

Identity and Empowerment of Self: the role of naming

by

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ABSTRACT

Naming plays an important role in the performance of our lives, in the telling of tales of who it is we think we are. Using an eclectic methodology, which leans heavily towards art-based research, this qualitative study explores the commonalities and differences in the self-naming of seven women. These women were living in various regions of Canada's British Columbia at the time.

In the creation of an invisible cloth of personal empowerment, the researcher/participant like a sewing needle works with invisible thread to stitch, baste and write together a complex, multi-layered text.

"Bits and pieces" of life's wholeness, taken from the twenty-first century's fragmented society, provide a variety of textures for the layering of this finished work. The text includes prose, poems, vignettes, art of an Old Master and a sewn installation Art Piece.

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INTRODUCTION

The title of this thesis is Identity and Empowerment of Self: the role of naming. Using an eclectic methodology within a poststructural paradigm, my purpose has been to explore the role of naming in the identity and empowerment of self. The methodology with its strong bend towards arts-based inquiry has provided the necessary latitude and artistic licence for the gathering and presentation of material, data that reflects more a 'wholistic' representation of the studied phenomenon.

I have conducted a qualitative study of seven women, myself included, who chose to name themselves. In conducting such a study, my intention has been to delve into the choosing of proper names to explore the threads of difference and commonalities in lived experience. Interested in and intrigued by the influence of the unconscious in conscious agency, arts-based methods have enabled me small 'peeks' into hidden curriculum – poems, songs, personal vignettes, art of an Old Master and the sewing of an art installation 'piece' support my written text.

When some one asked Jack Pollock, the surrealist painter, why he did not paint pictures of nature, he replied, "*I am nature*" (Slattery, 2001). In a similar vein, when someone asks me about my thesis, I reply, "*I am my thesis*". My thesis like Pollock's paintings has become a merging of text, experience, nature, life, self in a phenomenological encounter, a "*visceral rather than a visual experience of art*" (Bernstein, in Slattery, 2001, p.375)

And I find it necessary, for clarification purposes, to provide some guidelines for the reading of this text. In life, progression is 'any which way', yet within the confines of a traditional university thesis format, the words proceed linearly. This is not to say, however, that the writer's path was necessarily straight through the pages. When one reads beyond the wordy surface, one may catch glimmers of repetition in thought camouflaged by the diversity of scholarly description. This inquiry contains 'pieces of wholeness' - 'pieces of my life' - and I found it impossible to think and write about any

'piece' in isolation. Therefore, for those whose thinking leans towards the linear, it is suggested to read the text straight through, as a 'whole'. This manner of reading may later answer earlier questions, and relieve the mind, making overall comprehension less effortless.

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction of me by way of a Personal Declaration of Interdependence and more. Samaya VanTyler is my present name. Recognising the beginning of my relatively recent quest for balance in living my life, this chapter tells of events, silent thoughts and invisible emotions that accompany me on my journey. Subjectively objectifying whom it is I thought I was in times gone by, I write about conditioning, which stemmed from the social branches in the historical roots of my first two legal names, Jayne Baguley - my birth name, and Jayne Burgan - my married name.

An evident excitement regarding liberation in thought is apparent in the last pages of this chapter. Thorne, a character in Michael Crichton's novel, 'The Lost World', declares, "...*theories are just fantasies.*" Therefore, because I do not consider myself to be a 'conventional sort of a gal', this, in all probability, will not be thought of as a 'conventional sort of a thesis.' It is a text that was evoked as a concrete expression of the re-enchantment of my thinking – my own theorising and make believing.

Chapter 2 deals with my choice of a methodology. Initially, it was my intention to reverse the sequence of chapter 2 and chapter 3. After reading the completed text, I made the decision to 'switch' the order in consideration of readers who may find the diversity of movement in the present chapter 3 'chaotic', and so, difficult to make their way through. Chapter 2 prepares the way for chapter 3.

Concerned with the development of a wholistic perspective, in choosing an external methodology, it was important that I paid attention to the internal process of my choice. Consequently, striving for balance and awareness in the connections between my internal and external realities, I have interspersed reflexive reflections throughout the chapter.

In chapter 3, I have reviewed a large amount of literature relevant to the topic of this thesis, Identity and Empowerment of Self: the role of naming. There are two poems in this chapter. The first speaks to the painful process of acknowledging my own subjectivity, and the second poem is about change that occurred as I have 'lived' my way through this text. As well, there are included two vignettes. These vignettes serve to illustrate some of the conditions of my growing up - conditions, which helped shape the adult I have become.

Speckled in different spots throughout the literature review are personal 'insight' commentaries. These 'insights' were gleaned and took form as a result of connection made between myself - a reader - and words written by another - the writer, some one who is not me.

Chapter 4 contains two sections. The first section contains the findings of a qualitative study of six women who chose to name themselves; details of how these women came to be participants in the study are also given. Each woman is presented separately, introduced by a graphic representation of her self-chosen name or names. The second section contains an analysis of the data in the preceding section, exploring in some detail three emergent themes. These themes are representation, change and power.

Chapter 5 addresses a metamorphosis that took place during my engagement with the completion of a graduate program in a formal learning environment, particularly the writing of this text. Also included in this chapter is the recollection of experience that was pivotal in providing the catalyst for self-examination. In retrospect, it was this 'embodied' memory that became the 'impetus' for the idea and provided the foundational substance for this study and text.

