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ADULT MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD PLAY EXPERIENCES: EMERGENCE OF METAPHORIC THEMES

BY

DARLENE WITTE 

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Adult Memories of Childhood Play Experiences: Emergence of Metaphoric Themes" submitted by Darlene Witte in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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Date: October 15, 1987

DEDICATION

THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED TO THE INTEGRITY OF THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH IT WAS BROUGHT FORTH:

To Daiyo Sawada, for his vision
and to Lorene Everett-Turner, for her courage.

Special thanks go to Karen Reynolds
and Anne Ingledew.

But most of all this thesis is dedicated to my daughter,
Robin Eileen Johanna,
who is a shining light, a gift of God, and
who also has sparkling brown eyes.

ABSTRACT

This thesis presents an exploration of the value of childhood play. Eight adult women recall favourite play experiences and reflect on coherences present in their lives that seem to have originated in these episodes. Metaphor is used to discover their tacit knowledge of play through the use of narrative writing and dialogue. Metaphor is also discussed in relation to the bringing forth of self from within the environment in which the individual is immersed, and is explored as having a wide-ranging role in the personal structuring of experience.

While each woman's story was unique, a theme that was common to all eight also emerged: that what was most highly valued was personal freedom within a supportive social context.

Significant implications arising from the research are discussed in relation to teacher education, teacher and parent information, as well as program planning.

FOREWORD

I have known that metaphor functions in literature as a device that lends insight through analogy, that is used to enrich meaning and is often considered to beautify the written word. This is the kind of metaphor that exists in the world of definitions and is "studied" in literature classes. However I have come to see that metaphor goes far beyond that role and is central to my own way of thinking, being that which makes it possible for my reality and my comprehension of that reality to be a personal construction. I now see that metaphor functions as a means by which the individual brings forth understanding from the sea of perceptions that the human mind forms while the body and the environment act in concert. It seems to me that metaphor is epistemologically active in the formation of the structures through which personal reality emerges. I have come to agree with Gregory Bateson's statement (Capra, 1988), that "Metaphor is right at the bottom of being alive" (p. 77).

I began this research by having a group of adults recall, write about and discuss memories of their childhood play. The language of these personal stories was the beginning point for exploration of possible connections or themes in the life-histories of eight women. I was curious to see whether ideas about life that had originated with the child in play were then carried forward by the adult as an essential and permanent part of their world-view. I was also curious to find out whether or not metaphor could be useful in accomplishing the purpose of revealing these

coherences, should they exist.

Thus the intent of this thesis has been to investigate the possible wider role of metaphor. In this work I have allowed myself the freedom to explore metaphor by trying to observe and describe something of how it acts. I have not addressed metaphor as the familiar literary device we may have used as a point of discussion in literature classes. Rather than addressing metaphor I have un-dressed it so that it may be re-named, or re-dressed in a wider sense. Instead of wondering "What is a metaphor?" and seeking a definition, I have had as my constant companion the question "What is in a metaphor?" Metaphor is contained within language. Without language we would have no communication as we know it. But as Black (1979) states, "every metaphor is the tip of a submerged model" (p. 31). Thus I see metaphor as moving beyond the words into the realm of mediation of perceptions and the structuring of personal reality. Metaphor is most familiar to us as a part of literature but I wish to explore metaphor as it stands behind the words where it is held in body and in mind, and where it serves a purpose that may be indefinable. I would invite the reader of this thesis to explore the possibilities that are presented here in the spirit of an explorer-listener. Let us look together into language and then let us look inside the "in."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I

WHAT'S IN A METAPHOR?

I asked my friend, "What's in a metaphor?" She did not answer. Her eyes half-closed. Her mind, I knew was looking back. I waited. I did not know the scene that she was viewing, the one during which she had last been asked about metaphor. I hoped she was seeing what I saw: multi-levels of thought, patterns and connections. . .shimmering ideas, thoughts quivering with the excitement of being newly brought forth from perception into mind. But what she saw was herself, feeling alone and unsure, in Ms. Wilson's Grade Eight Literature class. The stakes had seemed so high, with all eyes upon her, and the room silent.

"What is a metaphor?" Ms. Wilson's voice could dissolve thought. My friend could only think of the sound of nails scraping across a tin roof. She did not answer. On that occasion the explanation she stumbled over was caught in a vortex of definitions. Metaphor versus simile. What she knew was lost in an emptiness of words-as-knowledge, words without meaning. It seemed to be a thing too trivial to be able to cause such deadly pain as she felt.

Sadly for my friend, the answer to the question died right there on her lips. Wondering simultaneously died in her heart. Perhaps it was because Ms. Wilson had a unique way of making things die. Or perhaps it was that to my friend, "metaphors" had usually lain flat on the pages of

texts, never taking wings and entering into her imagination, and never quite surfacing in her awareness as a vital part of the living quality of her personal growing self and world. Whatever the reason she edged away, intending to leave me alone to ponder the mystery and the power of the possibility of metaphor.

I knew that the problem was one of the difference between essence and explanation. But how could I show her what I meant? I called her back, saying, "I only partly know, but it has something to do with how I became. . .and how not knowing becomes knowing. . .and how perceptions become realities."

She said, "O.K. I'm listening. Tell me. What is in a metaphor?"

I answered, "I think it's like when I was a child, playing. My mind caught at a thought and tossed it into the air. Another came and my mind tossed it as high as the first. My hands and my mind juggled them like bright toys until suddenly understanding leaped from one to the other and back to me again. . ."

My friend did not comment, but this time she was smiling as she walked away. And I? I went on into the heart of the question. What is in a metaphor?

Exploring the Essence

Words

Narratives and dialogues about memories of childhood play were formed of words written and words spoken. As language the shadows of memory, gently stirred, gently probed, gently opened, brought forth shapes, sounds and meanings. Perceptions allowed to rise from the personal and privately known past, became framed.

These words took on new life through being placed between the researcher and the participants. We became a community of friends, a community of those-who-are-coming-to-know. Between us the words emerged precious and somehow new-born, re-newing memories that had become rather silent. They passed through the mesh of unspeakable meaning and spoken word, and progressed into the creation of our joint awareness.

When words are not yet known to us, they form part of the whole unknown in which we are immersed, the whole region of the waiting-to-be-found. These are the regions which we begin to explore as children, from the time when life itself first stirs our forming bodies, and our being begins to call itself forth from the void of unknowing. The journey of coming to know is one that we undertake with the great joy that only children can sustain. While on this magnificent adventure we dance and play while we build and become that which we are building. As children we begin what takes

until our final breath to complete, the active construction of our personal epistemology. From what we are given and what we find along the way we build and bring forth our individual house of being. As we go along we play out the adventure of personal knowing in that gentle but dark space between the known and the not-known. In that incredibly beautiful, magical-sacred area, mind emerges from all the rest of doing and perceiving.

How do the journey and the dance and the building begin? And how do they go on? In my way of seeing, they both begin and go on with metaphor as it acts within experience, perception and mind, and shows itself to us through word.

What is a word? A word is an outline drawn by the mind around a thought. Once released by the voice, a word is a sound drawn with the voice around a perception or bit of experience. Perhaps the voice is the body's way of shaping and holding an idea, a region of mind with which an intimacy has been established. A word can then be a point marking the intersection of co-ordinates of body, mind, and perception. It could be a marker for either the world we have already formed within, or the point of a probe with which we could tease those portions of the world which are prehended. In that world which we are beginning to make our own, word-as-probe may be a tool for marking out a region of mind-in-world with which we have only begun the dance of

knowing. A word is a uniquely human way of bringing forth experience that we have known or that we have discovered has somehow come to know us.

Written, a word is perhaps a scattering of black strokes against white, a figure drawn against a ground. A word is possibly a grouping of strokes, a grouping of letters that leaps into our minds and lives then as symbols holding ideas in place. Both spoken and written words are a kind of map, a map common to a particular community, recognized both by the individual and the group as having the quality of standing for, or standing in place of the territory to which that sound-word-symbol or written-word-symbol actually refers. Whatever they are, words-as-maps have the function of both forming and revealing patterns to both our conscious and unconscious awareness. Words are not the thing which they name, but they hold what we call "meaning". As symbols that have meaning to us they may accompany us on our private journeys between the known and the unknown. They provide us with the necessary tools for telling, writing, and making-sense-of the narratives of our own lives, the stories of our own becoming.

Words, strung together on paper or voiced one after another, lead us on into the mystery of ourselves and thus further into the wonder of knowing. The mind selects and refines and chooses them from the myriad of possibilities that are available to our thoughts, caught as they fall from

the lips of those around us. Words work with and within our perceptions, as frames, as windows, through which we can see. Our seeing then becomes part of new experiences, new perceptions, new knowing which our words must in turn stretch around, absorb, be absorbed by, and make a one-ness with that which is already known.

As a child, the whole self resonates with the environment. So unified are environment and child that they can scarcely be separated. The child's sensitivity to who s/he is, and where, is very great and is evidence of the child's thorough involvement in his/her commitment to coming fully into being. Metaphor functions within coming to know, as an epistemological tool. It acts as a way of dealing with, or making sense of the perceptions formed during experience, exploration, and discovery. Metaphor, the child, and the experiences of the child's mind and body, the perceptions, form connections through an abductive logic characteristic of the wider realities out of which the child him/herself is emerging. Metaphor does not function only outside of mind as a non-living thing, as a linguistic form or literary device. Metaphor both draws forth differences and structures similarities from within the perceptions bubbling through the child's senses. It is within metaphoric processes that the actions of the body and the emergence of mind unite. The strands of the child's actions of mind and body, his/her development, and the environment in which s/he

is immersed are woven together through a recursive process that is as natural as life itself. The result is found in the child's sense of wholeness within self, connectedness within community, and in his/her sense of well-being. The result is also to be found in the child's sparkling eyes, busy hands, and active tongue, as much as in his/her intense but ever-playful pursuit of knowing.

Hanging in the silent space between being and becoming, words echo bodily action, and mind and body act together as the warp and the weft of our lives. The words and the stories are a fabric within us, formed in deep, throbbing places beneath the skin, within the sound of the pulsing of the heart. The heart beats in rhythm. The rhythm forms a pattern. It is as design, and as word-figure drawn forth from background that metaphor dwells within us, a living part of the essence of our growth.

The knowing of our own heart's beating is gained through action and perception of action, and comes most naturally to children during play. Experiences that are first remembered sharply later may fade into the background of the too-familiar. However, when the time of an episode of play is long past, the essence of the knowing of it is retained. This knowledge is perpetually there and always accessible, but not necessarily held in the forefront of the mind. Over time, the magic of immediacy dies. The figure and ground blend into each other. The pattern fades. Then

this metaphoric knowledge is tacit, or implicit. This knowledge forms part of our unawareness, while simultaneously providing a basic structure for our ongoing processes of coming to know. But we are only as aware of its presence as our body might be aware of its own bones.

A Gathering of Words

Narratives are words called forth and gathered together into stories. While personal, at the same time narratives may express essential elements of a much older human story. While differing from each other in surface detail the narratives explored in this research still contain invariances that are as constant as fire and water, earth and sky. Yet as such they are ever-changing and always unique. In the same way the essential elements of the human story are also always alive, are perpetually the same but different, are identifiable, and are constantly being woven into and out of human experience and perception. Narrative writing brings to a more conscious level knowledge that has been part of our personal life-fabric for so long that we can no longer pick out figure from ground. The words hold experiences and perceptions that have become part of the background out of which we continue to bring ourselves forth. It is through the words that we begin both to write the story as story-teller, and to interpret the story as listener. It is in the-words-become-narrative, that the metaphors are contained. Simple though they may

seem, these narratives, these gatherings of words that describe the long past play of small children, preserve an integrity. They tap resources deep within, where the story-maker-child lives inside the adult, remaining close to his/her own beginnings. The child, who lives joyfully close to the process of coming to know, dwells within our memory. Her/his voice within us is capable of speaking with clarity, surprisingly sure of the events of which s/he took an intimate part, long ago.

"Looking back" can form a pathway between the unconscious or implicitly known, and the conscious, or explicitly known. Reflection-as-pathway thus allows a joining of the unknown self to the known. Reflection is a way of allowing pattern to emerge from ground through awareness of differences. Awareness of differences then leads into another difference, that of essence, which is the realm of metaphor. From there reflection allows awareness of pattern, the expression of the essence of essence, which is to be found through the surface and deep metaphors. Pattern emerges, finding its own voice in metaphor. In this the deeper self can know itself, and the meaning of experience can merge into the conscious knowledge of the individual, becoming a medium for the blending of past into present and future. Metaphors lying quietly but never inactive became newly alive, through hearing their own voice again. Drawn once again into conscious awareness these

memories became both candles and diamonds.

Candles and Diamonds

Meaning compressed in language such as metaphor is able to contain, expresses the essence of our lives. Diamond, which is formed of compressed carbon is one of earth's most common elements and expresses the essence of being in just the same way.

Beginning with perception of difference, thought filters between the senses and the brain, becoming mind. Difference therefore, or perception of difference, is that which informs cognition, and is essentially all that we can know. Mind emerges from the patterned connections between perception and perception-of-perception, and it is intimately our personal creation, intimately our own house. That which we can perceive becomes that which we perceive, and is constantly renewed and reformed in revisiting, as mind is brought forth.

To "candle an egg" is to hold the light behind it in order to see what is inside the shell. The light makes the shell translucent. What could be described as a figure, a meaning, a perception of a difference, or an essence of what is contained inside the eggshell is then visible. The gross dimensions of the figure within thus emerges from the background. What is hidden inside is subtly revealed. A difference is perceived.

Reflection-as-candle, held to the metaphors within

narratives, brings forth the meaning from experience. We thus may find the patterns that have been hidden, metaphors at a level so deeply and quietly implicit that we may not see them without the acts of thinking back, and writing them down, and then sharing them between minds.

Narratives written about past play experiences provided a site for just such sharing and revelation. Metaphors, the "deep", behind-the-words metaphors of the kind that perpetually give structure to our lives without our knowing it, hold a candle behind our words and illuminate their personal meaning. Metaphor finds pattern in the region of the implicit, and draws forth shapes and meanings from within our experiences and perceptions. At the same time, metaphor can be a way of our finding patterns as we draw forth those perceptions and frame them in language. Pattern, or awareness of differences then, is that which metaphor both forms and finds.

Words used in the construction of a recollection allow remembered experiences to function as windows. Metaphors stand as candles in the windows of our house, showing us the way into our own essence, our own central meanings. Through reflection metaphors-as-candles can reveal to us our diamonds within. Those metaphors of personal value are revealed through language and emerge from the ripples of meaning that are set off by the process of remembering. The wandering parts of ourselves, parts that may have seemed

lost, those nearly forgotten essences, are brought back into focus. These nearly hidden parts of self found to be still part of the personal foundation, are a personal and essential structure of our life-story. Through reflection, metaphors can provide inner connection or coherence, and a way of bringing the lost stranger within into the friendly light of the welcome and the known. The research experience became a way of showing what may have seemed to be wandering parts of mind the way to reconnect with their own beginnings.

Reflection provides a way of seeing what we have created, the diamonds, the essence of the essence of that which we have made our own, as we move between the unknown and the known, the past and the present. Reflection is the means by which we can consciously focus on differences, the perception of which are central to all knowing. Metaphor is the means by which pattern is formed and coherence is attained.

Metaphor thus forms an irreplaceable part of mind, and is more than a basic process in the formation of mind. It can also provide a way to bring a sense of wholeness into our conscious awareness. Thus our level of comfort, our warmth for and recognition of ourselves within ourselves is increased, and a treasure is found by being led to the essence within. Reflection finds the candle-light flashing from within the heart of the diamond. We reach into the

candle flame and draw forth the diamond. . .the essence of the metaphor, which is the essence of our perception. Thus there is essence within essence within essence. For always another candle flame burns within the heart of another diamond. Always and always there is another and another inside the inside, reaching back perhaps to our earliest thoughts and our earliest words. But it is by means of metaphor that we begin the journey outward and come forth from ourselves.

The diamonds that we perpetually hold within us flash with the flame of the candles. Thus metaphor expressed both explicitly and implicitly unites emerging mind, which in turn is our reality. The individual thereby constructs self within a personal epistemology using that which is given, as well as that which s/he finds along the way.

Infinite Play and the Dance of Knowing

In coming to know, both mind and body play with what is perceived. Infinite play perpetuates itself, while allowing for the addition of new information. In the developing person there is an agreement within the self that coming to know shall be continuous, and shall be joyful. Mind and play thus are both part of their own development, through being part of experience and perception. Both as child and as adult, we act physically and mentally to bring forth our reality from the world in which we live. Invariance of change is that which allows play and knowing to become

infinite. Through the unbounded play of metaphor within perception, the patterns of the dance result. These steps weave in and out of life and experience, bringing knowing out of themselves, and themselves out of knowing.

This is the dance of knowing, the building of the house of metaphor. Mind and body, difference and metaphor act as partners in play that is a life-time in the bringing forth of personal knowing. Throughout our journey, and all along the way, the route is marked by candle-light, by those metaphors that hold us either implicitly or explicitly, but nevertheless hold us in our own path as the story of our life unfolds. Childhood play provides a beginning to our story. In the construction of this story and all through the life of the adult, the building continues in the action of infinite play within emerging mind. Coming to know thus remains the flame at the heart of play, and the result of the action of metaphor.

Chapter II

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

As adults, we seem to know deep inside us that play is necessary and good, and when we see children play we sense this. We perceive children's play with an involuntary recognition that comes from knowing that the story we see young children acting out in front of us is also in some way an echo of our own. In this, we know without even wondering how we know, that when children play they enter a world of unities that is almost aesthetic in quality. Perhaps this is because as children we found so much richness in play, and watching children explore that magical world stirs both our memory and our deepest awareness of ourselves. It seems that we carry that wealth of knowing forward with us throughout our lives wherever we go. It is a world where self is somehow forgotten, and discovery and exploration occur harmoniously within context, and the context has merged into a self that seems more real, and is refreshed. This thesis is an exploration of play as an activity that influences our lives from childhood onward.

The significance of childhood play has been examined from many points of view, with researchers looking into a wide range of aspects. Parten's research (1932, 1933a, 1933b) gives insight into factors such as the social abilities and preferences of young children, as well as favoured activities and learning materials. Parten's work

lays a basis for program planning in ECE classrooms, and informs teachers of appropriate expectations for young children in group settings.

The work of Smilansky (1968) extends theoretical knowledge in the field by examining characteristics of play, especially sociodramatic play. She describes behaviour patterns in childhood development, and provides a rationale for these. For example, she examines the child's need for identification with his/her parents,and how children express this through role-taking play, using fantasy and imagination. Smilansky also identifies types of support required in adult-child relationships for most effectively extending children's learning.

Frost and Klein (1979) describe play as "the chief vehicle for the development of imagination and intelligence, language, sex role behaviour, and perceptual-motor development in young children" (p. 50). These authors suggest that children's need for play lies in their need to learn to master their environment through physical actions and language.

Monihan-Nourot, Scales, Van Hoorn & Almy (1987), write that play is of central importance to any program that supports children's developmental learning. They suggest that play provides a "window on the ways that children mediate social knowledge." They further state that play is "a primary means for the child to integrate and accommodate

new information," (p. 148) and to become able to use information in a symbolic manner. These authors also suggest that while social knowledge cannot be "taught", children are nevertheless very effective "learners" of such competence, and that play is essential to the skill of "maintaining a shared perspective with playmates." (p. 155)

Dansky & Silverman (1973, 1975), Dansky (1980a, 1980b), Pepler (1982), and Sutton-Smith (1967) assert that play, particularly make-believe play correlates significantly with creativity, creative thinking, and divergent thinking. Johnson, Christie & Yawkey (1987) point out that this relation likely occurs because of the "symbolic transformations that occur in make-believe play [which] are a key factor in play's contribution to creativity." (p. 16) Also, (Cheyne 1982; and Simon & Smith, 1983) indicate that play contributes significantly to the child's competence in problem-solving.

A number of theorists and researchers attempt to understand play as an essential medium for the child's successful development. Wickes (1927) indicates that our sensitive observation and understanding of a child's play can offer us many clues to his/ner inner world. Erikson (1972) speaks of a child's play session as being a "condensed bit of life. . . constructed within the individual himself" (p. 131, 132). Erikson also refers to play as "an infinite resource of what is potential in man"

(p. 127). He further describes a child's play as containing elements of self-motivated purpose, saying

> It is a common experience [when watching a child play], and yet always astounding, that all but the most inhibited children go at [being asked to build something] with a peculiar eagerness. After a brief period of orientation when the child may draw the observer into conversation, handle some toys exploratively, or scan the possibilities of the set of toys provided, there follows an absorption in the selection of toys, in the placement of blocks, and in the grouping of dolls, which soon seems to follow some imperative theme and some firm sense of style until the construction is suddenly declared finished. At that moment, there is often an expression on the child's face which seems to say that this is it - and it is good. (p. 128)

Erikson concludes his recording of a particular play-episode stating that "this performance [is] an example of a five-year-old's capacity to project a relevant personal theme on the microcosm of a play table" (p. 130). He goes on to assert that

> one child after another will use a few toys and ten to twenty minute's time to let some disturbing fact, or some life task, become the basis for a performance characterized by a unique style of representation. . .

> [while] other play constructions done by the same child over a period of time show an impressive variation as well as a continuity of themes. [This] continuity is a witness of unifying trends close to the core of a person's development. . .Many of these constructions decades later can be clearly seen as a condensed statement of a theme dominant in a person's destiny. (p. 131)

Erikson (1972) indicates that during a play episode the child may be "working through a traumatic experience. . . expressing playful renewal, governed by some need to communicate or to confess. . .that [play may be serving] the joy of self-expression, [may be to] exercise the growing faculties. . . and seem[s] to serve the mastery of a complex life-situation" (p. 131). He refers also to the child's experiencing life-events as being "meaningfully condensed", a metaphorical creation of a "microsphere. . . a spectacle. . . a speculum. . . a mirror of inner and outer conditions" (p. 160). Play, then, may serve as a way of observing the child's inner person as well as a way for the child to deal with the world in which s/he is immersed. The play of the child may also be a useful way of looking at fundamental unities within the adult who later emerges.

