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Adults Returning to School:
Seeking Understanding in the Gap Between Experience and Theory

by

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of Communication and Social Foundations

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ABSTRACT

In this qualitative study the author uses both autobiography and the stories of six students in the Humanities Diploma Program to bring alive the experience of returning to school as an adult. Continuously using the tension created by being in the gap between experience and theory, she considers themes such as connection and separation, the everyday and transcendence, changing and fixing, uncertainty and knowing, emotion and logic and the question of what it means to do qualitative research.

Theoretical literature from adult education and other disciplines, the author's stories and poems related to her personal experience of returning to school, and the stories of the six participants highlight the uniqueness of each experience while raising questions of interest to teachers, students and people working to design programs for adults.

The work suggests that including the experience of self, different ways of knowing, and reconsidering the student/teacher relationship are essential to educational quality, learning and growth. It also suggests that the possibility of remaining in the gap - of not being fixed - is a workable one on a personal and intellectual level. Finally, it speaks to the complexity of adult participation in formal education and thus contributes to both the understanding and the practice of adult education.

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Many people have supported me as I've made this journey through graduate studies; without them it would not have been as exciting and thought-provoking as it has been. Sometimes it has been one small statement from someone I hardly know which has triggered an understanding I didn't have before. Sometime it has come from the continuous attention to issues, both academic and personal, as in the Tuesday noon hour gathering of graduate students and in many of my classes. My family provides a kind of unconditional support which has been so important to me. Friends have changed during this process. New friends have taken me to new places; old friends, I appreciate so much more than I did. The people I work with at Continuing Studies have been supportive and interested, and always great to work with. I have had some excellent teachers along the way. I will always especially appreciate Larry Devlin for being so sure that I could do this, and Antoinette Oberg for providing a space for the personal which led to so much learning for me. The participants in this study have been wonderful, completely supportive and interested in my work. And I am thankful for the scholars, especially the women scholars, who have asked what's missing and provided so many stimulating ideas about what it means to be human.

Dedicated to the memory of my mother, Eileen Matthews, 1918 to 1972

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Dear Reader:

gap 1. opening; 2. disparity; 3. breach;
 4. interval; hiatus; 5. pass in a mountain ridge
(The Scribner-Bantam English Dictionary)

What does it mean to change? And what does it mean to be connected? These two questions and their relationship shape this thesis, continually emerging as themes in my experience of being a student. I use the word "gap" in the title because it gives both a sense of disruption and a sense of opening - a disconnection or breach which is unsettling and/or a way to get through something seemingly impenetrable. This study began in the gap between having the experience of returning to school as an adult, and reading theory and research about the experience of returning to school as an adult. Something seemed to be missing.

The gap between theory and the experience of being a practitioner is felt and discussed by many of us who work in the field of education. Brookfield (1990) comments on people working in adult education who return to school "These students (all of them practitioners in some kind of adult training or continuing education setting) declare that they are unable to recognize themselves in the pages of most program development manuals" (p. 206). Brookfield goes on to say that gap is about "ideal" program planning models which presume enough resources, a positive political climate, and easy cooperation from partners - all of which are difficult to come by in the real world.

These are factors as well in the gap between the experience of being a student and theory about the experience - but besides this gap between the ideal and the reality, there is another gap, perhaps having to do

with the disconnection between what is learned and its relation to personal experience; or having the experience and seeing it reflected; or generalizing about an experience which seems so unique; or

-the gap between thinking and feeling;

-the gap between knowing a little about a whole bunch of things and a lot about a few things;

-the gap between speaking in a voice that "knows" and is convincing, and a voice that is unsure and tentative;

-the gap between one's own inner life and the inner life of others;

-the gap between the everyday living of life and transformation;

-the gap between telling the stories of participants in this research and letting them tell their stories;

-the gap between looking from a distance and looking from within.

I have found the gap both jarring and a way through to developing a changing, or more flexible, understanding. Sometimes gaps have provided me with a way to traverse difficult territory. Sometimes not recognizing them has left me stuck - not able to understand how to move or travelling long distances to try to find my way around. But, knowing also that I usually pick a stand and get to know enough about it to defend it (specialization), I did not want to simply jump to the other side. I hoped to explore how the sides are connected. I felt I could only do this by staying away from sides (staying in the gap)

and by shifting ground as much as possible through my experiences, fiction, feminist theory, psychology, philosophy, biology, adult education, other adults' experiences. The problem was how to include these points of view both in my own knowing and to express how they influence and change my understanding. And so, I come back to the preoccupations of this thesis - connection and change.

The paper begins with telling you something of the extraordinary experience this return to school has been for me and of my search for understanding in what is generally considered "women's ways of knowing." I then turn outward to do research - interviewing several adults who returned to school - the disconnection between the inner and outer is hard to understand and allow. Appendix I has more information about each student interviewed than you will find in the body of the thesis and Appendix IV contains a review of the literature which attracted me when I began this program and which provided threads of ideas that have influenced me throughout.

This thesis is a qualitative study leaning towards the phenomenological (interpretive) tradition. When I first encountered these words - qualitative (set in opposition to quantitative) and phenomenological (set alongside words such as ethnography, hermeneutic, symbolic interaction, narrative, biographical), they were completely foreign to me, heard about as one hears about the culture in different lands - heard about but not familiar enough to be comfortably used in everyday "real" life. I'm still not sure that I understand these terms. I step gingerly in this world as it is my second language, rather than my first, taken on because it feels more like home (see Estes' chapter "Finding One's Own Pack") to me. I write to you now as a guide who is gaining experience

and would like you to explore with me a place which is in some ways unfamiliar to us both.

The research language which I am more familiar with, a familiarity I share with you, is what we usually think of as scientific. Here are some of the characteristics of a scientific study in the culture we grew up with: the researcher is the objective seeker of truth; the larger the number of "subjects" the better; the research results must be reproducible by another researcher; the researcher must control several variables so that we know that the variable being studied is the one that is having an effect...and many more, but you know what I'm talking about.

From this perspective, both you and I ask questions about this thesis. How can it say anything generalizable when there are only six participants and it includes rather than excludes my own experience - or if I have not been strict about asking all the participants exactly the same questions - and if I'm not sure what I'm looking for? If I'm not trying to explain why something happens, how useful can the study be?

The original question for my study was "why do adults return to school (especially those who return for non-career related reasons)?" I gave up trying to explain why adult people return to school because it seemed to mean reducing their motives to categories which, although useful for some things, gave me no idea of who these people really were. I found myself asking "what's missing?" What I found to be missing was the actual experience, the uniqueness of the human experience of returning to school as an adult. Our present understanding of what it means to be scientific is a narrow (although useful particularly in the area of

physical phenomena) realm of knowledge. As Robert Donmeyer (1990) says, "few physical scientists are interested in predicting, much less controlling, where a single leaf falls...Teachers, however, are interested in individual students" (p. 178). I am not interested in predicting or controlling either - I am interested in understanding individual experience as much as possible in order to provide a "holding" environment which allows each student to grow in his/her own understanding of themselves and what they are studying, and perhaps more important, which allows me to open up to others' experiences, to learn from each, to expand my consciousness.

When I was able to free myself enough of the powerful attraction of my usual view of science and what it means to do research, I stepped into a breathtaking panorama of ideas about how we as humans might come to know and understand, into a world where every assumption was questioned. I read and heard about how the bias of people who thought they were being objective affected their work; about how findings that had been accepted as valid could be interpreted, just as reasonably, in a totally different way; about how some efforts to understand human nature had left out whole dimensions of human experience because they included only men; about how seniors performed some tests poorly because they couldn't be bothered with the nonsensical questions the researchers had made up for them.

In the familiar meaning of a scientific study, one is trying to make things simple in order to understand a piece of the whole. In a qualitative study, one is trying to capture the complexity of human experience but in a way that makes that complexity and its moving nature accessible to everyone. This is my interpretation of what

a phenomenological study does. Actually, there is much discussion among people interested in phenomenology about what phenomenological research is. Although there is agreement that a phenomenologist searches for the essence of a particular experience, there is controversy about what that essence is. If the search is for an underlying reality common to all, how is phenomenology different from science or any search for "something we can know for sure?" Once one has found an essence of a human experience, is this the fixed truth of that experience? My own understanding of human experience is reflected in many different ideas about how we live - we continuously construct our own reality, but this construction is limited by other living and non-living entities, and by our biology. And there are common essences to our experience which help us to construct reality together. In an essay entitled "Should a Phenomenologist Be Clever?" Dominique Janicaud (1996) discusses the tension between the need for limits or rules and a "vague openness" in phenomenological research and says:

the new intelligibility that is needed is not the intelligibility of the pure spectator, the Cartesian subject who looks for the complete transparency of its horizon of objectivity. It is the understanding of the flesh of the world, the understanding of the chiasm between the world and self - between outside and inside (p. 58).

This is why I consider this thesis as tending towards the phenomenological, because it is that intersection (felt by me as a gap) which both motivates this study and provides its limits, the tension between the inner world of a person and the world of others. Janicaud proposes "understanding" - a word which implies connection through empathy - as the basis for phenomenological research:

One could dream of a more scientific, rigorous, and formal phenomenology, or, on the other hand, of a more suggestive, feminine, and provocative one. By offering the guiding thread of understanding, however, I have taken into account phenomenology as it has been at its best and as it may still flourish: unsatisfactory, but disclosing insights; minimally 'reductionist,' but helpful against narrower reductive strategies; eidetic and trans-eidetic; too clever to be scientific, not clever enough to be art (p.60).

Janicaud also gives a sense of the importance of movement within phenomenological research when she says the

aesthetic sense of phenomenology...should also allow phenomenology 'to develop within a double precariousness': precariousness in the face of the phenomena as they appear (they might be mere appearances) and precariousness in the face of appearing as such (the source or the origin of the upsurge of the phenomena) (p. 58).

This idea of uncertainty, of uncovering the unconsciously known and yet never knowing whether we have really done so appeals to me. For me, phenomenology has to do with Ursula Le Guin's short story, *She Unnames Them*. In this story a woman, whom I think of as "Eve," goes about removing all the categories we have set up, although she does not deny that they have been useful. At the end of the story she says goodbye to "Adam," who is too busy to notice, and walks out into a world where everything is known only by its constantly changing relationship to other things. Generalizations can never be universal, even when helpful, because of this constantly changing uniqueness. Then the question becomes, how are these uniquenesses connected? In Ursula Le Guin's story, unnamings do not lead to fragmentation but instead to a quality of being which is totally connected because the

uniquenesses are constantly created by the relationship with other uniquenesses.

I want to treat the meaning I find behind the words people tell me with care, allowing always for changes in understanding, for the influence of other points of view. Life is constantly changing patterns, some so large and slow that they can't be seen, others so small and fast that they can't be seen as in Ursula Le Guinn's poem:

Slide Rock Creek, September

My skin
touches the wind

A lacewing fly touches my hand
I speak too slow
 for her to understand

Rock's warm under my hand
It speaks to slow
 for me to understand

I drink sunlit water

(*Hard Words*, 1981)

I tell you all this to prepare you for entrance into a way of knowing which may be unfamiliar to you. I would ask you to come to it as you would visit any foreign land - with a curiosity about its customs; about differences and commonalties; and about what is said about the nature of being human.

WONDERING ABOUT CONNECTION: PART I

Returning to School

Only a fraction of the adults entering school programs do so with the hope or intention of personally growing from being in school. Most have what they (and we?) would consider far more practical goals, such as getting ahead in their work lives. Yet the school experience in adulthood places one, as Charles Seashore puts it, 'in grave danger of growing' (Kegan, 1992, p. 293).

Adult education and adult development literature give us a sense of the complexity as well as the changes and limitations of adult life. As is the case with many adult students returning to school, I had recently experienced a major transition in my life. I joined the majority of adults who return with the stated purpose of professional development. The concern with meaning, the transformation of experience, and the different modes of intelligence in adulthood are all discussed in the literature and rang true with my experience of the return to education. I could identify patterns in my life such as those discussed in *Lifelines: Patterns of Work, Love and Learning in Adulthood* (Merriam & Clark, 1991). My life fit one of the patterns identified - the pattern of successful work career, up and down personal life, with formal education punctuating both.

I've had a variety of successful careers in social work, accounting (OK, maybe this was "just" a job; it was an unstressful source of income while my daughter was young), as a counsellor in and Director of a community agency supporting single parents and most recently at the Division of Continuing Studies at UVic. At the same time my personal life included seven years in a first marriage, seven years as a single parent, nine years in a blended family, and finally, with my daughter's move into

adulthood and away from home two years ago, the transition to single person with a grown up child. I had intended to enter graduate school right after my B.A. in 1968 but got married instead. I had applied to graduate school again in 1975 but my marriage broke up. In 1992, I intended to go no matter what. Besides many professional development workshops throughout my working life, changes in my personal life triggered taking courses for interest (such as parenting and women's studies courses).

I especially appreciated the connections made in the literature between the student, education and society. Change often triggers people's participation in formal education. And learning, whether formal or informal, changes the social context - be that through socialization, emancipation, or something else. Educational events are not just situations in which information is passed on to the students. They are processes which have an effect on the individual, the community, and the event itself - the result can be much more than the final grade.

But as I compared the findings to my own experience and what I know of the experiences of the students with whom I work, I felt that something was missing. Yes, I see myself mirrored in the literature, but as in a reflection, the reality is missing. The mirrored image, like a series of photographs in someone's album, gives hints about the stresses and strains, about the joys and challenges of my own and other people's return to school but misses something about the nature of the experience.

Being

Once upon a time, but only a moment ago (Estes), a teeny tiny being lived in a garden. She was the only one like herself but she didn't mind because she was very much a part of the web of life of the garden. She was not lonely, she just was.

One day she started to grow. She tried to plant her feet firmly in the earth - she wasn't going anywhere! But she grew wildly in spite of herself, without direction, except that it was generally up, which we all know is the best way. She grew and grew until she could no longer hear or feel the teeming life in the garden. She felt so far away. She was terrified of moving because she was afraid she might hurt someone or something.

Different voices than the ones she had heard in the garden were becoming louder and louder. They told her how to grow, how she should be, but she never seemed to get it quite right. The being thought that if she could just learn to be the right way she would be happy again. So there she was, trying hard to learn to be the right way and trying not to move lest she hurt a something she couldn't quite define.

Being was lonely but she blamed this on herself. Still, life was OK. As she came to know many of the other voices and recognised that she was one of those voices, she knew that she was happier than many. Sometimes she felt she was finally being the way other people in this grown up world thought she should be, but eventually she realised she was never going to get things "right."

One day, Being wandered into a huge garden, the curriculum garden (Oberg), and decided to spend some time

there. Soon she met up with the wise wild woman who roamed the garden. But although Being was powerfully attracted to the wild flowers which wild woman offered, she was also afraid and stayed away for one year while she sampled the well manicured and familiar fruits offered in the other parts of the garden.

The next time Being met up with the wild woman, she instantly felt just the tiniest bit of that old connection that she had felt so very long ago. Wild woman did not ask Being to be any particular way. She only asked her to try to tell her own truth, to try to understand why she felt she had to get it right - and right according to whom? She encouraged Being to wonder why she thought about things in the particular ways she did and to try out new ways of looking at things. She invited beings from other wild gardens far away to come and visit, and there were always many others like Being who had come because the beautifully manicured parts of the garden could not support their quest for meaning anymore. The place was alive with difference.

The longer Being stayed, the less afraid she became. She began to get a glimmer of what it might be like to feel a sense of connection again, to love in a way much greater than status, or personality, or even astrological signs can give. And that is where she is now, still trying to disentangle herself from the clamor of voices of which she has become an intricate part, so that more and more she can use the wisdom of her own experience as a guide to connecting with the wisdom of others. And the strangest thing is that there are times when she doesn't feel so alone even though she feels even more like one of a kind.

(Journal: Fall 1993)

Being Fixed

And I have known the eyes already, known them all-
 The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
 And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
 When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
 Then how should I begin
 To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?
 And how should I presume?

(T. S. Eliot, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*)

There are many ways that I think I know you and you think you know me - and I am afraid of most of them. Once I was in a parking lot returning to my car after shopping with my teenage daughter. A stranger walked by and said to me "I'm sure glad my daughter didn't turn out like that." My anger was immediate but I would have ignored him if I hadn't seen the pain in my daughter's eyes. I followed him and his family screaming at him that I hoped his daughter would not turn out to be as rude and narrow minded as he. I shouted at him as the crowd gathered, never giving him a chance to reply as he ran away. The man obviously felt it was his right to express his disapproval and my daughter was dressed to invite the disapproval of people who think there is a "right" way to dress in our society. Was this only a particular moment from which little can be understood?

Whether it is through making instant judgments from the way people look; categorizing people through statistics, roles, level of development; or rating students through grading; it seems to me that our purpose is often to present findings as if this is the way people are, rather than wondering about their becoming. It seems that we would rather "fix" what we know than celebrate change. I

think that much of the research done in adult education is about trying to understand people so that we can meet an agenda which is often about persuading more people to come to our courses, or about giving teachers information about how to organize the learning experience, or about understanding what is happening for adult students in the classroom in order to "fix" them (make them better). There is a usefulness about this focus but I struggle with what is lost to our experience when we try to "know" by fixing our understanding. For example, although people always have an immediate reason for participating in formal education, reasons usually tied to professional development (see Deveraux, *One in Every Five*; Johnstone & Rivera, *Volunteers for Learning*; even an unpublished survey I conducted in the Fall of 1993 showed that many adult students taking courses designed for personal enjoyment were taking the courses primarily for professional development reasons), this knowing might give us an idea about what to offer but does not attend to the unique experience of students within their social context.

When my daughter was 18 months old, she would walk backwards when I called to her. I was relieved to read in Dr. Spock that 18 month olds often walk backwards when called as an expression of their growing independence. When she was two, her Dad and I separated. Six months later, her day care worker called me aside to tell me that she was far too compliant, too quiet, too willing to do exactly what she was told. I took her to a counselor who proposed that I reward her every time she said no or gave any indication of reluctance. She remained a quiet person but did develop some skill in saying "no!" to me. In adolescence, her potential for non-conformity flowered. She began to dye her hair and dress weirdly. She refused to attend Biology classes when they were dissecting animals. She took six courses instead of the required five because her school had locally developed courses - she could take Comparative Religions, Law, and

Psychology. She ended up with a lot of courses but only the bare minimum of required courses that would allow her to get her grade 12 diploma. Her grades were good. After leaving high school four years ago, she lived for a time in Ireland and now calls Toronto (where she was born) her home.

All through the years of bringing her up, her Dad remained an unreliable, ethereal figure. He was unable to offer any emotional support and it was too difficult for me to insist on financial support. It is now 21 years since we separated. I have made my peace with the situation and expected that he would have too, but I didn't know because our communication has been limited and is never about difficult things.

June, 1996. Our daughter is accepted to Ryerson, to the media arts program, which only admits 75 people a year out of hundreds of applications. A program which she applied to last year without success. She worked very hard on her portfolio this year, often in the editing studio from 8:30 a.m. to early afternoon and then at her job from 3:00 p.m. until midnight. Her Dad's reaction to her acceptance was, I can't afford to help you. But I will ask your grandmother if she can help.

July 8, 1996. I call him on Monday night "T. says you can't help much. Could you let me know what you're thinking of? I have an appointment with the bank this weekend and need to know how much I should borrow." "Can I call you back, Peggy." "OK, talk to you later."

Later my daughter calls. Her Dad has called her and very angrily told her that she should call me to say that they will come up with one third of the tuition - and tell your mother not to call here again. My daughter is angry. She tells him that she is tired of feeling guilty when she asks him if he can help. She doesn't want and would not accept any money from him. She calls me upset. We talk. We know that we never know how he will react in any given situation. We know he probably feels guilty about not helping her more. We know that he was never able to link his own love of art and photography to living his life. We know that a source of our resentment is that he and his new family have so much more in the way of

material things than we do. We know that they are probably having difficulties with their relationship. All this knowing helps, but it is not enough.

I toss and turn all that night thinking what can I do? I start a poem. I wake up with a cold sore. I can't concentrate on work and feel like I'm moving through a sea of molasses. I want to shut myself in. Every moment I can snatch from the day, I work on a poem which becomes three poems, and then back to one, and then finally two by the time I have worked it out enough to leave it alone.

Wednesday afternoon. In class, the professor struggles with his way of understanding and in doing so helps to free me to struggle with my ways of understanding. I can feel something happening within me which I can't explain. I'm thinking about the professor's openness to questioning himself. I'm thinking about how comfortable I am with the women in my group, how willing they are to go backwards and forward, how their faces invite me to be involved with them. And suddenly, I understand something about how my master's thesis will be in a way I haven't been able to before. The body of the thesis will be from the point of view of the student. I think I may be able to take more risks - to include the personal, to talk about not knowing. I wonder if my excitement will change tomorrow to "what the heck was I talking about." But for now, it's the sweet peace of the ocean lapping at the shore.

TO MY DAUGHTER'S FATHER

Yes, you are human
I can see that
You have two thumbs
You talk, you walk
You write, you count
You waste and you want
As humans will do

But you are not being
I can see that
You do not love, you do not care

*You do not forgive, you are not there
 You do not change, you might as well be a stone
 Except that even a stone warms up in the sun*

*Dim is the fire of life within you
 No warmth spills beyond the confines
 Of your retreat into smallness
 I feel the loss of you and so does she
 I have grieved for you enough
 She will grieve much longer*

THE MOON SNAIL

*Funny creature
 Soaks up the fluids of life
 Expands until its shell is just a decoration on its back
 Portrayal of a large and generous spirit*

*But when I touch you, you disappear
 Leaving only a pool of tears
 And a shell with its door shut tight*

*On Sunday, during our usual weekly phone call, my
 daughter casually mentions that she is having lunch with
 her Dad tomorrow.*

(Journal July, 1996)

The story which begins the introduction to this section reflects the struggles and contradictions that have shaped this inquiry since its beginning (and my life on an ongoing basis) but which had not yet come into enough consciousness to allow me some understanding about my behaviour. The "being" was afraid to move for fear of hurting someone - she was embedded - she knew that moving affected others but did not understand how. She tried to hold herself and others in place (to "fix" them) as this is the only way she could see to understand. She listened carefully to others' voices to do this and to try to "fix" herself in an acceptable way. She developed her own

voice but somehow recognizes it as a separate voice adding to the cacophony of individuals telling each other what to do.

This thesis is concerned about the gap between reading theories about adults returning to school and actually having the experience. The gap is explored through several vitally connected themes - what it means to see ourselves as fixed (things rather than processes) and as separate rather than connected - and explores the possibilities inherent in thinking about students as unique, dynamic processes within a connected educational system.

It was a long time before I was able to tell anyone about the man in the parking lot. I thought that anyone I told would feel the same way as the man did and judge me harshly for "letting" my daughter dress that way. Then in the summer of 1995 I was taking a course with a professor who was interested in the evolutionary, developmental models of human change which appealed to me. I gave him the 50 pages of writing which I was considering as an introduction to my thesis. I thought he would like it. He said "yes, but it doesn't emerge." I thought, "I just can't get this right" and went home and threw out the paper and sat down to write about what I cared about. The story of the man in the parking lot came out and, along with it, my distress at the way people, including me, handle difference. I was on my way towards a new way (which is still emerging) of looking at my thesis.

There is a follow-up to the story of the man in the parking lot. In June of 1996, I visited the professor who had triggered my writing of the story. His son told me that he finds his dad easier to talk to than his mom. When I complimented the professor on this, he said that he made more of an effort to listen to his son after reading my story last summer. I was quite amazed, and so was my daughter, that something good had come out of that incident.

Reflections

Critical reflection involves a critique of the presuppositions on which our beliefs have been built (Mezirow & Associates, 1990, p. 1).

The sense of reflection I get from this quote has been an important part of writing this thesis. Mezirow is talking about a particular kind of reflection, "critical" reflection, which he believes is necessary for "perspective transformation." The words above mirror my experience of reflection as I have attempted to become more conscious of assumptions and values which have been taken for granted. But the more I tried to understand my own and others' assumptions, the more distance I felt in some way - and yet, I was pleased when I could do it as it is a powerful tool for both internal and external understanding of what is going on. The part of me that can argue and expose contradiction became more powerful - but this is also the voice which has torn apart relationships which have meant a lot to me. The reflection which meant much more to me could fall under Mezirow's definition as well - reflection which has led me to question the notion of strengthening my voice. Perhaps perspective transformation is about softening one's voice so that others can be heard.

This is perhaps not a distinction others would make, that one result of critical reflection may be a softer, more malleable voice, one with the strength that comes from being able to bend rather than being able to win.

Because I was in such turmoil when I began the master's program, quite a lot of my writing was metaphorical in an attempt to let the emotions work themselves through. Now when I look back on these writings, I'm so appreciative

that the personal, the "non-academic" writings were allowed to be part of my educational experience. I think of it now as letting the connected voice speak:

October 4, 1993

I dream that I am at the bus stop outside my townhouse. The bus comes along and I try to get on. But I can't. I'm too small. Try as I might, I cannot lift myself onto the bottom step. But I want to go and I scream in frustration. After waiting for a while the bus closes its doors and drives off. I tell M about this dream. I think it indicates that I just have not grown enough in wisdom to ride into the future. M suggests I have a conversation with the bus.

Bus, oh bus, why won't you take me away?

You are not ready.

Not ready for what? I want to go away from here.

I'm driving off into the sunset. You are not ready to go where I am going for I will never return. You must stay here. You have much to learn. This is where you belong right now. You are not ready to leave this world yet. Stay and learn.

October 24, 1993

Last night reading *Women Who Run with the Wolves*, Estes talks about keeping a garden to get in touch with the life/death/life cycle, the part of oneself which knows when to let things die, what to tend, how to combat threats. This morning as I'm making bread I look out at my tiny yard. I planted a wild flower mix in the summer which is still blooming - my garden looks wild - not at all tended. But what attracts my attention are the scarlet runner beans hanging brown and unused. I planted some vegetables in this tiny piece of earth because I wanted some nourishment from the garden. As I look at those brown and dying beans now - beans I could have eaten and didn't - I realize that I don't believe that

what I grow will be good. And yet, I'm making bread right now and I know that it will be good and I will eat it. What's the difference? The difference is that I'm making the bread from ingredients other people have grown or perfected. I'm not responsible for knowing or nurturing the original life. I'm receiving a powerful message that I'm disconnected from the life force within me. The question still lingers about whether or not even to embark on this journey, but the question is fading as I realize that I have already begun, that the other choices are to do with no life or to allow the work to go on within me without awareness or direction or meaning.

January, 1994

I feel that taking the course this fall has encouraged me to embark on such a profound journey. The most important thing for me was something Kegan (1982) discusses when he talks about creating a space for development. He talks about the importance of being able "to recruit another's invested regard" and says "who comes into a person's life is in part a matter of luck, in part a matter of one's power to recruit others, but in large part a matter of other people's ability to be recruited." And he talks about how this gets more difficult as we get older (p. 16-20). I felt your profound "recruitablity" to my struggle to understand. The really surprising aspect of this for me is that I did not have to first prove to you that I'm a good person, worthy of your respect, etc. etc. And I did not feel that I had to get to know you in order to figure out if you would like me less if I told you what was in my heart. I believed your reassurance that whatever we shared with you would be confidential and I soon learned that I would not be able to figure out "what you want" - this freed me to just go ahead and do.

Your initial response did not engage with the dilemma I was presenting or give me advice, but instead encouraged me to "Keep going with it. Don't separate from it, hold it apart to 'study' it." At one point in my journal I said that I was afraid of being alone when I got old. You asked "Why?" My first thought was, "Isn't that how I'm supposed to feel?" And then I understood - understood that I had never really thought about it, had just

accepted a worry that many people have... No matter how much I tried, I could not persuade you to take my side. And yet, your responses to my writing were always reassuring, always to do with me and my being. I learned that reflection is not about justifying oneself and therefore firmly entrenching oneself in a point of view. Instead reflection is about deepening my understanding to increase the choices I have regarding my reactions. I didn't learn this because you told me, I learned this because you questioned and encouraged my own questioning.

April 2, 1994

I'm in downtown Victoria. It's my first "trip" outside my house since returning from my six-week holiday in Europe. I feel strange. I feel as if my shoes aren't right, my clothes aren't right. I feel as if everyone's staring at me, as if I'm staring at myself and saying "Where are you from? Why are you here?" I'm puzzled. This is my home. I don't have to ask anyone for directions. I suddenly realize that I've become more familiar with being unfamiliar, with having to pause and figure out what to do, with relying on strangers to point me in the right direction, with being "odd woman out." It felt good to be a stranger in a strange land. I'm confused about feeling a stranger in my own land. In some strange way I felt more like I belonged when I didn't belong. I relied on people's good will, and people came through. Here I don't need to rely on anyone. I know my way around. I'm independent and free. But something is missing. Maybe it's got to do with that old, old hang up of mine - wanting to do things right. Wishing I'd been able to be "normal" - married for 30 years with 2.3 kids, a loving woman devoted to her family, etc., etc. In my own home, my own land, my judgmental voice about how I should be comes through loud and clear. In strange lands it was drowned out. It was OK to be different because I was in a different culture. People who might have judged me if I were part of their culture, accepted me as being different. I accepted myself and enjoyed being different.

I was beginning to learn some profound lessons about myself, lessons to do with:

- how difficult it is to recognize the shoulds in my head;

- how the unrecognized shoulds get in the way of letting other understandings in;

- who I am: a mixer and matcher. When I recognized how I was judging myself in the garden metaphor, I could recognize that I think some ways of contributing to society (such as original research) are more important than others (mixing and matching others and my own experiences to create meaning);

- who I am: I enjoy diversity and change.

The strong feeling of how I should be gave way to looking at how I am. I had unconsciously created a lot of change in my life - the unconsciousness caused problems as I claimed I wanted one thing (stability) and took actions to create another (change). The reality is that I want both and to be able to choose with consciousness.

My reflection became more analytical as I tried to figure out what my interest is in terms of writing a thesis, and how the writings and speakings of others both challenged and connected to my own experience.

April 23, 1994

Today I was rereading Kegan, Chapter 9, and there it was on page 261, his ideas about the relationship of community to the individual. He believes that a healthy community recognizes the movement of an individual from embeddedness to letting go with a celebration of the passage. To not do so risks losing the continued active participation of an individual in society.

I'm thinking of P at lunch today. He says we must absolutely respect where the individual is. We have no right to interfere. Kegan sort of changes things around when he says "The constructivist-developmental clinician has one primary function: to protect those opportunities for consciousness, for meaning-evolution - which the client brings to him or her as 'problems'. He does not seek to, and cannot, 'get' the client to do anything: the choice is always the client's...he is seeking to join the process of meaning-evolution, rather than solve the problems which are reflective of that process" (Kegan 1982, p. 274). The activity of the person caring (Noddings) may not be so much to know what or how or why, but instead to make a space where a person can ask the questions themselves, and take risks with the answers.

November 23, 1994

Do I not want to categorize in the way Mezirow, or Basseches, or Kegan do because I'm a sloppy scholar? Or because these people have spent years coming up with a scheme and who am I to understand it (commit myself to it) or even criticize it? How do I recognize what the "real" reason is? I think that I just find it difficult to be so analytical about human nature. I feel that something is missing as soon as someone gets into defining. Kegan is better because he works so hard to give a sense of process (or maybe I just appreciate his acknowledgment of the importance of relationship so much that I don't want to criticize him!). For example, Mezirow talks about adults getting stuck, or choosing to stay closed if they don't successfully navigate the crisis of autonomy between 35 and 45. But I think maybe we have to understand better from the point of view of the adult we are with - the study I did for Interpretive Inquiry showed me that. Cohort is important to who we are. I don't think D (about 68 years old) is closed or stuck (as Mezirow might say he is) - he has actually undergone major changes in consciousness from where he started - he grew up with formal and unquestioned rules. Whereas A. (about 38 years old) comes from an era where questioning was the status quo. My daughter, at 21, feels that it is her responsibility to know what is right and

wrong, knows she cannot rely on an external authority. Change is slow but it's also fast.

For one class I took, I tried to string quotes from several authors together to support a point.

July 25, 1995

Choice, an essential ingredient of the post-modern paradigm, was not an option for a pre-modern....Plato's educational and social theories were based on each individual fulfilling a pre-set role for the common good (Doll, 1993, p. 24-5).

Accordingly, self-respect, and the making the most of your own individual opportunities, together constituted the efficient morality of the leaders among the industrialists of that period. The western world is now suffering from the limited moral outlook of the three previous generations (Whitehead, 1925, p. 196).

Of all the contributions America has made to the history of the world, the idea of freedom from a social hierarchy has been the greatest (Pirsig, 1991, p. 53).

It is, I claim, nonsense to say that it does not matter which individual man acted as the nucleus for the change. It is precisely this that makes history unpredictable into the future (Bateson, 1979, p. 43).

Physical wondering is still important, but greater still is the power of man's spiritual adventures - adventures of thought, adventures of passionate feeling, adventures of aesthetic experience. A diversification among human communities is essential for the provision of the incentive and material for the Odyssey of the human spirit (Whitehead, 1925, p. 207).

