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POETRY AS AN INTERCULTURAL PEACE BRIDGE
FOR TEACHING ESL

BY

HARRY HESS



A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

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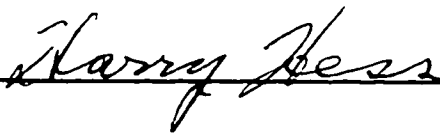
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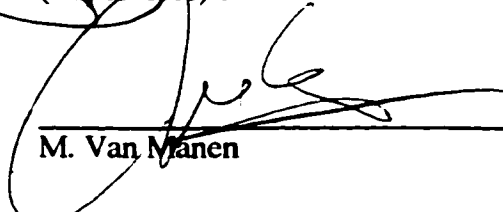
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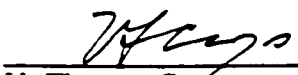
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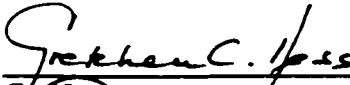
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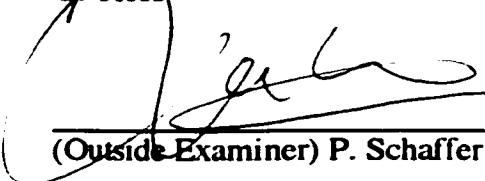
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DEDICATION

To my wife, Mary Anne, for her loving understanding, patience, support, and encouragement without which I could not have completed this research project.

ABSTRACT

This study moves into a new area of research. It seeks to investigate the value of, and the how of, using *poetry for peace education in the ESL classroom*. At the same time it seeks to demonstrate that poetry is a very useful genre to be employed for the teaching of the basic English language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

To this end the study produces an extensive literature review addressing a minor and a major theme. The minor theme looks into the validity of using poetry for ESL work. The major theme concerns itself with the idea of using poetry as a bridging device between cultures, and between people as individuals and of different genders, in order to promote understanding and peace. The literature review provides a theoretical base for the study.

The unique aspect of this study is that from this theoretical base it carries forward the aforesaid themes and gives them *application in the ESL classroom*, emphasizing the bridge building concerns of this study.

To test the viability of these ideas the researcher designed a qualitative study and gained access to an advanced ESL classroom of nineteen adult students, both male and female. For six weeks, for two one-hour sessions per week, the students were engaged in an intensive study and analysis of a wide variety of poetry representing numerous cultures. The poetry was carefully selected in advance for its applicability to peace education. Much reading and discussion involved both the class as a whole and the students working in small groups. The main object of this activity was to discover and formulate theme planks to be used in the construction of our peace bridges. Extensive use of metaphor was made in this study. The poems were thought of as rivers leading into the continent of peace education, and along these rivers were harvested the timbers for milling peace planks. The students also contributed poems of their own composition to this study. These poems also provided building materials and were useful for promoting basic language skills. Being mature and intelligent, the class handled poetry well and with enthusiasm. However, they did need help with vocabulary and sentence structure.

Using descriptive narration detailing the lived experience that he enjoyed along with his students, the researcher reports on what he sees as a highly successful expedition. He recommends that other researchers organize and go on similar expeditions for further validation of his positive findings. The researcher also makes recommendations on what he sees as important academic preparations for prospective ESL teachers. Throughout the study the researcher emphasizes the power of poetry to influence people to think and act positively about living in a more concerned, caring community. He concludes that poetry emphasizing peace education should have an important place in our society, particularly in our educational systems.

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PROLOGUE

Introduction

The essay in this prologue was first presented a couple of years ago as a paper for a graduate course that I was taking at the time. This was a creative writing course in which students presented poems, stories, and papers on various topics of interest. One of my papers, that which I give here, represented an interest of mine, namely poetry. I decided to include it as a prologue to my dissertation as a matter of possible interest for the reader. Poetry is of vital importance to this dissertation and I thought it might be useful to lay out some of my thinking to show where I am coming from with regards to poetry.

I am particularly interested in using poetry for teaching ESL classes. I argue for clarity of expression in this paper. Selecting poetry with clarity is critical for ESL classes. Such poetry, presented with enthusiasm, I find to be a very useful genre for teaching ESL. It can be used effectively to give students a wide variety of language experiences in the basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The reader will notice that some of the ideas given in this prologue are echoed again in the dissertation. But I think that this should not be a problem. Rather, the “echoes” should act as reinforcement.

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March 1999

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My Case, My Plea, for Simplicity

With each passing year, as the inexorable, rhythmic swish of the scythe sweeps ever more distinctly and closer up behind me, I become increasingly more impatient with those writers of poetry, who fail to write simply and clearly. As I develop my argument for simplicity and clarity of expression, I realize that many modern poets and critics would probably disagree with me. I also am aware that I may be arguing apples versus oranges. But be that as it may, I shall pursue my argument, nevertheless. In other words, this is an opinion piece, and I shall muster what arguments I can in support of my position in the hope that although the reader may not agree with me, he or she might at least give me a fair hearing and consider my position. So with these caveats in mind, let us proceed to ponder our way down the poetic pathway.

Ever since my childhood I have enjoyed reading poetry. I have studied it privately, and at the university, and also in my capacity as a teacher. On a few occasions I have even ventured to write poetry, some of which, if I may be so bold, I shall share with you in this paper. Poetry is something that interest me very much. But when I read a particular poem three, or four, or five times over, and I cannot make out what on earth the writer is trying to say, I begin to fret, groan and wonder. I wonder if I should be bothered with it; if I should waste my time on it. After all, time is a precious commodity, especially so as you get older and that “swish” becomes ever more audible behind you. Now you may wonder too, and postulate, “Well, you poor, old fellow, you’re lacking in perception.” Of course I would disagree with you. I would lay the fault with the writer, with his failure to communicate clearly. Ah, but who is right? Doubts begin to cloud the brow.

It seems to me that some modern poets set out deliberately to write obscurely, esoterically, as if such writing would somehow confirm their learnedness, their acuity of perception. They seem to fear that if they write simply, clearly and plainly, they will betray

themselves as simpletons. Surely, as I hope to show, such need not be the case. I am sure that anyone who is able to write, can, if he or she so chooses, write esoterically. But I think it is a wiser choice to choose not to. Now I would agree that there may be a place for esoteric writing - say in reflecting private cogitations, as when one meditates and explores the inner realm. But I doubt whether these personal mysteries should be inflicted upon the public in their esoteric, private form. However, these private reveries might be well worth sharing, if expressed in forms more comprehensible to us lesser mortals. After all, what is the purpose of communication, other than to convey a message, whether that message be a thought or a feeling?

Now if we insist upon superscribing our writings with, "None but one with PhD may enter here," I suppose that is our privilege. But in so doing, in our learnedness we leave ourselves open to the charge of being undemocratic, or of being snobbish, which is even worse. Thus unfortunately, we create a coterie of elitists, effectively precluding communion with the public at large. This stance can hardly serve the cause of education in general, nor of poetry in particular. It is this sort of obscurity that gives poetry a bad name and makes students inclined to dismiss it as being irrelevant and boring. They are thus deprived of what otherwise should be a very real communicative experience. Poetry need not be either irrelevant or boring. It is possible to get students engrossed with it. But to achieve this, poetry must be meaningful, not caught up in mystifying, obscuring, impenetrable fog. Keep your esoteric, private cogitations, private. When we address the public, we should speak plainly and clearly.

Let me hasten to add a cautionary note here. Human fallibility being such as it is, makes it also quite possible for the learned to sometimes miss the evident, to miss things that even children may be made aware of. This may be an occupational hazard of being learned. The mind set is so prepared to penetrate the arcane that it may miss the obvious. Poetry need not necessarily be obscure in order to be challenging. I shall demonstrate this point later.

Meanwhile, we will direct our attention toward two very important terms in poetry, namely, experience and meaning, the very heart of poetry. Perrine (1963) speaking of the various forms of literature, including poetry, says they “widen and sharpen our contacts with existence. Their concern is with *experience*” (p. 4). Then more specifically about the poet Perrine observes, “He creates new experiences for the reader...in which the reader can participate and which he may use to give him a greater awareness and understanding of his world” (p. 4). Brooks and Warren (1976) speak of a reader’s “experience of the poem -- an experience that is at first immediate in its impact and then gradually acquires greater and greater resonance....[Students may] be led to understand poetry as a means of imaginatively extending their own experience and, indeed, probing the possibilities of the self” (Preface ix). Further on these writers closely associate that experience with emotion as they say, “emotional expression is an essential element of poetry” (p. 2). Again “poetry springs from the poet’s ability to perceive meaning and significance even in scenes that are in themselves commonplace” (p. 93).

The poet then is much concerned with transmitting the meaning of emotional experience. This transmission is an art form. Shaw (1970) asserts, “Writing is the art or technique of putting meaning on the page” (p. 5). Now returning again to my thesis of clarity, I quote a passage from Corbin, Perrin and Buxton (1963):

When you talk or write, you have a purpose -- you want to make others understand what you are thinking or feeling, or let them know what you have seen or done, or explain what you want them to do. [Then more specifically on clearness].
Clearness. Your language, then, must first of all be clear -- or you will never convey your ideas to others. (p. 2)

In summary, within this same context of transmitting the meaning of emotional experience, I would like to submit and comment briefly on what I would call a:

Recipe for Poetry:

1. Experience
2. Emotion
3. Imagination
4. Disciplined intellect

Imagination is always an important ingredient in any type of poetry, but of itself it is not enough. You need judicious portions of the other elements too. Figuratively speaking, if you stir all of these elements together well, you should be able to produce a poem. All of these four elements mix into each other, feeding back and forth one to the other. As they are all essential ingredients, none may be left out if you want to have a good finished product.

For example, if you experience a dazzling display of northern lights, you may be moved to exclaim, "Oh, Wow! How beautiful!" You may have the experiential germ for a poem, but you still do not have poetry; experience and emotion, are still not enough. Your experience and your emotion must fire your imagination, so that you can see the streamers dancing in your head. And then using disciplined intellect you must work out your lines on paper, reconstructing the experience and emotion that fired your imagination. If you succeed in manipulating these elements skillfully, you should be able to recreate for others, for your readers, something of your own deep experience -- you will then have created a poem. This assumes, of course, that the reader reads the poem with some degree of sensitivity and empathy for the writer's experience. I now refer the reader to my poem, "Aurora Borealis," included in this paper (p. 14). This purely descriptive poem uses a riot of rhyme and rhythm to depict a riot of color. Hopefully, it will be clear and may be used as Perrine suggests above, "as a means of imaginatively extending...experience."

To the foregoing short quotation from Perrine, I add a longer one from Max van Manen (1986) which is also germane to our discussion. Although van Manen is not dealing specifically with poetry, I think his comments on text are applicable since they deal with clarifying experience. He writes:

Our text needs to be rich....The meanings of the lived sense of phenomena are not exhausted in their immediate experience. A rich description is concrete, exploring a phenomenon in all its ramifications. The educator, as author [poet], aims to capture life experience (action or event) in anecdote [poem] or story....The dialogic quality of these devices is obvious, for they engage us, involve us, and require a response from us. (p. 91)

As I think about the need for “rich” text to clarify experience and as I argue in this paper for the value of simplicity in writing, I am keenly aware of encountering a certain irony. Writing about writing simply is not always so simple. I maintain that good writing is characterized by a certain inherent simplicity, but this is not always easily arrived at. I am sure we all at times experience the difficulty of getting our ideas down on paper. Sometimes our ideas may be a manifold profusion of rustlings in the mind, disjointed and disordered. And from this vast, discordant array, we have to make some order. That is not always easy.

Britton (1975) speaks of this difficulty. He says of writing that it is:

very complex....We are all familiar with the struggle to express in writing what we have in mind, and we are also familiar with the very bad writing sometimes produced by very experienced and learned writers -- bad, that is when judged for its intelligibility or its consideration of the reader. (p. 19)

It is this lack of “intelligibility” to which Britton refers that I protest, whether in prose or in poetry. I can see where it might be excused in a child but there is really no excuse for such “bad writing” in an adult, especially one who presumes to be “educated.” Britton affords us an amusing look at one such child’s writing and explains why it is so difficult to comprehend. I feel sure that some of this same difficulty with comprehension is involved with the type of poetry to which I referred at the outset of this paper. Britton gives us this short sample of writing from a seven year old boy:

When I was Little

I was scared for I wasnt used to it and as well as that things wornte as nice as they are because my Mur Mun came but even from that day to this I have never stayed to dinner. (p. 42)

Only a little over two lines, but it is rather incomprehensible. It reminds me much of some of the esoteric poetry that one often encounters. Why is it so obtuse? In the little boy’s case, his teacher understood him well, but few else could ever hope to do so. The ideas were perfectly clear in the little boy’s mind and to his teacher’s mind, but not to ours. How come? The teacher was privy to the little boy’s experiential context; we were not, and he did not provide it for us.

A very similar situation, I believe, pertains in much obtuse, esoteric poetry. The ideas may be (at least I hope they would be) perfectly clear in the author's mind. But if the writer fails to provide us with enough context, we are likely to remain baffled, no matter how frequently we reread the piece. The writer in such a case is not having due regard for his reader. He is failing to communicate clearly. Now if you think of a poem as a word puzzle, that may be fine. But I would prefer to spend my time doing cross-word puzzles, if I were interested in word games. A poem is not a game; it should be the communication of experience. Ann Baker (1984) states, "Real writing is purposeful communication by writers to their readers" (p. 20). David Johnson (1990) echoes, "The poems, first written in solitude, become instruments of communication and community" (p. 62).

This same theme, "communication and community," is central for Karen Spear (1988) in her book, Sharing Writing: Peer Response Groups in English Classes. The whole thrust of her argument is that students should meet in peer groups to share and discuss their writings with the view to helping each other clarify, make more explicit, more precise, and more effective, each other's texts. This whole process, she suggests, "signals the degree to which a writer has conveyed information [experience, as Max van Manen would put it] to the reader rather than 'noise'" (p. 133). In other words, the writer who fails to communicate clearly, transmits to us "noise" rather than experience. Since we live in a world that already has far too much noise, maybe these obscure writers to whom I object should take some lessons from Spear and her peer groups and learn how to express themselves more simply, more clearly.

After all, in the world of art, and even in science, there is a certain beauty and grace in simplicity. If a set of data can be explained as satisfactorily with a simpler explanation, as opposed to a more complex explanation, the scientist will opt for the former. Maybe writers should do the same as they process and explain the data of their experience. Clear, simple language is effective language. The language of Winston Churchill, one of the most effective orators of modern times, comes to mind. Using clear, concise language, he was a

master of wit and repartee. On one occasion when an angry opponent tried to disparage him, she hissed, "If you were *my* husband, I'd gladly serve you poison in your tea!" Without a moment's hesitation, Churchill shot back, "Lady, if I were *your* husband, I'd gladly drink it!" Simple, direct, effective communication.

One can find innumerable examples in our great heritage of English literature, wherein great works of art are couched in simple, evocative language. I shall quote only a few samples. They will need very little commentary from me. What they will all have in common is their simplicity of expression, which only adds to their artistry, and in no way detracts from their profundity of thought:

Chaucer: (1340?-1400)

A Knight ther was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To riden out, he loved chivalrye,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.

(Prologue to the Canterbury Tales: ll. 43-46, p. 42)

Shakespeare: (1564-1616)

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interred with their bones;

(Julius Caesar: III, ii, ll. 78-81, p. 958)

....

Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood;
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
While night's black agents to their preys do rouse.

(Macbeth: III, ii, ll. 50-53, p. 984)

Although Macbeth's speech is plain, it is ominous and filled with deep foreboding. We may at times have trouble with some of Shakespeare's vocabulary today, but essentially his language was simple and direct. How else would he have filled his Globe Theater, day after day? Much of his audience consisted of very ordinary folk, "groundlings," who crowded into his theater to stand in the pit to experience the powerful language of poetry.

King James Bible: (1611) (John 15: 13)

Greater love hath no man than this,
that a man lay down his life for his friend.

Robert Burns: (1759-1796)

My Luvie (ll. 1-4, p. 167)
 O, My luvie is like a red, red rose
 That's newly sprung in June:
 O, my luvie is like the melody
 That's sweetly played in tune.

William Blake: (1757-1827)

The Tyger (ll. 1-4, p. 205)
 Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
 In the forest of the night,
 What immortal hand or eye
 Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

Alfred Lord Tennyson: 1809-1892)

Ulysses (ll. 18-21, p. 32)
 I am part of all that I have met;
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
 Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
 For ever and for ever when I move.

Robert Frost: (1874-1963)

Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening (ll. 13-16, p. 126)
 The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
 But I have promises to keep,
 And miles to go before I sleep,
 And miles to go before I sleep.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King: (1929-1968)

I Have a Dream (ll. 13-15, p. 199)
 I have a dream that my four little children will one day live
 in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their
 skin but by the content of their character.

These few, short samples should suffice to make it apparent that good poetry need not be convoluted and obscure. It should communicate readily to people, even to those who do not have the benefits of an advanced education. When we look at the work of King in a social context, we realize he worked with a wide spectrum of people, much like that dealt with by Shakespeare - from humble illiterates, ranging upwards, educationally speaking, to highly sophisticated people like King himself. Through his inspiring use of plain language, he united these people in a great cause of social justice. As Weber indicates in his biographical note in Hogan (1970), "Martin Luther King ranks among history's greatest fighters for justice and freedom, both for his qualities as a man, and for his abilities

as a writer and leader” (p. 204). His poetic language, as exemplified in his “I Have a Dream,” is characterized by the wisdom of simplicity, clarity, grace and power.

All this argument for simplicity in poetry is not to suggest that there must always be total unanimity in the final interpretation of a particular poem. Each of us will bring our own particular background of experience to the poem, which experience will influence our perceptions of the meaning the poem has for us. Lockwood (1994) in her interesting article, “Poets on teaching Poetry,” quotes Robert Kendall advising that teachers ““should not rigidly impose a single interpretation on the poem, since most poems can be read in a variety of ways’” (p. 65). I agree. The article also suggests that “it is not necessary for the teacher or the students to fully understand a poem” (p. 68). Again I would agree. It is not likely that there is ever “full understanding” of any poem. We can always generate new meanings and perception with further readings and reflection. But this is not to suggest that there cannot be a good deal of common understanding at some *basic level*. If there is not some degree of common understanding, it would seem to suggest that there has been a failure in communication.

Lockwood’s previous comments notwithstanding, it appears to me that she recognizes this need for some commonality when she recommends that we look “for poems that say something to adolescents....they must be able to relate it to the real world and their own lives....[now quoting Hillringhouse], ‘issues closest to them, such as friendship, love, growing up, making choices, and separating from their parents’” (p. 69). To do this they would have to have some common understanding at a basic level with the author. The author will have had to have communicated something to them.

Turning again to Frost’s “Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening,” I will address this issue of “common understanding at a basic level” a little further. When I first read this poem as a child, I was only able to understand it at a very basic level. That is, my literal perception of the poem was quite clear. Living on a farm where we used horses for transportation in the winter, I could readily identify with Frost, the snow, the horse, the

sleigh, the woods, the farmhouse. These elements were all part of my daily experience. However, my understanding of someone being torn between his admiration of beauty and his obligations -- "promises to keep" -- was rather vague. But, "And miles to go before I sleep," I also understood very well at a literal, basic level. However, not having anyone to clarify such concepts for me, the deeper levels of meaning of these "promises" and this "sleep" eluded me until I was a little older. In my innocence, I was unaware that the poet could view the world with one eye on life and the other eye on death. But the point is, I had access to the poem, since Frost's language was clear enough for me to understand it at the basic level. Without such initial penetration into a poem, there can be little appreciation.

All my arguments for simplicity of language in no way suggest that poetry need be devoid of depth in thought. There are different levels of experience, and different levels of message and thought. But in my opinion, at some basic level, the writer, even as Frost has done, should convey some message, some experience, so clearly that even a child can understand it, even while the deeper level of the message, or experience, may be denied that child, and reserved for the more sophisticated reader. But when the sophisticated reader is unable to discern the message, even at the basic level, then the problem lies, as Spear suggests, not with the reader, but with the messenger, the writer that is.

In poetry, the simple makes a ready avenue to the deeper complexities of the psyche and the soul. However, if this avenue becomes cluttered with complex, esoteric, personal idiosyncratic images, the traveller may very well be turned away from such an obstacle course. But if the messages are clear, the traveller may well venture further down the road and pause en route to smell the symbolic blooms along the way. Poetry can certainly have complex nuances, but the basic structure through which those nuances are conveyed should be very clear. If your basic structure is not clear, then certainly the nuances will not be clear either. They will be lost and you will have wasted your time as a writer and the reader's time as a reader.

We have just been considering Frost's vision of a snowfall. I would now like to invite you to experience the first snowfall of the autumn season with me, via my poem "Celebration" (p. 15). While Frost viewed his snow from outdoors, we will have our view from indoors, warmly looking out "Through double glaze."

Again using the concept of basic meaning, I think that even a small child could understand this poem at that level. But it might take a child who is a little older to note the death imagery of "Dust, clods and rocks / And the ruined stocks /...oblivion, silence, repose." And it might take an adult to appreciate the intimations of immortality in "Till spring / Till spring" And it may be possible that some adults, even "learned ones," may miss the symbolic significance of gazing out "Through double glaze," (two *planes* of glass). Not only do poets "see through a glass darkly" (I Cor. 13:12); they view the world on more than one plane, as I said earlier, "with one eye on life and the other eye on death." Poets are endowed, or should I say afflicted, with double vision. I use the expression "double vision" generically to include all the multiple levels of vision with which the poet views experience. Not only is this vision bi-optic, it is also tri-optic, quad-optic, etc.

The poet can often use a very prosaic vehicle to convey his or her experiences. This vehicle can be a very ordinary collection of images. I think these images should be simply stated in very clear language that even a child can understand. But behind this collection of plain, simple images the poets with his double vision (again used generically) sees lurking a deeper meaning or meanings, which through rereading and reflection the careful reader may apprise. The poet through clear writing will have provided entry to the poem.

Let me illustrate with my poem, "The Overlander" (p. 16). Any child who has ever gone camping will readily grasp the basic, literal meaning of this poem. A man sits by the dying embers of his campfire and is spooked by animals in the surrounding woods. And for the child that is enough. But if that were the poem's only significance, it would be rather irrelevant. I would expect the more mature reader would see it for what it really is --

a psychological study of internal strife and conflict. The fire, of course, symbolizes the incandescent crucible of the mind, and the creatures of the night, the forboding thoughts with which the overlander struggles. Furthermore, this could be taken to many more levels of abstraction. There are many interpretations to the reading of a poem.

Before we close this discourse, I hope I may prevail upon your patience to consider very briefly yet one more of my poems, namely, "Urbanization" (p. 17). Again it is very simple on the surface, but I hope it would, despite its Dr. Seussian tone, reveal some deeper meaning within. Ostensibly it is about a cat, a fat cat. When recently I presented this simple, little poem for discussion at a graduate seminar, I was very surprized that not one among that very able group picked up on the deeper import of the title, "Urbanization," and I did not enlighten them then, so I do so now. There is an intended note of irony here. Maybe I myself did not write clearly enough. But on the other hand, as I said near the beginning of this paper, even the learned may sometimes miss the obvious. It is a humbling thought to realize that human fallibility is really quite ubiquitous.

The title to a poem is usually very relevant. When we think of *urbanization*, we do not usually think of cats, but rather we tend to think of people leaving their rural surroundings and crowding into the cities. So maybe my title was misleading. But looking upon the urbanized, fat cat urges upon us another issue. If the cat through urbanization has lost so much of its essential "catness," to coin a term, what have we as human beings similarly lost through *our urbanization* as we crowd ourselves, cheek by jowl, into our dense population patterns? In our hurried urban living, how often do we "belly flop" and fail to connect humanely in our dealings with other human beings? What is the price of our urbanization to those who are left marginalized by the structural violence of our grasping, materialistic, competitive society? How do our dreams for "the good life" impinge upon those round about us? Who is our neighbor? What are our responsibilities? Do we just walk off like the smug, self-satisfied, fat, urban cat? Grave questions may arise from a simple poem.

As we conclude I refer once more to Johnson and his book Word Weaving wherein he so ably discusses poetry and human interconnectedness. I quote:

We need a place to begin, a place out of which and from which we might view the world and begin the process of reconnecting the fragments of our experience, making a whole again, making us whole again. Metaphorically, we need to find the center: the center of ourselves, the center of our culture. (p. 65)

Johnson suggests we may help ourselves to reconnect through the extensive use of poetry - reading and writing poetry, not just by a select few, but by the public at large. And as Spear suggests, we should share our efforts in order to promote clarity.

So may I suggest that when you take up your pen to write poetry, that you write with such precision and clarity that not only your neighbor will understand it, but that your neighbor's child will understand it too. Then beyond that, beyond the basic denotational level of meaning, feel free, through the imagery of metaphor, to explore the deeper, hidden connotational mysteries of life and death. Follow your multi-optic vision through its various planes of perception to explore the heights and depths of human experience. I am not suggesting that your neighbor and child will straight away understand all the subtle depths of your thought; that may come later. But as I said earlier there should at least be a good deal of common understanding at some *basic level*. The basic thrust of your poem should be readily apparent. If not, some redrafting may be in order.

Writing poetry is not an occasion to show how erudite and learned we might be. I think it should be an occasion to communicate, to build community, to relate to other people, both to the wise and the not so wise. I think if we write with this in mind, we may be of assistance in building bridges and connections to help heal and mend a sadly afflicted world. And so I rest my case, my plea, for simplicity.

Aurora Borealis

The forests fill vale and hill,
Snows abound upon the ground,
The night is cold in frosty hold,
Stars shine bright with radiant light,
And all is still.

Then up the vault without a halt,
A flickering flame begins the game,
With eerie green and violet sheen.
A crimson glow begins to flow
Across the sphere, charging here
Charging there with filmy flare.
The sapphire flies across the skies,
While violet hue races blue,
Through fluted shapes of shimmering drapes.
With reel and rout round about,
In yellow sheen against the green,
Fly curtains bright upon the night.
The colors flow and grow and glow;
Racing high the phantoms fly,
While silent feet their rhythms beat,
Across the sky.

The flashing train begins to wane;
On hasty feet in quick retreat,
Into the shade the colors fade,
And all is still.

Harry Hess

Celebration

The first snow
 Comes
 Drifting
 Shifting
 Gently
 Sifting
 Down
 Upon back lawn and garden.

Before my gaze
 Through double glaze
 A whirling world
 Is whitening.

The heat and hurry
 Of summer's scurry
 Is spent.

Frail, faded grass
 Begins to pass
 From sight.

Dust, clods and rocks
 And the ruined stalks
 Of a ruined summer
 Gladly receive the obscuring snow.

All is decked in oblivion
 And stilled to silence
 And restful repose
 Till spring
 Till spring

Harry Hess

The Overlander

The campfire light holds back the night,
 From a circle in the pines.
 The last log sparks as a coyote barks,
 From atop a distant hill.
 A whispering breeze sighs through the trees,
 That circle the dimming light.
 In the glimmering glow of the campfire low,
 Sits the solitary figure.
 The stars are bright this moonless night,
 Bright, yet distant, distant.
 Flung across the sky the lonely cry
 Of another coyote answers.
 The chilling night steals upon the light,
 Still sits the solitary figure.
 With his collar up tight against the night,
 With senses, sharp he listens.
 From nearby mixed with the coyote's cry,
 Come sounds of creatures creeping.
 From the underbrush in the dusky hush,
 The crawling creatures come.
 Not clearly seen but their eyes of green
 Betray their eerie presence.
 The creeping feet on dry leaves beat,
 Creeping nearer, nearer.
 The curled claw of a stealthy paw,
 Snaps a twig.
 With arms flung high to the studded sky,
 He shrieks to the heavens,
 "Back! Back! Back to the darkness,
 Out of which you came!"
 A moment's confusion by sudden intrusion ----
 The shadows scurry away.
 Now near, now far, the echoes jar,
 "... you CAME ... Came ... came."
 Then the night's the same out of which they came,
 With his collar up tight against the night,
 With senses sharp, he listens

Harry Hess

Urbanization
 or
Jump! Jump! Why don't you?

A fat, urban cat,
 Won't catch a rat,
 Or even a tiny mouse.
 The proof I saw one morning,
 Out behind our city house.

The neighbor's cat, oh so slow,
 Padded along the garden wall low,
 Lolled its body, so well fed,
 And stared into the flower bed.

Now in passing, let us mention,
 A foraging mouse caught its attention.
 At first that cat was quite indifferent,
 "Well, my kitty chow is quite sufficient."
 But feline instincts from eons past,
 Slowly roused that cat at last.

Head bobbed, tail lashed,
 Feet gathered, eyes flashed.
 Spring it must, that it knew,
 But knew not how, for morning dew,
 Might get its feet wet!

The silly dance went on and on,
 "I'll jump, I'll jump, ANON! ANON!"
 Little mouse moved, cat moved too,
 Gathering itself, to try anew.

I despaired, "You cat untrue,
 My toast I'll wager, you'll not really jump,
 You're much too fat, too big a lump!"
 And so the dance dragged on and on,
 "I'll jump, I'll jump anon, anon."

What is this? What is this?
 A total miss! A total miss!
 A feeble hop! A belly flop!
 It rummaged here, it rummaged there,
 Among the flowers blooming fair.
 But the mouse was long, long gone.

Puss walked away, nose in air,
 "I do have much better fare,
 A city cat need catch no rat,
 Nor even a tiny mouse, so there!"
 And I ate my toast.

Harry Hess

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DISSERTATION

CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Introduction

As an English teacher my interest in literature, particularly in the genre of poetry, has always been very keen. I have been able to use this interest to good effect in my ESL teaching. I have found that the use of authentic literature, including poetry, as a resource for teaching ESL is often more effective than the materials frequently found in many of the standard ESL textbooks. Widdowson (1981) in his article, "The Use of Literature," commenting on the poor characterization in much of the ESL textual materials complains about "stereotypic dummies, humanoids mouthing sentence patterns" (p. 211). As an antidote he recommends the widespread use of literature in ESL classes. Dupuy, Tse, and Cook (1996) also prefer authentic texts for ESL students. They note "we have found that students prefer them to simplified texts written for second language learners. For many students finishing simplified texts does not bring the same boost in confidence as finishing a book written for native speakers" (p. 11). Wong, Kwok, and Choi (1995) define "authentic materials" as "materials which are used in genuine communication in the real world, and not specifically prepared for teaching and learning English" (p. 318). It is from these perspectives about using authentic literature that I propose to explore Poetry as an Intercultural Peace Bridge for Teaching ESL.

I propose to explore how poetry could be used to bridge the gaps between the cultures of ESL students and the Canadian culture into which they have moved. At the same time I will be looking at the concomitant problem of promoting harmonious relations between the varying cultural backgrounds that are typified in most ESL classrooms. Sanchez (1993) commenting on the varied cultural backgrounds of ESL classes in Canada says, "They come representing a myriad of races, languages, experiences, backgrounds,

and world views” (p. 35). Along with this varied mix, the study will examine women’s issues. Thus the study will have a strong peace education, or global, or cross-cultural education component within its scope.

One of the most important and most urgent problems in the world today is one of human relations. All about us, locally, nationally, and internationally, people are at odds. Conflicts of every sort are ubiquitous. The distressing news of the media confirms this every day. As educators it is incumbent upon us to actively try to help ameliorate these problems of relations between diverse human beings. Teachers must have a vision. As Paulo Freire (1996) observes in his article “Dreams and Utopias,” “I can’t respect the teacher who doesn’t dream of a certain kind of society that he would like to live in, and would like the new generation to live in” (p. 1). Courchene (1996) adds, as he reflects on the large number of immigrants arriving in Canada, that we must be flexible and tolerant. “For each new generation the cultural paradigm must be reworked in the context of the changing society” (p. 6).

Our actions in the classroom are never politically neutral. What goes on there influences all concerned, teacher as well as students. The classroom is an appropriate and useful field for promoting better human relations. And poetry is an invaluable instrument and tool for working the ground of this field. Effectively used, poetry should help to produce a bountiful yield of better human understanding, of more harmonious interpersonal and cross-cultural relations. One of the functions of education is to provide a forum for the exchange and assessment of ideas with the view to provide students and teachers further opportunities for growth in human understanding and the promotion of good will amongst all people. Accordingly, I hope to show how poetry can be used not only to teach English to ESL students, but also to promote good will and as an effective elixir for peace.

The applications of such understandings should go far beyond the initial explorations of the ESL classroom where the study will take place. Attitudes of tolerance, respect, and appreciation should be fostered in every classroom as well as in the world at

large. Finding solutions to the problems of human relations should be everyone's concern. These solutions will not be found unless we make conscious efforts to deliberately move in that direction.

As we seek this accommodation with other people we will have to develop respect and appreciation for the poor as well as for the affluent of both genders. Poetry can help in this integrative process leading to greater tolerance and understanding between people. To illustrate I cite a passage from Robert Burns the eighteenth century Scottish poet of the Romantic period of literature. I realize that Burns is not an "authority" on education, but he is an "authority" about the human heart. As such he gives us wisdom. In his poem, "Is There For Honest Poverty," he urges:

Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will, for a' that,
That Sense and Worth, o'er a' the earth,
Shall bear the gree an' a' that;
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's comin yet for a' that,
That man to man, the world o'er
Shall brithers be for a' that. (ll. 33-40)

Burns penned his lines in 1794, over two centuries ago. We are still seeking his ideals of tolerance and respect, of sisterhood and brotherhood. The vision is still alive. Only a quarter century ago the great champion of human justice, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King (1968), proclaimed in his "I Have a Dream":

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live
in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their
skin but by the content of their character (ll. 13-15, p. 199).

More recently, Rivers (1981) and Hicks (1988) echo Burns and King. Rivers, in writing the foreword to Robinson's (1981) text on issues in second language learning, declares, "Harmonious living implies tolerance and acceptance of differences, willingness to cooperate with others whose ways of viewing and doing things are not ours" (viii). In his article, "Understanding the Field," Hicks states:

We are inextricably bound up in a web of global interactions, constantly affecting and affected by the choices of others, whether locally or on more distant parts of the globe. (p. 4)

Students should have a sense of the worth of others, particularly of those with social, cultural, and family backgrounds different from their own. (p. 15)

The close reading and study of poetry, the discussion of poetry and the writing of poetry can help students learn to appreciate others with “backgrounds different from their own.” ESL students, as I hope to show, can profit from this involvement with poetry as they adjust to a new cultural environment made up of diverse people. This involvement should help to bridge the gap between diverse cultures and between individuals and, in the process, help to promote peace and understanding between peoples.

The Statement of the Problem

This research proposes to study the following question: *How can poetry be used in ESL classes as a means of building peace bridges, or connections, between cultures?* This main problem shall be divided into three interrelated subproblems.

The Subproblems

The first subproblem. How can poetry be used to help ESL students to connect with Canadian culture?

The second subproblem. How can poetry be used to help ESL students of various cultural backgrounds to connect with each other?

The third subproblem. How can poetry be used to help ESL students towards personal peace, interpersonal and cross-cultural peace?

The Definitions

Poetry. I will offer a “provisional” definition of poetry for, as Perrine (1963) observes, in defining poetry, we must be, “Provisional, because man has always been more successful at appreciating poetry than at defining it” (p. 3). Poetry is an art form which uses words and ideas as a medium. It is distinguished from prose in that poetry, more consciously, more deliberately, uses *measured language*. That is, the language is measured metrically and/or by line. Poetry is very deliberately laid out line by line. In general, the language of poetry, as it deals with and evokes human experience and emotion, is more highly condensed, more highly connotative and figurative than is the language of prose. “Poetry is the most condensed and concentrated form of literature, saying most in the fewest number of words” (Perrine, p. 10).

ESL students. ESL students are students of a non-English background who are learning English while living in an English-speaking milieu. Their competencies could be at various levels. The level for this study will be addressed in the limitations set out below. More will be said later about the nature of ESL students in the section on the setting and the subjects.

Bridges. Bridges refer to *means* by which different cultures can come together to establish understanding, appreciation, and respect for each other. The *means* for this study will be poetry. For example, in Burns’s poem, “Is There For Honest Poverty,” quoted earlier, the poet would urge us to a sense of solidarity with the poor and underprivileged.

Connect. To connect refers to establishing rapport, rapprochement, peaceful, harmonious, friendly relations among people. It may involve overcoming barriers between people.

Peace. For this study peace includes, but goes beyond, the absence of war. It also involves a state of equanimity and composure with self and with others. It considers the conditions that make life more peaceful for most people. For example the provision of the basic needs like adequate shelter, food, clothing, education and medical needs. And to

provide for these needs we have to work at the elimination of poverty and homelessness. Women's issues have to be addressed. Likewise the reduction of inequality and prejudice. I doubt that anyone ever achieves a state of perfect peace, but it is an ideal towards which we can aspire. This study will seek to find how poetry can help us to that end.

Culture. Culture refers to the way of life of a group of people -- their customs, their values, their outlooks, their ways of doing things. Jenkins (1987) sees culture as a "complex of dynamic phenomena which predict, in the most general terms, how people normally interact with others, and how they relate to the environment" (p. 4). The culture of any geographical region, like Canada, which experiences a large influx of people is a fluid, dynamic entity in that the newcomers also contribute to that culture. "To be viable Canadian culture must be a synthesis of the past and the present, the old and the new, but never the reified and the fossilized....forever in transition, a vision on the way to becoming but never reaching its destination" (Chourchene 1996, p. 6, p. 8).

The Delimitations and Scope

As determined by their language-test scores, this study included only ESL students considered as being Upper Level in achievement. These tests were given earlier by their schools. The purpose of this delimitation was to ensure that all students would have sufficient English proficiency to read, understand, and respond effectively to the poetry used for the study. The study engaged an ESL class for six weeks. The class was enlisted from the Continuing Education Program of the Edmonton Public School System. Preliminary arrangements for access were made well in advance of the study.

The poems used in this study were mainly from the common English canon. Additionally, we used contemporary poetry of established English writers, and some English translations from other cultures. A list of the poems and their authors is included in the appendices of the study. The students involved in the study were encouraged to write poems of their own. One of the best ways to respond to a poem is to write a poem.

These poems written by the students were shared and discussed in class, with the students' permission, of course. I have included many of these student responses as part of the final report.

Limitations

The interpretation of poetry tends to be a subjective matter. To preclude biases entirely in such a situation, or in most any research situation, would be impossible. Realistically one must alert all involved -- researcher, subjects, and readers -- of the possible influence of biases upon the study. The need for critical objectivity will be discussed further in the chapter on design.

In view of the small number of subjects that were engaged by working with only one class of nineteen people, the generalizability of findings may be limited. However, this may have been somewhat offset by having worked more closely and for a longer time with such a limited sample size.

It was hoped that interesting and useful interaction, arising from the study and writing of poetry associated with this research, would be generated and recorded. Nevertheless, with due regard for the previously mentioned limitations, inference from these findings will have to be made with caution until further supportive studies are made.

Assumptions

1. The first assumption, supported by subsequent literature references in chapter two, was that poetry is an appropriate literary genre for study in the ESL classroom.

2. The second assumption was that ESL students can and do enjoy responding to poetry, including the writing of poetry. This assumption was based upon observations made as a result of the researcher's ESL teaching experience.

3. The third assumption was that students (and the teacher/researcher) would interact candidly when dealing with the poetry and with each other.

4. The fourth assumption was related to the third. It was assumed the students would feel that the classroom provided a safe, accepting, supportive environment, such as would encourage people to be candid. As Beaty (1995) states, “The caring teacher will respect students and deal sensitively with them, so that the students feel supported, trusted and valued” (p. 53). Such a supportive environment not only helps students to be candid but it also facilitates language learning by reducing stress, thus enabling students to be more willing to take risks as they employ the target language.

5. The fifth assumption was that the students would have had at least a rudimentary background in dealing with poetry, if not in their native language, then at least in English, seeing that they were already advanced students. Formal knowledge of poetry was not essential. However, enough experience to enjoy poetry and to respond to it intelligently was necessary. This the students ably demonstrated.

6. The sixth assumption was that friendly dialogue could help to build a community of interconnected people. It was *not* assumed that poetry builds these interconnections. The study set out to ascertain if friendly dialogue about poetry could help in the construction of these important linkages, particularly in an ESL setting.

Conclusion: The Importance of the Study

In Western Canada the whole field of ESL, both as to research and teaching, is still relatively new. I substantiate this claim by my own experience. Prior to changing careers in 1987, I had worked as an English teacher for fifteen years in one of the largest, most progressive high schools in Alberta. Such a high school, I believe, reflects the academic educational trends of the time. During that interval of fifteen years we had not a single ESL class in the whole institution. Subsequent to leaving this school I have kept in contact with a number of my former colleagues. With interest I note their increasing attention to and activity in the area of ESL. They have moved from no ESL classes to a well-established ESL program which is still expanding.

This growing concern augurs well for ESL as an educational research area. Therefore, any serious research in this field should prove both interesting and useful. With so many people moving into Canada from diverse parts of the world, the need for ESL research and teaching is great. This is no less true for our own province of Alberta, and our own city of Edmonton. As noted in a publication of Alberta Education (1993), "The need for ESL instruction in this province is increasing" (p. 2).

As educators we have not only an educational obligation, but also a social and moral obligation to help non-English speakers adjust to their new situation. This is not an argument for total assimilation and the loss of cultural identity. Chourchene (1996) observes:

Our challenge as a profession and a society is to find an effective means of sharing our cultural knowledge with new Canadians, so that they may act on it, transform it, and return it to us in a new form that also incorporates the content of their first culture. (p. 25)

Canada often prides itself in being a mosaic of cultures. Eliadis (1996) states, "Canada's traditionally generous approach to multiculturalism has made this country a good place for new arrivals from a wide range of backgrounds. Here they can raise families and build a life without losing cultural identities" (p. 1). Shamaï and Ilatov (1995) note that "multiculturalism" has been an official government policy since the Trudeau era of the early 1970s, the social message being that "it is fine to keep your ethnic identity and to be a Canadian" (p.5). This diversity adds much to our richness as a nation, not only economically, but more importantly, culturally and spiritually as well. Elliston (1997) affirms, "Diversity is a source of cultural and social richness" (p. 19). Nevertheless, these newcomers have a great need to become functional in English. Research should help to inform our practice as educators in the field. ESL teachers in particular should be informed. Sauvé (1996) commenting on the important role of our ESL teachers observes that it is often from these teachers that "immigrant newcomers get their picture of who and what Canadians are. From us they learn to see Canada through our eyes to some extent;

they learn how to access essential services; and they learn what at least some Canadians expect of them” (p.20).

However, we do not only want to inform our practice as to teaching techniques, we also want to inform our practice as citizens in a community wanting good relations and peace with our neighbors. This should apply not only to teachers and students in the classroom, but also to all of us in the wider community beyond the walls of the school. Pope and Overstreet (1990) remind us that, “To confront the challenges of the future and an ever shrinking world, we must acknowledge and interweave the common thread -- our human diversity....We must acknowledge and honor our cultural diversity, we must use that diversity to build strength” (p. 8). Freisen (1997) adds, “if we care about the future shape of our country, we must forge ahead...carrying the message of acceptance and appreciation of cultural and individual diversity” (p. 2). These are certainly no small challenges facing our educational institutions. Ryan (1996) observes “such tasks are not always easy to carry out, but they are necessary if all students are to receive a quality education” (p. 30).

To give these ideas a more immediate and local application I quote Anita Jenkins (1987), editor of a handbook for ESL teachers published by Alberta Education. This handbook states, “In our pluralistic Canadian society, and in the world as a whole, there is a growing need for empathy, tolerance and acceptance” (p. 7). And again, “Students should perceive the world community as a human family. Through the study of other cultures they can reduce their ethnocentrism and provincialism” (p. 43).

Poetry has great potential as a means of bringing various cultures together in that it can deal with such universal themes of: nature, birth, life, work, play, love, joy, peace, religion, hate, fear, war, death, etc. These are themes to which most people can relate, for these are important issues of life that are dealt with in the texts (both oral and written) of all cultures. As people of various cultural backgrounds study poetry and see how other people deal with these issues, hopefully we may enhance our common sense of humanity and so

promote better intercultural relations, and the concomitant peace that we desire. The study of poetry can be a humanizing, socializing experience. Poetry can help us to stand in the other person's shoes. The literature consulted in Chapter II of this study will further support these ideas.

I think that this research is also important in that it seeks to further the idea of using poetry as a valuable teaching/learning resource for ESL students. It helps to corroborate the assumption stated above that poetry is an appropriate genre for study in the ESL classroom. Unfortunately, the idea of using poetry for ESL teaching is not always well received by ESL teachers, and thus they often bypass a useful resource. Poetry is sometimes thought of as not being very important or practical. However, poetry is not some mundane, arcane activity indulged in by a few eccentrics. It is part of every culture, our own included. Although not numerous, some writers, as is shown in the consulted literature, ably support the use of poetry as a facilitating device for teaching English to foreign students while at the same time helping them in the process of adapting to a new cultural environment.

As a concluding note on the importance of this study it should be observed that, while researchers and writers who support the idea of using poetry as a teaching medium for ESL are not numerous, those advocating the use of *poetry in ESL classes as a medium for promoting peace* are virtually nonexistent. While conducting a thorough search of the literature I was not able to turn up even one formal study that explored the aforesaid issue. So in a very real sense as my study explored this area I was doing pioneer work in a new field. It is hoped that this study will contribute to our fund of knowledge that will help to inform the practice not only of ESL teachers in particular but of teachers in other disciplines as well.

It is also hoped that this study might help to make educational institutions responsible for teacher education more aware of the importance of preparing teachers to work in an increasingly multi-cultural environment. Morris et al. (1996) recommends that

such institutions offer prospective teachers specific courses for such preparation. They state, "Teachers entering the profession today must possess the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and strategies that will enable them to work effectively with students and families from diverse backgrounds" (p. 22). In this connection I would suggest that prospective teachers should also be given courses that would give them a good grounding in teacher research. The topic of teacher research and its importance will be discussed in some detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II: CONSULTING RELEVANT LITERATURE

Introduction

My object in this chapter is to lay a theoretical foundation; to build a context or framework from which to launch into a new area of learning and knowledge. I hope to show how poetry can be used in ESL classes not only to teach English but, more importantly for this study, to build bridges between cultures and between individuals. This peace component should be of interest not only to ESL teachers but to educators generally. New ideas are not developed in isolation. They always relate back to and are grounded in ideas that have gone before. This concept of interrelated people and their ideas is developed more fully later as I look into David Johnson, (1990), Mark Johnson, (1987) and Peter Harries-Jones (1995), along with other writers. But for now I quote Merleau-Ponty (1964) who seems to have anticipated the thoughts of the aforesaid writers when he states as, "a cultural law, each new idea becoming after the one which instituted it, different than it was for this instituting idea" (p. 224).

The literature component is organized around two general themes, one receiving less emphasis than the other. The three subproblems listed in Chapter I lead off with the expression, "How can poetry be used to help ESL students...?" The minor theme concerns itself with the validity of using poetry for ESL work. The major theme concerns itself with the idea of using poetry as a bridging device between cultures, and between people as individuals and of different genders, in order to promote understanding and peace. Since these themes are interrelated, they are not treated as distinctly separate entities in this literature study. Accordingly, I shift from one theme to another as the literature study progresses. Nevertheless, the first theme, which receives less emphasis, will be treated more in the earlier sections, while the second, more major theme, is emphasized more in the latter portion. As a general backdrop for both themes I begin the next section by discussing the idea of the power of poetry as it affects people in their lives and how it applies to multiculturalism and to ESL teaching.

The Power of Poetry: Implications for ESL

I make brief mention of the power of poetry to affect people's lives in numerous other sections of this study. However, in this section I wish to explore the topic more fully, thereby adding breadth and depth to the foundational work upon which to build the ensuing explorations of the aforesaid main themes. I bring to bear upon the topic several authors not mentioned elsewhere, quoting and discussing their ideas. I believe this is a useful exercise since the use of poetry features so largely in my whole undertaking. Poetry, as David Johnson asserts and whom I quote elsewhere, has the power to build connections between the individual and the rest of the world. In this capacity it can be employed usefully, as I suggest in the title to my study, Poetry as an Intercultural Peace Bridge for Teaching ESL.

Wham, Barnhart and Cook (1996) describe an interesting study which investigates the power of literature, which of course includes poetry, to influence the attitudes of students in a positive way. Over a period of one year these researchers compared several groups of children. There were experimental groups and control groups. All the students had attitudinal tests administered both before and after the study, which gave a profile of the children's attitudes in areas of cultural diversity. The experimental groups had multicultural literature read to them on a daily basis. The control groups had only the usual curriculum. The study found that the children exposed to much multicultural literature developed much more positive attitudes towards people of diverse cultures. The researchers observe, "Literature allows individuals to share in the lives of others; it can also provide an avenue for multicultural understanding. It allows individuals to experience other people's feelings, appreciate and understand those whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own" (p.2). Similarly, Wilkinson and Kido (1997) argue for "literature as that bridge to other cultures" (p. 255).

I will turn my attention now from a discussion of literature in general as a bridging device between cultures to a more specific application of poetry for the same purpose.

Fukuyama and Reid (1996) assert “a poem is a potent form of communicating feelings, history, and interpersonal dynamics of complex multicultural phenomena....Part of the power of poetry comes from its unusual and unexpected juxtaposition of words and from its brevity” (p.83). Pinsky (1988) sees poetry as having “the ability to introduce feelings and meanings to precise degrees, with compact, rapid accuracy” (p. 38). Fukuyama and Reid assure teachers that poetry “can be used in the classroom by multicultural educators...[and one] need not be an expert in creative writing to use various techniques in presenting or in working with poetry” (p. 84).

