two ways. Once again, it is repeating what I said. It's being in touch with yourself and with your inner self and being at peace with that.
- R: In other words, for you it is difficult to separate spirituality and religion. For you, they go hand in hand.
- D: They do. Because, like I said, for me it's not about a building or a particular ritual. It's more about the way you are and the way you fit into the whole world, your place in it. I can't confine it to Hinduism as such.
- R: So, do I understand you correct; when you define spirituality it also has a lot to do with your actions.
- D: Yes.
- R: How you conduct yourself.
- D: Very much so.
- R: When we talk about workplace spirituality, say for instance somebody comes to the hotel and says, 'we want to encourage workplace spirituality', how will you understand that?
- D: (Pause...laugh)
- R: And why do you think they would use the word spirituality?
- D: I think the one thing would be, because of the industry, hospitality as such. It's become, um, I mean, yes; lately we're starting to use better words in terms of, um, how we conduct ourselves. But it's always been the 'stage' where you have the 'backstage' where the normal things happen and where a person is who you truly are, and the 'front stage' where you are an actor. And spirituality and acting can definitely not go together. It's not the same thing and ,um, it's one thing going on 'stage' and doing the 'show' for an hour or two a day, quite another living half your life doing the 'act', um, when does it stop? Spirituality is internal. Sorry, I'm

interrupting myself here. Spirituality is what you are inside. So, if you are spending most of your time doing something that you are not, it's very difficult to put the two together.

R: So, if I am understanding you correct, you're personal spirituality determines how you conduct yourself in any given environment. But when you are expected to act the whole time, it becomes difficult to live that out. Am I understanding you correctly?

D: Absolutely.

R: But when you are expected to 'act' the whole time, it becomes difficult to live that out. Am I correct?

D: Absolutely, yes.

R: Now, how would you feel, say you have employees who are atheists, and you come and you say, 'we want to encourage spirituality at work.' How will they be able to associate with that term, or do you think there is an alternative term of putting it to them?

D: I think one of the most difficult things to do is, I know the dictionary description is one thing, however, spirituality is quite difficult to understand. I mean I still battle with what it exactly means and how does it fit in. I think I've got an understanding for myself, and I can completely understand that people could get very negative or, um, anxious if you bring that across to them. Especially if you look at education levels as well. Some people have got grade six or grade two and so on and, um, they might not be able to understand what you are trying to say. They might think you are trying to convert them into a different religion, which is usually how it comes across if it is not clarified in the very beginning.

R: So, in other words, when we talk about spirituality in the workplace, again it is going to be difficult to separate religion.

D: Yes, very much so.

R: So do you think that we should maybe use an alternative word? One of the people I've had an interview with specifically referred to the word work 'integrity'. Would you think that that would be a more, um, 'neutral' word to use to get the same qualities out of a person instead of 'playing' on their spirituality?

- D: I think very much so. I think you will have to use both words because I don't think integrity by itself is strong or deep enough. It is actually, but my opinion is to put both things in there purely because by and large people are, I'll say, practicing religion, and they understand the teachings. They understand what religion is about. So, if that could be brought in, obviously then you would need to know what that person's beliefs are.
- R: But, remember what we said that now we are talking about the religion and spirituality being very important for the personal, but if you're not involved with that, when you are an atheist, then you don't have that 'link' so then one has to work purely with values. Do you understand what I'm saying?
- D: I understand what you are saying.
- R: So say for instance you don't use the word spirituality because, with what I've heard in the previous interviews, spirituality is associated with certain actions, let's say good actions, and you want to encourage people to act in a 'good' manner. Now, if you don't want to use the word spirituality because there is always going to be this religious 'thing' coming in. Then how do you feel about rather using the term workplace integrity?
- D: I think it will fit in, absolutely. Yes, it will fit in.
- R: Then a person can maybe bring the message across, but you leave the religious aspect aside. This is what one of the other co-researchers suggested. How do you feel about it?
- D: Two ways. It will definitely help with people that are atheists, which don't believe in a higher power, it will work for them. But to the same degree, those that do believe in a higher power, spirituality just carries a lot more weight. That's my opinion.
- R: Why would you say that?
- D: Because, the whole religious aspect has come from when you are this big (indicates the height of a toddler), as you were brought up. It was a part of your life. It got recorded into you. And yes, integrity is part of it, but it is one portion of it. There are a lot of things that go with it; respect, trust, and integrity. But I mean respect is a big one that goes with it.
- R: Can I ask you something?

D: Yes.

R: I am not familiar with Hinduism. I would like to know, were you told that good actions are rewarded, and bad actions have a consequence?

D: Very much so.

R: Tell me more about that.

D: As far as religion goes, I don't know if you are familiar with the whole re-birth and so on.

R: No. Please, go ahead.

D: Basically what it means is; you are here on the earth to fulfill your role, to live your life, and if you die you move on. And your actions here determine how you move on. So, basically what the whole idea is, the soul never dies. So, when you end your life here, you could take the form of another being, a human being, an animal, or something. So you come back. Hence, the respect for the animals and the trees and so on that comes into the religion. So, if you lived a good life, you will most likely come back as a higher human being. You know, at a higher level in society, or, um, you know what I mean.

R: Yah, I know what you mean. I understand.

D: But also, if you really lived your life really well, you don't come back at all. You become part of the whole cosmic energy. So you are out of that sickle of re-birth. The sickle of re-birth is like a trial.

R: Okay.

D: So if you do well, you move up with the food chain. If you do badly, you move down, and you still have to go through the whole sickle. And if you keep doing badly, you are going to be living for a very long time in different forms.

R: So, if I understand you correctly, the ultimate goal is to live such a pure life that you do not come back as any kind of animal or person but you become part of the cosmic energy.

D: Yes, which is basically, that's almost like being in heaven.

R: I understand. It's a very clear description. I do understand it. Would you say that that influences your conduct? Subconsciously or consciously when you are at work.

- D: I would say very much subconsciously. It's not a conscious decision. Because it's almost like, it's been hard coded. Yes, it's in the back of my mind, but I do not think of it when I do something.
- R: Would you say that it's almost like your DNA, but it's not something that you consciously think of? Like you don't say, well you should do this, or you should do that.
- D: No. It's just there.
- R: It's so ingrained in you that you just do it automatically.
- D: Yes. And that's what I mean about your upbringing. Because if it wasn't there from the very beginning, I don't even think I would think of it. I mean, that does not mean I'll be doing bad things or that I'll be treating anyone badly. That's not what I'm trying to say. Because even if somebody is an atheist who has never been taught the difference between good and bad and treating people properly.
- R: I understand. I want to ask you; in your working environment, I understand that the challenges that we are discussing are not only in the hospitality industry. It's purely because of this study that we are talking about the hospitality industry because there is such a strong relation between hospitality, religion, and spirituality. I would like to ask you how the Hindu religion feel about hospitality.
- D: I wouldn't be able to tell you in the modern term in hotels and so on, but hospitality as hospitality at home, to guests, it sits right on top of the, what shall I say, the hierarchy of things that you should be doing.
- R: So, it's a core aspect of your religion.
- D: Very much so. In fact, you have certain, almost like, um, sayings that comes up. And there's one that comes up that the guest being the primary person. Which means, he's the most important person at that time in your life because that could be God walking through the door. So that person is the most important person.
- R: It's very good that you say that because through my studies that I've done until now, that description fits almost every religions that I've studied. That is, how important the guest is because of the fact that you never know if it is God entering your door.
- D: Yah.