In pre-modern times, the individual was an essential part of the whole, a part which was decided before the person was born. Over a long period of change, the idea of self shifted to where we are now - the community is basically forgotten in our culture as we have become more individually focused. The individual is a thing to be defined in itself and can be considered as not having value. But this movement in our idea of self has not been totally negative. Our idea of freedom from social hierarchy probably could not be thought without the focus on individuality. As both Bateson and Whitehead say, in an organic system randomness is needed in order to have on hand many possibilities from which to choose. Doll says that we may have to overlearn the place where we are now before the process of self-organization can occur to take us to the next unfolding. Although we are tremendously fixated on self right now, everything is in question (one can tell by the desperate trying to hold on to the status quo while watching it crumble), this may be changing. Being an optimist, I see the change from total external control in pre-modern times to too much individual responsibility in our time as an emerging towards, hopefully, an internal understanding of and commitment to community and diversity. Each place where we've been as human beings seems a necessary pre-condition (or Whitehead's prehension) of movement from being an unconscious part of the natural system to being a conscious part of the natural system. As soon as human beings discovered their ability to control the environment, this movement probably became absolutely essential. However, I'm really aware of Tom Barone's statement this summer that students can be just as attracted to a person who closes down possibilities as someone who opens them up, and I think this is what Bateson was getting at too - the unpredictability of who is going to influence future directions. We will have more choice about who this will be if, as individuals, we are more conscious about underlying assumptions and dynamics. "What is always important is to be sure that the new is not worse than the old" (Bateson p. 177). Not that we can ever be sure but awareness of underlying motives and dynamics protects us and makes us responsible for community.

And I continued to try to understand how my background influences me.

July, 1995

I think that I am attracted to literature (works of fiction) because there I can find the random ways of presenting ideas which will take me beyond the world of surface reflection which I'm living in now. I need literature to help me get beyond my tendency to believe everything I read, to help me see underlying dynamics, to pay more attention to what is deeply buried but won't go away. In an imaginary world, I'm a little bit more free to imagine.

In high school, I was streamed for university. The more "hard" sciences one took, the better chance there was to get in. I took physics, calculus, trigonometry, chemistry - and of course, English. It was not until Grade 12 that I took Biology 11 as an elective, and loved it. But I felt it was too late to switch paths. I would have had to delay my entry to university for a year in order to get Biology 12 if I wanted to take biology at university. Math was my major the first year of university, but I switched to psychology in the second year with a focus on neuropsychology and psychometrics.

English was my minor. Although I did not do well at it, some kind of stubbornness and feeling that it held something for me made me pursue the subject. One course would be in the lab training my rat whom I named after my English professor; the next would be a course on modern poetry. No connections were ever made between the two and when I left university, I left both poetry and the science of psychology behind gladly. Since university, I have used literature mainly as an escape.

Why am I telling this story? Because I'm hoping it will help me to make connections, to see patterns, to bring to my consciousness a sense of something below the surface. I can see immediately why I'm interested in organismic and evolutionary theories. I've been attracted to biology since that first taste in Grade 12. But I can also see that I have basically ignored my own underlying sense of

possibilities emerging in order to follow the path laid out for me and which I was good at. I have been an active participant in learning to ignore the underlying connections and now I need to become an active participant in uncovering them, to will myself to pay attention to discordance rather than ignoring it.

There are many, many more of these journals, most of them handwritten, many scribbled on bits of paper. These are the journals which arise from the underlying emotional journey. The readings I choose as a student, the interpretation I make of them as a student are heavily influenced by the search for an emotional connection which includes rather than separates both ideas and myself. I recognize the themes which arise again and which I now think of as a gap between connected knowing (allowing myself to be influenced, to develop a relationship with something or someone I'm trying to know, to find a connection) and separative knowing (being critical, using a powerful 'should' voice to persuade others, being separate from).

Recently, I've had a strong pull back to the metaphors. I'm much more likely to sit down and write something like this to try to figure out what's going on for me:

September 30, 1996

Silently I stand beside the pool of my emotions. The surface is calm with the weight of sadness, bright with the light of joy. It's a change from the raging torrent of emotion which was more the norm four years ago. Then it was impossible even to watch the turmoil for long, I was caught and tossed by the whims of the surface. Now I know that the depth of the pool held me lovingly then, as it does now. Now I feel drawn to the beauty of the surface, reflecting back to me continuously changing images of myself and others.

I think that deepness is in me as it is in everyone. This writing allowed me to put another "should" in its place. Widening my focus may be a deepening experience for me, the surface reflections a source of understanding if I am conscious. In my practice and in my life, I am drawn to expanding rather than narrowing my vision and must trust that the underlying depth will hold me.

My work consists of talking, problem solving, being with many people everyday. Relationships with students continue over the time they are in a program and usually consist of brief but often intense discussions when they run into problems. I'm involved in helping to design programs for those students. The adult education literature has helped with this, and so has experience. What has enhanced my practice just as much has been a growing ability to acknowledge the richness of "other" even though the relationship isn't such that I will ever actually "know" that richness. The more I understand the richness within myself, the more I know that others, too, are unique and have depths I will never know. The more I have learned to question my attachment to "shoulds," the more I have realized that I do not have to "know" each person I meet. What I want to do is to be able to be present to their particular concerns at the moment - not make immediate assumptions about what their problem is, not make judgments about their ability to move, and also not to let them get off topic more than I can tolerate. My practice, my work, is to be with a person in dynamic interaction (Keller, Whitehead) as much as I can be for the short time we are together (Noddings, Heshusius).

My work requires expertise in connection/process more than in a "content" area such as the university might define this. It requires much practical knowledge of the University, our programs, the ability to talk to people

in many different disciplines, from many different backgrounds, and intuitive knowledge built on experience of the adult students with whom I work as well as my own experience as an adult student. I'm a much better practitioner now than when I began the job 10 years ago because I have had so much experience. What graduate studies has given me is more ability to open up to and to welcome change and diversity. To recognize that in spite of my seeming search for stability, an underlying urge towards change has been a strong motivation in my life, to indulge in my love of mixing and matching.

Depth comes not only from experience but from acceptance of, making space for oneself. My work is to provide that space for others even if it is only in the smallest of ways and in the briefest of encounters.

A Broken Web

Catherine Keller (1986) theorizes that our continued support of patriarchy has led to separation being more highly valued than connection. Her metaphor is that the separative voice continuously breaks the web of connections which life is; while the soluble voice continuously tries to mend the connection. I find the metaphor useful, not in terms of judging one way of being or the other, but in trying to understand how these two forces of separation and connection work together in the process of change, relationship, and education.

Keller uses the word separative (rather than separate), "implying an activity or an intention rather than any fundamental state of being" (p. 9), to designate a moving self whose task is to be seen as different, special, strong and "lies above all in impermeability" (p. 9). In contrast, the soluble self tends to dissolve into other

in order to understand, to be with. "The pattern congeals into two different sorts of self, completely dependent on each other; but the task of one is to assert its apparent independence, the task of other to support that appearance" (p.8).

The first point of view values knowing yourself as special, overcoming all odds through willpower, brute force, imagination, whatever resources you have at your disposal. The desire is to know yourself somehow as separate and, one hopes, better than most. The relationship with other has to do more with "being seen" (Jordan et al., 1991, p. 55) as separate or different by other in order to know that you are separate or different.

The soluble self blends with other, defining itself more in the relationships created moment to moment than in a separate sense of being. "'Being present with' psychologically is experienced as self-enhancing" (Jordan et al., 1991, p. 55) rather than threatening to a sense of individuality. The soluble self is dependent on other because success is defined in relational terms.

I imagine how these two sorts of selves may look and wonder about the connection between them.

Heroes and Heroines

"I am not a number, I am a free man!"

(*The Prisoner* TV series, early 70s)

The powerful image of the handsome, strong, and heroic man standing on the wind-blown beach shouting I AM NOT A NUMBER, I AM A FREE MAN at the unknown, forever unnamed, THEY, who have imprisoned him, "captured" me when I was a

young woman. The Prisoner was kept in an "idyllic" community (I say this because THEY thought it was and sometimes when the stress of real life was too much to bear I thought it was, too) where every need was taken care of and where everything was under control (or quickly brought back under control after the prisoner created havoc once a week). People in this society did not have names - they had a number, giving the idea that each was predictable and controllable. Only our hero, the Prisoner, was able to resist this control. I was "captured" by the Prisoner's refusal to give up, his need to struggle and his continuous attempts to introduce some rebellion into the community.

The idea of individuality presented here is that one has to be special, strong, a fighter in order to resist seduction by an evil other or by the lull of the everyday. The Prisoner seems to be totally alone in his fight, his sense of connection has to do with knowing he is right, with a sense that he is fighting for a larger cause. His sense of being involved in a heroic struggle sustains his self.

I soon tired of the program. Although The Prisoner fought a new battle every week, things never changed.

In contrast, the subtle change that takes place in Stacey MacAindra (nee Cameron), whose everyday life over the course of a year is the subject of Margaret Laurence's *The Fire-Dwellers*, is barely perceptible and yet somehow so real. The following quotations which come near the beginning and near the end of the book reflect minor, yet significant change:

The full-length mirror is on the bedroom door. Stacey sees images reflected there, distanced by the glass like humans on TV, less real than real and yet more sharply focused because isolated and limited by a frame. The double bed is unmade, and on a chair rests a jumble of her clothes, carelessly shed stockings like round nylon puddles, roll-on girdle in the shape of a tire where she has rolled it off. On another chair, Mac's dirty shirt is neatly folded. Two books reside on the bedside table - *The Golden Bough* and *Investments and You*, Hers and His, both unread. On the dressing table, amid the nonmagic jars and lipsticks are scattered photographs of Katie, Ian, Duncan and Jen at various ages. Hung above the bed is a wedding picture, Stacey twenty-three, almost beautiful although not knowing it then, and Mac twenty-seven, hopeful confident lean, Agamemnon king of men or the equivalent, at least to her. Sitting on the bed, Stacey sees mirrored her own self in the present flesh, insufficiently concealed by a short mauve nylon nightgown with the ribbon now gone from the neckline and one shoulder frill yanked off by some kid or other (p. 3).

On the bedroom chair rests a jumble of Stacey's clothes, off-cast stockings like nylon puddles, roll-on girdle in the shape of a tire where she has rolled it off. On another chair, Mac's clothes are folded neatly, a habit he acquired in the army, as he has remarked countless times. Two books are on the bedside table - *The Golden Bough* and *Investments and You*, Hers and His, both unread. On the dressing table, amid the nonmagic jars and lipsticks are scattered photographs of Katie, Ian, Duncan and Jen at various ages. Above the bed is hung a wedding picture, Stacey twenty-three, almost beautiful although not knowing it then, Mac twenty-seven, hopeful confident lean (p. 305).

The books are still unread, Stacey is still untidy with her clothes and Mac still tidy. Not much has changed and yet there is change. Stacey is no longer looking in the

mirror and seeing the reflection. Mac's tidiness is linked to his past. Mac is no longer "Agamemnon, king of men or the equivalent." Over the course of the year, Stacey has come to understand his struggle and her own strength a little better. Nothing seems to have changed and yet it has.

In contrast to *The Prisoner*, Stacey is certain about nothing.

At the Day of Judgement, God will say Stacey MacAindra, what have you done with your life? And I'll say, Well, let's see, Sir, I think I loved my kids. And He'll say, Are you certain about that? And I'll say, God, I'm not certain about anything any more. So He'll say, To hell with you, then. We're all positive thinkers up here. Then again, maybe He wouldn't. Maybe He'd say, Don't worry, Stacey, I'm not all that certain, either. Sometimes I wonder if I even exist. And I'd say, I know what you mean, Lord. I have the same trouble with myself (p. 10-11).

The men in her life - Mac, Thor, Buckle - are trying to be heroes, to be what they think is required of men in our society while Stacey lives her life trying to be what she thinks is required of women in our society: she works to hold the threads together. She reads women's magazines about how to bring up boys and worries that she is babying them. She takes evening courses to improve her mind.

My mind is full of trivialities.
So when they're at school, do I settle down with the plays of Sophocles? I do not. I think about the color of my front door. That's being unfair to myself. I took that course, Ancient Greek Drama, last winter. Yeh, I took it all right.

(Young academic generously giving up his Thursday evenings in the cause of adult education.

Mrs. MacAindra, I don't think you've got quite the right slant on Clytemnestra.

Why not? The king sacrificed their youngest daughter for success in war - what's the queen supposed to do, shout for joy?

That's not quite the point we're discussing, is it? She murdered her husband, Mrs. MacAindra.

(Oh God, don't you think I know that? The poor bitch.) Yeh well I guess you must know, Dr. Thorne. Sorry.

Oh, that's fine - I always try to encourage people to express themselves.)

Young twerp. Let somebody try killing one of his daughters. But still, he had his Ph.D. What do I have? Grade Eleven. My own fault (p. 32).

Stacey is preoccupied with Mac, the kids, what she is doing and what it means, with what the right thing to do is, and the wrong thing. But what she does is just keep going, day after day, minor crisis and major crisis. Weaving the web, keeping at it no matter what.

To me, this is an exquisitely beautiful story of love and commitment, about weaving the web of connection day in and day out, whether it has been rent by herself or other. Stacey is to me, in spite of her drinking, her sarcasm, her confusion, her uncertainty, a symbol of the beauty of living an "ordinary" life. The everydayness of life, so feared for its boredom, is actually subtlety changing day by day, sometimes like the colours of a deciduous tree, sometimes like the colours of an evergreen tree.

Both of these stories, that of *The Prisoner* and that of Stacey, are fraught with the perils of living. One engages with the ideal of being a "good" human being from the everydayness of life (emotional, personal); one

fights the battle of being a "good" human from the heroic perspective of transcendence (objective higher truth).

There are strengths and weaknesses in both voices. They pay attention to different aspects of being human. Perhaps it is because one has been more highly valued than the other that they seem to work against each other rather than together, counterpoints that can't seem to find a common ground. Or perhaps there is something missing from the connection they make with each other and with life.

The Quality of Connection

Organic theories of development put growth, or change, or transformation in the biologic world in terms of differentiation (movement to separate) and integration (movement to relate the separation to the rest of the organism). These must occur at the same time and the new incorporates the old in some way. It is the integration that allows the separation to make sense. Suppose we thought of human beings, perhaps human consciousness, as an organism continuously engaged in this process of differentiation and integration. My question becomes, are we involved in a natural process of growth which has built into it the limit of integration (relationship that makes sense) or have we become a cancer growing more and more with no connection until we kill our host and therefore ourselves?

Of course, this overly dramatic question can't be answered, but it resonates with an underlying concern of mine that we have not valued connection as we value separation, and has prompted me to try to understand how integration (relationship, connection) fits with differentiation (separation) in a way which makes links

or makes sense. Feminist literature (Trinh Minh-ha, bell hooks, Donna Haraway) has discussed how we deal with difference rather than relating to it by absorbing it (becoming like the dominant group as when women are pressured to become more like men in the working world), by seeing it as incomplete and therefore something to be fixed or made better, or by making it special. (Catherine Keller uses the example of religion which she says has changed from a gospel of love to a gospel of separation. "We are chosen and no longer simply different in our community of uniqueness, as all others are in theirs" [p. 219]. The body of Christ, a radically relational vision, instead designates an elite of the saved.)

I have been deeply affected by exclusivity and have put a great deal of energy throughout my life into trying to both belong (connect) and not belong (separate). I found that when I belonged, I was very aware of the people who were being excluded, and when I didn't belong I felt vulnerable, insecure and lonely. I felt this pull most within the context of organizations which often made a claim that one could belong if one held certain opinions or beliefs when in reality there were many unstated factors (such as race, class and gender and other more subtle issues of belonging as well) which determined whether you could or could not belong. For example, the difficulty my mother had being accepted and included by the church community when we first moved to Lethbridge was to do with her newness to the group. I learned about the time it takes to be accepted. I was deeply affected by a decision by a Girl Guide leader not to award me my last badge because I looked too young and no one would believe I had completed my requirements for the gold cord (appearances are important in this quest to belong).

Basically, I belonged automatically according to stated criteria such as being a white Anglo and reasonably well socialized. And yet, I did not like the belonging, was not proud of the belonging by the time I was in my late teens. As well as questioning their ideologies (part of being a young person in the sixties and seventies), I had

recognized the exclusivity of organizations on a personal and not just an ideological basis.

What would it be like to relate to difference, to people and other parts of the world which are not like us? What would it be like to allow difference to influence us, to make connections which include and recognize that we are a part of rather than separated, making it less easy to continue our journey of separation without limit?

The Dynamic "I"

...yes, you are, were, and will be the same person; no, you are not and will not be the same self. The semantics of distinguishing the self (as actual entity) from the person has more than sophisticated intent. It provides one possible framework for conceiving the individual being as both radically spontaneous and deeply continuous (Keller, 1986, p. 195).

The idea of the individual as both an ongoing *person* and a dynamically active *self* which Catherine Keller proposes allows for both our profound feeling of sameness as individuals and our intuitive knowledge that we do change. This idea exists in other scholars' works (Haraway, Trinh-minh-ha, Whitehead, Kegan). These scholars see the self as a dynamic process, constantly feeling its way into existence (Whitehead). The dynamic process of I which exists right now making decisions, feeling, thinking, having conversations - interacts not only with other dynamic I's ("actual entities" as Whitehead would say to expand our concept beyond humans) but with all the memories of me that existed at one time or another.

As I write this, my head is full of characters with whom I am interacting - the imagined readers (academic advisors, friends, and family who might read this,

colleagues, the Humanities Diploma Program students who participated in this study); voices constructed from past experience; and scholars whose voices pop into my head as I write and whom I try to acknowledge by putting their names in brackets. Even though I would say that I am alone, sitting at my computer with the sun streaming through my window, in the stillness of a beautiful fall day, in reality, the room is crowded not only with the voices I allow to influence the dynamic I who is writing, but also with memories of the past which influence me moment by moment.

I try to feel this idea, let it sink into my bones. What I feel are limits, how few of these voices I can hear at any one time. A couple of voices are particularly loud, one which insists on continuity and the other which says, be careful (both themselves made up of many voices of experience - my own and others) - I try to convince them that I'm only asking for a little space, I would like to have more options and choices available at any one time. I think that perhaps both the soluable and the separative self, carried to the extreme, don't have many options - one can't hear other options at all, the other only hears others' options. And yet, I need both strength and softness to hear the quiet, distant, or unfamiliar voices both within me and from others.

In this scenario, other people provide variety for the dynamic I of the individual. When we talk, we change each other or perhaps not. When I talk to myself (my imagined host of characters), I revise how I feel about myself or not. It is the dynamic I's decision, influenced by you and by myriad past experiences. The dynamic I is a system in continuous movement which is constantly working to maintain stability, constantly relating, making sense of, feeling, thinking.

The process of going through graduate studies for me has been a process of learning to allow the dynamic I to be influenced by more and more ideas at any one time (from both within and without) without necessarily being caught by one, learning to be more present in a situation - all the past, present, and future ideas at the moment allowed to be in dynamic interaction with what is happening now. The change is that the voice who knows (or who tries to know) the rules (perhaps was not experienced enough not to be dependent on the rules to either follow or rebel against) is slowly losing its dominance, allowing the dynamic I to hear more differing voices at the same time without being paralyzed. The contradictory ideas don't have as much power because I recognize them as constructs originally designed to help make sense rather than to block understanding. In losing their power, the power of making connections comes to the fore. I am amazed these days at how much more often I find that the combination of others' ideas and mine holds such amazing potential.

Thinking about the dynamic I is influenced by Catherine Keller as I try on her ideas. This is how she describes the process:

...my many selves as the fabric of other persons, plants, places - all the actual entities that have become part of me - and my many selves as the necklace of experiences that make up my personal history from birth to now. These selves are all there; if I acknowledge their influence, they become part of the community of my psyche working together through the most painful contrasts of desire, through seemingly irreconcilable differences of perspective, to produce the integration of a greater complexity of feeling (p. 227).

It is in this dynamic sense of I that I see the potential for a sense of connected knowing, and here is where I

understand the problem with seeing ourselves as fixed beings.

To say I am now the same person I was a moment ago is to make a (doubtless useful) generalization. That generalization should not be mistaken for the real actuality in its immediacy. But why not? (Keller, p.197)

Why not? Perhaps it's because we then see people, and other dynamic systems as fixed rather than constantly changing. "Identity replaces connection" (p. 197) leading to more of a concern with sameness and prediction than with dynamic interaction and ability to be in the present moment.

A standard way of trying to understand people in our society is to hold them still and analyze from various perspectives. This has proved a useful way of gaining knowledge on one level, but it has also created a problem, the problem Whitehead calls the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness." In order to make useful generalizations, we say that something is so and then forget that we have made up the construct and assume that we have found something concrete which is true. For example, it has been found that women adult students returning to school don't have time to meet competing priorities (Edwards, 1993; Pascall & Cox, 1993) which causes stress on the student and on their families. We say the problem is time management and offer workshops on that topic. These are useful but the problem remains, so we offer more time management workshops and convince these women that this is what they need. In our desire to make things concrete, "control and permanence become higher values than connection and spontaneity" (Keller, p. 198). We forget the dynamic, changing reality which is the adapting required by the woman and her family as she

is exposed to new ideas which upset her equilibrium. We forget the social context which demands that a woman continue to be the glue which holds the family together even while her educational experience is asking her to develop a separative voice.

But what is this glue about? What is included in the everyday personal life which seems not to be included in the idea of transcendence? The next four sections - Width and Depth, Empathy/E-Motions, Connected Knowing and Father Talk/Mother Talk/Baby Talk look at some ideas usually missing from, or at least ignored, in our traditional idea of what it means to be educated which places more value on specialization, objectivity, and separation. (For a history of this development see Margaret Wertheim, 1995, *Pythagoras' Trousers*.)

Width and Depth

I learn a way of looking at the world that is more accurate, complex, multilayered, multidimensional, more truthful...I've learned that what is presented to me as an accurate view of the world is frequently a lie...so I gain truth when I expand my constricted eye (Pratt, 1988 p. 17).

Minnie Bruce Pratt is faced with a devastating contradiction when she finds that declaring her lesbianism means losing her children and her place of belonging in society. This causes her to examine the very foundations of her society and herself. She opens herself up, layer after layer, each time losing a "home" where she has felt safe to eventually find a new, more inclusive home. But each new home is more complicated to retain, although infinitely more rewarding, because of her expanding awareness which includes awareness of the historical background, if not the personal setting (which

she wonders about) of each person she meets. Minnie Bruce Pratt becomes conscious of her connectedness in the world (the effect of her actions on others and the social context), her relationship to past, present and future; her relationship to lover, friend, acquaintance, and stranger; her relationship to the resources she uses. Her understanding is deeply connected to how she is in the world.

But because knowing what to do in a situation that you suspect may be racist or anti-semitic, even knowing what that situation is, involves judgement and ethics and feelings in the heart of a new kind than we were raised with, then we will only be able to act effectively if we gather up, not just information, but the threads of life that connect us to others (p. 52).

Although, women's ability to "serve many masters" (M. C. Bateson, 1990, p. 163) has not been a highly valued skill - economically and in other ways, our society has valued specialization - M. C. Bateson poses the question:

but what if we were to recognize the capacity for distraction, the divided will, as representing a higher wisdom?...Instead of concentration on a transcendent ideal, sustained attention to diversity and interdependence may offer a different clarity of vision, one that is sensitive to ecological complexity, to the multiple rather than the singular (p.166).

These visions from Minnie Bruce Pratt and Mary Catherine Bateson propose that complexity and width are the basis of our commonality; broadening our experience of each other and ourselves is a key to relating to difference. As Catherine Keller says, wholeness cannot be a monolith. "The Prisoner" is alone and disconnected. Even though he may move our ideal of being human forward, it could just

as well be backward because there is no connection. The ideas of width, of multiplicity teach that we will always change if we continue to allow and expand our ability to be influenced, to be moved endlessly.

Empathy/E-motions

The study of empathy may provide one means for examining the relative development of agentic and communal in an individual such that any action for the self would contain a consideration of the effect of this action on others (Jordan et al., 1991. p. 28).

Jordan, Surrey and Kaplan (1991) describe empathy as a combination of feeling and thought:

We propose that empathy involves both affective and cognitive functioning and is a far more complex, developmentally advanced and interactive process than implied by those theories which associate empathy with regression, symbiosis, and merger of ego boundaries (p. 27).

Relationship based on thought (being logical) without feeling can lead to exclusion (consider that there was a time when women and blacks were "thought" to be less than human). On the other hand, it is "thought" that relationship based on feeling only leads to the fusion of self with other. It has been "thought" that women easily get into this bind, but interviews with women about moral dilemmas, whether done by William Perry or Carol Gilligan, show a rational understanding as well as feeling about moral problems. Although care may keep a person from following a prescribed course of action which has been deemed the "right" one, this is not due to fusion of the self which interferes with the ability to make a decision. Instead it is based on an ability to

feel the many sides of an issue and make decisions based on context. Both thought and feeling exist in empathy; it is when one or the other is not included that relationship begins not to make sense.

Empathy is a skill, not much acknowledged in the educational setting, and yet it could be a key for developing relationships (connections) which make sense.

Suzanne Pharr (1996) was asked in an interview with *MS Magazine*, "How do we root out our own racism or homophobia or prejudice against poor people?" Her response was:

One way is to examine the place in yourself where you've experienced discrimination and imagine someone else there...We need a politics of empathy: If this is what it feels like to me, isn't it possible that this is similar to the experiences of other people? What also breaks through is telling people's stories. I cannot tell you how important this is (p. 68).

So let me tell you a little story. The other day I went for lunch with someone who teaches at the University. He had agreed to teach a course in our community education program. While I was away from the table, a person at the next table asked the professor if I was a teacher. I returned to the table in time to hear "No, she's just an administrator" - and then, looking at me, "Well, I shouldn't say just an administrator..."

Feelings or emotions play a key role in empathy and connected knowing. Often, the sense of connection comes from feeling, or imagining feeling what another person is experiencing. And yet feelings are not highly valued and are even feared. As Keller (1986) says,

If men are in danger of (and dangerous with) too much blockage of feeling...women may accept too much conformity with the emotions of others, or with the stasis of the felt world, and we may have special difficulty letting go of the overpowering emotions of our own immediate past. These are the temptations of relation (p. 189).

Keller goes on to argue that women are in danger from the power of their emotions only because their lives have been so confined within our society. She says,

Released from the constrictions of social domesticity and the narrow world of the private family, women adventure into width of thought, feeling, relationship. Width, a corollary of connection and openness, might seem to work against depth. But (as Whitehead says)... "the function of width is to deepen the ocean of feeling" (p.191).

And, as always, Keller brings us back to the idea of movement. "To be moved is motion, e-motion" (p.221). Feelings change constantly. We can learn from them and let them go. And yet, because we are so used to thinking of ourselves as fixed, we tend to identify ourselves with an emotion and get stuck with it.

Connected Knowing

The major ways in which connected knowing differs from separative knowing come from the acknowledgment that both the personal and the emotional are a part of the learning process. Educational institutions have valued an objective stance which has been deemed more valid than the subjective stance with which connected knowing begins. I think of "David," one of the participants in this research project. He has done a tremendous amount of work (and spent a lot of money) providing proof of his

argument that P. B. Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*. Underlying all this work is his interest in and caring about an author whom he sees as struggling with some of the same issues in life as he does. But "the kind of self-analysis required for complex connected knowing has been largely excluded from the traditional liberal arts curriculum and relegated to 'counselling'" (Belenky et al., 1986, p.123) which means that the greatest value of his research is seen in terms of its acceptance by the academy.

Connected knowing begins with the personal and "involves feeling because it is rooted in relationship; but it also involves thought" (Belenky et al., p. 121). Perhaps the feelings help us make a connection and the thought moves our understanding forward.

The two ideas emphasized here, the link of personal knowledge of ourselves and the ability to understand other positions from the inside rather than the outside are processes which take place while we are on our educational journey, and yet they are not acknowledged, or there is usually no place for them in formal education.

Father Tongue/Mother Tongue/Baby Talk

Learning to debate, prove you are right, to be critical, compete to be better than others is more highly valued in formal education than empathy, feeling one's way into understanding, valuing teacher-student and student-student relationships, valuing personal knowledge and everyday experience. What do we need to learn to be more inclusive?

Ursula Le Guin in her "Bryn Mawr commencement Address" (1989) discusses "father tongue" and "mother tongue" and urges the graduating students to learn "baby talk." She says:

(The father tongue) doesn't speak itself. It only lectures...It is the language of thought which seeks objectivity. I did not say it is the language of rational thought. Reason is a faculty far larger than mere objective thought...The essential gesture of the father tongue is not reasoning but distancing - making a gap, a space, between the subject or self and the object or other...is spoken from above. It goes one way. No answer is expected or heard...what I call the father tongue is immensely noble and indispensably useful. When it claims a privileged relationship to reality, it becomes dangerous and potentially destructive (p. 148-149).

Using the father tongue, I can speak of the mother tongue only, inevitably to distance it - to exclude it. It is the other, inferior. It is primitive: inaccurate, unclear, coarse, limited, trivial, banal. It's repetitive, the same over and over, like the work called women's work; earthbound, housebound. It is vulgar, the vulgar tongue, common, common speech, colloquial, low ordinary, plebeian, like the work ordinary people do, the lives common people live. The mother tongue, spoken or written, expects an answer: It is conversation, a word the root of which means "turning together." The mother tongue is language not as mere communication but as relation, relationship. It connects...It is written, but...it flies from the mouth on the breath that is our life and is gone...and yet returning. It is a language always on the verge of silence and often on the verge of song. It is the language stories are told in. If I try to be objective...I'll make a commencement speech about being successful in the battle of life, I'll lie to you; and I don't want to. (Instead I want to) offer our experience to one another. Not claiming anything: offering something (p. 149-150).

(Baby talk is) In Sojourner Truth's words you hear the coming together, the marriage of the public discourse and the private experience, making a power, a beautiful thing, the true discourse of reason. This is a wedding and a welding back together of the alienated consciousness that I've been calling the father tongue and the undifferentiated engagement that I've been calling the mother tongue. This is their baby, this baby talk, the language you can spend your life trying to learn (p. 152).

Baby talk goes beyond connection and separation. Father tongue is the teaching tongue, the voice of objective knowledge in formal education. Mother tongue is also a teaching tongue, the voice of experience in everyday life. I know both these tongues. I speak mother tongue everyday with students, and father tongue with colleagues in order to convince. Father talk has a strength but without the underlying sense of connection which the mother tongue contributes; it can lead to a sense of fragmentation rather than a sense of multiplicity. Perhaps baby talk has to do with staying in the gap, attending to both but somehow being a way that is neither.

Talking Baby Talk?

The whole notion of describing human interaction in geographic or spatial terms, along a scale of close or distant (i.e. separated), seems questionable. Surely it is the quality of the interaction that is the question - the interplay of 'conceptualized feelings' (i.e. feelings cum concepts), the doing of good or bad to the other - in relation to the nature of each's needs (Jordan et al., 1991, p. 17).

The story of the Being which begins this section is a story of someone who senses that something is missing. A

sense of connection is missing; a sense of movement is missing - the being fears being fixed and yet tries to be fixed and to fix others, thinking that this will bring a sense of belonging and security to her life. But in order to fix something, she has to separate or distance "it" - making herself or other into a "some(thing)." The attention is on the somethings, including herself, and how they should be rather than the web of connections and interrelations within and outside of the self which both hold her and change, even if in very small ways, continuously. Being has a very difficult time "fixing" and sees this difficulty as a lack in herself which she tries to correct by trying to become more distant, more fixing and fixable, becoming ever better at father talk and less in touch with mother talk.

I have become quite good at using the separative voice to argue against exclusion, racism, discrimination. This voice is highly valued in our society and it works to some extent. But because it is not a voice of genuine inclusion, it has left me feeling empty. It is out of this separative way of interpreting past experiences that I have come to fear "being fixed." As I begin to understand the ways in which I "fix," I have begun to feel more connected. My father was with one company for 35 years (or maybe longer), a fact I found hard to relate to and which I took as a criticism of my own history of relatively short-term employment. Only recently have I realized that my father's working career involved more change than I am ever likely to know. Not only did he live in four different cities over those years, but the nature his job continuously changed as the airline industry changed. The separative voice has had years of experience identifying ways in which my father and I are different, the connective voice finds the place which can relate to and learn from his experience. The separative

voice distances and so I can only see the overall "heroic" struggle rather than the contextual meaning of life events at particular times, in particular places, with particular people.

I don't think it's a case of having to give up the separative voice. As Clinchy (1989) says,

...separate knowing is obviously of great importance. It allows us to criticize our own and other people's thinking. Without it, we could not write a second draft of our papers; the first draft would look just fine. Without it, we would be at the mercy of all the authorities who try to tell us what to believe. Separate knowing is a powerful way of knowing. But it is not the only way (p. 650).

Although this separative way of knowing, which celebrates separateness, dominance, and achievement, whose voice I have learned well, and which has led to feelings of isolation in spite of acknowledged belonging, is prevalent in education; the voice of connection is beginning to be heard. As Keller points out, it is difficult for this voice to gain recognition. The concern about connection paradoxically can keep the voice quiet. To speak in a separative voice (which is strong and sure of its stance) about connection can create the contradiction which the "being" feels in the story - speaking out for connection with a separative voice and feeling disconnected. The connected voice is uncertain in order to be more inclusive. As soon as we are sure of our stance, we close ourselves in some way, we become "fixed," we stop moving.