Addressing the theme of the nature of play, Piers (1972) writes that "Play is a Must of the first order for individuals. . . and for mankind" (p. 172). Bruner (1983)

states that "to play is not just child's play. Play, for the adult and for the child alike, is a way of using mind, or better yet, an attitude toward the use of mind. It is a test frame, a hot house for trying out ways of combining thought and language and fantasy [the richness of which contributes to the making of] better human beings" (p.69). Dewey (1916) comments that "work which remains permeated with the play attitude is art-in quality if not in conventional designation" (p. 206). He encourages that activity be embraced for its own sake, which then permits ordinary experience to have deeper meaning for the individual.

Carse (1986) is another who discusses play as a process of living. Writing of the "infinite game", or infinite play, Carse says that it is an activity that is pursued "for the purpose of continuing the play" (p. 3). Of infinite players, he confirms the need for play to be personally owned and motivated from within the individual's sense of purpose. Infinite play is that which perpetuates itself, that allows for change, is joyful, and is concerned with discovery as an essential life-perspective.

Cass (1971) also focuses on aspects of the importance of play-as-process, writing that a child's play is "as necessary and important to a child as the food he eats, for it is the very breath of life to him, the reason for his existence and his assurance of immortality" (p. 11). Cass

further clarifies that play has a much wider significance than what may be immediately apparent to any observer. She states that

> It is an activity which is concerned with the whole of [the child's] being, not with just one small part of him. . . to deny him the right to play is to deny him the right to live and grow. . . The very spirit of play is that it is an end in itself. . . [which] in its own playful way, tries to elude definition. (p. 11, 14)

Piaget's (1951) work adds much to our understanding of characteristics of childhood cognitive development. He views play as a learning medium (Suransky, 1982). Piaget sees play as being necessary to the child's process of adapting reality to the self in assimilation, and adapting the self to reality through accommodation. Piaget describes play as beginning with the child's realization that his/her physical actions can have an interesting effect on the environment. From this beginning, play in the life of the child evolves into make-believe. He describes make-believe as "the outward manifestation of symbolic thought" (p. 169), which points to the possibility of symbolic thought. In his view, symbolic thought results from and responds to the child's developing linguistic structures through which s/he expresses feelings and becomes able to describe the concrete world. Thus the child's own play becomes an important factor in his/her personal development, with understanding

coming through recreating the world on his/her own terms.

Isaacs (1980) writes that Piaget's views on cognitive development were essentially an extension of his concept of adaptation, an orientation that was due to his work as a biologist. She comments that Piaget "holds that knowledge is a process [through which]. . .cognitive abilities change. What is learned also changes [and] grows and changes with the learner" (p. 111). Isaacs says that the actions of the learner within his/her environment results in the individual imposing a structure on those experiences. It is from this base, indicates Isaacs, that the individual then begins to develop a personal reality, using his/her own reasoning about sensory experience as the major source of information. David Elkind (1978, 1981, 1987) in carrying forward Piaget's work, explores affective growth. Elkind (1987) says that play provides an essential factor in children's affective development, forming the necessary buffer between the child's tender self-concept and the sometimes confusing and overly demanding world within which he/she is immersed. He suggests that conflicting and/or over-abundant stimuli from many sources may overtax the child's resources for accommodation and assimilation. This may result in the child's need for time and support to work out his/her responses in a satisfying manner. Elkind (1981) asserts that "while play is a primary way for children to explore, discover and invent, play is also nature's way of dealing

with stress for children as well as adults" (p. 197). He warns against "the pressure on children to make social accommodations at the expense of personal assimilations" (p. 195). Elkind (1987) recommends play that allows for personal expression in a free atmosphere, describing play as being "always a transformation of reality in the service of the self" (p. 156).

Suransky (1982) discusses the child as "living in open communication with the world" (p. 172). She views play as being the

> mode through which the child realizes herself. . . for the transforming nature of play allows the child to become fully realized as a human being. . . Play should be seen as the primary mode for the child who is involved in becoming. The child becomes herself through play. (p. 172)

During the processes of learning, which require us to perceive and respond to the world and to the self, Hodgkin (1985) declares that

> it is the learner's own doing that counts because [s/he] is in the process of taking patterned information in, much of it without words. . . The activity of learning may be that of hand or eye or it may be activity shared with others, or it may be hidden 'in the mind', where words and pictures work together. It may be fun and involve play, or it may

involve sustained effort and practice. (p. 14)

Hodgkin recommends an environment that is rich in freedom, but also rich in support, and that provides for appropriate direction from adults. The specifics of the situation, the context in which the child is learning, is essential to the process. Hodgkin further describes the exploring child as having "an existential dimension." He says that each one is "a unique person, the very essence of whose being is to know, to choose and to get to know." Explaining that "every skilled act. . .start[s] as an achievement in the face of difficulty and danger" (p. 9), he uses the term "frontier" to describe "that zone of individual experience where new skills and new concepts are born" (p. 9). Hodgkin sees play as having an essential role in the child's continuous development, with play-practice-play-discovery being the elements of the optimum learning cycle.

Johnson, Christie & Yawkey (1987) indicate that in their opinion, play includes "the traditional categories of practice, constructive and dramatic game forms [as well as] all activities such as art and music which have an element of spontaneity, nonliterality, free choice, and pleasure" (p. 13). They summarize that play that is optimal for development "reflects or slightly stretches the current social or cognitive abilities of the child" (p. 18).

Bateson (1979) suggests that we should think of play as

"a frame for action" (p. 125), rather than as the name for acts which children do. He also envisions that in order to facilitate our understanding of play, we should think in terms of what else play is like, rather than defining play according to the actions of which it is constituted. Piaget (1951) further states that play is "in reality one of the aspects of any activity [and is] determined by a particular orientation of the behaviour" (p. 147). Play thus contains elements of exploration and discovery, can be carried out on an infinite scale, is self-generating and complex in nature. As such, Bateson (1972) postulates that play provides a frame for metacommunication, requiring that persons engaged in any interactive sequence with each other communicate about their communication, interpret signs as signals, and thus operate at some level of abstraction. Clarifying this, Bateson states that

> play is a phenomenon in which the actions of "play" are related to, or denote, other actions of "not play". We therefore meet in play with an instance of signals standing for other events, and it appears, therefore, that the evolution of play may have been an important step in the evolution of communication. (p. 181)

As such, play has a significant role in the child's development of his/her sense of the relationship between abstract messages, "a more concrete reality" (p. 191), and the beginnings of communication. In this way, Bateson

hypothesizes, the child's ability to use an "as if" stance greatly enhances his/her facility with abstractions. His/her ability to correctly interpret the signs-as-signals of other people also facilitates the child's success in inter-personal communication. Play, as a form of communication, is therefore instrumental in the cognitive, creative, social and emotional development of the child's personal knowledge.

Johnson et al (1987) also speak of the "as if" stance that is common in play. They suggest that "as if" provides that crucial transformational dimension which allows for the child's growth, through the dissolution of boundaries. Children are thus permitted to "escape the constraints of the here and now and experiment with new possibilities" (p. 12). It is thus, where one thing is understood in terms of another that the metaphorical (Black, 1962; Turner, 1974; Petrie, 1979; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, Johnson, 1987) nature of play allows the experience of the new to be understood in terms of the already known, and which facilitates the emergence-from-within of the child's conceptual reality.

Discussing the possibility of a relationship between conceptual reality and metaphor, Reid (1988) comments that

> the very idea of approaching knowledge through images makes me think of ideas caught out of thin air, fleeting here and then gone again, or of illusions as fluid and mutable as water bubbling downstream. (p.

22)

Johnson (1987) however, makes it clear that metaphorical understanding "is not merely a matter of arbitrary fanciful projection from anything to anything with no constraints" (p. xv). Rather, Lakoff & Johnson (1980) state, "metaphor. . . unites reason and imagination" and according to Johnson, is a pervasive, indispensable structure of human understanding by means of which we figuratively comprehend our world" (p. 193, p. xx).

Black (1979) points out that metaphors "permit us to see aspects of reality that they themselves help to constitute" (p. 5). Petrie (1979) states that "metaphors. . . [seem] to provide a basic way of passing from the well-known to the unknown" (p. 460). Petrie (1979) says

> where metaphor is useful in effecting cognitive change it does so by helping the mind move from one conceptual scheme with its associated way of knowing to another conceptual scheme with its associated way of knowing. (p. 460)

Petrie (1979) also says that metaphors can bring about basic changes in how we understand ourselves and the world around us. Sticht (1979) refers to metaphors as "intuitive tools for thought" (p. 484). Black (1979) describes metaphorical thought as that which "embodies insight expressible in no other fashion" (p. 34). Petrie, Black, and Sticht are each referring to an action of the mind.

This action of the mind, this change, this "golden something" (Whorf, 1950, p. 73), this insight, this "intuitive something new" (Black, 1979, p. 5), is what is created when personal meaning is achieved.

Turner (1974) says that metaphor is, in fact, metamorphic, transformative. He states

> metaphor is our means of effecting instantaneous fusion of two separated realms of experience into one illuminating, iconic, encapsulating image. (p. 25)

Thus it is that the metaphorical characteristics of our comprehension allows us to expand our knowledge, and permits reality to come forth from within.

Metaphor and play both seem to provide ways of forming this reality from within, in that one thing is allowed to stand for another, and thus holistic comprehension is facilitated. It is from this point of view, where mind, body and total environment form a unity from within which the individual brings forth him/herself that I look into the situation that I have chosen for this research. Play could be described as being one of those phenomena that, like metaphor itself, is bigger on the inside than it is on the outside (Lewis, 1950). Perhaps this is because play and metaphor, like nature, emotion, creativity, or the sacred, stand outside of the relevance of everyday logic while contributing much to the coherence of everyday experience. They contain the dimensions of the unpredictable,

unexplainable,and indefinable. The mind, building on previous experience, nevertheless recognizes these as important ways of dealing with the raw data of experience and perception. Both play and metaphor-making require an act of creativity on the part of the individual mind which is engaged in the playing, and/or engaged in the metaphor-making. In this thesis, metaphor is seen as essential to our way of being in the world. Metaphor is also used as a tool for bringing forth explicit information from implicit knowledge of adult memories of their childhood play. It is thus central to the research undertaken, both in conception and interpretation.

Wright (1970) discusses this inter-relatedness of metaphor and experience, explaining that "metaphor is the apprehension and expression of. . . integral relations of thought to thought" (p. 53). He further states that "experience is that circle whose centre is wherever metaphor occurs, and whose circumference is everywhere myth. Neither can have any sense without the other - experience can have no unity without both" (p. 73). At the centre, where perception meets thought, is the stillness of unity and the point of nascence of essence. As Bateson (1979) expressed it, "to be still is the essence of calibration. The still point is the setting of the turning world" (p. 218). The individual's world-view is composed of a constellation of these still points, where what is perceived becomes what is

known, and what is known further complements what is perceived.

Turner (1974) says that metaphor functioning at this level pervades the individual's perception of self and environment. He describes metaphors such as these as root metaphors. Ortony (1979) says that from this type of metaphor "grow many shoots which, taken as a whole, constitute an entire system or way of looking at things" (p. 5). Schon (1979) refers to metaphors of this type as deep metaphors. Deep metaphors, he says, are extremely powerful and generate the essential characteristics of the individual's perception, or framing of life situations. Fraser (1979) refers to these metaphors as live. Live metaphors are those which retain a personally real character to the individual. Thus metaphor itself is a process that is capable of generating meaning in our lives at many levels. Schon (1983) describes this facility as "seeing-as", saying the metaphorical thinking can be especially useful in problem-solving situations, enhancing our intuitive abilities. Building on the work of Schon, Munby & Russell (1989) state that "we construct our world, or 'see' it metaphorically" while we are yet in the process of creating our reality (p. 2).

Lakoff & Johnson (1980) remind us that "to understand, to make sense of ourselves, our world, and our place in it, is basic to the human condition" (p. 15). They describe

"gestalt" as being a structure for just such a purpose. They assert that gestalt provides a way of discussing the role of metaphor in perception, as well as a way of speaking about how pattern, or coherence within a context is generated.

These authors describe that coherence results from mental images which are gained through life-experiences. Perceptions experienced through repetition over time become gestalt structures, or as Grossman (1984) says, ways of dealing with experience as "whole" (p. 64). Polanyi (1966) and Johnson (1987), are in agreement that these gestalt structures "consist of parts standing in relations and organized into unified wholes, by means of which our experience manifests discernable order" (p. xix), and that these structures result from the actions of the individual in creating his/her own knowing. Lakoff & Johnson (1980) propose that "meaning is always meaning to a person. . . [and is gained through] the construction of coherence via [these] experiential gestalts" (p. 228). They explain that these mental images tend to become metaphorical through the symbolic role of perceptual and other factors, and thus facilitate holistic comprehension. In this way the personal world is both maintained and enlarged.

Lakoff & Johnson (1980) describe the interconnected, patterned quality of these gestalts, saying

an experiential gestalt will typically serve as a

> background for understanding something we experience as an aspect of that gestalt. Thus a person or object may be understood as a participant in a gestalt, and an action may be understood as a part of a gestalt. One gestalt may presuppose the presence of another, which may, in turn, presuppose the presence of another, which may, in turn, presuppose the presence of others, and so on. The result will be an incredibly rich background structure necessary for a full understanding of any given situation. Most of this background structure will never be noticed, since it is presupposed in so many of our daily activities and experiences. (p. 176)

They claim that we achieve direct understanding of our experience when we "see it as being structured coherently in terms of gestalts that have emerged directly from interaction with and in our environment" (p. 229). However, we can also understand our experience metaphorically "when we use a gestalt from one domain of experience to structure experience in another domain" (p. 229). These authors suggest that these patterned, metaphorical, cognitive structures emerge naturally from our every-day experience, and in so doing provide grounding for our conceptual system.

Bateson (1979) provides a point of view by focusing his inquiry into metaphor and cognition on "the pattern which connects." He describes mind as a system which emerges as a "necessary unity" (p. 8), from the context of itself in

response to received perceptual information. In this view, Bredo (1989) clarifies, "perceptions of objects or events are considered to be parts of the contexts which they help to compose." Bateson (1972) sees the "unit of psychological input" (p. 481), as difference. He (1979) says that difference itself acts as "a nucleus for change" (p. 43). As a unit of information in the self-organizing world of mind, difference is never a thing in itself, but is an idea which acts as an event or change. Perception of difference triggers interaction between parts of mind, and acts as "information which generates further information, or further difference of difference" (Bateson, 1987, p. 19). Beginning as a quantitative measurement, Fischer (1988) says perception of differences is the result of the brain's response to environment. What happens to that difference once it is brought forth by brain is a function of quality, that is, the emergence of mind occurring as a qualitative, patterned (structured) response due to context, with perceptions being "interpreted in light of past perceptions" (p. 2). Pattern (structure) emerges from context as essence (quality), due to those "differences that make a difference" (Bateson, 1979, p. 105). Mind thus can be seen as coming forth from itself during the creation of a personal version of reality.

Using the metaphor of map emerging from territory, Bateson says that in the same way our view of reality is

related to our experiences as a "somewhat flattened, abstracted version of 'truth'" (1987, p. 17), but all that we can know. Pattern, he postulates, may be changed or broken by addition or repetition, "anything that will force. . . new perception" (1979, p. 29), and act as new news within the development of mind. Bredo (1989) states that Bateson views learning itself as the result of our response to such emerging contexts. Ricoeur (1981) comments that this requires imagination, which is "the ability to produce kinds by assimilation and to produce them not above the differences as in the concept, but in spite of and through the differences" (p. 234). Thus mind becomes its own context for further emergence of mind, and as Wilder-Mott (1981) concludes, "we think in patterns of contexts of differences" (p. 39).

Capra (1988) quotes Bateson as stating that "metaphor is the way this whole fabric of mental interconnections holds together" (p. 76 - 77). Bateson (1987) says that while quantity, or perception, is necessary in producing pattern, quantity "can never explain pattern" (p. 117). Metaphor is that which allows figure to emerge from ground and is the mind's way of finding, drawing forth, and accommodating pattern among essential differences. Metaphor thereby both allows and enhances the coherence of our knowing within ourselves, and our knowing of the world in which we hold our own being. As such, metaphor, or one

concept being understood in terms of another, is a means of dealing with relations between perceptions.

Capra (1988) says that the idea of reality (or mind) being personally constructed from within, differs fundamentally from the traditional Cartesian view that is generally taken for granted throughout the western world. Grossman (1984) explains that according to Descartes, body and mind are two separate substances. This view demands that the relationship between body and mind be that of a relationship between two separate substances. Toulmin (1981) states that Descartes

> performed an act of abstraction whose consequences it has been hard to escape. What Descartes required us to do was not just to divide mind from matter: more importantly he set humanity aside from nature, and established criteria of "rational objectivity" for natural science that placed the scientist himself in the position of a pure spectator. (p. 364)

Berman (1981) states that mind is not dealt with beyond this point, but rather is "explained away" (p. 235). Polanyi (1958) suggests, however, that "an impersonal knowledge would be meaningless, and that we must learn to accept as our ideal a knowledge that is manifestly personal" (p. 27). Bateson (1987) discusses the Cartesian view as unsatisfying, leaving the mind as being viewed as "an undescribable mystery", rather than as the organizing

activity of living systems (p. 60). Capra describes Bateson's view of mind as the first to really move beyond the Cartesian division, with "mind and life becoming inseparably connected [and] with. . . mental process being immanent in matter at all levels of life" (p.204).

Departing from traditional views of how we come to know, Bateson sees epistemology as "always and inevitably personal. The point of the probe is always in the heart of the explorer" (p. 93). Dell (1985) comments that such a view of epistemology, or human knowing, must have an effect on one's view of ontology, or human being in the world. Bateson (1987) says that in his view there can no longer be a clear distinction between epistemology and ontology, because "what is, is identical for all human purposes with what can be known" (p. 19). The personal construction of reality and understanding also results in a personally valid world-view. Burke (1981) and Toulmin (1981) agree that the line between being inside/looking outside begins to blur in Bateson's work. Engel (1971), in his preface to Bateson's (1972) Steps to an Ecology of Mind says "we create the world that we perceive, not because there is no reality outside our heads. . . but because we select and edit the reality we see to conform to our beliefs about what sort of world we live in" (p. vii). Reality may or may not be what we perceive it to be. Nonetheless our perception of reality is our perception, and therefore is reality as we know it. In

Bateson's own words

> the context of every action is the whole network of epistemology and the state of all the systems involved, with the history that leads up to that state. What we believe ourselves to be should be compatible with what we believe of the world around us. (p. 177)

The possibility of that blurred line between knowing and being is also discussed by Lakoff & Johnson (1980). They state that constant interaction between the individual and the environment results in constant negotiation of both the understanding of the world and the meaning that world bears. The medium becomes its own message, functioning as part of the reality that it helps to constitute. In other words, it is from inside the inside that we view the outside, or as Wright (1970) puts it, "everything exists as it is perceived, at least in relation to the percipient" (p. 53). Von Foerster (1981) comments that "the discovery we all have to make for ourselves is the following postulate: the environment as we perceive it is our invention" (p. 288).

Tressler (1988) agrees that

> our experience of an object changes that object. The thing-in-itself, even if it does exist, may as well not exist insofar as our ability to understand it as such is concerned. In other words, it is our search for the object, as well as the object of our search, which determines the nature of our knowledge. (p. 39)

Our ontology then, must always be in some sense subject to our epistemology, and both will owe something of their character to metaphor. Murray (1986) states that "the metaphor emerges from the context of a person's life. One metaphorizes as he lives, but also lives as he metaphorizes. They both belong to his existence in the world" (p. 108).

It would seem that from childhood on, the "as if" stance of play and the "seeing as" capacity of metaphor contribute to the flexibility needed to accomplish an ontology that is complementary to our epistemology, and vice versa. Thus, from the total context of ourselves and the world in which we dwell, a unity is brought forth from within. Tressler (1988) states that

> knowledge is the attempt to make the world intelligible to ourselves. . . the attempt to discover/create a unity in the seeming diversity of phenomena. (p. 39)

Or, as Bateson (1979) would say, our comprehension of inter-relationships is due to our attempt to unveil the "pattern which connects" (p.8).

Clues to the patterns, those deep metaphors that contribute to an individual's epistemology and ontology may be revealed by examining surface metaphors. As Reid (1988) states, "metaphorism belongs to the realm of symbol and the symbolic function of words and ideas. . .This symbolic value has the function of pointing to or towards something beyond the usual or ordinary meaning engendered by its presence"

(p. 21). Surface metaphors are those referred to by Schon (1979) as those contained in an individual's explicit language. Metaphor at this level, says Murray (1986), is "critical [in the] dimension of language and languaging, and is a pivotal domain in the understanding of the advancement of personal integration" (p.86,87). Polanyi (1966) says that "we know more than we can tell" (p. 4), and personal knowledge that is held at a tacit, or implicit level can be brought forward into explicit awareness. Turner (1974) suggests that while metaphor may indeed be the form of tacit knowledge, that which is tacit may become explicit and thus available to us at an articulate level. This can be done, Polanyi believes, by critical reflection. Maturana & Varela (1987) describe reflection as "that which leads you to know your own knowledge" (p. 249). Coward & Royce (1980) clarify that "what the metaphor does is to present enough of that tacit knowledge so that personal recognition occurs" (p. 125).

It seems that Lakoff & Johnson (1980) would also support the possibility of using surface metaphors (the explicit) to bring forth deep metaphors (the implicit). They state that

> metaphors are not merely things to be seen beyond. In fact one can see beyond them only by using other metaphors. It is as though the ability to comprehend experience through metaphor were a sense, like seeing

> or touching or hearing, with metaphors providing the only ways to perceive and experience much of the world. (p. 239)

Image thus points to structure as well as to emerging meaning (Ricoeur, 1981). Or, as Murray (1986) puts it, "our metaphors are mind-filled, not mindless creations. . . The metaphorizations with which we are languaging our life. . .are imaginative unifications that have helped us make sense of life" (p. 99).

In this thesis narrative is used as a tool for revealing metaphors of personal value, and as such is seen as an "everyday story [used to describe or explain] our own and other's actions" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 1). Sarbin (1986) describes use of narrative in the discussion of personal truth, stating that human beings naturally use narrative forms to impose structure on the flow of experience" (p. 9). He cites narrative as being one possible way of both expressing and revealing that implicit structure.