I have had opportunity to re-work and re-write my life as I have written this text. In addition, I have taken liberties such as using the word 'and' far more than may be considered correct. This is not an oversight or due to grammatical ignorance. It is a determined use of language that serves the need of a wilful yet silenced child of the past

who demands the reading of the third chapter for an explanation of the ‘over-use’ of ‘and’.

Also perhaps, there will be those who accuse me of finishing too many of my sentences with the quotes of others. I plead guilty. I have not yet integrated into my psyche all I have read and learnt in the last three years since I began my latest academic journey. It takes time to integrate knowledge, and replace old habits. Concerned with connection, with relationships both inside and outside of my self, I have found some others’ words more eloquent and ideal for expressing what it is I thought I was thinking and feeling at the moment of reading and then writing. I have used mixing and matching of diverse voices as a tool to sculpt and shape my individuality from the collective block. I am in the process of learning another way to think, to write – ‘**re-inventing**’ myself. As a self-directed learner, re-reading some of my undergraduate assignments, I appear to have moved in quite a different direction, away from the tendency then of rhetorical ‘mono-conversations’ that filled the pages. However, keeping in mind my present relationship with the academy and my striving for balance in life, I have made a concerted effort to ‘stick to convention’ in this respect, minimising the completion of written sentences that contain my thoughts with the words of an other.

“There is no doubt that it was I who authored the text...my poetry and prose and theoretical commentary.” (Haegert, 1998, p.9).

Moreover, because of my total engagement in the production of this text, I found that one of the challenges has been to peel away the layers of time and space to write from a virgin place. Whether I have accomplished this or not is left to the eyes of the reader, who will undoubtedly hear my voice, which is most certainly present.

CHAPTER 1

A PERSONAL DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE and MORE

*Where to begin
At the beginning of course?*

*Unsure, unclear
Where the beginning is or was,
I start from here.*

*Here becomes there
As I read.*

You write.

*Words on pages
Containing*

Movement

Meaning

LIFE.

I am reminded that life can only be understood backwards, though it must be lived forwards (Kierkegaard 1996). And so, this writing presents itself as a *'hybrid'* - a history book story (Atwood, 2002; Rushdie, 2001), moving continually from the level of events to the level of reflexive reflection. In pursuit of living a meaningful, authentic life, I have come to recognise the importance of counter streams that run continually beneath the mainstream of my existence. Some of these counter streams rise bubbling to the surface whenever I pause to breathe deeply, appreciating the sights, sounds, and other sensations that nourish a spirit, or I stop to eat and drink, feeding a body.

The Western tradition of the separation of the conscious and unconscious mind has been disputed and brought into question by Philip Montgomery (2002) who disrupts the constructed dichotomy between consciousness and the unconscious. Montgomery contends that the unconscious is a resource to be harnessed in order to enrich consciousness, not a liability to be suppressed.

These conscious streams of ‘connected knowing’ introduced to discourse by feminist scholars within poststructural paradigms provide me with blue prints and tools to perfect the art of shape shifting. The ability to shift my shape, change my angle of vision, step in and out of roles, enables me to roam more freely beyond veiled portals of multi-dimensional realms of knowledge (Castaneda. 1968; Crockett, 2000; Ross, 1998). Movement beyond the Cartesian divide of subject and object which perpetuates a dualistic inside- versus- outside, mind - against - matter view of the world, (Trinh, 1991) suggests that, “*Connected knowing builds on the subjectivist conviction that the most trustworthy knowledge comes from the personal experience rather than the pronouncements of authorities... Connected knowers develop procedures for gaining access to other peoples’ knowledge,*” (Belenky, et. al., 1986, p.112).

And so these wise words of Janice, a First Nations woman whom I met briefly when at a crossroad travelling towards the future, ‘*Samaya, it’s no use seeing like an eagle if you don’t have eyes like a mouse*’, rattle around constantly in my skull. There is a low-pitch in the resonating rumble that demands I notice details in the larger picture of life, while remaining acutely conscious of the connections, the wholeness of the universe. In telling my ‘back story’ (Rushdie, 2001), which becomes a present narrative, I pay special attention to the significance of ‘shaking up’ those prescriptive restrictions concealed within the limitations of dominant Western discourse. The world contains not only a West but has had since before the time of Christopher Columbus and language determined positionality, a South, a North and an East. This is even so to day, although these components of the global community have been “hierarchized” - South and East valued as under-developed and North and West as developed.

Looking out with eagle eyes, I see a widening expansion containing the sun, moon and stars, each one splendid and magnificent in its own interdependence. Therefore, I ponder the delicate balance of power relations close by, and those at a distance in other parts of the universe, loci of control, and gatekeepers of knowledge. The world below is in chaos and no one denies that in these post millennium times, the speed of change is escalating rapidly.

Feminist researchers and theorists continue to challenge old ways that are discordant with the increasing rhythms of women's heartbeats and the experiences of our own lives. However, traditional academic theories that equate power with domination and control continue to hold centre stage, although there is jostling in the wings by those whose thinking and world-view are not conventional. Rosabeth Moss Kanter's (1992) groundbreaking work on power, powerlessness and empowerment in organisation focuses on power as capacity and efficacy. Her findings disturbed the settled sediment of phalocentric complacency, and disrupted the status quo, sending ripples of discontent to the beaches of open minds (Hurty, 1995). Power becomes an internal driving force, energy to be used as a resource and, *"The way we understand power is the way we understand society and to use power differently is to create a different world."* (Cockburn, 1991, p.241).