- R: So, would you say that the hotel industry is an ‘industry’? You cannot really bring your religious background into the hospitality industry because at the end of the day it’s a working industry.
- D: Yes.
- R: I know the hospitality industry is a challenging industry; it’s got long hours. And it’s very important what you mentioned earlier on, this stage that you constantly have to be on. I would like to know, do you feel that there is currently enough integrity at the workplace that people feel that they are part of a team, that they are supported, and that they are listened to and that their private lives do have some kind of priority?
- D: I was thinking long and hard about this. I think it was yesterday, about how it fits into everyone’s lives and is it getting better, is it getting worse?
- R: Sorry, what are you referring to?
- D: Oh, sorry, I’m just going back a step because I was thinking about this that you just mentioned now about how, um, do people think they have the space actually to be themselves spiritually. Sorry, was that the question?
- R: What I asked was, do you feel that people live out their spirituality or integrity at work, keeping each other in consideration. For instance, do you feel that managers give enough attention to challenges of their juniors?
- D: The short answer is no. I don’t think there is enough. All of us have our views of how it should be done. The problem, I think, there are two aspects to it. I think one is the different personalities and the other one is actually historical. If you look at the changes that have it have gone through in the last ten to fifteen years is massive. Fifteen years ago it was a lot more dictatorial where we have this wonderful product, and you as the guest walk in and you are almost doing us a favour by coming here and staying here in a five star hotel and paying us and leaving. Now, you are flipping that and making sure your service is right so the guest will come in because there is so much choice. Especially in South Africa. We didn’t have that many hotels fifteen to twenty years ago.
- R: Do you feel that the long working hours contribute to the quality of work that workers can produce? Thus, do you think more mistakes are being made because people work these long hours and because they are emotionally drained?

- D: Absolutely. It is a problem, um, there is no two ways about it. Sometimes physical draining is not the issue, it's the emotional drain on you because you constantly have to be nice to guests. To put it bluntly, you always have to be nice to people around you; you have to put on this 'face' no matter how you feel inside, and it drains you. I mean, after a full day's work you're mentally tired. Maybe not physically because you have not been doing physical labour, but mentally you are exhausted. You just want to drop. Long hours, definitely an issue. Which is why it's so important that the managers actually give the guys time to speak to them to understand what they are about. Not just the number that does the frying of the eggs.
- R: I understand. And like you said earlier, you don't feel that it is at the level where you would like it to be.
- D: No, definitely not. There's certain people that are very good at it. Unfortunately it is not everyone. Not everyone is good at it. Not everyone does it. And the other problem is that we as senior management are at fault as well. Sometimes we just, well, it's working so just leave it.
- R: Do you think that these mistakes that people make cost the company money?
- D: Absolutely.
- R: How would a guest be compensated for a mistake? Say for instance I am a VIP guest. I've booked my room. I come in late the evening, and I specifically asked that certain things had to be placed in my room. I get to my room, and it's not there. I complain about it. What will be a typical manner in which I will be compensated?
- D: First of all, you will have to put that and more into the room because you would most likely have paid for what you asked for. Now it will most likely be free.
- R: How often do such mistakes happen? Do they happen on a daily basis, a weekly basis or on a monthly basis?
- D: I would say weekly.
- R: Would you say that if one would calculate those costs over a period of a financial year, it will be quite a substantial amount of money?
- D: Absolutely. And it's not just the financial numbers that one should look at. I think the same person, although you've done what you needed to do to fix it, you might have lost the client completely.

- R: So it's actually a greater loss.
- D: The compensation that you do on the spot is small. It doesn't cost you as much as what the long term damage is.
- R: Coming back to the long hours. Is it always necessary to work these long hours?
- D: No. Many people believe it is. My belief is, it is not. Not at all. If people pace their work correctly. Yes, there will be times. We know that there will be exceptions. Once a week or so, you have to work that fourteen, fifteen hours for the day. But by and large, if the work is planned properly, you don't need to work that kind of hours.
- R: Do you feel that one of the reasons why you have to work those long hours is because there is not enough staff or enough competent staff?
- D: That's a big one. Enough competent staff and enough staff. I don't know. Um, there are time, obviously, that you have shortages, but not often and not in the company where I currently work.
- R: So, in other words, for you it is more the quality than the quantity.
- D: Quality and planning. That's the two issues.
- R: In a typical financial meeting, do they ever weigh the two up and say; 'The employees are overworked. These are the consequences. This is the loss that we suffer every year. Why don't we take that loss, that amount of money, put it in more competent staff, either by educating them or by employing then so that the workload can be more balanced.' Do they ever make that comparison?
- D: Not in any meeting that I've ever been in (laugh). Unfortunately, I know it sounds terrible, um, we have looked at ways to improving staff. The problem is, um, the daily duties always get in the way and you just tend to fall into your comfortable habit which is fifteen hours and off you go.
- R: There are so many articles that discuss the long working hours of hospitality employees. If one looks at the mistakes and the compensation associated with these mistakes, why don't they weigh it up? Why don't they say; 'You know, let's make it easier for everybody. Let's get more competent people and let's be a bit more open-minded about these working hours.' How big is the staff turnover?
- D: It's seasonal, usually. It's not massive. Again, I'm now referring to the establishment where I currently work. It's not huge. You go through stages. I was at a hotel

previously, and the staff turnover was crazy because of changes in the hotel and so on. Whenever there is a big change in the hotel, being at Head Office or the GM.

R: You are mentioning an important thing now because you are talking about depending on top management. Is it thus correct to assume that, if it is a good leader, the people will tend to stay, and vice versa?

D: Yah, absolutely. And also depending on how good the person that's leaving is because often you tend to have (indicates with his fingers as if someone is walking)

R: Followers?

D: Yah. Absolutely.

R: I want to take you back to a conversation we had a while ago regarding this study. You mentioned that you feel there is a lot to be done regarding keeping senior management in tune with staff issues. To listen to the stories of their personnel. Not to neglect issues that are causing unhappiness amongst the staff. Do you still feel that that will make a difference?

D: Huge. And I think that's where half the problem is because quite often as a senior manager you tend to get out of touch with the junior staff because you expect the HOD (Head of Department) to have a finger on the pulse. And he expects his assistance who expects their supervisors. And no one does anything. Everyone just comes in, do their work and goes home. Sorry, I'm using an extreme case now, for instance, when no one even knows that he has got a sick mom at home or his child is crippled, or anything. No one knows anything about anybody's family life and that's a problem because if you don't know and the guy says; 'You know, I can't come in because my child is ill', one might think that this is not a real reason but it is a real reason. His child is actually in a state where he can get seriously ill quite often, and that happens. I've seen it so many times.

R: So do you feel that if we can take the result of a study like this to senior management and discuss what we have found, do you feel that we can then incorporate this into spirituality, or integrity, in the workplace?

D: I think so. I think what will be important is to quantify it in some way. I don't know how. That's going to be difficult. But just to show that a happy workforce is more productive. You have less issues. You have less sick days. It has been proven

before. And somebody works a lot better when they work for someone they believe in. So if you have a connection with somebody that's working with you, they will work for you. They will put that extra hour in and they will put that little bit of extra effort in.

R: What, according to you, will make an employee believe in you?

D: If you actually care. Not just because you tick off a little box, thinking; 'Have I asked how many kids have you got?' But you actually care about that person as a person. And the whole thing about spirituality. I think that's precisely when you mention that, that comes in. The real caring of that person that is there, as a human being.

R: Yah. Because I feel there is never a situation where there is not hope. A person must just maybe change your view. Let a fresh opinion be heard. Or truly listen to the stories of the people that you are working with and not just see them, like you said earlier on, as the person who fries the eggs in the morning. Is there anything that you would like to add or any questions that you would like to ask?

D: Um, not at this stage. I would just like to add to that; where hotels are lacking at the moment is when they move a person from a worker stage to a supervisor stage or to a manager's stage. Yes, there are courses, but the courses focus a lot on financials and policy and procedure and systems. That's easy to do. You can learn from a book, you can learn from a computer.

R: So, what would you like them to learn?

D: I think they need to focus more on emotional intelligence. Those sort of things where they actually learn what it means to be a supervisor. How can you be a better supervisor? Yes, you can be a better supervisor by knowing all the policies and procedures, and enforcing them. And yes, it is necessary for things to get done. But it will be so much easier to implement all that stuff with people who actually believed in what you are trying to implement as supposed to holding a stick over the person's head. And if you believe that that's actually the right thing to do, you should do it, whether there is a stick or not.