Powell (1997) teaches teachers and relates her experiences with them as she engages them in writing poetry. She employs group work. These groups exclude criticism at first until all are more comfortable.

Slowly the students begin to trust me, one another, and finally their own voices, and they risk telling more and more truth....[They] begin to think about themselves as writers whose words have the power to touch other people -- not professional writers, not geniuses, but ordinary people appropriating the art of poetry for their own expression. (p. 451)

Carter (1996) suggests that we should not be too surprised that “ordinary people” should have an interest in poetry. This innate quality is evidenced in the very young. “I want to emphasize that the child is born with a poetic voice....This poetic voice is made manifest very early, for instance, in the need to play with a cry or with bodily rhythms” (p. 10). In this chapter on literature I note how various writers maintain that ESL students can also pursue this natural urge and profit from being engaged in “appropriating the art of poetry for their own expression” (Powell above). Akyel (1995) reminds us that “teachers can help learners expand their language awareness and improve interpretive skills by making the language of poems the focus of classroom study” (p. 63).

Lazar (1996) questions, “How will studying a poem...help students to acquire the English they need” (p.773)? She answers by saying, “literary texts are a rich source of classroom activities that can prove very motivating for learners” (p. 773). She goes on to suggest that such literature explores the dynamics of human experience and emotion and so

it can get students involved as they read, discuss, and write about their encounters with literature. "By doing so, learners become more personally invested in the process of language learning and they can begin to own the language they learn more fully" (p.773).

Heath (1996) is also interested in the personal involvement of her students. She engages her ESL students in the writing of their own journals, stories and poems. "Emotion, confrontation, confession, and dreams fill page after page, pushing learners to use words never called for in mathematics, science, or social studies assignments; shaping lines of poetry and epigraphs from half-sentences....Literature has no rival in its power to create natural repetition, reflection on language and how it works" (p.776).

Simac (1990) speaks of the power of poetry to connect people and to transcend cultures, "Metaphor offers the opportunity for my inwardness to connect itself with the world out there. All things are related, and that knowledge resides in my unconscious" (p. 89). And, "It goes without saying that a Chinese has greater appreciation of Chinese poetry than a Westerner. But poetry is not only what stays in cultural context, but what transcends it" (p. 91). Similarly Rich (1993) suggests poetry has the power to enable us to articulate our deepest feelings; it is "an instrument for embodied experience" (p. 13). She argues that as we "embody" our experience through poetry we can get beyond the superficialities and intellectual poverty of mass media entertainment and become a more caring society. She sees poetry as an antidote to this poverty. Poetry is a liberating force, "pulling us toward each other" (p. 39). It is based on a language process and belief that "an 'I' can become 'we' without extinguishing others, that a partly common language exists to which strangers can bring their own heartbeat, memories" (p. 85). McHugh (1993) agrees. "The place of poetry is nothing less than the place of love for language; the place of shifting ground, for human song....It takes upon itself, into itself, what it sees; the song of insight. Whether out of joy or grief, it sings us in, and as it does, we are moved" (pp. 1-2).

Lazar's (1996) article, "Using figurative language to expand students' vocabulary," also lends voice to the power of poetry through its use of metaphorical language. She suggests that our whole language system is essentially metaphorical. She cites idioms by way of example. "Idioms are a rich repository of figurative meanings, but are so highly conventionalized that their origins are all but forgotten by the native speaker" (p. 45). Lazar suggests teachers must help language learners understand the linkage between the comparisons made in the use of figurative language. "Our task as teachers is to sensitize students to the cultural significance which accrues to particular examples in figurative language in English, while encouraging them to compare those associations with those in their own language" (p. 46).

In her book Literature and Language Teaching, Lazar (1993), like Simac and Rich above, also discusses the power of literary text, both prose and poetry, to raise our sense of social responsibility. "Literary texts have a powerful function in raising moral and ethical concerns in the classroom. The tasks and activities we devise to exploit these texts should encourage our students to explore these concerns and connect them with the struggle for a better society" (p. 3). To get students concerned about "a better society" they will have to be emotionally, as well as intellectually, involved. Literature "can help to stimulate the imagination of our students, to develop their critical abilities and to increase their emotional awareness" (p.19).

William Preston (1982), in "Poetry Ideas in Teaching Literature and Writing to Foreign Students," (TESOL Quarterly 16 (4), 486-502) wonders why teachers fail:

to tap this potentially valuable resource as a means of directly and actively involving foreign students in communicative, creative uses of English....much more can be done to exploit this largely ignored, yet potentially relevant resource. (p. 489)

Similarly Akyel (1995) referring to Widdowson and others states, "teachers can help learners expand their language awareness and improve interpretive skills by making the language of poems the focus of classroom study" (p. 63). Tosta (1996) laments that poetry has been neglected as "a tool for language instruction" (p.62). He recommends poetry for

several reasons. "poems usually deal with universal themes such as love or hate, which are familiar to all readers. Secondly, poems bring contexts which are not only rich culturally but also linguistically" (p. 62). The language teacher must select poems carefully to ensure the materials are suitable to the language level and interests of the students. "A poem should be meaningful and enjoyable" (p. 62). "The inclusion of short authentic literary prose selections and poems will show students who are just commencing their study of English that English can express feelings and ideas about love, death, hope, fear, etc." (Tarvin 1990, p. 34).

While carefully selecting poems the teacher should also be prepared to read them aloud. Of course it is assumed the teacher will read effectively with expression appropriate to the poem. Amer's (1997) comparative studies indicate that language students who had materials read aloud to them achieved much better results in reading comprehension than students who only read materials silently to themselves. "The pedagogic implications of these results...is that reading aloud by the teacher, if it is made a regular and integral part of the EFL teaching process, can have a positive effect" (p. 46). Ong (1967) urges the importance of the oral aspects of language, in fact he argues its primacy. "We have been slow to note, although the linguistic experts remind us of it constantly now, that writing is a derivative of speech, not vice versa, and that speech in its original state has nothing at all to do with writing" (p. 18). Ong again, "the spoken word does have more power than the written to do what the word is meant to do, to communicate" (p.115).

Cruickshank (1996) in his article "Poetry Writing and ESL," like Preston noted above, also questions the lack of poetry in ESL classes. He observes that, in these classes, "Poetry teaching has a history of unpopularity and neglect" (p. 54). Cruickshank suggests that this may be due, in part, to the unsatisfactory experiences of teachers themselves when they were students. Nevertheless, Cruickshank recommends not only the reading but also the writing of poetry as being highly beneficial for ESL students. As they try to express their ideas and feelings via poetry, they will gain a better comprehension of what and how

poets are trying to write. "Poetry writing is an excellent way to develop the language skills of ESL students....poetry offers a way to express ideas and feelings that are not possible in prose" (p. 54). As a source for these ideas Mitchell (1996) recommends the students' own memories, "something they really know and something that matters to them" (p. 19).

Hudelson (1986) argues that, as we teach ESL, our students should not only listen to and discuss stories and poems, they should also be engaged in writing them. She maintains that students "of limited English speaking ability can compose in their second language, before they have 'mastered' that language, before they have total control over the systems of English" (p. 26).

Also in the area of timing, Rigg and Allen (1989) make a strong case for the early introduction of literature into the ESL program. As editors to a collection of articles on ESL, they state in the introduction:

Literacy is part of language development. Writing, speaking, listening, and reading all nourish one another; we don't wait for mastery of one before encouraging development of the other three....ESL speakers should be involved with literacy activities from the first....They need not be fluent English speakers before they can write and read...they need to hear literature read aloud to them by the teacher. (xiv)

Writing separately in the article, "Literature as a Support for Language Acquisition," Allen (1989) argues for the importance of literature in language learning. She states that it is very valuable in that it can give ESL students "something to talk about by providing a very special kind of experience" (p. 59). She also stresses the "reading aloud of books...to ESL students" (p. 62). Germain (1995) likewise stresses the value of presenting poetry to students. "Poetry is very powerful, and students should see and experience poetry's power" (p. 58).

In this same context Preston (1982) tells of an interesting experience that he had with a group of Thai school teachers learning English. He would read them simply written poems and then have them respond with a poem of their own in English. He reports great success with this venture. "I found that poetry writing can indeed be an equally enjoyable, creative and productive learning experience for foreign students" (p. 493).

Humans as Beings of Emotion

The foregoing writers stress the emotional enjoyment to be derived from poetry. Through my interest in poetry, both as a writer and as a teacher, and through long observation I would contend that humans are more inclined to be creatures of sentiment and emotion than creatures of reason and logic. Poetry can help to nurture this emotional inclination. I will support this contention by reference to the literature. Living in a scientific age, we may, to our own detriment, forget or deny our emotional predilections.

Accepting our emotional nature can constitute very positive experience. At the same time I do not deny that emotion can be very destructive, as we often see in crimes of passion and in the scourge of war. But humans can make choices between constructive and destructive emotions. Writers of literature all through the centuries have continually explored these options. That is why poetry, which is the language of feeling, should be an important part of every language curriculum. Poetry can be a meeting ground where we can explore our emotional nature and learn to appreciate each other for this human dynamic which we have in common. Briggs (1957) observes, "In every human heart there is a great variety of latent emotions -- emotions of joy and sorrow, hope and despair, resignation and resentment, admiration and disgust, ambition and complacency, love and hate" (p. 28). Poetry can help to vent our emotions and channel them in a positive, constructive, conciliatory direction.

Most writers in dealing with poetry stress, as Preston has, the experiential enjoyment to be derived from poetry, even if it evokes poignantly, sad feelings. Poetry deals very much in the affective domain. Douglas H. Brown's (1987) book, Principles of Language Learning and Teaching, considers humans to be essentially emotional beings.

Human beings are emotional creatures. At heart all thought and meaning and action is emotion. As "intellectual" as we would like to think we are, we are influenced by our emotions. It is only logical then, to look at the affective (emotional) domain.... (p. 49)

Perrine, cited earlier, suggests that poetry is a means by which our emotional inclinations may be nurtured. He sees poetry as a means of “deepening our experience ...by making us feel more poignantly and more understandingly those everyday experiences which all of us have” (p. 6). David Johnson (1990) who will be examined in greater detail later, like Perrine, also stresses the experiential importance of poetry. He sees poetry as a means of “reconnecting the fragments of our experience, making a whole again, making us whole again” (p. 65). ESL students also have these feeling and experiences, these needs for “reconnecting,” and should have poetry included in their curriculum.

Antonen (1997) likewise argues for the power of literature to uplift and move people in a positive way. She maintains that it has the power to “stir us, make a difference and contribute to our moral development” (p. 37). It does this, as she points out earlier in her article, by evoking an “‘echo’ of reality” which hightens our experience. “And when we enter this world created by literature, we catch glimpses of reality that lie beyond the words” (p. 35).

Sage (1987), in Incorporating Literature in ESL Instruction, supports the use of poetry for language instruction. It attracts people because it deals with timeless human concerns and values.

Poets lead readers to fuller experiences, not only of ordinary moments, but also special moments. Poetry uses language to evoke and exalt special qualities of life, and suffuses readers with feelings (p.13)

In a similar context, Ronnqvist and Sell (1994) affirm Sage. Commenting on the value of literature, including poetry, for helping language learners, they observe:

Reading literature not only gives learners a chance to contextualize on the basis of the cultural knowledge they already have, but can encourage them to use their brains in an effort to acquire the new knowledge they need in order to understand passages which puzzle them. (p. 125)

Language Acquisition and Culture

The foregoing writers stress the importance of literature in language acquisition. To facilitate the understanding of another language, we must also become familiar with the culture associated with that language. “each person is the product of a particular culture that passes on shared and appropriate meanings. Thus, if we want to learn to communicate well in a foreign language, we must understand the culture that gives the language meaning” (Irving 1986, p. 4). Hyde (1994) informs us that “Language use reflects culture and it is impossible to disassociate the two in any real sense” (p. 295). And “Although people are not necessarily prisoners of their language, it is undoubtedly true that the way a culture sees the world is reflected in its language” (p. 300).

Bennett (1997) also explores the way culture impinges upon the individual’s world view . The culture into which we are born profoundly affects the way we see reality.

Worldview refers to the way a cultural group perceives people and events. While individual idiosyncrasies do exist, it is also true that the people who share common dialects and primary experiences learn to see “reality” in the same ways. They develop similar styles of cognition; similar processes of perceiving, recognizing, conceiving, judging, and reasoning; as well as similar values, assumptions, ideas, beliefs, and modes of thought (p. 136)

Dao (1997) quotes a poem by Tran (1987) which I think illustrates the way cultures influence perceptions. Tran is an Eastern writer and we see in his poem how he contrasts *his* perceptions of his culture with that of *his* perceptions of the West. Since it is a short poem I shall quote it in its entirety. To quote less than the whole would fracture the work and detract from its impact. Following the quotation I shall comment on the poem briefly. Tran writes:

East

We live in time.
 We are always at peace.
 We are passive.
 We like to contemplate.
 We accept the world as it is.
 We live in peace with nature.
 Religion is our first love.
 We delight in thinking about the
 the meaning of life.
 We believe in the freedom of silence.
 We lapse into meditation.
 We marry first, then we love.
 Our marriage is the beginning
 of a love affair.
 It is our indissoluble bond.
 Our love is mute.
 We try to conceal it from the world.
 Self-abnegation is the secret to
 our survival.
 We are taught from the cradle
 to want less and less.
 We glory in austerity.
 Poverty is to us a badge of
 spiritual elevation.
 In the sunset years of life,
 we renounce the world
 and prepare for the hereafter.

West

You live in space.
 You are always on the move.
 You are aggressive.
 You like to act.
 You try to change it according to your blue print.
 You try to impose your will upon her.
 Science is your passion.
 You delight in physics.

 You believe in freedom of speech.
 You strive for articulation.
 You love first, then you marry.
 Your marriage is the happy end of a romance.

 It is a contract.
 Your love is vocal.
 You delight in showing it to others.
 Self-assertiveness is the key to your success.

 You are urged everyday to want more and more.

 You emphasize gracious living and enjoyment.
 It is to you a sign of degradation.

 You retire to enjoy the fruit of your labor.

Tran (1987) in Shade (1997) p. 53

The poem certainly makes sweeping generalizations which we might question. For example, it would be very nice if Eastern people were “always at peace.” This is obviously not always the case. Nor are Eastern people always “passive.” Nor do all Western people “delight in physics.” However, we must note that these are *Tran’s perceptions* that have been nurtured by *his* culture. The generalizations and overstatements notwithstanding, we can recognize certain broad truths in his observations for both East and West. Who, for example, could argue the idea that we in the West in general “are urged everyday to want more and more.” Or that the Eastern scholars “believe in the freedom of silence.” These are matters of very real cultural orientation.

It is important that ESL teachers be aware of the correlations between language and culture. This would help teachers to understand and appreciate the uniqueness of different

cultures. But at the same time Ruth Johnson (1995) cautions us not to overlook the commonalities of various cultures. These commonalities help us to sense our interrelatedness. Referring to the preparation of ESL teachers Johnson suggests:

the realization of commonalities can be achieved through culture-specific instruction: to present unique behaviors of another culture while at the same time explaining to students where the commonality lies. Thus, for example, although eating behaviors vary from culture to culture, the fact that all people eat and have eating rules for eating is common. (p. 61)

Bennett (1996) agrees that underneath the apparent differences manifested by various cultures there are indeed commonalities. But he argues we must go beyond just identifying our commonalities so as to be more comfortable with each other. We must in fact, urges Bennett, recognize that we have profound differences engendered by our various cultures, then at the same time we must learn to respect and appreciate these differences. Bennett suggests, “we must be able to consider the possibility that cultures provide us with different views, different organizations of reality....Another way of thinking about this is as intercultural empathy....That demands knowledge of the other culture” (p. 15).

Blake (1992) suggests, in "Poets on Poetry: The Morality of Poetry," that through poetry there is available a valuable source of cultural information. Poetry provides access for “knowing about one’s culture and of inevitably and necessarily becoming a member of that culture” (p. 17). Similarly, Swiderski (1993) sees “second-language acquisition as coordinate with, and ultimately dependent on, second-culture acquisition...culture learning is not a discardable option for language learning” (p.8). Since ESL students enrol in English classes, it is reasonable to believe that they are interested in improving their English proficiency and in enhancing their concomitant understanding and appreciation of English culture.

Gail Robinson (1981), some years earlier, also notes the interplay between language learning, culture, and the “affective (emotional) domain,” noted by Brown above.

research shows that a positive attitude toward the target language culture facilitates acquisition of the language...the degree of empathy or identification with the target culture affects second language acquisition. (p. 30)....a language teaching strategy based on personal involvement, that is, one which stimulates students emotionally, conceptually, and subjectively, may have two benefits. First, personal involvement -- especially emotional involvement with cultural messages -- is critical to cultural identification....Cultural identification in turn affects language acquisition. Second, on a more direct level, personal involvement in messages conveyed through the language may affect language acquisition by encouraging deeper processing and greater elaboration of the input. (p. 85)

Jacobson (1996) gives us further insight into the importance of “personal involvement” in the language-cultural association. “cultural knowledge is not learned *from* experience, but *in* experience” (p. 16). He sees culture as a commonality of shared experiences, a mutuality in the way experiences are interpreted. When we learn a new language and its associated culture we must learn new ways of understanding our experiences and relationships. “Learning a new culture means coming to share other’s ways of making sense without the benefit of having shared their histories” (p. 16). Jacobson goes on to affirm that the cognitive processes of learning a new language and a new culture cannot take place in the abstract apart from a social context. “Cognition is not solely an internalized, psychological process, but is inherently context-dependent and interactive” (p. 21).

I believe that the ideas posed above by Robinson and Jacobson support my argument that poetry is an effective tool to expedite the learning of both language and culture. Poetry can not only provide the linguistic context but also the highly important emotional context referred to by Robinson which is so useful in the language and cultural learning process. Then again as the teacher employs the dynamics of group work in the poetry lessons there will be provided the interactive context advocated by Jacobson. While working with poetry, both in class work as a whole and in group work, there is much scope for emotional and intellectual involvement on the part of the students. Poetry is the language of emotion and a well-managed poetry lesson gets student and teachers involved at an emotional level. Poetry can be an enlivening, engaging experience. It can provide for, as Jacobson puts it, “Evolving participation in a community of shared meaning and

practice" (p. 25), which is the essence of language and cultural learning. Nostrand (1996) adds, "But of all the arts, literature, 'the autobiography of the people,' is the most explicit expression of its culture....Exploring ideas in the company of writers...leads to an exciting atmosphere of discussion" (pp. 19-20). Tavares and Cavalcant (1996) would concur. "culture and language are interrelated...language is used as a medium through which culture is expressed" (p. 18). They recommend the study of various customs of the target culture and language. And as a good source of information they recommend, "Arts: literature and cinema" (p. 19).

Bruner (1990), in his book Acts of Meaning, likewise makes a close connection between language and culture. Both are adhesive agents in the process of building bridges between people.

We learn our culture's folk psychology early, learn it as we learn to use the very language we acquire and to conduct the interpersonal transactions required in communal living. (p. 35)

As people conduct their "interpersonal transactions required in communal living," they employ language. The language of poetry can be an important aspect of those "interpersonal transactions."

McConochie (1981), in her article "All this Fiddle: Enhancing Language Awareness through Poetry," (On TESOL '81, 231-240) urges teachers to enlist poetry for enculturation. "without some study of poetry -- as well as other literary genres -- our students are deprived of an understanding of the full nature of English" (p. 232). Furthermore, "by far the most effective way to help students learn the cultural values underlying the English language is to arrange for them to discover those values for themselves, with literature being a convenient medium for the discovery" (p. 236). In the same vein Stelk (1991) states, "Words are rooted in the culture, and definitions are understood through understanding culture....Therefore, literature is an ideal tool for enriching language and growing into culture" (p. 13).

Similarly Steinbergh (1991) views poetry as an important enculturating medium. Teachers can help students of very diverse backgrounds build interconnecting bridges through the study of literature. "While language and custom influence literature and thought, broad themes recur in every culture. These themes include: family, memories, dreams, the spiritual life, and the familiar environment" (p. 59). By discussing these themes and responding to them by reading and writing poetry, Steinbergh suggests "we see how poetry truly is 'the language of the heart'" (p. 59).

Poetry as a Cultural Bridge

MacLean (1990) sees many ESL students as having strong cultural interests in poetry. Suggesting we capitalize on this tradition, she asks, "Must they wait until they are fluent in English before they are allowed to share stories and poetry?" She replies, "It is my contention that literature is the strongest bridge that teachers of English can provide to help children, and indeed learners of all ages, to a new language (p. 244)...Through the rich and growing collections of Canadian literature...we can teach newcomers about the values, customs and social attitudes of Canada" (p. 248). Collie and Slater (1987) add, "In our view, the sooner learners start to enjoy literature in their new language, the better" (p.2). Literature can act as a cultural bridge.

Silverman (1990), in her "Children's Literature for ESL Adults," observes that:

Literature is concerned with the deepest human preoccupations, which are common to all people and transcend cultural differences. ESL learners can recognize familiar feelings and sensations even though they may be described through a new language and/or culture. (p. 202)

Silverman goes on to suggest that these universals, these "preoccupations," make literature very appropriate as subject matter for teaching language and culture. By accentuating the mutuality of human experience in the emotional realm we can establish linkages.

Such uses, as I have been discussing, of literature in the language classroom as a means of helping to unite people are also endorsed by Lewis and Lacattiva (1990) in their

article "Cultural Bonding through Literature." They observe that such language study can promote "Acceptance of the universality of people as different strands of a common cloth" (p. 161).

Navascues (1988) teaches Spanish to American, English speaking students. Nevertheless, we may also apply his ideas to ESL classes. In his "Oral and Dramatic Interpretation of Literature," he says:

as teachers we must strive toward the positive, and show that poetry deals with very human feelings and emotions which they can recognize and express in their own personal way. (p. 188)

Susan Ramsaran (1983) agrees. In her article "Poetry in the Language Classroom," she aims to "demonstrate how poetry may be used in language classes to develop the students' knowledge of English" (p. 36). By using carefully selected poems as models, she maintains that students may be taught pronunciation, intonation and rhythm, vocabulary and meaning, grammatical structures, and colloquialisms.

"A study of poetry alongside conventional discourse can...draw attention to language, not as an abstract system but as a communication resource" (Widdowson 1988 p. 194). And again, "Poetry then can be seen as serving both a pedagogic and an educational purpose in teaching. It should need no apology" (p. 196).

Alan Maley and Alan Duff (1989), in their book The Inward Ear: Poetry in the Language Classroom, offer many interesting arguments and suggestions for the use of poetry in the ESL classroom. However, for the purpose of viewing poetry as a cultural bridge, I shall quote only one passage wherein they stress the universality of poetry:

Poetry as a form of language use is universal among all human beings. No known language is without it...The themes which poetry deal with are common to all cultures, although the way they are treated, naturally differs. Love, death, nature, children, religious beliefs, despair...the list is familiar. (p. 8)

Similarly Fry (1995) asserts the universality of poetry as he says, "The fact that 'poetry' (suffice it for the moment to define it as 'expressive language') is both perennial and pancultural should prove in itself that poetry is a need, not a commodity" (p. 2). Affirming

poetry, Chappell (1993) states, "I regard it as an inescapable quality and product of human physiology and an important element of all human society" (p.1).

This universality of poetry helps to make it appropriate for language study. These themes are focal points to which ESL students can relate. In most cases the concepts themselves will not be new, although the vocabulary may be unfamiliar. Understanding the concepts goes a long way toward understanding theme. The teacher will help bridge the gap by helping students develop the appropriate English vocabulary. This new vocabulary will help students use English to verbalize concepts that in many cases they have already experienced in their own language and culture. Thus, the teacher and students, working together with poetry, can develop a sense of community whereby they may promote better human understanding and so establish linkages, or bridges, between cultures and between individuals, a sense of interconnectedness, and at the same time promote peace. In a similar context Strachen and Giltrow (1990) note that students "would need to acquire the necessary vocabulary and sentence structures. The teacher's role is to assist them to "language" what they wish to know" (pp. 113-114).

We Embody Our Culture

Poets are very keenly aware of how our common human experiences weave us together into a shared culture, first as communities and nations and ultimately as global citizens. They see how culture impinges upon us and how in our interaction within a culture we too contribute to the whole picture of cultural meaning. We embody our culture and, conversely, our culture embodies us. These concepts have been examined and celebrated by poets for centuries. In this regard I have already cited Burns and King. At this point I shall cite only a couple more of the many poets that could be referred to. Over one hundred and fifty years ago in "Ulysses" Tennyson (1842) explored the movements and motivation of Ulysses, the mythological Greek hero who could not endure inactivity after having returned home from the long and bitter Trojan Wars:

I am part of all that I have met;
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
 Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
 For ever and for ever when I move.
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
 (Ulysses: ll. 18-23)

In the first line of this quotation we note that Tennyson sees us as interwoven with all of our experience. As we move through the “arch” of experience our perspective changes and keeps changing as we “move.” The old “margin fades.” Even though Ulysses is aging, he still has a zest for new experience; he wants to “shine in use!” He, like a poet, is an explorer of experience of the first order.

Back even further we find that John Donne (1572-1631) is also concerned with the implications of human interconnectedness. In his “Meditation from Devotions upon Emergent Occasions,” one of his most famous lines appears. “No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.” This is a powerful assertion of our linkage to the rest of humanity and to nature.

Poets surely know something about interconnectedness, about our coupling to our history, to our surroundings, to our experience, and to each other. We do not exist alone. We are communal beings with a strong need of a sense of community. We exist in a meaning-generating culture to which and from which we add and abstract meaning by our ongoing cultural process of living and relating to others. “No man is an Island.” “I am part of all that I have met.” The poet is certainly a person “bringing forth a world of significance, with others” (Kieren 1995, enactivist notes, p.1). Hoffman (1996) suggests that, instead of being inflexible and closed in on ourselves, we should explore the interactive, communal aspects of cultural diversity with the openness of children. “We must rather approach culture as children do, as natural and genuine explores who are able to transform and be transformed by their encounters” (p. 565). I believe that poetry can help students in this important exploration.

Our Need for Home

Not only, as Hoffmon suggests, do we have a need to explore the new and the unknown, but we also have a need for the familiarity of home, for stable structures within our lives. Christine Norris (1994) discusses the life experience of Duc, one of her ESL students, who has arrived in Canada from Vietnam and is adjusting to life in a new country far from his original home. He experiences a deep sense of dislocation. Reflecting on Duc's situation, Norris observes, "When we think of home, we think of the past. In leaving home we break the continuity of the past-present-future" (p. 2).

Wu (1991) expresses this sense of dislocation even more vividly. His experiences are recorded in the journal, Phenomenology and Pedagogy (1991, V. 9, pp. 267-275) in an article entitled, "The Lived Experience of Being a Foreigner." Wu, from mainland China, was doing his doctoral work in Education at the University of Alberta. Although he had been studying in this country for a number of years, he still had strong feelings of ambivalence as he experienced the foreign Canadian culture. He poignantly reflects :

This "me" is not the "self" one is familiar with. I am not only a stranger to others, but also a stranger to myself. (p. 269)....In my mind, only that part of the world [China] remained as a whole continent on which I could stand and move with freedom. My new world consisted of ice flows. I could recognize their existence as separate pieces, but they were too slippery for me to step on, nor was it possible for me to predict the directions of their movement. (p. 272)

The vivid, poetic imagery here almost begs for a poem to be read or written. Poetry, which so often deals with universal, human experiences, would be an ideal genre for focusing and verbalizing the felt emotional needs of foreign students in such situations. I feel confident that as ESL students experience such sense of dislocation that poetry, as David Johnson suggests later, can be used to help students reestablish ties, to reconnect to the world about them. Poetry can plumb the depths of our longing and common feelings, our need to reconnect. As we come to recognize and appreciate our commonality through the study of poetry, we are better positioned to empathize with one another and so build a more tolerant, caring world in which we can feel more comfortable with each other and feel more at home.

Poetry as Emotional Integration

When approached with skill and sincerity, poetry has much to offer in the ESL classroom. It offers interesting subjects for reading, discussion and writing, but even more importantly it offers occasion for meaningful personal exchanges, both verbal and emotional, which are vital to building interconnecting links between cultures. Collie, et al. (1987) note in their book, Literature in the Language Classroom, that:

Above all, literature can be helpful in the language learning process because of the personal involvement it fosters....Poems offer a rich, varied repertoire and a source of much enjoyment for teacher and learner alike....they often explore themes of universal concern and embody life experiences, observations and the feelings evoked by them. (p.5)

In this same context I will quote again from MacLean's (1990) article, "Literature and Second Language Learning." MacLean stresses the emotionally, integrative aspects of literature, which thoughtfully considered can help us "grow in knowledge and understandings that rid us of our narrow prejudices and enrich us as human beings in an increasingly multicultural society" (p.249). This idea from MacLean is certainly a very valuable plank to use as we go about building interconnecting bridges between cultures and individuals. White (1990), in a vein similar to MacLean, refers to "the timeless inspiration that is the gift of poetry in its many forms" (p. 193). "We find answers and questions in the literature of the world....the values of cultures other than our own expand our horizons and may even correct our misconceptions, our unconscious wrongs" (p. 194).

Mead (1980), in "On Teaching Literature in Today's World," also stresses the cultural connections of literature. These connections have a universality about them as they span not only cultures, but also generations. Mead reflects:

Literature, properly understood, is the attempt of an author to communicate to his or her own generation, and to later ones, what the universal experiences of human life have meant to one human being who, at the same time, is a living part of a larger culture and way of life. (p. 538)

David Johnson: Poetry as Integrative “Word Weaving”

Johnson (1990), in his book Word Weaving, likewise persuades us of the integrative power of poetry. Using the metaphor of weaving to stand for the process of writing poetry, he illustrates how poetry can form an important web in the tapestry of culture to help link humanity into a more caring, supportive community. In this day of disjointed relationships, when we find ourselves so often alienated from one another and even from ourselves, his work at the loom merits our close consideration. Poetry, he points out, explores human experience in all its multitudinous variety. As we follow the explorations of the shuttle back and forth, we are led along the warps and woofs of connecting links that clarify what it means to be a member of the interconnected, interdependent, world community.

We need a place to begin, a place out of which and from which we might view the world and begin the process of reconnecting the fragments of our experience, making a whole again, making us whole again. Metaphorically, we need to find the center: the center of ourselves, the center of our culture. (p. 65)

It is interesting to note that T. S. Eliot (1964), in his book The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, says almost the same thing as he observes that the poet is “among other things, one who not merely restores a tradition which has been in abeyance, but one who in his poetry re-entwines as many straying strands of tradition as possible” (p. 85). Similarly Merleau-Ponty (1974) observes, “whenever I try to understand myself the whole fabric of the perceptible world comes too, and with it come the others who are caught in it” (p. 15).

Johnson forcefully maintains that poetry is a very good attempt at “reconnecting... to find the center: of ourselves, the center of our culture.” Therefore, it is important to give a wide scope to the reading and studying of poetry in our homes, in our schools, and in our communities. Not only does he advocate the study of poetry, but equally important he suggests the widespread writing of poetry, not just by a select few but by the population at large. Schools he suggests have a great responsibility in fostering this interest in poetry, by encouraging students to practice this creative process. He offers numerous suggestions

of how schools may help in this endeavor. He cautions though that students should not be bogged down in critical analysis of forms and structures of poetry. Rather they should explore it as human experience, delving deeply into the metaphorical and emotional implications of the work. This weaving of poetry, this standing before the metaphorical loom, will help us discover our common humanity and establish interconnecting links in the tapestry of human culture. Poetry, with its emphasis on metaphor, should be an important part of our education for, as Sierakowski (1994) quotes Robert Frost (1874-1963), "Education by poetry is education by metaphor" (p. 40).

I maintain that schools with ESL students should also actively encourage these students to participate in reading, discussing, and writing poetry. As Johnson states, "writing a poem is a splendid response to reading a poem" (p. 5). This, as seen from Hudelson (1986) and Preston (1982), quoted earlier, should include ESL students, too. For as Johnson observes, "The poems, first written in solitude, become instruments of communication and community" (p. 62). In the research study that I have completed, I engaged the subjects of the study extensively in much close reading and discussion of poetry, as well as in the writing of their own poems. Their own poetry also formed the basis for close reading and discussion.

In the next portion of my literature study I further emphasize Johnson's idea of "communication and community." Again I support themes mentioned earlier, namely, (1) the efficacy of using poetry in the ESL classroom, (2) the importance of poetry as a bridging device between peoples and individuals and as an avenue towards peace. My arguments will also be supported by extensive use of citations. These citations often refer to "students" and "adolescents"-- that is, to high school students. However, any experienced ESL teacher will understand that the suggestions given will also be adaptable to the ESL teaching situation, especially with students at an advanced level, such as I used in this study.

An argument for the use of poems with simple, direct, comprehensible language will be put forth when one studies poetry with ESL students. This is not to suggest the preclusion of figurative language or complex ideas. But it does argue that effective communication with ESL students is best fostered by the use of simple language. Such is particularly true in the realm of significant, emotional experience, the lifeblood of poetic endeavor. Obscure language can give poetry a bad name and makes students, especially ESL students, inclined to dismiss it as irrelevant and boring. They are thus deprived of what otherwise should be a very real communicative experience. Poetry need not be either irrelevant or boring. It is possible to engross ESL students with it. But to achieve this, poetry must be meaningful, not caught up in mystifying, obscuring, impenetrable fog.

Head (1989) addresses this issue. She suggests that since students “often don’t like poetry or feel they can’t understand it, it’s important to give them the success that comes with the immediate comprehension. Later we can read poems that are more difficult and talk about ways to unfold them” (p. 5). Head also suggests that the dislike of poetry may stem from teachers questioning students too closely on technical aspects of poems rather than encouraging students to enjoy the poems for the emotional appeal that they can bring.

Poetry as Meaningful Experience

In this section of the literature study I attend to two very important ideas in poetry -- experience and meaning, the very heart of poetry. Perrine (1963) speaking of the various forms of literature, including poetry, says that literature will “widen and sharpen our contacts with existence. Their concern is with *experience*” (p. 4). Then more specifically about the poet, Perrine observes “He creates new experiences for the reader...in which the reader can participate and which he may use to give him a greater awareness and understanding of his world” (p. 4). Brooks and Warren (1976) speak of a reader’s “experience of the poem -- an experience that is at first immediate in its impact and then

gradually acquires greater and greater resonance....[Students may] be led to understand poetry as a means of imaginatively extending their own experience and, indeed, probing the possibilities of the self” (Preface ix). These writers closely associate that experience with emotion as they say, “emotional expression is an essential element of poetry” (p. 2). Again “poetry springs from the poet’s ability to perceive meaning and significance even in scenes that are in themselves commonplace” (p. 93).

The poet is much concerned with transmitting the meaning of emotional experience. This transmission is art . “Writing is the art or technique of putting meaning on the page” (Shaw 1970, p.5). In transmitting this meaning Corbin, Perrine and Buxton (1963) suggest:

When you talk or write, you have a purpose -- you want to make others understand what you are thinking or feeling, or let them know what you have seen or done, or explain what you want them to do....[Then more specifically on clearness].
Clearness. Your language, then, must first of all be clear -- or you will never convey your ideas to others. (p. 2)

To the foregoing quotations I add one from Max Van Manen (1986) which is also germane to our discussion. Although Van Manen is not dealing specifically with poetry, I think his comments on text are applicable since they deal with clarifying experience which, as we have seen above, is also one of the objects of poetry.

Our text needs to be rich....The meanings of the lived sense of phenomena are not exhausted in their immediate experience. A rich description is concrete, exploring a phenomenon in all its ramifications. The educator, as author [poet], aims to capture life experience (action or event) in anecdote [poem] or story....The dialogic quality of these devices is obvious, for they engage us, involve us, and require a response from us. (p. 91)

These “needs” for “rich” text to clarify experience are not always easily arrived at. I am sure we all, at times, experience the difficulty of getting our ideas down on paper. Sometimes our ideas may be a manifold profusion of rustlings in the mind, disjointed and disordered. And from this vast, discordant array, we must make order. Britton (1975) speaks of this difficulty. He says of writing that it is:

very complex....We are all familiar with the struggle to express in writing what we have in mind, and we are also familiar with the very bad writing sometimes produced by very experienced and learned writers -- bad, that is when judged for its intelligibility or its consideration of the reader. (p. 19)

In this context Britton affords us an amusing look at a short sample of a child's writing by a seven year old boy and explains why it is so difficult to comprehend.

When I was Little

I was scared for I wasnt used to it and as well as that things wormte as nice as they are because my Mur Mun came but even from that day to this I have never stayed to dinner (p.42)

Only a little over two lines, but it is rather incomprehensible. Why? His teacher understood him well, but few else ever could. The ideas were perfectly clear in the little boy's mind and to his teacher's mind, but not to ours. How come? The teacher was privy to the little boy's experiential context; we were not, and he did not provide it for us.

Clarity is Critical for ESL Classes

As mentioned earlier this need for clarity in writing is particularly critical when selecting poetry for consideration in ESL classes. To hold their interest these students have to be able to relate to experiences alluded to in the poem. It must have meaning for them. But this is not to suggest that there must always be total unanimity in the final interpretation of a particular poem. Each of us bring our own unique background of experience to the poem, which will influence our perceptions of the meaning the poem has for us as individuals. Lockwood (1994), in her article, "Poets on Teaching Poetry" quotes Robert Kendall advising that teachers "should not rigidly impose a single interpretation on the poem, since most poems can be read in a variety of ways" (p. 65). I agree. The article also suggests that "it is not necessary for the teacher or the students to fully understand a poem" (p. 68). Again I agree. It would seem highly unlikely that we ever "fully understand" any poem. We can always generate new meanings and perception with further readings and reflection.

Umberto Eco (1994) speaks to this matter. During our travels we will not all be following the same paths through the woods. In his Six Walks in the Fictional Woods Eco suggests:

Woods are a metaphor for the narrative text....not only for the text of fairy tales but for any text....a wood is a garden of forking paths. Even when there are no well-trodden paths in a wood, everyone can trace his or her own path, deciding to go to the left or to the right of a certain tree and making a choice at every tree encountered. (p. 6)

Occasionally divergent paths will meet and it is hoped that travellers will respectfully greet each other and exchange pleasantries, only to part with the hope that they will meet again. And they will carry away from the encounter some truths to ponder and to enlighten them along their way.

Unanimity may not be the goal. Nevertheless, these encounters and dialogues along the way may help develop a good deal of common understanding. If this is not so, to some degree at least, it would seem to suggest a failure in communication. Even though all may not agree, some meanings that students can share with others should be forthcoming. A poem should be the communication of experience. "Real writing is purposeful communication by writers to their readers" (Ann Baker 1984, p. 20). David Johnson echoes, "The poems, first written in solitude, become instruments of communication and community" (p. 62).

"Issues Closest to Them"

Lockwood's earlier comments notwithstanding, it appears that she recognizes this need for some commonality when she recommends that we look "for poems that say something to adolescents [students generally, including ESL students]...they must be able to relate it to the real world and their own lives....[now quoting Hillringhouse], 'issues closest to them, such as friendship, love, growing up, making choices'" (p. 69). To relate to the poem students would have to have some common understanding with the author. The author will have had to have communicated something to them.

David Johnson also deals with “issues closest to them” -- to the reader, that is. Part II of his book deals with the “What” of poetry. It makes suggestions of what to write about. Referring to the diagram of concentric circles on page 66, which I will not reproduce here, we see that Johnson unabashedly places the “ME” right at the center of the focus. Johnson readily acknowledges the egocentric nature of the poetic process. Poetry is a record of personal encounter with experience. It is important to understand the personal base of this process, for from it we reach out to others in ever-widening circles to connect with the world around us.

And poets must christen [celebrate] this continuous process....It is impossible...to construct an intellectual, scientific framework that encompasses all of reality, but we are capable of making connections, of following the threads of the imagination which bind one thing to another -- the process of weaving our lives into a creative vision of the whole. (p. 67)

Powell (1973) has also recognized the personal immediacy of the poetic enterprise, especially when it comes to the writing thereof. He feels it is important for students to be “encouraged to write on topics that are of interest to them. They should be brought to realize that anything is ‘grist for the writer’s mill,’ and that their own experiences provide the best base from which to start” (p. 5).

Returning to Johnson, again we find him questioning the possibility of constructing “an intellectual, scientific framework that encompasses *all* of reality” [emphasis mine]. Therefore he would also question a solely scientific, mechanistic conception of reality such as we see exemplified in the Chalmers (1995) article in the December, 1995, edition of “Scientific America” where Chalmers hopefully speculates, “The ultimate goal of a theory of consciousness is a simple and elegant set of fundamental laws, analogous to the fundamental laws of physics” (p. 85). Such a goal seeks to reduce our understanding and our conception of reality to a mathematical formula. This search, the poet believes, may prove to be in vain. We also need an imaginative, poetic conception of reality.

Mark Johnson: "CENTER-PERIPHERY"

Within this same context of David Johnson's concentric circles, mentioned above, I refer to another Johnson, namely, Mark Johnson (1987). This writer, in his book The Body in the Mind, also sees the world from a "central vantage point." But instead of within concentric circles, he places his observer in a figure, a "CENTER-PERIPHERY," bounded by a "wavy line" (p. 124). The point is, similarly to David Johnson, his "ME" is also in the middle. Both Johnsons echo Tennyson.

I will quote Mark Johnson presently, but before doing so I note with interest how that Merleau-Ponty and Ong seemed to have anticipated Mark Johnson's thoughts. Merleau-Ponty in discussing a world view observes, "I comprehend the world because there is for me near and far, foreground and horizon, and because it thus spreads out and takes on meaning for me" (1964, p.xvi). Likewise, "My body is the vantage point from which I perceive all possible objects. It is my body which is the vehicle of my perception and movement in the world" (1974, p. xvi). Ong (1967, p. 1) indicates, "Man communicates with his whole body, and yet the word is his primary medium. Communication, like knowledge itself, flowers in speech." And Steiner (1989) adds, "The meanings of poetry and the music of those meanings, which we call metrics, are also of the human body. The echoes of sensibility which they elicit are visceral and tactile" (p. 9).

In a similar vein Mark Johnson speaks of:

Center-Periphery

The fact of our physical embodiment gives a very definite character to our perceptual experience. Our world radiates out from *our bodies* as perceptual centers from which we see, hear, touch, taste, and smell our world. Our perceptual space defines a domain of macroscopic objects that reside in varying distances from us. From our *central vantage point* [emphasis mine] we can focus our attention on one object or perceptual field after another as we scan our world. What is "figure" or "foreground" at one moment may become "background" at another, as we move perceptually through our world. At a certain distance from this perceptual center our world "fades off" into a perceptual horizon which no longer presents us with discrete objects. We may move in one direction toward the horizon, thus opening up new perceptual territory, but this only establishes new horizons presently beyond our grasp. (p. 124) [How similar to Tennyson! : "that untravell'd world whose margin fades / For ever and for ever when I move."]

The aforesaid writers stress our interconnectedness to our world and to each other. They suggest we are emotionally bound by interconnecting, intellectual ties facilitated by our imaginative use of metaphor. And we should keep in mind, as David Johnson suggests, that our sense of interconnectedness can be enhanced through our use of poetry. This is why poetry was such an important tool in this research study as I examined how poetry might effectively build connections between cultures and individuals and so promote understanding and peace. Mackay (1992) would support both Johnsons. "Literature is the study of universal values, which define what it means to be human. It allows us to reexamine our humanity, values, and enhances our awareness of the commonality of all people" (p. 1). She goes on to say that this awareness helps lead students to a more global perspective with greater respect for the "desires and rights of all people on the earth" (p. 2). Pohl (1996) adds that by studying literature in groups we can help to overcome provincialism and racism by "'talking the truth' about our lives among ourselves. By comparing notes, we realize how much we have in common with one another" (p. 66). Years earlier, Merleau-Ponty (1974) put it so eloquently:

The glory of the evidence such as that of successful dialogue and communication, the common fate which men share in their oneness, which is not merely a biological resemblance but is a similarity in their most intimate nature--all that science and religion can effectively live is here brought together and rescued from the ambiguities of a double life. (p. 173)

Bateson: "Abduction": "A Recursive Vision"

Gregory Bateson (1904-1980) examines how these interconnecting ties are operative in our intellect. His ideas have been collected by his biographer, Peter Harries-Jones (1995), in the book A Recursive Vision. Bateson sees "abduction" as an important aspect of the human cognitive process. Later, in my chapter on design and procedure, I relate this process metaphorically to the movements of a squirrel in the treetops (p. 121). Although this metaphor may seem odd, it aptly describes the qualitative subject matter of poetry as created by abductive leaps rather than by linear, logical locksteps.

Harries-Jones notes Bateson's thinking.

Abduction was a form of hypothesis construction that permitted a lateral extension of abstract components of description....Abduction was like qualitative modelling -- a means of undertaking formal comparisons through contrasts, ratios, divergences of form, and convergences. (p. 177)

Abduction could also be used, more strictly, as a lateral extension of a network of interrelated propositions....Abduction is not recognized within science as a method for validating descriptive models. Yet, he says, 'metaphor, dream, parable, allegory, the whole of art, the whole of science, the whole of religion, the whole of poetry, totemism ... the organization of facts in comparative anatomy -- all these are instances or aggregates of instances of abduction within the human mental sphere' (Mind 1979: 142). In short, all are different means through which the threads of resemblance could be grasped. (p. 178)

I shall try to clarify further the distinction, as I understand it, between abduction (lateral thinking) and linear thinking as used in quantitative, scientific research. The latter entails a lockstep approach in which one proposition logically leads to the next, to the next, and to the next, and so on. Extraneous deviation is not allowed. The solving of a geometric theorem, or step by step scientific problem solving might be considered as examples of linear thinking. The vision is very narrow and focused upon a specific objective, e. g. solving a specific problem.

In contrast abductive or lateral thinking is more divergent and, if there is a focus at all, it is much broader. Persistent linearity along narrow corridors is not the order of the day. The orientation is more qualitative. Thinking may stray into byways as feelings and interests urge. Yet from these straying ideas may be gathered a unifying whole, as in the creation of a poem.

Creative cognition, as used by poets and artists, involves much "lateral extension" of ideas. These ideas beget ideas in all directions, rather than in a lockstep linear progression marching through the mind from some input to some predetermined output, or product, as in a computer model. Every day when teaching poetry, and I specifically include ESL classes, as the teacher motivates the students with enthusiasm, these abductive leaps by students may be observed as they explore the ideas of the poet. That is why, as I have mentioned previously, divergent interpretations of poetry should be accepted and why

no poem is ever really completely understood. We can always make an abductive leap in yet another direction. As Steiner notes regarding thought and its utterance, it moves outward in “ever-widening concentric and overlapping circles....No formalization is of an order adequate to the semantic mass and motion of a culture, to the wealth of denotation, connotation, implicit reference, elision and tonal register which envelop saying what one means” (pp. 82-83).

In chapter nine, “The Pattern Which Connects” (pp. 192-211), Bateson reveals his misgivings about the linearity of the computer model mentioned above, particularly when this model is applied to solving biological or human problems:

In 1971 he wrote a metalogue which spells out a mistrust of cybernetic engineers, those who knew best how to apply systems theory. All machines are ‘single minded’ and directed towards single purposes. They are anti-biological for that reason. Any argument that the solution to ecological crises lies in technical inventions, such as computers, simply amplifies systemic error. (p. 193)

Bateson argued that people through their “lateral extension” of abduction “contribute actively to their own perception” and when they recognize this “they become much closer to the world around them” (p. 203). “Not only are perceptions drawn from ‘the outside,’ but, recursively, they also impose pattern on the ‘outside’” (p. 203). These ideas parallel the ideas of David Johnson about poetry being a means of establishing linkages between people and drawing them together. Poetry is an abductive, cognitive process. It should also be added that Bateson, himself a scientist, his “mistrust of cybernetic engineers” notwithstanding, was not entirely, and absolutely, opposed to linear thinking. His objection was to limiting our thinking to a linear pattern only, thus precluding many creative possibilities.

Bloom et al. (1961) more than thirty years ago also recognized the cognitive tendency of humans to “impose pattern,” as Bateson puts it, upon the “outside” world of experience. Bloom suggests humans have a primitive instinct to pictorialize, which is “basic to human imagination. The poet exploits the pictorial instinct, giving it a certain

sense...by fusing memory with controlled imagination and reason” (p. 31). Later I will show how Mark Johnson further carries forward these ideas about imagination.

Furthermore, as we consider Bateson, we see that cognition is much larger and far more complex than what goes on in a computer or even in the human brain. Mind is not to be equated to human brain. Mind encompasses the *whole body* and extends beyond the body into the community, the culture, the environment, the universe. Mind is the embodiment of all these factors. “Our body is the contact with the world and through the body we are who we are. What we know and what we live is done through the body that is in the world” (Winning 1991, p. 47). Even earlier than Winning, Merleau-Ponty (1964) recognized this body-mind relationships when he states, “Our century has wiped out the dividing line between ‘body’ and ‘mind,’ and sees human life as through and through mental and corporeal, always based upon the body and always...interested in relationships between persons” (p. 226).

Poets have recognized and celebrated this interconnectedness for many centuries. They have recognized that *our* thinking also goes on in the community -- “out there.” It is not confined to what goes on inside our head. “No man is an Island.” We are all connected to an interacting web. If we are ever to have real peace in the world we will have to recognize and accept our interconnectedness. In this study I have focused on how poetry can help us along the way, to where people “become much closer to the world around them” (Bateson above), and where “man to man, the world o’er, / Shall brithers be for a’ that” (Burns quoted earlier).

This journey towards peace will draw upon our best and greatest imaginative resources. Scientific, quantitative thinking, although very useful, will of itself not suffice. Our thinking will also have to be infused with the imaginative abductions described by Bateson above, “metaphor, dream, parable, allegory, the whole of art, the whole of science, the whole of religion, the whole of poetry.”