Power is an invisible force, ever shifting, ever present and manifesting in all the actions and agency of everyone. Starhawk (1987) makes visible three types of power: power-over, power-from-within, and power-with. *"Power-over is linked to domination and control; power-from-within is linked to the mysteries that awaken our deepest abilities and potential. Power-with is social power, the influence we wield among equals."* (p.9)

Power-over has a clear material base, grounded in the ability to punish by imposing physical or economic sanctions. The demands of war work from a blueprint for the construction of domination, which in turn builds in us a continuing psychological

readiness to accept and administer control, a willingness to obey. Power-from-within and power-with are grounded in another quite different source, akin not to violence but to spirit.

Because power-over works by creating false divisions, we have been trained to see spirit as something severed from the material world and from the world of real political and economic struggle. The split between spirit and matter, which locates God and the sacred world outside the world of form and earth and flesh, allows exploitation and destruction of human beings and the earth's resources. The model of God in patriarchal religion furnishes the model that lends authority to all hierarchies. (Starhawk, 1987, p.16)

And so, this text concerns itself with a journey of empowerment, a personal attempt to balance the scales of justice inside, outside, and in the ever-constant relationship I have with the universe and myself as a whole.

Small mouse eyes peer intently through thick layers of systemic mist, slowly bringing into focus the warping and wafting of strands of empirical, methodological, theoretical material, that shroud the individuality of the free mind and spirit. Searching for food and checking that all is safe, I scuttle around the patriarchal heaviness with a growing urgency to keep moving, not to 'get stuck' in the muddied mire of intellectual rhetoric. I want "*....to keep things in process, to disrupt, to keep the system in play, to set up procedures to continually demystify the realities we create, (and) to fight the tendency for our categories to congeal.*" (Lather, 1991, p.13)

Moreover, following the teachings of Don Juan regarding the importance of finding a 'spot', that is yours (Castaneda, 1968); I locate myself in a tangle of tensions to do with interpretation and representation. I venture many times into territories that are unfamiliar, yet familiar, connected yet unconnected. There are times when my past becomes the present and as a late bloom in an academic garden, I am placed slap-bang in what Britzman (1992) describes as

...that unsettling place between authorised and unauthorised discourse. It is a place of differently lived anger and vulnerability, where the cost of identity entails reformulating the self with imperatives that veil how culture is lived as a relation of domination and subordination. (p. 254).

And I am in motion, always negotiating, as I carefully manoeuvre myself within the lexicon of meaning making. To remain present, engaged in the process, I learn to befriend this constant state of negotiation so it becomes an ally in the navigation of uncharted waters, especially the sometimes-turbulent rapids of my current academic journeying.

Returning to a formal learning environment as an adult who has lived more years than those to come, my goal is nothing less than Rorty's claim for education as '*bildung*' or '*self-formation*'. For Rorty and me this means that "*education...is about 'remaking oneself' rather than 'getting the facts right.'*" (Mourad, 1997, p. 39-40)

In addition, She, this '*woman of certain years*' (Wallace, 2000), this '*woman adrift*' (Munro, 1998), this '*apparently obscure person, living a small, quiet life*' (Lessing, 1986), like Mark Twain, defines education as more than schooling.

Education, defined in terms of life-long learning, becomes the means for transgressing, transgression and liberation (Freire, 2002; hooks, 1994). Choosing to name myself is but one example of '*the practice of freedom*' (Freire, 2002), and serves to illustrate how ordinary people empower themselves by doing extraordinary things while actively participating in the process of transforming their own worlds - their own minds.

Naming me was and continues to be an empowering experience. Empowerment according to Gough (1999) is "*... not something done to or for someone; it is a process one undertakes for oneself in the development of a new relationship within their own*

particular context.” (p.12). The act of naming myself serves as a concrete illustration of my perceived relationship between power and empowerment. In hindsight, naming me was a pre-requisite, an initiation into a new relationship of personal empowerment.

I consider myself to be a unique human being, an organism, no matter what descriptors may be used by others to ‘pigeon-hole’ me and keep me contained in their place of comfort. I am a human being, an organism with an array of wholistic needs. Within this thesis context, ‘wholistic’ is defined on the micro level as the relational connectedness among mental, physical, emotion and spiritual dimensions. On a macro level ‘wholistic’ is defined as the relational connectedness of the northern, southern, eastern and western parts of the world. This spelling of ‘wholistic’ will be utilised throughout to reflect the overall concept of wholeness (Chisan, 2001).

My thinking, my values and beliefs have changed over the years. Reality has shaped and defined me. Reality continues to re-shape and re-define me. Moreover, in one of my boxes of ‘things to throw away but cannot bring myself to do it yet’, I found a button and on it are written the words ‘*Whatever befalls the earth befalls the people of the earth.*’ The button tells me that Chief Seattle spoke these words, when or where it does not say. However, his words are in keeping with what I have come to sense about my relationship with nature, and supports what I have read in books written by Alan Watts who states,

We do not “come into” this world; we “come out” of it, as leaves from a tree. As the ocean ‘waves’, the universe ‘peoples’. Every individual is an expression of the whole realm of nature, a unique action of the total universe. (Watts, 1966, p.6)

Since I am also a product of my own generation, and of generations that have gone before, the cosmos now seems more like a growing and developing organism than an eternal machine (Sheldrake, 1995). According to Lorraine Robinson (submitted for publication), an Elder, “*The blood of my ancestors flows in my veins, and their lives echo*

in my personal experience of life, death and survival. Memory is held in our cells and passed on through the generations." (Robinson, submitted for publication)

I do not exist in a vacuum and have been influenced by relationships within past and present contexts. I have been called a rebel, an idiot, a *Pisces*, a heathen, a Limey, a loser, a bad girl, a naughty child, a mother, a friend, a snob, a poor female, a rich woman, a stupid person, a teacher, an elitist, a learner and all sorts of other things behind my back and to my face. Nevertheless, like everyone else all over the globe, I am still and always will be a human being with a mind that thinks and a heart that beats. And I am one of a multitude of others with whom I share this universe.