R: So what you are saying is that one should look wider than merely the figures.

D: Absolutely.

R: And that there should be a balance as to how you train a manager.

- D: Big. Huge! Obviously, the selection criteria for a supervisor or a manager cannot purely be based on how good they are in doing their current job. That's often what happens. He's the fastest checking guests in and out, so let's make him a supervisor. That's fine, make him a supervisor, but how are you going to develop him further? Now the fastest egg fryer or the quickest clearing waiter becomes the host at the desk. That's fine. He's got the core skills but what are you going to do to make him better? What does he need now? He knows how to do this, he doesn't need more training on a computer. He can do that.
- R: I'm with you. So you would like to suggest that, from one's initial education in the hospitality industry, one should encourage the development of emotional intelligence so that employees can have better people skills and not only work skills for the specific job that they are trained to do.
- D: Absolutely. And I think this counts not only for the hospitality industry but all industries. It's not just industry related, its life related. You know how to interact with people around you, how to bring your view across without offending anyone. It's just easier to get things done that way. And I don't say don't have the stick. Discipline is needed. There will always be people who are going to take chances and if you have to call somebody in, you do that.
- R: Now that you are talking about hearings and measurements in place, I would like to ask you the following; say for instance I am line staff and I speak in a disrespectful manner to a manager. Am I correct to say that there will be consequences?
- D: Absolutely.
- R: But what will happen if a manager speaks to a member of line staff disrespectfully?
- D: It should be the same consequences.
- R: Is that the case?
- D: No, not enough.
- R: Why do you think not?
- D: There are two things; most of the managers are well trained in HR (human recourses) and hearing procedures. They know exactly what they have to do if a staff member does that – speak to them in a disrespectful way. They know they can pull this guy in a hearing. I'm going to charge him with insubordination, and he is

going to get kicked out or receive a final written warning or whatever the case might be. The protection is there for the junior staff, in the books, in the policy of the company and so on, but it's not something that is actively encouraged.

R: Why not?

D: Um, two reasons. As a manager, you don't want too many, um, disruptions because somebody is constantly offended if you tell somebody to do something, their job.

R: Do you think it is the manner in how the worker has been told to do his job? In other words, there are ways, and there are ways.

D: There are, but sometimes you get people that just feel offended, um, sensitive. It is one of those things where it is difficult to draw a line. Of course, if you use abusive language then that is clear cut. It's black and white.

R: The reason I'm asking you, is I want to know if there is the same consequences for a manager that speaks disrespectfully to a junior member of staff? Will the same steps be followed against the manager?

D: No.

R: Why not? What are the main reasons why the junior will not take the senior member to task?

D: One is fear to get 'marked'. Somebody who causes problems is a trouble maker and has issues with authority. That is a big stigma that can be attached very quickly.

R: So they might feel victimized? Am I correct?

D: Yes, not as a target, just as somebody you should keep an eye out for as a trouble maker.

R: Do you think it is possible to bring a system in place that will bring managers that, and I'm not talking about a once off, I'm referring to a type of manner that has such a characteristic. People label you as a disrespectful manager and this manager constantly use bad language and are constantly being disrespectful. Is there a system in place that can cancel this type of situation out?

D: The system is there; the process is there, it's just not used enough. I think one of the reasons are because the staff does not know how to conduct themselves. And it's true, it is so true that we take people to hearings who don't even know what they are going there for. Okay, they do know. You have told them. They do know why

they are going there for but they have no idea how to defend themselves. I'm not saying they are not guilty. But if the knowledge is not there, is it fair to pull somebody in there? Yes, you tell them you can have a representative from the unit but most people are too scared to go and represent someone because now they are going to be labelled as a trouble maker.

R: So it's a snowball effect.

D: It is. And I think the whole induction process into the company needs to be changed a little bit. Yes, we have a four or five-day induction. They spend some time looking at the history of the company, and yes it is important to know where the company is coming from and is going to. But, it is a lot more important to see how you fit into the company. So perhaps that's something that we have to look at and say; 'What are the rights of a person?' Yes, you hold up this lovely board that says this is your rights as a worker and these are the terms and conditions that apply to the hospitality industry. But to get across to the people, to say these are your rights, the company expects this from you, it's all there in documents. The problem is; how many people actually have the time to read it? During the induction they should sit you down for an hour or two and say; 'Listen, these are your rights, and this is what we expect of you. But, in return you will be treated with respect and dignity. You will not be insulted, and if you are, these are the steps that you should follow to make sure you are treated correctly.' You should sit with the person and his manager and take it up from there.

R: So you feel that staff should get support when it comes to 'uncomfortable situations' like hearings and that they should not feel that they should rather avoid it because they are too uninformed to proceed with such procedures. Do you feel that this information is sometimes withheld from them deliberately?

D: Absolutely, yes.

R: So if they don't know what to do, they won't do anything.

D: Exactly. It's less troubles. Less hassles. Less hours to worry about this or that. I have a hundred e-mails to answer. Yes, very much so. And often people that go through that, it discourages them. It demotivates them, and it demotivates those around them. I've seen it in front of me where a staff member only wanted five

minutes of that manager's time to listen to them. That is often all that it takes. Just shut up, don't say a word and listen to what this staff member wants to tell you and often the problem is sorted.

R: Just to get it off his chest.

D: Just to get it off his chest.

R: Is there anything else that you would like to add to what we have discussed? Or ask?

D: Sorry, I know you have told me, but what is the main purpose of this study?

R: The purpose of this study is to see how religion and spirituality, consciously or subconsciously play any role in the hospitality industry. Do those rules, or those principles still apply in modern day hospitality, or is it rather personal principles that you as a spiritual person apply because the company does not necessarily apply these principles, but you as an individual does. You treat people as guests, you are the host, and I would like to see how you do it. How emotionally uplifting or draining you find it. Because nobody has a guest at home, twenty-four hours, seven days a week, all year round. So it can be emotionally draining to produce constantly. However, others might find it stimulating. And also, if you say that you are a spiritual person, does that mean you have to conduct yourself in a manner that is respectful. How do hospitality workers do this in the workplace, seeing that we are talking about workplace spirituality? Like you said, one cannot take the personal spirituality out of the equation. Thus, that will be each person's determining factor as to how you believe you should conduct yourself towards others. That's the main purpose. I'm listening to different stories, and then at the end, I'm going to share all these different stories and give report back on them and then I'm going to make a conclusion with regard to what we found. First of all from each of you, and then, in general. But, like I said, you will get a copy.

D: That's very interesting.

R: Do you want to ask any more questions?

D: No, no. I just want to add one or two things. The religious aspect becomes very difficult because, um, it is also how you view the world around you and how you apply it to a guest that comes in with a string of young girls that go to his room for

the next three or four days. You know exactly what he's coming for. He's booking a suite. He's paying a huge amount of money. You *have* to treat him nice because he is a VIP guest, but how do you, um, you can't avoid him, his there.

R: You indirectly now have to support his actions.

D: Yes, absolutely. I mean, if you take out all the frills, that's what you are doing, isn't it?

R: Do you as a person find that difficult?

D: Yes, I do. You have to, um, avoidance is not the answer (laugh), but you tend to do that.

R: Do you think a person can address something like that? You will probably have to cope personally with that, or how do you feel?

D: Exactly. Because you cannot dictate to the person how he should be living his life, but, yes, although it is not your house, you're still the host.

R: I understand what you are saying. Anything else that you would like to add?

D: There is but I just pulled a blank now. What I would like to add is, respect is a *huge* thing on a personal level for me, and I think in general in the industry it is lacking, both between staff and different levels of staff, staff to guests and so on. And I think the one thing that we also lack is how to disengage when the other person is being disrespectful. Often you will get a guest screaming and shouting at a staff member. The staff member doesn't know what to do. This is something that needs to be addressed as well. A staff member doesn't have to take such abuse. It doesn't often happen, but it does happen. And the same thing on the other side, a manager screaming and shouting at a staff member. How should we deal with it?