Support for using narrative as a source of surface and deep metaphor would also seem to come from the work of Lakoff & Johnson (1980). They state that "self-understanding is facilitated by the

> search for appropriate personal metaphors that make sense of our lives. . . the unending negotiation and renegotiation of the meaning of your experiences to

> yourself. . . the process of self-understanding [which occurs in] the continual development of new life-stories for yourself. (p. 223)

Further support for a methodology using narrative as sources of surface and deep metaphor would also seem to come from the work of Schon (1979) and Johnson (1987) in which they describe the use of story-telling or narrative as containing metaphors of personal significance. Also, Munby & Russell (1989) make use of transcribed interviews as sources for information allowing the discovery and exploration of personal metaphors. Munby & Russell (1989) contribute that "careful attention to how one describes the world appears to give clues to how one constructs it. Such constructions can come under scrutiny only when we speak or write and then attend to the language we have used" (p. 8). Cinnamond & Zimpher (1988) state that language, especially in a shared context, "is the way in which the everyday life-world and the self are understood" (p. 17). Munby & Russell (1989) add that metaphor "builds upon the relationship between language and thought" (p. 2). Bateson (1979) further elucidates this relationship, describing story as natural to the thinking of the human species. He says that

> a story, [that] little knot or complex of connectedness which we call relevance. . . is at the very root of being alive. . . and [expresses] the notion of context, of pattern through time. . . [Such] stories [are] built

> into my very being. The patterns and sequences of childhood experience are built into me. (p. 13 - 15)

Bateson insists that our verbal communication as well as our conceptual system is pervasively metaphorical. Thus it seems plausible that investigation of personal stories of childhood play may provide both a natural and fruitful method of exploring the dimensions of an educator's personal knowledge, using deep metaphors to tease to the surface that which is implicit. The following chapter presents a methodology designed to accomplish this purpose.

Chapter III

THE RESEARCH SITUATION

This research was conducted with the co-operation of two different groups of adult University students. Members of these two groups provided data for this research through participation in two phases, a narrative collection phase and a dialogue phase. All members of both groups participated in phase one of the research situation, and nine volunteers who had participated in phase one also chose to participate in phase two. It is the data provided by eight of these women who participated in both phases which eventually provided the basis for this thesis.

In phase one the participants discussed in small groups their memories of a childhood play experience, and then they individually recorded their memory in narrative form. Phase two involved dialogues held between individual participants and myself, in which the search for personal meaning that had begun in phase one was further explored.

Phase one research data was collected on two occasions, with the two different groups under similar conditions. The participants were enroled in Education Curriculum and Instruction evening classes at the University of Alberta, Edmonton. Although one class was a graduate level course and the other was a fourth-year course, all but two of the students had previous teaching experience at the elementary level. The first group was composed of fifteen adult women

students, and the second included five adult women.

Participants were invited to attend these narrative gathering sessions which were held in class time, but attendance was not mandatory.

After participating in phase one, the participants were invited to volunteer to take part in phase two, the dialogues. Of the total number of participants who prepared narratives, nine volunteered to discuss their play memories with me privately in dialogue sessions. Of the nine dialogues that were held, one was "lost" due to equipment malfunction. However, verbatim transcripts were prepared of the other dialogues. The narratives written by these eight students, and the dialogues I held with them provide the data presented in this document.

The narrative collection sessions which took place in two groups, and the eight individual dialogue sessions were each about one hour in duration.

Phase One: Preparation of the Narratives

In this phase of the research, play memories were recalled, discussed, and then written in narrative form. The two narrative gathering sessions were held in a small circular teaching theatre where the lights could be dimmed and participants could relax on the carpeted floor as they wished.

In both sessions of phase one, the following details

were as much alike as possible: Participants were told that I was researching adult memories of childhood play experiences. I explained that I would try to create a comfortable context for them, one that would be conducive to them feeling able to remember, and to share those memories. They were invited to begin their narrative with a sketch if they preferred drawing over writing. The participants were asked to find a space of their own in the room. Next, I played a tape of relaxing music and nature sounds such as bird songs and running water. After allowing a few minutes for everyone to get comfortably settled, I led a relaxation/centring exercise selected from The Centring Book, (Hendricks, 1975). This involved some deep breathing and concentrating on relaxing various muscle groups, while the music was playing. I then read aloud from Langeveld's (1983) narrative The Secret Place in the Life of a Child. (Transcripts of these are provided in Appendix A.) The participants were then asked to take a few minutes to reflect on their own play memories. I instructed,

> Think back to yourself at whatever age you like, age five, seven, thirteen, or whatever feels right for you. Let yourself think about how you liked to play. Think about the place: Where is it? How does it feel? How does it smell? Who are you, who do you imagine yourself to be when you go to this place? Do you like to go there alone? Do you like to have another child

or adult there with you? Think about the activity that you are engaged in. What are you doing?

After taking some time to reflect individually, the participants were asked to group themselves into pairs whenever they felt ready, and to share these memories verbally with each other.

Following this a choice of either writing or drawing about their memory was given. It was suggested that if individuals chose to draw, then perhaps they would like to label their drawing with explanatory notes.

Participants were requested to

> describe the play experience, giving as much detail as you are comfortable with. Try to identify what it is about this very special experience that has made it stick with you, and what if any significance it may have for you now. There may be no real significance that you can put your finger on, and that's fine. Just write or draw what you can remember.

When the participants were finished writing and/or drawing about their memory, they were asked to

> think of a phrase to describe yourself as that playing child in the situation you have recalled. An example of what I mean could be: Joan-as-organizer, Susan-as-swing, or Marlene-as-tiger. These are very short, descriptive statements that say something about the essence of the experience, a sort of summary in one

sentence. It should be something that seems to capture the central meaning of the combination of yourself and the play experience as you remember it. You could think of these statements as metaphors, and that you are writing down a metaphor for yourself as playing child.

With the second group to participate in phase one, the same basic format was followed. The only planned change that was made to the context of the second data-gathering session was that participants in the second session heard a shorter version of the Langeveld narrative. In addition, they listened to me read some poems about childhood play by Robert Louis Stevenson and A.A. Milne. (Copies of these are also provided in Appendix A.) It was stressed that any type of play memory, happy or sad, would be acceptable for this research. The criteria which I requested the participants consider most carefully before they began the discussion and the subsequent narratives was that they should choose a memory from their own childhood play that was personally meaningful.

Phase Two: The Dialogues

In phase two the narratives prepared during phase one were discussed in a dialogue held between the researcher and individual participants. The dialogues were conducted in a private office, and were tape-recorded with each

participant's permission.

During the dialogues metaphors which the participants themselves had identified as expressing the essence of their narrative as well as metaphors which the researcher sensed were implicit in the narratives, were discussed and expanded upon. Surface metaphors found imbedded in the language of the narratives were also considered. That is, both surface and deep metaphors were used to investigate implicit meaning held in further deep metaphors. During the dialogues, the researcher attempted to listen carefully for clues as to the implicit meaning held in the words which the participants were using to describe their experience. I tried to focus on implicit meaning, and to respond to this, in order to facilitate the reflective process, and to allow the implicit to come forth into the articulate level. Consequently there was no prepared list of questions that were asked of every participant.

Analysis of the data

Just as the research was done in two phases, the analysis of the data was also done in two stages. These were analysis of the narratives and analysis of the dialogues. (Transcripts of the narratives and of one dialogue are included in Appendix B and C.)

Stage One

After the narratives were prepared, and before the

dialogues were held, the first steps in analysis were taken. During this phase analysis involved reading the narratives that had been prepared. I searched for metaphoric statements contained at the surface level of the language. I also considered the self-metaphor that the participant had supplied, and thought about what deep metaphors could be present. As these came to mind, I wrote them down. This information was used as a beginning point for the dialogues, which then became important in the next stage of analysis.

Whatever the participant supplied as a "metaphor" was accepted by the researcher as being suitable for the purposes of the research. Whether these self-metaphors or metaphors of personal value were literary metaphors in the strict sense of the word or not was not important. Cognitively these statements still bear significance and may draw forth the essence of remembered experiences. These themes encapsulate or frame the "seeing-as" of the individual, and function in a metaphoric way whether they could be considered to be metaphors at the surface level of the language or not.

Stage Two

The dialogues began with the participants being given an opportunity to review their narrative, as several weeks had passed since the writing had taken place. Participants were then encouraged to talk about the memory about which they had written. We sometimes began with, "Is there

anything further you feel you'd like to add to your narrative at this time?" Sometimes I found that using their self-metaphor as a beginning point led easily into discussion. For example, saying "You have described yourself in this experience as 'Mary-as-friend'. Let's talk about that," seemed to open the way for further discussion. After beginning the dialogue with some fairly casual discussion of the play-memory gathering session and/or the self-metaphor, talk usually seemed to lead naturally to focusing on the surface metaphors, that is, those which were imbedded in the language of the narrative. The participant and I then continued in this vein, with the result that deep metaphors began to emerge.

During the discussion, I kept in mind the impressions of deeper metaphors that I had recorded during the first stage of analysis. I thus was able to check the accuracy of those impressions by the participants' reactions to them. Together we thus developed a more detailed account of the significance of the remembered experience for the participant.

In this research therefore, the narratives and dialogues formed the data and contributed to essential elements of the analysis of the data.

Following the eight dialogues transcripts of the sessions were made. I read and re-read these many times to allow myself time to reflect, absorb, and record whatever

information I could perceive within them. From within each dialogue, one, two, or in some cases, three or four dominant themes seemed to emerge. When I sensed that I had found an implicit thread that was important in the personal story of the participant, I traced that thread by writing a list of everything that the participant had said concerning that theme. My perceptions of these dominant metaphoric themes which emerged in this way became the chapter on Findings. That section of the thesis traces connections between the surface language and those deeper metaphors from which patterns may have been generated. Those implicit unities that seemed to me to contribute a sense of connectedness within the life-story were brought to an articulate awareness through reflection and discussion. These were then woven by myself into a story that expressed these dominant themes.

The final chapter of this thesis presents my further response to the information that came forth during the analysis of both the narratives and the dialogues.

Chapter IV

ADULT MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD PLAY EXPERIENCES: EMERGENCE OF METAPHORIC THEMES

FINDINGS

Metaphor is that which distils essence without losing richness. Metaphor hides in order to reveal and may allow unities to emerge as patterns, or structures of the self. In this research it could be said that themes of the self-story that were found through memories, opened the heart of the child within to the listening adult who then was able to respond with re-cognition of these personal coherences. Thus exploration of these stories provided a way of finding connections, those patterns within the web of personal knowing that also have to do with one's sense of being-in-the-world.

The stories that eight adult women shared about memories of their childhood play appear in this chapter as personal versions of reality that were formed from within. The narrative/dialogue format used for probing these views of reality allowed individual experiences to be both expressed and examined through metaphor. In this way coherences to which explicit, surface language alluded led the way into the discovery of more deeply held unities.

Stories

Christy: Christy-as-timidly-daring

Christy's story emerged as one of transformation in which a timid child became a daring adult through the process of play. This play-memory is a rich reflection of the person that she has become.

Christy described adventures enacted at a relative's farm every weekend and holiday as the seasons permitted, between her sixth and eleventh year. Of the farm she said, "It was in this. . . vastness of forest, hills and streams. . . you [could] get lost. So it was like exploring. If you set off in a new direction each time, it was into the unknown. . . [It was] exciting."

Christy referred to herself as a timid child, an observer who did not speak up or voice opinions, a child who lacked self-confidence and who participated only when she wanted to. She said she "play[ed] it safe, want[ed] to succeed and not try something unless I [could] do well at it and accomplish it."

Explaining that she was the youngest of a group comprised of herself, her older sister, and three older cousins, she said, "My oldest cousin [Sara] was always leader, and her two brothers. . .would almost like scouts [be] sent out to do different things. My older sister was involved [and] very much played close with Sara. I always felt a little bit like the straggler, the one behind, being

the younger one." Christy recalled one such incident saying

> [There was a] log across the stream, and of course [there] was always moss, or [it was] really wet, and those guys would just scamper across, and I would think 'Oh God!' How am I going to make it! I would know that if I wanted to keep up with them, I'd just have to do it. What made me keep up with them was the fact that I'd have to turn around and go back [alone]. . . so that's what pushed me on.

Despite her feeling of being the straggler Christy affirmed that the situation was still very freeing. She always wanted to be with the group in order to experience and be a part of the adventure. She explained that being with the others was what allowed her the opportunity to explore. Commenting on this aspect she said, "That was part of the freedom, [and] getting away. If I wasn't with the group I wouldn't be away and off exploring. I would never have been allowed to do it by myself. There's safety in numbers."

During these adventures that the group pursued together, real dangers such as the one described above, and imaginary dangers such as pretending that there were strangers lurking in the woods, lent an ever present and what they considered to be necessary intensity to the experience. She remembered that the children both created and coped with these elements, constantly testing their own

boundaries. Christy described the interaction within the group as being, "almost dares. We each had definite roles. . .and [the older children] were teamed up. . .to push each other. . . That always had to be part of the adventure." The elements of competition and danger were consistent. One-ups-man-ship was always present between the members of the group. She stressed the element of danger that was always present in the adventure, saying "It didn't have to be scary but had to be dangerous. . .it had to push us to our limits, [so we could see] how much further we could go." Christy clarified that these elements were very much a part of what everyone in the group expected of their time together, and that it was important to all of them. She felt that the competition between them in performing physical deeds was a way of revealing strength of character and nerve, as much as how they tested physical strength. Risk and chance-taking were inherent in the experience that was being shared.

The elements of danger and competition were always offset by the fact that within the group there was always a feeling of caring. Christy explained, "Even though it was scary, way. . . way at the back of my mind I knew I was safe with these kids." She stressed that there was always encouragement and support for her when the need arose. If she hesitated at the edge of danger, the others would remember her and tarry rather than running off and leaving

her behind.

From these play experiences, Christy said that she learned to be a doer and was able to move on into becoming a stronger person. She eventually saw that whatever the group ventured to do, whatever risks were taken, things turned out well. Consequently she learned to not need to know how an undertaking would end before reaching out into the unknown. She learned that the enjoyment of the adventure was in the doing, not in the outcome.

She recalled that within the group, rules and boundaries were spontaneously generated and abandoned as needs arose from within the context of the play episodes. As a group the children set their own boundaries, and she said "We always knew when we had gone far enough." There was never any need for restrictions to be imposed by any person or element outside the context of the play itself, other than the given conditions that they stick together and that they be home in time for supper. The adventure was over when, on coming out of the forest into a clearing on the top of a certain grassy hill, "you could see all around and the others could all see you." You would feel that you were in the midst of "bright blue skies." It seems that the image of every adventure ending in bright blue skies is still a picture that Christy carries within her. It would appear that because every adventure demanded that this timid little girl push herself to the limits of her nerve and

daring, but always within a supportive context, Christy gradually became transformed from timid to daring.

Christy described how the metaphor of Christy-as-daring has become appropriate for her now, both in her personal and professional outlook. She declared that she is not afraid to "go for" what she wants, and that she is willing and able to venture into new territory without worrying about the consequences. Although her professional training was at the Secondary level, her Grade Two classroom is very activity oriented. Both she and the children enjoy the doing and pay little heed to the end product. She views play in the classroom as a medium through which young children learn the processes they need to enhance their own development. She stressed that there is an opportunity to get into an imaginary world, and she provides a block corner, and sand and water tables. This type of exploration she feels, is supportive to children's verbal development. She elaborated that it enables them to have the opportunity to listen to each other's ideas, with which they can then "connect. . .and spin off, and build."

In commenting to Christy that there were several references to sounds in her narrative, I asked whether sound was something that was very important to her. Probing this idea with me, she first of all mentioned that the music I played brought the memories back to her in a very evocative way. Continuing this thought she mentioned missing the

solitude of the countryside, saying that in the city those special sounds are lost.

I continued, "I wanted to ask you about child-as-listener. Were you a listener. . .when you were out there in the forest?" Christy responded positively, saying that she loved the sound of the hush that is under spruce boughs when they arch over your head and almost touch the ground, and the sound of a leaf falling, and the orchestra of birds chirping in crystal clear air. Elaborating on her role as listener Christy commented again that she was very quiet as a child, and always a listener. I asked whether that affects her now as a teache and her answer came with a laugh of discovery. She said

> I think I very much make sure that I listen now. . . Still. . . Oh God! I'm still listening! . . . I really make sure that I take the time to listen and let them be. . .Give them a chance to be. . . I didn't even think of that [connection, and] that's a really strong theme that I take through my classroom too.

Thus it would seem that the sensitivity to her environment that Christy gained as a child has been carried forward with her in the deep metaphor of the listener. It appears that Christy who was child-as-listener has become the leader-who-listens and sets that example for the children with whom she works.

That the transformation of Christy-as-timid to Christy-

as-daring, seems to be clearly related to her play experiences can be shown in the following paragraphs extracted from the transcript of the dialogue.

> Christy: I don't think I was much of a risk-taker as a child. I think I really played it safe. I really, really did. I think. . .it was very much the fear of failure. I think that very much I wanted to succeed and not try something unless I felt sure I would do well at it and accomplish it.
>
> D: So you feel that through all those experiences as the explorer. . .you've been able to leave that need behind? . . . You don't need so much to be sure you'll be safe?
>
> Christy: I can very much be a leader now, and strike off in new situations. And not need to know how its going to end. . .just experience for the pleasure of experiencing it, no matter what the end is.
>
> D: And you feel that the play you [experienced] had a big part in that?
>
> Christy: Oh, now I see that it really [did]. The time for observing and sitting back and watching is over.

Marilyn's story follows, standing as another example of woman who now celebrates the freedom of having been allowed to come forth from within herself and her experience.

Marilyn: Marilyn-as-anything-she-can-imagine

Beginning her narrative, Marilyn wrote

In a field behind the neighbour's house someone had built a set of monkey bars (the old-fashioned kind made of metal rods, square and high.) Often my friends and I went there to play (either physically or by make-believe.) But [my family] always ate supper early, so by the time I came out to play, the others all had to go in for supper. This was a time that I loved. I would climb up to the top of the monkey bars, and sit, looking out over the houses and the field, imagining all sorts of things. My favourite thing was to sing an Indian song, Land of the Silver Birch, and pretend I was an Indian princess. I would sing loudly, because I knew no-one could hear, and relish being alone with my thoughts. I would go in any weather, usually in the evening, and no matter what my mood, I would always feel good when I had to go home - or the others would come.

I think that this (plus many other times that I played alone at other places and with other things) helped me to realize that being alone was (and is) not lonely, but a happy time, and that an imagination is a wonderful thing to take you away from the trials and tribulations of this world!!!

Opening the discussion of her special childhood play-memory, Marilyn said what mattered to her was "being able to

do anything I wanted to do. . .not what everybody else did." Clarifying this, she said "I liked to plan things and do them in my order of doing them. I liked to be organized. . . I loved it. Loved it. That was the best part. . .[that was] the fun stuff."

In probing her metaphor, Marilyn-as-anything-she-can-imagine, it became evident that this has become a structure that is tremendously useful to her as an adult. She described how her thinking, planning and doing all start with imagination. First she imagines what it is she wants to achieve, and then she works toward that goal in a logical fashion. She commented

> You see, I think I can pretty well do what I want. . . I'll just work my way toward it. . .[because I am able to say] it is possible to do it. . . Because if you can imagine anything you can do it if you work that way. . . It's got to [start] like a little imaginative thing. . . It's a mind thing.

Marilyn viewed the development of this ability as being related to the freedom she experienced as a child. She described children's play as something that may only make sense to the child who is engaged in the play and to no-one else. Using the freedom they are allowed, children are uninhibited as they intelligently explore possibilities that are personally meaningful to them. She explained that in play the child is free to think, and will show verbally and

physically what is happening in his/her mind. She feels that play in the classroom should allow for freedom for the children to do what they want, "and to plan what they are going to do and work it out." She explained how her own play as a child was very free and precious to her because it was a time when she did not have to deal with structure imposed by others. Because of having this autonomy as a child, she now knows how to have control over her own life as an adult.

Marilyn's imagination seems to have been allowed to serve her well throughout her life. The habits of mind that made her anything-she-could-imagine on the top of the monkey bars, now generates autonomy at another equally necessary level. While her story expressed the themes of child-in-control and child-as-organizer, at the same time her childhood capacity to imagine is not lost. This strongly self-determined person seems to have developed within a context of freedom for action, and in the adult this has combined with a deep respect for the innate capabilities of the human being. The child-Marilyn's strength and joy, the power of imagination, remains central to the adult-Marilyn's ability to be flexible and creative within herself and within her adult life.

The following story is quite different from either Christy's or Marilyn's. In Margot's life, imagination has been lost. She mourns this loss from within a firmly

controlled self-structure, one she created out of that which was strictly enforced by her family and her circumstances, during the time of her childhood.

Margot: Margot-as-dancer/Margot-as-feminine

Early in the dialogue Margot shared that her interest in this research stemmed from her own need to increase her knowledge of herself. Her participation, she explained, was motivated partly by her hope that this exploration would help her to find more of her own childhood.

Margot-as-feminine was an idea that she found attractive to when she was a young child. She offered that play is a way that the child satisfies curiosity about the world, saying that "It's probably about fantasy, things that you couldn't do." She said that a child's interest in a role is followed by trying it out, enjoying it, and then stepping back into an everyday role. She felt that she tried the role of feminine in play because this was something that she saw in other people that she wanted for herself, and about which she had feelings of apprehension. She speculated that "because it [was] pretend" she felt free to take that risk. She said she doesn't regard herself as a feminine sort of person, so experimentation and taking a "safe" kind of risk with this role was probably what made it important to her.

Margot-as-dancer was another strong theme. Part of Margot's play-memory recalled Sunday afternoons when she was

six years old. Margot-as feminine appeared as a strand of the Margot-as-dancer metaphor brought forth in this woman's story. Struggling to recall details, she said, "I just remember that everybody was there. It was a family time and a happy memory." The one recurring event that really stands out in her memory is that after Sunday dinner, she and her brother and younger sister would dress-up and perform dances for the adults. She remembered the clothes she dressed-up in as being old dance-costumes of her mother's that were "really crinoline-y." The kitchen was backstage, and the living room where the adults were relaxing was on-stage. Margot clearly recalled the importance of the setting. She can remember getting her siblings ready for the performance by bossing them around. Recalling that if the adults didn't play their role as audience to her satisfaction, she would also instruct them to "Pay attention!"