An example of using imagination to bring people “closer to the world around them” is given by Grace Feuerverger (1996). She does a study of a Jewish-Arab school in Israel dedicated to educating Jewish and Arab children side by side within the same school, within the same classrooms. The object of this undertaking is to create tolerance and respect “based on the principle of egalitarian coexistence between two nations, that is the Jews and the Palestinians” (p. 53). They employ a team-teaching approach from kindergarten through grade eight. Every classroom has two teachers, one Jewish, one Palestinian. Parents sending children to this school are very supportive. One parent said, “We want our children to learn in friendship and joy, not in conflict and sorrow” (p. 55).

What a remarkable contrast to the prevailing atmosphere of hostility and strife in that part of the world. This refreshing display of intelligence and imagination gives much needed impetus to the viability of the precepts of peace education, of global education, of multiculturalism. How liberating, how supportive of freedom! Dillard (1996) uses journal writing as an important adjunct to this liberating process. She sees journal writing not only as a means of self-discovery but as a means of discovering commonalities in a multicultural environment. The journal writers explore human consciousness and discover that it is, “Embodied, thrusting into the lived and the perceived, it opens onto the common” (p.13). She and her students write with the philosophical principles of Paulo Freire in mind. She paraphrases him as describing education as “the practice of freedom, that which seeks to build connections between culture and community, across boundaries of race, class, gender” (p. 14). As I will indicate later, I also used journal writing in my study but with a less outstanding measure of success.

Mark Johnson: Imagination and Schemata

Since imagination is so important to the success of our journey, Mark Johnson’s insights into this intellectual phenomenon are revealing. Imagination is an important subject for all teachers, but probably none more so than English teachers. I would not

recommend burdening ESL students with the details of Johnson's ideas on imagination, or with his schemata theory, which I also discuss. But Johnson's ideas, I believe, would be highly useful for ESL teachers, and other teachers as well. Time taken to read the whole book, although lengthy (over 200 pages), is well spent.

Johnson gives us insight into the all-pervasive, wide-ranging magnitude of imagination in the whole cognitive process of the human mind and body. It is integral to the poetic process.

Without imagination, nothing in the world could be meaningful. Without imagination, we could never make sense of our experience. Without imagination, we could never reason toward knowledge of reality. (p. ix)

This dynamic, overarching aspect of cognition includes much more than the fancy of artists, composers and poets, more than "notions of artistic creativity, fancy, and fiction" (p. 29). It also involves our everyday experiences of getting up in the morning, eating, getting into or out of a car. Johnson agrees with Kant, "for Kant, imagination is the very means by which we have *any* comprehensible structure in our experience" (p. 29).

To understand how we use imagination to comprehend and structure experience, Johnson proposes and details his schemata theory. He defines schemata at some length.

In sum, image schemata operate at a level of mental organization that falls between abstract propositional structures, on the one side, and particular concrete images, on the other....in order for us to have meaningful, connected experiences that we can comprehend and reason about, there must be pattern and order to our actions, perceptions, and conceptions. *A schema is a recurrent pattern, shape and regularity in, or of, these ongoing ordering activities.* These patterns emerge as meaningful structures for us chiefly at the level of our bodily movements through space, our manipulation of objects, and our perceptual interactions....I conceive of them as structures for organizing our experience and comprehension. (p. 29)

Cook (1997) backs Johnson's conception of schemata. "A schema is a mental representation of a typical instance. Schema theory suggests that people understand new experiences by activating relevant schemas (also called 'schemata') in their minds.... Schematic processing allows people to interpret new experiences quickly and economically" (p. 86).

Johnson discusses examples of these schemata which he closely associates with “our bodily movements through space.” He gives numerous examples of schemata with in-out orientation.

You wake *out* of a deep sleep and peer *out* from beneath the covers *into* your room....You...walk *in* a daze *out* of the bedroom and *into* the bathroom...brush your teeth *in* a hurry, and rinse *out* your mouth....And these are only a fraction of the in-out orientations, let alone those for *up-down*, *near-far*, *left-right*, *front-back*, *toward-away*, and so forth. (pp. 30-31)

Johnson relates that these schemata are so common in our experience and in our language that we take them for granted. Through our imagination we project them metaphorically into all aspects of our lives -- our total experience, our cognition, and our speech patterns about our experience. The simple “*in-out*, *up-down*”, etc., image schemata become more elaborate abstractions which Johnson calls “metaphorical projections” (p. 162). The ubiquitous use of metaphor in language is also noted by Janice Johnson (1996) who comments, “the use of metaphor is not restricted to novel or poetic expression, but in fact is common in everyday language” (p. 219).

To illustrate this point, Mark Johnson refers to a poem wherein the closing period of a satisfying life is suggested by “images of the serene end of a beautiful summer day” (p. 163). Here we see how “imagination works through a projective process in which structures from one domain (e.g., summer evening) are projected to order our understanding of another domain (the end of life)” (p. 163). Imagination, through the process of schematization, mediates between the sensory impressions and abstract concepts, thus enabling us to share and understand ideas and mutual experiences.

This process is also operative at the more prosaic, everyday experience levels of life, as say in pressing toothpaste *out* of a tube. We understand the *out* in terms of metaphorical analogy to our own bodily movements wherewith we have moved ourselves *out* of a room, or *out* of whatever innumerable times. Similarly, metaphorically we back *out* of a deal, or enter *into* a contract, or fall *in* love. Likewise we understand the concept of a political party going *up* or *down*, *in* its fortunes. We recognize and organize

concepts so much in analogy to our bodily movements that as Johnson indicates in the title to his book, we have The Body in the Mind. Mind and body are coemergent in the cognitive process.

I always find it of interest how that ideas of thinkers occur and reoccur over time. It seems Johnson's (1987) ideas were anticipated, at least in part, two decades earlier by Ong (1967):

Ultimately the meaning of in and out or interior and exterior depends on pointing to a historical or existential fact, a fact which appears ultimately to be that of self and other, our experience of ourselves as existing somehow inside our bodies with an exterior world outside. What we mean by in and out comes from our experience of ourselves. We find ourselves situated in insideness and outsideness. Our bodies are a frontier, and the side which is most ourselves is in. (p. 118)

Mark Johnson: Implications for ESL

These basic language concepts can be extended metaphorically to many language learning situations for ESL students, such as helping them understand the numerous figurative expressions used in poetry. For example, students may need help to understand such metaphorical expressions as: *Winds of change. Moving on winged heels. The tortuous tides of life. Slaying the dragon. An everlasting sleep. Look before you leap.* Such expressions, the students will need to recognize, are not to be taken literally. But if they can see how they evolve metaphorically from bodily motions, they will be enriched in their understanding. And as they gain in experience such expressions, and others like them, will be understood via "metaphorical projections" without the need for explanation. They too will have put "*the body in the mind.*" To quote Cook again, "Schema theory is important to language teaching because schematic knowledge is as essential a component of successful communication as linguistic knowledge....It can help explain students' comprehension problems and suggest the kind of background they need" (p. 86).

Understanding the use of these "metaphorical projections" would be useful not only for the understanding and appreciation of poetry, but would also facilitate the

understanding of prose and everyday conversational English as well. English is very rich in idiomatic expressions which are essentially metaphorical constructions and not to be taken literally. For example, we may speak of someone's political fortunes as "going down hill at a dizzying pace." If taken literally the ESL student may inappropriately conjure up images of geographical terrain. But seen merely as a metaphorical projection of bodily movement the student could be helped to understand the "dizzying" effects of misfortune, political or otherwise.

Like Mark Johnson, Hughs (1967) also associates words with bodily movements and senses. He observes, "They belong to several of our senses at once, as if each one had eyes, ears and tongue, or ears and fingers and a body to move with" (p. 12). He also notes the figurative power of words as he says, "It is one of those curious facts that when two things are compared in a metaphor or simile, we see both much more distinctly than if they were mentioned separately as having nothing to do with each other" (p. 38). I think Johnson's example, mentioned earlier, of the figurative comparison of a summer evening and the end of life illustrates Hughs' point very well.

Karen Spear: Group Work

Previously I noted how Mark Johnson, the philosopher, explained how we utilize imagination to communally share and understand experiences and ideas, that is to make connections. I noted that David Johnson, the poet, also had a concern for human connections. The theme of connections, of "communication and community" raised by both Mark Johnson and David Johnson earlier, is central for Karen Spear's (1988) book, Sharing Writing: Peer Response Groups in English Classes. The thrust of her argument is that students should meet in small peer groups and, by drawing on their personal experience, share and discuss their writings with the view to helping each other clarify, make more explicit, more precise, and more effective, each other's texts. This whole process, she suggests, "signals the degree to which a writer has conveyed information

[experience, as Van Manen would say] to the reader rather than 'noise'" (p. 133). In other words, the writer who fails to communicate clearly, transmits "noise" rather than experience. Bencich and Blau (1990) refer to group work as "sharing meaning within a community of readers and writers" (p. 182). Ryan (1997) also advocating group work states, "this sharing opens dialogue between writers" (p.12). Spear is likewise supported by Bartelo, Baker and Philips (1990) -- "the importance of small-group or one-to-one discussion for...learning English as a second language" (p. 171). Eeds & Petersen (1997) add that students working in small groups will find "that deeper meaning will be built through conversation, dialogue and critique" (p.50). Winning (1991) also recommends conversational dialogue in the ESL classroom. "it is a meaning-making and meaning-revealing activity" (p.13). Further in her study she states, "To be able to act pedagogically involves knowing and understanding in an interactive manner" (p. 218). Throughout her informative study Winning stresses that this interaction is not just between the teacher and the class, but also includes one-to-one interaction between teacher and student and between student and student.

Pezone and Singer (1997) suggest that, in the language classroom, dialogue is much more useful than debate. Dialogue, in contrast to debate, does not seek a winner, and it gives more students a chance to participate and with a greater sense of comfort and ease. The authors say, "Important elements in the dialogue process involve giving everyone a chance to be heard" (p.75). This inclusiveness has for Chamot (1995), as well as for Spear, great motivational value in the classroom, "because," observes Chamot, "when teachers value thinking in the classroom, they are also valuing their students' identities, and this is perhaps the greatest motivation of all" (p. 4).

The students that Spear has in mind as she advocates these group dynamics in writing classes are native speakers of English at the high school and college level. Two years before Spear, Rulon and McCreary (1986) specifically advocated this approach to facilitate second language acquisition.

Although the teacher-fronted classroom continues to be the norm, there is growing emphasis on group and pair work, with a resultant increase in the opportunities for the learner to use the target language. One of the advantages of the small-group setting appears to stem from the fact that the more intimate setting provides students with more opportunity to negotiate the language free from the stress and rapid pace of the teacher-fronted classroom. (p. 182)

I have used a similar approach in this study with a group of advanced ESL students. We strove not only for clarity of writing but more importantly, as added dimensions, for the advancement of human understanding, for the bridging of gaps between cultures, and for the promotion of peace. This was a tall order to wring from poetry in an ESL class, but I believe it was done. Poems became “instruments of communication and community” (Johnson, p. 62). Evidence for these achievements was displayed in the day to day attitudes of the students as we studied poetry. As will be described later, further evidence appeared in the form of themes generated through the discussions of poems, including poems which the students wrote.

However, we must realistically keep in mind as Smith (1993) cautions us that the road to a more benign global village is not an easy one. He speaks of “a long, slow process where good teaching can play an important role [in promoting] a life more tolerant of cultural and ethnic differences...how one thinks is intimately related to how one lives” (p. 28). Schools can help foster a more tolerant, caring society. Noddings (1991) insists “schools simply must help [students] to learn how to contribute to more caring relations” (p. 165). Noddings suggests that a useful means for helping students in this direction is to encourage them to work and interact in small groups. She would fully support Spear discussed above. Noddings states, “small-group work appears to be a promising possibility. It can be an excellent way to get students working together, helping each other” (p. 168). Cox and Boyd-Batstone (1997) add, “Language and literacy is a social interactive process that takes place when students work collaboratively with each other and the teacher” (p. 53). The teacher bears great “response-ability” (Winning p. 223) as a facilitator in this collaborative process.

I explored these principles as I gathered data for my research into the problem of using poetry as a connecting bridge between cultures in order to promote peace and understanding between people. I am not suggesting that I developed a formula for solving all the problems of human relations. But if I can help even in a small way, then this study will have been worth the time and effort put into it. I was not attempting to develop some objective measuring device with which to determine how effective the use of poetry in ESL classes will be in promoting better human relations. The evidence that I gathered as a participant observer is anecdotal in nature, employing the use of narrative and thick descriptions which abstracted emerging themes which showed trends in the human development of my students. The next section looks at teacher research, a research technique intimately related to the approaches of the participant observer to which I have just alluded.

Teacher Research

My research methodology for this study is what Schon (1983) calls *reflective practice* and which I designate as *teacher research*. Teacher research is an eclectic amalgamation drawing ideas from different research paradigms. The paradigms that impinge upon teacher research would include action research, ethnography, and phenomenology. In doing teacher research the teacher draws ideas from these areas and presents the ideas in a qualitative context by employing careful observation and reflection followed by writing descriptive narration to detail the study problem selected for investigation.

In his 1983 book, The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action, Schon details some of the elements of this form of research.

Practitioners are frequently embroiled in conflicts of values, goals, purposes and interests. Teachers are faced with pressures of increased efficiency in the context of contracting budgets...[Schon goes on to discuss the] emergence of professional pluralism. Competing views of professional practice....Each view of professional practice represents a way of functioning in situations of indeterminacy and value

conflict, but the multiplicity of conflicting views poses a predicament for the practitioner who must choose among the multiple approaches to practice or devise his own way of combining them. (p. 17)

[Such amalgamations are achieved by using] artful ways in which some practitioners deal competently with the indeterminacies and value conflicts of practice....artful competence which practitioners sometimes reveal in what they do....restructuring of situations that are complex and uncertain....[They engage in the] task of choosing among competing paradigms of practice. (p. 19)

In other words we are dealing with an eclectic approach such as I have alluded to above. Again quoting Schon but now from his 1987 book, Educating the Reflective Practitioner, we see how he sums up the artistry of this eclectic approach as he states:

They have, in short, a particular, professional way of seeing their world and a way of constructing and maintaining the world as they see it. When practitioners respond to the indeterminate zones of practice by holding a reflective conversation with the materials of their situations, they remake a part of their practice world and thereby reveal the usually tacit processes of worldmaking that underlies all of their practice. (p. 36)

An aspect of this eclectic approach is action research. Hammersley (1993) views action research as a new perspective which sees the teacher as “a skilled practitioner, continually reflecting on his or her practice in terms of ideals and knowledge of local situations, modifying practice in the light of these reflections, rather than a technician merely applying scientifically produced curriculum programmes” (p. 212). Kemmis (1993) notes an impetus for this new perspective as arising from “the demand from an increasingly professionalized teacher force for a research role based on the notion of the extended professional investigating her or his own practice” (p. 181). Kemmis sees a “spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflection” (p. 185). Similarly McEwan et al. (1997) indicate, “Action research begins with a period of critical reflection, followed by project planning, implementation, and observation” (p. 49). Isserlis (1990) provides a good definition: “Action research has the goal of investigating reflection, implementing change, and encouraging participation among teachers and learners, learners and learners, and teachers and teachers. The process is recursive and ongoing” (p. 307). Farrell, Trevor and Trevor (1995) observe, “At its simplest a piece of action research would involve a teacher trying a new way of delivering a piece of curriculum content and

monitoring the results” (p. 18). These ideas are incorporated into teacher research and suggest a continuous growth-pattern in the teachers’ professional development as they carry out their own research.

The ethnographic aspect of teacher research is reflected in the definition of ethnography, as it applies to schools, given by Lawton and Gordon (1993). “Ethnographic studies refer to small-scale, micro studies of the school or classroom....The stress in these studies would be in the way that participants interpret the situation. There is therefore sometimes a link between ethnomethodology and phenomenology” (p.82).

Rowntree (1981) sees phenomenology as a descriptive study “centered on the detailed understanding of an individual’s experience ” (p. 215). Van Manen (1990) describes phenomenology as “the study of essences....the systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures of lived experience” (p. 10). Wright (1996) says phenomenology is “a philosophy concentrating on what is consciously experienced” (p. 312). Page and Thomas (1977) note, “Typical topic of interest to the phenomenologist is the *self concept* ” (p. 264). So, one might reflect that a poet exploring and describing human experience is really a phenomenologist by another name.

This mutuality of phenomenology and poetry comes to my mind when I read Van Manen. As he describes phenomenology I often observe that what he says might well be applied to poetry. I will quote again from his Researching Lived Experience (1990).

Phenomenological research is the study of lived experience....Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences. (p. 9)

Phenomenological research is a poetizing activity. (p. 13)

Lived experience is the starting point and end point of phenomenological research. The aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence -- in such a way that the effect of the text is at once a reflexive reliving and a reflective appropriation of something meaningful: a notion by which a reader is powerfully animated in his or her own lived experience. (p.36)

And this involves textual practice: reflective writing. (p. 38)

To all these ideas the poet would agree. The poet too deals with life experiences and tries to fix them into text “by which a reader is powerfully animated.” This certainly mirrors the ideas of the poet, David Johnson, discussed earlier where the poet speaks of finding “a place out of which we might view the world and begin the process of reconnecting the fragments of our experience, making a whole again, making us whole again.” (See p. 52 of this text).

Looking more directly at poetry Van Manen observes, “A poet can sometimes give linguistic expression to some aspect of human experience that cannot be paraphrased without losing a sense of the vivid truthfulness that the lines of the poem are somehow able to communicate” (p. 71). Both the phenomenologist and the poet are engaged in capturing and elucidating lived experience in text. The teacher researcher is similarly engaged. He/she observes, reflects, and writes, reflects and rewrites to produce text. Again Van Manen states, “To write/theorize is to bring signifying relations to language, into text.... Writing and rewriting is the thing” (p. 132).

Van Manen advocates a thoughtful, reflective form of writing which explores experience in depth, providing “A rich and thick description” (p. 152). I suggest that ESL teachers consider exploring poetry with their students as a basis for generating “rich” text both for themselves as researchers and for their students as language learners and writers. And at the same time they can explore the continent of peace education in order to help heal a fragmented world. I am pleased to note that Van Manen includes poetry as one of his exploratory options for generating research text. He says, “as researchers in education we need to discover and rediscover new sources for informing our research activities: lived experiences, philosophy, literary novels, poetry, art forms, personal experiences, and so on” (p. 155).

As I look back upon my teaching career, like many other teachers I had an orientation towards teacher research from the beginning, although I did not specifically use the expression “teacher research.” All dedicated teachers, as they prepare and write up and

rewrite their lessons, reflect upon their actions with the view of improving their professional service to their students and to the community in which they function. To be effective the teacher must have a strong sense of community, both in the classroom and with the larger world beyond. Echoing Mark Johnson, discussed earlier, Eisner (1993) speaks of “this communis.”

Indeed, acculturation and education can be considered the psychological process used to provide frameworks to the young so that the worlds they make for themselves will have some commonality with those of others. It is this commonality, this *communis*, that makes communication possible. When people do not share frameworks [Johnson’s schemata], there is no common ground; they cannot understand each other....What we believe, in the end, is what we ourselves create. With such a vision, the scope for method in research can be widened and the criteria for assessment made more generous. Such a prospect when put into practice will not only make possible the use of a more diversified array of talent, but it may also help us better understand and improve educational practice. (pp.54-55)

Teachers reflecting upon and modifying their actions as a result of this reflection is at the heart of teacher research. “teachers are the ones best able to understand and refine their work...as they reflect on their experience” (Towill 1993, p. 12). This reflection involves the examination and manipulation of patterns discerned in the teaching framework. For example, if the teacher finds that a particular teaching approach with a class or a particular student is not effective, he or she upon reflection would fit a different approach into the teaching framework. Again quoting Eisner (1985), this time from an earlier work, his book, The Educational Imagination, we read:

Images [patterns] are the bedrock upon which we build our theoretical palaces. (p.355)

Knowing, like teaching, requires the organism to be active and to construct meaningful patterns [images, schemata] out of experience. At base, such patterns are artistic constructions, a means through which the human creates a conception of reality....Pattern is an inescapable quality of the organization of thought.(p. 364)

As one reflects upon teacher research it becomes readily apparent that this approach is qualitative in its orientation, as it builds its “theoretical palaces,” as Eisner puts it. Schofield (1993), like Eisner, is aware of the personal involvement of the researcher in this

building process. Nevertheless, his article, "Increasing the generalizability of qualitative research," argues that with proper care generalizability is possible.

The goal is *not* a standardized set of results that another careful researcher in the same situation or studying the same issues would produce. Rather it is to produce a coherent and illuminating description of and perspective on a situation that is based on and consistent with detailed study of that situation. (p. 93)

most researchers writing on the generalizability in the qualitative tradition agree that their rejection of generalizability as a search for broadly applicable laws is not a rejection of the idea that studies in one situation can be used to speak to or to help form a judgment about another situation...thick descriptions are vital. (p. 97)

A consensus appears to be emerging that for qualitative researchers generalizability is best thought of as a matter of the 'fit' between the situation studied and others to which one might be interested in applying the concepts and conclusions of that study. This conceptualization makes thick descriptions crucial, since without them one does not have the information necessary for an informed judgement about the issue of fit. (p. 109)

In addition to the essential "thick descriptions" noted by Schofield, Phillips (1993) would add another requirement to enhance objectivity and generalizability, namely, critical scrutiny. Phillips observes:

A view that is objective is one that has been opened to scrutiny, to vigorous examination, to challenge. It is a view that has been teased out, analyzed, criticized, debated -- in general, a view that has been forced to face the demands of reason and of evidence. When this has happened, we have some assurance (though never absolute assurance) that the view...has respectable warrant. (p. 66)

In obtaining "respectable warrant" through "examination" and "challenge" I think it is obvious Phillips has in mind not just teachers but all stakeholders in the educative process -- teachers, students, parents, university personnel as instructor and researchers, and employers. In other words, we have this sense of community that Eisner advocated. Nevertheless, this is not to minimize the importance of the teacher as she or he makes decisions daily in the operation of the classroom. These decisions are made not only daily but hour by hour and minute by minute, both while the teacher is with the class and in the many hours outside the class spent in preparation. And all the while the teacher will be subjecting these decisions "to scrutiny, to vigorous examination, to challenge" both personally and collegially. The teacher's responsibility in decision making is great. On

collegiality McEwan et al. (1997) add, "On-going reflective practice is encouraged through dialogue with fellow team members...in a spirit of collaborative inquiry with the purpose of creating a climate of openness that encourages thoughtful practice" (p. 49).

Ross, Cornet, and McCutchen (1992) in their book, Teacher Personal Theorizing: Connecting Curriculum Practice, Theory, and Research, examine closely the decision making aspect of teacher research. They consider:

how teachers consciously and tacitly use their knowledge, skills, beliefs, and values to make sense of their situations, take appropriate actions, and assess the impact of those actions. (p. 4)

Teachers must select and organize multiple factors in ways that provide experiences for particular groups of students in particular settings. (p. 14)

Teachers learn to make curriculum decisions through direct experience as both students and teachers. (p. 15)

the key is to develop within teachers and their research collaborators critical self-reflection, reevaluation, and exploration of both teachers' practical theories and the actions which they guide. (p. 16)

Kanno and Applebaum (1995) suggest that our "research collaborators" should not only be teacher colleagues but our ESL students as well. They maintain we should consult more with ESL students to obtain useful ideas about teaching them. They see the perceptions that these students have of their experiences, and the stories that they can tell, as untapped, rich sources of data (p. 274). Noddings and Witherell (1991) agree, asserting "stories are powerful research tools. They provide us with pictures of real people in real situations, struggling with real problems" (p. 280). Winning (1991) adds, "An authentic second language education will allow space for the storying of the students" (p. 53).

Kanno and Applebaum speculate on why these sources have not been used more. "One reason has to do with the current strong tendency of SLA research to emulate natural science. Metaphors borrowed from natural science such as measurement, general laws, and control may have diverted SLA researchers from stepping into the realm of meaning interpretation" (p. 32). I hope that my study, with its strong emphasis on teacher research and narration, has helped to offset this tendency.

Ayers (1992) in his article, "Teachers' Stories: Autobiography and Inquiry," looks at another aspect of teacher research. He examines what numerous teachers have written ("teachers' stories") as a result of their critical reflection upon their work. These writings included autobiographies, journals, diaries, and personal documents. Ayers maintains that by scrutinizing these personal reflections, even though they "are never neutral or value free," (p. 35) we can gain much valuable insight. "Interrogating our stories, then -- questioning and probing our collective myths -- is an important pathway into exploring the meaning of teaching" (p. 35). Gudmundsdottir (1995) notes that such narratives, "go directly to the heart of the teacher's professional, practical knowledge" (p. 4). Cooper (1993) sees teachers' and students' journals as "a form of narrative as well as a form of research, a way to tell our own story, a way to learn who we have been, who we are, and who we are becoming" (p. 98). Witherall (1993) adds, "the teller or receiver of stories can discover connections between self and other [and] penetrate barriers to understanding" (p. 94).

Of great personal interest, as I completed this study of using poetry as a cultural and peace bridge in an ESL setting, was the reference of Ayers to a teacher whom he calls Sylvia. He describes her not only as a teacher but also as a poet. She feels that subjecting her teaching to intensive reflection and criticism has given her work a dynamic, organic quality. Quoting her Ayers states, "She describes her teaching 'as a plank in a bridge from one culture to another' and she believes that organic teaching, besides being an effective tool, is a humble contribution to world peace" (p.38). I made similar uses of, and claims for, the metaphors of planks and bridges throughout this report. My study sought to validate that poetry can help to establish these metaphorical connections. And I report on these connections by means of narration, through a teacher's stories arrived at through reflection upon what I and my students have experienced together in the classroom. In other words, I engaged in basic teacher research. This type of research, I believe, is a

powerful tool that should be used much more extensively by teachers as they develop their professional expertise.

I find support for my position in Nias (1996), as she discusses the great value to be derived from teachers' stories:

To accept that there are elements of power, conflict and politics behind teachers' feelings is to shed a new light upon...the importance and value of teachers' stories. Noddings argues the case for the inclusion of teachers' stories in teacher education, especially those which portray feelings and which show how good teachers come to terms with and productively use their emotions. But she also shows how stories may help teachers and university students to greater cognitive insight into and enriched theoretical discussions of teaching. (p.304)

Colalillo-Kates (1996) similarly discusses the value of teachers' reflecting and writing on their professional practice. She notes:

The act of writing brings forth a deeper understanding of one's compressed knowledge and offers the opportunity to communicate it....when we write we bring a conscious layering of understanding [organization] to what we know deeply. We begin to formally articulate what we know....the content is clearly a formal presentation of human experience valid across research and teaching communities. (p. 13)

The writers who share an interest in teachers' stories appear to be numerous.

"Stories capture experience. In doing so they provide a way to express and represent the multidimensional aspects of any teaching decision or action" (Pinnegar 1996, p. 13).

"Stories make permeable the boundaries of our own and other's life experiences...and enable the appraisal of those experiences" (Gomez 1996, p. 1). I believe that the affirmations of Pinnegar and Gomez, as applied to stories, may also be applied to poetry. Poems also "capture experience" and seek to clarify "life experiences." Hence, it would appear to me that poems, like stories, have a legitimate place in the ESL classroom.

The lively, organic aspects of teachers' writing is also probed by Kleinsasser (1992). To throw light on her concern about teaching language arts she made a case study of eight teachers, four female and four male. She enlisted these teachers to write twice weekly entries into journals which were later examined for matching themes. She also interviewed the teachers extensively. Her approach was decidedly ethnographic. She

employed, "The tools of an ethnographer -- interview, participant observation, and interpretation" (p. 57). Reflecting on close observations and interviews coupled with "thick description," she sought to gain a better understanding of the experience of formal schooling and its culture at the high school level. "the researcher is an author who writes from the midst of life experience where meanings resonate and reverberate with reflective being" (Van Manen 1997, p. 368).

Kleinsasser found that, "The desire to promote positive, caring interpersonal relationships with both students and colleagues emerged as the dominant theme across all cases in the study" (p. 62). These language arts teachers spoke of the importance not only of teacher-teacher relations but also of the rapport in teacher-student and teacher-class relations. They also noted the risk factors associated with sharing feelings in order to develop these relations in a positive manner. "Sharing feelings has the potential to build rapport between student and teacher at the same time that it demands sensitivity and trustworthiness from the teacher" (p. 63).

Kleinsasser's observations about the value of personal writing and the value of sharing feelings bring to mind the study of poetry, the language of feeling, which provides an ideal field for teacher research as the foregoing writers have envisioned it. Their ideas run very close to what I expressed at the outset, in the introduction to this study, where I speak of poetry as being a useful tool for working this field "to produce a bountiful yield of better human understanding." (See p. 21).

Eisner feels that "method in research can be widened and the criteria for assessment made more generous" (Eisner 1993, p. 55), and Kleinsasser advocates "caring interpersonal relationships (1992, p. 62). We have also seen how these worthy objectives can be concomitant outcomes of teachers' initiatives while engaging in teacher directed research. The article, "Insights from the Analysis of Our Own Theorizing: The Viewpoints of Seven Teachers," (Cornett, et al., 1992) both justifies teachers' "own theorizing" and at

the same time tries to understand why the salutary effects of such theorizing are not much more widely practiced. These seven teachers concur:

It is quite productive to confront our practice on our own terms (rather than have someone else tell us what we are doing “right” or “wrong”) and to identify the strengths and weaknesses in each of our practices that we have never confirmed before. (p. 138)

It is also difficult to assume a systematic inquiry stance regarding our own practice because we have been socialized into thinking that others are better equipped to study our own practice and give us directions.(p. 139)

These teachers go on to say that they were not able to overcome their tendency to defer to the “experts” on all questions pertaining to curriculum and curriculum implementation until they had read and discussed widely the literature on teacher-initiated research with its emphasis on examining their own practice and taking individual responsibility for critically assessing and determining how to improve it. Furthermore, this was to be an ongoing process throughout their teaching careers.

William Schubert (1992) shares many of the views of the seven teachers noted above. Writing of his experience as a classroom teacher and later as a professor of education, he notes that teachers were given to understand that they were “implementors, those who were to carry out directives from higher authorities. I resented this, and, like most teachers, I knew better. Teachers make curriculum choices every moment of their daily work; they shape the curriculum actually experienced by students” (pp. 261-62). Schubert decries this shortsightedness on the part of “experts,” which causes valuable insights that could inform our teaching practices to be lost. To correct this he suggests teachers be recognized as collaborators in developing and implementing educational theories. “It is necessary to overcome the elitist assumption that only those who have been sanctioned by the credentials, peer reviews, and promotions of academe are worthy of the title *scholar, researcher, or theorist*” (pp. 258-59). Likewise Marujo (1996) adds, “Teachers’ voices have not yet been valued enough and teachers themselves are not always able to recognize the power of their stories” (p. 14). Schubert and Marujo strongly endorse

research on the part of teachers. Milner (1990) concurs, "Having teachers involved in the creation and evaluation of the curriculum and instruction is a positive way to effect change" (p. 14).

Poetry and Peace Education

Throughout this document I have made numerous references to the idea of using poetry to promote peace. Nevertheless, this section of the literature study concentrates more extensively on the idea of using poetry for *peace* education and for *global* education. Many writers in the field use the terms synonymously, and I shall do likewise.

Zachariah (1989) commenting on the purpose of global education says, "The most important objective of global education, surely, is that teachers and students should gain a heightened awareness of the increasingly interdependent world in which they live" (p. 48). Alladin (1989), in his article "Teaching for Global Awareness," states, "Global education can be defined as those educational efforts needed to teach individuals a global perspective" (p. 6). He advocates "treating the school as the global village and the students as the global citizens" (p. 7). To achieve this we need teachers with a global vision. "The global teacher has a cross-cultural perspective" (p. 10). I believe that all successful teachers, including ESL teachers, should have such a broad, encompassing world view. Thomas (1997) sees a growing trend towards a more global culture. He stresses the important role teachers world-wide will play in fostering this culture. "Teachers are going to be in the frontline in melding the positive effects of this new 'global culture' with the existing cultures of knowledge and teaching" (p. 25). Commenting on this global education Wenden (1992) indicates "its goals, content, and methodology should be incorporated and adapted to all forms of learning and used by educators as an added perspective from which to plan and evaluate their endeavors" (p. 1).

To encourage such a world view among teachers Gay (1997) argues that university courses for teachers in training should be deliberate and systematic in their treatment of

multicultural education. It is not enough, she says, to give prospective teachers occasional exposure to concepts of cultural diversity and to ideas of how to cope with such diversity. "Rather, multicultural philosophies, issues, content, materials, and techniques need to be infused in deliberate, systematic ways throughout the entire structure of teacher education programs" (p. 151).

Choldin (1993) notes the multifaceted aspects of global education. "global education is related to peace education, environmental education, development education, and multicultural education" (p. 29). Stressing the "cross-cultural perspective" he suggests teachers should help students "learn to appreciate that their view of the world is coloured by the cultural glasses through which they look, that other people looking from different points or through different cultural glasses may see things quite differently" (p. 28). In this context of variant views poetry can be useful for peace education since, by appealing to our positive emotions, it helps us to affirm our humanity and solidarity with other people who may be different from us. As students of different cultural backgrounds work together to study poetry they should be afforded many opportunities to note and compare various perspectives. At the same time they should be encouraged to have tolerance and respect for these divergent views. As noted earlier, Hicks (1988) stated, "Students should have a sense of the worth of others, particularly of those with social, cultural, and family backgrounds different from their own" (p. 15). In another article Hicks (1993) suggests that as teachers lead students to work together and compare views "in many cases they will find that there is no agreed 'right' answer and thus begin to learn about the need to tolerate ambiguity and differences of opinion" (p. 24). Similarly Winning (1991) observes, "The ESL classroom has the propensity to utilize many world-views, thereby not only showing each individual that his or her way of knowing is valid, but also extending the world-view of every class member" (p. 106). Zachariah adds, "respectful dialogue between cultures is important" (p. 44).

Avery, Sullivan and Wood (1997) stress the importance of tolerance in cross-cultural and in all human relations. These authors suggest we can only be tolerant when we are in a state of disagreement with someone else, and if we all agree there is no reason for tolerance. But we show tolerance when we allow for disparate views. "Underlying political tolerance and conflict resolution is the willingness to acknowledge the rights of those with whom we disagree" (p.32). They also note, "people are not naturally tolerant...tolerance for diverse beliefs must be learned" (p. 32). And this is why, as Noddings pointed out previously, the schools have such an important role to play in developing better human relations.

Kniep (1989) likewise has an integrative world view incorporating the use of literature for peace education. He sees a "complex web of worldwide interconnections...in which all of us affect and are affected by others across the globe" (p. 12). Furthermore, Kniep believes that the value-laden works of the arts have much to offer, by way of useful content, to the peace educator. "literature, music and the arts also have a great deal to contribute to the understanding of human values, the experience of people in coping with persistent problems, and the development of a historical perspective" (p. 15).

The theme of interconnectedness and interdependence runs deeply through all the literature of global/peace education . Bacchus (1989) encourages us to see "a need for us to move beyond self-interest and develop a sense of commitment to and solidarity with the less fortunate of this globe" (p. 21). He gives this vision a Canadian application. Bacchus notes Canada's official multicultural policy and asserts that if it is to be successful we must adopt and display "an understanding and respect for each other's cultures and a sense of mutuality between the various groups that comprise society" (p. 22) -- cross-cultural education, in other words. Then with a poetic turn of mind Bacchus continues:

The concerns of the poet John Donne expressed in the mid-seventeenth century are still very meaningful today. They ask us, "never (to) ask for whom the bell tolls, (because) it tolls for thee." In other words, Donne tried, over three centuries ago, to emphasize that we are all involved in whatever happens to mankind in different parts of the world. (p. 22)

To add to Bacchus' reflections on Donne, I quote again Donne's famous line, "No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main." I am sure if Donne were living today, he would, without hesitation, include women in this encompassing, inclusive view.

Roche (1989) states this inclusive view clearly. He says we need "a sense of world consciousness in which every individual realizes his or her role as a member of the world community" (p. 18). In another article Roche (1993) contends that to achieve this inclusive view, we will need an emotional and moral awakening along with a renewed ethic as essential to a new world order of peace. "Central to such an ethic is a spirituality that recognizes the sacred source of all life and the integral relationship between the human species and the whole earth community" (p. 31). Webster (1996) similarly affirms, "The global core curriculum will address the moral failure of the people of the earth to relate properly to each other and to the environment" (p. 121). Webster adds that, to have freedom and peace in the world, we must make "an acknowledgement that all human beings equally carry great worth" (p. 123). Lister (1995) advocates that, "Political education as moral education and citizenship as moral enterprise can make a contribution to the creation of a global citizenship in our own times" (p. 109).

Hildebrand and Hinzen (1996), two German adult educators, in their article, "Adult education and the fight against poverty," also stress a moral imperative as being essential to an enlightened world view commensurate with justice and peace. The struggle against poverty cannot be won without a strong sense of neighborly altruism, or a "sense of world consciousness," as Roche would put it. We must extend our focus beyond our own immediate concerns to include a much wider world view. Hildebrand and Hinzen connect adult education with global education (peace education) as they speak of:

solidarity with the struggle for development among peoples of the South, which rests finally on arguments of morality, and development cooperation as a way of securing the future of the entire world. (p. 162)...it is evident impoverishment cannot be countered unless social factors, such as unequal access to and

exploitation of resources, are taken into account both from a local and a global perspective. (p. 168)

The theme of the “sense of world consciousness” referred to above by Roche is also raised and examined in much more detail by Toh and Floresca-Cawagas (1990) in their text Peaceful Theory and Practice in Values Education. They, like David Johnson discussed earlier, employ the metaphor of weaving “to describe the process of peace building” (p xii). This “weaving” is a process of “joining hands with each other to nonviolently transform ourselves and society towards greater compassion, justice, sharing and personal peace” (p. ix).

Toh and Floresca-Cawagas insist that this transformation must involve a process they call “conscientization” (pp. ix, 5-6, 18-19). Here they discuss this concept in detail, but they also make many other references to the process throughout their text. Essentially they see conscientization as a heightened awareness and concern for the less fortunate members of our world community, both in the wider world and in our local environs. This concern involves much more than just a sense of pity for the poor and unfortunate of the world. Such pity may be mollified by dispensing some food, clothing, and/or cash; but, such action is not nearly enough. It is merely a band-aid solution to a deep systemic problem. Ultimately it is no solution at all.

According to Toh and Floresca-Cawagas, conscientization, properly understood and applied, not only sees the immediate *what* of a problem like the oppression of poverty, but also seeks to understand the underlying *why* and *how*. Why are so many disadvantaged? Why is the marginalization of the poor so ubiquitous? Why is there such disparity between the rich and the poor in the world, both individually and as nations? How and why do our social structures perpetuate these disparities? How can this structural violence of our societies be altered? How can the rich justify their rampant consumerism which, for the benefit of a few, saps the resources of the globe and despoils the environment? What are we as nations and as individuals prepared to sacrifice in order to amend these inequities, these patterns of structural violence?

The implications of conscientization are truly challenging. Toh and Floresca-Cawagas, like Roche mentioned above, stress a spiritual dimension in the process of conscientization for peace education. They observe, “peace education stresses the development of a deep sense of spirituality within any faith or belief-system, so that peace-oriented values and principles are indeed practiced, and not simply ritualized” (p.17).

Educating and acting for peace is not possible without a deep sense of compassion for the suffering, pain, and misery experienced by much of humanity throughout the world....Compassion, if authentic, recognizes the injustices underpinning poverty. It behooves speaking out against structural violence, and for transforming social, economic, political, and cultural relationships, institutions, and structures towards more just production and distribution of resources and rewards. (p. 3)

Conscientization illuminates the root causes of these human and planetary crises, and catalyzes us to act to transform structures of greed, injustice, violence, and ignorance into global, national, and local orders imbued with values of sharing, equity, nonviolence, and ecological understanding. (p. 19)

Writing separately in a journal on global education Toh (1993) describes a “transformative paradigm” as crucial to world peace:

We affirm our humanity when we can empathize with compassion for the suffering, joys, despair and hope of others wherever they are....Spirituality in the transformative paradigm, therefore, although it respects diversity, is also profoundly uniting by emphasizing the values of learning from the wisdom found in all cultural frameworks. (p. 12)

These writers see conscientization and its ensuing spirituality as a personal matter where the individual assumes personal responsibility for helping in the liberation of our less fortunate brothers and sisters of the global community as they struggle to free themselves from the demons of poverty, oppression, injustice, greed and prejudice. But in doing this, Argan (1997) suggests that we will first have to free ourselves from our own personal demons which allow us to turn a blind eye to the suffering of humanity. In an article about spirituality Argan includes a quotation from the great humanitarian, Mahatma Gandhi, of India.

For decades, Mahatma Gandhi led the Indian people in a struggle, eventually successful, against British rule. Despite his beefs with the British, Gandhi once said, “My first fight is with the demons inside me, my second fight is with the demons in my people, and only my third fight is with the British.” (p. 16)

Further on Argan states, "And if you want to build a just society then, as Gandhi noted, you should first drive the demons out of yourself" (p. 16). McCall and Andringa (1997) also note the human inclination towards injurious, selfish behavior.

if all people examined their own lives, they would find episodes of prejudice. Many of us have been conditioned to accept it, either from fear of losing our jobs, losing our reputation, or causing more chaos than we are willing to endure. We have to choose whether we will allow prejudice to exist and run the risk of being subjected to it ourselves, or to stand up and object whenever anyone falls victim to bias. (65)

Sadu and Brown (1996) likewise see the human propensity towards prejudice.

They observe, "No one is totally free from prejudice, although it can be reduced, it cannot be eradicated" (p. 203). This is not as pessimistic as it may at first appear. These writers go on to say that, although prejudice may not be totally eradicated, it can be reduced so that "various racial and ethnic groups [can live in] cultural and societal harmony" (p. 208). They suggest that this can be accomplished through education and through association. "an increase in both appreciation and respect for others is directly associated with the opportunity to interact with them" (p. 210). Lazar (1993), in his article "Education for prejudice reduction," advocates the value of education. He suggests, "Direct instruction can also be used to make students aware of values such as tolerance, respect, and cooperation which are antithetical to prejudice" (p. 8). Shade (1997) stresses the importance of overcoming prejudice in our school systems. She sees this as "the primary challenge being faced by education today" (p. 220).

Poetry, I believe, can be a very valuable tool in the process that "catalyzes us to act," as Toh and Floresca-Cawagas put it, to make the world more just and equitable for all its inhabitants. Poets often urge us, not necessarily by didactic statements but by extended implications, to "stand up and object" in the face of evil. The poet's message may not always appeal to our logic, but it is not primarily to our reason and logic to which the poet appeals. The poet appeals far more to our sentiments and feeling as to what we know to be right. This is an appeal to our intuition and aesthetic sense which transcends our sensory

perceptions of “proof”: “No proposition in poetics and aesthetics can in any rigorous sense be refuted....Truth, if any such be postulated in respect to the aesthetic, cannot be either proved or disproved statistically” (Steiner, p.68). And Steiner again, “There are in art and poetics no crucial experiments, no litmus-paper tests” (p. 75).

And yet there is a power in the word, particularly in the poetic word, to create an awareness of peace and urge us in that direction. Poetry helps us to articulate our noblest ideals and values, which include a longing for peace. “the word moves toward peace because the word mediates between person and person....Without communication there is no peace” (Ong, pp. 192 & 194).

To illustrate this point further I will quote from Drew (1959) who in turn quotes a powerful passage from William Blake, which I will also include. Drew effectively contrasts the affective power of prose and poetry, and indicates that the latter has much more strength to express ideas about which we have strong feelings. The passage that she cites from Blake has such power that it will hardly need further commentary from me. Drew (p. 33) states, “An editorial, pleading the cause of civil rights, might say: ‘We may unhesitatingly assert that we shall not lessen our efforts nor cease to struggle in this great cause of human happiness and moral warfare until our objectives have been clearly obtained.’ But this is what Blake writes:

Bring me my Bow of burning gold!
Bring me my Arrows of desire!
Bring me my Spear! O clouds unfold!
Bring me my Chariot of fire!

I will not cease from Mental Fight,
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England’s green and pleasant land.

My main concern is with ESL classes; but, I think all classes, in all subjects, at all levels, should be presented with a global perspective. And I believe that poetry, well-selected for the ESL classroom and for other classes as well, can help to enhance a more egalitarian world view -- a global perspective and a peace perspective. Because of the

diversity of cultures in the ESL classrooms it is particularly important to help students not only to adapt to the Canadian culture, but also to develop a sense of appreciation and respect for the variety of cultures represented by their classmates. Furthermore, in adapting to Canadian culture, we as teachers should encourage them to do so *not* uncritically, lest they too fall into the malaise of the all too prevalent patterns of insatiable consumerism. We must not forget the need for conservation of the earth's resources and for a sense of solidarity with the poor of our own country and those around the world. We too can help to build Jerusalem.

Over the centuries, serious, reflective poetry has always been concerned with social issues. It has ever been the champion of the poor and the oppressed. As seen in earlier parts of this study, John Donne stressed the interconnectedness of all people. Likewise Robert Burns, Martin Luther King, and William Blake used their poetry to express solidarity with the poor and marginalized of society. They advocated a more charitable solution to the problems of humanity. You can never find a solution to a problem unless you recognize it and have some way of describing and delineating it. Poetry can formulate such descriptive delineations.

We must applaud the work and concerns of modern global/peace educators for a more equitable, more just and peaceful world order. But we should also give due credit, as I have indicated above, to poets who have been working and weaving works with the same concerns in mind. Centuries before the modern global/peace educators came upon the scene, poets were already exploring the issues. I am not suggesting some competition between poets and peace educators; rather, I am suggesting an alliance. Poets and peace educators can work at the same loom to produce a more comforting fabric with which to clothe the world. This fabric will reveal patterns of humility, of love and of concern for the welfare of our sisters and brothers worldwide. This sense of universal concern is well summed up in a statement by Merleau-Ponty (1964) as he states, "When man takes an oath

to exist universally, concern for himself and concern for others become indistinguishable for him; he is a person among persons, and the others are other himselfes' (p. 231).

Again Toh and Floresca-Cawagas (1990) employing the metaphor of weaving state, "Peace education is a process of weaving a culture of peace. We try to weave a rich tapestry of peacefulness using the multidimensional threads of compassion, conscientization, constructiveness, conciliation, commitment, communion, and contemplation" (pp. 18-19). Reflecting on these threads and patterns in the poet's craft, I have examined below a few selections of relevant poetry.

Some Selected Poetry for Peace Education

In this section I have tried to keep my quotations brief. For more fuller readings one may refer to the bibliography. My first citations refer to the King James Bible. The Bible may be controversial, however, I am not citing it for religious dogma, but rather for poetic insight. We should keep in mind what writers like Hicks, Zachariah, Toh and Floresca-Cawagas, cited earlier, said about the great value of comparing and learning from various cultural perspectives.

In the very first book of the Bible we find the age old question raised, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4: 9). As the story of Cain and Able unfolds we find that the question is answered in the affirmative -- we are indeed our brother's keeper. The philosophy of these ancient people recognized our interconnectedness and our responsibility of concern one for another. The same ideas are expressed again in the book of Deuteronomy where it states, "Thou shalt open thy hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to the needy, in thy land" (Deut. 15: 11). Leviticus admonishes us, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev. 19:18).

This theme of our responsibility to be concerned about one another can be traced through the Old Testament right into the New Testament. Here Christ responded to the question, "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29) by telling the story of the traveller who

fell among thieves and was rescued and provided for by the good Samaritan. The story makes it clear that our neighbors are whomever we may meet, especially those in need.

I could not mention these selections of poetry without references to Shakespeare who was also much concerned with human interconnectedness. In Julius Caesar, Shakespeare describes those who are trying to get ahead, at others' expense, if need be.

lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
 Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;
 But when he once attains the upmost round,
 He then unto the ladder turns his back,
 Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degree
 By which he did ascend. (II, i, ll. 21-27)

Although Shakespeare stated these lines in a political context, I believe they can be given a much broader application. I have noted earlier that it is possible to give poetry many, diverse interpretations. I do not think it would be much amiss if we took these lines and suggested by analogy a certain likeness to the situation of the "industrialized nations" heaping up material success for themselves at the expense of the "third world countries." For many years the "industrialized nations" have been adept at plundering the resources, both natural and human, of their poorer neighbors. As we trample across heads we seem resigned to forgetting those who helped us up the ladder. We greedily provide them with guns in lieu of butter and charge an exorbitant price in the process.

The foregoing lines by Shakespeare suggest, by implication, the need to recognize our commonality and our connectedness. He brings forth the same theme again in his play The Life of King Henry the Fifth. During the night before a major battle the king reflects upon what the coming day may have in store for himself and his men. Deep in thought, he walks incognito amongst his troops to sample and to bolster their morale. Thinking him a common soldier, his men converse with him candidly. We see a man who despite his high office feels inwardly much the same as ordinary men do. The king from his assumed identity speaks:

For though I speak it to you,
 I think the king is but a man, as I am:
 The violet smells to him as it doth to me;
 The element shows to him as it doth to me;
 All his senses have but human conditions:
 His ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness
 He appears but a man.