R: So you feel it is also important not to allow guests to be disrespectful just because they are paying?

D: Oh yes, absolutely. I mean that's a big thing I advocate and something I believe in very strongly. We should say; 'No, we will not allow that.' And say; 'You know what sir, if you have this problem, we cannot deal with you' and walk away. I will support you hundred percent with that.

- R: If there is anything more that you would like to add, but cannot think of it at the moment, I am going to type our conversation and send it to you. You are more than welcome to add more information if you wish to do so.
- D: Good, when I see the document I'll just make notes and send it back to you. I'm sure I'll be able to add more value once I read it. I would like to add more. I don't think enough came out (laugh).
- R: So you would like to put more meat on the topic (laugh).
- D: Oh, yes. I think it is just bare bones at the moment. From my side, that is.
- R: Well, I'm going to type it as soon as possible and then I'll send it to you and then you can do the alterations and the adding's and so.
- R: That will be great. I will send it to you as soon as possible. Thank you for your participation.

CINDY'S INTERVIEW

- R: Hi Cindy. Thank you so much for participating in this study, I appreciate it. Thank you for taking the time to come and have your interview with me today.
- C: It's my pleasure.
- R: Like we discussed earlier on, I would like you to tell me how you do you understand religion?
- C: Well, for me religion is basically what you've been brought up with, or how you were raised, if I may put it that way. Believes that your parents believed in and they basically transmit over onto you. Religion being the god you believe in, whether it's our God Jesus or if you are in any other religion. That's basically how I see it. It's your own believe as a person ultimately when you mature into it.
- R: I understand. And the principles that you were talking about that your parents would imprint on you, can you mention some of them for me?
- C: Basically, firstly to always do the right thing, to know what's right from wrong. Principles that you get taught as a child is to never lie, to always say when you feel something, to be honest about it and the big word obviously being the integrity part

of it which comes together with if you are going to lie about something, the stealing, the basic principles that you get brought up with.

R: I understand. And how would you define spirituality?

C: That's actually a very tough one (laugh) because when you hear the word spirituality, what do you link it to? Is it that you believe in, the word supernatural might sound a bit harsh if I use that, but spirituality for me is the 'bigger power' of something. Do you believe in God? But the spirituality is how you connect. That's for me something spirituality. Your connection to your religion.

R: Okay, so if I understand you correctly, you link your spirituality with your religion.

C: Yes.

R: Okay. Have you heard about the concept, workplace spirituality?

C: I've heard about it, but I don't have any background basically about it. For me, there is so many different religions and spiritual believes in one workplace, and I think the norm is, you know, the corporate world pushes you to not talk about the religious part of things normally, you know. You sit in an office, you joke about various other things, but hardly ever do you connect with someone on a spiritual or a religious base or ground.

R: I understand. So if somebody would come to you at work and say; 'I want us to start embracing or implementing workplace spirituality.' How will you understand it and why do you think they would want to do it?

C: Shoe, If somebody would say that to me I would probably be very shocked, um, wow. That will be the first time ever in a corporate world, but I would probably see it as that this person would like to chat about religion – if you share the same religion, or it's someone from a different religious background, um, to spiritually understand what they believe in, what I believe in and how we can make it a common topic or a discussion.

R: So, do I understand you correctly that there's going to be a religious part in there.

C: Yes, yes.

R: Regardless whether we are talking about spirituality on its own or spirituality in the workplace.

C: Yes, yes for me.

R: Is it a touchy subject?

C: Yes.

R: And what do you think the possibility is, that by saying that to employees, is to cultivate a certain manner of how they should conduct themselves at work? In other words to cultivate a sense of spirituality in order to encourage a better conduct at work. Do you feel that that could be linked to that?

C: Yes, definitely because your spirituality, um, I mean like we said now, you link it back to your religion. But, spirituality guides you normally in your beliefs and how you as a person conduct yourself. And to bring that into the workplace will be a very good thing. Um, when you are at home, to bring that to your workplace. What you believe in, what's the right thing to do then in the workplace?

R: In other words, if I understand you correct, your own personal spirituality will contribute to the manner that you conduct yourself at work.

C: Yes, hundred percent.

R: What will you do if you sit in a boardroom and they say; 'We want to encourage workplace spirituality.' But there is quite a couple of non-religious people and atheists in the room. How do you think you will answer them when they say to you; 'What do they want us to do? We are not religious. How should we either relate to it or how do we fit into this picture?'

C: I think my answer to someone like that would be, um, if you as a person, you don't have any religious thing you believe in but there is, you do feel that there is a higher calling or a higher power that controls the whole galaxy, or the universe, for instance. But that guides you as a person in what you say and what you know is right or wrong. I think that's what I will say to them. I will also say that just the basic disciplines that you were taught as a child, maybe you can contribute that into what we can do in the workplace or what you now as an adult believe in: What's right, what's wrong and how you would like to be treated, or how you should treat others.

R: Can I thus assume that you link the actions and conduct of these non-religious people to the principles of integrity?

C: Yes, hundred percent.

- R: So, what do you think will happen, you sit in the boardroom, but instead of saying ‘we want to encourage workplace spirituality’, somebody says we want to encourage workplace integrity?
- C: I think when you’re going to use the word integrity, everyone is familiar with integrity and integrity might not be seen immediately as me personal now verses when you say spirituality because spirituality and religion are very personal and are very personal based. And if you are an introvert, someone might not be comfortable sharing it. But if you say integrity, I think the word is clear enough for them to understand what the corporate integrity then would expect of them or would be based on.
- R: So, would you say it’s easier to define integrity than it is to define spirituality?
- C: Yes. I strongly feel the integrity you can define easier than you can define spirituality.
- R: I understand. And seeing that we are working in a hospitality environment that has got very strong roots in religion, um, one would expect in an environment where you constantly serve as the host towards the guest, that this must be, for an outsider at least, associated with an environment with a lot of integrity. How would you see this environment? Do you feel there is a lot of integrity or do you feel that there is space for development regarding that?
- C: I feel there is not enough. There is a huge space for development. Like you rightfully said, the perception is that you play the host and that we all have deep roots of playing that host and linking it back to the religion and spirituality. But the question is very big; is there really integrity amongst the workforce, or the hosts, if you would like to put it that way because we are just on stage for that time. But every ‘actor’ needs to be grounded at the end of the day. And you need to feel that if I work with Neil, that Neil will treat me with the utmost respect and integrity. When I ask for assistance, or even when I fail as a host, that he would support me. But in the hospitality industry, is it a warm, friendly environment? For the workforce, it’s a very cold and very harsh environment. And where I sometimes feel people, or even myself if I might put it that way, we sometimes forget to connect with people on that spiritual or integrity base as a one-on-one with someone because you are just out

there 'performing' the whole time. That you forget that the next person, Neil or Cindy or whoever, might also need just that one-minute connection with someone.

R: Exactly. I forgot to ask you at the beginning of the interview; what level of management are you?

C: I'm middle management.

R: And how long have you been in the hotel industry?

C: Nine years.

R: What do you find the most challenging of the hospitality environment?

C: The most challenging? the pace is fast. The pace is very fast, and for me personally you sometimes lose yourself in this pace that you are going. You need to remind yourself to take a few steps back to just get your soul in touch with your body again. To ask; 'Is this what I strongly believe in or is it just imposed on me?' That this is what is required and, what is needed at the moment to make it a success. I forget sometimes to connect with people in a way of, you will see that somebody is battling to keep up with the pace. This person will be seen as being weak. But is that fair to then see someone that way? Someone might just need to stop and touch base again, and I think for me that's what I struggle with sometimes. That the pace that we all go at, we sometimes forget the basics. That every person just needs one minute to get back in touch before carrying on.

R: If I understand you correct, you should pay more attention to the staff that you work with.