Margot realized that an aspect of this activity that was important for her was the feeling of being an organizer, and she thus described the preparation of the performance as being significant. This was a situation where she saw herself as being a full participant, a time and place where she had control in a world that she and other children were creating together. Explaining that she has carried this forward with her, she described herself as "a doer." She says that she doesn't stand back and let situations around her fall apart, but will take charge of things. Margot

experienced the role of organizer as "[being] part of a network, and then [I would] step out and say 'No, that won't work'." She continued exploring this idea, saying "I've always been bossy. . . I think being the youngest of many children you tend to be within the group, and then you tend to get bossy because you've been bossed so much." Margot explains that her family was "very, very strict" with her.

Elaborating on this she said that rather than being a way that she explored the possibilities of structure from within herself, in this play the role she was exploring was a copy of the structure that had been imposed in her life by others. It seemed to her that she was acting out that imposed structure in her own way.

Margot offered that besides being a member of a very strict family, she became heavily involved in organized sports from about age ten. From then on she "played almost every sport", some at an international level of competition. She commented, "I remember the practices. None of the competitions." She recognized that it was preparation such as took place at camps and practices that she enjoyed most, not the outcome of the competitions, even though her family was "very product-oriented."

Margot-as-dancer re-surfaced in her life when she began her first year at University. She said, "I took a year off competitive sports because. . .I was tired of competitive sports. . . I decided to dance, and it was just like. . .

being in a competitive sport. . . There was a big production. . . It was great. . . That was neat. . . The opening number, that kind of thing." Thus this exploration of dance seems to have occurred in a very structured setting rather than being an opportunity to express her own creativity.

Margot feels that due to her strict family and her heavy involvement in organized sports, she did not play enough as a child. I asked Margot what she feels she missed through having structure imposed on her and how she feels about that. She replied, "[I missed] freedom! Absolute freedom! And as an adult I feel that. . .[and it] burns the hell out of me! To be perfectly honest. Lack of freedom really bugs me. I think that it's important that you keep that freedom. . . [It] has made me what I am now. . .very structured. . .[but] I've been questioning in my mind. . . what's so bad about wanting to play?" She speculated that she never will have the freedom to do what she would like to do even once her children are grown up, because the things she would like to do may not be what her husband would want to do. Margot then questioned why she sets limits like this on herself.

Margot discussed how as a teacher she sees that too many limitations are imposed on children, with the consequence that this stops their minds from branching out. She recognizes that what the mind can't think, the body

can't do. Speaking of her teaching style she says "People used to tell me I was a great teacher. . .[but] I was not a great teacher. I was a good teacher. And I made sure the kids knew what they needed to know for the curriculum, but I didn't really go from the child. . . I taught the curriculum. I didn't teach [the children] for them[selves]. . . I've always been the boss." She feels that she is beginning to realize that children are capable of "coming up with wonderful things if you let them." She clarified this saying, "I think that. . .[what we teachers] need to do is. . .stand back and let them do it." Her attitude is changing from seeing herself as being responsible for making children learn to being someone who provides support to children who are in charge of their own learning.

Margot said that she still participates actively in sports and expressed that she does so as a diversion from frustration, and as a way of releasing energy but not really as enjoyment. She viewed this as a response to having been deprived of the freedom to play both as a child and as an adult. She strongly feels that the creative, imaginative part of life has been cut off and is over for her. That Margot seems to be lacking a sense of autonomy is evidenced by her anger over the lack of freedom she feels which she relates to her lack of freedom as a child. The metaphor of Margot-as-dancer seemed to be one that points to a view of herself as a person who has been rigidly structured

(choreographed?) but who is beginning to wonder what it might be like to venture into the world free from that structure. Possibly the metaphor that is hidden deep within this woman's experience is something like Margot-as-frozen, or Margot-as-trapped. These themes were not explored in the session that we held, but such discussion may have been fruitful. Possibly discussing her experience using these metaphors would have revealed even more clearly her sense of frustration with a structure that was imposed from without to the point where she seems to have forced herself to reproduce it within her own life. Within this net of structure imposed from without and structure generated from within, Margot has thus far been unable to find her own way to freedom. She seems to have been left without a sense of being capable of satisfying her own soul. I also wonder if Margot-as-feminine has been transformed to Margot-who-must-please-everyone else. . . but likely that would require another story. . .

In continuing this reflection, I asked Margot whether she has allowed her own children more freedom than she had herself. She responded, "No. I don't think so. . . In most of our life, my husband's, mine, and the kids, [our life revolves] around the same thing that my life was around, competitive sport. Isn't that a shame. I just realized it. We are continuing the same. . ." "The pattern?", I suggested. "The pattern," she assented. At the end of the

dialogue session Margot said, "Just talking about [this] has put some perspective on my life." She left in a very thoughtful frame of mind.

It seems that Margot-as-dancer has become Margot-the-choreographed as well as Margot-the-controller. Uncomfortable with the structure that she has learned to generate for herself and others, and aware that part of herself has been neglected, she does seem to be ready to begin to think about making some changes in her approach. As all of us are, she is engaged in a life-long search for appropriate metaphors, ways of going on with her own story. Perhaps doing the play-memory session was the beginning to a new chapter of Margot's life.

Heather's story comes next. In that she established a way of keeping her sense of self safe and whole early in life, her story contrasts sharply with Margot's.

Heather: Heather-as-quiet-gal

Heather's narrative began with a description of a retreat that she discovered when she was a very young child.

> At age three and four I used to love to retreat to my clothes closet! It's true! The closet had a really neat "accordion" door that made a great "clapping" sound, and I suppose that that was the initial attraction. I used to have dolls, books, papers, etc. very cosily arranged on the floor and I remember that my head grazed a few of my dresses that seemed to hang

> so, so way up high! For a feeling of privacy, the door was almost completely closed but the door must have been about a foot ajar because I vividly remember the daylight from my bedroom. . . It just seemed like the most natural, cosy, private retreat to me!!

As her self-metaphor Heather chose "Heather-as-quiet-gal." The dominant theme that emerged from her story revealed her achievement of a personal sense of wholeness. This was complimented by the idea of the need for a safe haven or retreat, and the notion of child-as-world-maker. All of these strands appear to be closely linked with her self-metaphor, Heather-as-quiet gal.

During the dialogue, Heather mentioned that she retreated to the quiet of the closet in her bedroom, "to get away from the hustle and bustle of the home." She remembered that this place was so special and so private to her that she never invited anyone to share the space, but organized her personal toys inside the tiny, quiet area completely for her own pleasure. She recalled that it was place that seemed just right for a tiny girl. It held her, she said, "Like a womb." She did not see this quiet retreat as a cave or a castle. She thought of it as being representative of her, because the closet was small like she was. She described it as "My own little world. A place I created. Completely private."

Heather assumes that she enjoyed this space because

over it she had total control, and within it she felt completely safe. She explained that, "It was sort of like my bedroom within my bedroom." Elaborating on this, she said "at that age your bedroom sort of belongs to the whole family." She felt that perhaps she provided for her need for privacy by establishing a room of her own. This room within a room was a place where only Heather went. She asserted that she would not have been comfortable if another child had entered and tried to share it with her. It was a retreat for herself alone.

Heather described her haven as a place where she had the freedom to define the boundaries that would contain herself as well as the space she was in. Being able to adjust that door to meet her own wishes was essential to the control she felt. She could make the door to this place wide or narrow, and having control made the space feel like it was really hers. Within this, Heather was the world-maker and had charge of her world and herself. She said that she must have been seeking a quiet place without knowing it and when she opened that door and went in, it seemed to be so naturally safe and cosy that it drew her back.

The quietness she found there is something that Heather seems to have taken inside and made part of herself. She has found that the need to construct a personal quiet-time is still essential to her. Recalling the positive emotions

she experienced in that closet, Heather commented that "It felt good. It felt right for me." As an adult Heather said, "I still like having quiet time. I really do. I like reading and just. . .being by myself to read. I still love that, absolutely, and I'm sure that's just a continuation of how I was then."

Heather commented that quiet time has always been very replenishing, very rejuvenating for her, and allows her just to get her thoughts together. It is "That little bit of time [she needs] to just quiet down and be a person again." In asking Heather whether she could survive without having this kind of quiet time for herself, she replied that she couldn't. She asserted that that would tear her apart, and she would soon just be begging for some space, for that mental place of her own, and for a way of standing back.

It is as though if she were unable to find that internal quiet, she would be missing one of the essential pillars that holds her in place. The ability to be Heather-as-quiet holds her together, sustaining her.

Going a little more deeply into this idea, I commented, "Getting back to your metaphor and to the closet where you first remember experiencing this quietness. . .did it give you a sense of wholeness?" At this, Heather's face and eyes lit with recognition and she said "Yes. That's it. That's the word. Wholeness. I felt whole." I said, "And now when you feel you need that you still. . ." She finished the

sentence for me saying, "Retreat. Yes, I go by myself and be quiet, and get that sense of wholeness back. When you say child-as-world-maker and talk about that sense of wholeness, there's a real response in me to say 'Yes, that's it.' But I wasn't aware of it until you said it."

I asked whether she feels the metaphor "Heather-as-quiet-gal" still applies to herself. She said, "No, not really." Her job as a teacher demands that she be much more outgoing, but this also makes her solitary moments even more necessary to her. The sense of wholeness that she has carried forward with her in the form of this special childhood play memory seems to have been retained as a permanent structure in her personality, a part of both what she needs and how she meets her own needs. The child's retreat into the quietness of the closet has transformed into Heather's ability to retreat into the haven of herself. There she reconstructs her quietness, and regenerates her ability to face the world outside.

Jessie's story reveals another woman who has found a safe quietness within herself.

Jessie: Jessie-the-participator

In her narrative, Jessie wrote

> My memories of play are closely tied to nature. [Because] I grew up in Northern Alberta where the winters were cold and long, my mind naturally turns to the summers of that time. We ran free and barefoot

> over the hot sand, we swam in the lake, we rode "horses" on corral fences and bent-over trees, [and] we sailed the lake on floating trees. The feeling of lying on the ground and looking up at the clouds is very vivid to me, and the accompanying longing to rise up and be among them. I can feel the pleasant prickles of dry grass and weeds on my back, and I can smell the greenery all around, and feel the heat rising from the ground. . .

In this, Jessie described a play situation in which she was immersed in a wonderful, natural environment. During the dialogue Jessie elaborated that this very free environment was complemented by an emotionally supportive family. She maintained that this experience of life in childhood left her feeling a strong sense of unity within herself, with nature, and with the people around her. From what seems to have been an extraordinarily rich and gentle background has emerged a soft-but-strong person with a firm sense of the importance of play in childhood.

As child-as-participator, Jessie described herself as one who "did not stand back and watch other people. . . I was immersed in what I did." As an adult Jessie explained that this metaphor operates in much the same way for her in that she "has the capacity to be totally immersed [in wnat I do]." She further described herself as someone who likes to be involved, likes to choose that involvement, and then

expresses that involvement to the best of her ability.

Jessie spoke of her sense of unity with nature as giving her a great deal of pleasure both as a child and as an adult. She feels that her sense of being immersed in a friendly, natural environment was what gave her a lack of self-consciousness. She does not feel a sense of awkwardness or "not-fitting" either with the natural environment or with people. It seems that just as natural and part-of-everything-else as the lake, the trees, the grass and the flowers, there was Jessie. She revealed that she took herself as "just being," and as a peaceful part of the world's unfolding and blooming. She offered that she was sensitive to the environment, and child-as-feeler would be an appropriate metaphor for expressing how she saw herself. She commented that she was very sensitive to the emotions of those around her as well as to the moods of nature surrounding her. However she did not agree that child-as-explorer or child-as-finder were metaphors that would bring out a picture of the child that she was, nor was she an imaginative child. Jessie said, "I didn't look at myself from the outside." It would seem that she viewed herself as participating in the inner nature or the essence of her surroundings, and she never in a conscious way saw herself as a separate being.

Jessie felt that she was allowed a great deal of freedom to do, to live, and to create as she wished. This

freedom she described as helping her to deal with stressful family situations that arose from time to time during her childhood. Evidently she was allowed to find her own strength this way and consequently as an adult, she feels she is a "survivor". She said, "I've often gone through bad times and I've thought to myself, 'I don't understand this', and I've survived. . . I see people around me whose lives seem to be great, and then all of a sudden they fall apart, and I keep going. . . I'm the survivor. And I don't know why but I think it has something to do with the [freedom I had]."

She clarified, "Because of the kind of childhood I had, I had very little unfinished business. . . Now I can be an adult. . . I just feel grateful that when I was a child I was allowed to be a child. And I had lots of time to play. . . I had the freedom to imagine. . .[and] I had the freedom to feel what I felt. . . I just took myself as being. . . I did not stand outside myself."

Jessie elaborated that the emotional environment which she experienced also supported her in a very gentle way. She said

> My mother had a trust in us children. It just sprang as naturally as breathing that she had a certain trust in us. . .something like an unconditional acceptance but even more than that. . .[an unvoiced but pervasive feeling of] 'I think you're a worth-while person, and I

have trust in you'. . .a respect.

Jessie realized that was the quality of this sense of acceptance and connectedness that has been essential to the development of her point of view. She said, "Play is very important, [as is] the nurture that goes on. . . There are kids [who] have all the freedom to play that they want, and nobody cares. They don't grow up happy either."

It would appear that Jessie views the child as requiring the freedom to play within a supportive environment. These factors, she said, not only provide the basis for the child to have a satisfactory relationship with him/herself, but also with others. She also felt that this quality of connectedness, this trust, is what provides the child with the rudiments of a self-discipline and self-confidence. She explained,

> I feel that if I had had too much interference with what I did it might have affected my ability to carry through, because you lose confidence in your ability to choose for yourself. And being able to choose what you want to do, and then [to have] the freedom to try it out, gives you the experience of knowing for sure. Whereas if somebody is always stopping you in what you're doing, or pointing out another way to you, I think you might become confused.

Jessie seems to view freedom for imagination and exploration then, to be necessary for that sense of unity between the

child's sense of who s/he is and the world in which s/he lives.

Jessie also stressed that the time of childhood is essential for the activities of childhood. Clarifying this, she said

> I think really what the importance of play is, and the nurturing and so on, is that it is done when it should be done. So that as an adult, it has formed the basis for your life but it's no longer needed. Well, its there, but you don't have to dwell on it anymore. . .I just have a feeling that young children are so important and the time is so short, and if you don't handle it right, there is never a second chance.

Jessie asserted

> You have to be very sensitive to [children]. You have to allow them freedom to be themselves. . . I feel that children have to be brought up gently. . .[and this gives them] such an advantage in life. . . The ones that are brought up roughly, you know, hardly brought up at all, they get so hard that nothing can penetrate them anymore. Its almost as if the battle is lost. . .they have so little chance of having any kind of happiness in life at all. They have to be nurtured so gently at the beginning, to give them a chance to have. . . some measure of happiness and fulfilment [in the rest of their lives.] Childhood has to be handled

> properly or you leave scars that last a lifetime. . . [They do need structure, but that] has to be balanced with freedom so that [the child] is happy with what [s/he] is doing.

Jessie, the child who fully participated, and who was perceptive of the environment in which she felt immersed, seems to have become Jessie the woman who has a great sensitivity and gentleness for the needs of the children with whom she lives and works. She is still Jessie-the-participator in a way that is satisfying to her.

Samantha's story follows, providing a sharp contrast to that of Jessie. Here we meet a young woman who experienced a great deal of freedom as a child, just as Jessie did. However it was a very different kind of freedom. Instead of experiencing a sense of wholeness, she seems to have felt almost lonely.

Samantha: Samantha-as-mother/Samantha-as-dreamer/Samantha-as-explorer/Samantha-as-leader/extremist/show-off

Samantha described herself as engaging in role-play frequently as a young child. Her favourite play area was a playhouse which was very realistically designed and supplied with everything a playhouse could need. Her chief enjoyment there was creating and acting out an ideal-mother role. She described this play as being very imitative but not particularly imaginative or creative. Asked if the metaphor child-as-creator would be appropriate, she said, "I don't

think I was creator. I think [the play-house world] was already created for me. It was already there." However, she did feel that she created the role which she played there, which was that of mother. Samantha explained that it was not her own mother she was imitating so much as an idealized figure she had in the back of her mind. She speculated that this ideal figure could have been drawn from books or TV shows, but did not feel it was inspired by anyone she knew personally. In this play, Samantha agreed that she was an organizer and a world-maker. She said, "We hated interruptions. . . it was a world. . . that door was closed. . . we hated being called for a meal. . . [we'd think] 'No, we're having a meal here. We don't need one there. We're busy' . . ." Samantha said that she remembers very little else about her play before the age of nine, and described most of her memories as being attached to certain objects such as toys that she knows she played with.

Samantha then described a relatively short tom-boy and tree-climbing phase in Grade Three, which resolved into an extended, intense interest in Barbie dolls. In this, Samantha said, she was "always trying to be something I wasn't [and] making the Barbie say something and then [it wasn't me that was talking]." Samantha-as-dreamer was the girl who dreamed of romantic adventures and glamorous careers, all centred around herself and the Barbie doll character. Samantha-as-explorer was the girl who undertook

camping trips to imaginary places. She clarified the dreamer-explorer connection by saying that "I always wanted to go camping as a kid. . .[but] we never did." She speculated that this was one way she indulged a fascination for something she couldn't have in real life. Samantha also stressed that she was organizer in this world as well. She would phone her friends, telling them what to bring with them for their day of Barbie-play.

The friends with whom she shared this world, Samantha remembered, all watched the same TV shows and commercials, had the same dolls, and were interested in the dolls' clothes and so on. She felt television played a large part in the way they imagined. It gave them a common theme around which to develop their ideas. She said, "The commercials [would] tell you what Ken and Barbie dolls are supposed to do. That's what I remember." It is as though Barbie and Ken and the television formed as important a part of Samantha's life at this time, as did her friends and activities.

Asked how the two metaphors of dreamer and explorer function in her life now, Samantha said they are very subdued. She described her ideal classroom as "very structured" and said that practicality will not allow her to pursue dreams to any great extent.

Samantha, the child who was mother in the play-house and who organized the Barbie-play, later emerged as

Samantha-the-leader, after going through a time in which she described herself as a show-off and an extremist. As an example, she described a dance-group she and her friends formed when they were in Grade Six, saying

> we all had red T-shirts that said, 'Sweethearts', and [had our] initials. . .I don't remember what was on the back. . .and we all wore red shorts. . . The movies had a lot to do with it. . .John Travolta and. . . Olivia Newton-John. . .and sex was coming in, then, at that age. . .it had a lot to do with the boys in the class, and we were the Sweethearts, and. . .(laughs) awful things.

Samantha clarified, saying "I was getting into things that I shouldn't have been getting into. . . I started smoking when I was twelve and. . .things like that. . . Those were signs, I think." She described a song that the group performed for her class, commenting that one reason for sharing the incident with me is that she feels guilty about it. In her narrative, Samantha had described the song, saying that it was called "Now You're Messing With a Son of a Bitch." It was one that the girls had rehearsed carefully, singing and dancing to it for hours. Recalling that the class reacted as though it were "a big joke," she said

> In adolescence I did things that other, that most other people weren't doing, but I didn't see those things as

> being extreme. I think a large part of the reason that we did this dancing was because it was so different, and because of the attention that we got. . . and [because] it was a privilege, I mean we missed a lot of class time.

At the time, Samantha said, the girls did not see what they were doing as a kind of play, but she admits now that it probably was.

Samantha had strong words of indictment for the teacher who allowed the girls to engage in this activity. She said

> I just can't believe we had a teacher that would put up with that. . . I don't think it was appropriate. . . I think he should have found out what was happening. . . he could have put limits. . . He could have been more aware. . . He could have known what that song was before we did it.

Although she admits that she and her friends would have been furious about any interference of this sort, she still felt that being allowed to act this way in school was inappropriate.

Samantha also discussed the fact that her parents permitted her to take jobs very early. At age ten she delivered papers and at age twelve she worked in a gas station. She said that now she feels strongly against "kids growing up too fast. . .and [learning] about all the bad things in the world" when they should still be playing. She

stressed that she was too young for the responsibility she was given and for the kind of freedom that earning her own money gave her. She says that when she now sees children playing and having fun it sometimes upsets her to realize what she has lost. She is unable to identify with the sense of innocence that they seem to feel. That time of freedom seems so far away for her that its as though it is from another planet and in another life-time.

Speaking of being "part of the group", Samantha mentioned that she didn't enjoy doing things as an individual, but always was part of a group. She feels comfortable leading but agreed that she is successful in this because she reads people well more than because she is "her own person." She said

> I did a lot of things in my adolescence that I would not have done if I was more my own person. Instead [I] follow[ed] along. . . I wasn't enough of a leader to say 'I won't do that', but if that's what everyone wanted to do then I would be the one to lead them into it.

Samantha said that as an adult she is now more her own person, and tends to think her way out of urges to do extreme sorts of things before she actually does them. As far as being a leader, she is presently an executive member of one of the University students' associations. However, she said that she is finding the leadership role to be more

difficult, feeling she "lacks clout" in her present position because of the way the association is structured.

Referring to her childhood again, Samantha agreed that she felt her childhood was robbed from her, but it was not because of structure being imposed on her by others. She said, "It was something I did to myself. . . I was allowed a lot of individual freedom. . . I was made responsible, because I was to make my own decisions." However Samantha now feels that the kind of freedom she needed was the freedom to play. She sees that she made some choices that put her in the position of losing the innocence and the essence of childhood too soon. Explaining that during the time of her turbulent adolescence her parents were very trusting, and "didn't have a real clue what I was doing," she agreed that it is a good thing to give children room to make mistakes and to make choices of their own. However, she predicted that as a teacher she will offer more guidance than she received. She predicts that she will

> be open and allow them to make choices, [but] I just maybe will guide them a bit more, [pointing out] like if you decide this then this is what may happen. I don't think I was really shown what may happen. . . [the] consequences.

As a result, she felt she "grew up very quickly. . . [and] had a hard time."

It seems that the freedom this woman experienced did

not carry with it the emotional support she needed. Freedom, perhaps, requires boundaries if it is to serve the child well.

The next story is that of Keshia, who grew up in Africa. There she experienced a great deal of freedom, but within that freedom Keshia also experienced the invaluable emotional support of her family and her community.