Within the multitudes, there are those who are alienated and marginalized by the division of people into hierarchical systems. Hierarchical superiority is grounded in mistaken notions of humankind separated from nature and the assumption of the burden of our own evolution (Smith, 1949). In an escalating fragmented world, Smith contends that everyone experiences segregation to some degree, and she writes that segregation is, "*...a word full of meaning for every person on earth. A word that is both symbol and symptom of our modern, fragmented world.*" (p.2)

And although Smith's early writing was within the context of her lived experience in Africa, her philosophical reflections have relevance for all parts of the world. She writes of timelessness in the avocation of a wholistic knowledge that moves beyond self-imposed borders of rigidity in thought. She writes,

We the earth people have shattered our dreams, yes; we have shattered our own lives, too, and our world. Our big problem is not civil rights nor even a free Africa - urgent as these are - but how to make into a related whole the split pieces of the human experience, how to bridge mythic and rational mind, how to connect our childhood with the present and the past with a future, how to relate the differing realities of science and religion and politics and art to each other and to ourselves. (Smith, 1949, p.21)

In addition, Ruth Hubbard (1984) reminds me that:

The organism environment split that academics like to talk about is a useful concept and a useful device because it allows us to study discrete portions. I mean, we can't study everything at the same time. But it doesn't describe the real world in which organisms and our environment interact constantly and continually and can't be sorted out. We're quite literally part of one another. (p.1)

Technological advancement, demographic movement, environmental issues, women's changing roles, minority and civil rights, are just a few of the trends that are shaping the lives of individuals in today's transforming world.

Within dominant Western cultures, men and women receive a name at birth and it has been the common practise for women, upon marriage, to give up maiden names and adopt the family name of their husband. However, some women do choose to keep their own last name as well as the name of their husband. An increasing number of women choose to change their name legally - not necessarily because of marriage. I did, and command recognition by the use of a name I chose that is neither that of my parents nor that of the family of my marriage.

In reality, I have had, to date, three legally accepted names and acknowledge that the acquisition of these names determined to a large extent how I was to be and how I was to live my life in the minds of others. My names have given me a context, and provided me with clues and markers for observable behaviour that is deemed appropriate for a girl-child, a female wife and woman.

The tremendous impact of these names only becomes visible as I come into '*Being*', one of Mary Daly's wonderful play of words within the dominant language she refers to as the '*male maze*' (Daly, 1978, p.2), '*Being*' or Mary Daly's '*be-ing*' lives in the house of language, according to Heidegger. He believes that it is language that '*presences*' meaning and the creation of meaning is a given condition of existence

(Bleakley, 1999). I subscribe to the notion that “...*language is the house of being and it is by dwelling (in that house) that man ek-sists.*” (Heidegger, In Bleakley, 1999, p.327)

Thus, to me, language is not something we do, but a context that sustains us. Names are words, words are part of language and language has personal as well as political power. Changing names may be construed as an external indicator of an internal shift in power. Names are words that describe, in language, who it is we think we are. The way we describe the world describes how we value and experience the world. If we say that only quantifiable experiences are true, we have not eliminated what cannot be measured, but we have devalued it. (Starhawk, 1987)

This being the case, the present-day use of language and its implication in the world of men and women, receives attention, albeit brief, in a research study that examines the experience of seven women, myself included, who chose, for a variety of reasons, to legally name themselves. The research data are examined and explore the impact that the choice to name oneself has on immediate, personal relationships, as well as exploring the ramifications of such a choice within the broader context of society as a whole.

And as I have grown older, my voice has become stronger, and louder. I have become more concerned with matters of personal integrity, with knowing my truth, not living some-one else' lie. Standing tall, listening and watching the silence of time in space, some words spoken by Marilyn Frye (1983) remind me of ghostly stories whose phantoms haunt my present future. She speaks: “*Many of the restrictions and limitations we live with are more or less internalised and self-monitored and are part of our adaptation to the requirements and expectations imposed by the needs, and tastes and tyrannies of others*”. (p.14)

As I look back over my shoulder, forms slowly creep out of the shadows and I recognise the face of privilege, racism, sexism, oppression, ethnocentrism, discrimination, inequity, ignorance, arrogance and naiveté. There are other forms I am

sure, whose features I cannot yet make out. Acknowledging this constant hovering of invisible forces requires a careful tiptoeing through a maze of “*mal (e) function*” if I am to break free from iron chains that have kept me locked away, separated and looking out (Daly, 1979).

And looking back from where I have come, changing my names is a little like exchanging old worn-out, black and white blankets for bigger, brighter ones of coloured cloth with intricate designs that provide warm places to be and spaces to become. And so I see more clearly, “...*a world composed of relationships rather than of people standing alone, a world that coheres through human connection rather than through systems of rule.*” (Gilligan, 1982, p.29)

I was born in England. The name Jayne Baguley was officially given to me during a christening by my white, middle-class European parents. This christening ritual was sealed, symbolically, with drops of cold holy water. Thus began the ritualistic objectification and socialisation of a female life (Haug, 1985).

Britain during the 1940's provided the backdrop for my parents and other family members to expect that I “*be seen and not heard*”, “*be nice*”, “*act like a lady*” and grow up to believe that “*sticks and stones can break your bones but words can never hurt you*”. They lied. Words do hurt and at times, I still feel the sting of a childhood scolding.