Therefore when he sees reasons of fears, as we do,
 His fears, out of doubt, be of the same relish as ours are.
 (IV, i, ll. 104-115, three lines omitted)

To further illustrate the affinity of peace educators and poets I will again refer to Zachariah (1989). Although more prosaically, Zachariah, speaking for modern times, gives much the same account of humans as Shakespeare quoted above. Zachariah asserts:

The goal of global education should be to present people, whether in Canada or elsewhere, not as cardboard characters in a stilted puppet play but as multifaceted human beings who love and hate, are selfish and selfless as well as cruel and kind at different times, are seeking to express their sense of personal worth while constrained by their cultural and natural environment, and who enjoy life's little pleasures as well as cope with its tragedies. (p. 51)

Be we king or commoner, we are creatures of emotion and feeling who embody a "sense of personal worth" which craves recognition, dignity, and respect. Poetry recognizes, acknowledges, and celebrates this emotional nature of humans and is therefore a valuable resource for peace education as we strive to weave an interconnecting web of concern for and of sharing with our sisters and brothers around the world. Poets and peace educators, alike, keep the vision alive. Burns, quoted earlier, said, "It's comin yet for a' that, / That man to man, the world o'er / Shall brithers be for a' that." And, of course, this encompassing view must include women, whose plight we all know is often more dire than that of men.

Newton (1977) also addresses the ideas discussed. She too sees poetry as a means of expressing and discovering our commonality, our emotional human bonds. As educators we can help to weave these emotional bonds or strands into a fabric of concern for our worldwide community. Newton declares, "Enjoying poetry is, first of all, responding to the poem with some emotion. Unless a poem produces some reaction, it has failed to achieve its desired goal" (p. 4). She mentions such feelings as awe, reverence,

laughter, joy, loss, and revulsions, and goes on to say that as we respond to a poem “we have touched upon a feeling and a sensibility that is common to all of humanity, no matter when they lived in history, or who they were” (p.5). Similarly, Connolly (1960) observes, “Poetry expresses feeling, and...if it does not, no matter how witty its thought or brilliant its style, it lacks an essential poetic characteristic” (p. 14).

Hoffman (1993) likewise sees the poet as searching for the common links that connect us with humanity, past, present, and future.

Beneath the felt confusions of our lives are felt continuities which we scant at our peril. The biological life-cycle and its intrinsic stages, our instincts and our intuitions -- these are little changed in the thirty centuries of human institutions. We live on this deep level now, even as our spacecrafts practice docking....Creatures of acculturation as well as of instinct, we are also what we know and are enriched by our knowledge of our nature; we are impoverished by its loss. (p.27)

These are not just academic ideas to be theorized and speculated about in the “hallowed halls of higher learning.” As I have said before, and I repeat, the ideas of peace education/global education, our commonality, our connectedness, should be applied at all levels of learning, and I specifically include ESL students in Canadian classrooms. ESL students are often from the so-called “less developed countries” and have witnessed first-hand the burdens of poverty and oppression. These students often feel deeply about and have a keen interest in global problems. They are interested in peace education. Poetry, since it appeals to the human heart, to our emotional being, can be a facilitating resource, an intercultural peace bridge, in this educative process.

The appeal of poetry to the human heart helps us question war and crave peace. Unfortunately, poetry has not always refrained from glorifying war. Tennyson’s (1855) “The Charge of the Light Brigade” comes to mind: “All in the valley of Death, / Rode the six hundred/....Theirs not to make reply, / Theirs not to reason why, / Theirs but to do and die” (ll. 3-4 & 13-15). Here we see considerable militaristic flag waving and hero worship reflecting a prevalent mind set of the Victorian period.

A little more than fifty years later this unquestioning attitude towards war is challenged by a young Canadian writer. Owen (1918), in his poem "Dulce et Decorum Est," strips war of its glory by making us walk behind a wagon bearing a young soldier, dying a ghastly, agonizing death as a result of gas warfare. We see and hear "the blood / Come gargling from froth-corrupted lungs" (ll. 21-22). There is no flag waving here.

Similarly another Canadian writer, Jarrell (Wld. Wr. II), in his "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner," lays before us the unmitigated horror of war as we witness a ground crew servicing a returned, crippled bomber as they flush the shattered remains of the gunner "out of the turret with a hose" (l. 5). In graphic, vivid detail, these writers are making a very strong statement against war and in favor of peace.

Although there could be many more, at this point I will sample but one more writer of poetry who protests war and champions the cause of peace. Hardy (1840-1928) in his poem, "The Man He Killed," presents us with with a plain, simple man who tries to speculate on the incongruity and irrationality of war. This infantryman is troubled in retrospect by his recent killing of a man. He wonders why he did it and can only conjecture that it was, "Because he was my foe," (l. 10). But this does not satisfy even him, and he goes on:

Yes; quaint and curious war is!
 You shoot a fellow down
 You'd treat if met where any bar is,
 Or help to half a crown. (ll. 17-20)

In questioning the cruelty and irrationality of war these writers are engaging in social commentary, trying to promote change for a better, more peaceful world. Poets not only see the scourge of war but their social commentary is also directed at the injustices of poverty and the marginalization of vast numbers of people in society. Here again the poet stands at the loom in solidarity with the peace educator. Poets often question the propensity of the few rich to heap up wealth at the expense of the many poor.

William Blake (1757-1827) was such a questioning poet. Writing during the Romantic Period of English verse, Blake was much troubled by the prevalence of child labor in his country. He was particularly incensed with the widespread practice of using little boys as chimney sweepers. These boys were controlled and exploited, like slaves, by unscrupulous men who marshalled them about the city to do this dangerous, unhealthy, dirty work. Some people were agitating for laws to ban this practice. Blake lent these agitators his moral support by writing the poem "The Chimney Sweeper" (1783). The poet is definitely standing in solidarity with the oppressed. He paints a grim picture, being all the more effective, by employing the simple, lisping diction of a child.

When my mother died I was very young,
 And my father sold me while yet my tongue
 Could scarcely cry 'weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep!
 So your chimney I sweep, & in soot I sleep. (ll. 1-4)

Blake is not only indicting the handlers of these boys, but also the people whose chimneys they cleaned and the whole society generally for tolerating such inhumane practices. And this raises a current question which we all, including ESL students, can understand and discuss. How often in our insatiable consumerism do we benefit, through our imported consumer goods, from the exploitation of child labor in other countries?

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) was also concerned with the rampant consumerism of his day. By way of illustration two of Wordsworth's sonnets castigate the avarice so prevalent in his British society. A plain-living man who often communed with nature, he questioned the materialism of his society. In his "In London, September 1802," he laments, as I quote in part:

The wealthiest among us is the best:
 No grandeur now in nature or in book
 Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
 This is idolatry; and these we adore:
 Plain living and high thinking are no more:
 (ll. 7-11)

His language could hardly be more explicit. Continuing in the same mood in another sonnet, "The World Is Too Much With Us" (1802), he mourns that society in grasping after things has lost its affinity with nature.

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
(ll. 1-4)

Such a "sordid boon" is certainly not unknown to our own society today, where "the bottom line" often seems to be the greatest concern. Peace educators/ESL educators can enlist the support of poets in challenging this excessive preoccupation with the accumulation of material goods. They can stand together as they build connecting bridges of concern between people. To further illustrate I will look at a few more modern poets.

To build such connecting bridges between cultures and between individuals we need a sense of compassion and also a sense of what alienates us from one another. We will recall how that Toh and Floresca-Cawagas (1990) stated, "Compassion, if authentic, recognizes the injustices underpinning poverty" (p. 3). The modern American writer Robert Frost (1874-1963) in his poem, "The Death of the Hired Man," recognizes such injustice and marginalization of the poor. In a style of very plain everyday speech this long narrative poem tells the sad story of an old, worn out farm hand who is too old to work anymore. No one seems to want him. He has no place to go. Winter is approaching. In desolation he staggers back to the farmstead of a former employer and collapses near the barn. The farmer is away, but the wife sees the old man and helps him into the house and gives him tea and a warm place by the kitchen stove. Soon the farmer returns and is met outside the door and is told by his wife what has transpired.

The farmer, himself a poor man, feels that they cannot afford to winter old Silas. As the conversation continues we learn that Silas has a rich brother just down the road, "Why doesn't he go there? His brother's rich, / A somebody -- director in the bank" (ll. 133-134). But they soon conclude that that would be impossible. The younger brother

down the road is rich and indifferent. He is not “his brother’s keeper,” whether figuratively, or as kin. The woman’s nurturing concern prevails and she persuades her husband to go in and tell the old man that he can stay. But:

Warren returned -- too soon it seemed to her,
Slipped to her side, caught her hand and waited.

‘Warren?’ she questioned.

‘Dead,’ was all he answered.
(ll. 172-175)

Thus Frost closes a graphic study of callous indifference to poverty. The rich brother lacked the capacity to show concern. He had more important things to do, like managing the money at the bank. In Wordsworth’s words, he had “given [his] heart away, a sordid boon!”

D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930) shows compassion for the disadvantaged, too. In his “City Life,” he identifies with the dreary life of the factory worker -- “When I am in a great city, I know that I despair” (l. 1). He sees factory workers as hapless victims with “iron hooked into their faces” (l. 5). Hooked, they cannot escape their drudgery because they are dragged by an invisible, steel fish line “back and forth, to work, / back and forth to work” (ll. 10-11) “by some malignant fisherman on an unseen shore” (l. 13). And so they live their lives for the sport of others, lives that they can neither alter nor escape. We see this not only in our own country but also increasingly in “newly emerging nations” becoming “industrialized” with cheap labor. Peace educators and poets stand in solidarity with these workers. Through the study of poetry, ESL students, and others, may likewise.

I will continue my consideration of the poor and the oppressed by turning to a blues artist, Anderson (1970), a black American writer. His song, “My Neighborhood,” reveals the degeneration, squalor, and misery of the large city slum produced by the structural violence of racial discrimination, all of which the slum dweller would like to escape, but it is likely that he can’t, for he too is caught by steel lines of circumstance. From childhood up he has been trapped by the “Newspapers, beer cans and broken glass, / Garbage that

smells fumes up the main drag; (ll. 1-2)....a short neck of wine (l. 6)....the bank just got robbed (l. 14)...you like where I was born?" (l. 17). This is not a very auspicious place in which to grow up. No wonder he longs to get away.

Kirkpatrick (1970), another black American blues writer, likewise expresses the frustration of the ghetto dweller as he sees "The Cities are Burning" (title). Kirkpatrick paints a fearful picture, the consequence of racial prejudice and its concomitant oppression and poverty. This injustice he predicts will lead, both figuratively and literally, to burning cities all over U.S.A. "Yes, you know if these white folks don't settle up soon / We all goin' to wake up in Judgment Day" (ll. 22-23). But much to the credit of the song writer and his song, he is still able, in the midst of this misery, to extend a charitable hand of hope holding out an olive branch as he suggests, "The only solution I see to this whole thing / Is non-violence through Martin Luther King" (ll. 32-33).

Kirkpatrick illustrates what Steinbergh suggested earlier, "we see how poetry truly is 'the language of the heart'" (p. 59). One cannot help but be impressed by the magnanimity of such a gesture -- the down trodden and oppressed still thinking in terms of non-violence. This is what White, also quoted earlier, refers to when she speaks of "the timeless inspiration that is the gift of poetry in its many forms" (p. 193). Similarly, David Johnson held that, "We need a place to begin, a place out of which and from which we might view the world and begin the process of reconnecting the fragments of our experience, making a whole again, making us whole again" (p. 65). Poetry, I believe, is such a "place to begin." Students, including ESL students, can understand and appreciate this adhesive quality of poetry that can enhance our sense of common humanity, our sense of sisterhood and brotherhood. I believe I saw these principles worked out during the course of this research study: *"Poetry as an Intercultural Peace Bridge for Teaching ESL."*

I have been looking at the themes of ethnic prejudice and oppression which are of great concern to the poet as well as to the peace/global educator. I shall examine two more examples as viewed from the poet's perspective. Leona Gom (1975), in her short poem

“Nazis,” gives us a striking illustration of how prejudices can be learned, “redefined” and shifted from one convenient target group to another. She relates how, during World War II, Canadian citizens of German background were often harassed, vilified, and labelled “Nazis, until they kept alien / to their farms and afraid” (ll. 11-12). As the war ended and the Cold War began a new target for prejudice was found. “the enemy now redefined: / the stooped Ukrainians / pausing over their plows. / *Communists, we said. / Communists*” (ll. 13-19). The poet leaves it there, a sad commentary on the vagaries and caprice of negative human passions.

Robert Finch (1968) in his poem, “Select Samaritan,” looks at the prejudice of a wealthy couple who are contemplating the adoption of two children. The couple magnanimously claim that “we don’t care about race” (l. 7). But Finch, by using the words out of their own mouths, shows that they are bigoted liars: “But they can’t / Be Jewish” (ll. 3-4). Spaniards would be acceptable but only “If they are fair” (l. 5). They might consider Germans, but not “Chinese, must draw the line somewhere” (l. 8). “Poles might be good, / Of the right type” (l. 12-13). Having condemned themselves, they arrogantly assert how good any children they adopted would have it; they would “be in clover” (l. 14). No doubt the children would have every material advantage, but one would have to question the moral values imparted to these adopted children by such prejudiced parents. ESL students, I am sure, could readily develop the critical awareness to see through such hypocritical “Select Samaritans.” ESL students can also become critically aware of gender issues which I will discuss next.

Women’s Issues, Peace Education, and Poetry

Throughout this literature review, I have made it clear that I believe all ESL educators, and all educators generally, should be peace educators, presenting a global education perspective. To do this educators need not wait for the development of a special curriculum for a special subject devoted to peace, which students might or might not elect

to take. With a little forethought peace education can be incorporated into the present curriculum for all subject areas. We have already seen in the section on *teacher research* (p. 52 of this report) that teachers have a great deal of latitude in how they interpret and implement any curriculum. By carefully selecting materials and examples the thoughtful teacher can present a global, peace perspective projecting a concern for the whole global community. All teaching poses the use of illustrative samples and problems. Instead of drawing these samples and problems, say for math or science, from just anywhere, they could be systematically drawn from a global education context. The same could apply to ESL materials, to social studies and literature. There is no reason why literature (including ESL literature) cannot explore themes pertaining to global issues.

And this concern for the global community, for global issues, will of course include a special concern for the welfare of women, since society often places women in very disadvantaged positions. How can we possibly have “on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2: 14), unless we also have “good will toward [women]?” This concern is explored briefly in this section of the literature study. I shall cite some prose articles along with supportive references to poetry. The discussion will necessarily be rather brief, looking at only a few major problems in the area. To do the subject justice would require a completely separate study on its own. I shall only go far enough into the subject to show that poetry can profitably address and throw light upon women’s issues and to show how the poet and the peace educator can work side by side at the same loom, weaving a fabric of concern for women and their problems.

What is of concern for women should rightly be the concern of all, both male and female. Thus we have a rallying point, a focal point for women’s concerns, for women’s issues. At this meeting point it should not just be women who gather and speak up. Men should be meeting there too in demonstration of support and solidarity. Men also must speak for women. What is good for women is good for all society, including men. Everyone benefits from a more just social order but this will not be achieved without the

good will and combined efforts of both men and women. Wiltshire (1994) reminds us, "There is no movement for social change that has succeeded without the full cooperation of the women working side by side with the men" (p. 8).

Charlton (1984) also stressed the cooperative aspect of this endeavor. She clearly states:

there is no doubt that equity for men and women will come only as a result of the combined efforts of progressive men and aggressive women. Men must be progressive in using the skills, authority, and power that are available to them to initiate equity strategies for women, and women must be aggressive in seizing opportunities and in demanding greater choice, more voice, and improved well-being. (217)

This aggressive striving for "improved well-being" should be guided, Toh and Floresca-Cawagas (1994) suggest, by Gandhian principles. In their article, "Dialogue on Gandhian Principles and Techniques for Conflict Resolution," they state, "Gandhi lived in a land and cultural tradition where women and those of the lowest castes faced much discrimination. But he was not afraid to question these traditions and customs" (p. 4). In other words, cultural traditions are not written in stone. They yield and bend as people speak up, as they gain deeper insight into the meaning of peaceful human relations and of cultural solidarity.

Referring to the neighboring continent of Africa, we find Daphne Topouzis (1993) speaking on behalf of poor women in her article, "The Feminization of Poverty." She maintains that the numbers of poor are increasing and that those who suffer the most are the women and children.

Poor shelter, malnutrition, disease, illiteracy, overwork, a short life expectancy, and high maternal and infant mortality rates mark the lives of the poorest women and their dependent families. Poverty is growing faster in Africa than in any other part of the world. (p. 132)

Landless, unskilled, and illiterate rural women often live precarious lives on the edge of impoverishment, regardless of how hard they work. (p. 133)

In Malawi, women put in twice as many hours as men cultivating maize, the main cash crop, and the same number of hours in cotton, in addition to doing all the housework. (p. 133)

These are strong reminders that the lives of women in many parts of the world are far from adequate. Peace educators are constrained to speak out against this blatant injustice. Here again, the peace educator and the poet can stand in solidarity for a mutual cause.

Lack of well-being, or poverty, for women is not a problem peculiar to India or Africa. This universal problem is found in our own country where many people are marginalized by "progress." Nomagugu Mgijima (1994) in her poem, "to a native Indian woman, with love, from a South African woman," demonstrates how the poet can enlist our concern and support for the poor. She paints a bleak picture of the status of women in her own land and the similar condition of native women in Canada. Much of the land which once nurtured the people has been plundered and despoiled by industry. The environment has been polluted, largely for the benefit of a few at the expense of many.

But before looking at the poem I will turn again to Hildebrand and Hinzen, who were mentioned earlier, and note what they say about the environment and the exploitation of natural resources. They lay bare the ulterior motives of our bloated consumer society even as it preaches concern for the environment. The solicitous sham becomes blatantly apparent. I think it is a useful exercise to compare the prose of Hildebrand and Hinzen with the poetry of Nomagugu Mgijima. Close reading and reflection on the two pieces reveal that the poetry is no less effective, and in fact may be more effective than prose in addressing environmental issues and issues of exploitation and poverty. Somehow poetry seem to focus the issues more clearly. It seems to impress itself more keenly upon the mind and leaves us with a more vivid, longer lasting image.

Hildebrand and Hinzen state:

environmental protection is increasingly widely accepted because it is marketed as environmental management, thereby still falling into the pattern of a North-South transfer of knowledge and technology with, in the final analysis, the aim of guaranteeing privileged life styles in the North and the supply of raw materials for the industrialized countries. (p. 167)

Mgijima relates:

i can feel what you feel

Cry? No?

Me too

i was born the day gold was dug

you too?

was born the day oil was drilled?

i lost my ground to gold

i can feel what you feel (ll. 1-8)

Yes, i too can't gather the fruits no more (l. 13)

The fruits and plants i used to gather

have all turned into snakes and mambas (ll. 16-17)

grandma used to call that sacred water

put her lips to the boiling spring

i can't! all has turned into a chemical concoction (ll. 22-24)

Nor is it just native women who are victims of structural violence. Women in Canada, as in many other countries, are often trapped in low paying jobs, in "sweat shops," working under appalling conditions. This situation has a long historical precedent in our country which in part explains the inertia to change. Wilson (1991), in her book Women, Families, and Work, reports on the "sweat shop" factories that were a common feature of the Canadian garment industry a century ago. Women did piece-work for very little remuneration. And they worked under the most difficult conditions. One Inspector Brown reported in 1885 that upon a certain occasion he went into a Montreal factory and "could hardly breathe for steam, heat and the smell from the gas irons. [He] could hardly even see the girls" (p. 75).

These types of problems have persisted in the industry and are not entirely corrected even today. Wilson refers to a 1938 Royal Commission and adds a caveat about the *present conditions*. "The Commission reported problems of dust, heat, humidity, fumes, and gases -- *problems that continue to present serious health hazards to the 200, 000 women who work in the garment and textile industries in Canada today* " [1991, emphasis my own] (p. 75). For the most part, the garment industry in Canada today still has not

been unionized, and so wages tend to be low. Consequently, many Canadian women still contend with the issues of low pay and poor working conditions.

Poets effectively address the issue of poverty for women. Elizabeth Brewster's (1978) "New Year's Day, 1978" lets us see into the lonely and disappointing life of an aging, single woman. Due to poverty, not much has turned out as she had hoped for in her youth. Her modest dream of "Sons and daughters / A big house with an orchard behind it" (ll. 17-18) was not to be. Instead, she confides, "I have lived all my life in rented rooms; / my loves have been temporary; / my best friends are dead; / I have no children" (ll. 26-29). Towards the end of the poem, as she approaches sixty-five, she laments, "My lover may marry me / for my old-age pension" (ll. 48-49).

Erin Mouré (1985) gives an equally sad account of the poverty and deprivation of a woman in her poem "Lenore." Here a woman struggles on her own to pay for a house and raise her children. "she took in ironing 8 hours a day & fought / fought for the pay of that. / *Next week, next week, was all she heard*" (ll. 6-8). "borrowing 5 dollars from Mike at the Legion / just to feed her girls" (ll. 10-11). Unlike the woman in the previous paragraph, Lenore can not even dream to console herself. Her future is not bright. "She sees her future self in her mother at Edson, / 75 years old & still cleaning hotel rooms" (ll. 17-18). In the end her girls are grown and turn away from her, leaving her alone to endure "the breakdown of caring; / where her fears gentle her & she drinks her Scotch" (ll. 35-36) In highly compressed language the poet has given us an insight into the poverty of two generations of women, leaving us to speculate on what might befall the third.

The poet as a global/peace educator brings us face to face with the structural violence encountered by the poor. Students, including ESL students, can understand this. Only as we describe, understand, and feel the problems of the poor can we be moved to do something to improve the situation. Poetry is a conscientizing force, an instrument of "communication and community" (Johnson p. 62).

Not only do Canadian women often work at low-paying jobs with resulting poverty and loneliness, those that do get married often have to cope both with jobs outside the home and then, like their sisters in Africa, come from work and manage the house and children with little or no help from their husbands -- two jobs and very little pay. Wilson, quoted earlier, concerns herself much with the problem of how the Canadian woman has to struggle with the demands of family and work. She sees more and more women engaged in the labor force. Yet there are gender disparities in wages and on the job and in work demands at home. Women "receive less pay relative to equally qualified and experienced men" (p. 1). On the same page Wilson observes, "While fathers today are more active parents than in the past, they typically do not share responsibility equally, and most husbands resist doing housework." Such renegeing of responsibility puts a great deal of extra strain upon the woman.

This issue is also examined by poet Paulette Jiles (1984) in "Paper Matches." She uses the figure of women as paper matches to show how they are consumed in their double duties. At a family gathering the women have prepared the meal and are now washing up the dishes while the men folk amused themselves as they "squirted each other on the lawn / with garden hoses" (ll. 2-3). When the speaker protests why this should be so, we hear, "That's the way it is / said Aunt Hetty, the shrivelled-up one" (ll. 5-6).

Aunt Hetty obviously is traditional and resigned, but not so the speaker, for she says, "I have the rages that small animals have, / being small, being animal" (ll. 7-8). She is overwhelmed by tradition. But her rage continues to fume as she and the other women are portrayed with the fire imagery: "One by one we were / taken out and struck, / We come bearing supper, / our heads on fire" (ll. 11-14). The poet achieves a vivid protest as she stands in solidarity with the overworked women.

Not only are women often overworked and underpaid; worse still, they often suffer physical abuse from the men who should love and support them. Here again we see how the poet as a peace educator can mount a strong protest against injustice. In the book,

Structures of Patriarchy, edited by Bina Agarwal (1988), numerous articles by women writers explore social problems from a woman's perspective.

Agarwal writes the introductory article for the series. In her "Patriarchy and the 'Modernist' State: An Introduction," she opens up the topic. In surveying the literature on women's issues, she sees the national policies of many Asian states as contradictory but, nevertheless, favoring patriarchy. She indicates, "What is apparent from the emerging literature, however, is that they are structures dominated by patriarchal interests and typically, the contradictions, as they play themselves out, have tended to work to the detriment of women" (p. 2).

Glaring examples of such detriment are cited by Roushan Jahan (1988) in her essay, "Hidden Wounds, Visible Scars: Violence Against Women in Bangladesh." Her article makes for very sobering reading.

Though violence against women, especially by men (such as wife-abuse, rape, molestation, abduction) both in the home and outside remains largely unreported or under-reported, even the limited coverage suggests that the number of such cases is considerable. (p. 199)

Such abuse underscores the lower status accorded women. However, such lowered status is not confined to the experience of women in Third World countries. We have instances of such abuse in Canada; and, as in Bangladesh, this problem is not unique to lower income groups. According to Wilson, "Family violence may be more visible in working-class homes, but wife battering transcends all racial, ethnic and socio-economic groups" (p. 44). Not only is it widespread across the social spectrum, it is also frequent. Citing studies Wilson reports, "Each year an estimated one million Canadian women are beaten by their husbands....Twenty-three per cent of Canadians said they were personally aware of serious incidents of physical abuse of wives by their husbands" (p. 131). This is certainly a very grim picture.

These are disconcerting figures and it is largely the women's movement that has made us aware of them. Likewise, Wilson suggests, the efforts of the women's movement

have made “Canadians...much more aware of and sympathetic to, issues of structured inequality than two decades ago” (p. 135). This has been done by bringing these matters to public attention through the media, and by lobbying the government.

Poets, particularly women poets, have joined in this peace crusade of protest, demonstrating clearly that the poet can and does hold up social issues for public scrutiny. Lorna Crozier (1985), a Canadian writer, in her poem “We Call This Fear,” depicts the ghastly brutality that is often inflicted upon women, and she does it with such highly condensed, pointed language. We cringe as we read:

...this tearing,
this fist, this sharpened tongue (ll. 1-2)

the woman full of holes (l. 8)

this woman brings you food
wears your bruises on her cheeks.
I am tired, so tired.
There is always something wrong.
You spit words at me
like broken teeth (ll. 12-17)

The poet makes a strong indictment against the violence and abuse towards women and against the men who perpetrate it. Crozier’s poem might well have been used as a preamble to the women’s petition against violence and war featured in a short article, “Swords into Ploughshares,” in the journal publication Networks, edited by Sara Coumantarakis (1997). “This petition is being circulated worldwide and will be presented to the 50th anniversary session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March 1997 and to the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 1997” (p. 15). The petition reads in part:

We, the women of the world, are horrified at the levels of violence witnessed during this century and that women and children are the primary victims of war and poverty. On behalf of society at large, we demand that annually, for the next five years, at least five per cent of national military expenditures be diverted to health, education and employment programmes. By doing so, one half billion dollars a day would be released worldwide for programmes to improve living standards. We also demand that war, like slavery, colonialism and apartheid, be outlawed as a totally unacceptable form of social behavior....We resolve that we will inaugurate a new century that rejects warfare and promotes human welfare. (p. 15)

One can only hope that this petition will be taken seriously. It could be the fulfillment of Burns' vision of universal sisterhood and brotherhood already noted.

Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will, for a' that...

To bring this vision to fruition, worldwide, women will still have a long march before them. Robyn Sarah (1985) eloquently relates the rigors of this march in her poem "Fugue." The first stanza sets the tone for the poem.

Women are on their way
to the new country. The men watch
from high office windows
while the women go.
They do not get very far
in a day. You can still see them
from high office windows. (ll. 1-7)

Slowly, but surely, they are making progress. Eventually they arrive at "the new country / where there will be room for everyone and / it will be summer and children will / shed their clothes and the loaves will / rise without yeast" (ll. 30-34). The question still remains, will men join this march towards equity and justice? Or must women walk alone with their children? Will men lend their help, or will they merely stand back and watch "from high office windows?" Let us hope that the answers will be in keeping with what was said by Roche (1989), as he asserts that we need a world where, "every individual realizes *his* or *her* role [emphasis my own] as a member of the world community" (p. 18). This would be a world where we would all more fully achieve our potential. Here again we see how the poet and the peace educator stand in solidarity for a more just and peaceful society for "every individual," irrespective of gender or culture. Poetry, I believe, can help bridge the gaps between cultures and individuals, and between the genders. If we build carefully we should see "*Poetry as an Intercultural Peace Bridge for Teaching ESL.*" This teaching could be extended far beyond the ESL classroom. As concerned global citizens we should all be concerned with the plight of people ground down by poverty. Sadik (1993) maintains, "The elimination of poverty is first and foremost a moral

imperative; but it is also essential for the protection of the global environment and for the health of the global economy” (p. 135).

Conclusion

The literature study has examined two related themes (1) the validity of *using poetry in the ESL classroom* and (2) the *effectiveness of using poetry in an ESL classroom as a connecting bridge* between different cultures in order to promote peace and understanding across gender lines and amongst people generally. The major emphasis has been on the latter theme. Academic writers on peace/global education are numerous, but few make a connection between peace education and poetry. However, poets have been exploring human interconnectedness and peace for centuries past and right up to the present.

Additionally, as a prelude to the next chapter on design, I have also looked at literature dealing with teacher research. Although teacher research is not a theme of this study, in the sense of the themes discussed above, it merits discussion since it forms a large part of the theoretical base for this dissertation.

In reference to the second more major theme, although scholars support the idea of using literature in general as a bridge building device between people, the academic information on specifically using poetry for such purposes has been limited. The scholarly writing (as opposed to literary artistry, like poetry) about using poetry for peace promotion has been even more limited, especially ideas for using poetry specifically in the ESL classroom for the bridging of cultural gaps. And the idea of specifically using poetry *in the ESL classroom* as a peace promoting device has been virtually nonexistent. This study has attempted to throw light upon this latter deficiency in our knowledge as we explore “Poetry as an Intercultural Peace Bridge for Teaching ESL.”

I have quoted Ong in other places in this dissertation but, before closing this chapter on relevant literature, I will quote Ong again, and at considerable length, for I feel he sounds a very optimistic note regarding the possibility of world peace. In his informative

book, The Presence of the Word (1967), Ong traces the evolution of the word from its earliest oral stages as used by primitive man, through chirographic and typographic stages, right up to the modern period of electronic media. Through each stage of intellectual and social evolution man has had to effect massive changes in what Ong terms as man's "sensorium" -- "the entire sensory apparatus as an operational complex" (p. 6). Concomitantly there were complex alterations in the human psyche which over time tended towards a less polemic world view to one more amenable to world peace.

the word today is positively mobilized for peace on a scale hitherto unknown. There is no pretechnological equivalent of the massive literature today devoted to the cause of international peace. (p. 261)

by comparison with the state of affairs several generations ago, the institutionalized mobilization of hostilities around the world itself has unmistakably decreased. In this sense, some kind of foundation for a less polemic human existence appears to have been laid within the uses of the word. (p.262)

To be present to himself, man must find the presence of another or others. Man's life-world is the opposite of solipsist: it is a world not of presence but of presences. In presences we mature....The presence of other persons fills man's consciousness, as objects cannot. (p. 295)

Our sense of presence of others in the world is overpowering....Modern man's sense of global presence, of a peopled world, is entirely novel, until recently an unheard-of thing, both a new burden and a new boon for our consciousness. (p. 296)

The unification of the human race has lately become an inescapable public issue, so intense is the presence of man. (p. 297)

Some current instances of what might be considered as examples of a less polemic world view that Ong refers to are seen in various places today. Notably is the end of apartheid in South Africa and the transition to democratic, majority rule. We see also the implementation of a peace plan between Israel and the Palestinians. In Northern Ireland peaceful solutions to political problems are being found. It is heartening that in Kosova, as of June 10, 1999, formal hostilities have ceased. It is hoped now that peace will be built, for as Ong says above, "The unification of the human race has lately become an inescapable public issue."

CHAPTER III: DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

Ong sees “The unification of the human race” (quoted above). Although the road will be slow and arduous, David Smith (quoted on p. 70) also believes that someday the world will be viewed as a global village characterized by understanding and cooperation among its residents of both genders and all cultures. We can already see a trend in this direction as people increasingly move about more readily. With this movement, there will be an ever greater need for people to connect and relate to each other. In the literature study I opened up the question of using poetry as a means of facilitating this bridge building. This study has been designed to explore this issue more deeply. The thrust of the research has ESL teachers and their students in mind. I hope that this work has further informed the practice of ESL teaching in particular, and of English teachers in general. I also hope that insights gained about cultural connections and peace can be applied across the whole range of teaching and also to the wider community beyond the school.

Research Design

This study had a qualitative orientation. It used a descriptive, narrative approach, as advocated by teacher research discussed in the previous chapter, to explore the effectiveness of using poetry in the ESL classroom as a bridging device between cultures and between individuals in order to promote interconnectedness and peace. In other words, the study proposed to engage in the critical narration of experience, as it sought to throw light on the problem and subproblems chosen for exploration. Through the use of this critical narration the study explored themes arising from students’ interaction with poetry, with each other, and with the researcher. Close observations and careful documentation on the part of the researcher were required. This documentation was

recorded in the researcher's journal and provided the main data for the study. This data included statements from the students as to their perceptions of their class experiences with poetry.

Not only are students' experiences and their perceptions of these experiences reflected in the researcher's journal, but students were additionally invited to record and reflect upon their experiences, perceptions, and reactions in their own journals. The students were encouraged to record in their journals poems of their own composition, poems in response to poems considered and to experiences they had in the study. Students shared their journals with each other and with me as part of their total experience. Of course, any parts of their journals which they considered confidential were strictly treated as such. But students' writings formed an important part of the data for the study.

Such a narrative approach, I believe, has merit. Boomer (1984), an English educator, observes in his, "Piggy Nick -- That's a Good Word," that "we all have a natural urge to tell stories and write poems and compose songs" (p. 6). Educators and researchers should enlist this "natural urge" and use it with ESL students as well as with other students, not only in the classroom but also in the field of research. Such research as I have undertaken has a strong hermeneutic element as it sought to interpret the texts describing the phenomenological lived experience of the students as they experienced poetry and interacted with the various participants in the study.

This approach is endorsed by Carter (1993) who sees narrative as a "positive source of insight for all branches of human and natural science" (p. 5). Carter continues, "At one level, story is a mode of knowing that captures in a special fashion the richness and the nuances of meaning in human affairs" (p. 6). Furthermore, Carter suggests that story is a useful means of organizing and interpreting information, "Knowledge is organized into explanatory frameworks and, in turn, serves as an interpretive lens in comprehending one's experience" (p. 7).

William Thompson (1989), in his book Imaginary Landscapes: Making Worlds of Myth and Science, affirms strong support for the narrative approach to explanation.

The recital of a narrative tells us something about who we think we are, where we think we come from, and where we think we are going. Any narrative, Biblical, Marxist, or Darwinian, that definitely seeks to answer these three questions of: "Who or what are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going?" becomes ineluctably mythopoetic....A scientific narrative of the world, from Big Bang to Black Hole, is still narrative in which the structure is as constitutive of world-making as any particular content. (p. 47)

Bruner (1990) also explains the importance of narrative constructing activities for the promotion of human understanding and for cultural stability.

This method of negotiating and renegotiating meanings by the mediation of narrative interpretation is, it seems to me, one of the crowning achievements of human developmentCulturally, it is enormously aided, of course, by a community's stored resources and its precious tool kit of interpretive techniques: its myths, its typology of human plights, but also its traditions for locating and resolving divergent narratives. (pp. 67-68)

There is, I think, in the "precious tool kit" a useful tool which researchers unfortunately often overlook. This oft neglected tool is poetry. It is a tool which could be used much more extensively in research for "negotiating and renegotiating meanings." Poets, as I have already indicated through Burns, Donne, Tennyson, etc., often lead the way in capturing the essences of human problems and experiences and highlight the issues long before other intellectuals step into the arena. As narrators and interpreters of human experience, and as formulators of folk psychology, poets often have insights which we might well take note of for our enlightenment. Poets often state these insights so unobtrusively and succinctly that we sometimes overlook them in our haste to leap into the psychological fray of educational research. As an antidote to this oversight, this research project makes extensive use of poetry and reports its findings through the qualitative use of narration.

I am aware that this research approach is not in keeping with the quantitative traditions of past decades of educational research. However, Eisner's observation in The Educational Imagination (1985) states, "we have been professionally socialized to accept

simplistic assumptions about acceptable methods of educational inquiry that leave no room for nonscientific forms of understanding” (p. 53). Again Eisner (1981), “On the Differences Between Scientific and Artistic Approaches to Qualitative Research,” observes, “Our problems need to be addressed in as many ways as will bear fruit” (p. 9).

More recently Bruner (1990), like Eisner, cautions us about being too narrow in approach. In the preface to his book, Acts of Meaning, Bruner states:

The study of the human mind is so difficult, so caught in the dilemma of being both the object and the agent of its own study, that it cannot limit its inquires to ways of thinking that grew out of yesterday’s physics. Rather, the task is so compellingly important that it deserves all the rich variety of insight that we can bring to the understanding of what man makes of his world, of his fellow beings, and of himself. That is the spirit in which we should proceed. (p. xiii)

Writers like Eisner and Bruner certainly endorse a qualitative study of human problems. Kellert (1993), In the Wake of Chaos, takes a similar stand. He discusses nonlinear, unpredictable chaotic phenomena, suggesting that such areas are more suitably dealt with by a qualitative approach.

So researchers into chaotic phenomena seek a *qualitative* account of the behavior of nonlinear differentiable dynamical systems....As a qualitative study, chaos theory investigates a system by asking about the general character of its long-term behavior, rather than seeking to arrive at numerical predictions about its exact future state. (pp. 3-4)

A classroom teacher, especially a language classroom teacher, is well-positioned to be such a qualitative researcher. The language classroom is replete with much unpredictable, chaotic phenomena, thus making a suitable setting for such research. In language study, in a classroom setting, there is always the difficulty of implementing distinctive treatments for different groups because of the possibility of overlap in classroom procedures. There is also the possibility of contaminating influences outside the classroom. If the various groups in the study were in the same school, there would be every possibility that the groups would mingle and influence each other during the course of the study. Even if the study involved comparative groups in different schools, or even different cities, the researcher could not guarantee the exclusion of some contaminating

influence from media like telephone, radio, T. V., videos, magazines, newspapers, internet, etc. The only way to overcome and control such problems would be to confine all the subjects, experimental and control groups, into cages as is done in animal studies. Of course, this would be practically impossible and ethically immoral. Because of these inherent weaknesses in the design of experimental studies for the language classroom with its many unpredictable, chaotic phenomena, I believe a descriptive, qualitative approach, such as I have used in this study, is more suitable than a linear, experimental approach.

As I have stated before (p. 71), and which I paraphrase here for emphasis, I have not sought to develop a formula for solving all the problems of human relations. Nor did I attempt to develop some objective measuring device to determine how effective the use of poetry in ESL classes would be in promoting better human understanding. My evidence as a participant observer is anecdotal in nature, employing narrative and thick descriptions from which to abstract emerging themes which have indicated trends in the development of my students.

The Setting and the Subjects

This study took place in Edmonton, Alberta. The subjects for the study were drawn from an ESL class of the Continuing Education Program of the Edmonton Public School Board. I used only one class group. The group had advanced ESL competency as determined by school placement tests. The class had nineteen students consisting largely of young adults, of both genders, who arrived in Canada, for the most part, within the last two or three years from various parts of the world. Arrangements for access were made in advance. After I started working with the class, I drew up a class profile which is included in the study. The profile includes such information as age and gender distribution, cultural origins of the students and their educational background. (See p. 136).

Materials Used

The basic materials used in this study is poetry. The poems used are mainly from the common English canon, plus some contemporary poetry of established English writers. I have also selected some poems from other cultures that had been translated into English. These poems and authors are listed in the appendices of this study. The students also wrote poems of their own. With the permission of the students, these poems were shared and discussed in class and many of them were combined into a collection as part of the final report.

I prepared some general questions and topics for discussion as a means of opening the poems up for consideration. These suggested questions and topics are given below in the section on procedures. Many other questions and topics arose as a result of the interactions amongst the various people involved.

In addition to the foregoing materials mentioned, I used, by way of introduction to the work with my students, two poems of my own. During my many years of teaching poetry, I always encouraged students to try writing poems of their own, not only to share with me but also with their peers. I have found it to be very useful if the teacher would “risk” sharing some of his poems with his students. Somehow, when the teacher is prepared to take that risk, students are more prepared to do likewise. Accordingly, I prepared an introductory lesson based on two of my poems. I have included this lesson subsequently. I should also add that I field tested this lesson with a group of adult ESL students at Grant McEwan College during July of 1997. The lesson, I believe, worked well.

In connection with materials used, legitimate questions of bias may arise. I realize that poetry, and people’s response thereto, are highly subjective matters. Nevertheless, it would appear to me that, in assessing and writing about students’ responses to poetry, some degree of objectivity must be exercised. For example, as a researcher I tried to guard against reading more, or less, into a student’s response to a poem than was warranted.

This is not always easy to do, but I made a conscious effort. To further minimize bias, I frequently conferred with colleagues as the work progressed. This triangulative consultation, I believe, helped to maintain suitable objectivity for the study. Nevertheless, all readers of this study are urged to keep the question of bias in mind as they reflect and “weigh the evidence.”

Procedures

Preliminary procedures. Certain preliminary procedures were undertaken prior to beginning the study. The approval of the Ethics Review Committee of the university and of the Ethics Review Committee of the Edmonton Public School System to conduct the proposed research was obtained. At the same time the appropriate administrators and teachers of the latter institution were approached to enlist their approval and support for the study. With these approvals in hand, and in accordance with the requirements of the aforesaid committees, the target students were approached to explain the nature of the study and to enlist their support. I made plain to them that no deception or threatening aftermath would ensue from their participation, or lack of participation. Their participation was voluntary and they had the right to opt out at any point along the way.

Procedures proper. Once preliminary procedures had been taken care of, the study proper began. As a qualitative study it tended to be personal. It involved the interaction of the researcher and the students with poetry, a very subjective subject matter. The study was grounded on Ary's (1990) perception that:

human behavior is always bound to the context in which it occurs, that social reality (for example, cultures, cultural objects, institutions, and the like) cannot be reduced to variables in the same manner as physical reality, and that what is most important in the social disciplines is understanding and portraying the meaning that is constructed by the participants involved in particular social settings or events. Qualitative inquiry seeks to understand human and social behavior from the “insider's” perspective, that is, as it is lived by participants in a particular social setting (for example, a culture, school, community, group, or institution). It is an intensely personal kind of research, one that freely acknowledges and admits “the

subjective perception and biases of both the participants and the researcher into the research frame." (p. 445) [Here Ary takes a quotation from Goetz and LeCompte, *Ethnography and Qualitative Design*, p. 95.]

By delving into numerous poems, the study sought to identify reoccurring themes that transcend cultural distinctions and in the process we tried to establish some interconnecting links, not only between cultures but also between individuals. In this way it was hoped that the ESL students would gain a better understanding of our culture in Canada (subproblem one) and of each other (subproblem two) and at the same time gain a greater sense of personal peace (subproblem three). (See Chapter I). As MacLean (1990) suggested earlier, studying poetry can become a broadening human experience. It can help us "grow in knowledge and understandings that rid us of our narrow prejudices and enrich us as human beings in an increasingly multicultural society" (p.249).

More specifically, how did this delving occur, how was it be plotted, and what kind of data did it produce? In other words, what activities actually transpired in the classroom with the subjects, and what evolved from these activities?

The activities involved much close reading and discussion of poetry along with the clarification of vocabulary, as necessary. The object at this stage was to strive for understanding. Technical aspects of poetry, such as rhyme scheme, metrics and scansion, were not considered important for the purposes of this study. However, such matters as symbolism, imagery, figurative language, and tone, which add so much to an understanding of poetry, were emphasized. Likewise three main purposes of poetry were discussed: 1. to tell a story (narrative poetry); 2. to describe something; 3. to make a point. Of course, auxiliary to each of these purposes is the poet's intent of evoking a mood or emotion as the poet seeks to express, clarify, and transmit human experience.

To gain further access to the poem, such fundamental issues as the following, which have been adapted (paraphrased, or quoted in part) from Perrine, were explored. *Who is the speaker and what is the occasion? What is the tone (emotional atmosphere)?*

Is there a tone shift? Identify the central purpose of the poem. Was the purpose achieved? How important is that purpose? What is the theme? (p. 25).

The foregoing items were certainly not considered as a closed agenda. Other items, both from the teacher and the students, were added as the discussions evolved. Therefore, it is apparent that although I had a basic, design structure and methodology in mind as I went into the study to gather my data, this design structure was not closed. It was open-ended. Some procedural structure emerged as the study unfolded. I felt that I was not able to go into this project with a fully predetermined agenda. In my case, for this study, that would not have been legitimate research. Much of the data for this research evolved from my students as I worked with them. This was consistent with Ary's conception of qualitative research. The study had what Ary calls an "emergent design" (p. 448).

Although I have quoted Ary before, I quote him again, and at some length, because he reflects my position so well.

Emergent Design In quantitative studies, researchers carefully design all aspects of a study *before* they actually collect data; they specify variables, measures for those variables, statistics to be used to analyze data, and so forth. This is possible because these researchers know in advance what they are looking for: They have specific hypotheses or questions in mind and can imagine what a test of the hypothesis or answer to the question might look like. Regardless of the particular problem or phenomena being investigated, researchers insist that this specification of elements of a study's design is extremely important. In contrast, qualitative inquirers rarely, if ever, fully specify all aspects of a design before beginning a study; rather, the design *emerges* as the study unfolds. They adjust their methods and way of proceeding (design) to the subject matter at hand. This is necessary because the qualitative inquirer is never quite sure just what will be learned in a particular setting...because what can be learned in a particular setting depends on the nature and types of interactions between the inquirer and the people and the setting and those interactions are not fully predictable, and because important features in need of investigation cannot always be known until they are actually witnessed by the investigator.

Thus, qualitative inquiry can only be characterized beforehand in a very general way that indicates how a study might unfold. (p.448)

Even though as Ary says "those interactions are not fully predictable," I think in designing a qualitative study based upon poetry one can anticipate some situations and needs. For example, it would be, as it was in my study, useful to reflect upon the overall metaphorical aspects of language, particularly of poetic language. In this area I think a

useful definition of metaphor to keep in mind, as I did, is given in Peter Harries-Jones' (1995) book, A Recursive Vision, to which I have already referred. Harries-Jones attributes the idea to Bateson. Metaphor is defined:

A **metaphor** seems to be a statement of the following sort: we refer to a system and, instead of talking *about* that system, we talk *about* another. Within this other system, we then refer to some relationship which we suggest obtains within the first system. (p. 142)

A metaphor that this researcher and his students had in mind as we thought about poetry and language learning and building connections between cultures did not envision thinking as a straight-line, linear activity, such as was envisioned by Chalmers' "fundamental laws of physics." Our thinking was more of a "recursive vision" such as Bateson suggested, which often bent back upon itself. I would suggest a squirrel in the treetops as an appropriate image. There is nothing very linear about its movements. Sometimes the flight will be forwards, then backwards, left, right, down, up. Interacting with its environment, the squirrel makes cognitive leaps from one abductive limb to another, ideas begetting ideas in ever expanding loops, resulting in a growing world of significance. The classroom activity became an absorbing exploration of the woods, an exploration of the world about us, and of the world within. As a teacher, and as a qualitative researcher, I challenged my students to leap upon the limbs of exploration. The mind that comes at a problem from many directions (like the squirrel) is more likely to arrive at creative solutions than one which moves in a linear, lock-step progression.

In this kind of exploration it is the teacher's responsibility to develop a warm and supportive communicative context so as to keep stress and anxiety to a minimum as advocated by the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach and as referred to in the fourth assumption, given in the first chapter of this study. It is beyond the scope of this study to detail the principles of CLT. Numerous text treat the subject, such as Richards and Rogers (1986) and Brown (1987). (See bibliography of this study).

Eeds and Petersen (1997) stress the importance of the teacher and students having a warm, interactive atmosphere in the classroom. They speak of “caring relationships.... The focus should not be on schemes or procedures, but on the web of caring and valuing story created by teachers and children [students]” (p. 56). Winning (1991) also emphasizes the importance of sharing stories in a supportive classroom: “To deliberately tell the story of one’s life is a fundamental method of personal growth and consequently a fundamental aspect of education (p. 53)....The teacher can foster a supportive environment within the classroom to enhance the learner’s readiness to ask for help” (p.131). My students and I strove to build such a caring community as we read and studied numerous poems together.

As we considered poetry I made sure such concepts as imagery, figurative language, tone, symbolism, and mood were clarified through the discussion of definitions and examples. It is my usual practice to clarify difficult vocabulary in a poem before I read it to the class. However, if a poem is decidedly a mood piece I may leave the vocabulary discussion until after the first reading so as not to influence the development of the initial mood. When a poem has been effectively presented, the mood of the poem is often reflected in the mood of the class, indicating both understanding and appreciation. After this initial reading, vocabulary was clarified and the contents of the poem were explored in some detail, emphasizing such things as symbolism and mood in the particular poem under consideration. This exploration was guided by the questions that I referred to earlier and which I will set out a little later in the sample lesson.

After the preliminary questions were briefly explored by the class as a whole, the students would often go into committee work for further, more detailed discussion of the questions. Additional questions on the board, or on handouts were posed, germane to the particular poem under consideration. The students, organized into groups of two to four students, considered and wrote brief notes for the given questions and in a few minutes (say fifteen to twenty) reported back to the class reassembled as a whole. One purpose of

the group work was to encourage discussion and to give individual students more opportunity for input to the proceedings. Students were encouraged to participate freely with their own questions and comments as they shared and compared ideas both in the smaller groups and in the larger one. These proceedings were guided by the principles of group dynamics as outlined earlier in Spear's Sharing Writing: Peer Response Groups in English Classes.

These ideas of group dynamics applied not only to the discussion of students' notes developed in their small groups, but also to response poems which the students produced. The students were encouraged to write their own poems both in and out of class. Poetry writing was part of the class activity. Furthermore, students were encouraged to take home their class productions of poetry for further polishing and revision, followed by further discussion in class.