Keshia

Keshia wrote, "Play helps a child to come to terms with certain situations s/he finds difficult to understand." Keshia described herself as a child who coped with the death of her younger brother through play and the support of her community at about age six. Evidently she credits play with being the medium through which she becomes participator, doer, and maker. Each of these themes in one way or another, expresses aspects of the deep metaphors child-as-coper, or child-in-control.

Keshia discussed the freedom she experienced as a young child, saying

> one thing about the African child [is], we have the freedom and the space to play. Most of us live on open land. You have a house, you live within a community where there are other huts or houses, you have beautiful grass, beautiful weather, and you can really go out and enjoy yourself. . . [and] we always have people, other kids to play with. . . You are never

> alone, so [you get a real sense of] belonging to that group. . . Your own little community.

Keshia described the autonomy she experienced as a child, saying she felt free to express and explore herself, to be what she wanted to be, without anyone hovering over her or telling her exactly what she was supposed to do. Free to participate in solitary or group play, Keshia said that the sense of being allowed to choose for herself and being able to find herself was the most important thing she received. Perhaps a microcosm of her developing sense of self can be found in her discussion of her "treasure box."

Keshia described this wooden box as being hers, and special because it belonged to her. She says that nobody else had any business there. She would defend her rights to the privacy of this box, which contained her bits and pieces of playthings. It was into this container that she would toss all of her toys at the end of the day, and then the next time she wanted them she would "know where to find them." She remembered having bits of pencils, charcoal, fabric, books, rocks, and other odds and ends of natural materials saved in this box. It was very important to her, a treasure over which she felt a strong sense of "this is mine." Keshia explained how she felt that no-one, not even her parents, had permission to take anything from her personal treasure. She viewed any interference with the contents of this box as an invasion of her privacy.

Investigating this a little more deeply, I asked Keshia, "Would you say that that's like the idea, 'Child-in-control?'" She answered, "Oh, Yah!" She then explained that she feels all children will try to acquire something special, something that is all their own, and that the need for this is universal. All children will, she points out, have something personal which they will then make use of in their play. The child that was Keshia thus seems to have seen her treasure box in the context of a safe place for play items that were of personal value to her. This treasure box may also stand for the safety she now feels within herself.

Keshia also described that play allowed her to be in-control-of her coping with the death of her smaller brother. She remembers that her play-mate was suddenly gone from her. Although she attended the funeral, saw his body, and was told she would not see him again, comprehension of the situation was beyond her. She commented, "It never dawned on me that I wouldn't see him again, that we weren't going to play. . . [or] chase each other. I used to practice my cooking on him. . . I couldn't realize he wasn't there. I kept asking my mom, 'When is he coming back? Isn't he going to come again?'" Keshia says that the adults around her were very patient with her and did not discourage her from talking about the situation, and it was through this support as well as her own play that she was able to slowly come to

an understanding that her brother would not be coming back. She said, "I would call him, [saying] 'Ebu, come on, its your turn now. You do this.'" She described that she talked to him, and pretended he was there. Keshia said that she was gradually able to accept his absence through the healing of time and play and the understanding of her family. She explained that she was able to help herself adjust because she was allowed to play with his imagined presence, without interference. Keshia has a sense of herself as a child who was able to find wholeness through the opportunities provided by her community, her culture, and her play. She agreed strongly when I suggested that perhaps it was this sense of connectedness within her community made her feel free in this way. She confirmed that idea of freedom-through-connectedness was important to her, elaborating that this kind of freedom "helps you to bring yourself out as a real person in your own right." Keshia described the child's capacity for this as being innate, and that given a chance to do so, the child is bound to cope with whatever situation s/he must face.

As an adult Keshia has found dealing with recent deaths of family members to be stressful and difficult, but nevertheless she has coped. She speculated that it is possible that being able to play out the role as a child gave her the skills she now needs to heal and help herself through the process of mourning.

The last story is Lynette's. Reminding us of Christy's and Jessie's stories, Lynette's emerges like Keshia's does as one which shows the value the child can find in having an emotionally supportive community within which to experience the freedom of play.

Lynette

In-Lynette's-neighbourhood/Lynette-the-grouch. Lynette described how she and her two sisters created a secret neighbourhood (Sesame Street) in the basement of their home. As she talked it became clear that it was not only a neighbourhood that these children developed, but it was also a tightly knit community of three. The metaphor of the community was extremely strong in this woman's language and experience.

Lynette recalled that they created their neighbourhood out of boxes or "whatever was there." She remembered the drier being used either as Big Bird's nesting place or somebody else's home. Lynette said, "Mom never knew. . . That was part of the fun. . . It was so funny when [recently] we were just talking about the old days, and my mom found out. . . [She said] 'Oh, that's why the bottom was always out [of the hamper]!'."

Lynette placed a very high value on her childhood play. She recognized her ability to play as an ability she gained in that safe community-of-three. She commented

I saw a quote on the bulletin board downstairs [in the

> Education building]. It goes something to the effect that it's when a man stops playing that he grows old. My hope is that I'm never gonna grow up. You have all the responsibilities and everything, but you know, I don't ever want to quit [playing]. . . I'm confident within myself, who I am, what role it does play for me, and it makes a difference. I've established it for myself. Not everyone has the same basis for it.

Lynette elaborated that she had lots of free time to play when she was a child. She described her childhood play as involving exploration, relaxing, and role-playing. These activities were usually carried out with her sisters. She remembered that she "didn't much care for Barbie dolls. . . [she] would play with them, but [she'd] just as soon play with a stuffed animal or a car. . . It's neat to [think back to] what we'd come up with all together." She felt that just knowing she and her sisters had a play-world they could go into provided a security in itself.

Lynette mentioned that this little community of theirs enlarged as she and her sisters got older. They played less in the basement-neighbourhood that they had created, and spent more time in the trees in their backyard. Lynette said that she

> practically lived in the trees sometimes. . . My sister would have her favourite tree, and I would have my favourite tree. And we had a tree where we'd go and

meet at. Well, our whole backyard was lined with trees along the back fence [and] two sides of it. So it was kind of neat. That was like a community too.

She agreed that no matter where she and her sisters went, they retained their sense of being a tightly-knit group of three, but within that they could be "whoever and whatever we wanted to be." She clarified that they as a group felt secure in themselves. She said, "My whole thoughts were, 'It's a safe place to be', and it doesn't matter so much in the outer world, what people want to believe or think. You know, what matters is within myself and my home community."

These sisters also gradually extended their play-boundaries to include exploration of the physical neighbourhood in which they lived. Lynette recalled the feeling she got from exploration-play, saying that this kind of play is "The most natural thing. . .It makes you feel so good. . . It frees your mind." She agreed that this is the element of play that she feels is most significant for her, and it is the element of play that she still specifically needs as an adult. She contributed

> I feel sad for people when they don't know how to play. [When] they don't know what it is, what its about, [or] how to go about it. I think that it's really sad that they don't. . .They need to see that [play] is normal, and. . .can be a part of life. It should be a part of

life.

Now that she is an adult this home-community still provides Lynette with the same sense of connectedness and security, and is a place where she knows she can find understanding, affection, and empathy. She clarified, "I can just go back home, and [it is] a place where I can go and find myself, and gain my strength back, and face whatever I need to. . . [and get that] identity back." She agreed that metaphors that express her meaning would include child-as-connected, child-as-participator, and child-as-full-member-of-a-community. She does not recall ever having had to strive for her place in the world, but very much felt that her home was a community that provided her with a safe place to become herself.

The community that she and her sisters created and gradually extended from the secret basement world out into the backyard, and then into the neighbourhood has even wider boundaries now. The strength contained in that community is apparent Lynette agreed, in that her family has the capacity to reach out to others outside the family. Lynette said, "One of my friends stayed at my place for half a year, just because she was having problems at home, and now one of my sister's friends is there."

Lynette described play as a need both for herself as a child and for herself as an adult. She said that although the way she plays now is different, the nature of the play

and the value that it holds for her is still the same. She commented that "We'll just sit down and talk about just whatever, and just be silly. Sometimes it's just silly ideas coming out, or we go bike-riding, or. . .[our] play is a little different [than in childhood]. We're not quite so much into make-believe."

In elucidating the significance of her second self-metaphor, Lynette-the-grouch, Lynette explained that playing the role of Oscar the Grouch provided a necessary outlet for some of the girls' frustrations. She said that there was need for this due to "the family characteristics stemming from the European (Hungarian) background. . .my dad had a real temper. . .[With the grouch] we could get some of that out." Conflicts that occur between Lynette and her sisters now do not cause serious rifts between them. She said, "Even when we have our fights or whatever, we can go back and. . .its not hard to say 'Sorry'. and then [that] usually goes both ways, and you get back to [that connectedness]."

Lynette recognized that the quality of the communication that is possible between her sisters and herself is very much a reflection of the connectedness between them. She said, "A lot of times we'll be talking. . .and if someone else is around. . .[what we say can go] right over their heads. . . And sometimes we don't realize it and we get these confused looks." She explained that this seems to happen because "We don't need to fill in every

single thought. . .and there's a lot of nonverbal [communication], a lot of what's already known."

The empathy that exists between them is expressed in other ways as well. Lynette explained that her mother is a very strong member of this community. She said

> [My mom is] my mom, but she's also one of my best friends. . . I've got a lot of independence, and I've never had a curfew or anything because we always let my mom know where we were, who we were with. . .and she trusted us in situations. And we knew if we ever needed to, no matter what time, we could call her. We knew what was acceptable, anyways. You push it a little bit far a couple of times, [and then] you realize it the next time, and there's an understanding.

She knows that their community functions on self-control, and her mother does not have to be the "policeman."

Lynette stated that the basis that was formed in her through her play-experiences within this community have given her a way of coping with life. She feels that she has learned the secret of connectedness, and that she would know how to re-establish this type of bonding with another group of people if the need ever arises.

I asked Lynette what goes through her mind when she now sees children playing. She answered

> I usually get a grin on my face, just because. . . those were the greatest times. I still love going to

> the park and swinging. And I think its so great when you see these kids, so free, and I remember doing that. . . Sometimes it makes [me] realize that I should be doing that kind of thing more often.

She explains, "I think play is important in learning. . . [children learn] when they're playing, from each other and just from themselves, and they remember what they learn, and its a part of them." In discussing the possibility for play in the classroom Lynette said, "I think you should bring play into the classroom when you can. It makes it all that much more meaningful for the child [and] keeps that sense of discovery and learning enjoyable." She feels that when play is part of the classroom experience of learning, that the children remember more because of the child's enjoyment and discovery being imbued with sense of purpose. She stressed that there is time for some structured activity, but that "you can't replace play. . . it's an essential, integral part [of learning]", and is what makes information meaningful to the child.

In Lynette's story there appeared to be a very strong sense of the unity of the child with her community-family. The metaphor of the community seemed to be self-referential in this woman's life. The medium seemed to be one with the message, as the child's basement neighbourhood was gradually transformed into the adult's wider community. The pattern of connectedness within the group-of-three in the secret play

in the basement appeared to become a sense of connectedness within herself, and which finally has become a confidence in her ability to provide the nucleus for the creation of such a self-generating community wherever she goes.

Lynette commented that reflecting on her play experience was very enjoyable for her. She said that she finds that the act of reflecting brings with it a sense of wholeness, and gives her a feeling of knowing "where I'm coming from [and] where I'm at." She commented that "going back really brings about a sense of who you are. . .and how you became that person. She acknowledged that her childhood play was part of her own unique experience of life, saying that it forms "a base to come back to." She elaborated that her participation in this research, "brought me back to who I was more,. . .and again I realized [play] is part of who I am."

Discussion

It seems that in each of these stories the child within found her own special way of being in the world, and along with that also was able to establish a way of going on with life from inside a self-created coherence. An important aspect of each of these stories was the element of continuity, or the repetition of these experiences over time. These special play experiences, perhaps because they were deeply enjoyed, perhaps because they were returned to

frequently and on a voluntary basis, or perhaps because they were "just" a part of the whole setting the child experienced have become part of the tacit knowledge of the adult. In this way childhood play has become part of the life-patterns within which these people carried forward their individual lives. Using metaphor to reveal these inner unities provided a way of allowing both the adult participant and myself a way of revisiting the genesis of those patterns. This research indicates that the quality of the pattern experienced by the child remains intact within the adult's personality, and acts as a means by which experiences still find coherence.

While each person's story was unique and the self-metaphors highlighted personal meaning in a very special way there seemed to be one theme that was present in all of these stories. The issues of freedom and community surfaced as matters of significance that were common to all eight participants. This finding is of significance and is among ideas further explored in the final chapter of this thesis.

Chapter V

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Explications

Two areas emerging from this research are worthy of explication. The first focuses on the efficacy of the methodology; the second relates to the findings which resulted from the data that was gathered.

Regarding the research methodology itself, it was found that metaphors of personal value did emerge when these groups of adults wrote narratives about memories of their childhood play, and then discussed those recollections. The methodology that was enacted seemed to be effective in facilitating the intended purpose of the research, that is, personal meaning was brought forth. Participants in the research appeared to achieve a sense of having re-visited a special time in their own lives which resulted in a renewed sense of self-connectedness or self-knowing. Personal knowledge was brought from an implicit level of awareness to an explicit level, through the combined use of metaphor and reflection in the examination of memories of special play experiences.

I found that using metaphors to investigate these memories consistently drove close to the heart of what made the episodes bear their significance to the individual. The metaphors functioned to accurately point the way toward the sought connection between the explicitly shared and the

tacitly known. Thus the incidents that were explored were found to contain information that led to sources of coherence in the life-view of the individual to whom those memories belonged.

In this research I observed that narrative writing and dialogue seemed to provide an effective vehicle for reflection. I also observed that the most complete sense of self-recovery occurred during the dialogues, in which those narratives were used as a beginning point for discussion. The narrative writing sessions gave rise to generally positive feelings, but it was during the dialogues that the strongest sense of new self-understanding became apparent.

Beyond the effectiveness of the methodology, an invariant theme relating to issues raised by all the participants was attained. I perceived that in one way or another the questions of "freedom" and "community" were raised by every participant in this study as being particularly significant in the development of their personal reality. From participants' comments, it seemed that while freedom was important to them as children, and while "lots of freedom" was considered to be highly desirable, freedom alone was not enough. Community as a quality of support for the child seemed to be significant as well. Rather than the scope of freedom being bounded by quantity, it seemed that the essential boundaries around freedom were qualitative in nature. Those participants who

seemed to have experienced adequate amounts of personal freedom within a supportive community (or family) seemed to have the most positive feelings toward their childhood play experiences, and toward life-in-general. Conversely, those who experienced either a lack or an excess of personal freedom and who also lacked a sense of being positively and securely connected to their community, indicated that they retained strongly negative feelings, and they seemed to be experiencing a sense of loss.

Implications

Implications of interest to teacher educators, teachers, and parents have resulted from this research. For teacher education they include the suggestion that using a methodology such as was enacted in this research could be effective in helping teachers to clarify their tacit knowledge. In this, teachers-to-be may be assisted in developing a more complete understanding of influences their tacit knowledge may have on daily classroom activities such as program planning and classroom management.

This research also indicates that teachers should be challenged to examine their intuitive knowledge of play, choice, community, freedom, and limits. Awareness of implicit knowledge can lead to an individual coming to an understanding of changes in point of view that s/he may wish to make. A methodology such as was pursued in this research

may provide the individual with the kind of information necessary for beginning this kind of change.

A third implication for teacher education is that those who work with teachers in pre-service programs should be aware that metaphors will unavoidably be transmitted to student teachers during their course of studies. An example of this is the metaphor "play is the child's work." An in-depth discussion of this problem is included later in this chapter.

Both parents and teachers of young children could consider the outcome of this research in regards to program planning. These results seem to indicate that whatever else children may need, they also require opportunities for free play within the type of supportive situation that the individuals in this study found to be so beneficial.

Discussion

Regarding Freedom Within Community

From my examination of the data I have concluded that the quality of the boundaries within which the quantity of play freedom was experienced produced patterns that were carried forward into adulthood. Marilyn-as-anything-she-can-imagine, Christy-as-timidly-daring, Jessie-the-participator, Keshia-as-coper, Heather-as-quiet-gal, and In-Lynette's-neighbourhood, were self-metaphors that allowed the exploration of knowledge that was of a very personal

nature. In some cases the quality of the boundaries around the child's freedom were created within a community that was overtly supportive. In other cases, those boundaries seem to have been created within a community that was at least warmly accepting. During the process of bringing forth themselves in a world in which they were naturally and positively engaged, Jessie, Heather, Marilyn, Keshia, Christy and Lynette were drawn forward into higher levels of personal freedom instead of developing the kinds of restrictions that Margot placed upon herself, or the inner conflict that Samantha felt. For example, in the stories of Keshia, Jessie, Christy and Lynette the positive quality of the freedom they experienced was a very evident part of the fabric of their experience as well as being part of the deep metaphor that has served them as they have each crafted their view of reality.

The qualitative structure of the community experienced by Heather and Marilyn seems to have dropped out of the recollection, at least for the incident that they have described, in that they did not discuss it. Continued focused discussion would be required to further reveal their tacit knowledge of the community that they experienced. Nevertheless, these women seem to have known freedom and community in a way that somehow was similar to the experiences of Lynette, Christy and Keshia. Their memories are strongly positive, and investigation of the personal

personal knowledge highlighted by the metaphoric themes present in their narratives and dialogues leaves one with the impression of women who are happily united both within themselves and with their world. It would appear that the quantity of freedom that they were allowed was adequate for their needs, and that the quality of their community was sufficiently supportive.

Margot and Samantha, on the other hand, seem to have had opposite experiences of quantity of freedom, but their experiences of quality of community appear to be similar. Margot had very little freedom, while Samantha had too much. Neither seems to have had a particularly strong sense of connection within their family-community. Their memories of childhood and their feelings about what they missed are strongly negative. Investigation of the metaphoric themes that emerged from their narratives reveal women who feel conflict about themselves and the world within which they live.

As Elkind (1981) points out, too much stress puts the young child at a disadvantage and play is his/her best defense against excessive conflict. Discussion of the metaphors that Margot and Samantha provided served to bring forth patterns of stress. Both women felt that lack of freedom to play was an important factor in the quality of their present feelings. Conversely, in the stories of Jessie, Christy, Lynette, Marilyn, Heather and Keshia, their

metaphors pointed to a sense of wholeness. These women concurred that having the freedom to play was significant in their development of ways to cope with stresses that occurred in their lives.

That issues pertaining to freedom and community were common to all the participants, and that these themes arose from the research findings was a surprise to me, as each of the stories had seemed to be so unique. However, if this sense of needing large quantities of personal freedom within a boundary of positive connections with other people is so important in the development of the adult who is crafted within the hands and mind of the child's play, and is found to be of general importance, then this would seem to be a question worthy of serious consideration by teachers, and by those involved in teacher education, as well as by parents.

Regarding Teacher Education

Schon (1988) suggests that a reflective practicum could lead to both teachers-in-training and their instructors being able to access tacit meaning. During this reflective practicum, teachers would learn how to reflect on their own actions and thereby come to a better understanding of some of the influences of which they could be largely unaware, that have a bearing on their day-to-day decision making in classrooms.

This process could facilitate both parties in coming to a clearer understanding both of particular strengths, as

well as learning needs in areas that are of relevance to students' prospective careers. Munby & Russell (1989) state that "it may be profitable for all teachers to become students of metaphor, at least of their own metaphors" (p. 1). Turner (1974) cautions that careful thought should be given to root metaphors because of the power they have to shape our thoughts and, subsequently, our actions. For many of the participants in this study, increased awareness of the metaphors that resulted from their own childhood play was accompanied by a fresh recognition of the value of play not only in their own childhood, but for children in general. Comments made during the dialogues indicated that their own awareness of the significance of past play experiences was heightened by their participation in this reflective research into their personal play memories. From this it seems possible that supported reflection on other kinds of memories could be useful in assisting both pre-service and experienced teachers in moving toward self-understanding. While they are in training, teachers could be challenged to examine their concepts of play, freedom, limits, and community and the possible relevance of their hidden knowledge to classroom work.

Elements of personal knowledge that could be examined include: What are teachers' root metaphors that influence how they view such issues as program planning, discipline, personal responsibility, learning, the role of curriculum,

and evaluation of children's progress in regards to freedom, limits, and community? Does our current conception of freedom within the classroom focus primarily on, for example, "free choice" of activities within a teacher-limited selection? Or does our concept of freedom within-limits allow room for the child to undertake the kind of personal search for and discovery of personal meaning that the individuals who participated in this research seemed to find so deeply significant?

In response to the need to be able to change our point of view, Schon (1983) developed "reflection-in-action", a form of coaching through which the professional can learn to see situations differently and thereby develop creative solutions to problems. Schon (1988) described using reflection and narrative within this process, saying that in this practicum

> [the students] would reflect on their observations and embody them in a description - very likely a story, for story-telling is the mode of description best suited to transformation in new situations of action. They observe, reflect and describe, treating their story not as a record of a method to be mechanically implemented but as a metaphor for the construction of a new program.

Wodlinger (1989), extending Schon's work in this area, focussed on the use of metaphors found in narratives to

assist the developing teacher in becoming more self-aware. He finds that a combination of reflective narrative journal writing and discussion assists student teachers' perceptions of their developing professional knowledge.

Lakoff & Johnson (1980) point out that in self-understanding we are always searching for what unifies our own diverse experiences in order to bring coherence to our lives (p. 231). In enhancing this process, Black (1979) claims that metaphor "has the power to present in a distinctive and irreplaceable way, insight into how things are - that is, the frames within which the individual knows his/her world" (p. 21). Frame awareness (Schon, 1979) can lead to frame conflict, which in turn can result in frame restructuring. It would seem that many of the participants in this study did become aware of their personal knowledge in a new way. The reflection and discussion may have generated new self-understanding.

It would seem that of the eight participants in this study, Margot is the one who is presently becoming most aware of frame conflict. She sees that while she has always been "the boss", and while she still retains a very high degree of structure in her life, she also is beginning to understand that "[children] come up with wonderful things if you let them. I think that [as teachers] we need to stand back and let them do it." Margot seems to be in the process of trying to formulate a new self-metaphor. She seems to be

willing to accept new information in regards to how she works with children, which in turn seems to be leading her toward frame-restructuring, and consequently to new ways of seeing herself and her role as a teacher. Fresh perceptions may lead to her becoming free to change her responses in present and future situations. Her sense of conflict between the person she is and the teacher she would like to be may lead her into further awareness of changes she would like to make.