C: Yes.

R: Then I take it that you are talking about the people that report to you?

C: Yes.

R: How do you feel about the people that you report to? Would you also appreciate it if they would take the time now and then to pay more attention to you?

C: I cannot express it more to you, and I think that why I do not pay as much attention is because I'm going at that pace that is expected of me to go at. And because I, personally feel that I don't have that support from my seniors getting in touch with me. They just see you go at that pace and they expect you to keep going and

ultimately I'm making that mistake because I'm being pushed by that environment, and that pressure, that I am starting to forget about the people below me.

R: I understand.

C: And that is why I try very hard to take that stock. Very recently I made the decision to take that stock to get in touch more. Because I'm not getting it, it's unfair of me to push it down further.

R: If you say you take a step back, how do you do that? Explain to me that you've made a decision to take a step back.

C: The first thing that I decided to stop doing is that there is an hour every day that you can stop with the e-mails, that you can walk up to two or three of your team members and just have a conversation with them. Ask them; 'How is your family?', 'How are you doing as a person?' and not just 'Hallo, how are you' and then deep in my heart I don't even care how you are, I'm just asking out of courtesy. But actually to sit down or to say, 'come sit here by me. Would you like a cup of coffee, or would you like a cup of tea?' Just to connect with that person. And to ask how you are doing.

R: And what has been the impact since you have started doing that? Do you feel that it has made a difference for you?

C: For me personally, yes. For me personally I feel I am not dehumanising the people that I'm working with. I do not see them as workhorses anymore. But I am starting to know them a bit better and understand it when they have an 'off' day and where it's coming from and why they feel the way they feel and how I can maybe just say; 'You know what, tomorrow you'll feel better.' It will mean the world to them because they I understand that I know why they feel the way they do. And the moral with them and amongst each other, and wanting to deliver when I ask them when the pressure is on, we need to deliver. It comes from within, and it's not just based on my salary.

R: So would you that since you have introduced this that there is a better camaraderie in your team?

C: Definitely. We have had a few challenges where we were not delivering on what we were supposed to, but just this connection with them, I can definitely see the change and they wanting to do it from themselves and not only because it is expected. Because there is interest in them. I have struggled a lot the last couple of months

with myself, not with my team because I'm giving that back to them, but with myself. I don't want to use the word 'recognition' because sometimes recognitions is perceived that you want to get a 'thank you' or a 'well done'. But just someone walking up to me, asking; 'How are you?' or my direct manager walking up to me and saying; 'How are you' or coming to sit down and having a cup of coffee me (getting emotional).

R: You were mentioning earlier that you go out of your way now to ask your team members about their families to get a better idea of them as human beings and not just as being employees. How much does your manager know about your family?

C: Not a lot. I think what my manager probably know is what I mentioned in the bypass. That I have a family member that is suffering from cancer, and that is also very sick and that is it. The polite question will always be; 'So, how's it going', you know, but I know it's not a deep down true 'how are you, and how is your family?'

R: It's not an authentic inquiry?

C: Yes.

R: We know that the hospitality industry is a challenging industry.

C: Yes.

R: Especially the long working hours. You are also not the first co-researcher that calls it a stage where you act on and the challenges that go with that. Have you been to a Hotel School before you entered the hotel industry?

C: No, I didn't. I studied tourism management. I wasn't sure if I wanted to work in a hotel or work in a game reserve. Those were the two things for me. And when I refer to a game reserve, I mean being a game ranger as such. Those were my two options at the time. It's very interesting that when the decision came, I was on my way to this farm, and when I arrived there, it was a house that was built in the 1820's. And it's been passed down generations, and all the old furniture was still in there. Everything was exactly there. And I got the job. It wasn't even an interview. They said to me, 'this is where you will live in the main house, and this is where the rest of the rangers are, and this is what will be expected of you'. And when I looked around, I realized that I am not someone that will be able to live with all these antiques around me and make a living here. And then I went for the interview at one

of the hotels. I also got the position and this is where I ended up. And it's how it started. I started then working at a hotel as a trainee and then got permanently employed at the same hotel. So that's how it came about me working in hotels and how I was introduced.

R: Very interesting. You're talking about the training that you got, on job training. Was it always just about skills or was there anything that they taught you specifically about people skills? Not just towards the guest, but also towards each other.

C: You know what, that's very interesting. For my first, if I can say four years, it was just about skill. Just about what you need to do. And never about how you would lead people or how you connect with people, meaning your co-workers. That only came very recently. I would say the last three years of my career. I was privileged to work with someone that honestly and truly cared about people and who had a great ability to connect with someone and 'read' someone. *She* taught me to sometimes take a step back, get out of the force that is driving you, to get that e-mail done, to get the last quote out or whatever it is you need to do, but to look at the person you are working with and connect with them.

R: So *she* taught you.

C: Yes.

R: But you never went any formal course that they had available for the staff that was structured and laid out to give you the opportunity to develop your interpersonal skills?

C: No, never. She introduced me to the John Maxwell's of the world where I have watched a view clips of him interviewing other leaders and basically where he talks about companies and leadership. And in a lot of his work, and also Jim Collins, they refer to the *people*. It is the *people* that makes something successful. It's not the delivery, yes, it goes hand in hand with the service you deliver and with your turn around time. But it's the morale and the emotions of the people that will make it work.

R: Do you think that overworked and emotionally drained staff often make little mistakes, or maybe even big mistakes that cost the company? To give you an example. Say for instance I'm a VIP. I've booked a room. I've asked for specific things that had to be done in the room. I book in late. I've got an important meeting

the next day early, so I wanted it to go flawless. I get to the room, and nothing has been done. It's just a standard room with none of what I've asked. That's just an example. How would a guest like that be compensated?

- C: For me currently, it's all about being overworked. And not just for me personally. I can see it across the board. The mistakes and the errors and where you miss the detail is based on staff. I would like to include myself here, us being so overworked, so tired. Emotionally I cannot operate anymore. Because, like you also referred, it's long hours, and when you do go home it's still expected of you to be part of that home environment and the home time, the family time. So, when do you actually have time for yourself to connect with yourself? That's probably when you stand in the shower for ten minutes to get ready to go on 'stage' again. That's the only time you have. So many of the mistakes and the errors come from being so tired that you cannot 'perform' anymore. You cannot be on that 'stage' anymore, delivering, because you are so drained and tired. And the competence. I think times have changed completely. The world has evolved. People are more skilled, people think for themselves a lot more. No one is oppressed anymore, so people have their own minds these days, and we are in a new generation. So people coming through the ranks are young dynamic people with their own drive. But the hospitality drives you to that tipping point where you cannot physically operate, or mentally operate, anymore. You're just going with the flow. You are no longer thinking beyond the delivery or to 'wow' that guest.
- R: So, Cindy, would you say that these type of errors, due to the factors that you've mentioned now, cost establishments a lot of money?
- C: Yes, I think it cost's companies millions.
- R: I'm trying to think. If you calculate those losses, and you take that money and you utilise it to train the staff or to employ more staff. Will that make a difference?
- C: Definitely. I think it is an investment that will not only benefit the company, but it will also benefit the people who work for the company. And to come back to the camaraderie that we earlier referred to, it will not just benefit the camaraderie amongst a few people, it will be a camaraderie in one big organisation. You know, so when something goes wrong, whether someone forgets something to deliver for

a guest, the camaraderie will be there to support that one person who made the mistake and to fix it in such a quick time. Because we now understand why Neil forgot to do that. Because we understand him as a person and what he might be going through. I think that is definitely something organisations should look at. And the hospitality environment, because why should we host the guest only and not host each other?

R: Seeing that we are talking about so much money that gets lost due to overworked employees, and we talk about these long hours, are these hours always necessary?