Applying such principles of group dynamics to writing such as Spear has outlined was not new. But using such group dynamics evolving from the study of poetry and applying them in the ESL classroom to the building of bridges between cultures and individuals and to the promotion of peace presented a vital new area of study. It is hoped that ideas developed in this study will be applicable not only to the ESL classroom but to other English classes as well and to education generally in the broader field.

During discussion the students generated statements of their understanding of the themes suggested by the poems and indicated how these themes could contribute to cultural understanding. It was not always necessary to reach consensus. Sincerely expressed divergent views were acceptable. We looked for commonalities and differences with the view to developing understanding and appreciation between various cultures. To ensure accuracy the generated statements were recorded on the board for closer inspection and further consideration. The students were encouraged to further reflect on these discussions outside of class and submit further statements of their individual understandings. They were encouraged to record their ideas in their own journals.

These statements, along with the students' responsorial poems formed part of the data for this study. They were collected and analyzed for emerging patterns and themes. To these data were added my own observations and reflections, which were recorded on a regular basis in a research journal. From these reflective notes there also emerged certain patterns and recurring themes.

As a further source of data, it was hoped that I would engage some of the students, outside of regular class periods on a voluntary basis, in one-on-one, more in-depth, discussions of poetry, including some of their own writings. I had some measure of success in this regard, but it was not as great as I had hoped. At a later point in this study I shall try to speculate and reflect upon why this might have been so.

As the work with the students drew to a close, they were invited to respond to a questionnaire in which they were encouraged to express their reactions to the study in which they had participated. These responses were also analyzed for data -- for common themes and patterns, and also for divergent views. The questionnaire will be given below.

Summary of Sources of Data

At this point I will list and summarize the various sources of data for this research:

1. Discussions with the class. As we discussed poetry we identified themes and listed them on the board for our consideration. These themes were composed with student input and edited by myself, the researcher/teacher, with the students' help. The themes were also recorded in the researcher's and the students' journals for future reference and became part of the primary data.

2. Poems from the individual students. Poems from the individual students were also explored to generate themes. These themes were recorded as in number one.

3. Ideas from the students' journals. Students were encouraged to each keep a journal and to share these journals with their peers. Here, as I will describe later, I experienced only limited success.

4. Individual discussions. Outside regular class time I tried to engage individual students in informal discussions about the poetry under consideration, and their own poetry as well. Only a few students met with me for these discussions. Most were too busy with jobs and family obligations after class.

5. Researcher's journal. As the study progressed I kept a journal in the role of researcher in which I narrated the progress of the study. I also recorded my observations, reflections, and analyses. Themes were noted and analyzed for significant, connecting, cultural links.

6. Student questionnaire. Students were invited to respond in writing to the following suggestions. It was made clear that students could respond to some, all, or none of the suggestions, as they saw fit. They were also requested *not* to sign their name to the questionnaire. These questionnaires were done by the students while I was out of the room and were collected by their regular teacher. Some the following items were included. The complete version appears in the appendices.

1. Has participation in this study been worthwhile to you?
2. What, if anything, worthwhile have you learned from this study about yourself and about other people?
3. What things worthwhile that you already knew have been reaffirmed for you in a positive way?
4. Feel free to make any other comment that you may wish to make.

Time Line

I finished my course work during the spring session of 1996. During the 1996-97 school year I did extensive reading and writing in preparation for my proposal and I obtained the necessary ethics review approvals. In July of 1997 I field tested an introductory lesson based on two poems which I planned to use, among others, for this study. The lesson, which will be outlined subsequently, was used successfully with an advanced ESL class at a community college in Edmonton.

After presenting this lesson at this campus I tried to negotiate additional access to a class for the purpose of data gathering. However, as detailed in my journal which is included in this study, I was not successful. Subsequently, during the winter of 1997-98, I negotiated an agreement for access to another advanced ESL class in Edmonton. Concurrently I compiled the collection of poetry used in this study. This collection is included in the appendices. Early in the spring of 1998 I went into this class for six weeks and collected my data. During the 1998-99 academic year I wrote my final report.

Conclusion

I have looked forward to engaging in this study. I believe it will be of interest and value, not only to the immediate participants but also to a wider field -- to ESL teachers particularly, and to all English teachers in general. As teachers we have a crucial role in promoting better understanding among people of all races and cultures. It is hoped that this study will in some way help to promote that important objective. In this work I anticipated Murray's (1982) view, "My students share their search for meaning with me. We teach each other by learning" (p. 45). And as we reflected on poetry in this study, I hoped we would build firm bridges between cultures and individuals. I hope that in some measure we have succeeded. Our need for a strong sense of community and peace is great.

A concluding question to reflect upon for this final report might very well be, How do you perceive success? I have already alluded to this concern, but I shall go into it

somewhat further. As I indicated previously, I have been looking for planks, figuratively speaking, with which to build bridges between cultures and individuals. These planks, or themes, we milled from the poems as we studied and reflected upon them. To inspect some of these planks I refer the reader to the lesson which I field tested in July of 1997. This lesson is outlined in the next section.

I would regard the success of this study to be somehow proportional to the number of sound planks that we, the students and I, have been able to produce and fix in place upon the connecting, metaphorical bridges that we have been constructing. It was a joint venture requiring the input of both students and researcher. We managed to work together with a deep sense of mutual respect and appreciation, with a sense of community, as we cooperatively built worlds of significance along the pathway to better human understanding and peace.

Sample Lesson

The following lesson, entitled "Building Bridges with Poetry," was used in a pilot study, field tested in July, 1997, with a group of advanced, adult ESL students in Edmonton. I felt that the lesson worked well and will comment on it further later. Additional pertinent comments, including a description of the composition of the class, will be found in the *researcher's journal*, which is also included in this study.

Building Bridges with Poetry

Bridge -- a structure for reaching across (for spanning) an obstacle such as a river, valley, road, etc. A structure to *bridge* a gap. (Used as a verb).

Why do we build bridges? To help us over obstacles. To improve communication.

Materials used: steel beams, concrete, wood, cables, ropes, vines
-- and in our case poetry -- the ideas found in poetry.

Poetry

Definition -- We will consider a "provisional" definition of poetry, for as Perrine (1963) observes, in defining poetry, we must be, "Provisional, because man has always been more successful at appreciating poetry than at defining it" (p. 3). Poetry is an art form which uses words as a *medium*. It is distinguished from prose in that poetry, more consciously, more deliberately, uses *measured language*. That is, the language is measured *metrically* and/or *by line*. Poetry is very deliberately laid out *line by line*. In general, the language of poetry, as it deals with human experience, is more *highly condensed*, more *highly connotative* and *figurative* than is the language of prose. "Poetry is the most condensed and *concentrated* form of literature, saying most in the fewest number of words" (Perrine, p. 10).

The importance of poetry -- All cultures everywhere have poetry. First form of written language. It touches all of our lives. We encounter poetry not only in books and magazines but also in many of the songs we listen too. Poetry is important to people because it is useful for expressing emotional feelings. We are entertained by the poetry in songs not because they bring us information, but because they *express feelings*.

Douglas H. Brown's (1987) book, Principles of Language Learning and Teaching, considers humans to be essentially emotional beings. Brown observes:

Human beings are emotional creatures. At heart all thought and meaning and action is emotion. As "intellectual" as we would like to think we are, we are influenced by our emotions. It is only logical then, to look at the affective (emotional) domain.
(p. 49)

As we learn to recognize and appreciate the emotional nature of human beings we will understand more clearly that *people everywhere have much in common*. That is, in spite of cultural differences, people as emotional creatures are in many ways very similar. Emotions are not always highly visible; often they lie quietly, deep within us.

Poetry as an art form deals with the universals of human experience. In life, we are born, we live and experience, we work, we play, we love, we hate, we grow old and we die, and in the process we experience happiness, sorrow, contentment, and anxiety. Poetry tries to reflect these universal experiences of life. As we read and reflect on the ideas found in poetry we become more aware of *our commonality with other people*. These ideas can be used as planks with which to build a connecting bridge between cultures and between individuals. If we look for these planks with an open, inquiring mind we will find them. But we will not be able to fix these planks into place on the bridge by ourselves as individuals. It will take a joint effort; we will have to work together. And as we work together we should be able to build a strong bridge between cultures and between individuals. This should help us build a more peaceful, more beautiful world.

Purposes of a poem:

1. to tell a story (narrative poetry) & evoke a mood or emotion
2. to describe something & evoke a mood or emotion
3. to make a point (e.g. to celebrate something) & evoke a mood or emotion

A particular poem may concentrate on only one of these purposes. Another poem may deal with two of the three purposes and still another may incorporate all three. But in all cases poetry uses a great deal of imagination as it seeks to express, clarify, and *transmit human experience*.

Within this context of transmitting the meaning of emotional experience, I would like to submit and comment briefly on what I would call a:

Recipe for Poetry:

1. Experience
2. Emotion
3. Imagination
4. Disciplined intellect

Imagination is always an important ingredient in any type of poetry, but of itself it is not enough. You need judicious portions of the other elements too. Figuratively speaking, if you stir all of these elements together well, you should be able to produce a poem. All of these four elements mix into each other, feeding back and forth one to the other. As they are all essential ingredients, none may be left out if you want to have a good finished product.

For example, if you experience a dazzling display of northern lights, you may be moved to exclaim, "Oh, Wow! How beautiful!" You may have the experiential germ for a poem, but you still do not have poetry; experience and emotion, are still not enough. Your experience and your emotion must fire your imagination, so that you can see the streamers dancing in your head. And then using disciplined intellect you must work out your lines on paper, reconstructing the experience and emotion that fired your imagination. If you succeed in manipulating these elements skillfully, you should be able to recreate for others, for your readers, something of your own deep experience -- you will then have created a poem. This assumes, of course, that the reader reads the poem with some degree of sensitivity and empathy for the writer's experience.

We will now look at some general guide questions and then consider two poems:

"Aurora Borealis," and then "Bouquet."

Our purpose: Look for "planks" for our "bridge."
Promote the communication skills of viewing, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Develop vocabulary. Understand symbolism and mood.

Symbolism -- signs, things, ideas that stand for something else.
Examples: lion = courage; lamb = gentleness; dove = peace.

Mood -- feelings that a poem brings to us.
Examples: happy mood, sad mood, mood of wonder, awe, surprise, fear, anger, frustration, hate, love, trust, hope, despair, contentment, admiration, disgust, etc.

Some General Guiding Questions

1. Who is the speaker? What is the occasion?
2. What is the mood (emotional atmosphere, the feeling) of the poem?
How does the poem make you feel? How come?
3. Which of the three main purposes of poetry does this poem address?
 - (a) to tell a story (narrative poetry) & evoke a mood or emotion?
 - (b) to describe something & evoke a mood or emotion?
 - (c) to make a point (e.g. to celebrate something) & evoke a mood or emotion?
4. Was the purpose achieved? How important is that purpose?
5. What is the theme of the poem? How does that theme touch our lives?
6. What plank or planks can we draw from this poem to help us build bridges of better understanding between cultures and between individuals? For example, how could this poem help to build a better understanding and appreciation between your culture and Canadian culture? And between individuals in the same culture?

Note: Definition of *celebration* -- to praise, to honor, to laud something; to give special recognition.

Aurora Borealis

Read the poem, then give handouts and clarify the vocabulary in the context of the poem. Reread the poem, then apply the guide questions, developing a class discussion.

Planks: (Subsequently milled by class discussion)

1. Canadians are much concerned with the outdoors, with nature.
(Some students noted that this was not peculiar to Canadians, other cultures had this interest too. I agreed and pointed out that this was a commonality we had found in considering poetry. We had found a plank for our bridge).
2. We all can celebrate the beauty of the natural environment.
3. Celebration has the power to bring us together.

Can we celebrate the works of people -- farms, towns, cities?
Can we celebrate the destructive power of nature?

Bouquet

Introduce the poem by showing the class the cartoon about flowers. Use an overhead if readily available. Otherwise, just show the cartoon and read the accompanying text.

Discuss:

1. What are the flowers supposed to symbolize? Is the man very convincing?
2. Why do we appreciate (enjoy, like) real flowers more than plastic flowers?

After a few introductory remarks about flowers and photography place on the board these two questions: 1. *What do the flowers in the poem symbolize?* (people, our experiences of loss and sorrow, our memories) 2. *How are we like flowers?*" (See "planks".) Also think about the various colors of the flowers.

Read the poem with music and slides.

Give handouts of the poem and the vocabulary. Discuss the vocabulary in the context of the poem. Read the poem once more, without music and slides.

Organize the class into groups of 3 or 4 for the purpose of briefly discussing and answering the general questions as they apply to the poem.

After about 10 or 15 minutes call the class together again to pool their answers.

Planks: (Subsequently milled by class discussion)

1. Again we celebrate the beauty of nature.
2. We celebrate the beauty of people.
3. People, like flowers, are very temporary. Therefore, we should appreciate them while we have them.
4. We are of many different sizes, shapes, and colors, but we are all beautiful.
(I think I found this last plank the most gratifying of all).

Before concluding, thank all participants for their help -- students, teacher.

Aurora Borealis

The forests fill vale⁽¹⁾ and hill,
 Snows abound⁽²⁾ upon the ground,
 The night is cold in frosty hold,
 Stars shine bright with radiant light,
 And all is still.

Then up the vault⁽³⁾ without a halt,
 A flickering flame begins the game,
 With eerie⁽⁴⁾ green and violet sheen.
 A crimson glow begins to flow
 Across the sphere⁽⁵⁾, charging here
 Charging there with filmy⁽⁶⁾ flare⁽⁷⁾.
 The sapphire⁽⁸⁾ flies across the skies,
 While violet hue races blue,
 Through fluted⁽⁹⁾ shapes of shimmering⁽¹⁰⁾ drapes.
 With reel⁽¹¹⁾ and rout⁽¹²⁾ round about,
 In yellow sheen against the green,
 Fly curtains bright upon the night.
 The colors flow and grow and glow;
 Racing high the phantoms⁽¹³⁾ fly,
 While silent feet their rhythms beat,
 Across the sky.

The flashing train⁽¹⁴⁾ begins to wane⁽¹⁵⁾;
 On hasty feet in quick retreat,
 Into the shade the colors fade,
 And all is still.

Harry Hess (1975)

Vocabulary for Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights):

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. vale - valley | 6. filmy - thin, transparent | 11. reel - a swaying motion |
| 2. abound - very much | 7. flare - light up brightly | 12. rout - to move quickly |
| 3. vault - sky | 8. sapphire - bright blue | 13. phantom - ghost, spirit |
| 4. eerie - ghost-like | 9. fluted - long, rounded grooves | 14. train - moving like a procession |
| 5. sphere - sky | 10. shimmering - shiny & wavering | 15. wane - to disappear |

Bouquet

**Bouquet⁽¹⁾ rich in colored perfume⁽²⁾,
 Spreading scent⁽³⁾ about the room.
 Luxuriant⁽⁴⁾ growth benignly⁽⁵⁾ smiles,
 But time its beauty soon beguiles⁽⁶⁾.**

**Petals⁽⁷⁾ dropping one by one,
 Striving⁽⁸⁾ hope is soon undone⁽⁹⁾,
 Beauty is but the fool of time⁽¹⁰⁾,
 Lauded⁽¹¹⁾ by our foolish rhyme⁽¹²⁾.**

**Drooping stalks⁽¹³⁾; forlorn⁽¹⁴⁾, bereft⁽¹⁵⁾,
 Cast⁽¹⁶⁾ them out, there's nothing left
 But a lingering⁽¹⁷⁾ scent once begun,
 By petals dropping one by one.**

**Memories⁽¹⁸⁾ bunched⁽¹⁹⁾ in rich bouquets,
 Are lingering yet on bygone⁽²⁰⁾ days,
 Watered now by tears that run,
 Like petals dropping one by one.**

Harry Hess (1973)

Vocabulary:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. bouquet - bunch of flowers.
 2. perfume - a sweet smell.
 3. scent - odor, smell.
 4. luxuriant - rich, colorful.
 5. benignly - friendly.
 6. beguiles - deceives, betrays, fools.
 7. petals - colored leaflets.
 8. striving - trying hard.
 9. undone - defeated.
 10. fool of time - destroyed by time.</p> | <p>11. lauded - praised.
 12. rhyme - poetry.
 13. drooping stalks - stems bent over.
 14. forlorn - sad.
 15. bereft - suffer loss.
 16. cast - throw.
 17. lingering - still staying.
 18. memories - mental pictures of the past.
 19. bunched - grouped together.
 20. bygone - past.</p> |
|--|---|

CHAPTER IV: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS
OR
EXPLORING THE CONTINENT OF PEACE EDUCATION

Introduction, or Mixing Metaphors

The introduction to this chapter is of necessity rather lengthy. This is because I had to reorient my thinking somewhat along metaphorical lines. I realize that mixing metaphors is sometimes frowned upon. But I think that this can be done if one is judicious about it and alerts the reader in advance. I also realize that any metaphor or analogy can be made to crumble into a meaningless snarl if pushed too far. I try to be judicious about that too. Metaphor will not be defined here for that was done in the previous chapter.

Thus far I have used three main metaphors in my thinking about and in exploring poetry. I have thought about poetry as a fertile field which can be worked to produce a bountiful yield of ideas. I have also thought of poetry in terms of a squirrel making abductive leaps forwards and backwards, left and right, down and up, from limb to limb through the leafy woods gathering ideas, as ideas beget ideas in tangential cognitive leaps. Additionally, I have already thought of major ideas in poetry, the themes, as building planks for the construction of peace bridges.

Now I wish to add a fourth metaphor, developing the analogy of poems being rivers, rivers flowing from the interior of the vast, largely uncharted *Continent of Peace Education*. During the study we, that is the students and I, used these rivers as *gateways* (again a metaphor) into the continent. The poets are pioneer explorers who invite us to paddle up stream with them, charting new territory. As my students and I made our way up these rivers we searched the surrounding forests for sound timbers from which to mill

planks (the themes of the poems) with which to build connecting bridges linking cultures and individuals, and in so doing promote peace and understanding between people.

Metaphor is used in most thinking processes. It is almost impossible to think without metaphor in the world of educational research and curriculum development. Metaphors can help clarify and make more explicit our thoughts, whether we think of education as a road, a river, a journey, a voyage, a vessel, a box or whatever. Miles and Huberman (1984), urge the researcher to use metaphor.

Though most novelists would cringe at being called “social scientists,” many surpass the best qualitative researchers in communicating complex social reality....Their appeal is that they dramatize, amplify, and depict, rather than simply describe, social phenomena. The language itself is often figurative and connotative, rather than solely literal and denotative. Part of this has to do with the use of metaphors, analogies, symbols, and other allusive techniques of expression....We are suggesting that qualitative researchers should not only write metaphorically, but should also think metaphorically. (p. 21)

Steiner adds, “Where it is most expressive, language, art, music makes sensible to us a root of secrecy within itself. The arc of metaphor, without which there can be neither shaped thought nor performative intelligibility, spans an undeclared foundation” (p. 176).

Miles and Huberman see words as being in many cases more meaningful “than pages of numbers” (p. 15). Likewise they note, “In the past decade...more researchers with traditional quantitative emphasis (psychology, sociology,...educational research) have shifted to a more qualitative paradigm” (p 15). This, I think, is a healthy shift which is continuing. Having justified the use of metaphor in educational research I will turn, in the next section, to consider how I will organize and manage my data.

Data Organization and Management

In Chapter III I gave what I anticipated to be a six point summary of my data sources: 1. Discussions with the class; 2. Poems from the individual students; 3. Ideas from the students’ journals; 4. Individual discussions; 5. Researcher’s journal; 6. Student questionnaire. This was part of my planned design. However, it did not quite unfold that

way. I discussed in Chapter III how Ary dealing with qualitative studies indicated that the design can rarely be fully predetermined. But “rather, the design *emerges* as the study unfolds” (Ary 1990, p. 448).

Accordingly, I revised my original plan. I have now developed my discussion in this order: 1. Reflective journal, which shall subsume numbers 1. and 4. above (Discussions with class and Individual discussions). 2. Poems from the individual students. 3. Student questionnaire. (Number 3., Students’ journals, of the original plan has been deleted, as I explain elsewhere). I have dealt with each of these three new points in their given order under a major subheading. However, before considering these three elements I shall at this point submit the previously referred to profile of the ESL class that cooperated with me in this study for the purposes of data gathering. I decided it was useful to have a picture of the students of this class in mind as I proceeded.

Profile Of ESL Class

The ESL class with which I worked to gather data for this study was part of the Edmonton Public School Board’s Continuing Education Program for adults. They were located with other ESL classes in one of the board’s many facilities. They had a competent, dedicated, young woman as a teacher. She had developed an excellent rapport with the students. The teacher and students had developed an open, friendly and supportive classroom atmosphere which made it easier for my work.

Not only did they have a competent teacher, the students themselves were an intelligent, sophisticated group of people. There were eleven females and eight males, ranging in age from their early twenties to their late fifties, but most were in their mid thirties. All these students had completed their high school before coming to Alberta. Nine had been in university completing at least one year of studies, some having their studies curtailed by civil strife in their homelands. Of these nine, two had graduated as

engineers, two had been to teachers' college and were experienced teachers, and one was a registered nurse.

As to the origins of these nineteen students, eight were of Arabic backgrounds: four from Palestine and four from Lebanon. Four were from Serbia-Croatia (former Yugoslavia). Two students were black: one from Zaire, and one from Haiti. One student was from Afghanistan. There was one Chinese student from Hong Kong. One student was from Thailand, one from Laos, and one from Quebec, Canada.

Their duration in Canada varied. The young woman from Quebec had been in Canada all her life of twenty-three years. Three students had been in Canada ten years or more. Two had been in Canada seven years. Most had been in Canada only two years or less. All except one were married and had children, mostly young children.

They were attending ESL classes to upgrade their English, some for the personal satisfaction of improving their communication skills. Some had job improvement in mind, hoping to reenter their professional fields. Others wanted to improve their communication skills for business reasons.

These students were classified as Level VI, an advanced level preparatory to high school work in English. Their maturity, intelligence, and sophistication made them a pleasure to work with. They were adept at understanding and responding to poetry. For example, I would say that they were more competent dealing with the symbolism of poetry, and the themes of poetry than the regular high school students to whom I taught English literature in Edmonton for many years. Of course, these ESL students had more problems with vocabulary, but this they were eager to remedy.

All these students had extensive commitments outside of class, such that it was very difficult for them to meet with me after regular class time. I put the invitation out a number of times but I found few takers. I respected the fact that their participation was entirely voluntary, so I put no pressure upon them. Many students had family obligations to attend to after school, such as being at home to receive young children coming home from school.

Some of these ESL students had jobs after school, in fact some had two jobs which occupied them late into the evening.

I mention this because it had a bearing upon my study. As I have indicated elsewhere, I had intended to individually engage these students extensively in after-class discussions about poetry, and about their journals. However, I had little success in these intentions.

My Major Concern

Having had little success in contacting students outside of regular class time, I must stress that my major concern in this research always was to study poetry with these ESL students *in class* with the intent to discover and formulate themes found in the poems, which themes would be pertinent to peace/global education. Herein I feel we succeeded very well, and this is what I shall concentrate on describing in this chapter. In other words, I will be addressing the vital question: *What transpired in the classroom as my students and I studied poetry together?* In addition to studying numerous poems, I managed to obtain from the students a sizable collection of their own poetry written during the project. This collection will be included in this chapter.

As I proceed into the report, let me restate the metaphorical image I have suggested earlier. The poems were rivers leading into the **Continent of Peace Education**. Travelling up these rivers we explored the area and harvested timbers that produced our metaphorical planks (poetic themes) with which to build connecting bridges between people and so promote understanding and peace in the world. In this context I quote from a recent publication "Building Bridges," put out by the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta, that raises and answers the question: "Why Bridges? They invite people to cross and explore what's on the other side" (Spring 1998, 1 (1) 1). Only by crossing over and exploring and making contact with other cultures will we gain in understanding and

appreciation of other people. Poetry, I believe, provides materials for the construction of these bridges.

Before looking at the *reflective journal* which constitutes a log of our exploratory expedition I will point out something about its writing. I first produced hand-written notes which I loathe to proffer to anyone because of their fearful script. Subsequent to this initial writing I sat down at the computer and reflectively rewrote and expanded my original notes, hoping to have produced suitably "thick text."

Journal Entries: What Transpired in the Classroom?

Introduction:

This introduction is the first entry to my research journal. Other entries will follow organized under date headings. In keeping with the principles of teacher research which I employ, I will keep this journal to record the progress of the study and make observations and reflections as the work proceeds. In particular I will record emerging themes as they unfold. These themes will include the "planks" for building the *intercultural peace bridges* that the students and I will mill from the poems that we will study. Furthermore, the reflections will also have an assessment factor. Although I have been teaching for many years, I find as I reflect upon my practice, I become aware of things which I can improve. I believe that all teachers should do this as long as they teach (e.g. teacher research).

Wed. July 16, 1997

A few days ago I made the necessary arrangements to speak to Mr. C.'s class. This morning, from 9:45 to 11:00, I was in an upper level ESL class at one of our local community colleges making a presentation on poetry and how it might be used to bridge the gaps between cultures -- more specifically between the various cultures represented by the students and the Canadian culture as we find it. I spoke generally about poetry, giving a "provisional" definition. We also discussed the relevance of poetry, its purposes, and its

makeup (“a recipe”). For illustrative purposes, I used two poems of my own composition, namely, “Aurora Borealis” and “Bouquet.” *[Details for this particular presentation are given elsewhere in chapter three on design].*

At this point I should give some indication of the composition of the class with which I worked. There were twenty-five students; ten men and fifteen women. They ranged in age from eighteen to forty-five years. But they were mostly in their twenties and early thirties. They were immigrants, mostly having arrived from various countries within the last two or three years. There were twelve from former Yugoslavia, two from Poland, two from Russia, one from Iraq, two from Eritrea, one from Somalia, two from China, one from Japan, and one from Vietnam. Most of the people were of professional backgrounds and were attending ESL classes for upgrading in order to enter their professions again. Over half were married and had children of various ages.

This presentation was a trial run, a field testing in preparation for more extensive engagements that I hope to enter upon next fall. As I reflect upon the experience, I note that there were certain contingencies that I should have attended to before the class began. I brought with me overhead material, sound equipment, and slides, all of which served well. However, what I failed to do, and this presented me with a bit of a problem, was to obtain before hand a class list and a seating plan for the class. This was certainly no paramount difficulty. But having the aforesaid items would have somewhat further facilitated questioning and class discussions. Of course this would not be a problem in a situation where I was in contact with the students for something more than one class period.

Nevertheless, since the class was friendly, outgoing, and quite competent in English, we had some lively discussion and with some Socratic questioning, we were able to nail down a few planks for each of the two poems used:

Aurora Borealis:

1. Canadians are much concerned with the outdoors, with nature.

Some students noted that this was not peculiar to Canadians, other cultures had that interest too. I agreed and pointed out that this was a commonality that we had found in considering poetry. We had found a plank for our bridge.

2. We can all celebrate the beauty of the natural environment.
3. Celebration has the power to bring us together.

Bouquet:

1. Again we celebrate the beauty of nature.
2. We celebrate the beauty of people.

For this poem we had discussed symbolism, flowers symbolizing people.

3. People like flowers don't last long; we should appreciate them while we can.
4. We are of many different sizes, shapes, and colors, but we are all beautiful.

(This last plank, I think, I found the most gratifying of all).

In closing this entry I note another little problem which I would try to correct another time. This was a matter of pacing. The students were so responsive and interesting that time slipped away all too quickly. I had intended small-group work on the last poem. However, we had to employ class-as-a-whole discussion. Had this been a continuing class for me, I could have instituted small-group work the next day.

Wed. July 23, 1997

At 9:00 A.M. I met with L., the supervisor of the ESL program of the college to discuss the possibility of access to one of their upper level ESL classes for the purpose of doing my research. I explained briefly the nature of my research and my needs as to a class for collecting data. I wondered if it would be possible to gain access to a class for two periods a week for four to six weeks.

L. had some reservations about committing that much time. She suggested maybe one period every other week . Furthermore, she also had some reservations about what practical value the students would derive from such a study of poetry. She had to consider that these courses were costing money and that some students might question giving that much time over to poetry. The courses ran for only twelve weeks.

I said I could appreciate her concerns, so as another option I asked if it would be possible to gain access to one of her classes for say three periods and then work with volunteer students on their own time outside of regular class time. I could use this time to acquaint the students with my study and to recruit their voluntary participation.

L. said that that was something to be considered. She suggested that I call her back on that towards the end of August. By that time she would have a better picture of the numbers and types of students that would be enrolled for the fall term. We left all these matters as open questions. I thanked her for her time and left.

Later, in retrospect, I wondered if maybe I should approach another educational institution for access to a class. And now I am wondering if I do not get access to a class for a considerable period of time how will that impinge upon my study? It might alter the nature of my study a great deal. Should I consider doing more of a series of individualized case studies, rather than a class group study? These are some questions that I will have to reflect upon.

Thur. Sept. 18, 1997

In the light of the rather meager access that I have discussed above, I phoned L. today to inform her that I would be approaching some other institution for my research purposes. I thanked her for her cooperation regarding my pilot study, and I also asked her to convey my thanks to Mr. C. for the opportunity of making a presentation to his class.

Mon. March 2, 1998

As I make this entry for my journal I must reflect a bit on some previous happenings which have led up to present circumstances. After failure to gain adequate access to a class at the community college I decided to approach Continuing Education of the Edmonton Public School Board. I had worked with them some years earlier while doing research for my Masters degree, so I was acquainted with some of their personnel.

Accordingly, some time before Christmas 1997, I contacted **Helen Yee**, their assistant principal for ESL. We had extensive conversations both by phone and in person. Helen was very obliging in helping me gain access to one of their ESL classes. The extent of access agreed upon was two one-hour periods per week for six weeks, subject to approval of teacher and students, as outlined in a letter of approval from Gary Reynolds, Director Continuing Education Services. A copy of this letter will appear in the appendices of my final document.

Mon. Mar. 9, 1998

This morning I contacted **Christine Enfield** whom Helen Yee had recommended as a cooperating teacher. I arranged to meet with Christine at her classroom at 2:00 P.M. that afternoon. At this meeting we had a fruitful discussion in which I outlined the nature of my research project and the nature of the proposed involvement of her class. Christine showed a strong interest in my study and felt that her students could profit from participating. She agreed to the two one-hour sessions per week for six weeks, subject to the students' approval. We arranged that I would come into her class the coming Wednesday, at 1:30 P.M. and use the last half-hour of the day to explain my project to the students and enlist their participation.

Christine also informed me that her class consisted of 23 adult students, 11 females and 12 males from various cultures around the world. I shall give more details later.

(This number declined later to 19 students).

Wed. Mar. 11, 1998

At the appointed time I arrived at Christine's class with a box full of materials to be handed out to the students. These materials consisted of the following items for each student without any costs to them: a bound booklet of 72 poems that I had compiled and reproduced earlier, a large spiral backed notebook to be used by the students as a journal to log their journey through this study, a one page consent form, a one page set of general questions to be used for discussing poems.

After being introduced by Christine, I explained to the students the nature and features of my study and why I needed their help in order to carry it forward. I emphasized that their participation was voluntary and that they could opt out at any point along the way without there being any negative consequences for them. After this explanation I distributed and read over the consent form with them, answering questions that they raised. Thus satisfied they all sign it. That taken care of I passed out the remaining materials explaining they were theirs to keep.

I also gave them some indication of the types of things I hoped they would record in their journals -- key ideas (themes) from the poems we studied. These themes would constitute the "planks" that we would use to build our metaphorical bridges of understanding and peace between cultures and individuals. Not only should they record themes that we milled in class through discussion, but they should also record themes arising from their own reflections to be subsequently shared with the class. And of great importance I stressed that I hoped they would also, during the course of this study, produce and record in their journals some poems of their own which they could share with other members of the class. And with their permission I hoped to place some of these poems in the final report of this study. Again I stressed that their undertaking to produce any poems was purely voluntary, but I hoped they would rise to the challenge. The journal note-book was also supplied so that they could record any particular thoughts, whether positive or negative that they might have about poetry and the study as the study

progressed. I encouraged them to feel free to agree or disagree with any ideas coming from me or any of the other students. I would only ask that if we disagree we would do so politely with full respect for the other person's feelings.

The half hour slipped by quickly. It was readily apparent that I was dealing with a friendly, lively, yet attentive group of students. Their teacher had obviously cultivated a good rapport with them, producing a warm, open, supportive classroom atmosphere. I was sure that I would enjoy working with them.

Thur. March 12, 1998 -- First Lesson

Today was my first lesson with these ESL students. I taught the same lesson that I successfully field tested at the community college in July of 1997. I will not outline the lesson here because I have already done so in detail elsewhere in this study (see Chap. III). However, I did vary this lesson somewhat in that I did not plan for any group work on this occasion. From my previous experience I knew that time would not permit. But group work will come later.

Again as in the previous presentation I emphasized that in studying the proposed poems we were not only seeking to gather planks for our metaphorical peace bridges, but we were also seeking to promote their English language skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing. There would be ample opportunity provided to practice all of these skills. The study would aim at helping to improve their English as well as improving their understanding of intercultural relations and concepts of peace education.

As previously, the lesson went very well, bringing forth many responses from the students. Characteristic of most classes some students were more forthcoming than others. However, when I get to know their names better, I will make a point of drawing out those students who tend to be more reticent.

The discussions with this class produced many of the same planks that the previous class had recognized. However, they also produced some of their own. As the students

milled these planks I listed them on the board and urged them to copy them in their journals. At the same time I urged them to reflect on the poems and on the planks that we had produced, hoping they might individually come up with yet more planks to be shared with us all later.

Now I will list, under the title of each poem, some of the planks that we considered: (The page references after titles and authors refer to the poetry collection which is reproduced in the appendices).

Aurora Borealis - Hess (p. 262)

1. The outdoors and nature are of much interest to Canadians.
2. All cultures have an interest in nature, even though nature may be much different from one part of the world to another.
3. All of us can celebrate the beauty of nature.
4. We can also *commemorate* the destructive power of nature. (As in storms, floods etc. I was pleased to note that a student had used the word *commemorate* instead of *celebrate*. We briefly discussed the difference).
5. Celebration and commemoration can bring people closer to one another.

Bouquet - Hess (p. 263)

1. As we admire flowers we celebrate the beauty of nature.
2. Since flowers *symbolize* people, we also celebrate the beauty of people.
3. People of different colors, like flowers, are all beautiful.
4. Flowers don't last very long; neither do people. So we should be nice to our family, to our friends and neighbors because we don't have them for very long.

And so we milled a few sound planks for our bridge construction. I am confident that the class will take up the challenge to mill many more as we continue to make progress exploring our way up our numerous rivers. I anticipate that we will find poetry to be an

excellent resource to draw upon for our construction material. And poetry is a fine renewable resource which can be used again and again without any serious, deleterious effects upon the environment. **So let us make poetry, not war.** I hope that that will be a thought that I can leave with my students.

Tue. March 17, 1998 -- Second Lesson

Although it was a teacher-fronted lesson, it involved much discussion -- students contributed freely. We shall be moving into group work (committee work) a little later.

In the hour at our disposal we covered four poems using the guide questions that I have listed previously. Numerous additional questions were also raised by myself and by the students. Many of these related to vocabulary and the authors' intent. Again through dialogue we milled planks for our bridge construction. I shall list these planks under the respective titles of each poem.

A Thunderstorm - Lampman (p.264)

1. Nature is very powerful.
2. We feel small before the power of nature.
3. Nature makes us humble.
4. Humility leads to sisterhood and brotherhood.

Worms and the Wind - Sandberg (p.264)

1. Prejudice keeps us underground in the dark. It fails to see the light "the sun nor the moon" It fails to hear the winds of change. "What is this wind we hear of?"
2. Prejudice lacks light. It needs enlightenment.
3. Prejudice (racism) is a failure of the human spirit.
4. "Worms like it in the dark." They are ignorant.

Is There For Honest Poverty - Burns (p. 265)

1. Poor people deserve dignity and respect.
2. Burns expresses a great longing for brotherhood/sisterhood.
3. Burns sees a world family.
4. The poet asks us to stand in his place.

I Have a Dream - King (p. 266)

1. We should not discriminate against people because of color or culture.
2. Our hope is in human sisterhood and brotherhood.
3. The cry for freedom. King lets freedom ring!
4. Judge character not color.

An interesting conclusion:

Right from the beginning I have been urging the students to write poetry of their own and to share it with me and the class if possible. Today after class I was very gratified to have a student approach me with one of his own poems. We sat side by side at a table in the classroom to have a look at it. He read his piece of about one page to me. I was much impressed. Then I asked him if I could read it aloud too. He agreed.

The poem, written in free verse, showed much deep reflection. It dealt with a perennial, universal, human concern, raising the issue of our mortality. What, if anything, lay beyond the grave? He did not have a definitive answer, but he had the courage to raise the question. He saw death as the great leveller. Here is a point where all humanity must meet. This insight should give us incentive to deal kindly with all our brothers and sisters, world wide. We are kindred in our mortality. I assured K. that I would be happy to include this poem in the final report of this study. That prospect pleased him as he added that he would just like to polish it a little more. Thus we agreed.

Thur. March 19, 1998 -- Third Lesson

I planned to deal with four poems today. But as any experienced, flexible teacher knows, the course of planning and execution are not always the same. And I think that this is often a very good thing. Sometimes we have to follow the lead of the students. If the students want to dwell at a certain point for a time along the way, then so be it.

There was some unfinished business from last day regarding King's poem, "I Have a Dream." The students felt that they needed some further clarification on vocabulary. Accordingly, we discussed such things as: *American dream, desert state, sweltering, transformed, oasis, interposition, nullification, despair, symphony, prodigious, Gentiles.* Of course these terms were elaborated in the context of the poem, thus illustrating how useful poetry can be in the teaching of English. And it should be noted that I encourage the students to mark up their poetry booklets freely -- to underline, make marginal notes, raise questions, make comments. In other words, dialogue with the poem.

So we moved on to Tan's poem East -- West (p. 268 of the poetry collection). This poem generated a tremendous amount of discussion since we had representatives of both "East" and "West" in the classroom. There was a certain amount of disagreement, but it was cordial. For example, the arranged marriages of the "East" were contrasted with the marriages of romance of the "West," each "side" supporting its position. One student observed colloquially that the "West" was getting "a pretty rough deal."

I thought that this was a good point to introduce the concepts of *bias* and *point of view*. Furthermore, it was also a good time to reintroduce and reemphasize the idea of *generalization* which we had looked at before. I pointed out that Tran was an Eastern writer and that he would be writing from that point of view which would give him a certain *bias*, which was also explained and discussed. Then we reviewed *generalization*, a broad statement that is usually true, but not always. (e.g. Tom is generally on time for school.) Writers, including poets, often use *generalizations* which may be very valid and useful if we recognize that there may be exceptions to them. And we turned to the poem for further

illustration: “East” -- “We are taught from the cradle to want less and less.” “West” -- You are urged everyday to want more and more.”

Now I pointed out that there are obviously exceptions to these generalizations, but broadly speaking they contain much truth. We know from observation that the people of the “East” are less materialistic than the people of the “West.” Then we discussed advertising. People from both the “East” and the “West” laughed at how commercials keep urging us to “want more and more;” “to buy now and pay later;” “no money down and you don’t pay a cent until 1999.” Although most of the students haven’t been here for more than two years, they could readily parrot the prattle of the media.

We concluded our discussion of the poem by drawing out three themes or planks and elaborating on some of their *implications* (also explained).

East West - Tran (p. 268)

1. It is important to recognize and accept cultural differences.
2. We cannot say one culture is better than another, only that they are different.
3. In dealing with different cultures we need a sense of tolerance and respect.

The students were readily able to define *tolerance* and *respect*, but they needed help with *implication*.-- indirect suggestion; hint.

From Ulysses (ll. 6-32) - Tennyson (p. 269)

Most of the students were not familiar with the Greek mythological hero, Ulysses, so I gave background about his travels, and his involvement in the Trojan Wars. We then went through the guide questions noting the speaker and the occasion, and stressing mood and the purpose of the poem. The mood of restlessness, created by direct, descriptive statements such as “I cannot rest from travel” (l. 6) was readily sensed by the students. They also saw that the main purpose of this excerpt of the poem was to make a point,

namely, to celebrate the desire for new experience, for adventure. We concluded by identifying these universal themes:

1. Human beings often seek adventure, just for the love of it.
2. Humans often thirst for knowledge -- "yearning in desire / To follow knowledge."
3. We *embody* our experiences -- "I am part of all that I have met" (l. 18).

An added note of interest:

Again after class I was pleased to look at two more pieces of students' poetry. The one student has been in Canada with his wife and young son for about fourteen months. He has come a long way already in learning English. He interrupted his university studies in his homeland when the opportunity to come to Canada presented itself. He is glad to be here and after he masters more English, he hopes to continue professional studies, although in a different field. He had been in law, but now hopes to go into the field of social work. His poem, which he termed as being "not yet finished," dealt with the student's satisfaction of having come to Canada "a great land." I encouraged him to finish the piece.

Immigrants typically experience a great deal of initial enthusiasm upon arrival, and then in a few months experience a sense of let-down and frustration from which they later recover. It appears that this student has already made this recovery. He is a capable student and is highly motivated and should do well in Canada, adding to the richness of our cultural mosaic. When he finishes his poem I anticipate finding in it some sound planks for our metaphorical intercultural bridge.

The second student spoke to me only briefly to see if she "was on the right track," so to speak. In their regular class work the students have been studying the novel, Lilies of the Field. This young woman was so moved by the characters and the story that she felt she wanted to respond to the novel with a poem. She wondered if this could be done. We read her unfinished work and I encouraged her to complete it. Here was a clear example of

literature touching people's lives in a positive way. I am sure her poem will affirm solidarity with people of other cultures. She too will be a bridge builder.

Tue. March 24, 1998 -- Fourth Lesson

My plan for today was to cover four poems, but we managed to take up only three. Again the class as a whole was very forthcoming in contributing to discussion. But again I noticed some students were a little shy. I shall have to engage these students a little more. I did make provision for the participation of these students by engaging the class in group work. This was our first attempt, so I kept the groups small. They worked in pairs. I will give more particulars later.

Now I will deal with each selection in turn and note the themes that we generated for each of the passages.

From The Bible (p.271)

As background for the subsequent poem, "Select Samaritan," I thought it would be useful for the students to consider some brief passages from the Bible. In dealing with these passages I suggested to this multicultural class that similar ideas could be found as well in the holy books of all the great religions of the world. As added background I related to the class one of my own experiences at the university a number of years ago when I was studying English literature. The professor was a very able man from India, and a Hindu as he himself explained. He went on to maintain that one need not know the Bible in order to learn English, but if one wanted to study English literature then a thorough knowledge of the Bible was essential, since English literature made so many references to this book. He related that he had read the Bible through several times in order to familiarize himself with it.

Thus we turned to the passages from the Old Testament where the age-old question was raised, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (See poetry collection p. 271 for references).

The students could readily ascertain that the context provided an affirmative answer. Then we read the short passage from Deuteronomy which affirmed our solidarity with the poor, which reading reminding us again of the poem by Burns that we had recently read. We saw how that the great themes of literature keep recurring. Moving on we noted that Leviticus admonished us to "love thy neighbor as thyself." This prepared us for the parable about the Good Samaritan as related by Jesus and recorded in Luke's Gospel.

The students quickly supplied answers to our guide questions as applied to the parable: Jesus was the speaker and the occasion was when Jesus was challenged by a Jewish leader who asked, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus told the story with the purpose in mind of teaching a very important lesson. We articulated the essence of the lesson in our planks:

1. We are indeed "our brother's keeper.
2. "And who is my neighbor?" (The class felt that the question itself should be a plank and the answer would be another plank).
3. Everyone we meet, especially someone in need, is our neighbor.

Select Samaritan - Finch (p.282)

For this poem I had the class work in small groups of two. But before they got started I read over the poem and we looked at some of the vocabulary, paying particular attention to the idiomatic expression "be in clover." They then worked for about fifteen minutes in their groups.

When we came back to a group as a whole the class had no difficulty identifying the speaker as the wife of a rich man. She was speaking by phone to an institution, an orphanage, on the occasion of the couple contemplating the adoption of two children. The students detected the haughty, arrogant mood of the speaker, terming her as having "too much pride." She viewed the children as animals. Several students quoted her "come and look them over." The poet achieved his purpose of exposing a fraud by using the woman's

own words. Our concluding planks, although negative in tone, were nevertheless useful since they can raise our social awareness:

1. A "Select Samaritan" is not a Samaritan at all.
2. Racism raises its ugly head.

From Shakespeare's *Henry V* (p. 272)

This selection, after it was read to the class and the vocabulary was clarified, sparked some interesting discussion. I informed the students how that King Henry was walking *incognito* among his troops during the night before a major battle. He was assessing and bolstering his men's morale. The purpose of the poem was to make the point that the king basically was much like an ordinary man, "The violet smells to him as it doth to me."

One student took exception to this apparent sameness. He argued that apart from the battle scene, the king and the ordinary soldier lived vastly different lives. Everyone agreed. Nevertheless, one young woman countered, true as that was, such an argument missed the point of the passage. We had to consider the basics, the king without his crown, robes, or palace full of servants. Apart from these things, "his ceremonies laid by," he was indeed much like his ordinary soldiers. He too worried about the coming day, about the battle which lay ahead. He too knew he might die, and he also feared death just like his soldiers did. But he dared not show it, "Lest ...it should dishearten his army."

This discussion generated one solid plank:

1. Whether of high or low rank, in their feelings (emotional nature), people are much the same -- "the king is but a man as I am."

Thur. March 26, 1998 -- Fifth Lesson

We spent today's hour mostly in group work with the class divided into five groups of three or four students in each group. Each group worked on a separate poem dealing with the questions of speaker, occasion, mood, purpose, and theme (plank). The guide questions were outlined on the board for the class's ready reference. Before they went into their group activities I read to the class each of the poems, giving brief clarification of vocabulary as needed. Once they were underway Christine and I moved from group to group giving further guidance as requested. The classroom was filled with the pleasant buzz of busy students as they read, exchanged ideas and made their notes. I was pleased to see how group work was facilitating student involvement. Some of the more reticent students were participating more freely.

In about twenty minutes we had each group report so as to pool our information. As each group reported I outlined their information on the board. This led to further questioning and discussion in the class as a whole, and to some revisions in the information presented.

Now under the title for each poem I shall briefly summarize the points made, emphasizing the planks which were milled for bridge construction.

Meditation from Devotion - Donne (p. 273)

For this poem the author, Donne, was identified as the speaker, reflecting upon the occasion of the death of someone in his community -- "For whom the bell tolls." The group readily identified the mood as being serious, expressing a deep sense of loss. The purpose of the poem was to make a point about our interconnectedness, or as one student put it, "We are tied together." The following two planks were produced:

1. "No man is an island."
2. As humans we are all interconnected.

The Chimney Sweeper - Blake (p. 274)

The group reporting on this poem readily identified the speaker as being a little boy, one of the chimney sweepers. The occasion was the boy looking at his miserable life. There was a contrasting mood between the boy's dream of being set free by the angel and the cruel reality of his life with the other boys. The author's purpose was to protest the cruelty of child labor. This group reported that they had discussed the fact that there still was child labor in the world. They referred to Nike shoe manufacturing in some of the poor countries in the world. In keeping with the principles of peace education, they suggested that maybe we shouldn't buy these kinds of shoes. The discussions from this group led to the production of these solid planks:

1. Free children from labor.
2. Children need opportunities to play.

Jerusalem - Blake (p. 274)

For this powerful poem the *committee* (synonymous with group) identified Blake, the author, as the speaker. In considering the occasion, this group made a connection between this poem and the previous one, "The Chimney Sweeper." They suggested that Blake was angry about what was going on in his country. And this produced a fighting mood of protest. They noted the imagery of the weaponry -- "Bow," "Arrows," "Spear," "Sword." These were not to be taken literally, but figuratively. Blake's purpose was to start a "Mental Fight" to make his country turn away from evils such as child labor.

This mature class readily understood the symbolism of Jerusalem, for when I asked them if we had need to build a Jerusalem in Canada, without hesitation there was a chorus of "Yes." They cited such examples as poverty, health care cuts, and racism. This discussion led to these two planks:

1. We all need to build Jerusalem.
2. We should fight for a better, more just society.

In London, September 1802 - Wordsworth (p. 275)

The committee working on this poem needed a little more help with the vocabulary. Once this was provided they quickly identified the speaker as being Wordsworth speaking in a despondent “opprest” mood occasioned by the crass materialism displayed all about him in his society. As the committee reported later, Wordsworth’s purpose was to call attention to his society’s loss of more noble values. “Plain living and high thinking are no more....the good old cause / Is gone.” When questioned the class was very clear in their understanding of *materialism*. They had seen enough of it on TV and in Canadian society all about them. I thought that this was a good point at which to remind them again, as I had done before, that they should not accept Canadian culture uncritically, nor any other culture either, including the one from which they had come. We can always build a better Jerusalem. Two planks evolved from this poem:

1. Too much materialism leads to moral decay.
2. Love “Plain living and high thinking.”

Dulce et Decorum Est - Owen (p. 276)

This was the first of a series of anti-war, protest poems. For this poem I had earlier, during the initial reading, given the class the translation of the Latin sentence at the end of the poem. Now I found, as I moved from group to group, that the committee working on this poem had some difficulty in identifying the speaker. At first they were inclined to identify the speaker as the author, Owen. But they reconsidered when I pointed out to them that Owen was a medical doctor who treated the soldiers. And when I asked them where these treatments would take place they soon saw that it would not be right near the front, but well back. So in their report they saw that the speaker was an ordinary, weary soldier being pulled back from the front for some rest, along with some buddies. The occasion was a gas attack producing a mood of grim horror. This mood was used to

make the point of protest against the horror of war. The planks for the construction of our peace bridge followed directly from this protest:

1. There is no glory in war.
2. War destroys our youth.
3. We must strive for peace.
4. Make poetry, not war.

At the close of this class I was again approached by K. who presented me with another first draft of a poem in which he used flowers symbolically to represent people. As before I encouraged him to finish it.