Margot described herself as someone who had rarely reflected on her past experiences. Perhaps she will become somewhat more reflective as a result of her experience in this research. Reflection can act as a beginning point for change, as new information allows for the possibility of changing old patterns into new. If Margot is successful in creating a new self-metaphor, then she will begin to understand new experiences in terms of this new metaphor. This may then generate the continued restructuring or reframing of these experiences. Further addition of new information may then continue to bring about the continuous development of new metaphors for herself and, thus, could lead to continued development of personal flexibility. It may be that Margot will continue the transformation that she has begun if she continues to reflect on the ideas that her role as "the boss" did not lead to great teaching, and that in the future she intends to allow her students more

room for creativity. In her search for a more suitable balance between too much guidance and not enough, it seems that Margot is using reflection on personal experience in coming to an new understanding. She seems to be realizing that learning that engages the learner at many levels of his/her being is in some way different than that which does not. Perhaps she is coming to an understanding that at some point both the learner and his/her knowledge seem to become rather empty if a complementarity between the physical, cognitive, and emotional parts of being is not nurtured.

It would seem possible that Samantha, with her awareness of her own personal conflicts might also be in a position to begin this process of reframing. However, unlike Margot, Samantha is not yet an experienced teacher. Sawada (1988) indicates that teachers who have had some experience in classrooms are more likely to be aware of changes they wish to make in their teaching. Thus it is possible that at some point in the future Samantha will become more actively engaged in reframing than she is presently.

The effectiveness of the chosen methodology for this kind of investigation was also apparent in the dialogue with Christy. Words about sounds in the surface language of her narrative led me to inquire about child-as-listener. Child-as-listener was a deeper metaphor that I sensed might be present. During the several minutes of discussion in which

the play memories and her present life were brought together, consideration of the metaphor began to reveal a hidden pattern. As Christy described habits of listening that she had first learned as a child playing under the boughs of trees in a forest, she described how she "is still a listener" as a teacher. She had also depicted herself as a listener in social situations as a child. The discovery of the link between her listening as a child and her listening as an adult was brought forth by the use of the deep metaphor child-as-listener. In this way the figure was brought forth from the ground. Christy knew herself as child-as-listener but had yet to discover herself as adult-as-listener. This re-perception may have been allowed by the process of reflection itself, due to the difference between the two metaphors. Once this difference was perceived, a slightly altered view of herself emerged. Her recognition of the emerging pattern was accompanied by her statements, "Oh God! I'm still listening. . . I didn't even think of that. I'm still listening." Her response was physical as well as verbal. When she perceived the connection, she laughed, and like a candle-flame, light broke across her face. When she left my office half an hour later, she was carrying a candle of self-awareness. She seemed to be full of lightness within herself, and she was still smiling.

It seems to me that this type of reflection carried out

with preservice as well as experienced teachers could be most valuable. Shulman (1988) argues that

> teachers will become better educators when they can begin to have explicit answers to the questions, "How do I know what I know? How do I know the reasons for what I do? Why do I ask my students to perform or think in particular ways?" The capacity to answer such questions not only lies at the heart of what we mean by becoming skilled as a teacher; it also requires a combining of reflection on practical experience and reflection on theoretical understanding. (p. 33)

The bearing that teachers' experiences of and attitudes toward community and freedom may have on the teaching styles of individuals is evident in their stories. For example in discussing her teaching style, Heather seemed to be saying that too many restrictions on children's freedom of movement are not necessary, and that basically children can be trusted. Marilyn seemed to feel that she is able to defend the child's right to freedom in play because she knows personally how essential this freedom is. Keshia verbalized that an adult can facilitate the explorations of a child, and that learning can be brought forth in a setting where the community allows the child ready access to freedom. Lynette expressed the view that since kids are washable, and nothing can replace play, children should be allowed to relax and explore. Christy was strongly aware of the value

of exploration in a context that is free of unnecessary external controls. She combined an awareness of the enjoyment of the process of learning with an awareness of the importance of listening to the child as s/he tries to communicate his/her thoughts. Jessie said that to her the most important thing to achieve in her play-school class was a balance between freedom and positive feelings, "so that the children are happy with what they are doing."

The above six teachers who had personal knowledge of the freedom of lots of play within the positive boundaries of a supportive community present a sharp contrast to Samantha and Margot, two teachers who did not have the benefit of those experiences in childhood. Samantha says her ideal classroom would be very structured, and she seems to have less trust in children. These are dispositions that could be a reflection of her own experience. Margot admits she has always been the boss, but is beginning to see that she could try to change this attitude. For her at this time, a change of this order seems to involve taking tentative steps into new territory.

Besides possible usefulness in the investigation of personal knowledge, another significant implication of this research in the matter of teacher education comes to mind. This has to do with the metaphors that are either implicitly or explicitly included within teacher-training itself. These can be present as a result of their inclusion in

course materials or other sources of information that could be used in teacher-education programs. One example of this is highlighted by the metaphor "play is the child's work" which was mentioned by two participants in this study, Christy and Jessie.

The metaphor "play is the child's work" is one that may have been introduced to Christie and Jessie at some time during their teacher-training and may be problematic. Elkind (1981, 1987) examines that phrase and states that this metaphor originated with Montessori and in recent years has become a cultural model, replacing "the formerly held Freud/Piaget view that play and work are separate but complementary activities" (p. 195). Elkind cautions that

> if play is thought of as the child's "work", then it may be translated into a lesson plan. A child playing store may be asked to put prices on his wares and total up the sales. . . We have to respect children's play productions as their efforts to protect, defend, and enhance their sense of competence. . . If we make ample provisions for children to engage in a variety of play activities without making them into something they are not or evaluating the children's productions, we contribute to their sense of competence. Otherwise, we rob the children of their major defense against the feeling of helplessness. (p. 156,157)

He posits that through this metaphor our concept of children's play has been transformed, saying

> What was once recreational - sports, summer camp, musical training - is now professionalized and competitive. In schools, when budgets are tight, the first subjects to be cut are art, music and drama. And the media, suffused with the new realism, offer little in the way of truly imaginative fantasy. Perhaps the best evidence of the extent to which our children are hurried is the lack of opportunities for genuine play available to them. Hurried children work much more than they play, and it is due to this that they are stressed. (p. 194, 195)

A similar view of play as the child's work can be found in Suransky's (1982) description. She says that "play is the child's work" has eroded the child's right to play freely. She concludes that "when 'work' becomes the reification of play, we see the origins of the bureaucratization of childhood" (p. 98) She points out that this view is consistent with the concept that the need for spontaneity is secondary to the need for calm, order, and discipline. Another strand of this structure views creativity as "bounded by the unidimensional function of the 'work' materials and the constraints of the environment" (p. 98). Exactly how this metaphor generates teaching practice in classrooms conducted by Christy, Jessie and other

participants in this study could be determined with further investigation.

Other metaphors were present in the data collected for this research but were not examined in the analysis. Many metaphors which no doubt have a large role to play in the day-to-day experiences of the children with whom these teachers interact, still remain to be investigated. Wodlinger (1989) points out that there appears to be "a paucity of research into preservice teachers' use of metaphor" (p. 36). However, to present another general example of the effect of everyday metaphors present in common speech, Reddy's (1979) essay on the conduit metaphor demonstrates how the mind becomes viewed as a container and knowledge as a commodity. He points out such phrases as

> Try to get your thoughts across better. . . None of Mary's feelings came through to me. . . You still haven't given me any idea of what you mean. . . Try to pack more thoughts into fewer words. . . I don't get any feelings of anger out of his words. (p. 286 - 288)

Reddy comments that the conduit metaphor is so pervasive that it is nearly impossible to remove it from our speech, and thus from our concepts of language and mind.

Russell, Munby, Spafford & Johnson (1988) affirm the power of metaphor in shaping our reality, saying that the use of metaphor is a "powerful concept in the process of identifying assumptions of which we may be quite unaware"

(p. 77). They see metaphors such as these evolving in teachers' thinking as they gain experience and information, either as students in a university or college classroom, as adult students, or as teachers in classrooms. Such metaphors-in-transition influence the development of practical knowledge. As living parts of our thoughts and actions, these metaphors become "cultural models in the heads of the actors" (Turner, 1974, p.64). Russell et al (1988) further state that

> it appears that the metaphors some teachers employ in discussing their views of teaching and learning are indicative of their level of experience and professional knowledge. . . reflecting [their] theories and guiding [their] selection of activities. (p. 87)

Therefore, exploration of teacher's use of metaphor seems to be an area that could benefit from further research.

From this example and other similar ones, it appeared that the writing and group discussions provided a useful beginning, but on their own these were not enough to bring the tacitly known forward into explicit awareness. The dialogue sessions during which we worked with the various metaphors that had been accessed through the narratives seemed necessary before the self-discoveries and the personal coherences could come forth. The metaphoric theme of Christy-as-listener seems to have emerged from this story as a strong unity in her life from childhood on. From its

origin as episodes in Christy's childhood to a permanent and valued way of being, the metaphor of the listener has had an important function in this woman's life, both personally and professionally.

Regarding Parents and Teachers

Implications of significance to both parents and teachers can also be drawn from this research, in regards to the types of experiences that are necessarily provided for the young children in their care. Some questions that could be considered include: Are children being provided with the opportunities to experience the quality of freedom-within-community that the women in this study cherished? Will the children of the 1990's have the time and the opportunity to learn to enjoy the kind of freedom this research points to as having been exceedingly valuable to the participants in this study? Will they be able to find that opportunity consistently enough so that they will be able to reap the benefits of the type reported by Christy, Jessie, Keshia, Lynette, Heather, and Marilyn? Or will their school hours be taken up with increasingly academic programs at earlier ages? Will parents feel that children's after-school hours should be spent rushing from one kind of lesson to another, or more study and more practise? Children need stimulation, certainly. But this study reaffirms the need for play. Are there enough hours in the day for both? Both parents and teachers must accept that if children's need for the time to

play is so essential to their well-being, then provision must be made for meeting these needs. It seems to me that a basic understanding of boundary-as-quality rather than boundary-as-quantity will also be necessary. It could be that teachers and parents alike will have to carefully examine their understanding of "limits" and "community." They may then be able to adjust their expectations for achievement and appropriate activities both for children at school and at home.

Suggestions for Further Research

It seems to me that further research into the issue of freedom-in-community is indicated by the findings of this study. If freedom-in-community has been so extremely important in the lives of these people, how do others feel about these issues? When teachers, administrators or parents think of accommodating children's need for freedom, limits and community what do they really mean? How are these issues conceived of in general? What are teachers' root metaphors regarding these issues that influence how they view such problematic areas as program planning, discipline, the role of personal responsibility in learning, the role of curriculum, and evaluation of children's progress in regards to freedom, limits, and community? For example, does the current concept of freedom within the classroom focus primarily on, for example, "free choice" of

activities within a teacher-limited selection? Or does our concept of freedom within-limits allow room for the child to undertake the kind of personal search for and discovery of personal meaning that the individuals who participated in this research seemed to find so deeply significant? I would suggest that the methodology used in this study could be effective in researching these further questions with the appropriate groups of people.

A Search for Larger Patterns that Connect

Elkind (1987) offers two reasons for the loss of play in kindergartens in recent years. He suggests that the expectations of parents "changed when [the kindergarten] came under the public school system." This change in expectations has resulted in the concepts of the "academic kindergarten" and the "competent child" (p. 174). He explains that economic and social pressures, not what we know is good pedagogy for children, have had a disproportionate effect on children's day-to-day school experiences. Monighan-Nourot, Scales, Van Hoorn & Almy (1987) describe the problem as being rooted in the "work ethic." They state that "in a country where individualism is a core value, and where the self-realization of the individual is believed to be rooted in hard work, play 'becomes mere diversion'" (p. 2). Besides play being viewed this way, these authors state that it is now part of the

popular culture to make children into "super kids." They feel that while in the 1960's and '70's parents wanted preschool experiences to focus on "play, self-esteem, and concern for others," that focus has now changed. Upwardly mobile, achievement oriented parents want programs that also push their children toward "early achievement" (p. 3). Influential though these factors may indeed be in attitudes toward and expectations of children's educational experiences, this problem seems to me to have roots that go even more deeply than recent changes in parental expectations.

Schon (1988) says that

> reflective teaching works uphill against the epistemology built into the bureaucracy of the school [which is]. . . all geared to a view of knowledge, learning and teaching [that is] built around "right answers" that teachers should be "covering" and students should be learning to reproduce. . . [In such an atmosphere it might seem difficult] to follow the puzzles, difficulties, and possibilities suggested by the spontaneous responses of a child. (p. 26,27)

Is spontaneity and that vital child-to-teacher, teacher-to-child connection of minds lost due to such interference from "outside" that intrudes on the immediate teacher-children situation? Are teachers required to attend to the needs of an educational bureaucracy that constantly demands his/her

attention, and are they thereby rendered less able to respond to the emerging learning needs of the children?

Capra (1988) expresses the opinion that the problem originates with the Cartesian world view that Western society accepted three hundred years ago. He offers that "the Cartesian world view is not merely the principal frame of reference [in our society]; it is regarded as the only valid description of reality" (p. 120). Many of our present-day institutions reflect the influence of Cartesian thinking in many ways. Capra records Grof (1988) as commenting that "In [this] mode, we [for example] perceive everyday reality in terms of separate objects, three-dimensional space, and linear time" (p. 121). It seems to me that it is a cultural tendency in many homes and even schools that the child is methodically trained to abandon his/her naturally holistic, integrated view of self and world, and teach him/her to accept a reality that is divided into separate pieces. (Albeit this is often done very unconsciously.) Once the dividing up is accomplished, little is done to help the child once again create a wholeness. The same situation exists in both the empirical and the social sciences. Because the Cartesian view allows for investigation of reality in basically only one way, and does not allow for a way of developing understanding of the relationships between those investigations, the result has been what McCleary (1986) describes as

> the present incompatibility between the philosophical foundations of the behavioral sciences and descriptive characteristics of experience revealed by these sciences. (p. 9)

It may be that the concept of how both limits and freedom are perceived may require particular attention. But even if this is accomplished and teachers begin to understand that the needed limits are qualitative, not quantitative in nature, what can be done? The pervasiveness of what could be described as the Cartesian metaphor is testimony to the power that root metaphors can have in our lives.

Hesse (1966) offers that if a metaphor is taken literally, it becomes a myth. The Cartesian world view which separates mind from matter and man from nature, establishes rational objectivity as myth, and therefore it operates as a dominant system of thought, and as more than one-of-many metaphors or models of reality. Lakoff & Johnson (1980) state that "the myth of objectivism is part of the everyday functioning of every member of this culture" (p. 185). They further state that

> just as we often take the metaphors of our own culture as truths, we often take the myths of our own culture as truths. The myth of objectivism is particularly insidious in this way. Not only does it purport not to be a myth, but it makes both myths and metaphors

> objects of belittlement and scorn: according to the objectivist myth, myths and metaphors cannot be taken seriously because they are not objectively true. (p. 185)

Another metaphor we have been bequeathed by our European roots is the mechanistic, Newtonian view. In this landscape, the universe is seen both as ordered and orderable. Doll (1986) points out that this is the source of such ideas as the measured, stable curriculum with the teacher being seen as the expert who dispenses information. He suggests that

> Education, as a process of intended human development, should be modeled on an open system paradigm. However, it has been plagued with the Newtonian, closed system paradigm. Manifestations of this are seen in the notion that IQ cannot be changed appreciably, that programs such as Head Start cannot make substantial differences, and that in any good test a certain percentage of individuals will always fail. While all these comments are supported by factual evidence, the evidence itself has been gathered in a framework governed by the Newtonian, closed system paradigm. Theorists such as Dewey, Piaget, and Bruner have worked on developing a new educational model - one based on an open system concept - but until the social sciences accept a new paradigm it is almost impossible for

education to develop one. (p. 14)

Would it have been possible to think of examining the qualitative boundaries around the freedom of play while operating within the Cartesian paradigm? It remains for us as a culture to fully realize the limitations of the Cartesian/Newtonian view. The paradigm remains appropriate, depending on the circumstances, and depending on the questions being asked. It is the general extent to which the paradigm has been assumed to be correct in every situation including program planning for children, that to me seems inappropriate. However, metaphors that operate at a cultural level can be slow to change. Capra (1988) quotes Heisenburg (1962) as writing that "the Cartesian partition has penetrated deeply into the human mind during the three centuries following Descartes, and it will take a long time for it to be replaced by a really different attitude toward the problem of reality" (p. 21).

Nonetheless children have a natural way of investigating the world in a holistic way, a method of which they are able to make excellent use, if allowed. Something they like to experience lots of. They play. Addressing the question of the holistic, qualitative nature of play as well as the quantitative aspect, Erikson (1972) says

> the most general answer necessarily points to a quality of all things alive, namely the restoration and creation of a leeway of mastery in a set of

> developments or circumstances. . . [this would be] something common also for the "play" of mechanical things, namely free movement within prescribed limits. This at least establishes the boundaries of the phenomenon: where freedom is gone, or the limits, play ends. Such polarity also seems to adhere to the linguistic origins of the word play, which connotes both carefree oscillation and a quality of being engaged [or] committed. (p. 133)

These qualities of being engaged or committed while free to explore seem to be necessary aspects of that much-needed boundary around freedom. Suransky (1982), referring to the need for freedom for personal action within limits, speaks of the nature of that boundary. She specifies that freedom does not imply allowing unlimited social or physical freedom. She states that

> a limitless situation throws the child into nothingness and does not aid in the humanization of the life-world for the child, for she then lacks the solidity of being. What is needed, however, is a flexible understanding of this dialectical experience in child-life. An authentic existential landscape permits the child to experience the dialectic of life - the dialectic of structure and freedom. In this, the child may be allowed to experience conflict, to express aggression, to experience the freedom to disobey, but

> be bounded by the awareness-of-the-other, awake to the possibility of disapproval and reprimand. The dialectic of conflict is such that it can be a positive bonding experience from which much learning and empathy-for-the-other may emerge. In addition, to be in conflict means that one must invent new modes. To be in harmony means that one can exist without awareness. One needs to stand on the edge of the dialectic to profit from its power. (p. 184)

Suransky (1982) suggests an essence for children's play. That is, "the child becomes herself through play" (p. 172). She describes the child as requiring a situation that allows him/her to "engage in social action upon the world that is meaningful and relevant [to the child], fulfilling both a personal and social purpose" (p. 173). In this, Black (1979) states that the "creative human consciousness is framer of its own world" (p. 20). Play would seem to be a very appropriate arena for this development to take place. Perhaps Piaget's view that in order for the child to understand s/he must in some way re-invent, would apply to the affective or social domain as much as to the cognitive domain. Therefore it may be that play boundaries that best contain what the human spirit can celebrate as freedom are those that do not exclude the child from his/her own creation, are best created within a social context but which also allows for self-determination and

privacy, and where freedom-within-limits as a root metaphor does not convey mainly a quantitative or external type of control.

This research appears to affirm the views of Suransky and Erikson, in that the freedom relished by the participants in this study required limits. This conclusion is not new to our internal model of appropriate practice, but perhaps it is our awareness of the nature of those limits that may require adjustment. Perhaps it is due to the Cartesian metaphors regarding quantity that implicitly structure much of our thinking, that we have tended to think of these boundaries in quantitative terms. This research seems to indicate that the social quality of that boundary around freedom is of as much importance as the quantity of freedom that is available.

If this sense of having great quantities of personal freedom within a boundary of positive connections with other people is so important in the development of the person who later emerges from the playing child, what can be done to protect the right of the child to be able to fulfil these very fundamental needs through play?

One possibility has to do with program planning. Doll (1988) suggests a curriculum that is not thought of as linear, but as

> a mosaic to be explored, patterns exist[ing] within patterns. . . [where] progress and development are not

> made in a linear manner not measured in units of efficiency. . . [having] boundaries and patterns which we both realize (or discover) and transcend through our own acts. (p. 12)

He feels that "the teacher and students should work together in a reflective manner" (p. 12). Doll further states that "we must go beyond the measured curriculum to a transformatory curriculum. . . [one where] order does not need to be imposed externally . . . [but where] order emerges internally, through interaction" (p. 14).

Cullum (1967) has a related vision. He says

> The A students will probably succeed, but the millions in the middle ranks and the failures who could develop a belief in themselves and make a dream or two come true, those are the ones who need an atmosphere that encourages them to be somebody. By sharing with and joining children in their world, teachers can create an atmosphere for a new kind of learning. . . How does a teacher enter the child's world? Federico Garcia Lorca, the Spanish poet wrote in "The Ballad of the Little Square":
>
> I will go very far,
> farther than those hills,
> farther than the seas,
> close to the stars,
> to beg Christ the Lord

> to give back the soul I had
> of old, when I was a child,
> ripened with legends,
> with a feathered cap
> and a wooden sword.

Cullum adds

> As teachers we should be constantly searching for our lost feathered caps and our lost wooden swords, for they are the only entrées we have to the world of children. If we can't enter their world, we can never reach them. (p. 21)

Perhaps for some of us the first step into this world could be a reflective study of our own play memories, that is to re-enter our own world at another level. As adults we will never be able to fully enter the world of the child but at least we can become aware that important processes occur during play, and that the playing child deserves our deepest respect.

Finding the metaphors that connect our adult self with the child whose experiences and perceptions figured largely in the adult we have become may also serve to bring us to a firmer sense of our own strengths, our own possibilities, and our own creative uniqueness. It may be that then we will be more able to frame some of those solutions arrived at through the "artistry" of which Schon (1988) speaks.

This thesis has been a collection of stories within

stories. As such it is also, and cannot be other than a retelling of my own story at another level. The questions I asked and the answers that I heard all were flavoured by my own perception as well as those of the participants. As a researcher I have not attempted to "remain outside" the data, but I have recorded my own impressions of these very human stories with as much integrity as I am capable.