C: Never. I think it has become an 'expectation' to work those hours. Like I said, we have more educated people out there and there are a lot of people that are willing to work, and you know, technology has evolved. The times have changed where people go to a hotel and expect someone to be at their beck and call twenty-four hours a day. You know, people understand people, and they know that you also have a life. So, if you utilise the money to get more people and give people more off time, get people to understand and to connect with themselves, I think that your workforce will deliver more in a shorter time than being there for ten to twelve hours a day, but only be productive for four of those hours. Because that is the true reality. You are there on 'stage', and you should only be on 'stage' for your eight hours and then your 'role' gets handed over to someone else. And I think you will be more productive and those hours are not necessary. Because, it's all about planning and considering and hosting our employee as well. I like the word hosting because when you mentioned it, we are so about hosting the guest that we are not hosting ourselves and the people who work for us.

R: Then there is another thing I would like to ask you. I've picked it up in one of the previous interviews. That is the consequences if a senior treats a junior disrespectfully, and vice versa. What I have heard is that it happens, unfortunately, more often than not, that a senior person would be disrespectful towards a junior person, and it will just be swept under the carpet. But the moment that the roles are reversed, then insubordination comes into the picture, and a big story is made out of that. Do you feel that managers should be taken to task as well if juniors are the ones on the receiving end of rudeness and disrespect?

- C: I don't think you could have hit the nail on the head better. That is something for me personally, as a Christian that I struggle with *daily* in my workplace. The minute when it is a junior being disrespectful, its insubordination. You get dragged through a disciplinary hearing and you will ultimately lose your job. But it's so common for a senior to be abrupt, rude, and disrespectful and to humiliate a junior. It's so easy, and walk away and nothing happens. And I sometimes wonder how some of those seniors sleep at night when you reflect back on your day. Do you actually think back that you have humiliated Neil today, and you were so rude? Maybe tomorrow morning I'm going to wake up, and I'm going to walk up to Neil and say; 'You know what, I'm really sorry about yesterday. I didn't mean to', but that *never* happens. And the senior expects that junior to show up on 'stage' tomorrow and 'perform' and forget what happened yesterday. Not thinking how that affected the junior. I think organisations need to *seriously* look at that because they can all easily say that we are doing exit interviews but how many times are people honest of why they are leaving the company? Because of those seniors. Because the manner in which they address the juniors, what they say to them. And most of the time the humiliation and the rudeness happens in front of other people. It's never in a one on one situation.
- R: So it's publically.
- C: Yes, it's publicly when it normally happens.
- R: We are living in a modern world. Have we become modern enough that we can accept foul language?
- C: I think for some people, yes, and for some not. And that for me goes back to your own integrity, and your own beliefs and religion and who you are as a person. For me, there were many a times where I have sat in meetings, and I have heard certain things that have upset me to my bone. But I see myself later on as a coward for not saying, 'you know, I don't appreciate you sayint that', but at the same time I *cannot* say it because my job is important to me, you know, it's my lifeline. And when things like that happen, I normally look around the table and I can see other faces, you know, turning and thinking 'oh my word, how can you say something like that?' But those people probably have the same feeling. Their jobs are equally as important. If you had to say to a senior, 'please don't say that' or 'you know, that is so wrong' it

could be you facing insubordination, and ultimately it will be *you* that will be taken to task. But turn the table, that senior is the one that is wrong at that point in time for saying something like that. So, yeah, we have become so modern and have moved with the times that we accept it, and we keep quiet and we don't do anything about it.

R: So, we accept it, but it's not less hurtful.

C: Yes, hundred percent. We accept it but deep down it does more damage than what the person saying it actually realizes.

R: Is there anything that you would like to add from your side?

C: I think we have touched on most of the things. I think we've definitely touched on the people side of things and what we expect these days in life. Something that has been bothering me over the last week or two is, and again, it is my opinion, we are in the holy month of Ramadhan and, um, you know, the exception gets made for Moslem employees to have their time for prayer, to have a prayer room, or for some of them during the time when they have to break their fast, to take their lunch hour during that time. And my biggest opinion at this point is for myself as a Christian, why do I not get my hour on a Sunday to go to church or attend a prayer meeting? Is it because I haven't asked, or is it because the company will say to you 'we are in the hospitality industry. It's a twenty-four hour role'. So, that is something I personally battle with at the moment which I am still trying to figure out. Is it just by asking the question, or is it my opinion that that is going to be the answer I am going to get?

R: That's very interesting. I was not aware of that, and I am very glad you brought it under my attention. I was completely oblivious to that rule, or the courtesy that's been given to one religious group and not to another.

C: Yah, and I think that the word courtesy is the right word. I don't think that it's a set rule, but for me the mere fact that the courtesy is there, is for me, personally, disturbing. Because where is the courtesy for the Christian or any other religion for that matter? You know, like I'm saying to you, on a Friday some of the Muslim people will be excused to go to mosque at 13:00, and during the month of Holy Ramadhan, this is what I'm struggling with at the moment. So why on a Sunday is there not a roster for the Christians when there is a church service in the city so that four of you

can go to the 09:00 service, and six of you can go to the 10:00 service? Or whichever way you work it around. But for me at the moment that is really something that I'm personally struggling with.

R: Didn't you say that they have got a room available for them to pray in?

C: Yes, hundred percent.

R: So, if they can make a room available for that, surely they can make a room available on a Sunday for somebody to come and give a short service, in say, two different sessions?

C: Hundred percent.

R: So that you don't have to take the additional time to travel and to come back but also provide it in-house. Like you do for one group, you can do it for the other groups as well.

C: Yes. And even if it's not an hour sermon, even it's a five-minute message and a prayer with someone. Even something like that.

R: I'm very glad you brought it under my attention. Anything else?

C: No, at the moment that is it from my side. If there is anything that I can think of when I go home, and I reflect on our conversation, and there is something, I will definitely book another cup of tea with you (laugh).

R: That will be great. I'm going to send you this interview once I've typed it, and then you can do alterations or add anything that you feel you might have forgotten. Just something I forgot at the beginning, which I will place at the beginning, how old are you now?

C: 28.

R: And have you got a family?

C: I have a partner that I live with. There are marriage talks at the moment (laugh).

R: Are there any children?

C: No children.

R: So at the moment it's your partner that has to understand and who has to compensate.

C: Yes.

R: Well, then we'll leave it at that, and I will be waiting to get feedback from you.

C: Yah.

R: This was a great meeting. I appreciate all your input, and I'm looking forward to your feedback.

C: Thank you. Same here.

JOHN'S INTERVIEW

R: Hi John. Thank you so much for coming, I appreciate you taking the time to participate in this study. I would like to ask you a few questions that we have discussed previously when we spoke about this interview. Can you tell me, how do you define religion?

J: I define religion as a sense of something that people believe in. They believe in a set of rules that they need to follow for a higher purpose, a higher being, and that people, in some instances, define themselves by associating themselves with a specific religion. That's how I define religion.

R: From what denomination are you?

J: I come from a Christian background. I belong to the New Apostolic Church.

R: And tell me, how would you define the spirituality?

J: I think that there can be a difference between religion and spirituality. I think a lot of people confuse the two maybe as being one. I think that somebody can be spiritual in the sense that they believe in something more than themselves, not specifically defined to a set of rules that they have to follow from a specific religion.

R: So, do I understand you correctly by saying that it is your religion that requires certain actions in your life?

J: Yes, I say that your religion, the way that you perceive things, are defined by your religion because your religion has a huge impact. Depending on how religious you are, if I may put it that way.

R: Okay. Would you say that it influence the way in which you conduct yourself?

J: Yes, absolutely. I believe that religion, and the way that you conduct yourself in your daily activities, the way how you interact with other people, and the manner in which you perceive things, is defined by your religion.