One of the fears associated with the connected voice is the fear of relativism. How will we ever be able to make decisions about how to behave, about right and wrong?

Does anything go? No, I don't think so, not in a vision where the quality of how we connect to others is a guide. This way of making decisions has been subordinate to the search for truths which can be applied to any situation. It is difficult; we have learned to want the security of knowing the "right" way to be, but these truths are constantly undermined and our inability to give them up undermines our ability to be human. For example, the people who set up the residential schools for First Nations people were convinced they were doing the right thing.

I ask myself, would I still yell at the man in the parking lot? Probably I would, because he is like an armed gunman, thoughtlessly shooting out his bullets of pain. He needs to know that he has hurt another person. My attitude has changed, though. Then, I felt guilty because I had yelled at another person in public, I blamed myself and thought others would blame me for his outburst (mothers are responsible for making sure their children turn out the way other people want them to), I didn't tell anyone, I held on to the feelings for a long time, I allowed anger and bitterness to take hold. Now, the context is larger. No, I'm not going to let someone who hurts me or someone else get away with it if I recognize it. Yes, other people may say it's my fault and, yes, I do have to look at my motives and how I express myself. No, none of us is perfect and even the man in the parking lot struggles in some way with how to be human. Now I might even more readily yell at the man in the parking lot, but I would also tell the story sooner, and sooner learn from myself and others, and sooner move on.

It is not only because the separative voice is more powerful that I tried so hard to learn it. It was also because I thought that connection meant meeting the needs of others by putting my own aside. I thought that connection meant pleasing others, being what others thought I should be. In the old days of protest marches,

feminism gave me the courage to begin to take care of myself. It is now the separative voice which gives me the strength to refuse it, to look for other ways of speaking and listening. Gilligan (1988) discusses the tension between doing what is "right" (justice) and remaining connected (care) which is "manifest in the moral opposition of selfish and selfless choices - an opposition in which selfishness connotes the exclusion of others and selflessness the exclusion of self" (Gilligan et al., 1988, p. 17). She discusses this dilemma, one which is always with us but one side of which is usually disregarded, in vivid terms:

In Book 6 of the Aeneid, when Aeneas travels to the underworld in search of his father, he is startled to come upon Dido - to discover that, in fact, she is dead. He had not believed the stories that had reached him. "I could not believe," he tells her. "that I would hurt you so terribly by going." (Virgil, 6:463-464, p. 176). Seeing her wound, he weeps, asking, "Was I the cause?" (Virgil, 6:458, p. 175). Yet explaining that he did not willingly leave her, he describes himself as a man set apart, bound by his responsibility to his destiny. Caught between two images of himself - as implicated and as innocent, as responsible and as tossed about by fate - he exemplifies the dilemma of how to think about the self, how to represent the experience of being at once separated and connected to others through a fabric of human relationship...

...When Aeneas encounters consequences of his action that he had neither believed nor intended and Dido, once generous and responsive, is rendered by grief cold and impassive, this disjunction momentarily surfaces. The detachment of Aeneas's *pietas* becomes the condition for his ignorance of her feelings; yet his adherence to his mission does not imply the indifference that she in her responsiveness imagined. Thus, the simple judgement that would condemn Aeneas for turning away from Dido or Dido

for breaking her vow of chastity yields to a more complex vision - one that encompasses the capacity for sustained commitment and the capacity for responsiveness in relationships and recognizes their tragic conflict (Gilligan et al., 1988, p. 3-4).

"Baby talk" (Le Guin) or "real talk" (Belenkey et al.) somehow tries to include the ability to be both committed and connected. Baby talk includes others through understanding context using a form of empathy which includes both thought and emotion, the construction of understanding through discussion, the acknowledgment of the personal and the public because they exist together. This kind of talk which reflects the complexity of being human and being a part of the natural world is what I try to learn.

My Experience of the Return to School

When connected knowers receive affirmation at the beginning of an educational experience, they feel more confident about their capacities and motivated to take new risks because they are freed from the 'tyranny of expectation' (Belenkey et al., 1986, p. 205) which permeates traditional classrooms. In traditional learning environments, this validation is normally granted only after proving one is worthy of being inducted into the community of thinkers (Enns, 1993, p. 8).

Although I criticize education for not giving connected values the weight they deserve, most of my experience with graduate school in Curriculum Studies at UVic has been different from other experiences with formal education. The personal, emotional side of my life has been given as much space as I want to take. Uncertainty is valued. When I realized that I could write anything I wanted to in my journals, that there would be no hard and fast rules about what it means to uncover my foundations,

assumptions, I felt that a great weight had been lifted off my shoulders. I was free to not know, free to let go, free to try on. And yet this freedom, this uncertainty has not resulted in a dissolution of self but has actually provided a different kind of limit. The difference is that these limits do not come from an external source that I can never seem to understand or get right. They come from an inner source which pushes me to be conscious of how I care, and yet allow myself to be less than perfect as life is movement, movement from which I learn when I am conscious. The desire to "do the right thing" still comes from within as it always has. The difference is that I don't look to others to tell me what to do but instead look to others for their experience and for a sense of how my connection to them affects them and myself.

WANDERING TOWARDS CONNECTION: PART II

Doing Research

We all do "research" in the broadest sense of the word. We seek out information about something we want to learn how to do. We ask our colleagues questions designed to find out why something is done a certain way. We read the paper and have thoughts about the way the world is going. We plan a trip by finding out as much as we can about our destination in advance. Formal research is linked to this everyday research - both are driven by a desire to learn something.

Why do I want to make this link?

Because when I'm moving into unfamiliar territory, I feel more comfortable if I can relate to something familiar.

Is this to maintain stability? What about transformation?

Yes, it is about maintaining stability, but it's also about protecting the possibility of transformation. When something is too unfamiliar, I experience a kind of blindness.

What do you mean?

I think it happens in two ways. One is that I keep the experience apart from myself and, well, take on a kind of parroting of what I think I'm supposed to do. This is different than stepping back after having been immersed in a situation and gaining some insights which may lead to change. The other way the blindness comes is through a lack of recognition, perhaps even rejection of the experience because it is just too different. Actually, now that I think about it, this desire to make connection may be the basis of transformation.

I'm not sure I understand.

I am concerned about connection. I want to be able to connect in some way with ideas and people which are different as much as with those more similar and therefore maybe not as easily seen. Perhaps the desire to find connection creates fertile ground for expanding consciousness or understanding, which is how I define transformation - a word I'd like to get away from using because it seems to imply that something totally new arises which I don't think is the case. Whatever, whomever, we can find a connection to, enlarges our idea of ourselves and others. This I call learning. To learn from a research project, I need to be able to connect research to a familiar process and allow my ideas about that process to change in accordance with the experience I have.

A formal research project is public and subject to frameworks and conventions which have arisen out of years of systematic learning by many about what it means to do research. Formal research demands a consciousness about what you are doing and how you are doing it, and is open to public debate and ethical questions.

I am unfamiliar with conducting this kind of systematic, conscious, and public research and I find myself experiencing the same kind of excitement and fear as I did when I was planning my trip to Europe. And as I look back on the experience, I see a pattern which teaches me something about the way I approach learning. When I was planning the trip to Europe and when I was planning to do the research project, I consulted guidebooks and collected stories of experiences from people who had been there to help me choose where I wanted to go and to prepare me for the experience. But the experience itself is far beyond what anyone could tell me. In the middle of the experience, I am often lost, can't seem to find the right guidebook or the right place in it or the situation is not covered, or I'm not sure what I want to know. Looking back on the experience, I think about what I

missed, about what went right and what went wrong. Something someone says, a certain quality of light, can send me back to relive a particular moment. I'm no longer quite the same as I was. Of course, there is a big difference between the way I planned, experienced, and learned from a trip to Europe and the way I planned, conducted and learned from a research project done within an academic institution. For me, that difference has to do with recording the experience; with trying to make the learning more conscious; with understanding more about how I come to understand or to experience myself as a different person.

Planning to do Research

When I began working on my MA four years ago, I conducted a survey of people who were taking community education courses. I asked instructors to distribute a brief questionnaire in their classes asking people their age and their main reason for taking the course. The results challenged one of my assumptions, that retired people take mainly day courses. I found that people take evening courses well into their seventies; it is only in the eighties that a strong preference for day courses is seen. And, although I knew that people's reasons for taking courses were complex, I was amazed at how often younger students taking courses designed for personal development gave reasons for attending related to professional development. For example, one was taking an art course because she wanted to build a portfolio for a planned application to art school; another was taking Russian because he expected to do research in Russia eventually. People took courses which matched other interests in their lives. For example "I'm a diver and wanted to know more about the Saanich Inlet" or "I'm new

to the area and thought I should know more about it" or "To guard my wife in the parking lot."

This survey gave me my first taste of the power of doing systematic research and, as I think a lot of research does, it raised more questions than it answered. Can I assume that retired people don't mind taking night courses, or is it that we don't offer enough variety in the day, or that parking is so difficult at UVic during the day? And people became more real to me. I wondered if the young woman ever got to art school or if the course the retired man took had any meaning when he had come primarily "to protect his wife in the parking lot."

Then, for a course on Interpretative Inquiry, I discussed two students in the Humanities Diploma Program (HDP) whom I'd interviewed previously for a paper for a course on human development. At first I saw the differences between the two students - background, age, sex, social status; then I saw their commonality, the passion for learning linked to making sense of their lives but expressed in such different ways because of their backgrounds. I decided that I wanted to broaden rather than narrow the focus of my research, to include rather than exclude as many variables as possible. The qualitative research tradition seemed to welcome this approach.

Preparing to Go

What does it mean to decide to do research in this tradition? Bogden and Biklen (1992) say that "By learning about the perspectives of the participants, qualitative research illuminates the inner dynamics of situations - dynamics that are often invisible to outsiders" (p. 32). Hmmm, making the invisible, visible.

Bogden and Biklen give five qualities which distinguish research in this tradition from research done in the quantitative tradition. These include:

1. a concern with context. For me, this has meant looking at participation in education in the context of the adult's whole life, not separating it out.
2. the work is descriptive. Words or pictures are used rather than numbers. Some of the most powerful pieces of qualitative research which I've read have been detailed descriptions of an experience which draw me in so that I actually get a sense of what it would be like to have the experience myself. Others have reminded me of the complexity of individual lives and how easy it is to make wrong assumptions about what an experience means to someone else.
3. a concern as much with the process as with the outcome. The actual journey is important to the destination. Knowing how we and others come to hold the values we do, to interpret our lives the way we do is a valuable area of research.
4. a tendency to analyze data inductively. Rather than beginning with a theory and then gathering information to see if the theory is correct, a qualitative researcher gathers information about an area of interest and then theorizes. This idea has created a struggle for me - if the idea is to make the abstract concept "adult student" real by showing individual people, why would I then want to make another abstraction? Why not stay immersed in the detail of individual lives? I've gained some perspective on this issue - the abstracting done from this perspective comes from trying to understand how the way we interpret affects our relationships and therefore focuses on processes rather than defining something we make into a "thing" so that we can try to understand it better.

5. meaning is of essential concern. How do people make sense of their experiences? How does the researcher make sense of how the participants are making sense? What does it mean to do research? What does it mean to go back to school? What does it mean to me and to the participants in my study for this research to be public?

I found the five guidelines helpful to determine that, yes, this is the area to which I want to travel. Given my personal background, given my theoretical interest in connection, and given my desire to be with people in a way that allows their difference, research that allows me to change understandings of myself and others and the connections between us makes sense.

June, 1995

I am drawn to the ideas of theorists who propose that we are actively engaged in constructing ourselves (Nelson, 1994; Haug, 1987; Davies & Banks, 1992) but I am wary of getting caught up in the idea that we construct ourselves so we can be anything. The idea behind changes in consciousness towards complexity in my theorizing is that through understanding the dominant discourses of our political/historical background as well as our personal framework, we can become more aware of the forces acting upon us and therefore have more ability to choose to act in accordance with how we want to express being human, to reject behaviour we come to see as oppressive and to challenge taken for granted ideas. I would like to illustrate in my study more awareness of this "multiplicity and fluidness of objects of our knowing" (and ourselves) (Lather, 1991, p.142) without detracting from the significance of being within one's context and without the culturally learned focus on individuality as a fixed self that can be found and improved.

Although we are a society which seems to prize individuality, most of what we know about ourselves comes from large-scale quantitative studies, illustrating Donna Haraway's point that we really want people to be generic

- we have trouble being with real difference. The growth of qualitative research is an indication that we want to balance this trend with a deeper focus on our ideas of what it means to be human. I will be trying to understand the process in terms of a person's attempt to be with diversity, diversity which exists both within and outside the person. I anticipate that each person's struggle will be unique. To be with this difference I think will mean learning to find the part in me that can connect to the other. Diversity can best be expressed through qualitative research and, at the same time, qualitative research is valuable to collective understanding when we recognize another experience as close to our own and when it highlights relationship. Haug says:

Human beings produce their lives collectively. It is within the domain of collective production that individual experience becomes possible. If therefore a given experience is possible, it is also subject to universalization. What we perceive as 'personal' ways of adapting to the social are also potentially generalizable modes of appropriation (p. 44).

Nelson says

The purpose of qualitative research is not only to discover specificity, in this case by evoking unique accounts of adults' learning. Through cooperative interpretation of even a small number of life stories, it is possible also to discover and appreciate themes of commonality and diversity... (p.393).

Marilyn Frye (1992) believes that women build knowledge differently from the way men do. In looking at what women have been doing, techniques such as consciousness raising, she talks about how women speak to each other creating context for each others' stories and recognizing patterns rather than statistical generalizations or universal truths. Frye suggests that patterns are like metaphors. Not everything or everyone fits but we can see a broad tendency. We can try on a pattern, test it by putting it out to other people. Just putting it out can begin the change in the pattern, and patterns do change. They are useful in terms of showing us a connection we

could not see before but they cannot be put forward as either a universal truth or as relativism. Frye says that "discovering patterns requires novel acts of attention" (p. 66).

A Troublesome Trip

(Methodology) refers to the philosophic framework, the fundamental assumptions and characteristics of a human science perspective. It includes the general orientation to life, the view of knowledge, and the sense of what it means to be human which is associated with or implied by a certain research method. On the other hand, the word 'techniques' refers to the virtually inexhaustible variety of theoretical and practical procedures that one can invent or adopt in order to work out a certain research method (van Manen, 1990, p. 27, 28).

Phenomenological inquiry thus includes both intuitive scanning of one's own life world and empirical, naturalistic gathering of evidence about the life worlds of others (Willis, 1991, p.178).

The less troubling part of this journey has been exploring my own life world to begin to be more conscious as an adult student, as someone who works with adults, and generally as a human being. I have been held lovingly by advisors, friends, family, and colleagues for a long time as I've conducted this exploration.

The more difficult part of this thesis has been deciding on a "technique" through which to involve others in research. For one thing, I simply do not have enough experience doing research to know what will address the question, or how doing research might affect participants, or even whether I'm capable of conducting a project which matches and at the same time uncovers my philosophic assumptions. As with many adults returning to

school, I work full time at a job that always requires at least 40 hours a week, and often requires 50 or 60 hours, and there are other priorities that compete for my time. How do I design a research project which is something I can actually manage to do responsibly? And, although I'm drawn to phenomenological research, it requires a writing ability I'm not sure I have. I consider many possibilities - autobiographical research (Nelson, 1994; Haug, 1987; Loughlin, 1994) looking at changes in consciousness; a consciousness-raising group with other graduate students; letter writing (Brookes, 1992); a participant observation study of Humanities 100. I collect interview questions that other researchers have used (Loughlin, 1994; Nelson, 1994; Brookfield, 1990). My inexperience makes me a novice. Understanding this, looking back on other novice experiences, I realize that I will not do things as well as I might like. The learning that comes from doing is the basis of my practice and I do that well. The important thing is to do and to learn. This is why I'm at school, right?

A second issue is not knowing exactly what my research question is. In qualitative research it is good not to know the answer but perhaps I could have had a better idea of what I wanted to know. I say perhaps because I don't know what the experience of knowing my question would have been. As Eisner (1985) says:

"Although it may be a shock to some, goals are not always clear. Purposes are not always precise. As a matter of fact there is much that we do and need to do, without a clear sense of what the objective is. Many of our most productive activities take the form of exploration or play" (p. 116).

When I started the research, the idea was to bring the complexity of individual adult lives to the fore and to

see if I could identify any change in how adult students made sense of their experiences over a year. These two goals contradicted each other in a way. In showing the complexity, I wanted several students and a life history from each because I am drawn to how our backgrounds influence the way we interpret our lives. But if I wanted to see change in how adults were interpreting their experiences, it may have been better to stay with two students and their descriptions of particular incidents in the classroom over the year. In the end, what I did is, perhaps, more in keeping with what I need to learn for the way my work is now, which is about connecting with many different people even in the briefest of encounters, and understanding that one is providing (or not providing) a space for people even in the briefest of encounters. If adult education becomes important at the University of Victoria perhaps there will be time made available to focus on supporting adults through their educational journey in the way Daloz (1986) describes mentoring adult students (his job is to counsel them through a degree program - ironing out problems with faculty, going over assignments when they are having trouble, helping them plan their program, teaching a course which gives students space to question their assumptions).

A third issue for me was a resistance to involving people in my research. I heard stories of problems from other researchers which helped me anticipate some of the problems I might encounter but also made me aware that unanticipated problems do arise. I was concerned about developing relationships with people that I could not continue after the research and so decided to choose participants for the study with whom I have an ongoing relationship - the research being only one part of that relationship. I was concerned about my insensitivity

which catches me unaware so many times. I was concerned about making interpretations of the participants' interpretations of their lives. I was concerned about presenting participants (or myself) as if the story I told was the only way the story could be told. I was concerned about my responsibilities as researcher.

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Perhaps the most difficult part of this project for me has been trying to come to terms with my resistance to making other people the objects of my study. One reason is that it is the idea of movement that is important to me - writing things down feels so permanent. Through the writing and learning I've been doing, though, I have a better sense now of the idea of building knowledge as an ongoing process. The idea of myself as a participant in understanding rather than an objective observer has also helped. Heshusius (1994) says:

Given the inseparability of ourselves as researchers and as persons, the questions we must ask are no longer on the order of epistemological ones like, are my results correct in the sense of accurate? but rather on the order of moral ones like, What kind of person am I or do I become? Or what kind of society do we have or are we constructing. Smith (1991, p. 31) concludes that in educational research as well, we are at the end of describing ourselves and our work in methodological terms and at the beginning of describing ourselves and our work in ethical (and therefore participatory) terms (p.20).

About autobiographical learning Alex Nelson (1994) says:

I propose that, by approaching learning from experience through the metaphor of autobiography, as the imaginative construction of the life story by the learner, researchers will find a more comprehensive understanding of the processes of learning in time of significant personal change (p.395).

However, both Nelson and Haug warn that we can use autobiography to reconstruct our past to fit the expected rather than focusing on the dissonance and therefore avoid changes in consciousness which come from gaining a new understanding. This idea that autobiography can be used to "fix" our stories has been of ongoing concern to me. Since I do not want to be fixed, since I know that I reshape and retell my own history as I live my life, I do not want to relate someone else's story, or encourage them to relate their story, in a way that seems to explain them.

Haug says that autobiography in the form of just telling one's story "assumes that the factors determining the life of the individual always remain the same...Diversity is compressed and presented as unified evidence that we have 'always' been hindered in our development by this or that person, this or that circumstance" (p.46). The way to overcome this for Nelson, Haug, and other writers is to be able to take the life stories a further step to group discussion or at least through a process of questioning. Nelson says that autobiographical learning (in contrast to autobiography used to avoid learning) contains four elements - a growing sense of personal understanding of how our context has shaped us, a growing sense of being the author of a story we can change, the use of imagination to symbolize our knowing, and a subsequent change in our perspective and practice.

In retrospect, I see a little more clearly some of the ideas that were bothering me and the contradictory advice which was coming from my reading (or at least I felt it that way then, I can better articulate it now, and I sense that I may not see it as contradictory in the future.) I was concerned about not writing someone's or my own story in a "fixed" way. Nelson, Haug, and Loughlin seemed to be suggesting that in order to avoid this, the researcher must be actively involved in the participants' movement towards consciousness - otherwise, the

participant may use the telling of his or her story to remain fixed.

On the other hand, theorists such as Heshusius and Kegan seem to see this holding environment as much less active. For Heshusius, participatory knowing is about putting aside ego and being with the other. Kegan speaks about the role of the "invested observer" whose interest allows the other more choices, if she or he chooses to make them. It is the student who chooses, the mentor/teacher/researcher is supportive. Daloz (1988) has written a wonderful article called, "The story of Gladys who refused to grow: a morality tale for mentors." After describing several incidents with Gladys that illustrate her refusal to entertain new ideas or go beyond a concrete and judgmental way of thinking (all of which he discusses very respectfully), he says:

Most adults are richly enmeshed in a fabric of relationships which hold them as they are, and many of their friends and relations do not wish to see them change. The adult student is in fact dancing with a whole floor of partners, some moving her this way, some that, and some simply standing right in the middle of the floor, not moving at all. Especially for women (who make up more than half of the returning adult learners), but also for many men as well, change demands a complex kind of renegotiating of relationships among spouses, children, friends, parents and teachers...Sometimes it is just plain simpler to stay right where they are, or at least to appear that way. That seems to be what Gladys chose to do.

Yet she did go on to complete her book. She asked her former art teacher to illustrate it and had it privately printed shortly after she graduated. It was reviewed in the local paper and was a great source of pride to her and her family. There, pictured on the back cover, she strides confidently

towards us, graduation robes proudly flaring, diploma in hand, beaming with delight. She had made it.

The following year her husband died. Three weeks later, Gladys followed him (p. 7).

Working to remain stable is a part of the process of being human. While I may think it is better that people understand how they use stories to fix their own understandings, I am concerned about how we, as researchers or educators place value on this idea of change. When a researcher actively engages in promoting changes in consciousness, are we not closing our own minds in some way? My anxiety comes from the same source as my concern about making judgments about what "stage" a person is at in developmental models. Will we say that we will not include that person because they have not changed? Will we say that we have not been responsible researchers (or educators) because a person has not changed (in a way that we can see)? What is the nature of our relationships with other people? My aim, my desire, is to have both respect for where a person is, and to understand that this is constantly changing in ways I may not be able to understand. It is the quality of the relationship which concerns me, the quality of the connection. When we think we know what is better, will we ourselves fix (make better) what happens? I'm not proposing relativism here. I am proposing (I think) that making ground or space for choices is important, that we do this best by questioning our own assumptions. Not I think by "knowing" what change looks like.

Yikes - this old soap box again! Coming, I know, from my sensitivity to being judged not good enough, from feeling that I can't satisfy someone (parents? teachers? myself?); that I haven't given them what they need to see in me (because it's their job?). It's a bone I chew over

and over again. Am I stuck? I think it's a knot that I will work at for a long time. This is the struggle to find my own (separate) voice and to remain connected, but in a different way than I normally understand these, which has had to do with pleasing others (or rebellion against pleasing others). The recognition doesn't ease the struggle but it does let me know that I am in the driving force for this study - what does a different way of connecting look like? A way of connecting which includes movement, influence, understanding?

In the end I decide on an interview format and five general question areas - background/history/educational events; turning points in their lives; life right now; questions about being in the HDP; and questions about being involved in the research. I collect information from six people in the HDP whom I know fairly well.

Then my advisors ask me - "What are you going to do with these stories? How will you interpret them?" Suddenly I realize that I'm actually on the trip and it's just about over. The experience is different from reading about it, it's unfamiliar. I don't belong here. I want to go home. I'm not a scholar (or a Greek, or an Irish person). I'm tired of all the strangeness. I think I'll catch the next plane out. I need time. Memories flash through my head. Kali's excitement, David's parallel journey, Flo's commitment, Kathleen's quiet glow, Alice's strength, and Hildegaard's openness. I have enjoyed them. I need to let the meaning of coming to know them a little better sift through my being. I need to reflect on what I've learned, relive and make sense of the experience.

The Site

I have been interested in the students of the Humanities Diploma Program (HDP) since its beginnings in 1988. The program appeals to me because of the reduced emphasis on the instrumental goal of learning a career skill. Rather,

Studying the humanities increases our appreciation of ideas and various modes of thinking. It leads to a greater understanding of values within cultural and historical contexts. It can sharpen our skill at formulating our own ideas, developing them coherently, and expressing them clearly and effectively. It can help us read difficult texts with increased comprehension and powers of analysis. All of these help us to learn how to learn - essential skills in the workplace and in our personal lives (see program brochure, Appendix II, p. 158).

Most of the students in the program are working (inside or outside the home); about 1/3 are retired. Of the students enrolled right now, 33 are women, 14 are men. Many have, or have had, technical careers (secretary, physician, lawyer, nurse, engineer) and feel the lack of a broader education. Many have had careers such as homemaker, teacher, social worker and, although immersed in the questions of how we live our lives, have felt a lack in being able to systematically think (or feel) about some of these questions. Many did not have a chance to pursue a university education when they were younger and are fulfilling that dream now. Some dropped out of high school in Grade 11; others have graduate degrees.

My role as program coordinator is to ensure that these students feel welcome at the University, to help them through the administrative regulations, to ensure that they know how to access various University resources, and

to help them through the personal struggle with the fear which many feel when beginning the program. The faculty coordinator is seconded from teaching one course in her or his regular load to counsel the students on their academic program and to teach the first and one required credit course in the program, Humanities 100. In this course, students are introduced to and given a chance to explore some of the "big ideas" in the humanities. The course is rigorous as the students learn to express and support their ideas. At the end of this first year of getting oriented to the University and taking the first credit course, Humanities 100, the students move into taking the regular courses in the Humanities Division, mixing and matching to pursue their own particular interests.

This year, thanks in large part to an article in the *Times-Colonist* by Deborah Pearce (see Appendix II, p. 160), 22 new students have been admitted to the program, bringing the total number of students currently working towards the 18 credits they need for their diploma to 47. Since the program began, 20 students have graduated and half of them continue to work towards a B.A. At least half of the people who have begun the program have dropped out for various reasons. Two of the participants originally included in this study fall into this category - one because he was not able to find what he wanted within the University; the other, who is not now included in this study, because family and career demanded her total attention. Another problem which forces many people out is the lack of evening or weekend courses.

The program is small: 47 part-time students out of a total student population at UVic of about 12,000. Even in relation to other Continuing Studies programs it is small (in our non-credit community education program, we serve

about 3,500 students per year) and it runs a deficit while all of our other programs must recover some money towards our salary costs.

By any normal economic measures, the program would be in danger of being cut. And yet it is supported by Continuing Studies and the Division of Humanities which demonstrates the University's commitment to providing this kind of learning experience. These core ideals of learning to learn, and providing a space to think about issues to do with being human seem almost lost as we have coupled relevance with specific job skills and force people to choose either job training or the humanities.

I chose the Humanities Diploma Program as the source for participants in my research because the students in this program are closer to looking at the meaning of the experience for them - the instrumental need to develop work skills is not the primary reason for attending. And yet they have committed themselves to learning within the formal regulations of the University and for a longer period of time than people who take our non-credit community education courses. And choosing people in the program alleviated one of my concerns about conducting research - that the researcher sets up relationships with people which end when the research ends. This program has my involvement built in for as long as the person is in the program.

But how did I choose the particular people I did? I would have liked to have interviewed everyone in the program, but this was not possible. Originally, I was only going to interview two people several times over the period of a year. But I kept hearing stories I wanted to include. Eventually, I stopped at seven people (only six of whom are included in this study). I see a reflection of myself

here - I am more comfortable with many different ideas, many different people, with widening my focus rather than narrowing it. I also soon realized that it would be difficult to see change in such a short time.

Interviewing the people I did, getting to know them a little better than my job normally allows, has immersed me much more in the complexity of being an adult student. Their stories are unique. And although the uniqueness continues in each response to the barriers they face, I can see how each response makes sense. Including more people also makes sense in relation to how I work - I want to learn more about how to connect with many different people - not just one or two deeply, and yet not with many by making them all the same, generalizing.

The participants were also chosen with a desire to explore the everyday - the lives of people who are not normally separated out because they are "different" or "special." As Philip Jackson (1990) says,

Those aspects of schooling that are naturally interesting - the bizarre behaviours of the 'problem children,' for example,... strike me as being too seductive somehow. They lead my thoughts away from schooling rather than towards it...Perhaps we have become so intent in looking *for* that we no longer know how to look *at*. Perhaps looking *for* encourages us to look *past* things rather than *at* them. Looking *for* constricts awareness; looking *at* expands it (p. 162, 163).

It is a different kind of looking behind which I seek - rather than a looking behind which interprets, which sees what has not been spoken; I want to see the background patterns which hold us and which we continually create to hold us even as we try to loosen them to free us.

The essay in which Jackson writes the words above is one of a series on the issue of validity in qualitative research (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990). Madeleine Grumet in a follow-up commentary on what Jackson says, offers some strong criticisms of his approach. However, I felt that my strong attraction to the "everyday" and to needing to fit the research within the context of my normal, ongoing relationship with these people, meant finding a ground which allows what happens to happen rather than reading another layer into what people tell me. And there is support, I think, for this position in other writing about doing this kind of research. I refer to Janicaud: (1996) "the 'good' phenomenologist humbly accepts not to be too clever, at least not more subtle or profound than the phenomenal realities. In keeping with Nietzsche's advice, he or she will be superficial owing to his or her own profundity" (p. 60).

The question of whom to involve and how to involve them in qualitative research is different than in statistical research. Terry Carson (1986) feels that qualitative research is more connected to practice. Statistical studies are done for the benefit of practitioners and much can be learned from them. But in qualitative research "to understand means that what is understood has a claim on us, we appropriate the meaning to our own thoughts and actions in some way" (p. 82). Both researcher and participant are learning from the inside out rather than trying to absorb from an external source of information. But this is considered one of the "problems" with qualitative research. How "valid" or "generalizable" is information obtained through talking with someone else about an experience? Can I "prove" that doing this study has improved my practice as a program coordinator, as a student, and as a person? Even if it

has, will others who read this study learn anything from it? Will it improve their practice?

The language that comes from a tradition where "Research is intended to provide generalized information to a broad audience of educators" (Carson, p. 73) is not always useful to those educators. Carson identifies this as a reason why "research based innovations" are often not put into practice. The kind of generalization that comes from statistical research is not always useful because it is so far removed from the world of practice which is "contextually bound to specific situations in which the individual practitioner must act as responsible agent" (p. 73). When individuals, whether practitioner or student, cannot find themselves or their situation in the research, it is either ignored or put into practice without the grounding needed for success.

I know that through examining my own reactions and understandings about returning to school and through involving other students in this research, my practice has changed - a kind of subtle change which is difficult to describe. I often tell my professors that I know a lot less now than when I began this MA - because rather than learning to know "for sure," I've learned to question, to allow my knowing to change. More space has opened up, boundaries feel more permeable. I'm not quite so quick to categorize others or myself, to reject ideas that don't fit. But this has not left me free to float. Instead I'm more grounded. Everything is more open but I'm also more aware of the grounds for my actions.

But what about other practitioners? Will they learn anything from this study since the research is so obviously connected to my own personal interests? I think that research is always connected to the personal

experience of the researcher. Whether acknowledged or not, every educational experience is influenced by the student's (or reader's) personal interest. I have learned that you will take from this what you can, as I have been only able to take from others' experience what I can.

So the question of what is "good" qualitative research is less easy to define than in statistical research where the basic idea of validity has to do with a defined set of rules. This idea has always disturbed me when it comes to trying to understand how we are human because of my feeling that room needs to be made for the possibility of change. Fixing our idea of what it means to be human is not only impossible, it also tries to define our connection with one another and the world, with other "actual entities" (Whitehead, 1925), in fixed terms rather than changing terms. The uncertainty I have come to appreciate as a source of continuous learning is one of the things I most appreciate about qualitative research.

This, however, does not mean that qualitative researchers do not also try to fix our understanding of what it means to be human. But if researchers include themselves, I, at least, find it easier to see their bias and can enter into a discussion based on my own personal experience. I'm not arguing with numbers, I'm relating on a different basis. And contradictions can stay because they are there. People's understandings change when they are exposed to other people's ideas in a way that influences them. Education can provide a holding environment in which people can learn to be influenced by others and their own voice at the same time. The difference is that I am trying to open up myself to different interpretations and to open my understanding to you.

I began this section with the intention of discussing the background against which this research is situated but it seemed important to take the side trip again into the differences between qualitative and quantitative research. In qualitative research participants are selected because of their experience with and ability to articulate a phenomena. All of the students in the Humanities Diploma Program are articulate and all are adult students. But I could not collect stories from all of them. Flo I chose because of her care for others and her quiet activism. Alice, because we seemed so different. David and Kathleen because they belonged to a different generation than I do. Kali because she had a different cultural background. And Hildegard because she was new to the program. And then I gritted my teeth and stopped choosing. I followed the protocols for ensuring confidentiality and received permission from the Human Subjects Committee at the University of Victoria to do this research (see Appendix VIII). Six different people would no doubt have produced six different stories; it is this uniqueness that I wanted to uncover. The five question areas come from my interest in context - background, their lives right now, their experiences in the Humanities Diploma Program, and concern about how being involved in a research project affects them. Some people I interviewed twice, some only once; some e-mailed me information, others gave me writing during the research period from August/95 to August/96. In the fall of 1996 I met with them all to go over what I had written about them and their stories "In Their Own Words" (p. 120). All revisions they made were honored.