I would like to conclude with a story of my own, which contains a vivid memory from my early childhood. On reaching the end of this writing I realized that this memory has had a very direct, although unconscious bearing on this thesis. My mother was a teacher who, though she personally preferred to teach Grade Three or Four, was always asked to teach Grade One by her school board. It was said that the children loved her and that with her, "They seemed to do better. . . they seemed to be better prepared for the grades ahead." The battle over how much adult-imposed control was appropriate for young children raged periodically between her and other members of our extended family who were also teachers. One of the few sharp memories I have of those days is of seeing my mother standing in the kitchen doorway, her brown eyes full of Irish temper, and her black hair swinging. She had just turned to speak to someone behind her whom I could not see, but I could hear her voice clearly. She was saying, "Children must not be pushed. They do better when. . ." This statement seemed alive with

conviction, and the words were back-lit by sunshine streaming in through the doorway behind her. When she saw that I was listening, she grinned. I was never able to pull the ending for that sentence out of my memory. However, it seems to me that this thesis has provided me with the words that she may have said, or something very close to them. "Children must not be pushed. . . they do better if they are allowed to come forth from themselves." They require nurture and support, faith and trust, freedom and play, and opportunity. They even require structure and limits. But perhaps the nature of that structure and those limits is something that can be sensitively negotiated rather than imposed. If freedom-within-community is seen as something that can be generated from within a relationship, that must be crafted within the artistry of caring and communication, and is accepted as being the primary mandate of the school, what is the potential impact on classroom practise?

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APPENDIX A

Used in the Research Situation
From The Centring Book: Awareness Activities for Children, Parents and Teachers, by G. Hendricks and R. Wills

Feeling the centre
This activity is best done on the floor, the children either sitting cross-legged or lying on their backs. If the sitting position is used, remind the groups members to sit squarely on their sitting bones, with spines straight and hands relaxed in lap. If the lying position is used, be sure everyone is lying straight - legs relaxed and loose, back and head in straight alignment.

(The participants did the following exercises to very soft, relaxing music, while I read these passages aloud:)
Instructions
"Most of the time we use only a small part of our lungs when we breathe. If we can learn to fill our bodies with breath by breathing more deeply and smoothly, we can increase the energy that flows through our bodies. Let's begin by letting our bodies relax. . . becoming very comfortable and closing our eyes.

"And now, becoming aware of your feet and moving them around a little to become aware of how they feel, send them a message to relax. Let all of the tension go out of them and let them sink into the floor, feeling relaxed and heavy.

"Let the feeling of relaxation enter your chest and your stomach. Feel the middle of your body become soothed and relaxed. Breathe deeply and smoothly, letting all of the tension go out of your body.

"Now let your neck and face relax. Feel the tension draining out of your face as you feel the soothing feeling of relaxation enter your face and neck.

"Relax your arms and your hands, feeling them resting comfortably, completely supported. Breathe deeply, sending the feeling of relaxation to your arms and hands."

Pause (thirty seconds)

"Inhale slowly through your nose. Let your stomach fill up with breath, then fill your chest. Breathe out smoothly, emptying your chest first,then your stomach. Try to let the breath come and go smoothly and peacefully. Let it flow in and out of your body, filling your body with energy. Feel yourself breathing deeply and smoothly, the energy flowing in and out of you. Listen to your breath flowing in and out of you."

Pause (ten breaths)

"The centre of your body is where it balances. For many people the balance point is just below the navel. As you breathe in, imagine that your breath is pouring into your body through the centre of your body. Let yourself feel the energy rushing into your body through the centre, just below the navel. Feel your breath flow into your body, up through your chest, filling your head. Hold the breath inside you for a moment, then let it flow out, carrying with it any tension you might feel. Breathe through your centre, filling your body with energy, then let the breath flow out of you, relaxing your body completely."

Pause (ten breaths)
"Let yourself feel the centre of your body, so that you can come back to it when you want to relax and feel balanced. Anytime you have something in your head that you don't like, breathe it out and then replace it with pure, clean energy when you breathe in.

"Now feel the alertness coming into your body. Feel your feet and hands begin to stir. Feel your muscles begin to move. Open your eyes, feeling rested and full of energy."

Excerpts from: The Secret Place in the Life of the Child by Martinus Jan Langeveld

In the lifeworld of the child there exist hidden places which permit the child the possibility of experiencing in a normal manner access to strange and unfamiliar worlds around him. Where does the child find his as yet indeterminate worlds? Worlds pregnant with the possibilities of new, meaningful experiences?

Let us, by way of example, turn to the home life of the child.

The Attic
Has there ever been a stranger place than the attic as it reveals itself to our spellbound eyes when we climb up through the trap-door or hatch? The attic confronts us with a gaze that comes out of nowhere. Its omnipresent stare is not aimed at us directly, rather it suddenly reveals and observes everything at once. As soon as we (after having shut the door) have descended the stairs or the ladder and find ourselves in our own safe familiar world, then its gaze instantly ceases to encompass us. At that very moment the attic resumes guarding its privacy and ours as well, our own privacy, which we had wanted to conquer through our venture into the attic. Let us climb back into the attic and stay

there for a while. . .

The secret spell of the attic can be encountered both in the deserted emptiness of the attic as well as in the overcrowded condition of another attic. Sometimes a threatening atmosphere hovers in an attic; the attic becomes weird, foreign, unearthly, secretive. The attic does not seem to belong to the normal atmosphere of the rest of the house - the trusted home. The attic can become completely severed from the house and turn into a ship which crosses many treacherous waters - or a grotto carved into the cliff of a foreboding mountain - an eagle's nest crowning on an unreachable mountain top - a perch from which to watch an unfathomable mystery play. The attic covers the normal living spaces below, and yet it seems to stretch unendingly over prairies and oceans bathed in the light of the setting sun. Thus, the attic separates itself, and frees itself from the house in the guise of an airplane or ship, and so it takes on the changing dimensions of its new being.

But sometimes the attic is just an available space, a room to be used. One can lay a train track there running through savannas. To be sure the train does not travel without hindrances, but these hindrances are not the familiar hindrances one bumps into int he normal living spaces of everyday objects. This uninhabited world of the attic is full of new significances. Here the train winds its way through a landscape of bundles, boxes, suitcases, and baskets. One encounters furniture or objects which once were furniture. In the living room it would always be a table and nothing else; tables and chairs and such exist within the boundaries of meaning set by their use. Now that it has been discarded, this piece of furniture takes on an unending array of identities in the free and undisturbed world of the attic. It offers itself as a tent on the prairies in which the chief of the Sioux crouches and smokes the peace pipe with Old Shatterhand. The most common things acquire new names which in the stillness of the old attic seem to be whispered in our ears. Soon we will actually be using these new names.

Although you might not have expected it, this crowded attic shelters hidden places. There are places to crawl into and hide; there are huts and havens, places of refuge, retreats, sanctuaries, dens, caves, holes, and narrow passes to travel through. Every object assumes a meaning which best fits it and makes it a part of this landscape. Except for that familiar storage cupboard over there which we know as the "apple keeper." This cupboard is a stranger to the scene just because of its definite identity and significance. It shows an inscrutable and even disagreeable face. We don't want to bother with it because it obviously

refuses to "play along." We don't expect anything from this cupboard. It will remain merely itself. Just look at it. How it stand there: heavy, dense, unmovable. And because of this immutable familiarity, it forfeits its worth and significance. It is precisely the fixed and "everyday" character of this common cupboard which robs it of any possibilities of expression in a world where every object secures a voice of its own. Let us listen to the language spoken by these things. In listening to this language, we may gain a deeper understanding of the nature of the secret place in the world of the young child.

Can I be sure that behind the curtain these lifeless objects are not gazing at me while crouching and getting ready for an unexpected leap? Let us look behind the ruffled creases of the curtain: There stands a docile stove doing what a good stove seemingly should be doing. However, we only need to life the curtain and let the stove into the familiar world of our lived - in daily activities - the stove may only hesitate a moment. But when he seizes the opportunity to serve as ship cannon or robot, he abdicates the idle usefulness of ordinary appliances. He assumes special meaning and thus becomes an essential aspect of the world in which we live. And yet, this world is not entirely "fulfilled by us." There is something vague and indefinable that seems to force itself upon us. For example, we sense this when behind us the lightly lifted curtain suddenly drops down. We catch our breath and the blood rushes to our head: "Who did that?" The "unperson" of the secret place has stirred himself in space, in the flashing moment of the fleeting instant.

Time
In the attic time stands still or time flies: It really amounts to the same. But if time has stopped, it is not because it has been blocked by the weary recoil or by the nervous density brought about by anxiety or fear. TIme simply has disappeared altogether. And when we find our way back from the attic to the living room downstairs, the clock looks at us pokerfaced. Maybe time took a rest; but it is also quite possible that the clock stealthily moved his arms forward three whole hours as soon as we had left the room. The time which we lost while dwelling in our secret place, or the time we forgot ("I forgot the time," we say), has really nothing to do with this clock. We don't lose sight of the time, but it is the clock itself we temporarily forget. The secret place does not know the systematic classification of hours, minutes, and seconds. In the domain of the secret place, time is not being managed nor kept within our sphere of control. Somehow, the secret place knows how to remain outside of the boundaries of time and of space. Neither time nor space have room for the

indeterminacy of the secret place. And therefore, this is truly a place of secrecy even though it lies there openly for all to see. And so the child finds here a condition for which he would only feel ashamed at school - a state of aimless daydreaming which knows no discipline of time. . .

The secret place is, then, a home where one find oneself at home, a place where one is with oneself. Its intimate character is determined, in the first place, by the fact that one finds oneself in the unexpected presence of one's own self without having tried to make oneself a project of study. Here, one has every opportunity by doing or dreaming to realize, to make real, a world of one's own. Nothing interferes with the multiplicity of relations the objects of this world have to "reality." This box can be a box, but it can also be a cave which surrounds me, or a fortress, a cliff, a boat, an airplane, or a building block. I myself can be an explorer, a pirate, a pilot, or a scientist.

At the same time, to spend time in the attic means still to be at home. For there is still the stairway. There one can still climb down. But the stairway has its own significance as well. And this significance becomes stronger when we look up the stairway toward where it leads into the unknown or to the unseen. . .

[Remember Milne's poem?]
Halfway up the stairs
Isn't up,
And it isn't down.
It isn't the nursery,
It isn't the town
And all sorts of funny thoughts
Run around my head:
It isn't really
Anywhere.
It's somewhere else
Instead.

In the research situation, the second group listened to the above narrative as well as the Milne poem. However the paragraph on time (p. 5, appendix A) was deleted, and the reading of the Langeveld narrative was preceded by the following poems:

The Land of Counterpane, by Robert Louis Stevenson

When I was sick and lay a-bed,
I had two pillows at my head,
And all my toys beside me lay
To keep me happy all the day.

And sometimes for an hour or so
I watched my leaden soldiers go,
With different uniforms and drills,
Among the bedclothes, through the hills;

And sometimes sent my ships in fleets
All up and down among the sheets;
Or brought my trees and houses out,
And planted cities all about.

I was the giant great and still
That sits upon the pillow-hill,
And sees before him, dale and plain,
The pleasant land of counterpane.

Us Two, by A.A. Milne

Wherever I am, there's always Pooh,
There's always Pooh and Me.
Whatever I do, he wants to do,
"Where are you going today?" says Pooh:
"Well, that's very odd 'cos I was too.
Let's go together," says Pooh, says he.
"Let's go together," says Pooh.

"What's twice eleven?" I said to Pooh.
("Twice what?" said Pooh to Me.)
"I think it ought to be twenty-two."
"Just what I think myself," said Pooh.
"It wasn't an easy sum to do,
But that's what it is," said Pooh, said he.
"That's what it is," said Pooh.

"Let's look for dragons," I said to Pooh.
"Yes, let's," said Pooh to Me.
We crossed the river and found a few -
"Yes, those are dragons all right," said Pooh.
"As soon as I saw their beaks I knew.

That's what they are," said Pooh, said he.
"That's what they are," said Pooh.

"Let's frighten the dragons," I said to Pooh.
"That's right," said Pooh to Me.
"I'm not afraid," I said to Pooh,
And I held his paw and I shouted "Shoo!
Silly old dragons!" -and off they flew.
"I wasn't afraid," said Pooh, said he,
"I'm never afraid with you."

So wherever I am, there's always Pooh,
There's always Pooh and Me.
"What would I do?" I said to Pooh,
"If it wasn't for you," and Pooh said: "True,
It wasn't much fun for One, but Two
Can stick together," says Pooh, says he.
"That's how it is," says Pooh.

APPENDIX B

The Narratives

Marilyn. In a field behind the neighbour's house someone had built a set of monkey bars (the old-fashioned kind made of metal rods, square and high.) Often my friends and I went there to play either physically or by make-believe.) But we always ate supper early, so by the time I came out to play, the others all had to go in for supper. This was a time that I loved. I would climb up to the top of the bars and sit, looking out over the houses and the field, imagining all sorts of things. My favourite thing was to sing an Indian song ("Land of the Silver Birch") and pretend I was an Indian Princess. I would sing loudly, because I knew no-one could hear, and relish being alone with my thoughts. I would go in any weather, usually in the evening, and no matter what my mood, I would always feel good when I had to go home - or the others would come.

I think that this (plus many other times that I played alone at other places and with other things), helped me to realize that being alone was (and is) not lonely, but a happy time, and that an imagination is a wonderful thing to take you away from the trial and tribulations of this world!!! Metaphor: Marilyn-as-anything-she-can-imagine!

Heather. At age three and four I used to love to retreat to my. . . clothes closet! It's true! The closet had a really neat "accordion" door that made a great "clapping" sound and I suppose that that was the initial attraction. I used to have dolls, books, papers, etc. very cosily arranged on the floor and I remember that my head grazed a few of my dresses that seemed to hang so, so way up high! For a feeling of privacy, the door was almost completely closed but the door must have been about a foot ajar because I vividly remember the daylight from my bedroom. Mom didn't know where I could be (the first time I was in my own little retreat), and I remember feeling her sense of alarm when she started calling for me in the house. All I remember about that was I couldn't comprehend what all the fuss was about. It just seemed like the most natural, cosy, private retreat to me!! Metaphor: Heather-as-quiet-gal

Jessie. My memories of play are closely tied to nature. While I grew up in Northern Alberta where the winters were cold and long, my mind naturally turns to the summers of that time. We ran free and barefoot over the hot sand, we swam in the lake, we rode on corral fences and bent over trees, we sailed the lake on floating trees. The feeling of lying on the ground and looking up at the clouds is very vivid to me and the accompanying longing to rise up and be

among them. I can feel the pleasant prickles of dry grass and weeds on my back and I can smell the greenery all around and feel the heat rising from the ground. I remember being about five and playing imaginary people with my sister, and going visiting them on a bicycle which was actually only an old stick which I held between my legs like a hobby horse.

A memory which has stayed with me because it came as a great surprise concerns playing with a friend when I was somewhat older, perhaps ten. A friend described the scenario an suddenly I was it all and was in it all.
Metaphor: Jessie-the-participator.

Keshia. As I recollect, I can throw my mind backwards some thirty-five years ago. An explanation of my family background will give an appropriate rationale for the choice of my personal play space. I am the only girl in a family of three boys. The youngest boy died when he was three and a half years old. When he was alive, he used to be my favourite play companion because of the proximity in age. When he passed away I realized that my two older brothers who were far older than I were not willing to get me to join their own boyish play activities.

In the warm, wet tropical land of West Africa in my country called Sierra Leone, we used to live in the capital city called Freetown, in a two-story wooden house with a big backyard garden. Being alone, with no one of the same sex to join in my play, I would go into the kitchen which was a small mud hut and search through a wooden box that was my treasure box where I kept all the improvised toys made out of natural or junk materials. My wooden dolls were two sticks tied together with a piece of string. My sauce pans were empty sardine and baked beans containers and sticks or a piece of wire would substitute for spoons. Out in the backyard garden, I would relax on the hot warm grass which provided some wonderful and countless hours participating in domestic play. I would still imagine my dead brother participating in the play activities and would soliloquize, pretending that he was still alive. I was able to play the role of mourning for my dead brother and finally I was able to cope with the depressing situation.
Metaphor: "Play helps the child to come to terms with certain situations s/he finds difficult to understand."

Lynette. My two sisters and I would play Sesame Street in the basement laundry area. We would take turns being Oscar the Grouch by going in the laundry hamper - no one could be Oscar unless they were in the hamper. The other characters we would role play were Big Bird, Grover, Ernie and Bert.

We always had fun, even though I believe we would fight over who was going to be Oscar the Grouch. I think we wanted to be Oscar the Grouch because it was acceptable at that time/situation to be a tyrant whereas in everyday life it is not the most desirable trait to portray.

Perhaps I remember this play because it was all three of us playing and we couldn't get caught. Within the past three years my Mom found out we used to play in her hamper - that's why it was always wrecked!
Metaphors: Lynette-the-grouch/In-Lynette's-neighbourhood

Samantha. There are basically three major types of playing that I remember from my childhood.

When I was about six to nine (?) I loved to play house. My sister and I had a playroom that was elevated and had a slanted roof - so that my parents couldn't stand in it. I remember the room to be usually very messy. I had a stove with real (toy) boxes and cans of food. The stove worked and I could make cakes. I had a miniature tea set which I still treasure. I don't remember who my playmates were at all.
Metaphor: Samantha-as-entertainer/Samantha-as-mother

When I was older Barbies were the thing from grade 3 to about grade 5. I would play with either my sister or two other girls my age. I had everything, a Barbie Camper, a Barbie House, and my mom made Barbie and Ken clothes for me. I remember talking a lot about dating with the dolls. My friends and I would also have the dolls acting out fights that our moms and dads had had. Basically the usual domestic stuff. The roles were very set. The female doll cooked, cleaned and looked pretty. The male doll went to work and did the garden, etc.
Metaphors:Samantha-as-dreamer/Samantha-as-explorer.

When I was in Grade six, dancing was all we did. A group of five other girls and I had a group called "The Sweethearts." We all had matching t-shirts and every Friday our teacher would let us put on a short show. The goal was always to shock the class. We wore lots of make-up, short-shorts, and I remember one of the songs was "Now You're Messing With a Son of a Bitch." We practised for hours before we did the show. Most of the songs and dances came from the Saturday Night Fever record and GREASE.
(P.S. I never dance now except at night clubs.)
Metaphors: Samantha-as-leader/Samantha-as-extremist/
Samantha-as-show-off.

Margot. Time: Sunday-family dinner when my older sister, 25 years, her husband, Sam 5, George & Mary 3, came into town from a farm: After supper when grown-ups were having coffee.

Play: My sister Barb (8 years), George, Mary, and I (6 years) would dress up and do something (I don't know whether it was a play or fashion show or what.) It seems my next brother, Ken (10 years) was there doing something (organizing.)

Important things which stand out:
We were always getting ready in the kitchen hiding so no-one saw us.
The audience had to pay attention.

Now: The significance seems to lie in the fact that it was a family time and a happy memory. Family is now divorced. Dress-up clothes were ladies' dresses - very feminine, sheer material.
Metaphors:Margot-as-dancer/Margot-as-feminine

Christy. One fond memory I have of special play moments is my older sister and I going to the farm to visit my cousins. In the summer we would often "be" explorers and go on long expeditions through the hilly forests. Secret places under the large, spreading spruce trees provided many moments of giggling and whispering. The days would be hot but the woods were cool and damp. The air was always quiet, with background babbles of the streams. Tiny toadstools enhanced the magical air of fairies and make-believe. There was always an element of the unknown, of maybe a stranger, so often the snap of a branch would send us all running and darting away to a clearing where we would meet and all fall laughing to the ground.

Standing out in my mind was the sound of the crisp, cool air filled with the crunching sounds of leaves falling, animals scampering, a twig snapping.

Feelings of warmth between my sister, cousins and I, a togetherness that has been lost. Childhood security, secrets shared, so long ago.

Sometimes I felt scared, anxious, with the activities we would try: Walking across the rushing streams on trees that had fallen over. Trees wet and slippery with moss. Fearing, as the younger one I would be left behind if I dared not keep up.
Metaphor: Timidly-daring-Christy

APPENDIX C

Dialogue with Christy

D: Have a look at your narrative, Christy, so you can remember what you wrote.
Christy: OK
D: Although you probably remember what you wrote. That was really a lovely story.
Christy: Oh, the music that you had playing in the background just. . . just lent for such descriptive words to come, and to really picture it. It really set the mood.
D: So you were really able. . .
Christy: Yah, to go back and just feel everything.
D: That's nice. That's good. That's what I hoped would happen. I have been so thrilled with the way that everyone who has participated in this has been able to go back, and nobody has sat there and said, "This doesn't do anything for me." Everybody has been really able to participate.
Christy: Uh huh.
D: I think they really feel like they were able to put themselves into it.
Christy: Right.
D: And then I think they feel they're getting something out of it too.
Christy: Mhm. That's right.
D: I thought your story was very, very interesting. Could you tell me more about some of these things? For example, the explorer, and the expedition? Can you just talk about it?
Christy: We would, um. Their farm is just in this vast. . .vastness of forest, and hills and streams. You can just get lost. So it was like exploring. If you set off in a new direction each time, it was into the unknown. You didn't know what you were going to encounter. Of course, there were always animals, and your imagination would be going, would we see bears, would we see this, would we see that. And my cousins would always have tales too, of maybe strangers that might be lurking in the forest, you know, of people camping out, things like that, and we would always wonder if we were going to encounter them. Stumble upon someone's place where they had been sleeping and camping out. . .people that were hiding from something. Exciting.
D: .....?
Christy: Yah, yah. I guess we always went in that direction.
D: So it was a real role.
Christy: Oh yah! Yah. for sure.
D: Did you have any equipment that you would take along all the time?
Christy: Well, we would always would take a picnic. A knapsack for a picnic. So, I guess any real equipment we would use would always be imaginative.
D: You'd make up things. . .