And my mother, brave soul, desperate for a life of meaning to call her own, committed the selfish act of courage by abandoning her two small female children. I was four, my sister, Mary, was two at the time. Although the family religion was Anglican, my father was rich then, and was able to pay the expensive annual fees for us to be amongst the first boarders in Mount Carmel Convent School. This Roman Catholic residential institution became a first home of sorts for almost five years. I was an excellent learner: sitting in my seat, straining forward to hear and see better, always one of the first to raise my hand to answer the daily catechism question. I never received that piece of silver, though, that coveted medallion on which was embossed a Virgin Mary or

some other holy person. I received a holy picture instead, a beautiful picture, rich in colours including a trim of gold speckles. Because I was not Catholic, I was not one of 'them'; I became an 'other', some one in the margins not worthy of receiving equal payment for a job well done. It did not make any difference either that I had made a secret promise to God that I would be very, very good in order to become Saint Semolina! Perhaps it was at this time, at such a tender age, that I became what those who teach in structured settings commonly refer to now as a 'resistant' learner. I became proficient in the art of sitting still, looking, listening, while not really seeing or hearing the words of the teachings that spoke in riddles to me and left me inside, feeling cold and alone outside.

Jayne Burgan became my married name when I married an olive skinned, third generation Lebanese man living at the time in America. I became a wife, 'chattel' in the eyes of American law in the nineteen sixties. As a wife, I became a possession in the minds of many who equated the use of my husband's family name as proof of ownership, as did slave owners who named the slaves they bought. I had been taught well, some may say; I was well trained to be a good, quiet girl and good, quiet girls make good, quiet wives. Being too scared, frightened, to be anything but a compliant pupil in an assortment of public schools, it never dawned on me that I had a choice regarding my surname in marriage.

And when I became a wife, I became a servant: I shopped for food; I cooked the food; I cleaned house; I did the laundry; I did the mending; I did the gardening; I decorated the house and organised the menu; I fed my husband on command and fucked him on demand; I fed the dog; I walked the dog; I scooped the poop; I became a mother once; I became a mother twice; I took care of the children, three children when I counted my husband. I packed up the children, household goods, husband and dog once; I packed up the children, household goods, husband and dog twice; I unpacked the children and dog three times. I was a good wife; I performed my duties well, but all was not well in Samaya's own house; her overall well-being was not good. Having attended to every whim of my husband, I became separated from my own needs as a woman and a person

in my own right; I had grown to think of myself generally as a 'second-class' citizen, a no-body, really.

One day, I just packed up and flew off. I flew away from my marriage like a caged bird released - with unstretched wings and unsung songs. My identity, my poststructural subjectivity, had become entangled, wrapped up in the need/greed and the self-interest of my husband who was so ignorantly entrenched in the mire of oppressive masculine arrogance, part of his inheritance. Retrospectively, I realise social inheritance affected us both with its expectation of acting out male/female roles. He was so busy acting out his male '*script*' and being a '*good son*'; I was so busy acting out my female '*script*' and being a '*good daughter*', and a '*good wife*', that my internal struggling and worrying to find ways of coping and being a '*Mrs*', never mind a '*Me*', were ignored, temporarily driven underground. I did not know then that I was disconnected, 'disassociated' is the psychological term, from an authentic relationship with either the '*me*' in '*my-self*' or the '*me*' in a relationship with the universe.

And Samaya VanTyler is my present name, and a name I chose for myself. I was in the initial stages of a divorce and it was a legal requirement to pay quite a large sum of money to return to my maiden name. The relevant laws have since changed; now no payment is required should a woman wish to reclaim her maiden name after a divorce. However, I did not revert to my maiden name; instead, I chose two completely new names. I liked the sound of Samaya, still do, and chose the VanTyler "handle" for reasons of numerological alignment and because, at the time, I thought I had to have a last name.

What has been the impact of this last change of name? I cannot count the ways that the pumping of blood inside a female body echo back, telling me I am alive. I have come to accept that there is predictability in the unpredictability of change. Becoming conscious of the unconscious, honouring the silence and learning to trust the process with the support of allies have enabled me to get up off my knees, look around, and breathe far more deeply and freely than I have before. I am acutely aware of my personal quest for

my true speak. I have come to acknowledge from my experience in reclaiming a life of my own that I am still emerging.

I have lost some I thought were friends - those who could not, would not call me Samaya. After strong words in long discussions, I have become closer to my biological sister, Mary, who once told me after a long absence, *"I don't like talking with you because you make me think differently"*. I cried for what could have been; I cried for what will never be. Until her death, two years ago, my mother wrote me letters addressed to Samaya VanTyler on the envelope but beginning *"Dear Jayne"*; I cried because my mother was a stranger and I cried in sadness because she refused to see me before she died. I cried because she never talked about why she left. When I changed my name, after the divorce, she was heard to remark curtly, *"Well, she always was an odd child"*. I cried because I have shared my living space with ghosts and only recently have they become friendly ghosts. I cried myself to sleep; I cried myself awake. I am alone more, yet feel not so alone. Sometimes I now cry in public, and there have been times I thought I would never stop crying. I allow myself to be seen in public feeling unsure, uncertain, and vulnerable: I gain strength from listening for and hearing words that speak to me of others who travelled or travel similar paths.

In addition, I have come to know that I lost myself to find myself in sweet, salt-water tears that trickled slowly at first, and then streamed down my cheeks. Like healing balm, the waters of wellness soothed and smoothed the jagged edges of personal abandonment, displacement, and political inequities. I wept not only for me but also for social injustice everywhere. Moreover, as I lie me down to sleep, I wonder, with a mixture of excitement and fear, who and how I will be when I awake?