- R: So you feel that it is mostly your religion that will define your actions and not your spirituality, am I correct?
- J: Yes, that is what I would say because by associating yourself with a specific religion you are saying that you are comfortable with what they are saying and that that will determine how you will conduct yourself in the world outside. It will also influence the way in which you perceive and react to things. That is if you are living your religion, if I may put it that way.
- R: In your religion, are there implications if you don't apply to their 'rules' or 'standards'? When you were brought up in the church, were you encouraged to abide to these 'rules' and what would be the implications if you don't abide to the 'rules'?
- J: I think the main thing is, obviously I've used the word 'rules', but that's for the lack of a better term. I think that when I say 'rules', I actually refer to 'guidelines', if I may put it that way. I think these guidelines make you a better person. Simple things like helping somebody in their hour of need, or showing respect to your elders, or those types of things. In the Christian religion that is something that does come through. Helping others in need and those types of things. We were always encouraged not to abide by the guidelines because there's a 'price' attached to it, but because it's the right thing to thing to do.
- R: So there wasn't any 'consequences' if you dint do it?
- J: No, it was not as if you would be punished or anything like that, but we were raised to believe that it is the right thing to do and it's not necessarily the Christian thing to do, but it's the humane thing to do.
- R: I understand what you are saying. And if we are talking about spirituality in the workplace, how would you define spirituality in the workplace?
- J: I think that spirituality in the workplace, it's quite a broad spectrum, if I may put it that way. I see it as an individual thing, how you perceive things and how you wish to serve a greater purpose, or greater being which you might believe in. That is tailor made to each individual. If that makes sense?
- R: What level of management are you currently?
- J: Senior management.

- R: So, say for instance, you as a senior manager, tell your employees that you would like to encourage spirituality in the workplace. They, in return, ask you; 'How would you want us to incorporate spirituality in the workplace? How will you explain it to them?
- J: I think I will start off by saying to them that there is no wrong or right religion, if I may put it that way. It is not as if they will be forced to follow any specific religion, or guidelines or rules. I would say to them that, say for instance, that if there is a group of people that would like to say a prayer each day before they start work, then that's okay. Or say, for instance, some of the Muslim staff want to say their prayers on a Friday, or whatever the case may be. I know that at work we are currently supporting that whereby we have rooms available that are blocked off for them where they can go and say their prayers.
- R: So if I understand you correctly now, you are combining spirituality and religion.
- J: (Pause) Yes.
- R: Earlier on you said that spirituality and religion can be viewed separately. But now, when we talk about workplace spirituality, religion comes into the picture.
- J: I would say depending on the aspect that what I would like to encourage the guys to do. Yes, because then you would be dealing with different religions. And you will have to be sensitive to each religion. I mean you wouldn't be able to say, 'you know what guys, let's go and have Sunday lunch, and afterwards we can have a chat about different religions', but then there's pork on the buffet for the Muslims or whatever the case might be. So in that case one would have to be sensitive to religion itself, but then each has the opportunity to either, can I say, either use their religion or their spirituality in their own capacity.
- R: Why would you think somebody would want to incorporate spirituality in the workplace? What do you think the main purpose of that is? Is that to embrace religion, or is there another purpose why somebody would want to encourage that?
- J: I think, that when looking at it, and this might be taking a few steps back, not only should a person's natural well-being be good, but also their mental and spiritual aspect as well. And I think that in all three facets we need to have a balance between your natural, your mental and your spiritual side. So, if the natural is fine, the mental

is fine but one is finding it difficult to cope with the spiritual, then there is not going to be a balance. Then somehow you'll find that people tend to be not as productive at work. You can see that something is bothering them, they might not be as friendly as they usually are. Or it could be something else that could be out of balance.

R: So, if I understand you correctly, you are saying that personal spirituality has an effect on your general well-being and the way that you conduct yourself.

J: Absolutely.

R: So say for instance you have a couple of employees who are atheists, and you say you would want to encourage spirituality in the workplace and they say to you, 'but we are not religious, so how can we participate? What do you want from us? What is the reason why you want to incorporate spirituality in the workplace?'

J: I think that's quite a tricky question because it's my humble opinion that nobody should ever be forced to do something if they don't want to. So in the case of the atheists, yes, fine they don't necessarily believe in God, or whatever the case might be, but what I would like to say to them is that they can participate if they wish. They are more than welcome to join. They can come and listen and those types of things.

R: I want to make a statement, and then you tell me if you agree with it. We encourage workplace spirituality because we want people to act in a respectful manner towards each other. Do you agree with that?

J: To a certain degree, yes. I would agree with that. I think that religion and spirituality are some of the guidelines that you would follow to associate yourself with a certain belief system. I would say that it would also have to do with your upbringing as well, the father figure, the mother figure and what they have done in the past. How they conducted themselves, what they have taught you. I think that would also play a very important role in that aspect as well.

R: Do you think there could be a link between the characteristics of spirituality to that of integrity?

J: Yes. I would say there is a link.

R: Because when we say that a person has integrity, what type of characteristics would you associate with integrity?

- J: Well, with integrity I will associate honesty and truthfulness. They will call a spade a spade.
- R: During my studies regarding the hospitality industry, how it has evolved through the ages, it has become apparent that religion, spirituality, and hospitality are very strongly linked. Ages ago, there were rules that had to be abided to when you have a guest that comes to visit you and how you treat that guest, and how the guest should treat you. Keeping this in mind, do you think that any of the Biblical values associated with hospitality can be relevant in contemporary hospitality?
- J: I would say yes. As you mentioned, hospitality and religion have been around for quite some time. For instance, I know it used to be customary for people who used to travel many years ago, to have a bowl of water so that they could wash their feet because they've travelled, and those type of things. I think that when Jesus washed His disciples' feet, that that was a form of hospitality to show that He is not necessarily greater than they are. I suppose it's the same in hospitality today whereby we try to show our guests that they are important.
- R: Would you say, throughout your career as hotelier, that integrity, in general is present in the workplace?
- J: I would say that it is more towards the positive. There is a lot of emphasis in hospitality with regard to integrity. For example, the cleaners who clean the rooms are told not to touch the belongings of the guests unnecessarily. It's also stressed in hospitality the trust between the employer and the employee. But once that trust has been broken, I think, or in most cases actually, an employee that oversteps these boundaries can no longer work for the employer because how do you trust somebody who has broken that trust. How do you know that that person will not do it again?
- R: Do you think that the hospitality industry can benefit if management is encouraged to show greater integrity so that it can filter down to the rest of the workforce?
- J: That is what I try to do during my daily interaction with the rest of my team whereby I try to be the example for them. And I think it is very important to do that whereby we should be the example. A lot of the time when I do something at work, the guys say to me, 'but why are you not sitting in your office, having lunch like the rest of

them?’ Then I say, ‘but why should I? I would rather be sitting here, chatting to you then sitting in my office by myself and sitting and chatting to the rest of my colleagues.’ They actually find a lot of value attached to that whereby somebody in a more senior position actually has the time to come and chat to them, and ask them, ‘how’s your family doing?’

R: Does your manager do that with you?

J: Not really. I think it would be a nice to have. However, I think that the dynamics are a little different between my manager and myself. I think it is more important to interact with the guys at the ground level because they need somebody to acknowledge the challenges that they face.

R: Do you think that junior employees feel free to come to a manager to tell him that he or she has a personal problem at home?

J: I would say yes. What I always try and do is maintain a balance between work and personal life. Hospitality has always been renowned for extremely long hours and a lot of people say it’s a thankless job because nobody ever says ‘thank you.’ One gets to know the personalities of your staff. And when you see that somebody is ‘off’, or somebody is not as smiley, then I tend to ask them what is wrong. I also encourage them to make use of the agency that the company use with regards to a helpline service. This service provides all kinds of assistance, from psychological assistance to financial advice to family planning. All those types of things.

R: So if I understand you correctly, you feel that there is a good balance of integrity in the hospitality industry?

J: Overall I would say, yes there is. However, you do have exceptions to the rule. From an integrity point of view, with regard to the places that I’ve worked in, there has always been integrity.

R: I would like to come back to spirituality in the workplace and integrity because I want to find out if spirituality is the correct word to use. I know people use the word spirituality because of the good conduct associated with spirituality. But, like you mentioned earlier, there could be conflict if religion comes into play. So, do you prefer the concept of workplace spirituality, or do you think a person could all it something else?