Christy: Yah. Yah. As we needed it.
D: You'd use a stick, or a. . .whatever.
Christy: Yah. Yah.
D: Oh, that's neat. So, child-as-explorer, and yet that was a group thing for you?
Christy: It was group, but it was also very individual within the group. I think, because we each had definite roles, I think. My oldest cousin was always leader, and uh, her two brothers, my two male cousins, would always. . .almost like scouts, were sent out to do different things. My older sister was involved, very much played very close with Judy. I always felt a little bit like the straggler, the one behind, being the younger one. . .
D: What was your role then?
Christy: I think I observed a lot, and just participated where I wanted to join in. Yah. Never really was assigned a specific role.
D: So, I can see why you said you were kind of timid. [re: her metaphor] You felt that you were the youngest, were you much younger?
Christy: I would say 2 1/2 years younger than. . .It's not a lot, but. . .
D: And two older boys and two older girls would be. . .
Christy: Right. . .teamed up. . .
D: . . .and sort of pushing themselves to see who could. . .
Christy: Yah.
D: . . .sort of daring each other. . .I can see how it would be hard for you to keep up to them. What do you feel that that experience gave you, as far as the Christy you are now, the person you are now?
Christy: I think as the observer back then, I think I'm much more of a doer now. In seeing what things started out as, and the outcomes of them, that things turned out OK, whatever we ventured to do. To take risks. To take chances. I think initially back then, before that I chanced or dared to do something, I wanted to know what the end would be before I would do it, almost. And uh, and now I don't need that. Whether that relates back to that or not I'm not sure, but, yah.
D: You'd sort of sit back and think, "Well, if I do this, am I going to survive?
Christy: Right. Oh, very much so. I just think of all the physical deeds. . .you know, I mentioned in there [the narrative], you know, the log across the stream and of course it always had moss or they were always really wet, and those guys would just scamper across, and I would think "Oh God! How am I going to make it!"
D: And you would go across just. . .
Christy: Yuh. If I want to keep up with them, I've got to do it, you know. I think what made me keep up with them was the fact that I'd have to turn around and go back . . .
D: By-Your-Self!

Christy: Yah, by myself. Right. So that's what pushed me on. . .They had this coulee that had these stumps in it, these big grass stumps, that go across the coulee, you went from stump to stump, and run across without falling in. . .
D: Did you ever stay back by yourself and not go with them?
Christy: No. I always wanted to be with them.
D: Why was it so important to be with them?
Christy: I think to experience the adventure, to experience it.
D: So even though you were afraid, the whole experience of the adventure just was important. . .
Christy: Oh yah. I wanted to be a part of it.
D: You looked forward to it.
Christy: Yuh. Always.
D: It sounds like it was really a lot of fun.
Christy: It was. We spent a lot of time out there as kids, on weekends and summer vacations.
D: I find your comments on risk-taking very interesting.
Christy: Uh huh. I don' think I was much of a risk-taker as a child. I think I really played it safe. I really, really did. I think. . .it was very much the fear of failure. I think that very much I wanted to succeed and not try something unless I felt sure I would do well at it and accomplish it.
D: So do you feel that all those experiences as the explorer. . . like you say, you've been able to leave that need behind?
Christy: Mhm.
D: You don't need so much to be sure you'll be safe?
Christy: I can very much be a leader now, and strike off in new situations. And not need to know how its going to end. Just experience for the pleasure of experiencing it, no matter what the end is.
D: Its almost like you played that role of explorer enough so that you got comfortable with it.
Christy: Yah.
D: Its interesting.
Christy: Yah.
D: Is there anything else you can add about that whole idea of the adventurer, explorer, risk-taker, and where it puts you now, into the ability to venture off without having to know the end? Child-as-explorer, adventurer, how you feel that functions. As a child you were able throw out a lot of questions, and then were able to leave that. . .I guess what we're talking about here is self-confidence?
Christy: I think so. I think self-confidence is a big part of it. It built a lot of self-confidence.
D: Was freedom a big part of it?
Christy: Hmm.
D: Maybe you didn't feel very free within that group situation, or did you feel free?
Christy: Oh no, I felt free. That was part of freedom,

getting away. If I wasn't with the group I wouldn't be away and off exploring. I would never have been allowed to do it by myself. There's safety in numbers, they'll take care of you, we'll all take care of each other.
D: So you can all go.
Christy: It's definitely built self-confidence in just things that I try. Go for. In my personal life, and definitely classroom life in school. . .In taking new ideas and not caring how they turn out. I guess in that sense I am the responsible one with these 20-odd children. And you're taking them through. . .
D: So the adventure is in the doing. . .
Christy: Right. I guess I am doing the leading now.
D: And you can take the adventure as being the doing. It doesn't matter what we produce in the end, but we're going to. . .
Christy: Right.
D: . . . have an adventure while we're doing it. . .
Christy: . . .Yah. . .
D: So its a process, not a product, the way you teach
Christy: Yah. Definitely a process
D: Oh, that's very healthy for a teacher, to have that viewpoint.
Christy: Yuh.
D: So, like you're saying, that really ties into that idea of you don't need to feel safe with the end, because you know that you'll be able to. . .
Christy: Right, yah. Its just the journey along the way. True.
D: The journey along the way. That's excellent. That's a very strong idea.
Christy: Hmm.
D: You've mentioned in here your secret place, the secrets? Was it under the trees?
Christy: Under the trees, I think, well, the secret place is supposed to be someplace that's far off, that can't be seen, and the big spruce would be down like this, and underneath was all clear, so you could hide in there and whisper and giggle. Some of us would have gone off ahead of the other ones, and we'd duck down and hide, and we'd pop up and scare them as they came by close to us.
D: There's something about that space under those boughs that makes you feel protected. . .
Christy: Oh, really. Especially with the boughs sweeping down. . .Yah.
D: It's almost like a church. That hush?
Christy: Yah? There's a definite hush. Yah.
D: That very special. . .
Christy: Yah! I never thought of it that way, but yah. That's a definite tie.
D: That's a neat memory. That's another strong idea, isn't it.

Christy: Uh huh.
D: Why do you think that you, as a group, wanted to have that little element of danger where you would make up the. . .?
Christy: I think . . .It's to push each other. It's almost dares. It's. . .
D: Was that always a part of it? Did you always want to have that little element of danger?
Christy: I think there always was, yah. Yuh. That had to be part of the adventure. There had to be something, not scary, it didn't have to be scary, but it had to be dangerous. . .it had to push us to our limits, to see how much further we could go. How, uh, how good are you? That's not really the right word. . .
D: How strong are you today?
Christy: I thought of strong. Yah, I guess strong, meaning strength of character rather than physical. . .
D: How much nerve have you got today?
Christy: Nerve. That's the word. Yah.
D: Would you say it was almost a one-up-manship? Or was it the group. . .?
Christy: I think it was a one-up-manship within the group. Oh, definitely. For sure. Yah, going out as a group in the sense of a group of people, but not as a group to get things done together. We went in a group, but. . .
D: So there was an element of a bit of competition in there, just a little bit all the time. . .
Christy: That's for sure.
D: And that was always there. . .It was important.
Christy: Always there. Yuh.
D: Part of the whole. . .
Christy: A big part. . .yuh, definitely.
D: I suppose it would have been part of your whole, everyone's idea of what the whole thing was about.
Christy: Yah. Very important.
D: Did you ever have a plan before you went ahead?
Christy: No. It was always spontaneous. One thing led to another.
D: You planned as you went along?
Christy: Yah.
D: How would you know when you had gone far enough?
Christy: You know, I think how we always knew we'd gone far enough, Is me picturing in my mind, we'd be down in the valley where all the brooks would be, and the spruce boughs, and you'd come back up the hill, and there it would just be a grassy hill, that you could see around, and you were wide open. You were seen. The adventure was over.
D: Oh, really?
Christy: Then we would just go home. We'd walk down the other end of the hill and just go home. Yah.
D: So you accepted that as your boundary. . .
Christy: I think that would be. . .Yah. Exactly.

D: The play was over.
Christy: The forests, streams. . .
D: So time wasn't your boundary. . .
Christy: No.
D: No-one really cared when you got back.
Christy: Well no. It would be, that was our walk, and that was what we did on our walk. . .just as long as we were back by supper, but we were always back by suppertime.
D: Yah.
Christy: No, it was like you were coming out of a shady spot. you know, because the sun can't get through all the leaves of the trees, although you would get little beams of light coming through. Even climbing back up the hill, there's trees all up the side of the hill, but the hill we'd come on top of was one that would have been cleared for crops, you see. So it was basically cleared. You'd come out, bright blue skies. Finished.
D: And that was the signal for all of you.
Christy: Yah.
D: It's over. Now we're done. I suppose I was looking at this [narrative] and asking myself about rituals. I guess that would abe part of a ritual, wouldn't it.
Christy: Yuh. Definitely. We always did it. Yuh.
D: For this, there was an element of certain things that were familiar, and you always did them, and then within those little boundaries you set for yourselves. . .
Christy: Uh huh. Uh huh.
D: . . .you tested each other and tested yourselves.
Christy: Yah. That's. . .in the summer. In the winter that didn't really go on. There was always so much snow, we'd do things like tobogganning. . .Yah, that was definitely a summer activity.
D: And did this carry on year after year?
Christy: Year after year, for I'd say from. . .for five years.
D: Really.
Christy: Like grade 1 through 5. And then my sister and I just got to the age, we were in Jr. High, where we didn't want to go out every week-end. So I'd stay home with Terry, and it just ended. But when you think of the age span . . .my cousin would have been, she's two years older than my sister. So, there was a real age span there, to be involved in that kind of play.
D: For that many years.
Christy: Yah.
D: You're very lucky that it continued for that long. And being that it did carry on that long, maybe that's why it did have an effect on your ability to meet situations, and come through to the point where you feel comfortable with risk.
Christy: Yah. Continuity.
D: Yah. Um, I was looking at your statement about rules.

Did you find that you were constantly making up little rules about this?
Christy: I think within the scenario of it, someone would go off to do something, one person might not think that was good, and they'd say, "Ah, but you can't. . ." They would start to lay on a little bit of guidelines.
D: Control.
Christy: Yah, for sure. "You can't really do that." I can't really remember what I said off hand.
D: Well, it was near the top here. . .no, maybe you didn't put down rules, I think I just thought I would ask you. . .
Christy: Yah. But I think if there were any, it would be, yah, exactly, someone trying to control someone else by saying, "You can't do that."
D: Yah. But it would be all spontaneous.
Christy: All spontaneous.
D: At the moment.
Christy: We didn't come with a specific set of rules.
D: Or really carry on a set of rules from week to week?
Christy: No.....
D: I guess what made me think of the rules was because you were talking about this place as being special, under the trees, and the secrecy of it, and I was wondering if you saw it as being a special private sort of place. . .
Christy: No. And I don't think it was any one particular spot. That just hit me from one time, and that was from, like, running ahead and darting underneath, and springing out.
D: There are a lot of sounds in your narrative.
Christy: Oh, but I think that all of. . .well the tape brought back the memory of those sounds. Out in the country, you don't have city noises at all, and the air is crystal clear, and quiet. . .but very noisy within that. You know, birds chirping. . . it would be so quiet and seem so crisp that you could actually hear leaves falling, fluttering down, and dropping. And you don't get that very often.
D: No, not unless you're really out there in the country, do you.
Christy: That's right. There's lots of sounds that are lost here.
D: I was going to ask you if sound was very special to you, because you have used so many sound words. Do you find you miss that?
Christy: I miss the solitude of it. I find that right now my life is really rushed, and when you, you know, with teaching full time, and then a young one, and then this course, I'll never do a spring session course again while teaching full time. . .
D: It really pushes you, doesn't it.
Christy: To the limit. For sure I miss those sounds, because, I took my kids out on a pond study on Friday. To

Hermitage park. It was just this wide open space, when we got there. And it was just. . .we just sat and listened, and it was just. . . a whole orchestra of birds and frogs. It was incredible. The kids couldn't believe it. Really, you know, Canada Geese honking as they're flying over, and. . .yah, you don't realize its all out there until you take the time and just let it be and feel it. I mean, it's always there, it's just finding it. Yah.
D: Sitting down. . .
Christy: Yah. . .so went I want time to myself, I don't want to go out of my yard and just, yah, sitting and listening.
D: Sit down, slow down, let it come in from the outside. I was going to ask you about child-as-listener. Were you a listener, do you think, when you were out there in the forest?
Christy: Definitely. Yah. I think I was always a listener. I wasn't a talker, as such. No, I was a very quiet child.
D: You mentioned before about the observer. You were in the group but sort of always observing. I was wondering if child-as-listener. . .
Christy: . . .listener as well. Yah.
D: . . .was part of that as well. . .
Christy: . . . Yah, a big part. I don't think I very often took the initiative to say something as to which direction the adventure was going.
D: Well, how could you. You weren't exactly in a position to do it, were you.
Christy: Well, exactly, yah.
D: How do you feel that that affects you now as a teacher? Or as a mom?
Christy: I think I very much make sure that I listen, now. Still. Yah, I guess. . .Oh, God! I'm still listening! (laughs) I really make sure I take the time to listen, and let them be verbal, and allow them to say their piece, no matter what it is. Yah, very much so.
D: So you know how to make yourself be still.
Christy: Yah. For sure.
D: And you know that if you make yourself be still, that will give the child, or the environment, if its outside. . .
Christy: . . .a chance to be.
D: . . .a chance to speak to you. Whereas if you're always talking, or always being active within it, you're not able to. You have to make that choice to. . .listen. To be a listener.
Christy: I didn't even think of that. I'm still listening.
D: I think that special, oh, its almost like a unity, when you're a little child, and you sit and listen to that nature, you learn a very special lesson there about your place in the world and relations with others and so on. . .
Christy: Could be. That's a real theme I always take

through my classroom too. Really strong.
D: That we listen to each other?
Christy: Yah. Un huh.
D: Well, its certainly a form of sensitivity, isn't it. And without that quality, we'd be very different people, wouldn't we.
Christy: Oh, very much so.
D: Our personality would be very, very different. Your whole, the way you manage a classroom, and just everything.
Christy: Yah.
D: I wanted to ask you about the group more. We've talked about the group some already, but you wrote down here about the sense of warmth and sense of togetherness. Although you mentioned that there was competition and one-up-manship, and a pushing with each other. But there was also. . .
Christy: There was always the support though, if you really needed it. And the encouragement, like, you know, if you were holding back, they would stand at the edge of the log, they would always stop and tarry.
D: They'd stop and wait for you?
Christy: "Come on. You've got to come. You can do it."
D: Oh, that's nice.
Christy: So within that, you were always remembered.
D: So you knew that even though you were a little bit scared, they would give you time to sort yourself out and come. They wouldn't just take off.
Christy: Yuh. Yuh. Or even if they did take off for a bit, they'd be waiting. . .
D:. . . somewhere, the next tree, or whatever, they would pause.
Christy: Yah.
D: That's nice. Not every group would do that.
Christy: No. There was caring.
D: I'll bet that has something to do with what you talked about, the sense of, you're able to take risks now because you know that you can. You don't worry about the outcome. It could have something to do with the fact that that exploration was done within a very supportive group.
Christy: Mhm.
D: You mentioned in you narrative that that sense of connectedness has been lost?
Christy: It has. We've really gone our own way. I think too, because we were so apart during our teen years. And, um, even just physically apart. Well, there's a close relationship with my sister, but with my cousins, you know, they're all gone, even to different parts of the province. So very rarely even see each other.
D: Do you find that you think about it often?
Christy: It's funny, I do. As much as I don't very often see them at all, that. . .thoughts every once in a while do pop in.
D: And you probably rarely talk about it.

Christy: Very rarely. Oh, never. Never.
D: But it's within. . .in your mind frequently. . .When you as a teenager made that choice that you didn't want to go out there and visit anymore, and run around in the forest like a kid. . . you were too grown-up for that. . .was there anything that kind of took the place of that?
Christy: I think there was always a void then.
D: You missed it.
Christy: Yah, I really missed it. And you know, I think its taken until later years. . .maybe that's why you know, to go on hikes, to go on a bike-ride through a park, there are definite feelings that come back. So, as much as being with the group, there are two things here. . .not just the people, but also just the environment.
D: Yah. They kind of worked with each other. Without the environment it would have really changed what happened, but without the group, that adventure and exploration wouldn't have happened either.
Christy: That's right.
D: You have the theme of security here, in this too. I guess we've touched on this. . .that you saw yourself as safe, and as a secret-sharer. . .
Christy: I knew that even with the risks, and how hard it was to take some of the risks, that . . . I didn't think anything would happen to me. Even though it was scary, way. . .way at the back of my mind I knew I was safe with these kids.
D: Well, I've already asked you if often reflect on your play memories, and you say you do fairly often although you don't verbalize it, and you don't. . .nobody would know, but it happens in situations. . .
Christy: . . .that trigger it back. . .
D: And brings back that feeling of the security and the adventure, and sort of it all comes back at once. . .Did you enjoy doing the narrative and the session we did that night?
Christy: Uh huh. I really did. I really didn't know what to expect, but it was really very relaxing, very calming. It connected back to a few things, which is quite pleasurable, to remember back to those times.
D: Did you find that the actual physical act of writing the narrative did anything. . .?
Christy: The. . . didn't we discuss it beforehand in the group?
D: Yuh.
Christy: I, when I started writing, that brought back way more, and it all started to link together. I'm sure that when I just discussed it with the two other people, it was very short. Very fragmented. And this, it just seemed to lead and lead and lead and lead.
D: Once you got going you flowed into the whole thing.
Christy: Yah. The writing brought out a lot more.
D: The writing, then brought the memory into a clearer

focus for yourself?
Christy: Definitely. And the feelings, and the actual events.
The music did as well. The music triggered. . .while I was writing the music triggered more.
D: The music triggered the situation. I tried to create a context that people could make their own. I think that that happened.
Christy: Right. Yah.
D: Relating to play in the classroom, do you think that play has any potential in the classroom? What grade do you teach?
Christy: Two.
D: Do you have what you'd call a play-based program?
Christy: Very activity based. . . There is an opportunity to get into an imaginative world. I still have a block corner, and a sand table and a water table. And I think its great just for their verbal. . .for the talking that's going along with it. . .and listening to each other's ideas, and how they connect, and how you can spin off and build on them. That's really important for the kids still at this age. . .Because I think developmentally they are all at such different, wide age ranges, that there is a strong need for it to be allowed. I think it still develops a lot.
D: Do you have an Early Childhood background?
Christy: I don't. No.
D: What made you go into the sand and the water and. . . what made you develop that awareness.
Christy: I guess my ties with people who were in it. My degree is secondary Phys. Ed., so it's the other end of the spectrum.
D: OK. So you went to other people for information. And obviously you went to the right people.
Christy: Oh, yah. It depends on the school you're in as well.
D: Do you find that in your situation, that there is support for that kind of a program at the grade 2 level?
Christy: There has been in the past. A change of administrators that we went through two years ago, where I feel this administrator is not very child-centred. He is an administrator. I feel strongly he is not child-centred. We have been able to keep it because of the support within ourselves. . .and a strong united front. And now we're going through another change of administrators. So it will be interesting to see just what their philosophies are. We've really tried to come across as a child-centred school.
D: That's very interesting. Some teachers have a very strong belief in play in the classroom. There is so much potential for play, but sometimes people feel that they're not supported to do as much as they'd like, so they're sort of held back.
Christy: That's right. That can very easily happen.

D: Have you ever had any contact with Alberta Education's Program Continuity policy? Has that come up at all? Articulation is another name. . .
Christy: OK. We did a whole, and we're still doing it. I worked downtown with Mary Smith on that. We also took it for one of our goals, one of our school-wide goals that was put in at the school board.
D: So it was taken seriously.
Christy: Very seriously. With looking at programs, not only programming, but with classroom situations, so that teachers are visiting each other's classrooms to see what is happening, and doing a lot of activities between the classrooms, between the grades as well.
D: And so play as a medium then, would be. . .
Christy: . . .up to grade 3. It's really people identifying that it's quality time, that children are learning through it. There are processes being learned. . .
D: So, its a process, not a product. Its a social, and its a wholeness. . .
Christy: Yah.
D: Can you think of anything else that you'd like to add about your narrative, about your metaphor "Christy-as-timidly-daring"?
Christy: I guess as I wrote that, I saw myself as back in that kind of position again.
D: Would your metaphor be different now, for yourself?
Christy: Definitely still daring, but not timid. I very much go for what I want, and . . .I feel strong enough for that.
D: And you feel that the play that you had, had a big part in that. . .
Christy: Oh, now I see that it really does, for sure. The time for observing and sitting back and watching is over.
D: There's one thing that I've been asking people, and I know this is just speculation, maybe its even a silly question. But, if you hadn't had that time, the freedom, if you hadn't had that, how do you think it might have affected you?
Christy: Well, in seeing the big part that is has played, I think that I may not have moved on into a stronger person. I could still be a timid, straight watching person, and not doing, and not having the confidence to strike out on my own. I don't have to be in a group in order to do something, although group support is still very nice. I think it would change a lot. You can't really say that, can you, because there is nothing to base it on.
D: I know, yah. It's just speculation.
Christy: But it would have to be, because that was part of developing a personality. If that was gone. . .and that was for such. . .for a five year period of time, that was a long time.
D: Very strong.

Christy: Yah.
D: Well, I think its an interesting question just to think about, even though I know that it can't be conclusive. I guess part of my whole reason for doing this is partly to help teachers to realize that there is value in play, beyond entertainment or goofing off.
Christy: Oh, no. Its the child's work.
D: Some teacher have a strong sense of that importance, and some don't.
Christy: And why the difference.
D: Yah. So, I guess what I'm getting at, is I'm saying, "If you can look back, reflect on your own past, and see . . ."
Christy: . . .the importance of it. . .
D: . . . what it did that for you, then it's much easier for anyone to be able to say, "If it did that for me, then it's important for these other little guys that they have the same opportunity."
Christy: This is really important. This should be presented. Where are you going to go with this? To a broader scope. Like, who are you going to reach with this?
D: I think that it could be very effective. I know that I've tried it, just on a very small scale, and those people who I have talked to have said that it really mattered to them. There hasn't been one person who sort of shrugged their shoulders and said, "So what". It has really meant something. There have been some very strong emotions attached to these things. And I guess to me its maybe a more effective way of getting at the importance of play, than Alberta Ed. dumping a load of policy on teacher's desks . . .
Christy: Oh, God yes. It was like, read it and interpret it, rather than experience it. And, that's. . .
D: And when you've been put back in touch with that experience all of a sudden there's a spark there, something you can relate to. And maybe it makes a little more sense. You've really had fun with this, haven't you.
Christy: Oh, yah, it's been great. I think it's really important. I think its really important, because I see Kindergartens now, and the pressure of parents and academics. . .
D: Much more structured.
Christy: Really. I don't see Kindergartens as I saw them five years ago. They're getting much more structured.