And will I change my name again? Yes, more likely than not. Why do I need a first and last name? I belong to no one; I belong to the universe. However, like the invisible writing made from the juice of a lemon that becomes visible only in a certain temperature, I too must wait for the heat of my time for yet another 'naming'. It is my intention to drop the VanTyler part of my name, keeping only the name, Samaya.

samaya: A Sanskrit word usually meaning 'vow' or 'commitment', it is used in the *Natural Liberation* as a concluding mantra in several contexts, where it signifies that the teaching is sealed by vows, and people should not use such teachings for other than spiritual purposes. (Thurman, 1994, p. 270)

In Arabic, Samaya means 'harmony'. I like these translations of my name; they resonate with an inner agency in the re-construction of my life.

And so, as I listen to silence and watch clouds of unsettling doubt begin to roll slowly across the darkening blue skies of the logic of conscious knowledge, lightning strikes. Rain pours down in torrents, gold and silver streaks flash in all directions and unearth the sparkle of precious gems, illuminating hidden dangers lurking in the shadows ready to snare the unsuspecting who walk a Milky Way towards the wisdom of real knowledge (Trinh, 1991).

And as I wander, like Alice in Wonderland, in a wonder (full) world filled with words, I come across a scene on some concluding pages of a book. This particular 'framed interval' (Trinh, 1991) catapults me somewhere else, into a time warp, to a 'Once upon a time' world and a return to the (re)-enchantment of make-believing (Berman, 1981)

..... Maybe every few eons, some animal comes along that kills off the rest of the world, clears the decks, and lets evolution proceed to its next phase. Kelly shook her head. She turned away from Malcolm and moved up the boat, to sit along side Thorne. "Are you listening to all that?" Thorne said. "I wouldn't take any of it too seriously. It's just theories. Human beings can't help making them, but the fact is that theories are just fantasies. And they change. When America was a new country, people believed in something called phlogiston. You know what that is? No? Well, it doesn't matter, because it wasn't real anyway. They also believed that four humors controlled behavior. And they believed that the earth was only a few thousand years old. Now we believe the earth is four billion years old, and we believe in photons and electrons, and we think human

behavior is controlled by things like ego and self-esteem. We think those beliefs are more scientific and better.

“Aren't they?”

Thorne shrugged. “They're still just fantasies. They're not real. Have you ever seen a self-esteem? Can you bring me one on a plate? How about a photon? Can you bring me one of those?”

Kelly shook her head. “No, but....”

“And you never will, because those things don't exist. No matter how seriously people take them,” Thorne said. “A hundred years from now, people will look back at us and laugh. They'll say, ‘You know what people used to believe? They believed in photons and electrons. Can you imagine anything so silly? They'll have a good laugh, because by then there will be newer and better fantasies.”

Thorne shook his head. “And meanwhile, you feel the way the boat moves? That's the sea. That's real. You smell the salt in the air? You feel the sunlight on your skin? That's all real. You see all of us together? That's real. Life is wonderful. It's a gift to be alive, to see the sun and breathe the air. And there isn't really anything else. Now look at that compass, and tell me where south is. I want to go to Puerto Cortes. It's time for us all to go home”. (Crichton. 1995, p.429-430).

CHAPTER 2

CHOOSING A METHODOLOGY: IN and OUT of a METHODOLOGICAL RECYCLING BOX

“As in a certain style of sketching, one draws a line again and again, layering over previous attempts. No one of the lines is either sufficient or accurate” (Jan Zwicky, 1955, p.530)

Likewise, no one methodology has been sufficient to explore the studied phenomenon or the process in which I have been an active participant. Within the text, I reveal myself as a narrative character, not as an act of hubris, but as a necessary methodological device, and so move toward a new understanding of reality, others and truths (Tierney, 1998). Not being the moon, I must rely on myself to shine (Ting Lan, 1988).

Therefore, this chapter concerns itself with the choosing of a methodology for what Ricour (1973) describes as the ‘*textualizing*’ of this inquiry.

In providing autobiographical glimpses, my intent has been to disentangle myself from a social history that continues to inform and shape me (Brooks, 1992). Biographical work has always been an important part of the woman’s movement as it draws women out of obscurity, repairs the historical record, and provides an opportunity for representation and connection (Reinharz, 1992). I have used the writing of this text as a mode for personal transformation. Therefore, according to Trinh (1991), it has required a certain freedom to modify, appropriate, and reappropriate other texts to prevent me from being trapped in imitation. This text is a determined attempt to purge the past, to reconstitute myself, and to break “...*free of the illusions which perpetuated in me a sense of oppression and learned helplessness.*” (Brooks, 1992, p.148-149)

Given then that my history of abandonment at an early age has taught me well how to acquiesce to authority figures, whether male or female, in my academic endeavour, I have dived headlong into, *“The giddiness felt lately by certain educational researchers upon release from their methodological straightjacket.”* (Barone, 1997, p.1)

With encouragement from Tom Barone (1997), and others who have plunged into the unconventionality of ‘*dare-devil*’ research (Jipson and Paley, 1997), I have begged, borrowed and stolen from those who have bravely gone before. Experimenting quite boldly with the methodology, writing style and format has generated creativity in the production of a finished, multi-layered text.