The stories which I give you are incomplete, partial stories presented in a variety of formats. They demonstrate, I hope, my concern with connection; with how we hold people so that they can make choices.

The People

What each person does with the ideas gleaned from any course cannot ultimately be documented: like the ripples from a stone tossed into a pond, they spread to shores far removed from the spot where the stone sank. Each person's growth is so unique that it cannot be compared to another's, but in the Humanities Diploma Program, everyone gets a chance to discover where that growth might occur, and is encouraged to explore possibilities which might be challenging, even frightening, but which also might have the potential to lead to new directions in one's life (Diane Edwards, Humanities Diploma Program newsletter, Fall 1996, p.3).

We think we know what's going on, that we have control of our lives; we make plans, have date books and schedules, and then we turn around to see ourselves and realize our lives have their own composition, their own movement (Goldberg, 1993, p. 110).

The gap between my internal world and how other people perceive me is one thing, the gap between my internal world and the internal and external worlds of the students I interviewed is another. It has been difficult to document my own process of learning through school. I have struggled continuously with how to include, what to include, with what external voices say is important, with what my internal voices say is important. It is this struggle that has led to a consciousness that it is the distancing of these voices that creates the gap between my own experience and that of others (whether "experts" or "colleagues" or "friends" or "participants"). I try to separate in order to look from a distance, as I have been taught, but without a corresponding engagement, I feel a gap. The more influences I allow, the greater my ability

to tolerate diversity, contradiction, and my own judgments of my work.

I wanted to "unname" (Le Guin) the experience of being a student as much as I could and show each person in her or his uniqueness. The problem was not so much how to make connection with them, but rather how to include them in a research project which has centered so much on becoming more conscious of myself as a learner (student). And this is the problem I am posing in this paper - how do we make links with other uniqueness in a way that makes sense and yet does not dismiss that uniqueness.

I did not choose people because their experience matched my own, or because their return to school had been extraordinary, or because I was looking for examples of my own theorizing (although this happened because a central concern has been how to understand the particular people who make up the everyday world - make these people "real" rather than fitting them into generalizations). So I grapple with the real problems of unnamings - when I don't want to make generalizations, what do I include and what do I exclude? What I've chosen to do is to tell their stories in my words, emphasizing what I think is important to them (what they want to be heard) and to me (what I learn from them). In Appendix I, I've included some of what they've told me in their own words.

You may find these two views of each student quite different. Sometimes information is included in my discussion which is not in the story they tell, and my voice is different from each of theirs. I hope there is enough difference in the two pieces to create a gap which reminds us that we can never "know" another person (or even ourselves) - we are always in the process of responding to our experiences.

Robert Donmeyer (1990) discusses the generalizability of qualitative research in terms of its ability to expand our experience and thus enlarge our cognitive structures. Difference is important here. The more different experiences we have, the larger our conception is of what our work (or life) is and what it can include. Reading about someone else's experiences or thoughts about something one is interested in, like traveling to another country, can enlarge one's experience as well. Because we are connected, we can have experiences vicariously - others' stories can create empathy or understanding of something we previously did not include in our experience. The value of doing research and reading about research is its ability to expand consciousness of what might be. In this conception of research "diversity... becomes an asset rather than a liability...after novelty is confronted and accommodated, he or she can perceive more richly and, one hopes, act more intelligently" (Donmeyer, 1990, p. 191).

Alice

"I met Marshal McLuhan - of course I was in awe - that was a touching experience because here was a man who devoted his life to communication, writing books, giving lectures and teaching. Unfortunately he had a stroke which rendered him speechless - he could not speak, write or read - all these ideas and no way of getting them out. That last year of his life was very difficult for him. I saw him two days before he died. We went to his house. As he came up to greet us, he offered his hand which I shook. He was silent but had so much to offer. I, on the other hand, was silent for so long and I have a lot to offer. At that point, I felt a real connection."

Alice had a great deal of difficulty being admitted to the University of Victoria because of her academic

background. She was born in 1954 in a small town in Ontario. In those days, there was little flexibility in the school system. Alice failed grades one, two, and three and each time had to stay back and repeat the year. As a result, she received only five years of formal education. She ran out of years in which to go to school and so in high school was streamed into non-academic. She says her high school diploma is a "fraud" and she was "functionally illiterate" when she completed her secondary schooling. And it has not been easy for her since she joined the Humanities Diploma Program at the age of 40. Only her determination to prove the label wrong and her love of ideas has kept her going. I wonder sometimes about whether she should continue or not and sometimes ask her if she still feels it is worth the amount of energy she expends and the battering she takes when she does not succeed. Alice sometimes wonders herself as she feels her creativity eroded when she tries to force herself to think in the ways expected of her in an academic institution. At the same time, she feels that her difference allows her to see things that others sometimes don't - although it's often a handicap, sometimes it's a help.

I interpret Alice's story in different ways. Because she is so successful in other areas of her life (sculptor, art teacher, homemaker, wife, and mother) I wonder what moves her to engage in a difficult challenge which seems unconnected to her present life although firmly embedded in her past. It has been a challenge for me to complete this MA even though I have always adapted fairly easily to the institution of education. My questioning of the system comes from a firm grounding in and belonging to the system. Alice's questioning of the system comes from a basis of not belonging where she wants to belong. Her questioning makes me think of my own belonging, of what I

give up in order to belong. As Alice has tried to fit into the academic world, she feels that her creativity has gone down. Alice is an artist and seems "trainable" into the academic form of expression expected at UVic only at the expense of her creativity.

There are several levels of understanding here which are discussed in various areas of the research literature. The first is a practical level. The theory of how intelligence changes as we age referred to as fluid and crystallized intelligence (Rybash et al., 1986,) says that as we age what we know is less quickly accessible, but that we have much larger bodies of knowledge on which to draw. The theory predicts that adults are less comfortable with and do not do as well on timed tests and that it may take longer to acquire new bodies of knowledge. Adults compensate for this slowing down by learning creative ways to connect new knowledge to what they already know. Research bears this finding out. In the class that Alice failed, a huge percentage of the mark was based on timed, in-class tests. She did fine on take-home tests and papers but even here, her creative way of making the information accessible to her was sometimes not acceptable to the professor.

Another level of understanding is about who belongs at the university. Is the university only for people like me who are easily trainable into the system? Is the insistence on a particular form, which is what Alice finds so difficult to deal with, a reflection of the university's basic philosophy or core, or is it a reflection of the university's unwillingness to consider other ways of knowing?

And a question about learning across disciplines can be raised here. Artistic and intellectual skills may be

quite different from each other. Are they mutually exclusive? Where do they meet?

Alice challenges the system simply by being here. If she were David or Kathleen's age, she may not have gone through the grueling process of getting admitted. But she comes from a generation which questioned all systems and in which people within the education system itself were beginning to question what knowledge is and the elitism of universities. Alice wants access to the traditional knowledge held by universities and to systematic questioning of that knowledge through courses which allow her to include her particular kind of creativity. This desire to include oneself is a theme in most of the students I interviewed and it is certainly a strong component of my own return to school. It connects with what the theoretical literature says about the adult need for meaning, and that meaning comes from connection with their lives.

David

"I have rattled on rather longer than I had intended, Peg; forgive me. I guess all I have proven is that I DID NOT fit in. Being a determined - and unrepentant - individualist, I have always resented structured environments. But when an organisation presents itself as a guide and mentor it should not withhold that service from those who seek that service: most particularly when we pay heavily for its existence."

David is a 72-year-old retired mining executive and ongoing writer of poetry. (David says this is not strictly correct as he has not written for a year or two.) He was born in Great Britain and served in the British Royal Naval Air Service during World War II as a radar mechanic from age 18 to 21. He married at age 20

and, following his war service, worked in several clerical capacities until early 1954 when, at the urging of his brother who had emigrated to Canada two years earlier, he himself emigrated and settled in Toronto with his wife and young son. He registered as a student with a professional administrative institute in 1959 and passed with provincial first place honours two years later. During this period he was also active in student affairs and regards it as one of the happier periods of his life. He moved to Vancouver at age 42, became involved in the mining industry and moved up the corporate ladder quickly, notwithstanding severe marital problems. Retiring early at age 58, the family relocated but his wife died in 1987, and a year later David underwent a serious operation. He feels that the events that had a major effect on his life were World War II, (which affected his decision regarding a university education and, later, his marriage) and the move to Canada. Despite his erudition and successful career as a student here in Canada (his early education was in England), David, too, had trouble getting into UVic because his 50-year-old high school records were not easily available - he devoted considerable time and expense to get them.

David enrolled in the HDP because he wanted to develop himself (particularly as a writer) and because he regrets having refused the opportunity for a university education when he was young. However, he was not happy with his first experience with credit work in Humanities 100 which he completed in 1992. He has not continued in the HDP because he feels that university study neither encourages nor allows time to think and analyze or to include personal experience.

The university is made up of people and many faculty supported the development of the Humanities Diploma Program. But still, the university is not an easy place for part-time students, or perhaps for any student who is too "different." Part-time students who work have difficulty finding courses or services which suit their schedules. Alice's difference has to do with not having the usual educational background. David's difference has to do with acquiring a special interest during his first course and not being able to find support for the focused study he wants to do within the university. While Alice wants to range generally across many ideas but finds the particular form in which the university wants her to do this restrictive, David has no trouble with form but wants to specialize on a particular author while the University wants him to broaden his area of study.

Of course, as David says in the quote above, he has always had difficulty fitting into structured environments. And yet, David has done very well at all educational institutions he has attended. And by his own accounts, he very much enjoyed these previous learning experiences.

David is one of the more than 50 percent of students who have applied to or begun the program and dropped out. And yet he probably spends more time in the university library than most HDP students. He is in contact with professors here and at other universities in Canada and the U.S.A. He is on a quest which began with writing a paper and doing a presentation on *Frankenstein* in Humanities 100. The quest began with setting out to prove that Mary Shelley did not write the story and that P.B. Shelley did. It has turned into a quest to tell the "real" story of a complex and prolific poet and writer whom David believes academics do not understand. He does

not want to take courses which divert him from his study of P.B. Shelley.

Although David has been telling me about this quest for a number of years, it is only through doing this research, being able to take the time to find out more, that I have begun to get a sense of what it means to him. P.B. Shelley was a man who was deeply sensitive to the injustices of life, to the contradiction posed by people who had every reason to behave well, but who behaved badly. According to David, who has written (not published) a two-volume book proving his theory, P.B. Shelley was also driven by the physical effect of a disease, diabetes, and by the unfaithfulness of the women with whom he partnered, particularly Mary. Although David does not suffer from diabetes, he too has fought for "right" and he has been profoundly affected by the unfaithfulness of his wife. David grew up at a time when people were more sure of the right thing to do. Wars are about right and wrong and David served in WW II; marriage was forever. David, like P.B. Shelley, believes that our intellect should help us do the right thing.

David's personal struggle to understand his life through his study of P.B. Shelley and particularly Shelley's problems with unfaithfulness in his wives, provides the motivation for his research. What we study with passion almost always has a personal base - something that has become clear to me in graduate school where almost every student's area of research is linked directly to personal experience - in my own case, a lifelong concern with exclusion/inclusion.

We have not been able to find a place for David, or David has not been able to fit, at the university. He wants to work on his book about P.B. Shelley, while we want him to

take a variety of courses and/or will not accept any work he has done "unsupervised." David is not able to fit our requirement, nor the university, his. And yet the ideals of both David and the university are similar - to quest, to challenge, to research, to know. Part of the problem is that both David's voice and the university's voice (professors, regulations) are strong and sure of themselves. I have often enjoyed debates with David as we take opposite sides on different issues. I don't think that either of us has changed each other's mind when we're in debating mode but I often note that our care for the relationship keeps us from going too far, from splitting so far apart that we will no longer be friends. The same kind of care does not exist between an organization and an individual. There can be a lack of commitment, on one side or the other, or both, to taking responsibility for the relationship.

Kathleen

"Right now, I'm having a bit of a problem. I've had three deaths in my immediate family. My husband died, my sister died - she was my best friend - and then my mother died. My sister's death was unexpected in that she was younger than me and had always been healthy. Everything has two sides and its impossible to take either one. My mother's death was less ambiguous because she was very old and terribly difficult. I often feel better here on campus. It has something to do with the atmosphere - young people around, I get to know people, I like my professors. I thrive in it. The new challenges were quite formidable but I've managed them so far and there is something about the study of Italian..."

Kathleen is 69 years old, a retired nurse. She has three children, a couple of whom have children of their own. Kathleen's parents immigrated from England before she was born. She remembers living on the prairies during the

depression. She was 12 when war was declared and she remembers the whole family spending hours together every evening listening to the radio. Her father was convinced of the superiority of the Englishman. He farmed and her mother taught school.

The major personal events in her life were her marriage, which, she says, "in those days, you stuck with come hell or high water," and the births of her children. Widowhood in the summer of 1992 was a resolution of many problems for her and for the family. She has always kept a life of her own doing post-graduate work in nursing and pursuing an interest in the sciences. She feels that her children and the "extra" interests are what made life worth living.

Kathleen is of the same generation as David. But whereas David stayed in his marriage by believing in the ideal, and was therefore able to stay reasonably happy within it, Kathleen stayed in hers by continuously balancing the pros and cons of leaving or staying. As with David, career provided a positive alternative to what was happening at home. Kathleen was admitted to UVic four years ago when she was 65. Her daughter had married an Italian and she wanted to learn the language. When her daughter's marriage broke up, her interest in the Italian language and culture continued. Kathleen joined the HDP to give a focus to her study and to work towards a diploma. She feels privileged to be able to attend university and has been successful. I was talking to a professor who has had her in his classes a number of times over the years - he spoke with pleasure about how she has come out of herself, has grown in confidence and understanding since he first had her in his class. Kathleen has been to Italy. Getting to know another culture has added a much loved dimension to her life. She

feels surprised at how well she has done at university and how accepted she is by the younger students and by professors. She is quiet and speaks thoughtfully, always thinking of and presenting both sides of an issue.

Kathleen and David are the oldest students in this study and, as the theoretical literature says, they are engaged in a process of looking back on and making sense of their lives. David looks back on his life and wonders about right and wrong and puts various parts of his life into those categories. He feels that if he had read more literature when he was younger, he may have avoided such pitfalls as loving someone who was untrue. He does not want to waste "whatever little time he may have left" on areas of study he does not need or want. Kathleen, too, wonders about time, how much time she has left and the quality of that time. But, although she too suffered from an unsatisfactory marriage, it is not as difficult for her to look back on her life. She does not describe her life in terms of success or failure, but instead in terms of better and worse times.

Kathleen has always done well at school and continued to take courses related to her profession throughout her career (she also began to learn to play the piano at one point in her adult life). She had been admitted to UVic before she joined the program. She started out by auditing her first two courses in Italian. In Humanities 100, she blanked out on the final exam and the professor allowed her to re-write it. This kind of flexibility has been important to many HDP students.

Kathleen has always been concerned about doing the right thing for others. In joining the HDP, she is doing the right thing for herself and yet there is still the care and concern for others; for example, one benefit of doing

the HDP is that she feels that her children will worry about her less if she has interests outside of them. Kathleen has found in her return to university a community in which to grow and learn, a place to belong which is both an escape from some of the concerns which have been weighing heavily on her heart, and a way to work through some of those concerns in a way that links her personal experience to a larger reality. In her story in Appendix I, I have included a passage from one of her essays and her comments on that passage. I see in these passages issues which I think Kathleen has struggled with in a real way. What happens when someone follows the rules due to external pressure and becomes a "perfectly horrifying character?" How does an internal sense of right and wrong develop - does it need to be taught? What happens when you can't do wrong to survive even though it seems you must? How does individual need fit with the need of the community?

Kathleen, I think, has struggled with these issues all of her life. The external rule said you stay in your marriage even though it was emotionally empty, especially since there was no physical violence. Her husband was a good father and eventually her own internal working out of the pros and cons led her to the decision to stay. The external rule provided a restriction but it also provided support in some way. Now when Kathleen looks back, she feels she made the right decision. While I was interviewing Kathleen, I was also reading about separate and connected knowing. I was reminded of my own struggle to become less reliant on external voices and yet not exclude them (an impossibility anyway). The movement for me became one towards understanding how, and that these voices are influences just as my internal voices are. This along with the idea of continuous change allows a flexibility of decision making at various moments. I felt

that I was learning about this from Kathleen's story as she continuously included various points of view and chose behaviours which benefitted more rather than fewer people.

Kali

"I had a fantastic time in Humanities 100. I found that the class reminded me of Singapore. I think I'd forgotten my values. I started meditating again...Our professor was fantastic. I liked the way she set up the class - the first hour of the class was spent discussing what we had read...We had to come up with three questions from a whole book. When I was unsure, when I didn't know how to answer the questions, she said - write down what you think at that moment. I would start writing and be very unhappy - being an academic, you want to please your teacher. She doesn't want to be pleased."

Kali was born in Singapore where the British system of education is the model of schooling for all children. She moved to Canada with her family when she was 17, just as she was about to write her "O level" exams. She was planning to be a doctor but those plans "drifted away" after she came to Canada and had to repeat grades 11 and 12 in spite of being near the top of her class in Singapore. Kali had a tough time with the adjustment to Canada and was depressed for several years. She did not feel accepted and, in trying to become accepted (or reject being accepted), she lost her own culture and values for awhile. She was attending UVic on a part-time basis when she joined the Humanities Diploma Program at the age of 29, making her the youngest in her Humanities 100 class. In Humanities 100 she felt, for the first time since moving to Canada, that sense of belonging to a community again. To talk to Kali, you would never know the difficulties she's been through, but then it is probably those difficulties which have contributed to her

current love of being alive, her ability to put things into perspective.

Kali joined the program for practical reasons. She is working towards a B.A. on a part-time basis, mainly because she needs to work to be able to contribute to her family's support - which she describes as a cultural expectation and a responsibility she fulfills happily. But it takes a long time to get a B.A. on a part time basis. The HDP provided her with a step along the way, an acknowledgment of her achievement after 18 credits. She also found the early registration helpful in getting classes which fit with her schedule. Many people enrolled in the HDP find this early registration benefit extremely helpful. Without it, most would not be able to continue because as first-year or special students, the few courses they have to choose from that fit their schedules would be full by the time they were able to register. As it is, some students have dropped the program because there were no courses offered in their area of interest at a time which suited their schedule. I was talking recently to two students (not part of this study) who were able to arrange their work time so that they could take day classes. One dropped the course because three times a week of getting away from work, finding parking, etc., was just too stressful. He called me in frustration to drop the program. We were able to arrange for a Directed Study for next term but I wonder if he'll be able to find anything in the following term. The second student completed the day course but says "never again."

But this is Kali's story. Kali reminds me of both the practical and emotional sides of being an HDP student. She was able to use the practical side to full advantage - it worked for her and she has now graduated with her

Diploma and continues to work towards her B.A. But Humanities 100 was also an emotional experience for her. Taking the course coincided with coming out of several years of depression and with the ending of an important relationship. She credits Humanities 100 with helping her get back in touch with her roots, her inner self, with being able to put things back in perspective rather than remaining preoccupied with a narrow vision of self. She is joyful again and strong. "Now, I'm just very strong. It's amazing - my own strength is scaring me! I keep thinking, if I was younger could I have appreciated this course? I don't think I would have. Now I'm thinking - wow - there are so many commonalities between all of us."

Life-changing events such as Kali's move from Singapore to Canada, can create years of emotional stress. She remembers the day she decided to adjust "And then one day, I don't know what happened, but I just woke up and said - OK, I'm here for real. Its time to make some positive changes." The experience of Humanities 100 further helped her to put her life in perspective. Kali had taken many courses before she took Humanities 100. But this course was special.

I recognized in Kali's description of Humanities 100 many of the same experiences I have had in graduate school. A teacher who continually turns the focus back to the student's own process of discovery, who provides a holding environment in which the student can explore what moves her, who creates an atmosphere of safety and trust, who allows the links between the scholarly voices and the personal voice to develop. I had been thinking that perhaps undergraduate work could not include this kind of experience because of the "need" for extensive background learning. Kali's experience with Humanities 100 proves this assumption wrong. For Kali, this was truly a

learning experience, not simply an educational experience, as graduate studies has been for me.

Hildegard

"I can feel a substantial change in myself. I know I can learn (still!), I know I want to learn. I have more confidence in my own opinions and abilities to think and reason...I have come to realize more fully how strong, resourceful and capable I am."

Hildegard was in the same Humanities 100 class as Kali. She returned to school in her late thirties and has enjoyed her first year in the program. In the interviews, she discusses the various joys and dilemmas which I hear often from HDP students - the difficulty of finding courses of interest at times when she can take them, the difficulty of adding school to a life already full, the attraction of being able to receive a diploma as a step along the way to a B.A., the appreciation for the support she receives as part of the program, and the appreciation for learning with peers (other adults with lots of life experience) in Humanities 100.

Hildegard is the only single parent in the group of students I interviewed. Of the students whom I included in this study, Kathleen and David are retired and on their own. Kali is single with no children, although she is committed to a web of family relationships; Alice is married with two children at home - in this creative family, she is fully supported in her return to school and can arrange her hours flexibly; Flo, too, is fully supported by her husband, but was not ready to return to school until her children were grown.

Hildegard is a "natural" student. She did well in high school and has fit easily into University study, receiving A's in the first three courses (two of them fourth year level) which she has taken. She works hard and is quick to pick up what is expected. She enjoys fitting her creativity into the expectations of the university. She has been able to focus on what interests her because her workplace supports her return to school and she can take time off during the day - something she finds inconvenient but manageable.

Hildegard has many support networks - crucial to being a successful single parent - and many different roles in her life which help her think of herself in different ways. She is a poet, harpist, parent, daughter, student, secretary and is conscious of all of these roles and the work she does to develop them. No one role dominates for too long. She has built a web of relationships which allow her to be many faceted and which protects her when one role is not working out too well.

Flo

"I can deal with three or four or five different situations at one time. I have to do it all the time. I did it when my kids were small. Some of the doctors - one in particular - cannot deal with more than one situation, or more than one resident at a time. If someone makes a comment about another while he's dealing with one, it just throws him completely, he forgets what he was doing."

And Flo has three or four or five reasons for why she is in the HDP which she had seen advertised over the years and had always wanted to join. She loves literature and feels it adds depth to her professional life as well as contributing to her hobby of writing children's stories. She wants to retire early at 55 years old and sees the

program as a foundation for ESL or some other training she might take when finished the Diploma.

Flo is 48 years old and describes herself as "wife, mother, nurse, pet owner." She is active in her union and has volunteered as a guide leader and at the birth control clinic. She has taken numerous courses and workshops over the years. She remembers the Berlin wall going up and coming down, the shooting of John Kennedy, the introduction of the new Canadian flag, and Trudeau's election. Flo was born in Quebec and moved to Ontario with her family when she was seven.

Some personal events which she feels shaped her life include the summers she spent working and playing on an aunt's farm while she was growing up; a friend in nursing who encouraged her to speak up (Flo was very shy); meeting her husband; and the births of her children.

The major dilemma facing society today she feels is that we are too concerned with ourselves when we need to be more concerned with our community: "We're out of sync and can't get together to solve problems." Flo felt that she was at a turning point in her life when she joined the HDP. Her children were grown (19 and 20 years old) and her husband was no longer working on his C.G.A. She had more time to develop her own interests.

She was attracted to the HDP because of her love of literature and history and because the diploma seemed attainable (it would take a long time to get a B.A. on a part-time basis). Her return to school is strongly supported by her husband who has many interests of his own and is happy to see Flo developing her interests. Where she feels the pressure to drop the program is at work - they would like to see her pursue a nursing degree

- the current expectation in nursing. It is her work as a nurse, work she has done for 25 years, which is creating the most stress in Flo's life right now. She feels nursing has changed, that there is no time for the patient even though time taken can save time later, that paperwork has become more of a priority than the people. Flo, although quiet, has developed her voice over the years and speaks out persistently about the problems. She cares deeply about the older patients she works with and has strong opinions about what is happening to them. She resists the pressure to go for more formal training in nursing because she is no longer happy with the profession and looks forward to a complete change.

Flo was the first person I identified as someone I wanted to interview for this study. The attraction was her quiet activism, her continuous work for the well being of people who don't have much power (her elderly patients, young women needing information about birth control, children, co-workers, animals) and her feeling for literature as a way to understand people and herself. Her quietness does not make her readily noticeable and yet she does have an impact on the people with whom she comes into contact.

AFTERTHOUGHTS: PART III

Growing in Understanding

Like a breeze she comes and we,
so different each from one another,
scatter shyly
and gently dance around
sometimes closer
sometimes farther
but always connected

I am dissatisfied in some way with what I've portrayed of the participants in this study. This dissatisfaction seems linked to a dissatisfaction I often feel with my links to other people. There seems to be an impassable gap between my experience and the experience of others. I fight the gap, I see it as a block to overcome. Finally, I let go. I try to simply be in the gap. From here I see that I have many ideas and images about what connection with others is or "should" be which interfere not only with what I actually experience but also with my ability to change.

And there are many connections among us, life outside of school cannot be separated from life as a student - even in situations where the personal is simply not acceptable in the classroom. There is an ongoing intertwinement of

all the events of our lives but there is more to this than just saying it. When we are not conscious of the possibility of change, we react based on habit rather than allowing ourselves to continue to be influenced. We form a "fixed" judgment of ourselves and we live up to this judgment, we aim for consistency in our daily lives. It is more difficult to change in this situation. We can add on information - there is no doubt that I learn from reading and listening to others, whether in the areas of adult education, philosophy, feminist literature, or from participants in a study - but it may not change me, or I may not understand the possibility of influence.

Externally, it may seem that little has changed in me. I am better able to articulate practical knowledge about adult students because my experience has been enhanced by others' experience, research and theory. The practical difficulties of adding the role of student to many other roles, the changing meaning of education as we age, the changing ways intelligence and experience are used as we age, the uniqueness of each experience, the need (and inevitability) of the inclusion of personal experience in the learning experience, the need for courses outside of traditional times - all these I speak of readily now.

The study has opened up for me a sense of attachment which had been partially blocked because the idea of connection was linked with the idea of giving up self. As we go over the final drafts of what I'm saying about them, or of the words they use to describe themselves,

the participants each express to me, in their own way, what the study has meant to them. Most have appreciated and learned something from the chance to look at their stories through someone else's eyes. None regrets being involved or feels it was a waste of time. The differing levels of involvement with each remain as they did before the study, but we do care for each other in a different way. For me, this caring seems more transferable than it used to be, it spreads.

One of the gaps between theory and experience is created by the uniqueness of experience. Theory's job is to generalize. But each student's experience is particular, illustrated by the multiple reasons they give for a return to school. And yet there are shades of each reason in each student. The uniqueness of the experience has something to do with the different weights each student gives to each reason, which in turn has something to do with their particular backgrounds and personal experiences. They might all say that they wanted to return to university because they did not have the chance to go when they were young, but each gives a different emotional weight to this reason. Some have an ideal of what university is, others have no idea at all. And while all may question their ability to succeed when they begin, for some this is more of a barrier than for others. It is the particular meaning each focus has for each student which I respond to as I support them through the process of returning to school. Along with the uniqueness of the experience, the connections run through

the stories, not really as generalizations, but as places for the beginnings of understanding of another's experience.

Perhaps what has become a little more consciously understood to me is a sense of what seems to be missing in formal education. Adult part-time students question in greater or lesser ways what it means to be a part of the university, and what it means to know. The dimension of this study which, at this point, I would think of as truly educational for me has been about involvement with learning on a deeply relational basis. I have found a connection which gives sense to learning but which is difficult to describe. It has something to do with being given the space to learn and practice "baby" talk, or "real" talk, a voice rarely heard, or perhaps which I couldn't hear, in my previous experience with formal education.

As I've gone through the process of graduate school, I have found it increasingly difficult to tolerate classes in which there is only space to listen or to tell. I want to be fully engaged in a process of learning which includes the others in the classroom. And I see the frustration in the adult students with whom I work when this doesn't happen, especially as they become more experienced with the system. We know that our life experience is a part of our learning experience.

Why real talk or baby talk doesn't happen more in the classroom I think may have to do with the problem of "fixing" and "being fixed," which in turn has to do with our ideas about equality and difference. Students and teachers have different levels of knowledge (and, in a broader spectrum, differing levels of wisdom). This is their attraction to each other. But we consider the relationship unequal, rather than just different, creating a situation which makes it more probable that either one side or the other will be given more power, or at least the difference is seen as keeping us apart, rather than as an attraction from which all parties might benefit.

But I'm grumpy - I can't quite find the words to describe what I'm trying to say. I allow this to be, knowing that I will keep learning. I could end here but a couple of questions keep following me around, waking me up in the middle of the night to pose their dilemmas.

The Question of Interpretation

Madeleine Grumet (1990), in her response to Philip Jackson's commentary on her essay on validity in qualitative research says:

He balks at 'reading a whole lot of symbolic meaning into her (Kathy's) words'...reminds me of the kids who were also scared to look below, above, beyond the surface of the text in high school English classrooms. They, seventeen and terribly unsure of everything about their minds and bodies, had no

tolerance for complexity, for mystery, for contradiction. Their passion for the ordinary, for conformity was understandable, given their vulnerability. But what of Philip Jackson, an articulate and gifted ethnographer, an acknowledged leader in his field? Why does this work make Jackson so nervous and so intent on this normative definition of the field? (p. 169).

I didn't read Jackson the way Grumet does. I think he is making a case for the everyday being of interest, a point I am also trying to make. I reacted more to Grumet's characterization of high school students afraid to go beyond the surface of a text. My limited experience with adolescents has been that they love to engage with questions about what it means to be human even if they do not have enough experience to understand what an author is saying. What does it mean to go beyond the surface of a text? Is going beyond the ability to interpret? Will any interpretation do? Who decides which will do? Where does connection or relationship fit in the idea of interpretation?

I don't have an answer to these questions, only more awareness of them. I have tried not to write down an interpretation of the participants' stories which goes beyond what makes sense to them; that is, I've tried not to write down what hasn't been said. This is how connection makes sense to me - the link or gap between their reality and mine keeps me attentive to what is said and aware that interpretation cannot be presented as if it is so - it is only a possibility. Grumet links interpretation to depth which she sees as looking below

the surface at what is unsaid. Depth for me has come from a different source. It has come from listening to what the participants say and trying to link with my own experience and other's experience in a way which includes and changes these. Saying something differently because you are who you are may change understanding. The depth comes from attentiveness, something I am learning, and putting together ideas in different combinations, wondering what is missing. A continuing process of observation and conversation, an unwillingness to find the truth which will satisfy all.

Do I Feel More Connected Now?

Do I feel more connected now than I did at the beginning of this process of exploration? I say yes, definitely and yes, hesitantly. I'm remembering a conversation with friends one night when we stopped by Starbucks after class one evening. I was talking about the piece I had written - heroes (The Prisoner) and heroines (Stacy MacAindra). The Prisoner would definitely not be at Starbucks because a call has been put out to boycott the chain because of some of its management practices. And yet we had gone to Starbucks because it was the only place one of our group could make. Being together, being able to be together was more important to us than the political stance we felt we should be taking. Still, there was some heated discussion about which voice is better - a sense that we need the strength of the hero more than we need the willingness to compromise of the

heroine. Why do these two ways of being interfere with each other? The quick answer is that we set them against each other - as I have done in the story above. The long attempt to look at this question is the subject of this thesis.

At first these paradoxes and contradictions paralyzed me. Like Being in the story, I was afraid to move because whatever I did could be wrong for someone else. Gradually, so gradually, what is beginning to free me is comfort with uncertainty, with the idea of change stemming from uncertainty which sharpens one's sense and ability to respond, with allowing the particular to be as, or perhaps more important than the general, with making context and care my guides to continuously changing, even if only in small ways. I think of mothering - so many things I would have done differently if I'd know what I know now. And yet, the commitment involved in being a mother kept me hanging in there, changing, working harder than I ever have to maintain a relationship as it changes. I often say to friends that without my daughter, I would have become rigid - I felt, as many people do, the need to know for sure what is right and wrong. She has kept the space open for possibilities which I now transfer to other learning.

The initial sensation of a gap came for me from thinking I had only two routes open to me in terms of how I dealt with the scholars I encountered during my study - reject or accept the ideas. Now, I enjoy the ideas which so many

people, including myself, contribute, to the idea of what it is to be human. There is a wonderful freedom in knowing that there is no right answer, that the point for me is to keep working towards some sort of caring ideal, to be able to give up ideas, or alter them, and take up new ones as understanding develops, to say I don't know and yet to keep on being, to allow the particular into the educational experience.

The gap has become a symbol of learning for me, conveying the difficulties and the possibilities of staying in between, of neither being fixed or fixing, of feeling connection through caring, moving relationships which teach us about ourselves.