Note: Right from the beginning with this class of mature, intelligent students, I was gratified at the extent of the grasp they had on ideas and principles. I maintain that an important part of the ESL teacher's job is to help the students to put into English that which they already know, which they have already experienced in their own language.

Fri. March 27, 1998 -- Sixth Lesson

Near the outset we quickly organized the class into five groups of three or four members each. Each group was responsible for one poem. The poems were initially read by me with some clarification of vocabulary. Today we did two more anti-war poems and three protesting urban blight. Again as the work progressed in committee for about twenty minutes, I moved among them giving encouragement and direction as the need was indicated. The committees then reported in turn.

The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner - Jarrell (p. 277)

This short poem of only five lines presented some difficulty. Initially the class had no clear idea of the concept of “the ball turret gunner.” So I clarified using a quick sketch on the blackboard. A little later the committee had difficulty identifying the speaker. At first some were inclined to think it was Jarrell, the author. As I listened in, another suggested it was the gunner. Then someone protested that the gunner had been killed, so how could he be the speaker. I pointed out that a poet could make anything -- another person, a dog, a cat or a tree, or even a dead man speak for him. Thus they settled on the dead gunner as the speaker as I moved on to another group of students.

Later in their report the group identified the speaker as a dead man reporting on the occasion of his death as a result of enemy gunfire. The reporting students themselves shuddered at the horror of the mood created by the mental picture of the ground crew flushing the dead man “out of the turret with a hose.” They saw clearly how the author used this gruesome picture for the purpose of expressing his protest against the cruelty and horror of war. The committee expressed the theme (plank) as, “The ugliness of war.” At this point I introduced and clarified the term “brutality” (inhumanity, cruelty, without sense or reason). After discussing the concept the committee reformulated their themes (planks) as:

1. The ugliness and brutality of war.
2. War is *irrational*. (I was pleased that one of the senior members of the class who was in Canada already for a number of years supplied the word *irrational*-- and he was also able to explain what the word meant).

The Man He Killed - Hardy (p. 277)

In conjunction with the initial reading of this poem I introduced two terms not found in the poem itself, namely, *sophisticated* and *unsophisticated*. When I was sure that they were clear on these terms I asked them to note which of the two terms applied to the speaker of this poem. The committee would report on the matter.

When the committee reported after their twenty minutes of meeting they identified the speaker as an ordinary soldier, not a captain or a general. He was very *unsophisticated*. When I asked them how they knew, they responded that his language was very plain and that his thinking was not *sophisticated*. I asked them to explain what they meant about his thinking. The committee went on to report that the occasion for the poem was that the man had just killed another man in battle and now in a puzzled mood he wondered about why he had done this. He tried to explain away the puzzle by saying, "I shot him dead because -- / Because he was was my foe." I was pleased to see that the committee picked up on his hesitant staggering from one "because" to another "because," indicating that he himself wasn't satisfied with his own answer. The students also saw his reservations a little further on in his "although." The committee presented the author's purpose as trying, through this soldier, to make us wonder about how "crazy" war is. At this point as we outlined the report on the board, and we again reviewed the terms *rational* and *irrational*. The committee incorporated these concept into their rendition of their planks. They had first said, "War is crazy." Now they agreed to the following wording:

1. War is irrational.
2. War cancels friendship.
3. War creates enemies.

City Life - Lawrence (p. 279)

The committee reported the speaker as Lawrence, the author, speaking on the occasion of watching exploited factory workers being dragged “back and forth to work / back and forth to work.” (The students used the term “exploited” on their own initiative). The mood of the poem was reported as being one of “despair,” hopelessness, depression. The speaker gives up, “it is useless to care.” The purpose of the poem was to protest against the factory owner, “the malignant fisherman” who drags the workers on “invisible wires of steel.” We arrived at the following themes (planks):

1. The factory system is very impersonal.
2. It often exploits workers -- “pulls them back and forth to work.”

My Neighborhood - Anderson (p. 280)

Here Anderson moves into the slum area of a large American city. The committee reported the speaker as being a person who lived in the slums, probably the author himself. The occasion for the poem was the speaker looking around and thinking about his surroundings. What he sees creates in him a mood of hopelessness and a wanting to get away -- “So help me today I’m gone.” The purpose of the poem was reported as trying to show the poor conditions in the slums. It protests that people should have to live in these conditions. The proposed planks were:

1. Poverty creates hopelessness, despair and crime.
2. We are called to stand up for the poor.
3. Politicians should be responsible. (At this point a great deal of cynicism was expressed by the committee about politicians -- “poverty funds...all used up on the higher echelons.”)

The Cities are Burning - Kirkpatrick (p. 281)

Here the Rev. Frederick Kirkpatrick, an associate and friend of the Rev. Martin Luther King gives us an even bleaker picture of racist life in the slums. As in the previous poem the the committee identified the speaker as a slum dweller, probably the author himself. The mood was noted as being one of judgement and condemnation as the author puts forward his purpose of condemning poverty and racism. The committee saw the main theme or plank in this piece as being:

1. Racism leads to burning cities. (The students agreed to Kirkpatrick's solution -- "non-violence through Martin Luther King").

Note: Some reflections as per teacher research: As I reflected on today's lesson, and also on the previous day's lesson as well, I think that I probably tried to cover too much material in the one hour that I had at my disposal. In each case I tried to cover five poems, striving to cover as much ground as possible in the twelve periods assigned to me. This is not meant in any way as a criticism of those people who agreed to give me access for this amount of time. In fact, I am very grateful to them for being so generous in their accommodation. They also have their agendas and relinquishing any time is not easy. Nevertheless, in my zeal to move ahead I think I was crowding my students somewhat. To explore all the multitudinous ramifications of any one of these rivers (poems) could likely take more than an hour, let alone all five. I already realize that there is no way that we can cover the whole poetry booklet, so I will have to pick and choose. So next time I will cut back on the menu and allow more time for discussion. Furthermore, I am still hoping that some of the students will, as I have requested, bring in some poems from their own cultural background, in English translation, of course. I am also hoping that we might be able to look at some of the students' own poetry writing in class. This again adds to the time constraints. The students understand that their writing of poetry is purely voluntary.

But I had actually hoped for a little more response in this regard. We are at the half-way point now. Maybe there will still be some student work forthcoming.

Tue. April 7, 1998 -- Seventh Lesson

At the beginning of this class I spoke briefly to the students about their journals, indicating that I wished to take them in on Thursday so that I could look at them over the long weekend coming up. Again I stressed confidentiality, assuring them that I would be the only one to read their writings. And if they wanted me not to read some particular section they were to tape together those particular pages and I would respect their wishes. Furthermore, if they were adverse to handing in their journal at all, it was their option to refrain from doing so.

Before going on with the poems I also passed out individual copies of the peace slogans or mottos we had been discussing previously. I shall say more about these mottos later. These mottos also provide some useful materials for our intercultural peace bridge construction.

Today I had planned to cover five poems, which I read over to the class, clarifying difficult vocabulary along the way and indicating that we were moving into a new area, that of *women's issues*. After the readings we organized the class into five groups, one group to each poem. I gave them twenty minutes to study the poems in committee and to prepare their usual types of reports. However, in the end we managed to hear reports on only three of the poems. So much lively, interesting, and useful discussion evolved that we had to set two of the poems over for the next day. This was no problem. I was pleased with their enthusiastic involvement. I shall outline the reports from the three committees that we heard.

From New Year's Day, 1978 - Brewster (p.284)

The committee reported that the speaker of this poem was the author herself reporting on the occasion of her reflections as she looked back on her life on New Year's Day, 1978. They detected an overall mood of sadness, loneliness and disappointment. But they also noted a more positive mood towards the end, that is courage and hope. The purpose of the poem was to describe and explore these moods. The committee readily noted the theme of poverty in the poem, and provided us with these planks:

1. Poverty often leads to hardship and loneliness.
2. Life can be disappointing.
3. The brave keep on hoping. "Ten years from now / I may write my great book."

Lenore - Moure (p.285)

The committee noted that this poem had some ideas similar to the previous poem. They saw the speaker as someone who knew Lenore, maybe the author, a friend. The occasion was the speaker thinking about Lenore's hard life. The mood was very sad and lonely. Committee members said the author's purpose was to describe the woman's hard life and to make us care. The theme (plank) the committee suggested was:

1. We should care about the hardships of the poor.

I thought that this was a good opening to introduce the term "solidarity," which one student ably defined as "standing together." The ensuing discussion produced two variations on the first theme which I list as # 2 and # 3.

2. Solidarity with the poor.
3. We cannot ignore the poor.

Paper Matches - Jiles (p. 286)

After the planks from along this river (poem) were presented there ensued a great deal of discussion, quite heated at times. I shall review some of this discussion after the main points of the committee's presentation.

The committee identified the author of the poem as the speaker, speaking about the occasion of a family gathering where the women are left to wash up the dishes while the men go outside to play. This upsets the speaker and produces a questioning, angry mood in the poem. The committee quoted the line, "I have the rages that small animals have [and] our heads on fire." The students readily saw that this was a protest poem, the purpose of which was to protest the unfair work load often carried by women. The themes were expressed succinctly in the form of two planks:

1. Why should women work while men play?
2. Women need fair treatment (gender equality).

As I have already indicated this report sparked some rather animated discussion, mainly between males on one side and females on the other. But at all times the exchanges were courteous, albeit emphatic. I should also hasten to add that a few of the men did support the women's cause. But some of the men argued the distinctiveness of the genders (although they didn't use that word *genders*, simply saying that men and women were different) and therefore distinctive roles were appropriate. In other words it was OK for men to play while women worked.

One articulate young woman of African background, and obviously quite liberated, shot back that just because that was the way it was back in former lands, that was no reason to expect it to be the same here in Canada. She went on to relate how that the women in her former homeland worked all day in the fields, or in shops or factories, and then had to come home and do all the house work with no help from the men. She accused the men of thinking they could still continue the same practices here. She added emphatically that they couldn't, or else it would lead to a lot of family problems.

One gentleman with a mischievous grin observed, "We are sure getting into the battle of the sexes here, aren't we?" And he added that this was an old, old problem going back many generations.

Another male student spoke out in support of the women. He said, with easy grace and in a comfortable manner, that he didn't mind helping his wife attend to the children and with the house work. He liked cooking and he didn't mind doing dishes either.

Personally, I had hoped to stay out of the debate and act only as a moderator. But some of the students wondered about my position in these matters. I told them that I thought that I was quite liberated as far as doing house work was concerned. I related that I had grown up on a farm and as a young person I had to work both inside and outside of the house. My mother saw to it that I and my brothers did our share of the household chores -- cooking, washing dishes, cleaning floors, and helping with the laundry. So now I had no problem helping my wife with housework. I added that I'm not very good at cooking, but my wife is and she enjoys it. So she does most of the cooking and I do most of the cleaning up and the laundry.

So time ran out and the clock called us to a halt before we could attend to the last two poems. But that was alright. While the class closed their books I told them that we would hear the other reports next day. As the students dispersed I mused to myself that maybe all of them had not necessarily been persuaded to accept the theme of the poem "Paper Matches." But the poem had certainly stimulated some good discussion, and without a doubt it had succeeded in its purpose of consciousness raising about women's issues, more specifically about gender equality. I think that this illustrates that poetry can be used to good effect in building peace bridges between individuals and between genders.

A brief discussion with Christine. After the class had left Christine, my cooperating teacher, and I sat down and had a brief discussion pertaining in general to the poetry lessons. Christine observed and I agreed that the students had not much difficulty

identifying the speaker, the occasion, the mood and the purpose for the various poems. But she felt the students had more difficulty articulating the themes, or planks evolving from the poems. I said that that was a valid observation. Even high school students who had been born and raised, and schooled here in Canada sometimes experienced difficulty in this area. So it did not surprise me that ESL students still learning English would have difficulty verbalizing themes at times. Furthermore, themes could often be stated in more than one way. I saw it as the ESL teacher's responsibility to help the students put into language what they were trying to say. The students should use their own resources as much as possible, but the teacher was there as another resource, a facilitator of the language process. The teacher could find opportune times to introduce new vocabulary into the appropriate context. The students if they were actively engaged thinking on the concepts would be very open to incorporating this new vocabulary into their own thinking, thereby increasing their language proficiency. As an example I cited the poem "Lenore." For this poem the class had suggested the theme, "We cannot ignore the poor." Another version was, "We should care about the hardships of the poor." At that time I thought it was a good idea to introduce the term *solidarity*, meaning caring for, standing with. The class quickly applied this to another version of theme for the poem -- "Solidarity with the poor."

Christine observed that this was time consuming and that maybe sometime I was trying to cover too many poems in the hour. I felt she had a valid criticism. In my efforts to explore as many rivers and as much territory as possible I might well have been crowding the students too much at times. I again acknowledged that I was very grateful that she had agreed to give me twelve hours out of her program. It was generous of her. Nevertheless, I felt that twelve hours was a very limited amount of class time. Sometime in the future I hoped that I, or someone else, could undertake a similar study but with much more time at his/her disposal, say even a whole semester on the study of *poetry as an intercultural peace bridge for teaching ESL*.

Thur. April 9, 1998 -- Eighth Lesson

Today after I arrived at class I found that I had to make some hasty revisions in my lesson plans. Since one student left recently, the class now has a full compliment of only nineteen people. This was a religious holiday for some students and so nearly half of them were not present. Among those absent were the committee members who were to deal with the two poems left over from last day. Since the class was small, I quickly decided that we would work as a committee of the whole, thereby covering the poems left over from last day, and hopefully move into some new material. I had slated five poems for today, the two from last day and three new ones. But again the discussions became so engrossing that we only completed three poems. I will list the titles of the poems we dealt with and summarize the ensuing commentary generated by the class. I should also note here the very real advantage of smaller ESL classes. Some of the more reserved students spoke up and contributed much more freely producing very good discussion.

Fugue - Sarah (p. 287)

I should again reiterate that according to my usual practice during the initial reading of a poem I clarify difficult vocabulary. *Fugue* was an unfamiliar term to the class so I defined it briefly for them as *a practice in music in which different voices or different instruments repeat the same melody with slight variation*. So I told them to watch for the use of repetition in the poem which the title hinted at.

The class concluded that the speaker was probably Robin Sarah reflecting on women's struggle for equal rights in society. They termed the mood as one of struggle, but one student, a male, added that there was also a mood of hope -- "Women are on their way." This led to a discussion of the purpose of the poem, namely, to make a point -- to encourage women on their way and to challenge men to support them instead of just standing back and watching "from high office windows." Here again in this poem we saw

how that the purpose of a poem often runs so close to and parallel with the theme. The class voiced the themes or planks for our peace bridge as the following:

1. Women will keep on marching for their rights.
2. Men are challenged to join them, to support them.

I must back up here a little. As we progressed in our analysis of the poem and before we generated the themes, this poem produced much discussion and raised many questions, the answers to which we could not always find. Although many questions were left unanswered, the poem definitely was a useful consciousness raising exercise concerning women's issues. Last day, discussing "Paper Matches," we looked at the issue of the fair division of labor between the genders. Today we carried this further into the related issue of the parenting and nurturing of children. Some members of the class, both male and female, were quite critical of the common Canadian custom of "dumping children off at day care centers" while both parents went off to work. They wondered if this was right, if this was best for the children. One man said sincerely and reflectively that he would not want strangers looking after his little children. A woman of Muslim background supported him. She related her own experience saying there was no way that she would have worked outside her home while her children were too young to go to school. She felt that her place was to be at home for them where she could teach them proper values in their formative years. At the same time she raised the question as to whether the increasing crime rates amongst youths and even children here in North America might be related to the earlier absence of mothers in the home. This was one of the questions we speculated about but couldn't really answer.

Up to now this woman hadn't said very much in class so I encouraged her to continue and she did. Now that her three children were in school she felt more at ease about being outside the home so that she could study and improve her English with the hopes of securing employment. But even now she said that it was her practice to hurry home after classes so that she could be there for her children when they arrived from

school. I commended her for her solicitude for her children and I also added that her study of English had obviously been fruitful, for she spoke very well. She smiled graciously and said, "Thank you."

The remarks of this woman led to another obvious, related question which I posed. What about women and education, that is their opportunities for equal education and access to the professions?

Here I was pleased to note virtual unanimity among the students, male and female. They asserted, and I encouraged them to do so, that women were no less able intellectually than men and therefore they should have the opportunity for equal access to higher education and continue on into the professions. One man who had already been in Canada for a good number of years, raising his children here, said that according to his experience that question has already been answered. He said that one only had to look about this city and one would notice all the females who were successfully practicing medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, law, education, and even engineering. And to his credit he said this with obvious pleasure and approval.

Another question evolved. How could women manage a home life and their concern for children along with careers, professional and otherwise? And now we were back to the issue of the division of labor. It was suggested that men could be more involved with the nurturing of children. Some objected, both males and females, that this was more appropriately a woman's role. It was more "natural" for the mother to be the nurturing one. It was also suggested that men could also learn to be nurturing, to share the responsibilities for home and children. It was also observed that women need not necessarily have children, or even get married for that matter. In other words we were exploring options without necessarily arriving at definitive conclusions.

The foregoing is only a sampling of the issues discussed by this intelligent, perceptive class as we considered Robin Sarah's poem *Fugue*. I think it again illustrates

how effective poetry can be in opening up social issues and in providing materials for building interconnecting bridges to help unite various cultures in a society.

All Bread - Atwood (p. 288)

Before going into *All Bread* we again discussed symbolism. It was pointed out that bread, considered as bread, was symbolic of many things, of life and the mystery of life, of sharing and hospitality. But more broadly speaking bread could also symbolize or stand for all foods and their life giving nourishment, both physically and spiritually. To illustrate the latter I referred to a family gathering around a feast table where the food not only nourished the body but also fed our emotional nature, our spirit. The spirit of fellowship was very important to family gatherings and to social events. This fellowship was closely associated with and symbolized by the sharing of food -- the breaking of bread.

It was concluded that the author was probably the speaker herself, if not, then it was someone the author knew very well. Reflecting on the baking of bread was the occasion for the poem. In this poem the class rightly noted that the mood, purpose and theme were all closely related. They noted a mood of mystery and wonder -- bread being "made of wood, / cow dung, packed brown moss, / the bodies of dead animals." The purpose of the poem was to make a point -- to examine bread as part of the mystery of the cycle of life and death. The themes, or planks, evolved from the foregoing points:

1. Share the fruits of the earth.
2. We are invited to break bread, to share life with all who live on the earth.
3. Breaking bread symbolizes sharing and peace.
4. We have to have love in order to share. (This point was graciously offered by one of our older student, a gentleman of Chinese background, one of our resident philosophers).

Fisherman's Lyric - Chao Meng-fu (p. 290)

We are now turning our attention to some oriental poetry with its tendency towards brevity and highly condensed language. This poem leads us back into the realm of nature which has such universal appeal. To begin with I pointed out that lyric suggests a quality of song. So I asked the students to watch for what type of mood this *lyric* might convey. Lyrics can run the whole range of human feelings from most happy to very sad. The only other word in this short poem that I felt needed clarification was *contemptuous*, suggesting a sense of indifference, of looking down at, or of ignoring altogether. After reading the poem the students quickly identified the speaker as a fisherman, probably the author himself. And the occasion was obviously a fishing trip. They saw this as a happy lyric -- carefree, relaxed, joyful. The purpose of the poem was to show the joy of fishing (even if one caught no fish), the joy of nature, the joy of living. The fisherman had friends all about him -- "gulls and egrets." Today he could forget about those in power -- "contemptuous of kings." I was pleasantly surprised and pleased at the number of themes the class associated with this short poem:

1. Fishing, being out in the world of nature, is very satisfying.
2. Nature can bring us peace and contentment.
3. We can enjoy nature together. (As we were doing in contemplating the poem).
4. The joy of nature is a meeting place for all people.
5. Nature gives us a sense of community, of commonality.

Tue. April 14, 1998 -- Ninth Lesson

Today we used a teacher fronted approach trying to cover at least eight short poems in preparation for group work again next day, when the class working in small groups of two or three will try to write some poems of their own. Thus far poems volunteered by the class have not been numerous. I am hoping that by using some class time and with some direction the students will be able to produce some poems right in class.

Before going into the main part of the lesson today, and in preparation for the poems we were going to look at, I conducted a short discussion of the symbolism of the seasons, and times of day, as used in literature, especially in poetry. This is a mature, intelligent class so they had no difficulty with these concepts. They were already familiar with them, so I was really conducting a quick review. I outlined a chart on the board which the class readily filled in:

1. Spring (Sunrise & morning) = Birth & childhood
2. Summer (Late morning to approaching evening) = Youth & maturity
3. Fall (Evening) = The ripeness of old age
4. Winter (Sunset, twilight & night) = Our final departure into death

In retrospect, this lesson, in which we managed to deal with the eight poems that I had selected, was rather fast paced. In fact, throughout this whole series of lessons, I have always been acutely aware of the pressure of time, as I have tried to cover as much material as possible and at the same time engage the students extensively in discussion. It would have been my wish, were it possible, to have had at least twice as much time at my disposal. However, I must hasten to add that I am deeply grateful to the personnel of the Edmonton Public School Board's Continuing Education Program in ESL, especially the cooperating teacher, for the twelve hours that have been made available to me for this study. I must also express my appreciation for the students with whom I worked. All along they showed a high degree of maturity and wisdom, and at the same time courtesy and good grace as we reflected upon the poems and exchanged ideas. And today was no exception. I was particularly pleased with the facility the students displayed in verbalizing the various themes (building planks) for the poems under consideration. Again I will briefly summarize the discussions under the title for each poem.

Autumn Thoughts - Ma Chih-yuan (p. 291)

As we discussed this poem we noted the many references to the flowing and passage of time -- *withered, old, dusk, flowing, ancient, gaunt, sun descending, edge of sky*. The class concluded that the speaker was probably the author speaking on the occasion of watching a traveller riding or *journeying* along a road in the evening. They detected a serious mood, a bleak, dreary mood as the night closes in. The author's purpose was to compare life to a journey, to reflect on the ending of a journey. Themes noted were:

1. The seasons of life, particularly the autumn season.
2. The journey of life.
3. We are on a journey through the seasons of life to "the edge of sky."

The Retreat of Sun Ching-hsiang - Chang Yu (p. 292)

The speaker of this poem was probably the author who was reflecting on his friend's recent retirement from "official duties." The students detected a mood of happiness for his friend's retirement, yet at the same time there was a mood of envy, as the speaker wished he could do the same. The purpose of the poem was to show a contrast between the dusty life of the city and the quiet, peaceful life of the rural village. The class noted two related themes, or planks:

1. The human heart seeks quietness and peace.
2. We all dream of (desire) our own quiet retreat.

I note with interest the response I got when I asked the class if we might think of this quiet retreat in the terms of William Blake's *Jerusalem* that we had noted in a poem some time back. Several class members maintained and the class concurred that sadly this concept no longer really held today, for Jerusalem was now anything but peaceful. Again I noted with satisfaction that this class was certainly far from being unsophisticated. I think that we as ESL teachers must recognize, particularly when we are working with mature students such as I had here, that our students bring with them a vast fund of experiences

and insights, such that they can readily grasp the concepts of literature, including poetry. Our task as ESL teachers is to help our students *language* these concepts in English. Hence, I maintain that there is little value in giving these students watered down materials *especially prepared for ESL students*. They are well able, and more able, to profit from real literature. But now I must continue with the other poems.

Poem Inscribed on a Painting - T'ang Yin (p. 293)

We found the author as speaker on the occasion of trying to write a poem. The poem expressed a mood of appreciation for beauty but also had a note of frustration in that the writer was having difficulty finding "the right words." The author makes the point that writing a poem can be hard work. Our class discussion generated the following themes:

1. Human beings strive for self-expression.
2. Desire for self-expression is the basis of all art.
3. The need for self-expression is a commonality in all people.

A Travel Poem - Teika (p. 294)

Again the speaker was identified as the author on the occasion of watching a traveller along an autumn road. The students felt that this poem had a cold, lonely mood - "autumn wind," "lonely light." We saw that the purpose of the poem was to make a point - to see life as a journey, a journey of transitions. This short poem yielded a number of interesting versions of themes or planks for our bridge construction:

1. We are all travellers along the road of life.
2. We cross bridges from one edge (cliff) to another edge (cliff) (in transition).
3. The sun sets for all of us in "lonely light."
4. Our journey is short as is this poem.

At this point we recalled an earlier poem, "Bouquet" --- flowers like people soon whither away and die.

A Winter Poem - Teika (p. 294)

The class saw the speaker as the author on the occasion of his recounting a cold winter trip on horseback. The poem presents a cold, weary, anxious mood - "no shelter... weary horse...twilight in the snow." Like the previous poem, the students saw the purpose of this poem as showing that life is a state of transition, of fording the river. Here again, as happens so often in poetry, the purpose of the poem and its theme run closely together. We generated the following related statements of theme (planks):

1. We make transitions in life; we ford the river. (We grow up, get married etc.).
2. Life is a transit - from time to time, place to place, situation to situation.
3. We all pass into the twilight and winter. (We come to terms with our mortality, our commonality).
4. Life is short. Respect and appreciate life in ourselves and in others.

The River - Yi Jung (p. 295)

Here the speaker was identified as a fisherman, probably the author himself speaking on the occasion of fishing at night. There appeared to be a sleepy, relaxed mood here - "waves subside as if to sleep....the sleepy fish." The purpose of the poem was to describe a peaceful mood, a peaceful situation. As we came to discuss the theme of the poem one particularly articulate young woman noted that we had been thinking symbolically in the last few poems. So now she wondered as for this poem, "When we are speaking fishing, are we speaking about fishing?" I turned the question over to the class and the consensus was that in this case "fishing was fishing." I said I was also inclined towards that interpretation, but that there might be other interpretations too. But we left it at that and nailed down two theme statements:

1. From time to time people seek quiet and relaxation (a universal commonality).
2. A quiet, moonlit night speaks peace and contentment.

Your Parents - Chung Chul (p. 295)

The class reasoned that the occasion for this poem appeared to be the death of a parent and the speaker seems to be the author, a child of the parent. He expresses a mood of love and respect for his parents, and at the same time shows a mood of sadness and regret about the parent's death. The class saw the main purpose of the poem was to make a point - to instruct us to be loving to our parents, "While your parents are here." Again the purpose of the poem and the theme mingled:

1. Love your parents; be kind to them "While your parents are here."
2. Charity begins at home.
3. Love your neighbor as yourself.

Here we discussed the idea that the most immediate neighbors that we have are members of our own family. If we could not love them, we would probably not love other people either. I also raised the question as to whether loving our parents suggested a necessity of perfection on their part. The class was quick to negate this notion, saying no one was perfect, whether our parents, or we ourselves as parents. We had to accept and love each other along with our weaknesses and faults. These were heart warming assertions.

Not War, We Want Peace - Daud Haidar (p. 298)

As background for this poem I pointed out that Haidar, a writer from Bangla Desh, had witnessed a destructive war during the time that his country fought to gain its independence from Pakistan. The class saw in this poem a speaker reflecting on the occasion of war, someone who had been hurt in some serious way by war, probably the author himself. The hurt was not necessarily just physical to the speaker, but was more likely emotional through the injury or loss of some loved one. The mood was seen as being very serious, pleading for an end to war - "Come let us be friends." This also

encompassed the purpose of the poem - to make a point, to make a plea for peace and friendship. We summed up the theme of the poem in one sentence:

1. Deep in their hearts people want peace; they yearn for peace.

Subsequently we discussed this theme a little further. Considering that we are still having so many wars in the world, I wondered about the importance of this theme. The class thought that it was important because it showed that people still had hope. Without hope we would stop trying to reach peace. If we didn't hope and try for peace we would go backwards and have even more wars. We also discussed some of those things that stood in the way of peace. It was suggested that a lust for power and material things got in the way of peace. So did prejudice and racism. But as long as people held up the dream for peace there was hope. And here, as we had seen, was where poetry could play an important role.

Wed. April 15, 1998 -- Tenth Lesson

Today's lesson proceeded at a much more leisurely pace than those of the past few sessions. For most of the period I had the class, working in groups of two or three, writing poetry. Through discussion and comparing notes they were to help each other, but each student was to prepare an individual set of short poems as I will describe below. For this initial class excursion into poetry writing I thought we would use a simple approach so that everyone would have some measure of success. Accordingly, I introduced the lesson with a brief discussion of *acrostic* poetry, or *formula* poetry, as I prefer to call it. I gave each student a page of examples made up by myself by way of illustration in order to further clarify the concept and to help them to get started. But I urged them to try to steer away from the given examples and come up with their own. The said examples will be reproduced subsequently (p. 180). I also gave each student a page of suggested acrostics with appropriately drawn blanks to be filled in. This was like the page of examples with only the initial letter before each blank.

After getting the class into groups and getting them started I was able to move among the groups offering encouragement and a few suggestions here and there. It is always rewarding to see a class working diligently in groups like this. There was a busy atmosphere of lively talk amongst the group members, sometimes lighthearted and sometimes serious. As I moved from group to group I was able to enter into these conversations with them. But the most important thing was that they were able to exchange ideas with their peers and so use their English to solve a problem at hand and thereby enhance their language skills. Everyone got a chance to speak, to explain his/her ideas, to agree and disagree in a warm accepting atmosphere. Of course some of their productions were awkward and trite, as is to be expected in this rather restrictive, prescribed type of composition. But some examples were quite innovative, displaying good insight. Near the end of the hour I asked if anyone was prepared to share his/her efforts with the class. Now there was hesitation. They weren't quite ready. They needed a little more time. Could they take them home for further work and do their reading the next day? Of course.

Acrostic or Formula Poetry

POEM

Plan _____
 On _____
 Employing _____
 Memories. _____

POETRY

Plan to include _____
 Other people. _____
 Enter into dialogue. _____
 Try to be fair. _____
 Remember to love _____
 Your neighbor. _____

LOVE

Let us all _____
 Overcome _____
 Violence _____
 Everywhere _____

PEACE

People _____
 Enter into dialogue _____
 And _____
 Care for _____
 Each other. _____

POEM

Put _____
 On _____
 Extra _____
 Meaning. _____

POETRY

Please be _____
 Of assistance to _____
 Each other as you _____
 Try to _____
 Record _____
 Your ideas on paper. _____

LOVE

Let all _____
 Of us _____
 View _____
 Everyone kindly. _____

PEACE

Plan to include _____
 Everyone _____
 As we try to _____
 Create a friendly _____
 Environment. _____

Thur. April 16, 1998 -- Eleventh Lesson

We started out the period by having various students volunteer to read some of their acrostic poems that they were working on last day. I was pleased that almost everyone of the students volunteered freely to read his/her pieces to the class. Some students needed a little urging, not so much from myself as from their classmates. Two students declined, so of course we didn't press them. But they said they would hand their work in for me to read along with the other students. The students produced some good pieces, some of which I will include later in this journal.

After the readings we moved on to another poetry writing session by the students. To get things started I put on the board the following statement for their consideration:

One of the best ways to respond to a poem is to write a poem of your own.

To illustrate the concept I reread to the class Margaret Atwood's poem, "All Bread" (p. 288 of the poetry collection). Then I gave them, on a handout, a simple response that I had written to her poem. The handout was in large, bold script which filled a whole page. But I shall reproduce it here in more modest form:

BREAD
 BREAKING
 THE
 BREAD
 OF
 POETRY
 BRINGS
 NOURISHMENT
 AND
 PEACE

I related to the class how that I had experimented with different combinations of words per line until I had finally settled on the arrangement of one word per line for this effort. Again I stressed the concept of *measured language* in poetry wherein ideas are laid out very deliberately line by line, the writer thinking very carefully about which words, and how many, will be laid out in each line. We also discussed the symbolism of *THE BREAD OF POETRY* and how it could provide *NOURISHMENT*.

Next I placed on the board a line from John Donne:

No man [person] is an island.

To give this line context I reread to the class the whole passage from Donne that we had considered some time earlier (p. 273 of the poetry collection).

The students were asked to respond to this line with a short poem of their own. In order to help them focus I suggested they might use some of the journalism questions, as I put them on the board: *Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?* But I suggested that they not force the use of all of these questions. They were only thought starters. The students should use some or none as they found convenient. Some students asked if they might use a different line of poetry as a starting point. I said, of course. And so I got the students working in pairs again, bouncing ideas off on each other as they composed. As they worked I moved about the class giving encouragement here and there. They seemed eager to show me their developing ideas.

Towards the end of the period a few of the students were prepared to read their productions to the class. We heard a few of them, and as time ran out I said we'd hear more of them next day.

After I collect their poems I will reproduce some of them in this journal along with some of my commentary on same.

Tue. April 21, 1998 -- Twelfth Lesson (the last of this series)

Since this was the last lesson I took the first few minutes to thank Christine and the students for giving me the opportunity of coming to this class and working with them. I thought it more appropriate to express my thanks now since I would be leaving the class before the students while they continued to fill out the questionnaire I had prepared. I also mentioned that Christine had invited me back for their little end of class social on Friday in the forenoon. I would come and I would bring ice cream and my own homemade choke cherry sauce.

Then we moved on to hear some more of the poems that they had been working on last day. We had heard some already last time, so now we were open to hearing some more. This time we asked for the students to come to the front and read their productions. A few students obliged us. A few chose to stand and read from their desks; a few read from sitting down. And a few declined to read at all, saying they would hand in their materials for me to read. So we accepted that. I should add that each student's reading was listened to attentively and received a hearty round of applause. There were some interesting pieces, some of which I plan to reproduce in my final report.

I now collected the students' journals saying I would return them to the school when I was through with them. The journals would come back here for them to pick up.

The next item on the agenda was a little final summing up by myself with an emphasis on peace education. I said that I hoped this study had been useful to their learning of more English -- that it had been an occasion for them to learn new vocabulary and new concepts. I hoped that their awareness and appreciation of peace education had been increased. I spoke briefly about the multicultural concepts that we are trying to promote in Canada, saying that Canada was a very fortunate land in that we had people coming here from all over the world and adding to the richness of the Canadian culture. And it was important that we learn to live together peacefully with respect for all the various people that make up our country.

We were not always completely successful, but in large measure we were doing that. I observed that this class was living proof that people of different cultural backgrounds could live and work together happily. It was up to us to relate this peaceful attitude to the larger Canadian scene and beyond that to the world. At this point I asked the students to turn once again to Daud Haidar's poem *Not War, We Want Peace* (p. 298 of the poetry collection). We reread the poem and noted again the universal theme of the human desire for peace which we all have to try to promote.

Then I turned to the questionnaire, telling the students that now they could have the last say on the matters I had been discussing. I went over the questionnaire with them stressing the importance of their not putting their name on the form. I said I would leave as soon as as I had handed it out and then they could begin. There was sufficient time left for them to fill it out and then they could hand it in to their teacher who would pass it on to me on Friday.

So I bundled up my materials, including those I had collected from the students, waved goodbye to the class and left. As I walked down the corridor and out of the building I had a sense of satisfaction in having worked with such a fine group of people -- the students and their teacher. Christine has developed a strong sense of rapport in this class which made for an enjoyable teaching situation.

Fri. April 24, 1998 -- A culminating class social

There was no formal teaching in the class today. The students were enjoying some music, some coffee, soft drinks, some pastries, and the ice cream with choke cherry sauce that I had brought. I had a pleasant visit with several of the students. Several students ask me about the expression *choke cherry*. I explained to them how that when these wild cherries were eaten raw they left a dry choking feeling in your mouth and throat. But cooked they were delicious. The students agreed.

Meanwhile Christine finished going over report cards with the students. Then she passed out certificates and before the students left she thanked them for being good students. She also gave them some final instructions for where and how to go about taking their next courses.

After the students left I chatted briefly with Christine about the teaching project I had conducted with her students. Had it been a worthwhile project for the students and for her as a teacher? She said it had and she would give me further comment in written form. I thanked her again for letting me have the opportunity of coming into her class. And I added if in the future she could use any of the materials or ideas I had presented she should feel free to do so, to adapt and modify them as she thought fit. Christine gave me the student questionnaires before I left.

Thur. June 18, 1998 -- Discussion

I had arranged to see Christine again this afternoon, after her classes. I wanted to discuss with her the class profile that I had prepared. So I drove over to her school at 2:00 P. M. Christine and I had a useful discussion of the profile. She gave me some valuable feedback, suggesting a few modifications to better reflect the class with which I had worked. I thanked Christine for her help. Back home I got on the computer and modified the profile. This profile will be included in my final report.

Slogans or Mottos: Conclusion of Journal

Before closing the reflective journal I want to present another aspect of the work we did in class. As we discussed and worked on the poems to abstract themes we also made frequent attempts to crystalize these themes into shorter more concise statements, or slogans as we initially called them. However, some students, and one in particular, objected to the term *slogan*, maintaining that it had an undesirable political tone to it. So the class suggested that the term *motto* would be more suitable. Everyone agreed. As we developed these mottos, I would reproduce them on my printer in the largest, bold type that I had, such that only three or four would fit on a standard page. These we then posted about the room for consideration and reflection. I will reproduce most of them here, but in smaller form for convenience. These mottos also constitute valuable planks for our bridge construction.

MOTTOS

POETRY

COORDINATES

**HEART
&
HEAD**

WORDS: TOOLS FOR THINKING

E S L FOR PEACE

POETRY FOR PEACE

POETRY: A PEACE BRIDGE

MAKE POETRY, NOT WAR

ALL FLOWERS ARE BEAUTIFUL

NATURE MAKES US HUMBLE

“WORMS LIKE IT IN THE DARK.”
PREJUDICE LACKS LIGHT
BURNS SEES A WORLD FAMILY
KING LETS FREEDOM RING!
JUDGE CHARACTER NOT COLOR
“AND WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?”
THOSE IN NEED
“THE KING IS BUT A MAN, AS I”
“NO MAN IS AN ISLAND”
HUMANS SEEK ADVENTURE
WE THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE
WE EMBODY OUR EXPERIENCE
KINDRED IN MORTALITY
DEATH: THE GREAT LEVELLER
PEOPLE ARE INTERCONNECTED
FREE CHILDREN FROM LABOR
LET US BUILD JERUSALEM
NO GLORY IN WAR
WAR DESTROYS OUR YOUTH
WAR IS IRRATIONAL
WAR CREATES ENEMIES
LET US REMEMBER
“HOOKED FISHES OF THE
FACTORY WORLD”
POVERTY BREEDS DESPAIR
RACISM BURNS CITIES
SOLUTION: NONVIOLENT PROTEST

(End of Journal).

Poems from the Students

My original intention was to devote a large portion of this dissertation to students' journals. However, I had limited success in this area and that surprised me. In the following paragraphs I reflect briefly upon why this might be so.

During the data gathering portion of this study while I worked with the students, I urged them to individually keep a reflective journal in which to record their thoughts on the progress of the study and to record poems of their own composition. I provided them with large notebooks in which they could do their writing. But this area of the study did not achieve what I had expected. My students were very busy people. Not only were they going to school, but most of them had family responsibilities, many had after school jobs, and some in fact had two jobs. In class they were attentive and productive. But once out of class it seems that the demands of their very full lives left little or no time to keep a journal. The students knew that I was keeping a progress journal. Apparently they thought that was sufficient for this study.

Consequently, the data generated from student journals is meager. All aspects of the students' involvement in this work was purely voluntary. They individually decided their degree of involvement. At all times they were free to opt out of all or part of the activities as they themselves chose. It seems that, for the most part, the pressure on their time was such that they chose to opt out of journal writing.

Only fourteen of the nineteen students involved with the study turned in journals. As I glanced through them I found that their journal note books were largely empty. For the most part the students took down only some notes that we as a class had compiled in common upon the board as the lessons were developed. Included were definitions and notes on the themes that emerged from the poems.

Another possible reason that the students' journals were rather disappointing may have to do with some of my own directions to them. It is my habit (a good one, I think) to mark up my own books with questions and comments as I dialogue with the author. I had

provided each of the students with a copy, for their keeping, of the collection of poems used in this study. The bound booklets had pages printed only on one side with the page opposite blank. I encouraged my students to use this blank space and the blank space along the margins of the poems for writing notes about the poetry; notes which otherwise might have been written in their journals. In my zeal to have them dialogue with the authors of the poems I may have subverted my aspirations for more documentation in their journals. When I thought of this it was already too late to take in their poetry booklets for inspection. The class had terminated and the students were dispersed. I mention this now so that some other researcher who might undertake a similar study could profit from my experience.

However, although the journals were generally disappointing, some contained some interesting poetry, some of which I shall reproduce in this section of Chapter IV, namely, *Poems from the students*. This section includes some of the poems I found in the students' journals, but also some that we undertook to write in class, and some that the students undertook to write on their own initiative outside of class. I lead off with some of the acrostic poetry, with which we began so as to generate interest in poetry writing. The development of this writing project has been described previously. Following these acrostic poems I have entered, in no particular order, some of the poems found in the journals, and some of the poems the students submitted otherwise of their own volition.

Initially, I have entered the poems without comment, but I shall make some comment on them in the next section, *Recurring Themes*. Understandably, since they are still learning English, some of the wording of the students' poetry is a bit awkward, nevertheless, it often speaks with strength and conviction, revealing depth of feeling and thought. I did some minor editing on these poems, but for the most part they stand as the students submitted them. For the sake of anonymity, no student's names are given.

Acrostic Poems

Topic: **POEM**

Paradise
Opens
Every
Minute; don't miss it.

Poets
Ought to
Embrace
More hope, love and care.

Prepare
Our
Everyday
Minds.

People
On
Earth
Move to reach the sky.

Put
On your page
Extra
Meaning and feeling.

Proceed into
Our
Endless thoughts and
Missions.

Plead
On for
Even
More dialogue

Persist, don't be
Overwhelmed by your
Enemy's
Massive influence.

Public
Opinion produces
Effects on people's lives and
Minds.

Put
On the paper
Everything you
Mean.

Plan
On how to
Excel in peace
Making.

People
Of
Earth, oh that you
May love each other.

Topic: **POETRY**

Please take care
Or your
Environment
That
Relies on
You.

People
Of
Each
Town should
Remember the deaths of their
Youths.

Powerful
Of the
Earth
Try to
Remember that
Your neighbors need you.

People
Of the
Earth
Talk about peace,
Ring your bells so
You and I can sit together.

Phenomena
On
Earth
To
Remind
You of who you are.

People should
Offer their love,
Enjoy
Their life and
Remember the happy
Years for ever.

Please keep peace on
Our
Earth for our children
To
Remember
You and me.

Peace includes
Our friends as it
Enters our mind as we
Think about fields of flowers and
Remember our
Youth.

Pick me up, put me
On your desk
Every day; look into me.
Try to remember me and dream on.
Really it will help you;
You will have a friend in words.

Poetry
Ought to be
Every day's deed
That ordinary people
Read in their spare time.
Yes, really that needs to be.

Pledge yourself to peace,
Offer your hand,
Enter into
That wonderland,
Remember to take with you
Your best friend.

Power -- it has to help
Or it can be a menace.
Employ it in good ways
To reach the mountain summit to
Refresh your thoughts and strengthen
Your voice so the whole world will echo it.

Topic: Love

Love of land is
Our
Vital
Environmental tradition.

Leave space for
Others and do not live in
Vain with
Envy.

Leave your tunnel,
Open your eyes,
Vanquish dull thoughts,
Enter the bright side.

Look around you,
Overcome desolation, there is
Very much that you can give and
Ever your heart will be full.

Lovely, lovely life,
Offer me something slightly different,
Very lucky I should be,
Even if it is not much.

Let us live in peace
On earth without
Violence and put an
End to war.

Let us
Observe and respect the
Value of the
Environment and nature.

Light
Of
Visions of peace for
Everybody.

Love
Of material things brings
Violence upon the
Earth.

Let all
Of us be
Very kind to
Each other.

Topic: Peace

Painful memories are
Expressed in
Adulthood from
Childhood's hard
Experiences.

Please
Enjoy life
And
Care for
Everyone.

Put your
Envy
Aside and
Care for
Each other.

Parks look peaceful
Everywhere
Around the
City of
Edmonton.

Peace on
Earth makes
All
Childhood
Easier.

Partners in
Education to
Achieve hope and
Create a better life for
Everyone.

Power drives people
Ever and again to do
Awful things.
Clever we need to be to
End all that.

Put to work
Even our
Appreciation of nature to
Conserve
Everybody.

Additional Poems

ALONE

I'm alone with myself.
 Have you already had this feeling?
 You feel like without energy
 Darkness surrounds like a second skin.

What you have done is without vigor.
 You think that you are separated,
 Your family is so far,
 Your friends are dumb.

Your old companions
 are now strangers
 and your future is without shine.
 Why this blackness?

Maybe I am the only one to see the somber.
 Someone, somewhere has needs.
 I must find my place
 and enjoy life.
 Life is too short
 to suffer on.

People

build

their

own

life

and

what will be

their product

other lives will replace them

and will go on in their own way

Experiment

Oh, fourteen year old girl come and sit beside me.
 My body torn, please sew it with your needle.
 I wish my grave beside your grave.
 I want to break the wall that is between us.

Jerusalem

Searching

For

Justice

And

Dignity

To make

A better society.

Calling me

Their sounds calling me,
 Their hearts waiting to see me.
 But my heart crying, smiling,
 Oh my heart, Oh my heart.
 You are crying on leaving,
 You are smiling on meeting.
 Why this distance, why?
 It tears my heart apart.
 Oh my heart, oh my heart,
 You cry, you smile.

Children

Children, our sunrise
Our spring and flowers.

In spite of our hard reality
They make us smile.

They are our breath for our vitality,
The spring of love and innocence,
The miracle and sign of Truth.

The Unseen Journey

The time is ready,
Not knowing which means
of transportation to take.
Ready or not the journey
is on.

Family and friends
Crying. Some thinking of
good and some thinking
of bad deeds of mine. But,
no time to come back.
I'm gone.

There lays my envelope
but myself nowhere to be
seen. Regret not, let
me go, because it is the
Will of the Unseen One.

Where am I going?
Some may guess but the
answer still is not definite.

Piled books in my room

Born innocent
but confused by desires,
learning so many things,
trying to practice them.

Some easy to get
along with, but some
become burdens to myself.

What can I do? The
answer is mine.
Do not forget friends,
It is the world.

The beauty of a flower

In the field so many flowers.
Many people were there, but only a few
picked some up.

In the morning, it gives signs
of birth.

At noon, everyone can admire
its beauty.

In the evening, it lays and
becomes useless to the other's look.
None to look upon it again.
Even the grains of its own
belly are busy -- busy with
their own business.

There some say, "Let's forget
about it." And here some say,
"What can we do? It is tired,
It is tired." Forgetting the
good time and energies used
To make their beauties.

The beauty of a flower
remains in the one who picked
it up and took care of it.
He is the one who can
remember it as far as
the world takes him.

A Broken Road

You brought me forth,
giving me daily bread.
When I was mature
enough, you gave me
freedom. Freedom of
choice. Mom did not
make any comment
because both were
one. Then I made
a choice. The choice I
made was blind, taken
away by my own feelings.

Today, you are no
longer there. To whom
can I complain? Yes Dad
and Mom, your bread was a
very precious one.

Now my back is paining,
paining of troubles I have
brought to myself.

There is still time, time
for me to look back in the
mirror, and see you once again
talking to me. I am going.
I'm going to do what my
parents taught me. I
can't wait till time is gone.
Here I stand with you
standing by my side,
like a blowing wind
in the desert without
one to feel it.

Strengthen me God
for my hope is in thee.

A Dog

Do you know how it is to be a dog
who has to sleep alone?
Do you know how he has to wag his tail
while his master comes along?
Do you know how short his leash is
even when he wants to be free?
Do you know how he has to bark
if you want to come into his yard?
Do you know what his dream is?
He wants to be free.

The Saskatchewan River

The Saskatchewan River tries to sleep
in the free country of the maple leaf.
It flows through a field,
and it doesn't have a chance to sleep.
It speaks with the Alberta rose
since it has this choice.
Somebody softly sings a love song,
A beaver makes a loud splash
Fort Edmonton enjoys hearing the sound
from the river flowing below.
If you want to find peace,
you will come here and enjoy this.

Fog

I was walking down a street,
trying to look and understand.
But a fog rolled down the street,
so thick I couldn't see.

I heard loud noises all around,
but I didn't know what they meant.

Blood, ruins and tears around me
I sensed, although I could not see.
But I knew that in some country far,
you could see the sun and the star.

Some Recurring Themes

One of the most gratifying trends which I was able to observe in my students was their ever-greater facility at abstracting themes of a global (peace) nature from the poems we studied. At first they were hesitant but, as they gained experience, their confidence grew and they became more adept at articulating the themes of poetry. These students were intelligent and well-educated in their first language. As they drew from the rich poetic traditions of their own cultures, they revealed a ready understanding and appreciation of poetry and its symbolism. But they had not experienced poetry as a peace promoting activity in the *formal sense* (as through instruction in the classroom). This was new to them. However, discussions revealed that their cultures made extensive use of proverbs, riddles, sayings and poems to teach human relations, or peace, in an *informal sense* (as through day to day interaction within a cultural community). But they rose to the new challenge. They readily delved into the poetry and related to the concepts the poets were conveying. There was much interaction and discussion, both in the class as a group of the whole and in small groups. Working together we were able to formulate and record the numerous themes generated by the writers of the poems we studied in class.