Insisting on ‘*the self as a site for politicization*’ (Trinh, 1991), I am seeking, in Diamond and Mullen’s terms to *“...remap and reterritorialize my knowledge so that it reflects more of my selves”* (1999, p.244). However, simply describing my experience of silent exploitation and of being kept in the dark is not synonymous with being ‘*politicized*’. Intent on being seen and heard, it is not sufficient to know only the personal: It is necessary to know and find different ways of speaking and being heard by more than a few. (hooks, 1989).

Therefore, the methodology for this enquiry is eclectic. Not only have I taken bits and pieces from an assortment of traditionally acclaimed methodologies for “*doing*” research; I have “*become*” the research. I have become passionately immersed in the study and have found, ‘*a way of going on,*’ doing my thinking and feeling in the qualitative media that I have worked with (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Diamond and Mullen, 1999).

Moustakas (1990) would identify my research as ‘*heuristic*’ because the study explores an aspect of human experience in which I have had a direct personal encounter – naming myself – and, “*...as with virtually every question that matters personally, there is also a social – and perhaps universal – significance.*” (p.15). Personally involved in the

heuristic process, I am searching for qualities, conditions and relationships that underlie the fundamental question of why seven women chose to name themselves.

Earlier in the text, I confessed to being a late bloom in an academic garden, and the work of Jon Van Maanen (1988) on ethnographical research informs me that as a ‘*confessor*’, I have developed some traits of the traditional ethnographer who tells confessional tales of the field. Ethnographers learn from living in unfamiliar cultures. Wearing an ethnographic disguise, I am learning in the academic culture - a culture that is, for the most part, foreign to me. Therefore, one of my challenges has been “.....*explicitly to question the very basis of ethnographic authority and to transform ethnography, insofar as possible into a more philosophical, artistic, phenomenological, or political craft.* (p.92)

Contemporary ethnography or fieldwork is in itself a multimethod process. It encompasses a descriptive and interpretative representation of a culture, social group or system. In sociological terms, ethnography is about the reconstruction of biographies (Richardson and Lockridge, 1998). Things make sense afterwards and it is not until then (now) that the potential of any kind of exchange is significant for and into the future.

The rise of feminism has led typically to the study of new topics that require alternative ways of representation and presentation. The feminist spirit is one of breaking free, including breaking free from methodological traditions and making use of creative energy powers (Reinharz, 1992).

Traditionally, ethnography has been associated with studying ‘*the other*’ in countries and/or communities that have not been the researcher’s own. Nevertheless, this approach has not precluded the study of host cultures within the researcher’s own homeland. For example, Diane Bell, an Australian in Australia, completed one such study, ‘*Generation: Grandmothers, Mothers and Daughters*’ (Bell, 1989).

Writing as a feminist, my position is linked with those about whom I write. The study provides me space for relating, merging, being a primary presence to myself, and enables the other women participating to do the same. Therefore, it makes possible the validation of transgressive writing that is

...not for the sake of sinning or thumbing one's nose at authority, nor for the sake of only and just writing poetry -- which may be ill suited for many topics, audiences, and writers -- but for the sake of knowing about lived experiences which are unspeakable in the "father's voice," the voice of objectivity; flattened worlds. (Richardson, 1993, p.12)

Using a feminist standpoint in conducting this study of women who chose to name themselves, I have taken myself out of the context of academic compartmentalism, and enabled myself to fuse with the work. This principle of 'fusion', the delicate balancing of subjectivity and objectivity, underlies feminist methodology although it is rejected by traditional mainstream social science (Reinharz, 1992).

Nonetheless, the contribution of qualitative research opened the locks of academic mainstream, permitting a disrobing and vulnerable exposure of myself in a passion for people, a passion for communication, and passion for understanding people (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). Notwithstanding that qualitative research is many things to many people, Denzin and Lincoln postulate that

Poststructuralists and postmodernists have contributed to the understanding that there is no clear window into the inner life of an individual. Any gaze is always filtered through the lens of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity...No single method can grasp the subtle variations in ongoing human experience. (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p.25)

Qualitative research provides a balance to quantitative research that has been held in the highest esteem for the longest period of time and addresses two critical issues - representation and legitimation (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). Quantitative research, intent

on standards of measure, is important for commercial exchange and defines things with respect to quantity. John Dewey (1934) pointed out that things measured are not values, although it is of great social value to be able to measure. He wrote,

Finally, as standards of measure, standards define things with respect to quantity. To be able to measure quantities is a great aid to further judgements, but is not a mode of judgement. The standard, being an external and public thing, is applied physically. The yard-stick is physically laid down upon things to determine their length. (Dewey, 1934, p.307)

I am seeking to expand rather than confine understanding, and multiple realities rather than a single reality are what interest me. There may be those who intimate that I have not trodden a beaten track of qualitative research, and instead have ‘bushwhacked’ my way through. Perhaps so, yet as a qualitative researcher, I see the world dominated by objects less obstinate than walls and live in my imagination - a setting more symbolic than concrete (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998/1992/1982). In addition, I have come to acknowledge that it is through interaction that an individual constructs meaning. Bogdan and Biklen point out “...*the meaning people give to their experience and their process of interpretation are essential and constitutive, not accidental or secondary to what the experience is.*” (p.25)

And so, symbolic interaction theory supplies a grounding for a self definition that is in keeping with my thinking while I presently write and with the intent of this study. I want to know more about the mythical ‘me’ through knowing more about the six other women who chose to name themselves. The social construction of a self - as the result of perceiving me through the eyes of others - and then developing a definition through the process of interaction is a concept that supports an underlying belief in a stream of constantly emerging selves. The intellectual loop of “*reseeing, retelling*” (Richardson, 1993), is purposefully set in motion by the undertaking of a qualitative research study of women who have chosen to name themselves and enables me to grow as I learn more about myself through the interactive process (Bogdan, and Biklen, 1998/1992/1982).