Last Words

I've just finished reading Virginia Woolf's *The Years*. She is preoccupied with how people don't talk to each other. Like Margaret Laurence, Virginia Woolf is always respectful of her characters. She observes and lets the reader take what they may. They are both interested in the everyday struggle of what it means to be human. They each create a reflection of how we live our lives which is both thought-provoking and tender. Here is Eleanor, in her seventies, near the end of *The Years*:

A long strip of life lay behind her. Edward crying; Mrs. Levy talking; snow falling; a sunflower with a crack in it; the yellow omnibus trotting along Bayswater Road. And I thought to myself, I'm the

youngest person in this omnibus; now I'm the oldest...Millions of things come back to her. Atoms danced apart and massed themselves. But how did they compose what people called a life? She clenched her hands and felt the hard little coins she was holding. Perhaps there's an 'I' at the middle of it, she thought; a hard knot; a centre; and again she saw herself sitting at her table drawing on blotting paper, digging little holes from which spokes radiated. Out and out they went; thing followed thing, scene obliterated scene (p. 294-295).

I imagine the knot of the self loosened - its a difficult knot, one hard to loosen up - but suppose it became larger, a much larger dot on the blotting paper, but not as concentrated somehow, looser, less clear, and the spokes still radiate out, lighter, with more space, gaps which accommodate other rays from other dots, radiating into each other, larger and yet very much its own pattern.

The last words in this thesis I give to another of Virginia's Woolf's characters. Nicholas, a "foreigner" who repeats himself often, is just as predictable as his English friends but is much more immediately liked by all who meet him. Perhaps because what he repeats is close to our hearts:

'My speech?' he laughed. 'It was to have been a miracle!' he said. 'A masterpiece! But how can one speak when one is always interrupted? I begin: I say, Let us give thanks. Then Delia says, Don't thank me. I begin again: I say Let us give thanks to someone, to somebody.... And Renny says, What for? I begin again, and look - Eleanor in sound asleep.' (He points at her.) 'So what's the good?'

'Oh but there is some good -' Kitty began.

She still wanted something - some finish, some fillip - what she did not know. And it was getting late. She must go.

'Tell me, privately, what you were going to have said, Mr. - ?' she asked him.

'What I was going to have said? I was going to have said -' he paused and stretched his hand out; he touched each finger separately.

'First I was going to have thanked our host and hostess. Then I was going to have thanked the house -' he waved his hand round the room hung with the placards of the house agent, '- which has sheltered the lover, the creators, the men and the women of goodwill. and finally -' he took his glass in his hand, 'I was going to drink to the human race. The human race,' he continued, raising his glass to his lips, 'which is now in its infancy, may it grow to maturity! Ladies and gentlemen!' he exclaimed, half raising and expanding his waistcoat, 'I drink to that!'

He brought his glass down with a thump on the table. It broke (p. 342).

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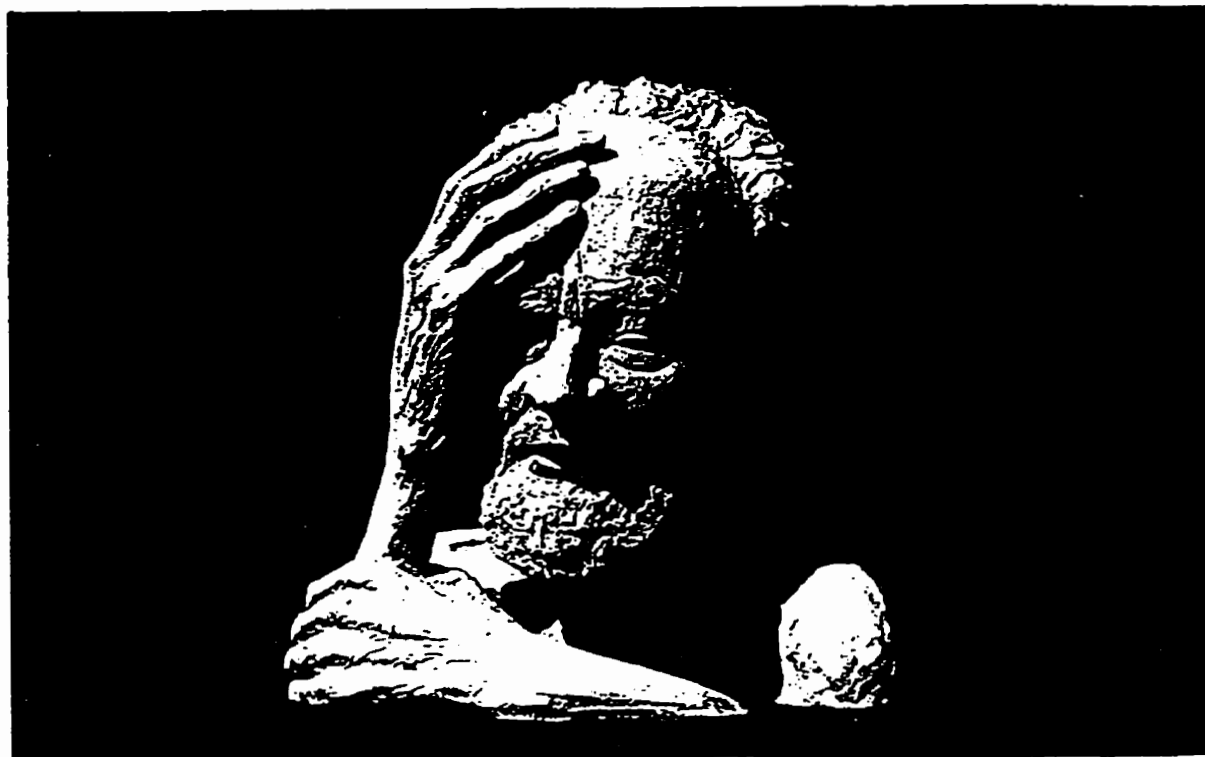
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APPENDIX I: IN THEIR OWN WORDS

ALICE



Background

"I grew up in a small town in southern Ontario. My father was a scrap metal dealer and my mother was a homemaker. I didn't have any kindergarten. I went straight to grade 1. My birthday was in December so I was a year younger than a lot of the students in the class. Being very shy, I didn't always ask for help when I needed it and as a result I fell behind. I failed the first grade - at that time you had to repeat grades if you failed them. The same thing happened in Grade 2 - for whatever

reason I failed and I had to repeat that grade as well. Then in grade 3, by this time it was unfortunate that nobody took me aside and gave me the extra help that I needed - of course you start feeling unsure of yourself and I failed grade 3. So that got me off to a very bad start. In grade 4 I finally found a teacher who was helpful and sympathetic and I passed but at that point I was three years older than most students in the class so they decided to put me into a program outside of the regular curriculum. I think if I'd had someone pulling for me I could have done well because I worked very hard.

"My parents trusted that the people in the system knew what they were doing. They didn't interfere; they believed whoever it was that said that I wasn't academically inclined. After a while you start to believe it yourself. It affected everything I did. They put me in an Opportunities class. It was non-academic and as far as I'm concerned was a waste of a whole year - I didn't learn very much because nothing was expected of the class. Fortunately, I had an artistic talent and everybody saw that as something to focus on. Unfortunately, they neglected all the rest - the academic side. I was good at art - that's not what I needed help in. By the time I was old enough to go to high school, I didn't have grade 5,6,7, and 8. I couldn't go to a regular high school so they put me in a vocational school. It was OK for the first two years. There was some academic but not the amount that the other schools had. I never had to write an exam or formal essay. Deep inside of me I wanted to go to a regular high school. I wanted to study Shakespeare, to do the academic subjects that my older sister was doing. She would bring home books - I wanted to know what they were about. I felt angry that they were never offered to me. No languages were offered to me. Basically I had subjects like restaurant services, horticulture, floral design, baking, beauty culture. I had a little bit of typing. It was easy and non-challenging. Of course, I did remarkably well in the art end of it. I won the award for the arts two years in a row. I did my five years there - I guess you would call me functionally illiterate at that point - I didn't have writing or math skills. I didn't even know what the word literature meant.

"When I graduated, they gave me a scholarship to go on to art school and they also gave me a grade 12 diploma. To me this diploma was a fraud and I was angry because I really didn't learn anything significant. But I took it anyway because it did get me into Sheridan College. I knew that there was more out there to learn and that it was up to me to do something about it. And I knew it would be difficult. In high school, I felt that people treated me differently because I failed all those grades, but as soon as I began school at Sheridan, where nobody knew me, I was treated like one of them. From that point on I read and read and read and tried to get the skills I needed and to surround myself with people who were intelligent. Just being there gave me more confidence. That year at Sheridan was an excellent year - very intensive. I met my husband. I think he was the biggest influence on my life at the time. He helped me enormously. He was a world traveller, very outgoing and I was still hesitant and feeling "academically challenged." I felt that anyone with a degree was really smart - and would they like me? Being with him and being

surrounded by people who did have degrees, I eventually came out of it and found they liked me for who I was.

"After Sheridan, I applied to the Ontario College of Art. With the background of Sheridan, I thought I had a good portfolio to show - that's what you had to do to get into the college - interviews and show them your work. I didn't get accepted that year. I remember sitting beside a whole bunch of people who were going to be interviewed. The girl next to me showed me her work - I felt it wasn't that strong, I thought mine was stronger - but she got in and I didn't. I felt outraged. That didn't stop me. You could do part-time without the admission procedure - I took three courses in order to build up my portfolio even more. Then I re-applied the next year and got advanced standing into second year.

"In the last year of college I took a course with Eric McLuhan - Marshal McLuhan's son. He was working on his Ph.D. and teaching part time at the school. I knew him through my husband - his study was fascinating to me and I decided to take his course. It was the best the course I ever had. We would have a lecture and then a discussion - we covered philosophy, literature, art, music, anthropology. It was such a comprehensive course, I wish I had taped his lectures. But I remember a lot of what he said. He was the first teacher who actually gave us a book list. I managed to read most of them. It was a real reading and thinking course for me.

He also taught me that the way I'd been taught to write a paper - one word after the other, one paragraph after the other - is not the only way. Maybe that's why I did poorly in school - I just couldn't think that way. Eric said - I don't know what prompted this comment - the way you tackle a paper or anything is playful, put one piece in, then another like a picture puzzle. To me that was - what!? - you can actually write something that way - that was so foreign to what I had learned was right. Just accepting that, hey, there's more than one way to do things. Linear thinking was not the best for me.

"The focus of the course was on communication and how technology affects society. Anything to do with McLuhan - and how to see things differently, the way people behave in certain circumstances. We studied an anthropologist named Edmond Carpenter. He would go and study primitive people - what he found was that his presence and the technology he brought with him to study these people was drastically affecting them and actually destroying a lot of their cultural beliefs. The effects of media on people fascinated him so he started studying that. If media had such a profound affect on primitive people, what affect does it have on us? I always felt that television was more powerful than the atom bomb. The course challenged my intellect and made me feel that I do have something to offer - as a result he gave me an honours mark. He said that I was the brightest one in the class - I was shocked that someone with real credentials could say that. It was a very important moment in my life.

"I graduated from the Ontario College of Art and did fairly well. I still had problems with academic subjects. I still wanted to study Shakespeare and poetry and all the rest. I decided I had to take some high school courses. I took grade 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 English credit courses. I took all of these within three years. I had a child and then a second child in that time as well. And, I was doing art; my sculpting was taking off in Toronto and I was teaching art part-time. So it was a lot but I managed to do it.

"We had lived in Toronto for 13 years and that was a great stimulating place to be. But we now had kids and we needed a little bit more calming atmosphere. My husband could live anywhere in the world as long as the federal express comes to the door. Victoria seemed ideal so we packed up and left. The kids were 2 1/2 and 5 1/2 years old.

Joining the Humanities Diploma Program

I wanted to relax for few years and enjoy my kids and do volunteer work at their school but I was still craving the academic challenge I had missed. It was still haunting me. I started looking at the University of Victoria but I knew that I would probably never be accepted at a University because of my background. Then I saw the Humanities Diploma program - it said you could enter as a mature student. Oh maybe there's a chance. So I applied. When they asked for my academic background I just about...I don't know...it was nerve wracking. I had to provide my high school transcripts. Reluctantly, I submitted them. I was rejected, I wasn't accepted into UVic - it was my worst fear. I appealed and the Senate decided to let me in. It was gruelling but when I finally got in it was great. I had to write the English Placement test with all those students who had gone through the system. I passed and was in the middle average range - I felt good about that.

First Course

I decided to take English composition in the fall. The section I wanted to get into was full so I had to take another. The professor's teaching style was embarrassing. He was young and I think he was a frustrated actor. He would do strange things - he would come into the classroom and say, "Would you like to see my interpretation of a fly?" Then he'd start buzzing around the room and bobbing his head against the windows. Everybody would look at each other nervously. His particular style was annoying, but I knew I had to get through the course. After being in art college - I really wanted something solid. I got through it, I passed.

Humanities 100

Then I did Humanities 100. I think the teacher tried to give us too much - it became overwhelming for us. Still, I enjoyed being with all these people of different backgrounds and ages. One thing that annoyed me was that the oral presentations were usually put at the end of the class when everyone was tired. My friend's presentation was very long. I wanted to stay for the whole thing but I couldn't because I was being picked up and had to leave. It was a slight to the students too - the teacher was saying his lecture was more important than the student's presentations. I talked to the teacher and, as a result, he changed the student presentations to the beginning of the class. It worked beautifully and I thought - oh gosh, I do have a little say - if you speak up you do get results.

A Bad Experience

"After that I took Introduction to English Literature. I wasn't too sure. I found that any kind of test or exam made me so nervous that I would usually bomb. But I did fairly well with the take home work. In this class, 70% of the mark was on in-class work, time limited. I thought - well, I'll give it a try. And I just did not do well. I did OK on the essays I wrote. I remember one essay we had to do on an author I didn't really like. We had to take a passage from the book and relate the passage to the whole book. I could not find a passage which interested me enough to keep me going. So I decided to take smaller passages from a number of sources in the book and relate them to the whole book. When I got my paper back the comments were - intelligently written and interesting but I can't give you a mark, did you understand the instructions? Well of course I did - I was being creative but I was chastised. The teacher said I could either rewrite it or do another one. So I did another one which I felt was inferior, boring, but it followed all the rules and the comment was oh, greatly improved, wonderful. I find many academic textbooks so dry and boring and uncreative...it doesn't have to be that way. The whole idea is to communicate.

"I would show my essays to friends who have degrees. They would say this is interesting and well done. They looked at the comments and would say - this is basically form they're talking about - the form is not up to their standards but the content is great. That's how I was marked. I wanted the content - the form was technical, it was irrelevant to the reasons why I was at the University in the first place. That's the difficulty I have because I don't have the formal background. Maybe I have an advantage in that I don't get bogged down with all this form. I can get right to the content. But in a University, there are areas where you have to follow certain guidelines.

"Anyway, I failed the course, not because of the essays I worked on at home, but because of the in-class work which did not allow me enough time to think. That

left me on probation for a year. So I had to bring up my marks. I took a film studies course and got a good enough mark to get me off probation.

"After that year, I thought maybe I should go in a different direction. I didn't have the energy to go right back - I wasn't sure what to do - I left it for the first term. I was studying Japanese on my own with a friend. I decided to audit Japanese 100B which was a good option for me at the time.

"I wasn't sure whether or not to continue with the credit courses and try to get that diploma or just withdraw from being a student and audit courses. Last week was a very difficult week because I had to make a decision one way or the other. I went to pay the fees for the audit but I couldn't bring myself to withdraw. After I milled it around in my head I started feeling better about continuing. By this time I already had a month behind me in Japanese. I felt that I was keeping up with the assignments. I was doing the tests. And so I thought - what the heck - give it a try. If I do well enough to keep on going then I will. If I don't - I've tried very hard and at least I'll get a language out of it.

Reflecting Back

"I worry about what was happening to me when I was doing courses in a field of interest to me - literature. I felt my creativity going down. I felt that if I continued, I wouldn't want to write anything - period. That's what was happening - I was losing that drive. I wrote a play several years ago, before I entered University. It was very pure - it was from reading Ibsen. I found that I love the way he writes because he is so clean and the message is there. So I followed that format and I wrote something that was really important to me. When I started taking courses, that enthusiasm died. After taking Introduction to Literature, I am still reluctant to write. I know it will come back. It was just such a negative experience that it's going to take me a while to get over it. I feel like I have something to say. I need to get it out somehow. I think what has happened at the University is that the balance between form and content has slipped. If you get so concerned with the form, the communication fails. I just don't want to write that way. The bottom line is to communicate your ideas. When I do my art, if I have an idea and it's communicated, that has the impact - the form is important too, but there has got to be a balance. In art, technical abilities are important but the other side - the ideas, the concepts are just as important. So it is a constant struggle.

"You do have to learn the rules before you can break them but you don't want those rules to cripple or restrict you. When you get someone who's a born teacher, like Eric McLuhan - it can be done. Teaching is an art. Unfortunately, we only have a few gems around - and when you get them, you have to get the most out of it.

"I met Marshal McLuhan - of course I was in awe - that was a touching experience because here was a man who devoted his life to communication, writing books, giving lectures and teaching, and he had a stroke which rendered him speechless - he could not speak or read - all these ideas and no way of getting them out. That last year was very difficult for him. I saw him two days before he died. We went to his house. He came up to greet us. He put his hand out and I shook his hand. I felt at that point - he is silent but has so much to offer. I was silent for so long and I have a lot to offer and I felt a real connection.

April, 1996

"It was interesting to read the transcript from the interview in September. It was weird seeing it on paper. It was almost...scary...a very odd feeling. Almost like hearing yourself. I can understand why aboriginal people, when they are taught to see a photograph of themselves, they are frightened. Capturing that time and space is scary. There is a lot I could do with what you wrote - add the subtleties we didn't cover. I don't keep a journal. I've never done that, and I don't know if I can do it. There is something very odd about it. Its hard to describe. I had a conversation with my husband. He felt the same way. You live and if you write something down each day it's like you're ... killing it or something...I don't know. I'd rather write something that has ideas. I'm not sure why.

"Writing in a diary is like exposing a part of your soul which you don't necessarily want to do. It might be interesting for someone to read but you almost feel guilty that you expose yourself or I don't know - it's odd, maybe I just have an inhibition about putting pen to paper about personal stuff. I'd rather put down ideas, objective ideas. They are a little bit detached. Different than a diary. It's like a photograph. You take a picture of somebody. It's nice to look back at your life but there is something odd about looking back, seeing yourself as somebody else. Aboriginal cultures are frightened of photographs and I think the photograph is similar to writing down in language because you're detaching yourself.

"When I was in the humanities course we touched on a Locke essay. The idea was that if you don't write something down about you or your history or your life or whatever, you don't exist. I think that as soon as you write it down, you're dead. Cultures that have survived for 40,000 years - are they dead? Only when their language dies. A language is alive, it's spontaneous. As soon as you put something on paper it doesn't change, it's there, it's concrete, it's dead. It doesn't move anymore.

"The drive to go to University has been kicked around a lot. I've been doing it so long. I try not to look back. I always get something out of it even though I go home and say why am I doing this to myself. It may be because I wasn't educated traditionally, or maybe they didn't know how to educate me because I thought so

differently. In some way, my experience is both an advantage and a disadvantage at the same time. I have to look at the advantages. There is still something pushing me. I have this drive. When I go to bookstores, I go to the philosophy and science section. I have a desire to learn - no matter how many problems I have. It's tough - but I'm always fighting it, even after all that, there's something in the back of my mind that I can't get rid of.

DAVID

Oh! fire, that burns within this ageing breast,
Will thou not die at my forlorn request?
Nor even burn more softly, bright but cool,
That this poor heart not make of me a fool?

Such hotly burning flame bespeaks a youth
With coursing blood - and gleaming eye, foresooth:
And though on that past state my mind reflect,
The years twixt then and now still interject
To claim obeisance to their passage run
And dare me their hard lessons now to shun.

Burn slowly then, a glowing ember still
To some small part of later memory fill.
Though eye may gleam, the blood runs slowly now;
Youth's ardent flame old hearts must disavow.

Background

"Driving back from the University today I recalled the three most vivid recollections I have of life within my youthful formal education. Actually, there were four but the fourth concerned my first experience of death: a classmate - and friend - in the fourth form suffered from TB for twelve months. When it became too severe he was sent to a sanatorium where he died about three months later. His was the first death of someone close that I endured and the first funeral I ever attended. It was on a very cold winter afternoon and I can still feel the cold but also the warmth of our not-overly-beloved headmaster who gently walked me and another school friend, arm-in-arm with each of us, out of the cemetery. That headmaster, who most earnestly entreated me - there is no other word for it - to sit for Oxford University entrance, later played a very important role in my life though he never knew it. (How? In March 1941, I was thinking of leaving my job - I happened to bump into my old Headmaster on the street and he had heard of a job which he felt would be beneficial to me and referred me to the General

Manager of the company. I got the job - but I also there met my first wife! Just think what would have happened if I had walked along that street five minutes later and thus not bumped into the Head. It always amazes me that life is built on no more than a series of unexpected, unplanned and totally haphazard occurrences.) The "other school friend" and I were virtually inseparable all through school up until we both got married. We were each best man to the other and Godfathers to our respective children.

"My earliest VIVID memory is of the teacher in my elementary school who prepared and coached me for the secondary school entrance exam. He was the only teacher I can recall - indeed the only person, as far as I can remember, - who deliberately slapped my face. (I can't recall even my father or mother doing that to me; though other parts were sometimes belaboured!) In retrospect, it was fully deserved because it was a response to blatant defiance of, first his request, then his admonition and, finally, his order. I was whistling loudly leaving the classroom and after each admonition I repeated the offence. Finally, he very firmly and very hard, slapped my cheek. He was however, an excellent teacher and we were excellent friends after I had left that school. He invited me to his home many times and was at all times a most patient mentor.

"Needless to say, I have many memories of my secondary school days which may have been the happiest days of my life. But two specific incidents fall within the VIVID category.

"My best subjects in school were English and History. The history teacher, who was called "Stiffy" because of his stiff leg earned in the First World War, was a terror. He carried the leg of a chair in his hand at all times and though it crashed on a desk many times, I never saw it touch a boy. He was a curmudgeon. And yet, probably because of my marks, he was always friendly to me. At exam time, classes became very mixed because even if you did not have an exam scheduled you sat, idle (usually reading for your own next exam), in with a class which was taking one. I was sitting alongside a second form boy (I was in the fourth) and Stiffy was invigilating. Ever stupidly helpful I advised the young lad before the exam started that if he needed help I would try to provide it. At some point an occasion arose and I, I thought, surreptitiously, passed a written note to him with the necessary answer. Nothing missed Stiffy's steely eye, however. Even 56 years later I can still hear the out-of-character sadness in Stiffy's voice as, having taken up the young lad's paper, and accused him of cheating, he told me how disappointed he was in me for having contributed to the cheating. We both were sent to the Headmaster's office where I made it very clear that I had encouraged the lad to ask for help and that he was not to blame. I had hoped this would relieve him of a caning. However, I think he got six. A bamboo cane across the hand is extremely painful and I got six, according to the Headmaster, harder than those he gave the young lad. And that too was fully justified because I cost the boy that exam. But what I remember

most clearly - and regret the most - is the hurt that I occasioned that very tough teacher who had showed me kindness and had expected better of me.

"The third incident is more pleasant. As I noted, English was my favourite subject. Our English teacher was a fiery little Welshman yclept "Dog." I never knew the origin of his nickname but rumour had it that he had been caught in a compromising situation at one time: not with a student! Dog was also my rugby coach and thus the relationship was a fairly solid one. Anyway, I responded to one of the many essay projects by writing an essay "ON READING." One of the prime sources in our home was Arthur Mees' twelve-volume "Children's Encyclopaedia." Finding an article much to the purpose therein, I paraphrased - though did not plagiarize - it into an essay. I can still recall the opening sentence:

"Give me a book and a shady nook" a man said long ago..

"I handed in the essay and within a day or two Dog came into class and read the whole thing to the class. And not only to my class. He read it to every class which he taught from Second Form through Sixth. He was so full of this essay and pouring such praise on it that I felt guilty. Finally, I told him the source of the essay and the extent to which I had used it. That, he said, made no difference: I had taken the trouble to find out more than I already knew and that was the key to good writing and I should continue to follow the same path. I must admit, however, that though he made it appear right I always thereafter felt I had been awarded praise under false pretenses. It is worth noting that I later learned that Dog continued to read that essay even in subsequent years as an example of good essay writing. As you already know, when I sat the Oxford certificate exams at the end of the Fifth Form year, I was awarded the prize for English literature - which, incidentally I still cherish; Dickens' "A Tale of Two Cities." Thanks, I guess, to "Dog"

"After I immigrated to Canada, I joined a professional administration institute and began the correspondence course for its exams with the University of Toronto. I almost immediately became involved in student affairs and initiated a monthly Student Magazine which was later adopted by the Institute. Between 1961 and 1963 I designed, wrote, typed and printed it entirely on my own; a group of fellow students helped to collate and mail. Incidentally, the Institute sets its exams in four parts - Intermediate, Parts 1 and 2 and Finals, Part 1 and 2. Its recommendations are twelve months study for each part. Was it rebellion against the commonplace when I completed and passed the whole of the Intermediate in 12 months and the whole of the Final in six months - and graduated top in Ontario? Doing the Student Magazine at the same time merely added icing to the cake. Now that REALLY sounds like a braggart!!

"My career information you already have. I constantly sought - and achieved - positions of authority culminating, of course, in President and Chief Executive Officer. It surely is the most individualistic of occupations.

"My life was affected more by omission than commission. That omission was the youthful and foolish refusal to go to university...I have often wondered whether my severe stammer between the ages of ten and seventeen - I had extreme difficulty in speaking; reading aloud in class was virtually impossible - had any bearing upon later life. The stammer did not completely disappear until my 20's: I had developed a series of phrases which did not include any 'hard' sounds and which enabled me to start speaking. It is the most embarrassing affliction that any child can suffer.

"Much of my life was affected by the duplicity and immorality of a partner...a devastating experience which has a major bearing upon my "present life situation."

Joining the HDP

"If *Frankenstein* had not been on the list of readings for Humanities 100, I would probably have proceeded to the next course - philosophy, maybe, without halt or hindrance. I can hardly blame the University for me going off in my own direction...Could the University have done anything to help? Probably not. Until it changes its policies regarding senior (in age) students it never will be able to. Requiring writing of a junior grade essay and then a pass in 115 or 116 is being obstructionist. Few older people would go back to university unless they felt reasonably competent in the English language. I think that you will find that most will have held reasonably responsible jobs; and certainly ones requiring Grade 12 or 13 education. When you get to your 60's or 70's there is little desire to waste what little time MAY be left to you on totally unnecessary - and unwanted - rules of grammar; particularly when you have spent a lifetime acquiring and using them. And if you haven't acquired them by that age you certainly don't NEED them....the senior student should be judged on his acquired knowledge of the course material and the quality of his approach to the subject, not on his lifetime-acquired habits of expression...

"I guess all I have proven is that I DID NOT fit in. Being a determined - and unrepentant - individualist, I have always resented structured environments. But when an organisation presents itself as a guide and mentor it should not withhold that service from those who seek that service; most particularly when we pay heavily for its existence.

Excerpts from a Conversation with David April, 1996

P: What did you expect or what did you hope for?

D: I'm in a subject where I know I am right in contravention of everything that's been thought for the last 200 years. It's beyond my comprehension that someone else can't see that and won't take the trouble to read what will prove it. I gave X a

chapter about six weeks ago - I doubt if he's read it. Its time consuming and perhaps he hasn't got the time. But, in the interests of academic learning, it would seem to me that he could get more involved! I don't think he isn't interested, but he appears not to show the real interest that I would have thought a subject within his own area would have created in him. He is not teaching me. I'm teaching him. That sounds awfully conceited, but I think he'd acknowledge it because he said to me at one time that he had changed some of his courses. Here is a subject that at least bears scrutiny and no one even bothers. I feel that X could have been more aggressive about it - particularly when we were trying to accomplish some way of holding me in so that I could still continue to work. And that was all that was asked of him. You know - that directed reading course way back then - even though I myself was the block, I realise, because it would have meant working in a restricted atmosphere - and I didn't want to be restricted!

P: It was Y, really, who got you started on the Shelley...

D: Oh yes, no question. But Y didn't push me into *Frankenstein*, nor push me into following it up. It all started after the course had ended. It was only right at the last oral, when I delivered the *Frankenstein* story that I got involved. I knew Mary didn't write it as soon as I read the introduction. I did not understand the book - I had not read anything about Shelley. I knew nothing except that the introduction read stupidly - this was right at the end of the course with Y. I can't explain it. When I read the introduction, I thought how can anyone write a sentence like that and claim to have written this novel. The two things did not jibe.

P: You could feel a contradiction right from the very beginning.

D: Right from the beginning. I've subsequently read a lot about Shelley. When I read the poems knowing what I know about him, modern critics don't make sense because they misread the poetry. I thought how can they write about this man when they don't know him. Even now, I'm still finding more evidence of what was wrong with this man, and how he covered it, and how his friends protected him from his condition being known. When he was all right, the genius was there and his imagination was unbelievable; but he also knew his mind was wrong. He studied dreams and he got into the human mind. But he never changed his philosophy. He was one track, even though he was tolerant - totally. He could argue both sides which is a great advantage for a writer.

P: I'm still curious - why Shelley? Why does this particular person, his poetry attract you?

D: It wasn't even his poetry. It was just that ruddy novel. I thought, there is something wrong here.

P: So is your continuing interest in Shelley more to do with trying to get acknowledgement from people who refuse to listen, or is it that you have learned to appreciate the soul of this person in a deep way.

D: I feel sorry for him. Because he fought all his life for what he considered a virtuous goal. He was right but he was unrealistic. Everyone has been dreaming about his utopia forever. It's never achievable because it goes contrary to human nature, that every man shall love his neighbour, respond to anger with love. All the standard characteristics of every religion, except that the religions have been the greatest murderers in history - human nature doesn't allow utopia to be achieved, nor ever will in my mind.

P: So do you feel sorry for him because he could never achieve that goal?

D: I feel sorry for him because he was ill, because he was sick. He tried to tell a story and no one would listen. That was because of the age he lived in as much as anything. No one would ever listen except people who were mentally maladjusted. People who would have believed David Karesch, or any other religious sects - people who are slightly mad.

P: What do you think would happen if Shelley lived today?

D: Bear in mind, it's not just his sceptical thinking that was his problem, or his philosophies. He had a disease (diabetes) that was considered like leprosy. If anyone had known that he had it, he would have been ostracised. Mary knew because she had a somewhat similar disease, which was one reason Shelley was attracted to her. He thought someone with the same problem would be understanding, but she wasn't. It was many years before he accepted the fact that he wasn't going to get better, it wasn't going to change and the disease was going to kill him. He came to that realisation I think in 1815 first - when he was 22 years old.

Then, on a trip with Byron, he came to the conclusion that his philosophy may have been flawed. He had always maintained that the combination of imagination and knowledge automatically resulted in a virtuous person. This is the marriage of Frankenstein and Elizabeth. But then he met Byron, whose work was admired by everyone in the world. Here was a man who had all the knowledge in the world, he also had a vivid imagination; and yet he was a reprobate. He was a womanizer and a drinker and everything that you can think of that would fit that mold. Shelley was quite the reverse - he didn't drink - maybe because he couldn't - it affected his illness. But he lived virtuously intentionally - he was a stoic. When he saw Byron, who had the qualities that Shelley felt would make him a virtuous man and yet he wasn't, it shook him. It's not that Shelley felt inferior to Byron, he was angry.

P: And he was trying to come to grips with a contradiction - which you are as well. Such as the contradiction of X being the Shelley expert but not having time to get involved with your work.

D: And I think I told you that I even put in one part that I don't think you can understand Shelley unless you've experienced some of the things that he experienced.

P: Such as..

D: Essentially, his female companions, who showed that they were merely money conscious, merely after his estate. Although he was the best feminist that ever existed.

P: For Shelley, the great teacher is the contradictions in life - between how we think life should be and how it actually is. For Shelley that comes up again and again - his illness, a mental condition heightened this awareness: but I'm seeing in you a person who also suffers from the contradiction

D: There is no question that after my wife died and after I found out what my wife had been, I probably changed. One was disgust with myself for being stupid for so long, not asking any questions. Last night - I'd been at it all day and I switched on the TV late - *Last Tango in Paris* was on - I missed the beginning but it became obvious that he had been deeply in love with his wife and she had been a whore. And the anger I saw...and then realising that he still loved her. And that was Shelley's problem.

P: And that was "David's" problem?

D: And that was "David's" problem - no question. Now, having lived from the age of 16 to age of 68 in what was an obvious lie, without having recognised it as such, but also with having known early in the relationship that she had been unfaithful, and having excused it, and thereafter assumed that she was still pure - and with this obsession of love. As I wrote in the book, only those who experience an obsessive love, to find out it was unrequited. I firmly believe that women are, and I haven't lost it entirely although it certainly has changed, but I have always believed that women are naturally pure.

P: Like Shelley believing that someone like Byron would be naturally pure.

D: Yes and like Mary and Harriet, his first wife. Same thing. He trusted implicitly. He didn't think anyone could consciously hurt someone else.