In some places I had to help them with English vocabulary, thus enhancing their command of English. Through our cooperative efforts we were not only able to verbalize themes but we were also able to crystalize the even more concentrated mottos that ensued from the poems. These themes and mottos, I believe, have been well laid out previously, and so I will not reiterate all of them here.

However, in this section I again recall briefly *some* of these previous themes and organize them under seven broad categories. Then I look at the themes that emerged from the students' poems and see if they bear any relation to the themes of the thirty-five poems that we studied in detail in class. Examining the students' poems I find that although the sample is rather small, they did generate strong themes of universal significance. In other words, they too can map out rivers on the Continent of Peace Education. The woods

adjacent to these navigable rivers yield valuable timbers or planks for the construction of *peace bridges*. I will proceed along some of these rivers (poems) presently. But before doing so, I shall for convenience revisit the original problem and subproblems selected for this study and try to show how the poems address the issues.

This research proposed to study the following question: *How can poetry be used in ESL classes as a means of building peace bridges, or connections, between cultures?* This main problem was divided into three interrelated subproblems:

The first subproblem. *How can poetry be used to help ESL students to connect with Canadian culture?*

The second subproblem. *How can poetry be used to help ESL students of various cultural backgrounds to connect with each other?*

The third subproblem. *How can poetry be used to help ESL students towards personal peace, interpersonal and cross-cultural peace?*

1. Our Commonality (Our Interconnectedness)

As frequently noted in this study, poets often stress our interconnectedness. The theme of our interconnectedness might be an overall theme for all poetry. I now recall and review a few specific examples. In our study of poetry my students noted Donne's statement, "No man is an island" (p. 273), as an assertion of our interconnectedness. When the bell tolls for one of us, it is tolling for all of us. My class also indicated that Shakespeare likewise reminds us in Henry V that whether king or commoner people are much the same. "The violet smells to him as it doth to me" (p. 272). Taking a modern poet we see Margaret Atwood in her poem "All Bread" concluding, "All bread must be broken / so it can be shared. Together / we eat this earth" (p. 288). From this my students projected the theme statements, *Breaking bread symbolizes sharing and peace*, and, *In order to share, we must have love*.

These ideas were variously expressed in some of the students' own poetry. One writer noted, "People / Of / Earth, oh that you / May love each other" (p. 190). Another exhorted, "People / Of the / Earth / Talk about peace / Ring your bells so / You and I can sit together" (p. 191). Noting the enlightening power of love another student writes, "Leave your tunnel, / Open your eyes, / Vanquish dull thoughts, / Enter the bright side" (p. 192).

My students represented a wide spectrum of cultures. The themes that they discerned in the poems we studied, and the themes which they expressed in their own poetry, give some significant answer to the overall question of this study: *How can poetry be used in ESL classes as a means of building peace bridges, or connections, between cultures?*

2. Our Mortality (Death the Great Leveller)

Very closely related to the theme of our interconnectedness is the theme of our mortality. In our North American culture, with its obsession with youth, we tend not to want to talk about death. I am not suggesting that my students relished the topic either. But many, having come from war torn countries, had witnessed death close at hand. This gave the topic a greater immediacy for them and lent a candidness to their discussions and writing.

My students were quite adept at discerning the intimations of mortality in the symbolism of Oriental poetry, some of which I will again turn to now. Ma Chih-yuan, the ancient Chinese poet in his "Autumn Thoughts" (p. 291) uses the images of the autumn season to symbolize the approaching end of life: "Withered vines, old trees....little bridgegaunt horsesun descending....the edge of sky" ["edge"-- where something ends]. These are a few of the many images that the writer uses. The students used them to construct the theme plank, *We all journey through the seasons of life*. And of course all journeys must come to an end, to an "edge."

Teika, the thirteenth century Japanese poet, in his “A Travel Poem” (p. 294) uses similar images and projects a similar theme. In only five lines he has a traveler experience the coldness and desolation of “autumn wind....evening sun....lonely light....bridge suspended between the cliffs.” In these two poems the students noted two different cultures expressing similar themes, similar concerns about life’s lived experiences. From Teika’s poem they milled the themes: *We are all travelers along the road of life. We pass from one cliff edge (life) to another cliff edge(death). Our journey is short (like the poem). The sun sets for all of us.*

This is where we all meet; we all have this common terminus. As the students reflected upon this they were in effect giving answer to my second subproblem: *How can poetry be used to help ESL students of various cultural backgrounds to connect with each other.* Poets see us as being bound together by common concerns. When we respect this wisdom we take a great step forward in connecting with each other and with other cultures.

A few examples from the students’ poetry gives further indication of their awareness of our “common terminus.” One writer intones that all should, “Remember the deaths of their / Youths” (p. 191). Another sees death as a “wall that is between us” (p. 195). [e. g. a separating “edge” at which we meet]. Still another in “The Unseen Journey” (p. 196) sees death poignantly as a deep, obscure mystery: “Where am I going? / Some may guess but the / answer still is not definite.”

The poets remind us that we are all creatures of mortality. Our sojourn here is brief. This admonishing function of poetry is well put by my student who describes poetry as a “Phenomena / On / Earth / To / Remind / You of who you are” (p. 191). Accepting our mortality is an essential for personal peace, which in turn is a prerequisite to peace with others. Poetry can help to facilitate this process and in doing so addresses my third subproblem: *How can poetry be used to help ESL students towards personal peace, interpersonal and cross-cultural peace?*

3. Peace and War

Peace and war are two diametrically opposed principles that we seem unable to separate. Any discussion of one invariably involves the discussion of the other. As educators we should do all that we can to promote the former and oppose the latter. I believe, as I have indicated frequently throughout this study, that we can enlist the use of poetry for this noble enterprise. Peace and war are highly emotionally charged issues. Poetry, the language of feeling, is a very appropriate medium for addressing these matters.

Real peace is much more than just the absence of war. But the elimination of war, would be a huge step in the right direction. This is not a mere idealistic, naive, impossible notion. We all realize there are no quick, simple solutions. The challenge may often seem impossible. But we must not give up dreaming the impossible, for how else can we make progress? We cannot throw up our hands in hopeless despair. A century ago, going to the moon was a mere fantasy. But it has been accomplished. Similarly a century hence, peace, and the elimination of war, may be achievable. We are in fact seeing noteworthy progress as I have shown in my references to Ong (1967) at the conclusion to Chapter II. Peace must be our long term objective. How can poetry help?

One practical step, as I have indicated in the description of the unit study of poetry in which I engaged my students, is that we should strip war of its artificially created glory and glamor. This is no small task in the face of the greedy, unscrupulous Hollywood merchants of death and destruction with all their glorified GI Joes, Green Berets, SWAT teams and trigger-happy cops and crooks. Of course I use the term *Hollywood* generically for all media, including Canadian, that promote an atmosphere of violence. They are formidable opponents, as peace educators try to influence minds, particularly young minds.

In contrast to the sinister darkness, the language of poetry can bring the light of love as one of my students put it, "Light / Of / Visions of peace for / Everybody" (p. 192). At the same time poetry can rebuke war and divest it of its glory. We have seen this stated earlier in Jarrell's short, dramatic poem "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner" (p. 277).

My students clearly perceived that there was no glory in war when they witnessed the horror of a ground crew flushing the remains of the dead man “out of the turret with a hose” (p. 277). Their theme plank, *The ugliness and brutality of war*, reflected this understanding. This is a powerful antidote to the glamorization of war.

In like manner Owen’s poem, “Dulce et Decorum Est,” (p.276) protests war. Owen shows its grotesqueness -- no gallant knight in shining armor riding forth upon a prancing steed. Rather we see bedraggled foot sloggers “Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, [trudging] through sludge.” Suddenly -- the excruciating spectacle of one of their comrades succumbing to poison gas, and they are unable to help him. They watch him die a slow, agonizing death “the blood / Come gargling from froth-corrupted lungs.” My students readily discerned in their theme statement that : *There is no glory in war*.

Again turning to the students’ poetry we see similar thoughts. The seeds have been planted and are taking root. One student sees poetry as an avenue for dialogue: “Plead / On for/ Even / More dialogue” (p. 190). Another expresses a vision of love and peace, “Let us live in peace / On earth without / Violence and put an / End to war” (p. 192). And we have to have understanding and wisdom (be “clever”) to achieve peace: “Power drives people / Ever and again to do / Awful things./ Clever we need to be to / End all that” (p. 193). In the poem “Fog” (p. 200) a student gives us the frightening, surrealistic effect of a nightmare as he grimly reflects on war. I quote in part: “fog rolled down the street, / so thick I couldn’t see./ I heard loud noises all around, / but I didn’t know what they meant. / Blood, ruins and tears around me / I sensed, although I could not see.”

Many of my students had experienced first hand the dislocation and trauma of war with its gruesome “ethnic cleansing.” In spite of the difficulty of coming to a new country, they were glad to be in Canada, a country they had viewed from afar as a beacon of hope. “But I knew that in some country far, / you could see the sun and the star” (from “Fog”). Let us hope that this land will not disappoint them, or others who will follow after. Let us hope that they will find the peace and opportunities that they envisioned. This land has

much to offer them, and they have much to offer in return, including in many cases a strong poetic tradition. This tradition should be encouraged in our educational programs for them. During this study, which occupied only twelve hours of their class time, I have seen how in their response to poetry, in their reading, studying, discussing poetry, and in their writing which we have been discussing, that they have been positively informative with respect to my first subproblem: *How can poetry be used to help ESL students to connect with Canadian culture?* We shall look again into this subproblem, as well as the others, as we progress. My students were simultaneously learning about peace and about language. We should keep in mind Steiner's observation about language, "Above all language is the generator and messenger of and out of tomorrow. In root distinction from the leaf, from the animal, man alone can construct and parse the grammar of hope" (p.56).

4. Prejudice and Racism

As we survey history we see that war is often instigated by prejudice and racism. Therefore, reducing prejudice and racism would be of great benefit in the struggle to eliminate war and promote peace. I say *reducing* because, as desirable as it might be, it is not likely that we can ever totally eliminate these two closely knit human vices. Sadu and Brown (1996) quoted earlier observe, "No one is totally free from prejudice, although it can be reduced, it cannot be eradicated" (p. 203). Poetry can help in effecting this reduction by exposing these vices as the running, festering sores that they are upon human character. By exposing it, poetry lances the wounds and aids in the healing process.

My students observed this profound healing process in King's "I Have a Dream" (p. 266) where he eloquently depicts a vision where all people "will be able to join hands... and walk together as sisters and brothers." Among the sound planks milled here by the students were: *Our hope is in human sisterhood and brotherhood*, and, *King lets freedom ring*. The students also saw how Sandberg associated prejudice and racism with the unenlightened groping of worms creeping underground: "Worms like it in the dark /

Worms underground never hear the wind overground and / sometimes they ask, / ‘what is this wind we hear of?’” Locked away from the uplifting winds of change and the light of day *worms* prefer to grovel underground. Rejecting the unenlightened behavior of the worms the students offered several thematic planks including: *Prejudice keeps us in the dark; “Worms like it in the dark;” Prejudice or racism is a failure of the human spirit.*

We can see similar ideas in the students’ own writing as they urge us to the light and to build a new Jerusalem. I maintain that poetry should be read many times. Accordingly, I will take the liberty to quote again a student’s poem that I quoted before. It fits so well in this context too. The student succinctly offers LOVE as an antidote for darkness: “Leave your tunnel / Open your eyes / Vanquish dull thoughts, / Enter the bright side” (p. 192). Another writer leads us in the light to “Jerusalem: Searching / For / Justice / And / Dignity / To make / A better society” (p. 195).

In order to reach out to other cultures and “To make / A better society” we must subdue our prejudices. Poetry can inspire us in this cause. It addresses the overall problem of this study: *How can poetry be used in ESL classes as a means of building peace bridges, or connections, between cultures?* Poetry not only provides the material, the planks, for building the connecting bridges but it can also give us the inspiration and motivation to use them. MacLean (1990) quoted (p. 51) in this document says poetry can help “rid us of our narrow prejudices and enrich us as human beings in an increasingly multicultural society.” Let us make this work in Canada, “the free country of the maple leaf” (p. 180), as one of my poet students put it.

5. Poverty and the Desire for Freedom: Political and Economic

The desire for freedom has drawn many people to migrate to Canada. This involves not only a desire for political freedom but also a desire for economic freedom, freedom from poverty, that is. No doubt some do not achieve their expectations, but many do.

But one cannot really have political freedom without a certain measure of economic freedom. Too often, and this is also happening in our country, the poor are marginalized, become disenchanting *and* disenfranchised. Democratic institutions and principles hold little appeal to those who are hungry, or who lack adequate clothing and shelter. These less fortunate people, the poets remind us, we must not forget. We are in fact “our brother’s [sister’s] keeper.” The prophets and poets call upon us to love our neighbor -- all those who are in need. Recurring themes, promulgated by the poets we studied, support these ideas.

In this study the first poet my students encountered in this area was Burns and his “Is There For Honest Poverty” (p. 265). Burns stood in solidarity with the poor. From his poem the class abstracted these themes: *Poor people deserve dignity and respect; Burns sees a world family* -- “It’s comin yet for a’ that, / That man to man, the world o’er, / Shall brithers be for a’ that!” And as we have seen before, King takes the same stand. “stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will / be free one day.” *King lets freedom ring.*

Another graphic plea for freedom, because of its absence, was given by Blake in his “The Chimney Sweepers” (p. 274). These little boys, forced to crawl through and sweep the sooty chimneys, were in fact slaves. Blake dramatizes and accentuates their plight by use of contrast. He contrasts the cruelty of the boys’ actual condition with the glorious sense of freedom that little Tom had in his heavenly dream: “And by came an Angel who had a bright key, / And open’d the coffins & set them all free; / Then down a green plain leaping, laughing, they run, / And wash in a river, and shine in the Sun.” The students saw the main theme of this piece as: *Free children from labor.* My students saw that Blake continued to carry this fight forward in his poem “Jerusalem” (p. 274). “Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand / Till we have built Jerusalem / In England’s green and pleasant land.” From this piece the class garnered these two theme planks: *We should fight for a better society, and, We all need to build Jerusalem.*

I found considerable evidence of the recurrence of similar themes in the writings of my students. Often there was a refreshing universality and broad concern for others in their thoughts. Note: "Powerful / Of the / Earth / Try to / Remember that / Your neighbors need you" (p. 191). Again, "Power -- it has to help / Or it can be a menace. / Employ it in good ways / To reach the mountain summit to / Refresh your thoughts and strengthen / Your voice so the whole world will echo it" (p. 191).

Another student sees freedom in terms of the increasing independence of recalled adolescence: "You brought me forth, / giving me my daily bread. / When I was mature / enough, you gave me / freedom. Freedom of / choice" (p. 198). Interestingly enough, yet another student sees a desire for freedom through the eyes of a dog on a short leash. After a succinct look at the life of a dog he ends his poem with a question and an answer: "Do you know what his dream is? / He wants to be free" (p. 199).

This widespread yearning for freedom the students recognized in the poems they studied and which they voiced in the poems they wrote answers in considerable measure the second subproblem of this study: *How can poetry be used to help ESL students of various cultural backgrounds to connect with each other.* A bond is established when people realize they all have this common yearning, this mutual need for freedom. We cannot be truly free when our neighbor is oppressed. "Remember that / Your neighbors need you" (191).

6. Women's Issues

In the area of poverty we cannot ignore women's issues. Women are often the most marginalized, particularly single-parent women. Moore in her poem "Lenore" looks at one such woman who eked out a miserable existence as "she took in ironing 8 hours a day & fought / for the pay of that...This is Lenore with no money, the future eaten out of her / & the past aching" (p. 285). Her daughters are grown and have turned away from her. She suffers alone in "her washed-out loneliness....[as] she drinks her Scotch." My

students readily formulated themes for this poem: *We cannot ignore the poor*, and, *Solidarity with the poor*.

We found similar circumstances in Brewster's poem "New Year's Day, 1978" (p. 284). This single woman had had dreams of "Sons and daughters./ A big house with an orchard behind it." But she observes, "I have lived all my life in rented rooms." She sees in her life "depression....conflict....pain....solitude." The students summed up the theme in terms of: *Poverty often leads to hardship and loneliness*.

The theme of standing alone, with and without children, appears again in Robin Sarah's poem "Fugue" (p. 287). Here the poet throws out a challenge, particularly to men, not to just "watch / from high office windows / while the women go." But by implication the men are urged to join in the march "to the new country / where there will be room for everyone" Here the students formulated two themes: *Women will keep marching for their rights* and, *Men are challenged to support them*.

We spent a good portion of our class time reading and discussing poems about women's issues. To my surprise I cannot report that my students specifically addressed the matter in their writing of poetry. I am not sure why this is so. Maybe it has to do with the traditional ethno-cultural backgrounds represented by my students where women, unfortunately, are often still undervalued and discriminated against. This background may have muted their willingness to write about women's issues. Or on the other hand, maybe they saw women's issues as part of an overall larger picture of concern for all who are disadvantaged. In that context we can see a concern for women in the concern for the whole human family.

We see an encompassing outlook as some students write: "Poets / Ought to / Embrace / More hope, love and care" (p. 190). "Plan / On how to / Excel in peace / Making" (p. 190). "Pledge yourself to peace, / Offer your hand, / Enter into / That wonderland, / Remember to take with you / Your best friend" (p. 191). "Let all / Of us be / Very kind to / Each other" (p. 192). Again I feel the students are also addressing the larger

overall problem: *How can poetry be used in ESL classes as a means of building peace bridges, or connections, between cultures?* These connections cannot be made without the sense expressed by the students of “love and care” and the sense of being “Very kind to / Each other.” Poetry recognizes, expresses, and emphasizes these connections so vital to peace education.

7. Nature, the Environment and Relaxation

Also vital to peace education is a concern for nature and the environment to which poetry speaks. In this area poetry also addresses the ancillary theme of relaxation which is often associated with the former. Much of the nature poetry which my students and I examined addressed the first and the third of my subproblems, namely: *How can poetry be used to help ESL students to connect with Canadian culture?* and, *How can poetry be used to help ESL students towards personal peace, interpersonal peace, and cross-cultural peace?*

As we looked at various nature poems the class came to see and appreciate that all cultures have an affinity to nature. Nature differs markedly from one part of the world to another. But everywhere, it seems, people draw inspiration and comfort from nature. We have this appreciation in common and it can form a bonding link between all people who come to live in Canada.

Nature is a vast storehouse for poetic inspiration. Poetry reveals how this inspiration is also at work in other cultures. In “Fisherman’s Lyric” (p. 290) by the thirteenth century Chinese poet, Chao Meng-fu, the fisherman finds relaxation as he goes out to be “Friends with gulls and egrets” and he observes that he has “no cares if all the fish below / never bite my hook.” The important thing is being in the solitude and solace of nature. My students generated two strong thematic planks from this short poem: *Nature can bring us peace and contentment* and, *We can enjoy nature together.*

Chang Yu the fourteenth century Chinese poet strikes a resonating note in many hearts with his short poem "The Retreat of Sun Ching-hsiang" (p. 292). Here the speaker of the poem who is still "caught up in official duties" in the city admires and, in a friendly way, envies his friend who has retired to a "quiet river village. / To breed fish [in] a broad pond." The students recognized this universal need and desire for peace in the themes they generated for the poem: *The human heart seeks quietness and peace* and, *We all dream of our own Jerusalem, our own quiet retreat.*

The Korean poet, Yi Jung, is of about the same era as the former Chinese writers. His poem "The River" (p. 295) also deals with fishing and the joy of nature. His fisherman likewise finds that "the sleepy fish won't bite." But this does not detract from the experience for he says with obvious satisfaction that "The empty boat and I return / Filled with our catch of moonlight." The whole scene is quiet and peaceful, suggesting the restorative relaxation found in nature. Here my students generated two related thematic planks: *People seek quiet and relaxation* and, *A quiet, moonlit night speaks peace and contentment.*"

As evidenced by my students' responses, they not only saw and appreciated the beauty of nature in the poems they read but they also expressed similar ideas in some of their own poems, and additionally, they expressed a concern for the welfare of the environment, an issue closely related to the appreciation of nature. In so doing they were expressing a strong link to the Canadian culture (the first subproblem). One student states, "Please take care / Of your / Environment / That / Relies on / You" (p. 191). Another writes, "Love of land is / Our / Vital / Environmental tradition" (p. 192). Appreciating the peacefulness of our local scenery a student observes, "Parks look peaceful / Everywhere / Around the / City of / Edmonton" (p. 193). We are enjoined, "Let us / Observe and respect the / Value of the / Environment and nature" (p. 192). "The Saskatchewan River" (p. 199) gives a description of the sights and sounds along the river. "It speaks with the Alberta rose....A beaver makes a loud splash / Fort Edmonton enjoys hearing the sound" Then the

writer urges, "If you want to find peace / you will come here and enjoy this." I think that this student, and the others too, demonstrate ably *How poetry can be used to help ESL students connect with Canadian culture*. And at the same time they also become cartographers mapping out rivers on the continent of Peace Education, from along which rivers they find and mill sound planks for the construction of *intercultural peace bridges*. With their diverse backgrounds ESL students are well positioned to appreciate and apply concepts and themes of peace education.

Under the seven previous larger headings I have outlined twelve interrelated recurring themes found in the poems that we as a class studied and in the poems the students wrote. For review I have listed these twelve recurring themes in the order in which they appear. They are: 1. Our commonality, 2. Our mortality, 3. Peace, 4. War, 5. Prejudice, 6. Racism, 7. Poverty, 8. Freedom, 9. Women's Issues, 10. Nature, 11. The environment, 12. Relaxation. One could go on forever discussing themes in poetry, but I think we have progressed enough to show how poetry can be used to address the problem and subproblems selected for this study. And of course, I include also the poetry written by my students. I am confident that had the students had more time, more than the allotted twelve hours, they could have generated many more themes.

The Student Questionnaire

On the last day of my data gathering activities with the class of ESL students with whom I worked I had them fill out a questionnaire (a complete copy is found in the appendices to this study). In accordance with established procedures I gave each student present a copy of the questionnaire and briefly discussed and explained its contents. I answered any questions the students had and emphasized that they not place their name upon the form, and they were not to begin until I had left the room. I also emphasized that if they wanted to respond more fully, at greater length to any question than what the space on the questionnaire might allow, they were to turn their papers over and write on the back.

After completion they were asked to give the form to their regular teacher who would pass it on to me. A few days later, when I had received the completed questionnaires, I found that sixteen of the nineteen participating students had completed and returned the form. Three students, as was their right, opted not to complete the questionnaire. I now look at the responses to the questionnaire and examine them for significance. As an organizational scheme I have followed its seven point sequence:

1. Has the participation in this study been worthwhile to you, yes or no?

All sixteen respondents answered in the affirmative.

2. Do you think that this study has helped your English, for example, helped you learn new vocabulary and new concepts, yes or no?

Again all the responses were positive.

3. Can a study of poetry, such as we have done, help to increase our awareness of and appreciation for questions of peace and concern for all people, yes or no?

To the third question one student responded "no," the rest responded "yes." I trust that the one dissenting voice gave an honest answer to the question. But why he or she dissented, I am at a loss to know. Provision was made for dissent in the questionnaire (see questions six and seven below) but this student failed to elaborate. Nevertheless, it is refreshing to hear a dissenter, one who will differ from the group. I respect his or her position. Throughout this study I encouraged students to disagree with me, and with each other, if they felt thus inclined. Close reading will have already revealed that I have recorded several instances of such healthy disagreement.

The students' overwhelmingly positive responses to the first three questions indicate that they found their participation in the study was a worthwhile learning experience for improving their English proficiency. This should reassure some ESL

teachers, who might otherwise be hesitant, that poetry is a useful genre to be employed in the learning of English. The universality of poetry gives it a broad appeal. If taught with enthusiasm, the students will enjoy it and at the same time use it to augment their language skills. Concomitantly it can raise their consciousness about peace, about global education, about their interconnectedness in a world community.

4. What, if anything, worthwhile have you learned from this study about yourself and about other people?

The sixteen questionnaires returned contained a variety of responses to the fourth question. I have quoted a few of these responses before making commentary:

I have seen that many people are concerned about peace.

to express ourselves, and at the same time you feel closer to others because you know their feelings and opinions.

that we are human after all....I'm so glad that I met new people that I didn't know before.

I have learned that people from every country we have in the class understand poetry [and] what is good.

that people can live in peace with each other and love each other

people can live in peace and treat each other the way they like to be treated.

I know somehow we are all looking, searching for peace.

I have learned that I can give much more help, love and peace.

It is evident that a recurring theme emerges from the students' comments. This theme is summed up well in the first and last comments -- "people are concerned about peace." "I can give much more help, love and peace." If we can recognize our humanity in ourselves and in others we can "feel closer to others because we know their feelings and opinions." Poetry being "the language of feeling" provides a navigable river into the continent of Peace Education. I think my students have had a consciousness raising experience as they studied poetry. They have demonstrated that they are both willing and

able to paddle up these rivers. They demonstrate a mind set to seek the valuable timbers with which to build the *intercultural peace bridges* we urgently need. I hope our society will make provisions and encourage them to do so. I have said more about these “provisions” in the final chapter of this study where I deal at some length with several recommendations.

5. What things worthwhile that you already knew have been reaffirmed for you in a positive way?

This question assumes that our students come to us with a large fund of knowledge derived from previous lived experience. This is particularly true when we are working with adult students. As teachers we do well to acknowledge and tap this valuable resource and help them reaffirm their knowledge through English. For example, in language learning situations using poetry and other forms of literature, the students often have had experiences and concepts in their own culture and literature which parallel the experiences and concepts explored in the English literature. Thus, in many cases the students will be on familiar experiential ground, but they may lack the English vocabulary to describe and discuss these experiences. It is incumbent upon the English teacher to help provide the vocabulary and sentence structures so the students can begin to “language” their experiences in the new language of their adoptive culture. I now return to question five.

Thirteen of the sixteen questionnaires returned to me included responses to the fifth question. Some of their responses of reaffirmation of established concepts were:

We should love each other and live in peace.

the value of reading, thinking about poems, and discussions in groups.

Many basic values are the same for each culture (love, peace, health, family, income).

to be more open and more understanding. There are lots of good people in this world.

We thought of the values of peace and love more when we were reading and writing poems.

Peace is very important and we have to build bridges between people all over the world.

that people can change to the better and help each other and that we can live together in peace.

The way I have to put my ideas on a piece of paper.

I think good people should reaffirm each other in their personhood and valued concepts. Poetry can help do this. I think this is evidenced in the foregoing comments of my students, engendered through the study of poetry. The recurring thematic ideas are love and peace. In spite of all the hardship and cruelty in the world, it is heartening to see these students accentuate the positive. "There are lots of good people in the world....we have to build bridges between people all over the world....people can change to the better....we can live together in peace....I have to put my ideas on a piece of paper."

This last comment reminds me so much of Lytton's (1839) famous line -- "The pen is mightier than the sword." As our students, and we as educators "...put [their/our] *ideas* on a piece of paper" *they* become more accessible not only for our own reflection but also for the reflection of others. My students have demonstrated that their poetic endeavors about peace are able to generate ideas which are worthy of our reflection. With the pen we can beat back the anarchy of war.

6. What suggestions would you make for improving this study?

I think it is important for educators to seek feedback from students suggesting ways in which the studies with which they are involved may be improved. Of the sixteen questionnaires returned to me, fifteen addressed question six. I will sample some of this feedback before making comment.

There should be more hours for ESL students to learn poems.

Give it more time and not rush it.

It should be longer hours for ESL students.

Read more poetry and practice writing more.

Spend more time on each poem.

We need more time and more of you here.

Longer hours for ESL students.

The common idea in the students' comments was that they felt more time should have been expended for the study of poetry -- "Give it more time and not rush it." I often felt the same. In my journal notes, recorded previously, I noted several times the pressures of time constraints. I wished for more than the twelve hours of class time available to me. However, one must do the best one can with the time at one's disposal. Time is a precious resource, and it is limited, particularly in a teaching situation. I count myself fortunate in having had this time with this fine group of people and their dedicated teacher.

7. Feel free to make any other comments that you may wish to make.

The last item on the questionnaire was open-ended allowing students full latitude in their comments. Only eleven students chose to exercise their option here. I have recorded some of their more pertinent comments.

I wish poetry to be understood all over the world.

I think poetry is a good way to study a second language.

I liked the lessons on poems. I would like to write if I had more time.

I enjoyed listening to the poems that you read. It was good and we enjoyed spending time with you. Good luck to you on your study. I hope it will be successful.

I would like to thank you very much and I wish you a successful life with peace. Keep it up; speak for peace.

I was happy and privileged to read all these poems.

Interesting points of view.

I learned a lot and I believe that I will continue to do so.

It was fun learning more language.

A very interesting class.

The students certainly present a positive collection of statements summing up their experiences with poetry during the course of their study unit. Studying poetry they found to be “a good way to study a second language....It was fun....very interesting”

Conclusion

Not only did my students seem to enjoy studying poetry, equally important, during my experience with them, I often heard them “speak for peace,” not only in their speech but also in their writings. As a group we went on a long, vigorous, but stimulating journey. We explored numerous rivers leading deep into the interior of the vast continent of *Peace Education*. And on this interesting journey the students demonstrated a willingness and facility to produce planks and fit them into place upon our connecting bridges between individuals and cultures.

Poetry was continually our concern not only for learning language but also as a means for learning peace. The students were moved by the great **power of poetry**. This was illustrated so well in two of the short poems written by the students. They have the last word in this chapter:

P O E T R Y

**Power -- it has to help
Or it can be a menace.
Employ it in good ways
To reach the mountain summit to
Refresh your thoughts and strengthen
Your voice so the whole world will echo it.**

P O E T R Y

**Pick me up, put me
On your desk
Every day; look into me.
Try to remember me and dream on.
Really it will help you;
You will have a friend in words.**

CHAPTER V: REVIEW, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Compared to some of the preceding chapters in this study, Chapter V will be relatively brief. I feel I have already laid out my ideas and positions in detail with many “thick descriptions.” Nevertheless, some summary and drawing of conclusions are in order. In Chapter V, I will also make some recommendations based upon my experiences in this study.

Review of the Study (by chapter)

I. The problem. I recap the problem here in only a general way but will look at it again in more detail a little later. This study examined the feasibility of using poetry in advanced ESL classes as a means of teaching English and for building bridges between cultures and between individuals to promote peace and understanding. It also proposed to *demonstrate* more specifically how *poetry* could be used to accomplish these objectives through systematic teaching in the classroom.

II. Consulting relevant literature. By examining many pieces of literature this chapter sought to construct a strong, firm, theoretical base from which to proceed into the study. This review was built around a minor and a major theme. The minor theme was concerned with the validity of using poetry for ESL teaching. The major theme explored the idea of using poetry as a bridging device between cultures and individuals in order to promote peace. I examined much literature pertaining to these two themes. However, the idea of using poetry *specifically in the ESL classroom* as a peace promoting device received scant attention in the literature. In fact literature covering this particular topic was virtually nonexistent. This study has sought to throw some light on this deficient area of our knowledge.

III. Design and procedure. This study was designed with a qualitative orientation. By using a descriptive, narrative approach it sought to throw light on the problem areas chosen for investigation. Using critical narration, the study explored themes arising from the students' interaction with poetry, with each other, and with the researcher. The researcher kept a journal detailing the progress of the study. These journal notes provided an important source of data. The procedure involved going into one advanced ESL classroom twice a week, one hour at a time, over a period of six weeks, and teaching poetry. Much discussion ensued, both in the whole class and in the small groups that were organized. The poetry was studied with the view to discovering themes (metaphorical planks) that could be used for building bridges between cultures and individuals, such that an increased awareness of peace principles could be engendered in participants. The poetry was selected with this in mind. The plan also called for the students to write poems of their own emphasizing peace principles.

IV. Data collection and analysis. This chapter concerned itself with the execution of the strategies outlined and called for in the previous chapter on design and procedure. In other words it described in great detail what actually transpired in the classroom during the poetry teaching sessions. The chapter began with a discussion of metaphorical thinking and proposed the idea of regarding poems as metaphorical rivers leading into the continent of Peace Education. The class and researcher would explore along these rivers searching out timbers from which to mill metaphorical planks (poetic themes) with which to build peace bridges between cultures and individuals. These planks constituted the primary data for this study. The students augmented our supply of planks by contributing poems of their own to the study. By examining the recurring themes that emerged, both in the poems the students studied and in the poems they wrote, I was able to relate these themes to the problem and subproblems of this study, thereby indicating how these problems were addressed by the poems considered.

Conclusions Regarding Peace Bridges

In the process of drawing conclusions for this study I will again focus more specifically on the problem and subproblems selected for investigation. I will restate them again and then review in a general way how they were addressed through the use of poetry. My references to specific poems will be minimal because these connections between poems and the problem areas have already been spelled out before in considerable detail. My approach will be summative.

The overall problem inquired: *How can poetry be used in ESL classes as a means of building peace bridges, or connections between cultures?* I shall review this problem by addressing briefly the three subproblems which relate back to the main problem.

The first subproblem. *How can poetry be used to help ESL students to connect with Canadian culture?* The main type of poetry we used to make this connection was poetry dealing with nature. (*Aurora Borealis; The Thunderstorm; The Fisherman's Lyric; The River*). Many different cultures were represented in the class that I taught. Each culture claimed an interest in and an affinity with nature. This was also well attested to by the poetry of the different cultures that we looked at. Although the natural surroundings differ markedly in different parts of the world, still the diversity of nature provides a common meeting place. Students coming into Canada can readily relate to the pervasive interest in the outdoors and to nature, which often forms the subject matter for our poetry, as it does in other cultures.

The second subproblem. *How can poetry be used to help ESL students of various cultural backgrounds connect with each other?* Near the outset of this study I stated that the main problem and subproblems were interconnected. Accordingly, we can see how the answer to the first subproblem has already in part answered the second subproblem. Nevertheless, to go further, the answer to subproblem two derived in large measure from poetry that projected the theme of our commonality, of our interconnectedness. Here we looked at poetry dealing with emotions, feelings and experiences that all people have in

common. We all desire freedom, both political and economic. (*I have a Dream; City Life; Lenore; Fugue*). We have a distaste for poverty and war. (*Is There For Honest Poverty; Dulce et Decorum Est; Not War, We Want Peace*). The abuse of children moves us. (*The Chimney Sweeper*). A reprieve from toil is dear to us. (*Fisherman's Lyric: The Retreat of Sun Ching-hsiang*). Finally, we all meet at the common terminus of death. (*Bouquet; Autumn Thoughts; A Winter Poem*).

The Third subproblem. *How can poetry be used to help ESL students towards personal peace, interpersonal peace and cross-cultural peace?* All three of these aspects of peace are closely related. One cannot really have personal peace without interpersonal peace and, ultimately, cross-cultural peace. Human beings are social creatures. We cannot have peace without having peace with those about us. We are all situated on an interconnecting web. "No man is an island." Poets have been stressing these ideas for centuries; they feel these ideas in their being, in their psyche. We are indeed "our brother's keeper." We have a moral obligation to the people about us. All good poetry directs us towards these Truths. Steiner sees in poetry a great motive force for change.

As the act of the poet is met...as it enters the precincts, spatial and temporal, mental and physical, of our being, it brings with it a radical calling towards change.... We cannot touch on the experience of art in our personal and communal lives without touching, simultaneously, on moral issues of the most compelling and perplexing order. (pp. 143-144)

People -- students and their teachers, including those in ESL classes -- become aware of these precepts when they are engaged in the serious study of poetry. They relate to these principles not only intellectually but also emotionally. And when they are moved as they look into poetry like King's *I Have a Dream*, or Lawrence's *City Life*, or Blake's *The Chimney Sweepers*, or Shakespeare's *Henry V*, they perceive and experience an emotional bond, a linkage, with other people. I have only mentioned a few poems here, but this could be said of all the poems that we studied and also of those poems which my students wrote for this study.

Such evidence is also found in the comments my students gave in response to the questionnaire which they completed. I have quoted these comments before but I shall mention a few of them again in this summative review. These comments indicate clearly that ESL students can, through their study and writing of poetry, come to not only appreciate but to articulate and give valuable voice to principles of peace education.

I was happy and privileged to read all these poems.

[One student notes the great] value of reading, thinking about poems, and discussions in groups.

[Another student suggests we should] be more open and more understanding. There are lots of good people in this world.

We should love each other and live in peace.

Many basic values are the same for each culture (love, peace, health, family, income).

We thought of the values of peace and love more when we were reading and writing poems.

Peace is very important and we have to build bridges between people all over the world.

people can change to the better and help each other and...we can live together in peace.

Yes, we should all, as the student urges, keep thinking about peace and love.

Poetry gives us the inspiration and wisdom to do so. As the study by Wham et al. (1996) cited on page thirty-three of this dissertation verifies, literature can be proactive in the cause of peace. They state, "Literature allows individuals to share in the lives of others; it can also provide an avenue for multicultural understanding. It allows individuals to experience other people's feelings, appreciate and understand those whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own" (p; 2). Wilkinson and Kido (1997) argue for "literature as that cultural bridge" (p. 225). Poetry can be enlisted to inculcate and disseminate peace concepts. To close this portion of the discussion I quote again my student who said, "If you want to find peace, / you will come here and enjoy this."

Conclusions Regarding Language Learning

The major concern in this study was the application of poetry to the promotion of peace. Concomitantly the study also explored the value of using poetry for second language learning. For this study I did not develop any objective measuring devices to prove that the study of poetry can enhance language facility. Such evidence I developed in a previous study for my MEd degree -- Hess (1993, U. of A), Multimedia Supported Study of Poetry for ESL Classes. In my current study, in addition to the ample evidence cited in the literature review, I offer only anecdotal evidence derived from my experience in the classroom as an ESL teacher.

Any experienced second language teacher knows that second language learning is facilitated by using the target language in as many ways as possible. My experience as a teacher and a researcher convinces me that studying poetry can indeed help ESL students learn English. Studying poetry provides a host of opportunities for students to engage in the basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The lessons which I detailed in Chapter IV support my assertion so I will not give details here. But I will cite further evidence from my students which indicates that they believed engaging in this poetry study was beneficial to their language development.

As noted earlier in response to the first two items on the questionnaire the students were unanimous. These items queried: 1. *Has participation in this study been worthwhile to you, yes or no?* 2. *Do you think that this study has helped your English, for example, helped you learn new vocabulary and new concepts, yes or no?* All students replied "Yes." Further positive corroboration, I believe, was given in the statements that the students volunteered in response to the last item on the questionnaire, which item was open-ended. I repeat that item and follow it with a few of the students' responses.

7. Feel free to make any other comments that you may wish to make.

It was fun learning more language.

I liked the lessons on poems. I would like to write if I had more time.

I think poetry is a good way to study a second language.

The students, it appears, found this study of poetry interesting, enjoyable and useful. Regarding the use of “poetry as a vehicle for language development,” Christine, my colleague who made her class available to me for this study says in a statement, “The skills of listening, reading and speaking were engaged during each session.” I obtained permission to use Christine’s statement and shall reproduce it in its entirety a little later. But at this point I think we may conclude that the study of poetry in ESL classes is useful for promoting English language skills, while at the same time the use of poetry has great value for the promotion of peace, for finding and putting in place connecting planks between different cultures.

Recommendations and Implications for ESL Teaching

The *first recommendation* that arises from my study is that the curriculum for all ESL classes could make much more use of poetry as well as other literature. I have, in my experience as an ESL teacher, used so called materials “especially prepared for ESL.” Most of these materials are exceedingly contrived and dull, and the students often find them boring -- conditions not at all conducive to effective language learning. Whereas *real literature* which has been appropriately selected and taught with some enthusiasm (it’s hard to be enthusiastic about contrived materials) will catch the students’ interest and imagination and will add to a positive motivational climate of a teaching situation. We all know that motivated students learn much more effectively than those who are uninterested.

I am not suggesting that second language classes limit themselves exclusively to the use of such literature as poetry, etc., but it could form a larger part of the curriculum, even in early stages of learning English. True, students will also need some of the “practical

stuff” like news papers, magazines, bus schedules, telephone books, application forms, etc. But literature should always be there providing them with lively subject matter to listen to, to think about, to talk about, to argue about, to write about, and to reflect about some more. It can provide endless variety for the employment of language skills. Students can identify with literature because it deals with basic human emotion and experience. It traces our interconnectedness. “No man is an island.”

My *second recommendation* is that ESL teachers should be well-grounded in English literature. A degree in English literature or at least a strong English major in a BEd program would be very useful. Such a background in literature would give ESL teachers a rich resource to draw upon for their teaching. They would be enabled to see literature not only as a useful tool for teaching language but also as a valuable resource for teaching peace education. And as I have said before, peace education should be of great concern not only to ESL teachers but to all teachers in all subject areas.

My *third recommendation* follows closely from the second. All ESL teachers, and all other teachers too, could take courses designed for specific training in pedagogy for peace. Teachers should be urged, if not actually required, to take such courses. Such courses are very useful in creating awareness of the problems associated with the promotion of peace. Some good peace education courses are available at our university, but there is a need for expansion. What greater or more noble enterprise is there than the promotion of peace?

In this area of implications for ESL teaching my *fourth recommendation* would be that all ESL teachers be trained in ESL methodology by taking university courses designed with their needs specifically in mind. This could include a course or courses on how to use poetry in the ESL classroom. We have good courses at our university for ESL teachers, but we need more. Currently I know of no course designed primarily for the promotion of the use of poetry in the ESL classroom. If poetry is helpful, then the Faculty of Education

should encourage someone, or some team, to design such a course and teach it. I believe that offering such a course would draw many enthusiastic applicants.

My *fifth recommendation* would extend in scope from and beyond the university. This would involve the development and production of teaching materials and lessons for ESL featuring, but not exclusively confined to, the teaching of poetry. Curriculum writers at the university, in conjunction with students working on projects for credits, could create such materials. The lessons I have used in this study might give some direction for such projects. The university could use its insights and good offices to help seek out publishers. Or the university could undertake such publication itself. Such materials would be particularly useful for those new to teaching ESL. They would also be of value to experienced teachers. Good teachers are always looking for new ideas, new approaches, to enhance their practice.

The implementation of my next two recommendations would fall largely outside the scope of the university. For my *sixth recommendation* I would suggest that educational jurisdictions provide in-service sessions and workshops for teachers on how to use poetry with ESL students, and how to develop the appropriate materials. ESL workshops are being provided, and that is good, but generally there seems to be little awareness about the value of using poetry in ESL. I have done some work in this area myself and it was well received. An interest can be fostered.

My *seventh recommendation* has to do with teachers' conventions. There are speakers at these conventions who deal with issues related to ESL. But very few deal seriously with poetry for ESL. And as in my literature review for this study, the thinkers at these conventions who show how to use poetry for peace education in ESL are virtually nonexistent. Professional educators, especially those associated with the organization of conventions, should be made aware of this omission and urged to do something about it.

Recommendations for Further Research

My recommendations here will be brief. I would like to see others share the research field I have been exploring. Professional colleagues here would be most welcome. The field I have tried to open up deserves more attention. The continent of Peace Education is vast. The concept of using poetry to explore it is new. And I think the concept deserves further study and support. In this type of research I would not suggest the replication of my study; a second researcher can never set up a situation to duplicate the first study. But I do suggest that some researchers undertake to do a *similar* studies under *similar* circumstances. Such studies could prove both interesting and useful. Would *similar* studies find the students equally receptive and approving of poetry experiences? I think they would, but I would like to see my findings substantiated by further research.

I would encourage anyone contemplating such an undertaking to seek a longer period of engagement with their students than I had. This may be difficult to accomplish since, as I have indicated before, class time is precious and it is understandably difficult for cooperating colleagues to relinquish class time to accommodate researchers. Getting more time with a class may be difficult but not impossible. The effort may pay dividends in that the researcher would be under less pressure of time restraints such as I experienced. In more commodious circumstances poems could be covered at a more leisurely pace, thereby allowing for more discussion and more poetry writing on the part of the students. In my own study the students made a respectable contribution of their own poetry. But they would have certainly produced more with more time.

Some might suggest extending the study over a longer period of time by engaging several different classes in succession. Such a study might garner useful information but I doubt it would have the desired effect that I sought. It takes time to get to know your students so that you can engage them freely and effectively in dialogue. It takes time to orient them to writing poetry. Several different groups of students would hardly solve the time problem; it might even exacerbate it.

A more useful approach might be for a teacher to engage his/her own class in a research project similar to the one I undertook. The teacher might undertake to carry forward such a project for the duration of a whole class -- say for a whole semester, or however long the institution runs its courses. Such a variation on my study would allow for more one-on-one student-teacher interaction. The teacher might even develop case studies with individual students thus yielding a wealth of data. Lest there be misgivings on the students' part about devoting so much time to the study of poetry, I am sure the teacher could assure them that they would not be short-changed as far as learning language skills was concerned. As Widdowson (1988) stated ten years ago, "Poetry then can be seen as serving both a pedagogic and an educational purpose in teaching. It should need no apology" (p. 196).

I think my study establishes quite firmly, as Widdowson asserts, that poetry is a useful genre to be employed for teaching ESL. Not only can poetry be used to enhance language skills but, more importantly for this study, it can be used to raise students' consciousness about the way people are interconnected by common emotional bonds and so promote peace and understanding between diverse cultures in the world.

My last recommendation is also in the academic context of the university. At various places throughout my dissertation I have made references to and citations of three important thinkers to whom I wish to refer again. They are Merleau-Ponty, Steiner, and Ong. The reader may refer to the bibliography of this dissertation for the dates and titles of their texts. I read their books with much interest finding supportive ideas for my study. However, I felt I could not really do these authors justice. Attempting to do so would have led me far beyond the parameters of my problem and subproblems that I laid out for this study.

These writers explore at great depth the phenomenology of the psychological and sociological ramifications of language. It could prove useful to look further than what I have done at how these ramifications might impinge upon the study of poetry. In fact a

more detailed discussion of their ideas might well form a springboard into an entirely separate study exploring these ramifications as they relate to the poetic endeavor. It could explore how poetry in particular, and art generally, impinges upon the thinking patterns of students.

In my own study I have sought to describe the *effects (the what)* that poetry can have on the thinking and attitudes of my ESL students. But I did not venture far into explaining the *how* of these effects, by what means poetry impresses itself upon the psyche of students, that is the psychological processes involved.

Tracing these processes could prove interesting. Accordingly, I suggest a possible question for formal research -- *How does the study of poetry impinge upon human consciousness?* There could be many variations to this problem and numerous related subproblems. As I make this recommendation I would also suggest that the scholar undertaking such a study be well versed in phenomenology and psychology. I would leave these explorations and speculations to others who would be more qualified to deal with them than I.

Reflective Epilogue

We come now to the last section of this report, the reflective epilogue, where I take another backward glance at this study and then a hopeful look towards the future. The first thing I want to attend to in this epilogue is the statement given to me by Christine, my colleague who so thoughtfully made her class available to me for this research project. Her statement serves as a good retrospective glance at this study since she concisely highlights some of its main features. With Christine's permission, I reproduce the statement verbatim as it was given to me some time subsequent to my teaching and data gathering activities in her ESL classroom. Christine writes:

**“Building Bridges with Poetry”
A Teacher’s reflection on the project**

My level 6 ESL class and I were privileged to participate in Mr. Harry Hess’s study “Building Bridges with Poetry.” I found Harry’s premise for the project most interesting: the notion that poetry, as a universal medium for expressing human feelings and experience, is ideal for stimulating an exchange of ideas leading to a greater empathy between cultures and individuals. Over a six-week period, we joined with Harry to explore whether this kind of exchange could unfold in some meaningful way. I feel that it did.

I observed the students responding to truths and real emotion communicated in several of the poems. Discussion resulted, and opinions and feelings were shared. It was interesting that even though students’ ideas often differed, the creation of the “planks” focused attention on a commonality that most could agree with.

Harry’s second purpose was to use poetry as a vehicle for language development. The skills of listening, reading and speaking were engaged during each session. Students appreciated opportunities to build and reinforce vocabulary. In addition, students were interested to discover how English-speaking poets’ use of symbolism paralleled devices used by poets of their own first languages.

Two challenges that were encountered during the study were time constraints and occasionally, poems that contained vocabulary of a level that made them inaccessible to some students without the teacher’s “translation”, e.g. “Is There For Honest Poverty” by Robert Burns. A few more weeks would have relieved some of the pressure to cover so many poems during one session. A little more “processing time” would have been helpful! More time would have also allowed further opportunities for students to write their own poetry with Harry’s direction. Also, I perceived the importance of selecting poems that were not so challenging that the students were unable to discover them independently from the teacher.

In my view, Harry’s study was a success and a worthwhile experience for both myself and my students. In fact, in my current ESL session with a new group of students, I used Harry’s guiding questions to explore some poetry by Ukrainian immigrants during a unit on Western Canadian immigration. It worked very well and I plan to make use of some of these technique again.

I would like to thank Harry for his hard work, careful preparation, and genuine interest in the students. I am interested in seeing additional practical applications of this study in the future.

Christine Enfield

July, 1998

We have been on a long journey, an important journey I believe. Having just returned I am finishing the report on our expedition. And now I am inviting others to go on a return voyage for further exploration into the continent of Peace Education. There are many as yet unexplored rivers to be mapped. Our recent expedition has only been able to navigate relatively few of these numerous waterways leading into the expansive hinterland. I invite other researchers, other teachers, to take up the challenge to push back the frontiers of our knowledge about this huge, inviting continent which is so rich in resources that can be developed for the benefit of the whole human family.