- J: I think workplace spirituality is a very good term to use. It's better to refer to spirituality than religion.
- R: *(Due to the fact that some Alex was of the opinion that workplace integrity can incorporate all the workers whether they are religious or not, I wanted to know how John felt about this notion).* What about atheists? They don't necessarily relate to either one of the two. So how can we establish an enthusiasm in them to bring out good qualities in them? How do you feel about rather encouraging integrity in the workplace? By doing so, we can incorporate all the workers.
- J: The smartest and the easiest would be to view it from an integrity point of view. The guidelines that one uses to establish integrity can be taken from a religious or spiritual aspect. It can then be changed to a new 'format' where it is not necessarily connected to a religion or spirituality.
- R: If you think about the curriculum in hotel schools, one can incorporate integrity in there, but you cannot really incorporate spirituality.
- J: It will be quite tricky.
- R: Yes, it will be quite tricky. So, I would like to know, seeing that integrity and spirituality is so closely related, and keeping in mind that religion is quite a touchy subject, would you then say that one's personal spirituality can contribute in one's personal life to encourage integrity?
- J: Yes, absolutely. At the end of the day, I think it's the same with anything we really do. For instance, in a computer, if you put garbage in, you're going to get garbage out. So, in essence, in everything we do in life, is what you put in is what you get out. That's the long and the short of it. So, if we put in, should I say, good things, you should be getting out good things. I suppose that's where the aspect of integrity comes into play, where we say to the guys, 'you know, in order for us to achieve, we need to input good things. You need to be honest. You need to be truthful', and those types of things. And once that input has been given, the output should be good as well.
- R: I want to know, seeing that we are talking about integrity, what will happen with a junior member of staff if he/she speaks disrespectfully to a manager? And what will happen if a manager speaks disrespectfully to a junior member of staff?

- J: Personally, what I tend to do, I try to treat everybody with the same amount of respect, whether it is somebody that is scrubbing toilets, or whoever the case might be. The way I see it is, that that person is doing an honest days of work. He's working to support himself and his family. Just because he's scrubbing a toilet doesn't make him any less important, or any less of a person than myself or a General Manager or a Director, or a CEO.
- R: I understand. What I actually want to know, is how do you feel about the current procedures in place, if there are procedures in place, if a senior person would speak in a disrespectful manner to a junior person.
- J: There's different types of power, should I say, that a manager has over a junior. There is the authority that was given to that person, so in this instance, let's say I'm a manager, and you would be the junior, because of my position, I automatically have a certain level of power. And as you mentioned now, for somebody in a junior position, it is a lot worse for them when a person from a higher position says to them, 'listen here, you are stupid.' The weight of your words is a lot more than if a college would say that to him. From what I am aware, we do have procedures in place. There's grievance procedures if a senior manager does speak disrespectfully to an employee. Employees are well aware of those procedures, and they can follow those procedures if they are really that aggrieved.
- R: In general, would you say that you are enjoying the hospitality industry?
- J: I would, yes. What I enjoy about it is that not one day is the same, there is constant change, and you get to meet so many different people. You get to meet some real interesting characters. Some difficult people. Some really nice people. Some people that don't appreciate what you do, but then you get that one guest that really appreciates what you do, and they make everything worthwhile.
- R: Is there something that you dislike about the hospitality industry?
- J: As much as I try to maintain a work/personal balance, it is not always possible. That is for me one of the worst things. Not being able to maintain a balance.
- R: Are you talking about the amount of hours that you work?
- J: Yes, that's what it boils down to.
- R: Do you think there is a way of solving this problem?

- J: (Pause) I do believe there is a way of solving that problem. It all depends on the people working with you. The solution to the problem would be to get more capable people to run the business while you're not there. Somebody that is capable of doing it. Not necessarily someone that has been there for five to ten years and have moved up and is now a manager. I believe with the proper guidance and training staff could be developed to fulfill a management position. But what a lot of people misunderstand is that a management position isn't just a management position. There needs to be a leadership quality attached to that as well, and I think that's where we are currently going wrong at the moment.
- R: So, if I understand you correctly, it's a lack of competent staff and a lack of enough staff
- J: Yes.
- R: In other words, quality and quantity.
- J: Yes.
- R: Do you think the quantity issue can be sorted out?
- J: The quantity issue can be sorted out, but once again what it would come down to is the bottom line, rands and cents. And that is also where the quantity and the quality comes into play because if you are going to pay peanuts, you are going to get monkeys.
- R: Can you see a way that this problem could be solved in the hospitality industry?
- J: As I mentioned, it can be solved, but then people will have to be willing to pay for what they get. So if you are looking for somebody that is exceptional and who knows what they're doing, a person that can do the work efficiently, that person will be more costly, if not, you might have to employ three people to do that one person's job.
- R: Is it possible for you to attend church fairly regularly while working such long and irregular hours?
- J: What I do try and do as far as possible, if I'm not working, I do try and go to church activities. For example, on Sundays if it is quiet at work, I try to slip out to go to church and return back to work again. But fortunately for me there is a service on a Wednesday and on a Sunday. So either way, I will try attend one service.

- R: So, for you, due to your specific denomination, it makes it easier for you to participate in your religious practices due to the fact that you have service on both a Wednesday and a Sunday.
- J: I wouldn't necessarily say easier because there is a lot of activities that I cannot attend due to work. There are some types of youth activities that I cannot attend due to work. So what I try to do is, there is generally a program that is sent out from my church, and once I've received my roster, I can decide which activities I can attend.
- R: Do you work a lot of overtime?
- J: I do, yes.
- R: Do you get compensated with hours off?
- J: No.
- R: So say for instance you work ten hours overtime this week, next week the establishment is less busy and you have a specific church activity that you would like to attend, however, on that specific day you are working, but you've worked ten hours overtime the previous week. Will it be possible for you to take that overtime off?
- J: Provided that there is somebody to cover for me, then I can do it. However, again, it depends on the competency of the person who can stand in for me.
- R: So, even though you've worked overtime, that doesn't necessarily mean that you can take it at the time you would like to take it.
- J: Yes.
- R: Is there any other point that you would like to discuss regarding the hospitality industry that you feel is important?
- J: Um, not really. I think what we have discussed are the main issues in the hospitality industry. The most challenging for me personally is the long hours...the fact that you are 'expected' to be there...um...and that's not always necessary. What people tend to forget is that we are also human...we also have families and friends; we also have birthdays, funerals, Christmases...those type of things and also what is also forgotten is that while we work on Christmas...it is our Christmas as well...it's not only the guest's Christmas...it's not only their Easter...it's not only their Good

Friday...um...a lot of people tend to forget that. But then you do get guests that says 'Merry Christmas, thank you for working'...

R: Let's say, you've had a 'bad' week. Do you find it difficult to give each guest the impression that he/she is the most valuable guest that has just walked through the door? How difficult is it to constantly show this façade of happiness?

J: Some days it is more difficult than others...um...but the thing that you are taught in hotel school is that the guest doesn't care if your dog has just died, they don't care if you've forty hours...um...they are there, they are paying for a service, they expect the service and that is what must be delivered.

R: Seeing that you work in an environment where all your colleagues basically share the same challenges, do you feel that there is a strong comradery amongst the employees? For instance, will they acknowledge the fact that your dog died or that you have any other sort of tragedy in your family? Do you feel the staff support each other in cases like this?

J: I think that will depend on the individual...the level of support will vary. I don't know if they will allow you to go home to sort things out. You will probably hear: 'You know, it's happened...the dog is dead...there is nothing you can do about it now.' If it is a family member, they will probably be more sensitive toward the situation. In such an instance, they will probably let you go home.

R: I understand. Is there anything else that you would like to mention to me?

J: No, I think that is it. Once I receive your e-mail, I will have a look and see if anything else comes to mind.