P: So what happens to you and Shelley when you find out?

D: You get angry. You lose a lot of your ingenuousness. You question.

P: Is that OK?

D: It was the only thing, I think ultimately, that gave Shelley contentment later on in life. He wasn't fighting as hard, he wasn't bitching as much. He accepted the way it is. It didn't stop him trying to convert or reform the world but he realised that it was no good getting mad at it. It was going to be a slow process. He wanted the story to keep being told. An amazing man. How he did it in the face of his problems, I don't know.

But what's the point of me getting uptight if I can't get the story across like Shelley didn't! I realise I may never even finish this book - and then it's going to just sit on a shelf, no one will know what it's about, and that's it. I've come to realise that that's the way it is. The information about Shelley should be out there. I'm concerned that he be understood. He was vilified in his lifetime. He has become glorified now as one of the best poets in the Romantic period. But I'd like people to know why he was the best poet - what he went through and what he was really saying about himself. Because he kept telling his own story - every book he wrote, he told his life story - he didn't do anything else, he just told his life story. The only way man can learn is through other people's experience or his own. Reading history of people, not of peoples, of people is the best way to learn about oneself.

KATHLEEN

Background

"My mother was teacher, my father was a farmer - his family immigrated from Britain when he was 18 - he had been studying chemistry - he wasn't very ambitious, he tended to drift and he ended up on the farm. My mother went back to teaching in 1942. Both of them believed in careers for women. I went through a stage of thinking I won't bother doing anything, I'm only going to get married anyway. My father pounced on me - "what if your husband died? Then what are you going to do." My mother came at me from another direction. It was just a passing thought but they weren't having it - they didn't really care what I did. My mother would have put me through university for English - I had good marks in English - but that would have probably meant I'd have to be a teacher - children and me ..no. I knew I wanted to be a nurse and of course it didn't cost much. Only the uniform and some spending money. They provided room and board

"I was brought up in very isolated circumstances on a prairie farm during the depression. - there weren't very many kids around. I had a frightful time adjusting to (grade) school - I remember that vividly. I was terrified for about three years because I had no experience with children and they didn't like me very well. I was

kind of a big frog in a little puddle. From about the age of 9 things settled down. There was another girl in school the same age - it was better. High school was a bit rocky especially grade XII . But it was quite hard because I was taking the whole high school in three years - you could take it in four but I took academic courses - latin, physics, I liked chemistry better - I got through. Nurses training was a whole different thing because one learns by doing. We had classes but it was mostly just hard work and long shifts 6 and 7 days a week - 1/2 day off on Sunday and maybe one other 1/2 day during the week but often it was so busy that you didn't get off on time - you had to be young to stand up to it. I was in training when I was 17.

"I had wanted to be a nurse since I was six. So in a way it was great to get in there and get at it. But I had to learn to produce. When you go into training, you're still treated as a kid but you'd better cut the mustard or you heard about it from higher ups. They smartened us up in a hurry. But I think that that sort of thing happens in many careers once you get away from home - you're not protected, you do have to compete - and it was good for me. I really would have been a different person if I hadn't gone through that three years of apprenticeship.

"These days I think that nurses have a certain amount of reality shock when they go into a ward because they don't get the continual clinical experience that we had. We graduated knowing that we could do the job. Mind you - when we got out, new changes kept coming out, you had to learn on the job and take courses.

"I stayed in nursing so long that when things changed, it was necessary for me to take courses. I was out of nursing for four years in the 60's. When I got back there wasn't a job in the field I was most used to which was obstetrics so I took a course at the University of Toronto in coronary care. They were just getting going in coronary care units in 71 and there was special training for nurses who worked in them. The course was in Toronto and we were living in Trenton, so I farmed out the kids and went to Toronto for four weeks - it was a great experience.

"It was a major decision to get married - that sort of sets your path. The crises that followed were coping or not coping or getting a divorce or staying together. My husband was an alcoholic and since I didn't have a child for four years, I could have left then but that was in the time when you couldn't get a divorce. I decided to hang in there because I had seen the kind of life that some women led who were separated - they were neither fish nor fowl - they couldn't go anywhere, do anything - raising kids on their own, not even able to remarry - a kind of limbo land. It has turned out to be the right decision to stay although I considered leaving so many times. I'd been to al-anon and had a certain amount of insight into my own behaviour. This was an alcoholic's family - it was very ambiguous. My husband wasn't abusive. He just wasn't there. I finally came to the conclusion that it was better to stay. The kids loved their father. And would they be better off with no father at all which is what would happen to them? They would have been worse

off. He never hit anyone. So I hung in there. And I think it was better because my kids seem to have very committed attitudes to their own marriages.

"We lived on an airforce base and there were always women around who had problems because their husbands were drinking. The Forces began to deal with it about the time we were retiring. It had been brushed under the carpet - ignored. You could get away with any amount of drinking as long as you showed up for work. It was really a very sad situation. If a man didn't drink much, he didn't fit in. I wasn't any different than many other wives on the base.

"I was 24 when I got married. I had been working for 2 or 3 years before I met my husband. He was in the Air Force. He joined during the war because he had three brothers in the service and he wanted to go too. He got in but he didn't have the education to fly so he became ground crew and he was a sergeant by the time he was 19 just before the end of the war. He had a lot of ability, but he got hooked on alcohol. He was always a very outgoing person. He only had about grade 10 but he could get up in front of a couple hundred people and give them an off-the-cuff speech. He was at home in that milieu rather than with his family. He wasn't a cranky man. He was a different person when he was drinking. The relationship died. It was unfortunate that he happened to be so susceptible to addiction. The longer it went on the more ingrained it got and the less possible it was to change.

"I developed the ability to detach myself. I could go to work with a terrible crisis at home and just shove it right off. I had to. It was actually my job that kept me going at times. I had two lives. One kept me from being isolated as a person. Having a profession develops your personality.

"I had the kids. He was absent so often that his input was minimal and yet when he was there...he understood the boys better than I did, in spite of the fact that we didn't see very much of him. But from time to time he would know what was wrong. That was one of the reasons I married him - I knew he was good with kids. With me - if it's not my own kids I don't know what to say, not so much now - but then. He wasn't like that - he was brought up in a large family. He felt he was just as good as anyone else. If an officer was giving him trouble, he would confront him or go over his head - I always admired that because I was just the opposite. I was shy. He was afraid of practically nothing. In some respects it wasn't a bad marriage - there were never other women.

"Right now, I'm having a bit of a problem. I've had three deaths in my immediate family. My husband died, my sister died - she was my best friend - and then my mother died. My sister's death was unexpected in that she was younger than me. She had always been healthy and then in the fall of 91 symptoms appeared - she had cancer - she had chemotherapy a couple of times but there was nothing they could do, she died in 93. I miss my husband sometimes when I think back to the early years... Everything has two sides and it's impossible to take either one. My

mother's death was less ambiguous because she was very old and terribly difficult. Its hard to separate the dementia from the person. It causes me to think about my own aging - I have done a lot of reassessing, readjustment and rebalancing.

Returning to School

"I often feel better here on campus. It has something to do with the atmosphere - young people around, I get to know folks to talk to, and I like my professors, and everybody seems to be very agreeable and cooperative. It's a nice atmosphere - I thrive in it. The new challenges were quite formidable but I've managed them so far. And there was something about the study of Italian that...

"Its entirely outside my experience. I have travelled but I always found that the most fascinating, the most rewarding thing about travelling is when you can get a look at the country outside of the tourist business. Meeting people who live there - like going to coffee with a Croatian - there is something about other people's points of view and how they live and what interests them. The best thing about the trip to Italy was the two weeks I spent with an Italian family. I stayed with a lady who was about the same age as my oldest son - they had gone to University. They had one child. She worked as a teacher of business economics. She and I could converse. She had no English at all but she was patient. I hit it off with this person. Having lunch with a family - young people, good looking, they all stood up when we came into the room and said hello. Then they served us lunch on the terrace. There were three or four of us left in the kitchen - everyone else went out to the pool. And we started to talk. I could understand enough. They were very amused by my bad Italian but they understood and they weren't critical.

"There was one evening when my landlady's sister, who was married to a history professor, took me over one evening to visit them and they were thrilled because they'd moved into this apartment. Those little medieval towns - they don't stretch so apartments are hard to find. We sat in the living room and Guisepe told me all about the history of the town, which of course was his field. And I understood it all, and I managed to answer from time to time. It was an ancient place and their home had once been a medieval cantina.

Taking Courses

"I didn't look forward to taking English 115, I wasn't sure I could handle all those essays. But I knew I had to learn how to write a paper properly, especially how to expand what ideas I had. So it was with some trepidation that I attended the first class. But we were introduced to writing essays gradually, with short writing assignments, and I found I learned something with each attempt. Much depends on the professor and she was very encouraging, always pleasant, and in full control of her class of over 20 teenagers right out of Grade XII - all nice people, but full of energy and not always ready to quiet down at the beginning of class. I enjoyed

them and feel I have benefited from the brief association with them. Young people are so much less constrained than we were in my early years. It must have been quite a task for the professor. She would have to make a couple of attempts to get their attention at the beginning of class. They were fun, they were nice young people but some were a bit hard to control. She was so good humoured about it.

"Our high school teachers were very patient people. I don't remember any of them being miserable. There was a bit more of what we would call now, sexism. But it was unconscious, it was so ingrained that I didn't think much about it and whoever was perpetrating a particular thing, didn't realise what he was doing. There wasn't anything blatant or exploitive. It was just cultural. They were good teachers and good people.

"Our boundaries were spelt out very early and clearly, especially for women, girls. We were brought up to be nice and to please other people, basically. Now they have more freedom but I think they don't have the security I had. They have to make their own boundaries. As far as sexual things are concerned - everybody knew the rules and what would happen if you broke them. Now that's all gone. With its restrictions and its security. I'm not really sure that it's any better for women now in some ways. We were brought up to take care of people and not to try to change the man you married. It's a good policy if you want the marriage to work but in the end it can be hard on the woman as an individual. You could go on forever comparing. Young women these days have more opportunities to get educated, to get a good job.

"I've enjoyed my University experience. It's just nice to be treated like everybody else. Like the other students. It's so easy for older women to feel shunted aside or on the shelf - out of the mainstream. I must say that in all the classes I've taken I have felt a part of the group. I feel a part of the life of the class. I'm getting the same correction as well as the same encouragement as everyone else. I appreciate that.

"There's good interaction in most of my classes. Most of the professors don't put anyone down. This encourages me - I know I'm not going to get squelched if I ask a stupid question. I usually will not say anything if I don't think it's a good question so I don't really let myself in for that. But I have noticed that most of the professors are considerate, in my experience. I think the professors respond to a positive person. Even if you're not brilliant, you can establish a good rapport.

"In the Humanities course, I blanked out on an exam question. The professor allowed me to rewrite and I was able to complete the course successfully. I wasn't as uptight about this last exam. I thought, I'm not going to get upset because I've studied to the point where if I don't pass it - I really tried. I felt better when I sat down to write. When I was young, I had no trouble with exams but when I started this program I was really uptight about them.

Kathleen's paper on Love Death and Hypocrisy in three plays. Written March, 1994

"Alvigia truly believes she is Christian; does she not observe the rites? Does she not visit the sick? She really has hope of a place in paradise. For her Christianity is like the magic she practices in her profession of witchcraft...Furthermore, she is not a parasite...From the death of youth and beauty is born tenacity, and also witchcraft and wickedness...Flamminio is more despairing about the death of youth and hope...for him remains only the sadness of a ruined life and advancing age."

I asked Kathleen to comment on this passage. Here is her reply:

"Alvigia is a compelling and perfectly horrifying character; one feels that Aretino really drew her from life. She is unencumbered by ethics or morals of any kind. Her visits to the sick are not inspired by compassion, but were made as a sort of dues-paying ritual to help pay her way into heaven. Alvigia does not understand compassion; she has never experienced it. Because she goes through the motions, she believes she is a Christian because the church gives her no reason to think otherwise. As I understand it, the church of the time did not teach the love of one's fellow-man as exemplified by Christ, but only the observance of ritual, and the payment of tithes and other gift to the Church as an assurance of life after death.

The problem with seeing religion as magic is dealt with in the eighth chapter of the Book of Acts in which one Simon, the Sorcerer, tried to buy from St. Peter the power of the Holy Spirit, because he thought it was magic, and of course was rebuked. Simon didn't understand, his heart wasn't "right with God" - but St. Peter tried to teach him. No one has tried to teach Alvigia, which function is the responsibility of the Church.

Flamminio's problem is that he is a good person fundamentally, unlike Alvigia. He cannot make the transition to living by whatever evil means may be necessary. Perhaps he doesn't hate the human race enough, or hasn't the courage. Possibly he has conscience, as Alvigia does not. These two characters illustrate that the will to live is stronger in some people than others, in youth or in old age, in this or any other period of history.

KALI

Background

"I was born and raised in Singapore which, being a British colony, followed the British form of education. You didn't have the freedom to pick what you wanted. You were classified immediately into one of three different groups - an express (smart) student, a normal student, or a slow student. That was decided when you

were in grade 3 (about nine years old) - you sit for an important exam then. So there was a lot of pressure, whole careers were being judged by that age. That's why children who are there don't have as much enjoyment as the children over here. There is a lot of pressure and a lot of competition. Educational standards are very high.

"There is a lot of culture as well, a lot of history, awareness of different types of people and how we are to respect and appreciate others. That's emphasised. Every month there is a theme such as "courtesy is a way of life" or something promoting cultural events. We can be part of another culture without having to be that culture. That is something I miss about Singapore - integrating with different cultures. That's not to say that there is no prejudice but there is a little bit more tolerance and people are educated to accept differences.

"When I was born, we lived in a derelict area. It was like a ghetto. But school was mandatory - it didn't cost us anything - all we had to pay for were our uniforms but even then, if we really couldn't afford them, there was help. When Singapore became a Chinese state it opened up business and rapid change took place. Homes were built left, right and centre, and it was affordable for the people who were living in our kind of situation to move into places like that. It happened to everyone. The government would take money based on salary for our mortgage. As far as education went - the government wanted the highest standards. The population was so huge for a very small island of 364 square kilometres that instead of homes it was all buildings - so if you go there today, you feel like you're in NY city but it's much cleaner. The great thing about living in that country was the fact that everybody had a home. Food was cheap and we could afford it. All basic necessities were accessible, affordable. I liked the uniforms because you looked like everybody else and you were there to study.

"People cared about each other. I remember myself as having happy childhood days. Most of the pain and the suffering was born by my mom and my father and my brother - they never let us see it. There were times when we had to share one piece of bread - of course the parents wouldn't eat - the children would. There were five of us kids, three of us were the youngest. My sister is ten years older and my brother about 15 to 20 years - you know I don't know his age because his birth date was never recorded, or my mother's. So we just made my mother's the 1st of January, 1930 and my brother ...I still don't know if he was born in January or July.

"I had a fantastic social life because besides all my schooling, I was involved in martial arts for seven years, and I was a long distance runner. Every student had to take part in some activity. My friends and I would get together and study, or do some sports, or go for a jog, or to the beach on the weekend. There were always things to do; there was never a boring moment.

"We believed in working hard to get what we wanted. This had a lot to do with our Confucius thought - the idea of working hard to get what you want. The idea of being respectful to your elders, wise man once said... there is a lot of Confucius' ideology that was followed.

Moving to Canada

"I moved to Canada when I was 17. When we decided to come here, I was beginning to study for my "O" levels which is a Cambridge exam. I couldn't write those exams because I had to leave for Canada immediately. My sister was having a very difficult time here. She was married to a man from Canada who was abusing her. We tried to work as a family to get her out of the situation or reconcile their problems somehow - that didn't work. When I came here, I had to redo two years of my schooling. This angered me because the education system in Singapore is more advanced than here - I felt old and I felt uncomfortable. And everyone was so cliquey here. I was put back in Grade 11 and not given the option to challenge the courses. So I found myself repeating a lot of what I'd already studied. But the flexibility of choosing music for a grade I found quite fascinating - I didn't take any of the other electives. I concentrated on the sciences, I wanted to be a doctor or work in a hospital. But I somehow lost my motivation after going to high school here for another two years. All my dreams just floated away.

"I was pulled along with my family. I had this discussion with my brother before I moved. I said - why do I have to go. He said well you will have a better education, better career, better this, better that. I said but I have all that here already. He said well, you shouldn't be thinking about these things at your age - let me make this decision - I know what is best for you. My older brother is 20 years older than I am. After my father died he took on the father's role. He didn't have much of a childhood. We were very poor, all the older children worked to support us. He has always wanted the best for us. It was something that I never understood until years after the fact. Once I got rid of my frustration and my anger and stopped being sorry for myself, I realised that I'm here now and if I really looked around, it wasn't so bad. I didn't like the fact that I was lonely and I didn't have any friends who understood me and my ideology. Philosophies were different. I spoke differently. It was difficult. It was a culture shock that I didn't understand.

"My whole world was collapsing. I felt like I was going into the earth. Quicksand. I thought I was sinking. I've been here since 1984 - 12 years. The first 5 to 6 years were the most difficult time for me and I think that's because I forgot who I was. The amount of racism...I almost felt embarrassed about being who I was. In Singapore, I felt important, there were a lot of people who cared about me. I was lost here. I tried to get back into my lifestyle. I tried getting back into martial arts, but I could never feel the same connectedness - the aura or whatever of the instructor, the passion that was shown by my old instructor. Here the priorities are different, the priorities at that age of 17 are boys, girls, party - I was never

interested in those things. For me it was still a time of enjoyment for myself and I lost all of that. And having to deal with an abusive person who believed that a woman's place was in the home and who constantly threatened us. There were no support systems except for the three of us. We were clinging on to each other for whatever support we could get. I grew up so quickly after that. It was a matter of survival. It wasn't a matter of experiencing my life. It was just living it. If I can make it through this day it would be good. Because I was always thinking of hurting myself. Now I look back at it and I think how many children or teenagers go through that. I think it's so important for them to realise what culture shock is. I didn't recognise that what I was going through was normal.

"I was being judged by things like how I did my hair. I was really distraught. I couldn't understand this idea of groups of people, and not having many groups of people. I was very aware of all that was going on around me. I was aware of how depressed I was. To alleviate that depression, I would eat and eat and eat. I became extremely ill. And then one day, I don't know what happened, but I just woke up and said - OK, I'm here for real. It's time to make some positive changes. And I think I'd better start with myself. I started looking at my own immediate needs. I had forgotten all the things I used to live by. By 16, generally in Singapore, you have a lot of values that are really strong in you, which you have incorporated into your life. But I'd forgotten those values. I was always defending who I was. I got really tired of that and I had to take a different approach. It was time to do something for myself. So I enrolled myself in school - at 21 I was in college. I could never go to school on a full time basis because I still have family obligations. I still give my mom... those are our cultural responsibilities. We take care of our own. So that's the reason why I've always gone to work and gone to school - that balance has been really good for me. If I had the money to just go to school, I don't think I would be experienced in what is really important.

Humanities 100

"I had a fantastic time in Humanities 100. I found that the class reminded me of Singapore. I think I had forgotten my values. I started questioning myself and started meditating again. Humanities 100 reminded me that I have to start concentrating on my internal self which I really forgot to do - I started questioning things like this idea of attachment to material things - the idea of what humanity is about, why am I feeling sometimes the way I do, why am I feeling the way I feel now. Why do I feel all this suffering - now I can actually look at it objectively without feeling sorry for myself - I can actually look at it very objectively and say - this is not important. I've just recently gone through a very difficult time and I can't believe my own strength. If I was in the same situation a few years ago, I would just feel down. Now I'm just very strong. It's amazing - even my own strength is scaring me. But I keep thinking - if I was much younger could I have appreciated this course? I don't think I would have. Now I'm thinking - wow - there are so many commonalities between all of us. And we all go through the same

things no matter what we want to call it - but at the same time we don't understand each other. We are lacking some kind of human connection. I realise that people don't have to believe or to agree with my own philosophy - but it's good to believe in something, rather than nothing at all.

"I've been trying to help my friends who are going through difficult times at the moment with unemployment being so high and who are living in really difficult situations. For a change, I feel like I can contribute something to them. Although I can't give them more money, I can spiritually say to them - this is what you can do - for a moment we can step back out of our process and see ourselves on another plane and look at what we can do. Now I'm the wise woman after taking the Humanities 100!

"The books were really good. The fact that you are looking at many different philosophies. We may not believe in it, but whoever wrote it down must have thought about it thoroughly. And then we make the choices we want to make. We may adopt some of them, get rid of some of them but eventually, we incorporate what is best for us for each individual person. And that's what I saw and it was really exciting.

"Just looking at things at a much different level without having to be so self-indulgent all the time and selfish and always me, me, me. All of this is so unnecessary. It's OK to feel a loss. Because from that loss, at the end there is eventually going to be a rainbow and it's better to go out and create your own. It's not so sad, it's not the end of the world. I think that is my message to most of my friends. It not the end - tomorrow is another day. I really believe people have aura - I think that if you're very negative, people are not going to be attracted to you. But if you're very positive, you become like honey and people want to hear what you have to say - and that's how you build relationships.

"In the class, I was the youngest, I felt that some older people had a very difficult time hearing from me. I found that they had a very different perspective, and I liked their perspective as well. But that didn't invalidate my perspective. The older gentleman who brought it up in class. He's right - it's very difficult for a young person to be in that class - and actually absorb or think about those kind of issues. I think we have to live and experience life a little bit before you can begin to think clearly. There are many issues that are still very fuzzy for me. It makes me want to read more. But that doesn't mean that one author is going to be correct. I may change by the time I read the next book. But it gives me options.

"I found myself at school - writing papers, meeting deadlines - I mean that's all very well. But I also needed to get out of that environment and maybe that's why I'm not full time - taking five courses, living my life at the university. When I say to my friend, I'm going out for a walk now. - but you only have 2 more hours before you have to hand in your paper - I really don't care. I don't want to be consumed

by this paper and let it drive me crazy. I've changed my study habits. I think two or three years ago I just didn't learn too well. I stressed myself out.

"Humanities 100 has been a nurturing experience. We are so wrapped up in the material world that we cannot think beyond it. I believe in so many different leaders. Listening to Buddha, or to Christ. Colour, our skins - they really mean nothing. I have this feeling that the reason I'm so dark is because I was born by the equator (laughs). Our colours have nothing to do with who we are.

"But you know, because I've taken this course, I'm starting to think about all these things and I'm finding, with some people, that when I say something that is really not profound, because it's been said by many people, many, many centuries ago, but I repeat it and I get a comment - oh, just because you have an education doesn't mean you have to read out of a book. That's their impression and they're allowed to have it, but the impact that the course made on my life is completely different. Yes, one goes to school to get a degree, to get a paper but I hope that you go to school to get some knowledge too - something that you can use in your life.

"Nothing is tangible - I'm here, I'm aware that we are here to help each other. I think that people need to start feeling happiness from within. For example, right now, when you break up with someone, you feel extreme pain. I didn't feel that this time - I just felt very disappointed - maybe it's not meant to be, maybe it's a good sign. I'm not insensitive. I do hurt. When I want to cry, I do. But it's just not as important anymore - there is just too much of life to live, too much to share, too much to experience. I like the idea of detachment - detaching yourself from people and material things.

"I found the idea of detachment in all the books - they were connected somehow. There were some ideas I could just not accept - but it gave me choice. And then I would read some other thing that I was unclear about which gave me a better vision of perhaps the way it could be. This is a long journey.

"The ideas of connection and detachment are related. And also the ideas of pain and suffering. It's normal. When I hear the stories of people, I don't get hooked in. I empathise and I really encourage people to let go but at the same time I remind them as gently as I can, to take a few seconds to look around them. I find myself recommending books. It's been exciting to be away from petty problems. Freedom from those petty problems, from finances, is what I'm seeking, to be free spirited, to enjoy every breath I take without feeling guilty, or without feeling I have a role to play and I have to fulfil that role to the image that somebody has put on me. At the same time I keep thinking back to the material world that I am part and parcel of - I still have to live there. It's been an interesting journey.

"Our group was fantastic. We all came from different backgrounds - we all had our own backgrounds - it was neat to hear the different perspectives from people. You

could see - relating the reading to their lives, the extra time they took to contribute - very powerful, thoughtful group, we didn't all agree with each other. Now I've read part of the bible. Usually one doesn't do that. The bible belongs to a group that really depends upon it. The stories are relevant to our lives. It makes us realise that we are really not that wise. And yet there are so many connected stories like that in my own scriptures. There are a lot of similarities.

"Our professor was fantastic. I liked the way she set up the class - the first hour was spent in small groups discussing what we had read. She was very accommodating, very flexible. We had to come up with three questions from a whole book. I liked her presentation - we aren't just reading, we are judging ourselves, our values. When I was in trouble, when I didn't know how to answer the questions, she said - write down what you think at this moment. I would start writing down and would be very unhappy - being an academic - you want to please your teacher. She doesn't want to be pleased. She made everyone feel... she was very free spirited. She encouraged us to write what we wanted to write about. No rules about getting stuff in on time or marks will be docked. She asked us to come prepared every week - and we did. There were times when I made no sense in my speech but she was never judging. She would ask us to clarify - that was helpful.

HILDEGAARD

Quill

I like it that my fingers
are stained
solid and emphatic
India-black writing ink
miraculous as raven's blood
sudden across my palm

and the words, perfect weights
pumping like jet beads
through a single feathered vein

this quill is teaching me
patience -
dipping and dipping again
into the glass well
a black baptism, a blessing
slow surrender of a clean page

see how this simple feather
tilts, just so

against the white dance floor
 a single limb waltzing
 to the silent syncopation
 of tongue, this dance

between words
 is a kind of flying
 a choreography of the waiting

Background

"I'm in that lost generation. I don't know what was important to people when I was in high school. It seemed like partying and drugs were important to a lot of people - not to me. I had my horse, and I had my friends, and a boyfriend once in a while. I was happy. I cared about fur bearing animals. I remember reading a book in school called *The Population Bomb* - I think - and talking about over-population and starving children and feeling very much affected by that. I'm not sure who we were - I don't know what I could be called - I'm right at the end of the boomers. I enjoyed high school especially English Literature 12. I had a couple of teachers who were inspiring. A couple of friends shared the same love. In English Lit 12, a friend and I wrote sonnets - we loved Michelangelo's David and we wrote a sonnet to David. And we really liked Shakespeare. It was a small class, intimate. Not a feeling of belonging so much as that we were all there because we wanted to be there. The work was not hard because I couldn't get enough of it. It wasn't like math.

"I graduated from high school in '76 and got married in '79 and my son was born in 1980. The fellow I married was going to school at the time. He had just finished two years at Camosun and then spent his next three years at UVic. I got admitted to UVic in '81 and took a couple of courses in English and Art History. But he was going to school full-time and I was working part-time, raising a baby, supporting him to go to school and typing all his essays. Then he got a job teaching out of town, so we had to pull up and leave. Returning to school got side tracked. Part of it was that and part was that it was just too much at the time.

"I should mention that when I graduated from high school, I was really sick of school. I worked for 9 months and saved enough money to go to Europe for a few months and then came back and started working. I got on the secretary track without ever intending to be a secretary. I felt good about going to UVic to take a couple of courses. I got an A on the first paper that I wrote. That was encouraging. But even then, I would have been 23, I felt in a different world than the younger students. I felt it even with that short an age gap...I think because I was a mother and a wife.

Life Changing Events

"My Europe experience was a life changing event. It was a real education. When travelling, you get to know yourself a bit, you're out of your element. You can be anyone you want to be. I travelled with a friend. It was wonderful. I turned 19 in Rome and got blessed by the Pope. Well not just me, thousands of others too. They were making a Saint out of a Spanish nun that day. I tried to find out who the nun was, I figure she's probably my Saint.

"Getting my book of poetry published was a big thing. Actually the first time I got up and read my poems in public was a big thing. I was afraid. In high school I was witty and bold on paper, but really shy if I had to be singled out. If I had to get up in front of a class room, I couldn't say anything.

"Getting pregnant and getting married, in that order, changed my life - and then getting divorced. Working out my difficulties with my mother, deciding to go back to school were other life changing events.

Choice

"I chose to go to Europe - I had to fight to be able to. I got all kinds of opposition from my mother. I was stubborn and determined. It was my choice and it happened. Getting pregnant wasn't really choice - it was an accident and getting married wasn't my choice - it was an ultimatum - either get married or... And I allowed other people's choices for me to dictate to me what I did. I guess I felt like I'd screwed up pretty badly and maybe someone else should decide what I should do - that's my excuse. Anyway - those weren't my choices although certainly having my baby was my choice - I would not have not done that. The divorce was my choice although I tried to make it not my choice. I tried to make him leave me - it didn't work - it might have eventually but it didn't work soon enough for me. Anyway, most things since then have been my choice. I don't think I'm about to abdicate that power anymore. That's one nice thing about getting older.

Writing/Music/Work

"Writing has created change in me, maybe not necessarily more than other life processes, but in a way that other things, like playing the harp, doesn't. Because it's words. Writing with the purpose of doing personal work, as opposed to actually trying to write a poem; there's a difference and they are the same too.

"Writing starts inside me but it gets out. I put it out. Playing the harp, other than when somebody is listening, is much more personal and internal. I started harp lessons 6 or 7 years ago. As an adult. That was a milestone. It was something that I always wanted, not harp necessarily, but music. I think it gave me a lot of confidence. Being able to do whatever I might want to try.

"I'm working as a secretary. I like my job. For a long time I didn't want to identify with being a secretary. I didn't like saying that's what I do. But I like the job I have now. I have lots of independence. I feel like I can make a difference for people when they come in, how I treat them can make a difference. My job title is administrative assistant. I try to use that because it takes away that connotation.

"I think too, with my job, as I am maturing and having more ways to figure out who I am, it is not so crucial - the way I make a living is just one aspect of me. I don't pin a lot on it. I think writing helped me with this more than anything. Becoming involved in the community of writers. I am a writer to them, not a secretary. I have this life that is separate from my job. I think going to school might do that too. I have a sense that it will.

Returning to School

"My son and I have been on our own since he was two; he's 15 now. Parenting is where my energy has been channelled, other than going to work. He's more independent now and I can see the horizon of his leaving, so I think it's time to go back to school. Plus I've found that my going back to school has been a positive influence on him, on his attitude toward whether or not he'll go to university. He's going into grade 10. He's intelligent but doesn't always apply himself. So, he sometimes just barely squeaks through. He had been a bit discouraged about that - thinks well, maybe I'll not go to university; it's too expensive. He was undecided. Now he's not talking about maybe I'll go, but what will I do when I go. That's a shift.

"My life is good right now. It's finally coming together. It hasn't been easy being a single parent and working. I bought my condo a year and half ago. I never dreamed that I would be able to get a place of my own as a single woman. There are debts but I would say that I'm happy with my life right now. I am excited about going to school. I like my job. My son and I are getting along. He's 15. He had a rough couple of years, well a rough couple of months when he was 13, almost 14. He's really no trouble. So that's going well. My relationship with my mother has improved a great deal and I never thought that would happen. I didn't even want to tackle it. But, it kept coming up and so I did. The last year we have been buddies.

Joining the Humanities Diploma Program

"I joined the Humanities Diploma Program because it is something attainable on a part-time basis. To get 60 credits for a BA when you are taking one, maybe two classes at a time is just too long a wait. I like it that I can take a fourth year class when I'm just starting. I know I couldn't do that if I didn't have the benefit of the program. I really like it that what I'm studying is not for a career change. It is not motivated by that. Although, I guess I have this fantasy about being a medieval scholar some day. The humanities are where my interests lie. I had been thinking

about doing a distance education course. But I just decided that I didn't want to do my learning in isolation. My professor for my first course started school when she was 50 years old - such an inspiration.

"And another thing, I really liked the brochure. I just love that photo. It's beautiful, attractive and says an awful lot. I wish there were more night time classes. If I didn't have the flexibility at work to be able to take time off during the day, there is very little at night that interests me.

April, 1996

Dear Peggy:

My relationship with my professor in my first term class was positive from the beginning. We had rapport immediately and I sensed her respect and interest in me as a student all the way through. I felt accepted and cared about. I found myself working very hard in her class to be "worthy" of the trust she had placed in me (and the HDP by extension) by allowing me into the fourth year class at the very beginning of my study at the University; the only prerequisite I brought with me was my sincere interest and a determination to do the very best I was capable of.

Her heart was involved in what she was doing and it was obvious to me that she worked hard to prepare for our classes. Because I liked her so much on a personal level, and I was completely enthralled with what we were learning, perhaps my opinion of her teaching ability is not very objective....I feel incredibly lucky that my "initiation" into university was such a positive one. I realise that I will not likely find this kind of instructor in all my classes at university, however I do feel that if I continue to study what engages my mind and heart and captures my interest, I have a good chance. Also, I am the type of person who enjoys student/teacher rapport so I suppose I go out of my way to find it.

An experience that surprised me in this class was how much I enjoyed giving my presentation to the class. I was well prepared, which is essential, and I felt confident and poised. I experienced an unexpected "high" from it. The experience made me think about the possibility of teaching at University some day; I think I could be good at it. I also felt very much in my element doing the research for my paper. I could be happy living full-time and permanently in Academia! (I'm so naive...)