I would recommend extensive preparation for the participants of this expedition, such as I have discussed in my section on recommendations earlier. All teachers, I believe, should be on expeditions of peace. But ESL teachers for whom I have a special interest, I feel are particularly well-situated to be advocates for peace. Often their classes of diverse ethnic and cultural groups are a microcosm of the world at large. These classes present challenging opportunities to cultivate appreciation and respect across cultural and gender lines.

In addition to the academic preparations to which I referred earlier, expedition participants should also be prepared to commit to reflective, self-analysis of their own thinking. We may have to be prepared to leave behind some thought patterns and replace them with new priorities.

To begin one might ask, what are our priorities? Where do we stand in relation to our students? What biases do we have that might stand in the way of our effectiveness as peace educators? Are we prepared to be revolutionary in our thinking and in the questions we raise? Will we raise these questions in our community? For example, are we willing to challenge the structural violence of our society which marginalizes and relegates so many to perpetual poverty, while others enjoy extreme wealth? Are we able to question the rampant materialism and consumerism of our society which consumes resources at a phenomenally destructive rate and leaves a trail of pollution in its wake?

As researchers are we willing to join those thinkers who challenge and question the strictly positivistic, quantitative approach to research that would have us believe that the only reality is that which we can see and measure objectively? I might add here that we do now see a heartening shift away from the exclusivity of this approach in educational research. As educators and researchers we should applaud this shift. This is not to deny objective, human rationality, but it is to give credence to the sentient, emotional nature of the human being. How we feel about matters has a great deal to do with how we live and how we relate to other people, our students in particular.

Thus prepared our mariners will be ready to come aboard and join another expedition to the still minimally explored continent of Peace Education. Their voyage will not be all smooth sailing. Rough seas no doubt will be encountered. But having weathered the storms they will make landfall off the coast of the new continent. There they will heave to, drop anchor, and run out the long boats. They will row ashore towards the mouth of an inviting river. The real work of their expedition will have begun. They will map out new territories up these rivers, and along the way they will harvest the truest and straightest timber from which to make planks for the building of our *intercultural peace bridges*.

We wish our mariners well. As a salute to these hearty explorers and as a conclusion to this study, I submit a poem of my own composition -- "Up Anchor."

Up Anchor

I've weighed my anchor and hoisted sail,
 I'll launch out where the wild winds wail,
 Where the billows roll across the deep,
 Where the salty sprays around me sweep.

Chorus: Up anchor and away
 For a year and a day
 Away and away!

Where sails snap and the cables strain,
 As we plunge and plow the stormy main.
 My ship and I, we'll not heave to,
 We're sailing on; we're sailing through.

She's heeling o'er as she swings about,
 To tack and weave the ocean route,
 She answers true to the helm's call,
 Nodding masts so straight and tall.

By day we follow the seabird's track,
 Spreading sail till the tackles crack,
 At night we steer by the twinkling stars,
 Twinkling through glistening swaying spars.

Come on you lovers of plain, dry land,
 Come on board and let's see you stand
 On a heaving deck that's all awash
 With pounding waves and foamy slosh.

Forget the plain, smooth, even land,
 Come on board and lend a hand,
 Hear the winds howl and the billows roll
 Recharge life in your weary soul.

Harry Hess

*This poem is dedicated to all students,
 Especially those at the graduate level,
 Who bravely chart their intrepid crafts,
 Out upon the vast and often stormy seas,
 Of Academia.*

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November 27, 1997

Mr. Harry Hess
928 Rice Road
Edmonton, Alberta
T6R 1A1

Dear Mr. Hess:

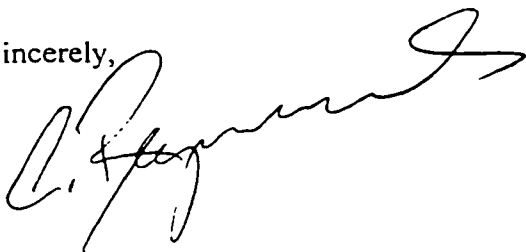
Subject: Building Bridges with Poetry

The above research has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Teacher and student participation in the study to be voluntary.
2. Students are free to withdraw at any time.
3. The results of the study will be provided to the Assistant Principal, Continuing Education Services.
4. Anonymity of the teachers and students, as well as the confidentiality of information obtained, is assured.

Please work through Helen Yee, Assistant Principal to make the necessary arrangements for conducting the study. I wish you success with the project.

Sincerely,



Gary Reynolds
Director

cc: Helen Yee, Assistant Principal
Continuing Education Services

Invest In Yourself . . .

100, 10310 - 102 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2X6 Telephone: (403) 428-1111 Fax: (403) 428-1112



EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Consent Form

I, _____, an ESL student in Continuing Education Services of the Edmonton Public Schools do hereby freely consent to participate in the research study conducted by Harry Hess of the University of Alberta. I understand that at any point during the study I may choose to opt out of the study without there being any negative consequences for me as a student. Some of the features of the study are set out below:

- a) **Purpose:** The research study seeks to find out how poetry may be used to build connecting bridges between cultures. The study also seeks to know how poetry may be used to improve the practice of ESL teaching; that is, how might poetry contribute to the improvement of ESL students' basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- b) **Benefits:** Students would benefit through improvement of their language skills. Through the peace education component in the study the students should also gain in their understanding of and in their ability to relate to other people, particularly to people of cultures other than their own. Teachers who read this study should find another approach for improving their practice not only as language teachers but also as peace educators.
- c) **Inconveniences** and d) **Tasks:** Inconveniences for the students would be minimal. They would be carrying on their regular class work in addition to participating in this study, which should also enhance their language skills. It is hoped that **if they find it convenient** they would also participate, on a voluntary basis, of course, in some one-on-one out of class work involving discussion of some of their own poetry which it is hoped they would write.
- e) **Confidentiality:** The students' rights to confidentiality of information given would always be respected.
- f) **Risks:** No physical risks would be involved. Emotional risks would only be such as exists in any language learning situation. And these would be minimal in an open, supportive, class atmosphere.
- g) **Those eliciting consent:** The researcher, Harry Hess, will be eliciting the students' consent on his own behalf and upon behalf of the Faculty of Education.

Student's signature: _____

Date: _____

Cultural Background (Getting to know you)

1. Name? _____ Country of origin? _____

2. You are now studying English. But remember to cherish your first language, and teach it to your children, if possible.

What was your first language? _____

Other languages you know? _____

3. Tell me a little about your education, training, and your work in your previous culture.

4. How long have you been in Canada? _____ In Alberta? _____

5. Are other member of your family here with you? Parents? Spouse? Children? Ect?

6. Do you work as well as go to school? If so, at what do you work?

7. What interests do you have apart from school? That is, what do you like to do for recreation, for relaxation and fun?

8. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about yourself? If you need more space use the back of the paper.

Questionnaire: Please do not sign your name to this form.

1. Has participation in this study been worthwhile to you, yes or no? _____

2. Do you think that this study has helped your English, for example, helped you learn new vocabulary and new concepts, yes or no? _____

3. Can a study of poetry, such as we have done, help to increase our awareness of and appreciation for questions of peace and concern for all people, yes or no? _____

4. What, if anything, worthwhile have you learned from this study about yourself and about other people? _____

5. What things worthwhile that you already knew have been reaffirmed for you in a positive way? _____

6. What suggestions would you make for improving this study? _____

7. Feel free to make any other comment that you may wish to make. _____

**A COLLECTION OF POEMS
FOR ESL**

COMPILED

BY

HARRY HESS

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

1998

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Aurora Borealis

The forests fill vale⁽¹⁾ and hill,
 Snows abound⁽²⁾ upon the ground,
 The night is cold in frosty hold,
 Stars shine bright with radiant light,
 And all is still.

Then up the vault⁽³⁾ without a halt,
 A flickering flame begins the game,
 With eerie⁽⁴⁾ green and violet sheen.
 A crimson glow begins to flow
 Across the sphere⁽⁵⁾, charging here
 Charging there with filmy⁽⁶⁾ flare⁽⁷⁾.
 The sapphire⁽⁸⁾ flies across the skies,
 While violet hue races blue,
 Through fluted⁽⁹⁾ shapes of shimmering⁽¹⁰⁾ drapes.
 With reel⁽¹¹⁾ and rout⁽¹²⁾ round about,
 In yellow sheen against the green,
 Fly curtains bright upon the night.
 The colors flow and grow and glow;
 Racing high the phantoms⁽¹³⁾ fly,
 While silent feet their rhythms beat,
 Across the sky.

The flashing train⁽¹⁴⁾ begins to wane⁽¹⁵⁾;
 On hasty feet in quick retreat,
 Into the shade the colors fade,
 And all is still.

Harry Hess (1975)

Vocabulary for Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights):

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. vale - valley | 6. filmy - thin, transparent | 11. reel - a swaying motion |
| 2. abound - very much | 7. flare - light up brightly | 12. rout - to move quickly |
| 3. vault - sky | 8. sapphire - bright blue | 13. phantom - ghost, spirit |
| 4. eerie - ghost-like | 9. fluted - long, rounded grooves | 14. train - moving like a procession |
| 5. sphere - sky | 10. shimmering - shiny & wavering | 15. wane - to disappear |

Bouquet

**Bouquet⁽¹⁾ rich in colored perfume⁽²⁾,
 Spreading scent⁽³⁾ about the room
 Luxuriant⁽⁴⁾ growth benignly⁽⁵⁾ smiles,
 But time its beauty soon beguiles⁽⁶⁾.**

**Petals⁽⁷⁾ dropping one by one,
 Striving⁽⁸⁾ hope is soon undone⁽⁹⁾,
 Beauty is but the fool of time⁽¹⁰⁾,
 Lauded⁽¹¹⁾ by our foolish rhyme⁽¹²⁾.**

**Drooping stalks⁽¹³⁾; forlorn⁽¹⁴⁾, bereft⁽¹⁵⁾,
 Cast⁽¹⁶⁾ them out, there's nothing left
 But a lingering⁽¹⁷⁾ scent once begun,
 By petals dropping one by one.**

**Memories⁽¹⁸⁾ bunched⁽¹⁹⁾ in rich bouquets,
 Are lingering yet on bygone⁽²⁰⁾ days,
 Watered now by tears that run,
 Like petals dropping one by one.**

Harry Hess (1972)

Vocabulary:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. bouquet - bunch of flowers.
 2. perfume - a sweet smell.
 3. scent - odor, smell.
 4. luxuriant - rich, colorful.
 5. benignly - friendly.
 6. beguiles - deceives, betrays, fools.
 7. petals - colored leaflets.
 8. striving - trying hard.
 9. undone - defeated.
 10. fool of time - destroyed by time.</p> | <p>11. lauded - praised.
 12. rhyme - poetry.
 13. drooping stalks - stems bent over.
 14. forlorn - sad.
 15. bereft - suffer loss.
 16. cast - throw.
 17. lingering - still staying.
 18. memories - mental pictures of the past.
 19. bunched - grouped together.
 20. bygone - past.</p> |
|--|---|

A Thunderstorm

A moment the wild swallows, like a flight
 Of withered gust-caught leaves, serenely high,
 Toss in the wind-rack up the muttering sky.
 The leaves hang still. Above the weird twilight,
 The hurrying centres of the storm unite
 And spreading with huge trunk and rolling fringe,
 Each wheeled upon its own tremendous hinge,
 Tower darkening on. And now from heaven' height,
 With the long roar of elm-trees swept and swayed,
 And pelted waters, on the vanished plain
 Plunges the blast. Behind the white flash
 That splits abroad the pealing thunder-crash,
 Over bleared fields and gardens disarrayed,
 Column on column comes the drenching rain.

Archibald Lampman

Worms and the Wind

Worms would rather be worms.
 Ask a worm and he says, "Who knows what a worm knows?"
 Worms go down and up and over and under.
 Worms like tunnels.
 When worms talk they talk about the worm world.
 Worms like it in the dark.
 Neither the sun nor the moon interests a worm.
 Zigzag worms hate circle worms
 Curve worms never trust square worms.
 Worms know what worms want.
 Slide worms are suspicious of crawl worms.
 One worm asks another, "How does your belly drag today?"
 The shape of a crooked worm satisfies a crooked worm.
 A straight worm says, "Why not be straight?"
 Worms tired of crawling begin to slither.
 Long worms slither farther than short worms.
 Middle-sized worms say, "It is nice to be neither long nor short."
 Old worms teach young worms to say,
 "Don't feel sorry for me unless you have been a worm and lived
 in worm places and read worm books."
 When worms go to war they dig in, come out and fight, dig in
 again, come out and fight again, dig in again, and so on.
 Worms underground never hear the wind overground and
 sometimes they ask,
 "What is this wind we hear of?"

Carl Sandberg

Is There For Honest Poverty

*Is there for honest poverty,
That hings his head, an' a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by --
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that and a' that,
Our toils obscure, an' a' that,
The rank is but the guinea's stamp;
The man's the gowd for a' that.*

*What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hodden grey an' a' that?
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine --
A man's a man for a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their tinsel show, an' a' that,
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.*

*Ye see yon birkie, ca'd 'a lord.'
Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that?
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a cuif for a' that:
For a' that, an' a' that,
The man o' independent mind,
He looks an' laughs at a' that.*

*A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, an' a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might --
Guid faith, he mauna fa that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their dignities, an' a' that,
The pith o' sense, an' pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.*

*Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that,
That Sense and Worth, o'er a' the earth,
Shall bear the gree an' a' that;
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's comin yet for a' that,
That man to man, the world o'er,
Shall brithers be for a' that!*

Robert Burns (1794):

I Have a Dream

I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of difficulties and frustrations of the moment I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream.

I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

**This will be the day when all God's children will be able to
sing with new meaning**

**My country, 'tis of thee
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing:
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims' pride,
From every mountain-side
Let freedom ring.**

**And if America is to be a great nation this must become true.
So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops on New Hampshire.**

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvacious peaks of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!

**Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.
From every mountainside, let freedom ring.**

**When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every
village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will
be able to speed up that day when all God's children, black
men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics,
will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old
Negro spiritual, "Free at last! free at last!
thank God almighty, we are free at last!"**

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King (1963)

East

We live in time.
 We are always at peace.
 We are passive.
 We like to contemplate.
 We accept the world as it is.
 We live in peace with nature.
 Religion is our first love.
 We delight in thinking about the
 the meaning of life.
 We believe in the freedom of silence.
 We lapse into meditation.
 We marry first, then we love.
 Our marriage is the beginning
 of a love affair.
 It is our indissoluble bond.
 Our love is mute.
 We try to conceal it from the world.
 Self-abnegation is the secret to
 our survival.
 We are taught from the cradle
 to want less and less.
 We glory in austerity.
 Poverty is to us a badge of
 spiritual elevation.
 In the sunset years of life,
 we renounce the world
 and prepare for the hereafter.

West

You live in space.
 You are always on the move.
 You are aggressive.
 You like to act.
 You try to change it according to your blue print.
 You try to impose your will upon her.
 Science is your passion.
 You delight in physics.

 You believe in freedom of speech.
 You strive for articulation.
 You love first, then you marry.
 Your marriage is the happy end of a romance.

 It is a contract.
 Your love is vocal.
 You delight in showing it to others.
 Self-assertiveness is the key to your success.

 You are urged everyday to want more and more.

 You emphasize gracious living and enjoyment.
 It is to you a sign of degradation.

 You retire to enjoy the fruit of your labor.

From *Ulysses* (ll. 6-32)

I cannot rest from travel; I will drink
 Life to the lees. All times I have enjoy'd
 Greatly, have suffer'd, both with those
 That loved me, and alone; on shore and when
 Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
 Vext the dim sea. I am become a name;
 For always roaming with a hungry heart
 Much have I seen and known, -- cities of men
 And manners, climates, councils, governments,
 Myself not least, but honor'd of them all,--
 And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
 Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.

I am a part of all that I have met;
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
 Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
 For ever and forever when I move.
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
 As though to breathe were life! Life piled on life
 Were too little, and of one to me
 Little remains; but every hour is saved
 From the eternal silence, something more,
 A bringer of new things; and vile it were
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire
 To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
 Beyond the utmost bounds of human thought.

Tennyson (1842)

The Charge of the Light Brigade

Half a league, half a league,
 Half a league onward,
 All in the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred
 'Forward, the Light Brigade!
 Charge for the guns!' he said:
 Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

'Forward the light Brigade!'
 Was there a man dismay'd?
 Not tho' the soldiers knew
 Some one had blunder'd:
 Their's not to make reply,
 Their's not to reason why,
 Their's but to do and die:
 Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon in front of them
 Volley'd and thunder'd;
 Stormed at with shot and shell,
 Boldly they rode and well,
 Into the jaws of Death,
 Into the mouth of Hell
 Rode the six hundred.

Flash'd all their sabers bare,
 Flashed as they turn'd in air
 Sabering the gunners there,
 Charging an army, while
 All the world wonder'd:
 Plunged in the battery-smoke
 Right thro' the line they broke;
 Cossack and Russian
 Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
 Shatter'd and sunder'd.
 Then they rode back, but not,
 Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon behind them
 Volley'd and thunder'd;
 Storm'd at with shot and sell,
 While horse and hero fell,
 They that had fought so well
 Came thro' the jaws of Death,
 Back from the mouth of Hell,
 All that was left of them,
 Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?
 O the wild charge they made!
 All the world wonder'd.
 Honour the charge they made!
 Honour the Light Brigade,
 Noble six hundred!

Tennyson (1854)

From The Bible

8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

9 And the Lord said unto Cain, "Where is Abel thy brother?" And he said, "I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?"

10 And he said, "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground."

11 "And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand." (Genesis 4: 8-11)

11 For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee saying, thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land. (Deuteronomy 15: 11)

18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (Leviticus 19: 18)

29 But he willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?"

30 And Jesus answering said, "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jerico, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him he passed by on the other side.

32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Samaritan as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

34 And he went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, 'Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.'

36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?"

37 And he said, "He that showed mercy on him." Then said Jesus unto him, "Go, and do thou likewise." (Luke 10: 29-37)

From William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Brutus: It is the bright day that brings forth the adder;
 And craves wary walking. Crown him? That!
 And then, I grant, we put a sting in him,
 That at his will he may do danger with.
 The abuse of greatness is when it disjoins
 Remorse from power; and, to speak truth of Caesar,
 I have known when his affections sway'd
 More than his reason. But 't is a common proof,
 That lowliness is young ambitions ladder,
 Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;
 But when he once attains the upmost round,
 He then unto the ladder turns his back,
 Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degree
 By which he did ascend. So Caesar may:
 Then, lest he may, prevent. And since the quarrel
 Will bear no colour for the thing he is,
 Fashion it thus; that what he is, augmented,
 Would run to these and these extremities;
 And therefore think of him as a serpent's egg
 Which, hatch'd, would, as his kind, grow mischievous,
 And kill him in the shell. (Julius Caesar II, i, ll. 14-34)

Henry V. For though I speak it to you,
 I think the king is but a man, as I am:
 The violet smells to him as it doth to me;
 The element shows to him as it doth to me;
 All his senses have but human conditions:
 His ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness
 He appears but a man.
 And though his affections are higher mounted than ours,
 Yet when they stoop, they stoop with like wing.
 Therefore when he sees reasons of fears, as we do,
 His fears, out of doubt, be of the same relish as ours are:
 Yet, in reason,
 No man should possess him with any appearance of fear,
 Lest he, by showing it, should dishearten his army.
 King Henry V (IV, i, ll. 104-117)

From Meditation from Devotion upon Emergent Occasions

No man is an island, entire of itself;
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less,
As well as if a promontory were,
As well as if a manor of thy friend's
Or thine own were.
Any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved with mankind.
And therefore never send to know
For whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.

John Donne (1572-1631)

The Chimney Sweeper

When my mother died I was very young,
 And my father sold me while yet my tongue
 Could scarcely cry 'weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep!
 So your chimney I sweep, & in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
 That curl'd like a lamb's back, was shav'd: so I said
 'Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare
 You know that soot cannot spoil your white hair.'

And so he was quiet, & that night,
 As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight!
 That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, & Jack,
 Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black.

And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
 And open'd the coffins & set them all free;
 Then down a green plain leaping, laughing, they run,
 And wash in a river, and shine in the Sun.

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind,
 They rise upon clouds and sport in the wind;
 And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
 He'd have God for his father, & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke; and we arose in the dark,
 And got with our bags & our brushes to work.
 Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm;
 So if all do their duty they need not fear harm.

William Blake (1789)

Jerusalem

Bring me my Bow of burning gold!
 Bring me my Arrows of desire!
 Bring me my Spear! O clouds unfold!
 Bring me my Chariot of fire!

I will not cease from Mental Fight,
 Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand
 Till we have built Jerusalem
 In England's green and pleasant land.

William Blake (1789)

In London, September 1802

O Friend! I know not which way I must look
 For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
 To think that now our life is only drest
 For show; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
 Or groom! -- We must run glittering like a brook
 In open sunshine, or we are unblest:
 The wealthiest among us is the best:
 No grandeur now in nature or in book
 Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
 This is idolatry; and these we adore:
 Plain living and high thinking are no more:
 The homely beauty of the good old cause
 Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
 And pure religion breathing household laws.

William Wordsworth (1802)

The World Is Too Much With Us

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
 Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
 Little we see in Nature that is ours;
 We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
 This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
 The wind that will be howling at all hours,
 And are up-gathered like sleeping flowers;
 For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
 It moves us not. -- Great God! I'd rather be
 A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
 So might I stand on this pleasant lea,
 Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
 Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

William Wordsworth (1802)

Dulce et Decorum Est

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
 Knock -kneed, coughing like hags, we curse through sludge,
 Till on the haunting flares we turn our backs,
 And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
 Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,
 But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame, all blind;
 Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys! -- An ecstasy of fumbling,
 Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,
 But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
 And floundering like a man in fire or lime. --
 Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,
 As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.
 In all my dreams before my helpless sight
 He plunges at me, guttering choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace
 Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
 And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
 His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
 If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
 Come gargling from froth-corrupted lungs,
 Bitter as the cud
 Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,
 My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
 To children ardent for some desperate glory
 The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
 Pro patria mori.

Wilfred Owen (1918)

The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner

From my mother's sleep I fell into the State,
 And I hunched in its belly till my wet fur froze.
 Six miles from earth, loosed from its dream of life,
 I woke to the black flak and the nightmare fighters.
 When I died they washed me out of the turret with a hose.

Randall Jarrell (World War II)

The Man He Killed

Had he and I but met
 By some old ancient inn,
 We should have sat us down to wet
 Right many a nipperkin!

But ranged as infantry,
 And staring face to face,
 I shot at him as he at me,
 And killed him in his place.

I shot him dead because --
 Because he was my foe,
 Just so: my foe of course he was;
 That's clear enough; although

He thought he'd 'list, perhaps
 Off-hand-like -- just as I --
 Was out of work -- had sold his traps --
 No other reason why.

Yes; quaint and curious war is!
 You shoot a fellow down
 You'd treat if met where any bar is,
 Or help to half a crown.

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

From Death of the Hired Man

Mary sat musing on the lamp-flame at the table
 Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step,
 She ran on tip-toe down the darkened passage
 To meet him in the doorway with the news
 And put him on his guard. "Silas is back."
 She pushed him outward with her through the door
 And shut it after her. "Be kind," she said.
 She took the market things from Warren's arms
 And set them on the porch, then drew him down
 To sit beside her on the wooden steps.

"When was I ever anything but kind to him?
 But I'll not have the fellow back," he said.
 "I told him so last haying, didn't I?
 If he left then, I said, that ended it.
 What good is he? Who else will harbor him
 At his age for the little he can do?"

"Sh! not so loud: he'll hear you," Mary said.

"I want him to: he'll have to soon or late."

"He's worn out. He's asleep beside the stove.
 When I came up from Rowe's I found him here,
 Huddled against the barn-door fast asleep,
 A miserable sight, and frightening, too --
 You needn't smile -- I didn't recognize him --
 I wasn't looking for him --and he's changed.
 Wait till you see."

"Warren," she said, "he has come home to die:
 You needn't be afraid he'll leave you this time."....

Why doesn't he go there? His brother's rich,
 A somebody -- director in the bank."

"I wonder what's between them."....

"You must go in and see what you can do.
 I made the bed up for him there tonight.
 You'll be surprised at him -- how much he's broken.
 His working days are done; I'm sure of it."

Warren returned -- too soon, it seemed to her,
 Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited.

"Warren?" she questioned.

"Dead," was all he answered.

Robert Frost (1874-1963)

Richard Cory

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
 We people on the pavement looked at him:
 He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
 Clean favoured, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
 And he was always human when he talked;
 But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
 "Good morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich -- yes, richer than a king --
 And admirably schooled in every grace:
 In fine, we thought that he was everything
 To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
 And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
 And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
 Went home and put a bullet through his head.

Edwin Robinson

City Life

When I am in a great city, I know that I despair.
 I know there is no hope for us, death waits, it is useless to care.

For oh the poor people, that are flesh of my flesh,
 I, that am flesh of their flesh,
 when I see the iron hooked into their faces
 their poor, their fearful faces
 I scream in my soul, for I know I cannot
 take the iron hooks out of their faces, that make them so drawn,
 nor cut the invisible wires of steel that pull them
 back and forth, to work,
 back and forth to work,
 like fearful and corpse-like fishes hooked and being played
 by some malignant fisherman on an unseen shore
 where he does not choose to land them yet, hooked fishes of
 the factory world.

D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930)

My Neighborhood

Newspapers, beer cans and broken glass,
 Garbage that smells fumes up the main drag;
 The educated got jobs while the laborers lag --
 From the corner they yak about what ain't their bag.
 Papa stoppa sendin' soda bottles all the time,
 We wouldn't last half a day without a short neck of wine.
 Leroy smokin' roches got caught and had to pay,
 The judge just give him a year and a day.

Tommy he's frontin' for the liquor store again,
 He ain't had a raise since I don't know when.
 Grocery store Willie can't say a word,
 The pawnbroker'll get him fired, least that's what I heard.
 What's the police doin' searchin' poor deacon Jones
 When the bank just got robbed they know the robbers are gone?
 It ain't gettin no better so I'm gonna split,
 I was born in this dump but Lord I ain't glued to it.

This is my home -- how you like where I was born?
 If you like it you stay, I'm on my way,
 So help me today I'm gone.

They killed brother Lucas for non-support,
 No job, no lawyer, he had a kangaroo court.
 From the poverty people no poverty funds,
 It was all used up on the higher echelons.
 Preacher man gettin' a kick back from the politicians downtown --
 Lord I want to tell you this is no place for me,
 Got to find that good life that I see on T.V.

This is my home -- now you like where I was born?
 If you like it you stay, I'm on my way,
 So help me today I'm gone.

John Anderson (1970)

The Cities are Burning

Lord, you know these cities are burning
All over the U.S.A. Yes --

These cities are burning now
All over the U.S.A.
Yes, you know if these white folks don't settle pretty soon
We all goin' to wake up in Judgment Day.

You know, God told Noah about it --
'Bout a rainbow sign
There'll be no more water
But there'll be fire next time.

The Bible's fulfillin' now
All over the U.S.A.
Yes, you know if these white folks don't settle up soon -- the U.S.A. --
We all goin' to wake up in Judgment Day.
Yeah!

You know, the first was in Los Angeles
In a section they call Watts
Then Newark, New Jersey, New York, and eighty more cities
All began to rock.

Those cities are burning
All over the U.S.A.
Yes, you know if these white folks don't settle up soon
We all going to wake up in Judgment Day.

You know Our Father which art in Heaven
White man owned me a hundred dollars
And he didn't give me but seven
Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy -- Kingdom come
Hadn't taken that seven
You know I wouldn't have got none.

That's why these cities are burning
All over the U.S.A.
The only solution I see to this whole thing
Is non-violence through Martin Luther King.

Rev. Frederick Kirpatrick (1970)

Nazis

Nazis, the whispering began,
Nazis, when they gathered
 and poured over each other
 memory of the Old Country
 to wash away the dust
 of the cold Canadian fields.
Nazis, the voices said
 to their backs in the town,
Nazis, to their children
 bewildered at school,
Nazis, until they kept alien
 to their farms and afraid.

Such relief for us all,
 the end of the war,
 the enemy now redefined:
 the stooped Ukrainians
 pausing over their plows.
Communists, we said.
Communists.

Leona Gom (1975)

Select Samaritan

We think we might adopt two children and
 The problem is to know which kind we want.
 Not Canadians. Refugees. But they can't
 Be Jewish. A couple of Spaniards would be grand
 If they were fair. My husband hates dark hair.
 Afraid they are mostly dark in any case.
 Germans would do, we don't care about race,
 Except Chinese, must draw the line somewhere.

So would you let us know soon as you could
 What sort's available? We have a car
 And would be glad to come and look them over
 Whatever time you say. Poles might be good,
 Of the right type. Fussy? Perhaps we are
 But any kids we take will be in clover.

Robert Finch

to a native Indian woman, with love, from a South African woman

i can feel what you feel

Cry? No!

Me too

I was born the day gold was dug

You too?

was born the day oil was drilled?

i lost my ground to gold

i can feel what you feel

*My son too, shot because he is a criminal
from whom no use can be!*

Yes i too have lost all right to land

Yes i too can't gather the fruits no more

me too, was told i give birth too much!

i can feel what you feel

*the fruits and plants i used to gather
have all turned into snakes and mambas
it's wild! i was told i can't be!
the soil? yes with grass so lofty and green
like i have never seen before
like i will never see again!*

grandma used to call that sacred water

put her dry lips on the boiling spring

*i can't! all has turned into a chemical
concoction*

i can't breathe no more

i can't tighten the grip no more

i can feel what you feel

*Having lost your womb and lost you soil
Oh! the pride of a mother that gives birth
to gallant sons and daughters*

that fill my land with songs of joy

just like the soil that gives birth

to huge trees that bear the sweetest fruit

and provide my people with shadows

against the hot sun of Africa

*OH! the curse! that womb has not gone so
barren*

from giving birth to thieves, yes drunks

just like that soil that had gone so bare, so

dry

from giving birth to logs that can't shade my

people no more

yes! i can feel what you feel!

i can see it all in your hands

fingers long, dry and shaky,

veins sticking out from the grip so tight

but, now, it is soil no more, it's hard rock

you have lost your soil to oil

i have lost my ground to gold

but, the grip is even harder than ever before

i can feel what you feel

the only realistic difference is

yours is cold! below 40 degrees

with scattered blizzard showers!

always, below freezing point

welfare can't warm it up so well

mine, is so hot and tumultuous

above forty degrees!

that's above boiling point

cosmetic changes can't cool it up at all

but! hey! woman!

grip tight to your soil

i'll hold tight to my ground

I CAN FEEL WHAT YOU FEEL

much love, Nomagugu Mgijima (1994)

From New Year's Day, 1978

If I had thought forty years ago
when I asked myself where I would be
twenty -- thirty -- years from then --

If someone had told me then
"On New Year's Day of 1978
you'll be sitting alone in a highrise apartment
in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
writing a poem to yourself,"
how disappointed would I have been?

A fifteen-year-old romantic,
a brainy silly goose in love for the first time of many,
full of high ideals, religion, bad poetry, incurable shyness....

Fame I thought.
Love, I thought.
Sons and daughters.
A big house with an orchard behind it.
Athens. Troy.
Heaven at the end, where I would meet my friends and relatives
miraculously young again....

I have lived all my life in rented rooms;
my loves have been temporary;
my best friends are dead;
I have no children.
I have yet to visit Troy (Where is it?)
My great book is still to be written.
I believe in God
only intermittently.
I live (like everyone else)
in fear of the destruction
of my country and my world.

Yet I would not change
these forty years,
would not omit depression, wars, conflict,
death, pain,
Or this solitude in which I drink coffee....

Ten years from now
I may write my great book.
My lover may marry me
for my old-age pension.

In heaven I shall be a ballet dancer
creating patterns
without words.

Elizabeth Brewster (1978)

Lenore

Here is the woman hurt all her life
 by money, walking away
 from it walking away away from her, leaving the children behind
 with her in the house she bought from Rose
 in 1958,
 how she took in ironing 8 hours a day & fought
 for the pay of that.
Next week, next week, was all she heard.
 She pegs the air with her cigarette & tells of
 borrowing 5 dollars from Mike at the Legion
 just to feed the girls.
 & the house not paid off yet, 22 years later.
 Still she thinks everyone has money but her.
 Rose has money, Bob has money, this & that one
 fade into the haze of happy strangers,
 alive with money, she thinks.

She sees her future self in her mother at Edson,
 75 years old & still cleaning hotel-rooms,
 getting up at 4am to heat water
 for her laundry,
 wondering, "Is it clean?"
 This is Lenore with no money, the future eaten out of her
 & the past aching,
 a woman once *so elegant*
 tethered to house payments & girls, now grown,
 & the aunts who accuse her of drinking.

Today her friends anger her; the toughness she's made of
 breaks down slowly, & she cries about
 money & Rose & her washed-out loneliness
 unconquered in more than 20 years, even by the men she held
 to relieve the quiet urge of her body.
 Never thinking of the love she'd need,
 never dreaming this far forward,
 to her daughters gone from her unpaid dwelling,
 to this Legion & the breakdown of caring;
 where her fears gentle her & she drinks her Scotch,
 lost with us in the cold
 heart of her family.

Erin Moure (1980)

Paper Matches

My aunts washed dishes while the uncles
squirted each other on the lawn with
garden hoses. Why are we here,
I said, and they are out there,
That's the way it is,
said Aunt Hetty, the shrivelled-up one.

I have the rages that small animals have,
being small, being animal.
Written on me was a message,
'At Your Service' like a book of
paper matches. One by one we were
taken out and struck,
We come bearing supper,
our heads on fire.

Paulette Jiles (1984)

We Call This Fear

We call this fear *love*, this tearing,
this fist, this sharpened tongue
love. I could kill you, I say,
many times. You do not carry
only the pain. There is more
than your world: the drunks
you find bleeding on the tiles,
the women full of holes, the dog
with torn eyes, the poet who has
chewed his tongue.

There is this room,
this woman who brings you food
wears your bruises on her cheeks.
I am tired, so tired.
There is always something wrong.
You spit words at me
like broken teeth and I, stupid
woman, string them into poems,
call them love.

Lorna Crozier (1985)

Fugue

Women are on their way
to the new country. The men watch
from the high office windows
while the women go.
They do not get very far
in a day. You can still see them
from high office windows.

Women are on their way
to the new country. They are taking
it all with them: rugs,
pianos, children. Or they are leaving
it all behind them: cats,
plants, children.
They do not get very far in a day.

Some women travel alone
to the new country. Some
with child, or children.
Some go in pairs or groups
or in pairs with a child
or children. Some in a group with
cats, plants, children.

They do not get very far in a day.
They must stop to bake bread on the road
to the new country, and to share
bread with the other women. Children
outgrow their clothes and shed them
for smaller children. The women too
shed clothes, put on each other's

cats, plants, children, and at the full moon
no one remembers the way to the new country
where there will be room for everyone and
it will be summer and the children will
shed their clothes and the loaves will
rise without yeast and the women will have come
so far that no one will see them, even from

high office windows.

Robin Sarah

All Bread

All bread is made of wood,
cow dung, packed brown moss,
the bodies of dead animals, the teeth
and backbones, what is left
after the ravens. This dirt
flows through the stems into the grain,
into the arm, nine strokes
of the axe, skin from a tree,
good water which is the first
gift, four hours.

Live burial under moist cloth,
a silver dish, the row
of white famine bellies
swollen and taut in the oven,
lungfuls of warm breath stopped
in the heat of an old sun.

Good bread has the salt taste
of your hands after nine
strokes of the axe, the salt
taste of your mouth, it smells
of its own small death, of the deaths
before and after.

Lift these ashes
into your mouth, your blood;
to know what you devour is to consecrate it,
almost. All bread must be broken
so it can be shared. Together
we eat this earth.

Margaret Atwood

Barter

Life has loveliness to sell,
 All beautiful and splendid things,
 Blue waves whitening on a cliff,
 Soaring fire that sways and sings,
 And children's faces looking up,
 Holding wonder like a cup.

Life has loveliness to sell,
 Music like a curve of gold,
 Scent of pine trees in the rain,
 Eyes that love you, arms that hold,
 And for your spirit's still delight,
 Holy thoughts that star the night.

Spend all you have for loveliness,
 Buy it and never count the cost;
 For one white singing hour of peace
 Count many a year of strife well lost,
 And for a breath of ecstasy
 Give all you have been, or could be.

Sara Teasdale (1884-1933)

There Is No Frigate Like A Book

There is no frigate like a book
 To take us lands away,
 Nor any coursers like a page
 Of prancing poetry.
 This traverse may the poorest take
 Without oppress of toll;
 How frugal is the chariot
 That bears the human soul!

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

A Painting of One Hundred Wild Geese

Close up they're seen in fine detail,
 far back they disappear;
 sky and water, vast and open, riverside or lake.
 How fortunate they were not noticed
 by the hunter's eye;
 instead they're captured in their leisure
 by the painted scene.

Tai Piao-yuan (1244-1310)

Fisherman's Lyric

Floating, floating on misty waves
 in a little boat;
 trees shed leaves in western wind,
 autumn on Five Lakes.
 Friends with gulls and egrets,
 contemptuous of kings,
 who cares if all the fish below
 never bite my hook?

Chao Meng-fu (1254-1322)

Autumn Thoughts

Withered vines, old trees
 and crows at dusk;
 little bridge, flowing stream
 and bank of sand.
 Ancient highway, gaunt horse
 in western wind.
 Evening sun descending to the west;
 desolate, a man at the edge of sky.

Ma Chih-yuan (?1260-?1334)

Echoing Lu Shu-chai's poem, *West Lake*

Spring wind, proud rider!
 a youth from Wu-ling;
 warm sun, West Lake, third month of the year.
 Winds and strings play on water,
 this market of oriels and flowers!
 Those who don't know music never visit here,
 perfect for song, perfect for wine,
 perfect for poetry.
 Mountains washed by rain:
 dark eyebrows, knit.
 Willows trailing mist:
 piled silken hair.
 How truly beautiful, this Hsi Shih,
 fresh from her long sleep.

Ma Chih-yuan (? 1260-? 1334)

The Retreat of Sun Ching-hsiang

Tired of walking in the red dust
 you moved to this quiet river village.
 To breed fish, you have built a broad pond;
 in love with bamboo, you have transplanted some
 in front of the gate.
 Moonlight colors the covers of your books;
 mountain colors enter your wine cup.
 As for me, I'm ashamed of being caught up in official duties;
 I still haven't found my fields and gardens.

Chang Yu (1333-85)

Ballad of the Ferocious Tiger

Where did this tiger come from?
 He has invaded the village of Three Forks!
 Yesterday he devoured the eastern neighbor's pig,
 Today he has eaten the western neighbor's dog!
 The animals of the mountain dare not make a sound;
 dark winds blow in the poplars and bamboo.
 A youth from one family, feeling very brave,
 goes off into the mountains, with his bow and arrow.
 Late at night, beneath a black moon, he stalks the tiger ...
 and the next day, only his white bones are found,
 in the wild grass.

Hsu Pen (1335-80)

Silkworm Song of Torchlit Fields

In eastern village and western village
 they celebrate New Year's Eve:
 towering torches, a thousand of them,
 light the fields red!
 The old people pray with smiles,
 the young folk sing songs:
 "We wish for a year good for silkworms
 and also good for wheat."
 In bright starlight strange shadows are cast,
 startling the perched crows;
 flames from the torches burn off the cold,
 giving birth to spring.
 Late at night, the torches all burned out,
 the people return to their homes;
 they all say prognostications
 show a prosperous year ahead.

Kao Ch'i (1336-74)

Poem Inscribed on a Painting

Among red leaves and green mountains, white clouds fly.
 White-shinned horses prance on beams of setting sunlight.
 This scene -- here before my eyes -- is beautiful,
 but so hard to put into a poem!
 I just can't get the right words, it's driving me out of my mind.

T'ang Yin (1470-1523)

A Travel Poem

The traveler goes on
 His sleeves blowing back and forth
 With the autumn wind,
 And the evening sun sheds lonely light
 Upon the bridge suspended between the cliffs.

Teika (13th C.)

A Winter Poem

There is no shelter
 Where I can rest my weary horse
 And brush my laden sleeves:
 The Sano ford and its adjoining fields
 Spread over with a twilight in the snow.

Teika (13th C.)

On Spring Rain

The plum in flower
 Suffuses with a crimson glow
 The early dusk,
 In which the willows bend to earth
 And the spring rain softly falls.

Tamekane (14th C.)

Dusk

The running hail
 Falls, then stops, and falls again
 In patches on the garden;
 And the beautiful colored clouds
 Grow dark in passage through the sky.

Tamekane (14th C.)

The River

The river darkens on an autumn night
 And the waves subside as if to sleep.
 I drop a line into the water
 But the sleepy fish won't bite

The empty boat and I return
 Filled with our catch of moonlight.

Yi Jung

Do Not Delight

Do not delight in what you own,
 Do not desire what you haven't.
 Those who do not have, do not know
 What a worry it is for those who have.

Such a pity to see so many people
 Scrambling for things.

Yi Jung-Bo

Wild Geese

Since wild geese flew south,
 Many frosty mornings have passed
 And the fall nights have lengthened,
 Deepening the traveler's yearning.

Only a midnight gardenful of moonlight
 Can make him feel at home.

Jo Myung-Ri

Your Parents

While your parents are here,
 Love them and do your best.
 After they are gone, there's no use crying
 Over undone acts of love.

There are things
 You can't make up for.

Chung Chul

Amid the Hills and Streams

Amid the hills and streams live poor and free.
 Don't haunt the gate of power where dangers lurk.
 Get drunk with moonlight and some cups of wine.
 Enjoy the gentle wind, a simple hut.
 Open the door of kindness to all men.
 Plant trees of virtue for your sons and heirs.
 Success or failure Heaven will ordain --
 why push and jostle wearing out yourself?

Nguyen Trai (1380-1442)

Advice to Students

Through your own efforts learn, and Heaven helps.
 Let's save old books and study them with care.
 To read is quite an act in these foul times.
 To teach was even hard for wiser heads.
 By knowledge freed, the mind flows like a stream.
 With few desires, the body fears no threat.
 Purge man of greed, and Heaven's truth will shine.
 Must scholars think of stipends and nought else?

Phung Khac Khoan (1528-1613)

Against Lust

Lust is your foe -- beware a woman's charms.
 When on the rise, prepare against the fall.
 Chou sacrificed a kingdom to Ta Chi.
 Wu lost the realm because of fair Hsi Shih.
 The world has seen the wreck of many homes.
 Why sap your spirit and impair your soul?
 One solemn task a married man performs:
 to sire some heirs and save the family line.

Nguyen Trai (1380-1442)

Secret Love

Can't spit it out, can't gulp it down.
 My love chokes me -- what should I do?
 Would I could scream one long, loud scream!
 Oh, it hurts so! Does someone know?

Nguyen Gia Thieu (1741-1798)

The Cloud-Messenger

You will find her voice subdued, my wife and second life
 While I'm away -- a single dove, longing for its mate.
 Her heart does yearn as these heavy, lonesome days go by;
 She has become, it seems, a wild lotus struck with frost.

O my belov'd; her eyes are swelled with tearful sobbing,
 Her full red lips are pale from the ardor of her sighs.
 A hand is placed against her faded cheek; her disheveled face
 Wears the mad look of a moon seen pale and hazy through the racing clouds.

When you find her, she may be withdrawn into holy worship, or
 About to paint, distracted, my haggard and impassioned form.
 She sometimes asks, too, her caged, sweet-throated myna bird
 Does it remember with delight her lord -- for the bird was mine.

Or, on her lap, the careless garment soiled, she lays a vina.
 Wishing to sing the song whose words I wrote, and sing my name.
 She strums strings wet with tears, yet somehow now forgets
 Cadence and chord she once played over and again.

The months still left, beginning with the day of our divorce,
 She counts and puts a flower on the ground for each of them;
 Perhaps she tastes, in memory, the perturbations of my embrace....
 Such are the moods, when love is far away, of women lost in love.

Kilidasa

Not War, We Want Peace

Not war, bring peace
 so these two nations can live as friends.
 We want to live all our days together
 in this same home --
 what shall we gain by hoarding hate,
 each in our private world?

Come, let us be friends,
 let us cross the mountains of grief:
 not war, bring peace
 to these two nations
 so that we may live all our days together
 in friendship.

Daud Haidar

The Question and the Answer

-- With what sword shall I
 Strike down tyranny?
 --With the sword of the weak of the earth,
 Bidpai answered.
 --What fire will burn
 the winding sheets of death?
 --The fire of humiliation
 Bidpai said.
 --And how might I make man anew?
 And Bidpai answered:
 --You will make him if you fall
 while standing up for him.

Muhammad al-Faituri (b. 1930)

The Inheritance

**Between the earth and the sky
 I draw a map for a newcomer.
 Before I die
 I give him his inheritance:
 the glow of love
 a ladder
 and a living room full of friends.**

Sami Mahdi (b. 1940)

An Answer

**The stranger asked me what my country was
 My country knows no exile, no “abroad”
 I told her: “My country is anywhere I meet
 a stranger I can share friendship and love with
 My country is an idea flowing with light
 It is not bound to a flag, or a piece of earth
 I’ve left behind the tranquil motherlands
 to those grown used to a settled life
 I’ve raced the wind on every horizon
 The winds and I have sworn companionship**

Ahmad al-Mushari al-Udwani (b. 1923)

Ars Poetica

Let poetry be like a key
That opens a thousand doors.
A leaf falls; something flies overhead;
Let as much as eyes see be created,
And the soul of the listener tremble.

Invent new worlds and watch your world;
The adjective, when it does not create life, kills.

We are in the age of nerves.
Muscles hang,
Like a memory, in museums,
But we are not the weaker for it:
True vigor
Lives in the head.

Do not sing the rose, O poets!
Make it bloom in the poem.

For us alone
All things live under the sun.

The poet is a little God.

Vicente Huidobro (1931)

From a Mother Again

My sons & the rest of the dead still
belong to the owner of the horses
& the owner of the lands, & the battles.

A few apple trees grow among their bones
& the tough gorse. That's how they fertilize
this dark tilled land.
That's how they serve the owner
of war, hunger & the horses.

Antonio Ciseros (1970)

The Joy of Writing

Where is the written doe running, through the written forest?
 Will she drink from the written water,
 that reflects her mouth like carbon paper?
 Why is she lifting her head? Does she hear anything?
 Poised on four slender legs borrowed from the truth
 she flicks her ears under my fingers.
 Silence -- this word also rustles on the paper
 and parts branches
 evoked by the word "forest."

Above the white page letters lie waiting
 to jump -- they may be badly arranged,
 sentences bringing to bay
 from which there is no escape.

In a drop of ink there are many hunters
 with squinted eyes
 ready to rush down the steep pen,
 to surround the doe with guns levelled.

They forget this is not life.
 Black on white, other rules govern here.
 The wink of an eye will last as long as I wish,
 it may be divided into small eternities
 full of buckshot suspended in flight.
 Nothing will happen here, if I insist, forever.
 Against my will no leaf will fall
 nor grass blade bend under dot of hoof.

So is there such a world
 I rule as absolute fate?
 Time, which I bind with chains of letters?
 Existence, at my command, never ending?

The joy of writing
 The ability to preserve.
 Revenge of a mortal hand.

Wisława Szymborska (1962)

The Bridge

I didn't believe,
Standing on the bank of a river
Which was wide and swift,
That I could cross that bridge
Plaited from thin, fragile reeds
Fastened with bast.
I walked delicately as a butterfly
And heavily as an elephant,
I walked surely as a dancer
And wavered like a blind man.
I didn't believe that I would cross that bridge,
And now that I am standing on the other side,
I don't believe I crossed it.

Leopold Staff (1878-1957)

Troubles

It was an awful day.
Troubles piled up on me,
as though I'd gone through
an earthquake.
Yet in this day of misery,
so awful for me,
my pangs delivered a poem that's happy.

Bozhidar Bozhilov (b. 1923)

Night

Why are you not asleep, child?
 Why do you weep?
 What grieves your slumber?
 The leaves that drop rattling in the dark?
 Or that trolley's far-off clanging?
 Those voices fading out?
 The moon
 climbing over the distant hills?
 Or the owl screeching in the wood?
 Or that streaking star
 come to disturb the stillness
 of this trouble-wearied world?
 Or my wakefulness
 long before the new day's here?

Why are you not asleep?
 Sleep, child, sleep.

Georgi Djagarov

Traditional Keres Song

I add my breath to your breath
 That our days may be long on the Earth
 That the days of our people may be long
 That we may be one person
 That we may finish our roads together
 May our mother bless you with life
 May our Life Paths be fulfilled.

Delight in Nature

**Isn't it delightful,
little river running through the gorge,
when you slowly approach it,
and trout hang behind stones
in the stream?**

Jajai-ija.

**Isn't it delightful,
that grassy river bank?
Yet Willow Twig,
whom I so long to see again, is lost to me.
So be it.
The winding of the river
through the gorge is lovely enough.**

Jajai-ija.

**Isn't it delightful,
that bluish island of rocks out there,
as you slowly approach it?
So what does it matter
that the blowing spirit of the air
wanders over the rocks:
the island is so beautiful,
when, driving steadily,
you gain on it.**

Tatilgak

The Spring of Youth

Sadly I recall
the early spring of my youth:
The snow melted,
the ice broke,
long before usual.

I stood scenting game
in the hot sun,
muscles taut,
sweat dripping from my face.

Look! Someone's out there
on the slapping lake-water,
slowly dragging reindeer
behind a kayak,
or noisily taking leave
for a dangerous sea-journey.
Could that be me?

As a hunter on land
I was undistinguished.
My arrows seldom reached
the reindeer in the hills.
But from a kayak,
hunting in the wake
of swimming bulls,
I had no match.

Thus I still relive
the early spring of youth.
Old men seek strength
in the thaw of younger days.

Ulivfak