Thanks for encouraging me to talk directly to the professor when I was feeling uncomfortable at the beginning of Humanities 100. It was right that I talked to her rather than to you. I wrote her a letter and we were able to resolve the issue in question. She showed great sensitivity in dealing with me and my concerns once they were brought to her attention. From the beginning I respected her abilities as a teacher but throughout the term I grew to respect her as a person and to like her

very much, as well. As with my previous professor, I felt like she was teaching from the heart, teaching what she loved. This made all the difference for me.

I think I would have succeeded in this class even if things had not gone so well with my letter, etc., but it would have likely been an empty victory. My heart would not have been in it. Although I did not have to work as hard in this class as the last one (both because it was less demanding and I was less demanding of myself!) I feel like in some ways I learned far more than the previous term. In addressing the problem and writing that letter, in short, in taking the risk that I did, I learned a great deal about myself.

It was wonderful in this class to be in a classroom full of peers. There are some fantastic people in the program and I felt a connection with almost everyone....

I have had less time over the past academic year for friendships and family (and housework!) than I would have liked. Brushing up on my time management skills and getting some outside help with housework would probably help a lot. This has been a difficult adjustment for my son, but he seems used to it (albeit grudgingly) now and is somewhat resigned that Mom is going to keep at it for a while yet. My friends are understanding of my absences, but I feel I have been neglecting them and hope to remedy this with some time off this summer. I have made some new friends in my classes, though, one in particular who has become close.

I have not been writing a great deal except academically. Poetry has left me. Poetry is like that though, it comes and goes. What has happened is that my "well of inspiration has been filled, and filled again....Again, a factor in my not writing has been time...I have not had time and solitude, which are essential to the writing of poetry....

I can feel a substantial change in myself. I know I can learn (still!), I know I want to learn. I have more confidence in my own opinions and abilities to think and reason...I have come to realise more fully how strong, resourceful and capable I am.

FLO

Excerpts from Flo's Nursing Journals: 1967 to 71

1967

November 17: I enjoy being with the patients but I feel I'm just playing nurse; we don't really have time to establish rapport with the patient. Sure we bathe the patient and make their bed but a nurse's aid can do these just as well. Of course, if I

had remembered the back rub I may have felt differently, but I think to be a nurse, you must spend more time with a patient....

November 20: ...I'm sure I will always remember how I felt when I was fed (useless, like a child, foolish, and as if all attention was centred on me and what would happen if I choked). A patient will probably feel the same only more so, so I hope that this experience will guide me in the future and that I will be able to make the patient feel comfortable.

November 28: Mrs. A.W. - widow, age 79 years, weight 64 pounds
...The intern returned later to insert the D tube. He had to try six or seven times to insert it as Mrs. A. W. refused to swallow. One time he had to remove it completely and there was blood on it. Each time he put it in it curled in her mouth. When it was finally in place he checked to see that it was in the stomach and not in the lungs by injecting air into it, and listening to the stomach with a stethoscope. A gurgling sound in the stomach could be heard...

November 29: Mrs. A. W. died the night of November 29 of pneumonia
...Mrs. J.J. received OT but that was discontinued...Although my opinion is only that of a lowly student I think that the OT gave up too soon. Mrs. J. J. should be getting OT...One should never give up as long as the patient doesn't regress, and not even then.

December 1: ...Again Mrs. J. J. tried to tell me the same thing as she did yesterday. She had speech therapy but became very distressed and frustrated trying to tell me she "didn't want another _____?" The speech therapist tried to tell me that Mrs. J. J. didn't know what she wanted to say, that she didn't understand me, and that her perception was at the lowest level. I do not agree with this at all...

1968

December 19: ...Miss W said the teachers find it hard to get to know me and I shouldn't be so reserved or appear so disinterested in what is going on, especially as she knows I am interested. Miss W also said I should walk with pride and hold my head up high as I was one of the top students...

1969

April 4: I have temporarily left nursing to go out west and marry F...

April 24: F and I were married at 7:30 pm ...

1970

January 12: Today I started back into Nursing. Its good to be back, but my feelings are mixed. I don't regret leaving and getting married, but I miss my class...

1971

July 9: Well, I have finally graduated. I can't believe it.

August: I finally got my results from my exams and I passed all of them. I am really a registered nurse. I only hope I can be a good one.

Background

"I went to a farm school for a month in Grade 3. Grades one to eight in one house. About 25 kids in the whole school. It was comfortable, I enjoyed that experience. You could hear what was going on with the other grades while you were doing your work. The experience was so different than regular school ... but I learned a lot in that month and I had a lot of fun. I was with my three cousins...and their cousins - most of whom I knew. So I knew at least half the kids in the school when I started. The older students looked after the younger students and the teacher was super - I don't know how she could possibly teach eight grades. It must have been a horrendous job for her - and she also cooked our lunch -pretty incredible...it really sticks in my mind. One of my best times in school.

"I had a Latin teacher in High School who was a wonderful man. He looked like everyone's favourite grandfather but he'd been shell shocked during the war and the students used to make the sound of bombs and he'd end up under his desk. It was just horrible. That always sticks in my mind. I felt badly for him. It was mostly the boys - I was in a very bad class, actually, and the kids were really quite nasty. They knew the effect that this would have on him and any time they got restless in class they would start. It was grade 9 or 10. It was a horrendous class - no one wanted us really. I was in that class for two years and then I moved to one where the students were much better behaved (Grade 11) but I didn't enjoy it much. I found that the math and science classes were difficult and I couldn't seem to keep up with the class. Whereas in the other class I was always at the top of the class, in grades 11 and 12 , I was always at the bottom of the class.

"The math teacher I had in grade 11 and 12 wrote the book - he just couldn't understand why it didn't make sense to me. My girlfriend and I went after school for help but he would say - this is simple, you should be able to understand that. He was a terrible teacher. He was a brilliant man but a terrible teacher. Nothing made sense, it was the new math and totally new concepts.

"I enjoyed my graduation from nursing. I started in the first class of our school of Nursing and I left at the end of the second year before I had finished it - I had two assignments still to hand in when I left to get married. We moved to Alberta and I was hoping to resume my training there. But I would have had to start all over again from scratch so I ended up going back to Ontario in September and finishing my second year off and doing my internship year. My father-in-law was glad to see us back but he never did forgive me for coming out here to get married. He'd wanted a big wedding - F's an only child.

"I worked in Toronto for about 14 or 15 months after I graduated and then got pregnant. F's dad again was really upset when we decided to move back to BC. But it all worked out. My parents were out here and although F had thought he would never want to leave Toronto, once he'd seen BC, he couldn't wait to get back. F's dad also got married again in that period so we weren't leaving him by himself. The other reason to move was that there were more opportunities for F out here.

"Life has been fairly smooth really. We had a few rough years with teenagers but we survived. We probably got off light but it seemed pretty horrendous at the time. I felt like I was on a roller coaster - I never knew from day to day what was going to happen. I took a parenting course which taught me not to struggle for power. I think that was the biggest help. And then a friend in Toronto said don't take it personally because they don't really mean what they're saying. And don't think you're a bad parent - and that really helped. My girlfriend was also having trouble with her daughter so we took the course together. I also found out that she wasn't such a bad kid!

"When our daughter was being difficult, it was a really hard time for F and me. At times it was hard to be supportive of each other when we were both so upset. There were times when she would only talk to me or only talk to F. That was a bit hurtful. It put our relationship to the test. Plus he was doing the CGA course at the time and that was very stressful - they compress a lot of material into a short period of time. Plus we got a lot of phone calls at 2 am. - "I missed the bus can you come and get me. They've been drinking and I don't want to be here can you come and get me" It was really hard to go out at 2am to Colwood or Sidney or downtown and bring her home and then get up for work at 7am the next morning. I think the biggest challenge was that we managed to support each other even though we had differences at the time. Something about F is very supportive. He's always been good about helping with housework and the kids.

Joining the HDP

"I'd wanted to go to University for so long. First of all I didn't because I was working full time and I had kids to bring up ...and once they left home, I had no excuse not to do it anymore. I saw the HDP in the University Extension calendar. It sounded interesting and so I joined the program. I was very lonely and isolated at first because there wasn't a single person I knew when I started. I made friends with one of the other students when we did some studying together. And I became friends with the English teacher whose English course I took after Humanities 100. Actually, I took three of her courses and really enjoyed them.

"I wanted to do it for me... I had to prove to myself I could do it because I wasn't too sure - it had been so long since I'd been to school. My husband was very supportive - he's great. He drives me to the University and picks me up when it's dark. My kids are supportive. They don't live at home anymore - it doesn't affect

them. My parents think it's great. My friends think it's great. I do get a lot of pressure at work as I've told you before - about doing a Nursing degree which is not what I want to do right now. I told them that when I'm finished the Humanities Diploma program, I might consider doing the Nursing degree. Actually what I think that I want to do is write. Get a degree in writing after I finish. I'd like to avoid a Nursing degree if I can. I just go along and tell them that when I'm finished the Humanities program, I'll think about it - just to get the pressure off. I've taken many creative writing workshops at Camosun. I'm now taking journal writing. I'm hoping for early retirement for nurses with no penalty by the time I'm 55 - right now its 3% per year for every year you retire before 60 - that's quite a bit. I've been working at nursing for 25 years. I've been at the same job for 18 years so the kids were pretty small when I started there. Work never really changed all that much. The workload got heavier.

"My life is chaotic right now. I don't know why my life is always so busy. My courses start again tomorrow. I'm working hard at work right now because of the change to a new lodge. That's made a big difference. The workload is totally different. I have fewer residents but I have a lot more responsibility. I do put in many extra hours which I don't get paid for. But if I don't do them my life is unbearable. I get behind. I don't like the new facility. The other lodge, with all its faults was a friendly place to work. At the new lodge we're very isolated. You don't see other staff. The corridors are so long you do a lot more walking. The residents have their own rooms. But they don't come out of their rooms like they did at the other lodge where there were four people in one room so they spent more time out of their room than in their room. So the residents are isolated. It may be a very beautiful building but it's too big and it's going to take a long time before the residents feel at home there. A couple of them want desperately to go back to the old lodge. There's one - at least three or four mornings a week, he's packing his bags and moving back to the old lodge. Plus we don't have access to the social worker. At the other lodge when we had family problems or appointments to make for residents we always left that to the social worker - she's not available to do that anymore so we're having to take that on as well as our nursing workload. And dealing with the residents' families can take a lot of time. We're supposed to cut them off - what they call "therapeutic closure" It just doesn't work that way. You just can't do that. If they are very upset about their parents or their spouse - they've got legitimate concerns - you have to deal with them. Spending 20 min., 1/2 hour, 3/4 hour, with them can sometimes make life a lot easier in the future.

"The other lodge was unsatisfactory. It was in bad condition physically. Woodwork was rotting. Waves in the floor. Building had shifted. The wings were separating from the building. The roof needed fixing. No matter what repairs were made there was always something else. We never had enough hot water. But the new building was not designed with the residents in mind, the nursing station is so far from the entrance - I can't see which residents are coming and going. We have one resident who's a wanderer. If the nursing station had been put by the entrance

then I would be able to discourage him from going out. As a result he had to move downstairs to one of the lodges with locked doors which is unfortunate for him. There are so many things wrong with it. They said they were going to consult us before they built it and they did give us a little chance for input but they obviously didn't pay any attention to what we suggested because it was built for the architect not for the staff and residents. Also the resident's families - the residents are in their 90's, their children are in their 70's - it's a long walk for them within the building. I just think that they were so gung ho on getting single rooms for the residents. I think for a lot of them it is bad. I know they want the single rooms but it's just made the building so spread out.

"I'm enjoying the HDP - it covers the areas I'm interested in like English. I haven't taken any history courses although I'm interested in history. I love reading. It's an escape because I can get lost in a book. I learn something every time I read. It gives me a wider understanding of people, of the past. It's just very enjoyable. And it's made a difference to who I am. And just understanding people better through literature makes my job easier because I have to deal with people so much. That's my whole job - dealing with people. How people's minds work differently than mine works. It's all right for everyone to be different and to deal with things differently. I don't know - it just makes it simpler. I get along with people well and I deal with some very difficult situations at work and I think its because I've read so much that I'm more aware of different ideas that people have and I don't necessarily judge them. If I didn't understand that people are different and that differences are good...

"I do have definite opinions about things but I also respect others. I think you learn that with writing compositions - you don't just look at one side of anything - you have to look from all around and gather the ideas together. I can deal with 3 or 4 or 5 different situations at one time. I have to do it all the time. I did it when my kids were small. I can think about half a dozen things at one time. Some of the doctors at the lodge - one in particular cannot deal with more than one situation, or more than one resident at a time. If someone makes a comment about another resident while he's dealing with one, it just throws him completely, he forgets where he was. I have so many things happening at work - someone needs a pain pill, I'm working on a transfer form, the telephone rings - the doctor's on the phone with orders. I've got many things happening at once - I have to prioritize but I can't let the other things go. So I'm always juggling.

April 1996

"The excerpts you took out of my journal were interesting. I don't know why you took out the one about the lady with the tube and I don't know how it's pertinent but it was a really difficult time - I found it hard to deal with - it was difficult to deal with death then. I feel differently about it now. I don't get so upset. I do feel

the grief because I'm usually quite attached to the residents but I don't find it that upsetting.

"Keeping the journal was part of our nursing requirement - but we never had to turn it in. Nursing is different now. I would not go into it now because I think you have less to do with the patient, there is more paperwork. Nursing work has changed, You're too rushed, you don't have enough time for patients, you have to do all this writing to protect yourself because you could get sued. I feel that it has lost the caring. The time we spend with the patient is valuable and you learn so much from it. And now you don't have time, just push out the pills, get everything done as quickly as you can. Your shift is over, you work overtime trying to finish the paperwork. And I think it's going to get progressively worse. I'm going to stay until I'm 55. We have early retirement. Then I'm going to try for a different career. I'm going to finish this Humanities Diploma Program, then get a degree in English, then do ESL training - something totally different but still working with people.

"I took three courses with C at UVic and really enjoyed them. We became friends. She is an excellent teacher. I know this from what other people have said, it's not just my impression. She asks for input from the students a lot. She expects a lot from the students. I never really got super marks in the class. I got B's but I felt like I'd really worked for it. For example, if I'd known I would have to make a speech in front of the class, I would not have signed up for it. She would give us something out of a brown paper bag and we would have to sell it or talk about it. She'd cut a whole bunch of advertisements out of magazines and we had to talk about what made them good or bad advertisements - you didn't see these things ahead of time. You had maybe 5 or 10 minutes to figure out what you were going to say. It was a real learning experience. And the students had fun, it wasn't an ordeal. And I had to learn how to use a Mac computer in the Mac lab. She took us over to the lab. I don't like Mac's. I don't find them easy to work with. I hate the icons - they drive me crazy. I had to learn and it was difficult. I got really agitated in one class, I felt so uncomfortable and frustrated. I made it through to the end of the class but I really didn't enjoy it and I was really annoyed at having to be there. I'm not a computer expert by any means but I feel comfortable using an IBM compatible computer. You could express your ideas as long as you could support them. You didn't have to agree with her as long as you could support what you were saying in your essay.

"She would ask questions - do you think you can explore this further....grammar wasn't a serious problem other than I had trouble with closure at the end of a paragraph and leading into the next. Not making the connection. I think I'm a little better at it but I'm taking expository prose now so I hope I'll get even better. I ended up writing an exam in her office once. I couldn't do the exam the day it was scheduled - an unexpected death at the Lodge. She let me do it the next day in her office. She was very understanding - it really helped. C could relate to everyone. She let one student use her office to do his tai chi and meditation before

the exam so he would be relaxed. There are lots of incidents like that. Every student really liked her - that's the first time I've seen that. Her expectations are high but she doesn't demand attention - she gets it because she's so comfortable to be around. She treats everyone well. She corrects in a nice way - if you make a grammatical error, she doesn't embarrass you. I'd like to take all my classes with her but I guess I should get experience from different teachers. What she does helps me in all my courses.

"I still want to work on writing children's stories. I have some good ideas but I don't have the time. I'm hoping that while I'm off work having my surgery, I'll have the time to start writing them again. On and off, over the years, I've written quite a few, maybe half a dozen. One was about a leaf that I saw blowing across the road - I wrote about that - where the leaf had travelled, another was about an old man and a little boy in a boat. The kids in the day care really enjoyed them. I had a day care for about a year. This was while I was working at the old Lodge - I was half time for about two years and it was then I did day care.

"I've always loved children's stories. I went to visit a friend a couple of nights ago - she's written some books and is fascinated by children's stories. She was showing me hers - her collection is totally different from mine. I thought there would have been more of an overlap because we both like Canadian authors.

"I don't know what the fascination is, they're just neat stories. They appeal to the child within me or something. I loved the way the leaf danced across the road in front of me so I wrote about it. Children have so much wonder - they are fascinated by things which we can't be bothered with as we get older. They are interested in the small things. It's just something I really enjoy.

Program Options

The faculty coordination will help you design your course of study and select your topic.

Select from one of the following ways to design your program:

1. *A course of study within one area* with courses drawn mainly from one Department (e.g. Chinese literature and society, twentieth century Russian literature and film)
2. *A semi-interdisciplinary program* with courses drawn from two or three Departments (e.g. The Immigrant Experience in Canadian History and Fiction, Ancient Greek Philosophy and Myth)
3. *A fully interdisciplinary program* with courses drawn from a wide range of Departments (e.g. in period studies such as European Medieval History, in thematic studies such as Women in Contemporary Society)

Required Courses

The first step is an orientation to the Humanities Diploma Program. This is a non-credit seminar which will introduce the Program, give advice on university-level study, and will include an interview with the faculty coordination to help you choose your courses.

During your first year in the program, you will take *Humanities 100: An Introduction to the Humanities*, which is a 1½ unit credit course. It gives an introduction to the various ways in which scholars from different disciplines in the humanities interpret, analyze, and evaluate texts. This course is restricted to students in the Humanities Diploma Program.

Program Description

Admission: Participants are expected to meet the normal admission requirements of the university. Mature students are especially directed to the requirements set out in the University Calendar (Admission Requirements, Section 5). The Humanities Diploma Program is limited to six students per year.

Course Selection: Each student's program will be made up of courses totalling 15 or more, and choice of courses should be directed towards a particular area or topic, as outlined above, and must be approved by the faculty coordination. Students in the program will be subject to all normal prerequisite structures and enrollment limits as stated by each Department in the University Calendar.

Previous Credit: Up to 6 units of applicable previous credit may be given for appropriate courses or for those holding appropriate degrees, at the recommendation of the faculty coordination and with the approval of the Dean of Humanities.

Academic Standing: Diploma candidates will be expected to maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least a (B+). The program must be completed on a full- or part-time basis, within a maximum period of six years.

Accreditation: Completion of the program will lead to a Diploma in the Humanities awarded under the authority of the Senate of the University of Victoria.

*Let me tell you about history, history
History isn't boring*

Application Procedures

If you wish to apply for admission to the Humanities Diploma Program, please complete and return the attached enquiry form to:

Humanities Diploma Program
Division of Continuing Studies
University of Victoria
P.O. Box 3050
Victoria, B.C.
V8W 4N6
Phone: (250) 721-6300
Fax: (250) 721-6334

Deadline

Applications will be accepted until **September 30** for programs beginning in the fall of each year. Late applications may be considered at enrollment points.

Fees

Credit Course: current university fees.

Application Fee and Orientation Seminar: \$120

Humanities Diploma Program Fee: \$60 for each academic year (July 1 to June 30) in which a student is enrolled in the Program.

*One who learns without thinking
is lost, one who thinks without
learning is in great danger*

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1996

TIMES COLONIST

Life Editor: Carolyn Heiman 380-5343

LIFE

CLOSE TO HOME

Older students learn for love of it in 'Hum Dip'

The class, ironically enough, was geography, and the location — well, I knew it had to be somewhere on UBC's campus.

But there were no names on the buildings, no time between geography and the class before, and truth to tell, no interest in the subject. It was an elective that both fit my schedule and had spaces left when I made it to the front of the line (no phone registration in the Dark Ages).

By the time I found the room, I'd missed enough classes to be lost in a different way. Panic-stricken, as well as confused by other, more personal problems, I withdrew from second year and never went back.

So what, you might ask, could I possibly have in common academically with David Fricker, who did honors chemistry and math at McGill, and went on to become a lawyer? Or his wife, June Hobart, with a masters of social work from U of T? Or Odeda Ecker, who brings with her from Israel degrees in Jewish history, religion and thought, plus the ability to read Plato in ancient Greek?

We're all enrolled, or just about to be, in UVic's Humanities Diploma Program.

It's one of the university's best-kept secrets for older students who've been

out of the loop, an easy entree into what is for some of us an intimidating world.

It also provides a slick way to be assisted through red tape by program coordinator Peggy Faulds, to have first dibs on popular classes, and to enjoy the freedom to study subjects because they're interesting, not because they're required.

The humanities include history, philosophy, literature, languages and the classics.

They address, as the brochure puts it, "a variety of needs: to examine the ethical values in our lives, to examine our social responsibilities, and to develop intellectually sound ways to reflect on what it means to be a human being."

DEBORAH
PEARCE

Students and faculty alike strip-mine the dictionary of superlatives in their praise of the program. "There's just so much there I wish I'd known all these years," Hobart sums it up.

Some go so far as to say it has changed their lives. And yet there's space to spare in the program: in fact, this year's class was in

danger of being cancelled.

My last-minute registration, and my husband's, solved that problem.

Co-ordinators say such indifference stems in part from our society's utilitarian view of education as job prep, with little room for learning for the love of it.

"[There's] the difficulty of explaining to friends and family why they are doing something perceived as 'useless,' rather than something work related," says Faulds, who's seen students withdraw as a result.

"We as a society are so focused on technical training that I think we sometimes forget that there is a lot more to being human than having the skills to do a particular job."

Currently, some 50 students are enrolled, 12 of whom are this year's crop. We have six years to acquire 18 credits needed for the diploma.

For people like Fricker and Hobart, the diploma is the last thing they want. "The degree doesn't interest me, the courses do," says Fricker, who plans to earn a lot more credits than 18.

The idea for "Hum Dip" originated with Brishkai Lund, arts and sciences program director for UVic's Division of Continuing Studies.

"It grew out of our seniors program," Lund says. "Some of them really weren't satisfied by these short courses

that didn't make them work. They also wanted not to be segregated."

Despite budget-cutting, senior administration supported the idea of helping older students overcome the hurdles of university bureaucracy and complicated lives.

In 1988, the first 25 students enrolled. So far 20 have graduated — and half have gone on to do BAs and MAs. Students' ages range from mid 20s to 70s. Some have multiple degrees — usually in the sciences — and some are high school dropouts.

"It gives people not only confidence and support, but intellectual preparation to commit to academic studies," Lund says.

The 1997 program starts this month with an orientation seminar (how to study, use the library, write an essay). In January, the faculty co-ordinator teaches the only mandatory credit course in the program.

Humanities 100 lets students taste what they might like to digest more fully later on.

"We start with Plato and we do Boethius, *The Bhagavad Gita*, the whole of Genesis, some Joseph Campbell stuff, some Jung, Shakespeare," says faculty co-ordinator Diane Edwards, an associate professor of English.

"It's a teacher's delight to be in that

group. They're keen to be there, they're pumped, they bring life experience. Give them a book, throw them together and say 'talk,' and they're off and running."

For that reason, professors much in demand — like Edwards and predecessors Stephen Scobie and Kim Blank — take on the job of faculty co-ordinator, which also involves counselling the students and guiding them in course choices, besides teaching Humanities 100.

Student Lois North says that one class gave her tools to clarify thought processes, teaching her as much about herself as about the texts she studied. Monica Turner goes further.

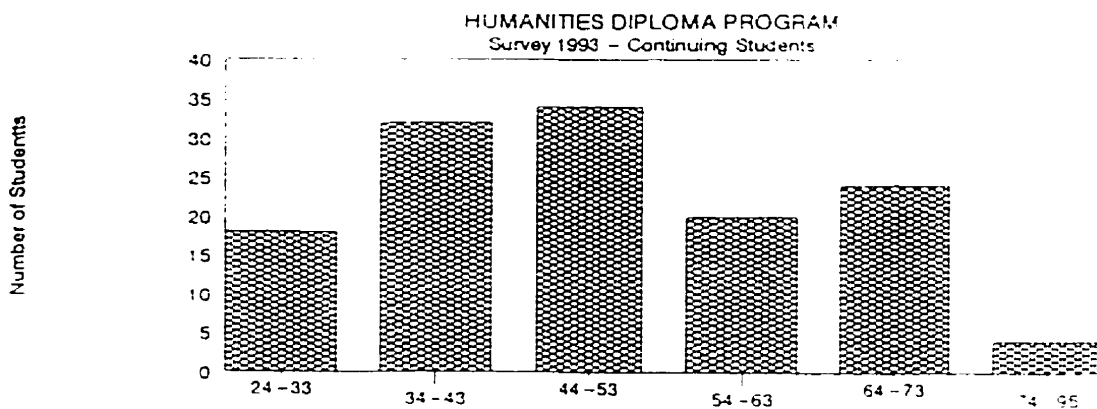
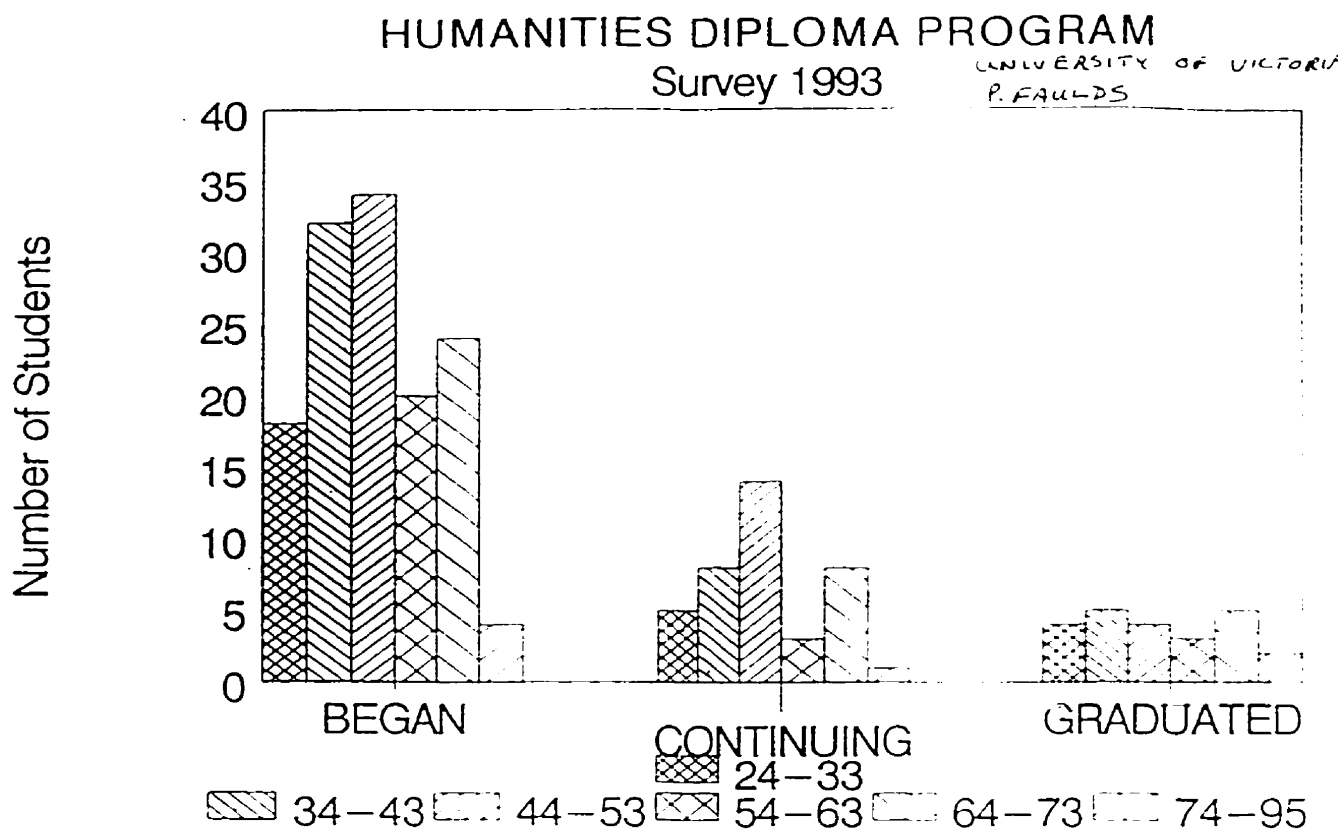
An active mother of four, Turner had suffered a severe depression that wouldn't lift, despite three months in a program at Eric Martin Pavilion.

"It didn't address the questions I had — what are we here for, what am I supposed to be doing?"

But Humanities 100 did. "Every single book addresses this," says Turner, who called her final paper, "How I used Humanities 100 as a road to recovery from mental illness."

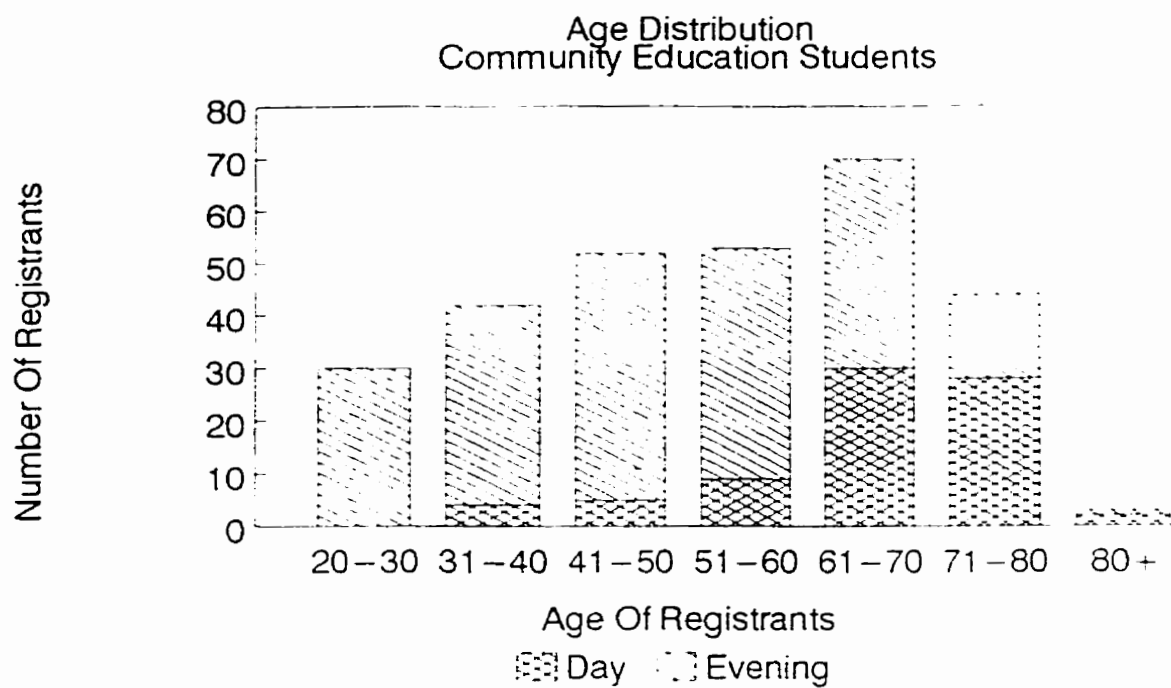
"It really was life changing for me." Anyone inspired to register can call Peggy Faulds at 721-8463.

(Deborah Pearce writes Tuesday, Friday and Sunday in Life)



BEGAN	CONTINUING	GRADUATED	AGE GROUP
18	5	4	24-33
32	8	5	34-43
34	14	4	44-53
20	3	3	54-63
24	8	5	64-73
4	1	2	74-95

APPENDIX III Community Education Survey



Spring '93
University of Victoria
P. FAULDS

APPENDIX IV: THE CONTEXT OF ADULT LIFE

Meaning, Responsibility, Complexity and Community

In Chapter 16 of *Learning in Adulthood* (1991), Merriam and Cafarella look at how learning is different in adulthood in relation to three areas - the context, the nature of the learner, and the learning process.

First, they point out that the context of learning in adulthood is different for two reasons - children are dependent on others while adults are responsible for themselves and others; and for children, school is a full time occupation while adults typically add the role of learner to other full time occupations. Also, learning usually arises from the context of the adult's life.

Second, the nature of adult experience is much different from that of children. Adults have more experiences and different kinds of experiences. Adults use experience as a resource - a resource that can be drawn on by the instructor and can also be a block to new learning. It is the need to make sense out of experience that is often an incentive for adults to engage in learning. The child is preparing to become an adult, the adult to functioning well as an adult. Adult transitions are peculiar to adults and transitions in adulthood are motives for learning.

Third, the learning process may be different in adulthood. Research in the last 20 years has uncovered some differences:

- pacing: the ability to respond slows with age
- meaningfulness: adults do poorly or are disinclined to engage in learning when it is not meaningful
- motivation: adults usually concentrate their learning in their area of interest and so motivation is high; adults choose to learn

- age-related factors: health problems, fatigue, and interference from previous learning

- knowledge as a transformation of experience: adults have the ability to reflect critically on their experiences

- there may be "higher" stages of cognitive development in adulthood

Merriam and Caffarella (1991) also outline six statistically derived factors for participation developed by Morstain and Smart based on the work done by Roger Boshier. These factors include participation in order to make new friends, compliance with the directives of an external authority, the wish to serve others and their community, job enhancement or professional advancement, alleviating boredom, and just for the sake of learning (p. 85) .

Aslanian and Brickell (1980) in *Americans in Transition* focus their research on the major role that transitions play in adult life:

Asking 'why do adults learn', the authors draw from their interviews with some 2000 men and women an important central conclusion: that most adult decisions to seek educational renewal are clearly and directly related to significant changes in their lives - changes affecting their careers, family situations, health, religion, or leisure opportunities. Going back to school is less significantly a transition in itself than a consequence of some other change, actual or anticipated, in individual circumstance (p. ix).

They found that 83% of the learners surveyed identified some past, present, or future change in their lives as reason to learn, and that the topic an adult chooses to study is related to the transition but not always related to the trigger event:

We feel that the distinction is important for those who provide adult learning. They should not expect that divorce will automatically lead an adult to study family relations: the adult may study secretarial skills instead. They should not expect a job promotion will lead an adult to study the occupation: the adult instead may learn to sail the new boat he purchased with his salary raise. They should not expect retirement to lead an adult to study leisure activities: the adult may instead learn a new relationship with God in anticipation of the final life transition (p. 61).

Change in Adulthood

Are there changes in people as they age? Participation in formal learning activity declines with age (Deveraux, 1984; Johnstone and Rivera, 1965). This makes sense in a society which views education mainly as employment training. Of the 75 staff people at Continuing Studies at UVic, five are engaged in providing community education programs which are not directly related to professional development.

Several theorists have studied changes in adults as they age:

Ability: J. Thornton (1986) in "Life Span Learning and Education" discusses the ability to learn as we age. On most measures of intelligence, ability to learn increases until age 60 or older (see Appendix V). However, the way we learn changes. Rybash, Hoyer, and Roodin (1986) describe individuals as increasingly active participants in organizing and deciding what needs to be known and how to use that knowledge as they age. The theory is that information control processes and fluid mental ability become increasingly dedicated to and encapsulated within particular "knowledge domains" throughout adulthood. While it may become more difficult with age to acquire new knowledge, this is compensated for by the development of expert knowledge and post formal styles of thinking which allow adults to use their knowledge in unique ways.

Participation: E. E. Marcus (1978) asks the question: How does age affect the process of deciding whether or not to participate in an educational activity? He points out that participation by older adults is low; there seems to be no relationship between reasons for participation and actual courses taken; and that different factors influence participation and non-participation. He then explores the idea of usefulness and draws on other theorists to propose that programs can appeal to people on either instrumental (practical need) grounds or on an expressive (enjoyment) basis. An important idea to add to the concept of usefulness is the idea of personal time orientation - the future time perspectives of the aging tend to be

short. Marcus makes some interesting observations from his research - one being that older people will perceive a program designed to be useful to them as also enjoyable. This was not true for younger adults. He also found that interests seem to narrow with age - people have determined what they like and want to spend what they perceive as limited time on those interests. D. A. Peterson (1986) finds that as people age, occupational interest disappears but the range of interests sought by older people remains wide. Although older people may seem to look more and more alike, they actually become more diverse.

In *Lifelines* (1991), Merriam and Clark review much of the literature which links adult development and experience, and conclude that the connection between adult development and learning is the restructuring of meaning. They come up with this definition of learning in adulthood: "attending to and reflecting on an experience that results in some present or future change in a person's behaviour, attitudes, knowledge, beliefs, or skills" (p. 202). Adults are concerned with expansion of personal capability, balance of independence and connectedness, and changes in life perspectives. Merriam and Clark also emphasize that the need to learn and the potential to learn never ceases. They found that adults take part in learning activities both in times of stability and times of change.

When work and love are both rated good, about ten times more learning occurs than when both domains are rated bad. But we also noticed a difference in the character of learning at these times. There is a greater likelihood of perspective transformation or a restructuring of meaning from those learning events that occur when a domain is rated as bad (p. 193).

In *Adults as Learners* (1981), Patricia Cross proposed a Chain of Response Model (see Appendix VI) to show the complex interaction and interrelatedness of life factors which affect an adult's choice to participate. The model illustrates the idea of the adult individual involved in a dynamic system that is complex for both internal and external reasons. In the same appendix is the life-events framework model which I found helpful in understanding where education might fit in the complex system of adult life. Particularly important to me is the idea that

adaptation affects not only the individual life but also the societal context within which the individual lives. Of course, there are problems with defining functional and dysfunctional outcomes which I think can be understood in the evolutionary models of becoming which I will discuss later.

Albert Bandura (1986) asserts that a life path can only be understood with a personal as well as a social analysis. I was particularly interested in his discussion of the chance event as a factor which can change a life path. Bandura asserts that it is the "interactive processes," rather than the event itself, which gives the event its power. He goes on to discuss some of the personal and social determinants of the power of a chance event on an individual life. His analysis of both chance events and freedom versus determinism, as well as his assertion that we are, at least partially, the architects of our own destiny, lends support to the idea of both individual and societal progression towards more understanding of and ability to balance competing interests.

(I'm beginning to understand or feel the idea of self and knowledge as relational. My struggle to understand here is about trying to see ourselves as an ongoing context. My understanding of myself cannot be just a quest for "I" - I don't become myself by myself and how I am affects other people)

These readings paint a picture of adult life that is rich on many different levels and from them I took several important ideas including:

- the quest for meaning becomes more important as we age; learning is not just an accumulation of knowledge but also a way of transforming experience

- adult life is a process of continuous change, changing roles and functions, changes due to experience, changes due to learning and adapting, physical changes

-life becomes more complex as more responsibility and more roles are added and individual lives become more unique; formal learning is a role added on to several other roles

-what adults do has an influence not only on their own lives but on the society in which they live

Transformative Dimensions of Learning

In the early 1970's, Jack Mezirow (1991) experienced a number of events which "precipitated an absorbing process of transformative learning - learning that changed (his) basic ways of looking at the world" (p. xvii). He was an adult educator interested in social action. He became an adult educator more interested in the individual process of change through education.

The three events which he identifies as precipitating his journey of transformation were:

- the writings of Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich which introduced him to the idea of changes in consciousness

- his wife's return to college to complete her undergraduate education after several years away from school which led to a dramatically transformative experience and prompted Mezirow's study of women returning to school

- a sabbatical leave spent working with Roger Gould, a psychiatrist who has made a major contribution to the study of adult development and whose interest at the time was adult learners going through difficult transitions

From the experience with his own process of transformation, his study of 83 women returning to school, and a broad range of readings, Mezirow developed a detailed analysis of how adults go about the process of making meaning and deals thoughtfully with the ethical issues that may be raised when one promotes what he

calls "perspective transformation." But Mezirow does not manage to create a different perspective, one which, for example, might allow a reframing of one of my concerns - the relationship between the self and society.

Mark Tennant (1993) says

Mezirow's attempt to link perspective transformation to adult development illustrates quite nicely a pervasive tension in his work and in adult education more generally. It is the tension between the individual and the social: between individual psychological development and social development and transformation (p. 35).

And yet we can't have one without the other. As Peter Jarvis (1992) says:

Herein lies part of the paradox of learning: human beings are born as animals, but as the human essence emerges through learning, humankind grows and develops and learns to be. While this process is natural, it is not free. Its implications are problematic. Learning is constrained by the sociocultural milieu into which individuals are born, it is directed through pressures exerted by social structures, and it is subject to control by power elites. Learning stems from the experience of living in society, but paradoxically, there would be no society without people learning (p.xii).

(When I think about learning as part of a dynamic web of relationships all affecting each other at the same time, I feel skeptical about such a detailed analysis of human behaviour as Mezirow's. I am conscious of how these theories, as helpful as they may seem, can be used to promote understandings that are incomplete - for example, when Gilligan includes women in the study of moral development we see that a whole dimension is added to the question of making moral judgments and rather than being at "lower" stages as Perry found, women may actually be able to make more complex decisions in this domain. I want to ask what or who has been left out? Not that everything can be included but as soon as we say "this is how it works" we may close our minds to other ways of looking at the subject. But then I don't know either how to frame the questions differently, how to keep the subject open.)

Jarvis concludes *Paradoxes of Learning* with this statement

humankind must grow and take moral responsibility for its own learning. Being poses questions that demand answers, but gradually humankind learns that no answers give absolute authority and certainty. But being finds living

in uncertainty problematic, as humankind discovers that beyond answers to the questions lie more questions and answers, and yet more questions lie beyond and these also demand answers (p.246).

(What I want to use from Mezirow's work are his acknowledgment of changes in perspective and the importance of being aware of the process of change so that it can be supported. He insists that adult educators must look at the people in their classrooms in a different way. But I want to honor the uncertainty Jarvis speaks of to allow as much difference as possible. I am hoping through this research project to learn to enjoy uncertainty as an important place where learning takes place and to grow in consciousness rather than finding answers.)

Developmental Change in Adulthood

The first course I took in this masters program investigated human development and I found myself looking to these theories to try to find a deeper understanding of the transition which, although personal, was influencing my experience of the return to school. While changes in childhood are acknowledged and have been the subject of extensive study, development in adulthood is less easy to define. Most changes in adulthood seem connected to our increasing knowledge about ourselves, our society, our relationships to others, and how we use this knowledge to adapt to change in our lives. Our biologic nature provides an underlying framework.

Models of adult development range from those which tend to view development more as changes within the individual, to those which propose changes due to changing societal or cultural demands as we age, to the evolutionary theories which use organic, biologic models to try to understand the process of changes in consciousness.

Intra-individual models of adult development focus on developmental commonalties or patterns which can be applied within and across cultures. The focus is on changes within the individual. Eric Erikson is probably the most well-

known theorist in this field. Erikson's work is built on the notion that there is an "underlying genetic plan common to all members of our species" (p. 295, Rybash, Roodin, & Hoyer, 1995) and that society is built to help individuals realize this plan. He proposed several psychosocial tasks associated with different stages of life. Gilligan (1982) criticizes stage theories such as Erikson's as depicting man's, not woman's, journey through the life course. As a result she says "the truth of separation is recognized, the reality of continuing connection is lost or relegated to the background where the figures of woman appear" (p. 155).

Other models of adult development are based on the idea that there is an expected life path. In 1972, Havighurst looked at the relationship of adult life to educational needs and introduced terms, such as the "teachable moment" and "developmental tasks," which we still find useful. Havighurst related developmental tasks in adulthood and their related educational needs to the assumption of an expected biologic, psychologic, and cultural progression through society. He drew attention to the reality that adults engage in learning new tasks throughout life, that adults have a complexity of roles and that there is movement in adulthood away from self-centeredness and towards understanding our role in society.

One problem with developmental theories based on an individual's expected progress through life is that what is "expected" at one era or in one culture can be totally different in another. Cohort provides an interesting example of this. Cohorts are people of similar age in our society who have had similar historic and social experiences. As Rybash, Roodin and Hoyer (1995) say:

Some developmental influences are closely related to specific historical eras or events rather than to age ... Normative history-graded factors include the pervasive and enduring effects of societal events such as wars and depression on individual lives. Think of the personality differences that exist between different-aged adults. People in their thirties and forties may have different attitudes and personalities than individuals in their seventies and eighties. Why do these differences exist? Is it simply because of the different ages of these two groups of adults? Or is it because the different age groups grew up in different circumstances? (p. 8).

Neugarten and Neugarten (1987) say:

the distinctions between life periods are blurring in today's society. The most dramatic evidence, perhaps, is the appearance of the so called 'young-old.' It is a recent historical phenomenon that very large groups of retirees and their spouses are healthy and vigorous...All across adulthood, age has become a poor predictor of the timing of life events, just as it is a poor predictor of health, work status, family status, interests, preoccupation and needs (p. 30).

These theories seem to contain a sense of both a need for separation and a need for connection; a sense of the interplay of the accumulation of experience and biologic need; a feeling for the adult's constant urge to change, and the complex relationship between individual and society.

There are many criticisms of these theories. Carol Gilligan has looked at the effects of leaving women out of these studies - we have only a partial view and what is left out is the importance of relationship. Another criticism is that they focus on what is normal or expected rather than promoting change to, as Michael Basseches (1984) puts it,

more complex, differentiated, integrated and cognitively adequate modes of thought...in life-task theories, the stages of development themselves are defined only by the issues with which individuals are dealing, rather than by how they are dealing with them. Thus, 'development' from one stage to another refers to a purely subjective process of change or inner concerns. It does not necessarily involve a person's achieving a more adequate way of understanding and interacting with his or her environment (p. 8).

Basseches feels that these theories, rather than encouraging people to make sometimes difficult changes in thinking, use the stage to excuse behaviour that is not helpful for the individual or for the society. He criticizes our tendency to use these theories as a "roadmap" to guide us through life (p. 7).

(A crucial issue for me about using development models is the idea that growth is better, the idea that we can define where an individual should be heading and judge whether or

not they have reached that place. It is this idea that has put me off development models since I myself do not want to be categorized or fixed at or judged to be at a certain level. I also don't want to leave it up to someone else (an expert) to be the one to say where I "should" be going. We cannot get away from being the culturally bound individuals we are. Whether a teacher follows adult development principles or not, judgments are made about how far to push students. What I am thinking is that we have a tendency, because we are dynamic, biologic systems, to increase our consciousness about why we do what we do, and how our decisions might affect others. Courtenay (1994) questions the "assumption that higher levels of development are better and acquisition of a broader perspective of life or an improved ability to deal with complexity somehow enhances the adult life" (p. 151). It is this focus on the individual that I think is the problem. I want to put individuality into a different context. Kolb (1984) says "Human individuality does not just result from random deviation from a single normative blueprint; it is a positive, adaptive adjustment of the human species. If there are evolutionary pressures towards the 'survival of the fittest' in the human species, these apply not to individuals but to the human community as a whole. Survival depends not on the evolution of a race of identical supermen but on the emergence of a cooperative human community that cherishes and utilizes individual uniqueness" (p. 62). It is wanting to use the idea of movement/change without pinning individuals to a defined pathway that led me to evolutionary theories of development.)

Evolutionary Models of Development

While the above theories of development focus on changes in adults, evolutionary models of development focus on the process of change. Michael Basseches says:

In contrast to equating human development with enhancing the self by getting as much out of life as possible, this tradition explicitly equates human development with getting beyond the narrow boundaries of the egotistical self. This tradition embraces the philosophical values of a pursuit of truth and a collective good which transcends the individual (p. 8).

(The tension between product and process is an interesting place for me. I am aware of the temptation and the impossibility of finding a concrete definition or something that will tell me what the right thing to do is and that any framework limits the way I look. Charlotte Bunch (1983) has helped me with this. The purpose of theory she says is to "guide us in sorting out options, to help keep us out of the action/no action bind" (p. 251). I'm not searching for answers - I'm searching for a way of looking which will allow me to stay uncertain.)

The primary movement in evolutionary change is described in terms of how living organisms grow and the evolutionary tendency towards complexity. This change is

achieved through increasing differentiation and integration. The tie to biology reminds us that we are complex creatures within an even more complex system comprising the whole of nature. Evolutionary theorists believe that we can better understand changes in society and in our own consciousness using this model.

Using this model, Csikszentmihalyi (1993) says:

Differentiation refers to the degree to which a system (i.e., an organ such as the brain, or an individual, a family, a corporation, a culture, or humanity as a whole) is composed of parts that differ in structure or function from one another. Integration refers to the extent to which the different parts communicate and enhance one another's goals. A system that is more differentiated and integrated than another is said to be more complex (p.156).

In evolutionary models the change is towards increasing complexity through individuation and integration - but the only way this can work is through increasing communication - understanding that what happens with one part affects the whole. Several theorists have described this movement.

David Kolb (1984):

Development on each level proceeds from a state of embeddedness, defensiveness, dependence and reaction to a state of self-actualization, independence, proaction and self-direction (p.140).

Robert Kegan (1982):

Evolutionary activity involves...a succession of qualitative differentiations of the self from the world, with a qualitatively more extensive object with which to be in relation created each time;...successive triumphs of "relationship to" rather than "embeddedness in" (p. 77).

Because Kegan emphasizes the relational aspect of self (self as process), he, more than most theorists I've read, emphasizes the importance of relationship in the process of development. About the responsibility each of us has towards relationship he says:

And why is it so important that we be recruitable? The answer is that a person's life depends (literally, in the first few years of life, and in every other way in all the years that follow) on whether he or she moves someone in this way. Our survival and development depend on our capacity to recruit the invested attention of others to us (p. 17).

Irene Karpiak (1993), has developed what she calls a "full spectrum" model of adult development (see Appendix VII) based on the work of Ken Wilber. Growth in a biologic, evolutionary model involves a process of differentiation and integration which enables the organism to handle increasing complexity and therefore become better able to adapt and survive. In her model, Karpiak looks at the work that has been done by many scholars on the subject of adult development and fits them into her framework. For example, she puts Piaget, Kohlberg and Perry into the Rational level where knowing is empiric - conscious, analytical, and objective. Havigurst, Erikson and Gilligan fit into the Biosocial level and Kegan and Maslow into the Integrated level. At these levels knowing is moving into Phenomenological - knowing is "self-conscious" and "whole-person." The final level is Transpersonal where she puts the later Maslow, Jung and Wilbur - knowing is Mandalic - super conscious, intuitive and contemplative.

(What I'm trying to get at here is the importance of the idea of "conscious connectedness". When you are embedded, you are connected but not conscious, you react without understanding why you are reacting or even that you are reacting. You are easily manipulated and tossed around by the surface movement of your life. Individuation is part of the movement towards becoming unembedded, but without the other part - integration, communication, understanding of connection, the complexity does not occur. Where my heart and head are taking me here is towards a feeling that our society, which has valued what we think of as masculine - individualism and specialization - so highly, needs to develop the feminine spirit of connectedness and generalization.)

Within this movement, the idea of self has created some problems. Although individuality seems an important part of the process, as Csikszentmihalyi says:

The more psychic energy we invest in personal goals, regardless of broader purpose - that is, the more exclusively we are involved in differentiation without concern for integration - the more frightening the dissolution of individuality is likely to be (p. 291).

And the more frightening the idea of dissolution of the self, the less able we are to move towards integration. And yet, the idea of individuality is important to the idea of growth towards complexity. Are individuality and integration contrary movements?

It is the idea of changes in consciousness which I think makes the sense of movement from individuality to integration understandable. Embeddedness could be defined as integration without individuality - we are connected but the awareness of connection is not there. We are human and for some reason, consciousness has developed. We perceive ourselves as somehow different from the rest of nature. The next step, in order to develop complexity must be to develop the awareness that we are deeply connected, that we are not separate individuals, although we are each unique, but exist as a part of a much greater complexity.

(The idea of the integration - not assimilation - of individuals. As I have struggled to understand what this might mean, my consciousness has changed. I have always been a left leaning socialist, bleeding heart type. One of my "soapboxes" has been divisiveness - for example, I rejected formal religion at a young age because in their insistence on "being right", religious organizations fight wars. However, I have come to realize that taking this stand is divisive because I, too, am interested in being right. This recognition of how my own need for a "right answer", or a "right approach" can create the very divisiveness that I take a stand against has been a powerful motivation in my search for a non-universal and yet not completely relative way of understanding)

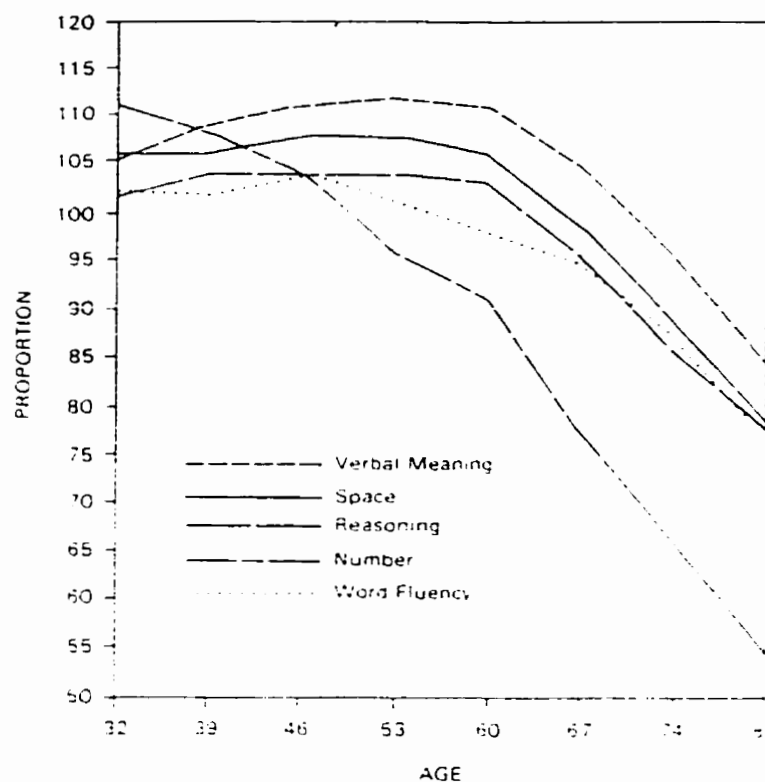
Human beings build societies to promote the goals of being human. And yet, society holds us back from individual transformation so that its own aims might be met. We are social and the need to belong is strong, and yet many of us in our society feel isolated and alone - and becoming more so even with the increased focus on individual fulfillment. Erikson (1968) says that "A long childhood must

prepare the newborn of the species to become specialized as a member of a pseudo species, i.e., in tribes, cultures, castes, etc., each of which behaves as if it were the only genuine realization of man as the heavens planned and created him" (p. 599). Kolb says that we learn to sublimate our will to society because society needs specialized roles at the expense of individual fulfillment. Society is built by humans to promote human needs and yet society works against individual fulfillment in some way. What is the relationship between these ideas?

Most theorists in the "evolutionary tradition" seem to agree that development is a product of both internal and external forces. Kegan refers to the individual as more of a process than a fixed thing, and the purpose of this process is the making of meaning. Theorists in this tradition believe that there is a natural tendency towards development and have a "long standing appreciation of nature as the source of wisdom" (Kegan, 1982, p. 255). If society is built by humans for the benefit of humans, why does it seem that some people "develop" while others cling to an unchanging view of the world. One of the reasons may be cosmic - we may need people who are willing to remain the same in order to provide continuity in times of change - change and stability do have a relationship. I feel a sense of urgency about moving to a more integrative understanding in the development of society because of the environmental and other crises facing us today which cry out for an understanding of our "relationship to."

FIGURE 3-1 Performance at various ages as a proportion of performance at age 25.

Source: Willis, 1984. Reprinted by permission of Van Nostrand Reinhold



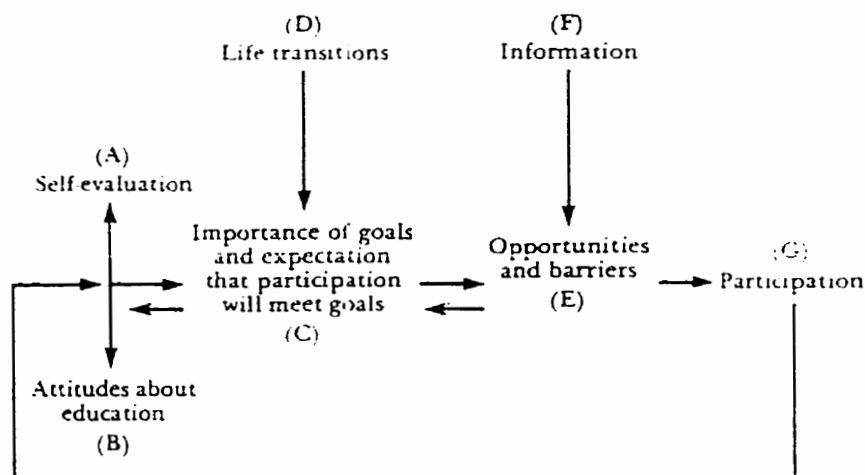
From Education and Aging, Peterson, D.A., Thornton, J.E., and Birren, J.E. (eds.), New Jersey, Prentice Hall Inc. 1986

APPENDIX VI Models of Interaction Between Individual Society, and Education

Chain-of-Response (COR) Model

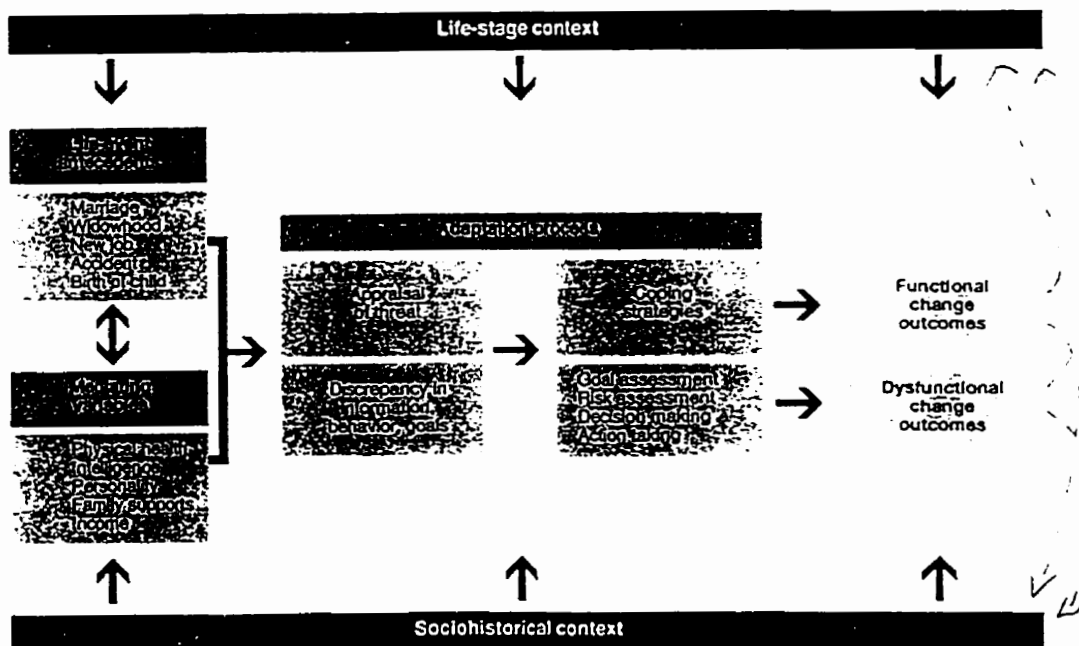
Figure 4 represents the rough beginnings of a conceptual framework designed to identify the relevant variables and

Figure 4. Chain-of-Response (COR) Model for Understanding Participation in Adult Learning Activities



From: Cross, P. *Adults as Learners*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981

Figure 3: A life-events framework



From: Rybush, J.W.; Roodin, A.A.; and Santrock, J.W. *Adult Development and Aging* (2nd ed). Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown

APPENDIX VII An Evolutionary Model Of Development

AN EVOLUTIONARY MODEL OF ADULT DEVELOPMENT

Irene Karpiak, University of Manitoba in the Canadian Journal Of University Continuing Education, Vol. XIX, No. 1, Spring 1993.

- proposed a "full spectrum model of consciousness" based on Ken Wilbur's work. Wilbur proposes a theory of development advancing from matter to body to mind to soul.

RATIONAL:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| <i>Piaget</i> | ■ intellectual capability, self control |
| <i>Kohlberg</i> | ■ building self-confidence and establishing realistic goals |
| <i>Perry</i> | ■ empirical, conceptual, analytic |
| | ■ focus of research is on ego function |

Empiric, knowing is conscious, analytical and objective.

BIOSOCIAL:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| <i>Erikson</i> | ■ biological and social factors shape the self |
| <i>Levinson</i> | ■ "internalized society" |
| <i>Havighurst</i> | ■ changes in response to age and social expectations |
| <i>Gilligan</i> | |

INTEGRATED:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| <i>Kegan</i> | ■ expansion of identity to include the total organism |
| <i>Maslow</i> | ■ capacity to express a full range of feeling, authenticity, spontaneity |
| | ■ "actually being the total being" |

Phenomenological, knowing is self-conscious and "whole person"

TRANSPERSONAL:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| <i>Jung</i> | ■ process occurring in the individual that goes beyond the individual |
| <i>Maslow</i> | ■ individual identity extends beyond the self to underlying identity with all |
| <i>Wilbur</i> | ■ universal, transcendental |

Mandalic, knowing is super conscious, intuitive, and contemplative

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY ENTITLED,
"UNDERSTANDING UNDERLYING DIMENSIONS OF ADULT
PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION" (Peggy Faulds MEd project)

I understand that this research project is studying both internal and external changes that take place in people's lives as they return to school. I understand that I will be asked for an educational and life history and to share with the researcher my feelings about both educational events and life experiences and how they might relate. The research will take place over the next year.

I understand that the research is being conducted by Peggy Faulds as a graduate student in the Faculty of Education to complete the project requirement for her Masters of Education. I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without explanation.

I understand that any data collected in the study will remain confidential; interview results and/or other written or taped material will be kept at the researcher's home or office in a locked filing cabinet. I understand that the researcher will share interview material with me to ensure the accuracy of such material. Furthermore, I understand that my name will not be attached to any published results, and that my anonymity will be protected by using a code name.

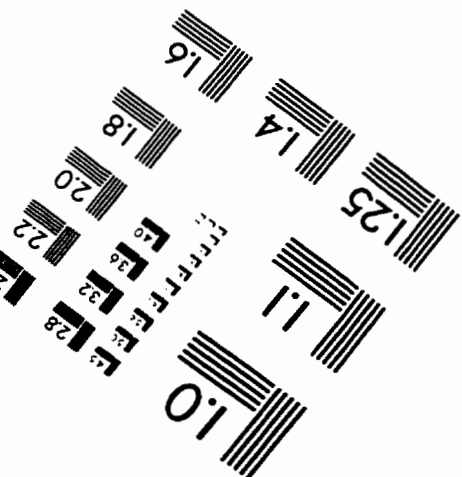
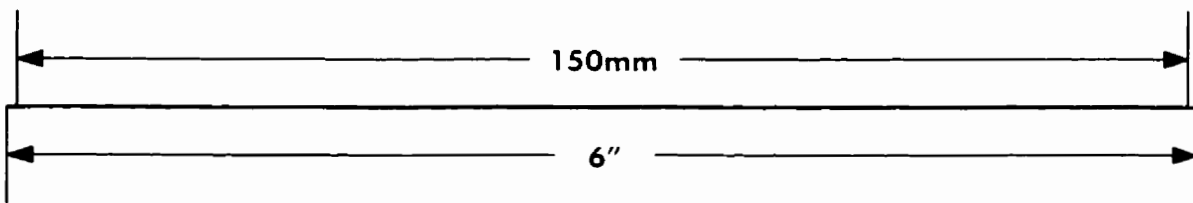
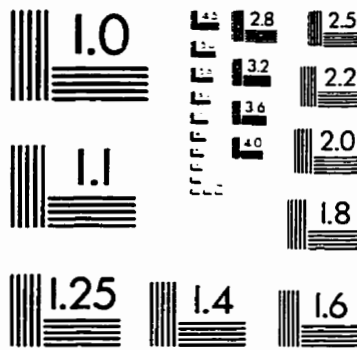
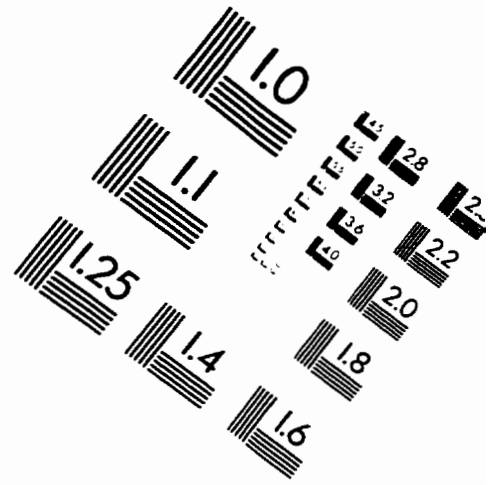
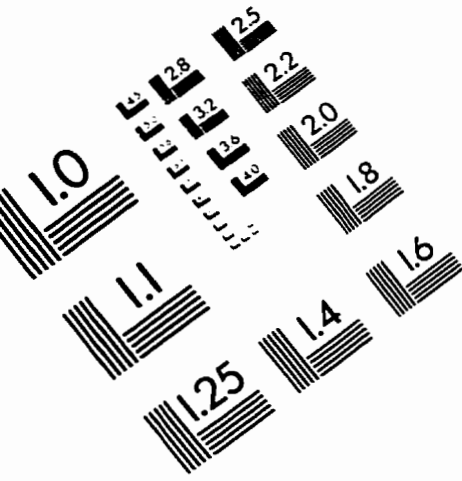
I understand that interviews may be audiotaped and that if they are, the tape will be immediately erased when I and the researcher have agreed on the transcribed version of our conversation. I also understand that if I do not wish to have my interviews taped, the researcher will take notes and together we will revise those notes.

I understand that my participation will have no bearing on my course work at UVic and that none of the information collected will be available to anyone except the researcher without my consent.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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