This is not a quantitative study. I embarked on a journey of understanding based on methodological traditions of inquiry that explores a human condition. Actively engaged in the process of a qualitative research, I have built a complex, wholistic picture; I have analysed words, reported the detailed views of the ‘other’ six women who participated in the study, and I have conducted the study in a natural setting (Creswell, 1998).

Qualitative research is, by its nature, endlessly creative and interpretative, and “...arts based narrative inquiry is a form of qualitative research that powerfully promotes the development of teacher researchers through deepening their understanding of the experience of self and others.” (Diamond and Mullen, 1999, p.18)

Therefore, according to Patrick Diamond and Carol Mullen (1999), because I have done my thinking and feeling in the very qualitative media I have worked with, I have composed an arts-based narrative inquiry out of a succession of allusions and literary or visual images. “Arts-based research belongs to no one genre such as the literary or visual arts, providing instead many subtle tools for the examination of self and other worlds” (p.58.).

And I have become acutely aware of multiple and fragmented parts that make up my whole in the act of observing and being. Bill Pinar (1992) writes about learning to know from sources different from the traditional outside subject matter; he compares himself and his students to modern painters who work from the source within. Patrick Slattery (2001) informs me that as artist working within, I have engaged in the postmodern and poststructural philosophies to contextualize my research and in doing so have released my imagination.

Postmodernism views the self in terms of a multiplicity of ironic and conflicting interdependent voices that can only be understood contextually, ironically, relationally, and politically. Poststructuralism goes further and rejects the notion of the self because the search for true and lasting self is a meta-physical dead end. Whereas postmodernism

the search for true and lasting self is a meta-physical dead end. Whereas postmodernism proposed a radical eclecticism of "both/and," poststructuralism rejects the project to delimit in any way by contending that the self is "neither/nor. (Slattery, 2001, p.374)

Arts-based educational research exists both as a performance and as a record. It is experimentation with a hybrid form: part social science inquiry, part "confessional" self-narrative, part dream-based fantasy and a crossing of frontiers of relationships and different ways of knowing (Diamond and Mullen, 1999). Having said that, this is an arts-based narrative research improvisation that enhances knowledge of myself within the resonating context of others. This single performance is intensified by the contribution of multiple voices which may have many dramatic beginnings, middles and ends, and which in part are influenced by the readers' and/or viewers' reactions. This back and forth movement in the inquiry creates an escape route from the limitations of any one dominant voice, or, of being stuck for too long in one position (Diamond and Mullen, 1999). *"The function of a canon is not to make further review unnecessary but rather to hold things together long enough so that an even better array can be assembled."* (p.114)

Life, I may now compare to a kaleidoscope, in which the patterns appear chaotic, shapes and colours always rearranging themselves to different form, never ceasing to amaze in the adventure of self-discovery. Knowledge of the world is yielded through knowledge of our selves in an ongoing process of self-inquiry in the deconstruction, reconstruction and recreation of experience.

The attempt to, *"disrupt notions of normalcy in research"* (Slattery, 2001), within this text has warranted attention to the ethnographic validation of personal narrative and autobiography as an accepted means for exploring the identity negotiations of participant and field researcher (Coffey, 1999). According to Slattery (2001), *"arts-based autoethnography"* takes this further by making the participant and field researcher a unified whole and, by encouraging engagement with the unconscious. An essential feature of the artist working within, as Slattery contends, is that the concrete expression

“...can only be understood if the conscious and unconscious influence of these artists and styles are considered.” (p. 390)

Before I began gathering data for my study or writing my text, I felt compelled to sew an installation art piece, the size of which is almost equal to the dimensions of a classroom door at the University of Victoria. This piece titled, “Re-Enchantment of Make-Believing,” (see Appendix A) is in itself, *“...a piece of interactive research in an ongoing process of deconstruction and recreation.”* (Slattery, 2001, p.385)

DESCRIPTION OF INSTALLATION ART PIECE

My installation piece, an artistic work, is a visual metaphor for the inner life of my personal process of transformation. It is a blending of the conscious and unconscious, and provides a concrete form of expression with multiple layers of meaning (Slattery 2001). The piece, approximately thirty-two inches by sixty-three inches is composed on a background of blue velvet cloth. A gift of a length of green wool material became the overall backing and strips of black velvet bind two of the edges. On the right (left) side, there is half of a tree, the branches of which spread across to the other side of the velvet rectangle. Twisting and folding several single tubes of machine-sewn material sculpted the branches, trunk and root system of the tree. Small blobs of glue from a glue gun were strategically placed and enabled the further positioning of invisible stitches to create 'bark-like' and 'root-like' texture in appropriate places. Artificial fig leaves adorn the branches, and it is the tree trunk and root system that comprise the borders of the other two raw edges.

In a body of water, painted on part of an old mattress cover and attached to the bottom third of the piece before the construction of the tree, are reflections of eight fruits. These fruits hang from the curving branches of the tree. Seven fruits of various shapes, each one a different colour of the rainbow, are decorated with beads and embroidery stitches of coloured silk. One fruit, noticeably different in its pearly whiteness, hangs closest to a superimposed moon on sun appliqué behind the highest branches.

Seven turtles, made of bone, make their way in single file from beyond the left (right) bottom corner to the water's surface. A small serpent dangles from a low branch, seemingly intent on heading for an inviting pleat in the tree roots. Turtles and serpent are held in place by glue and stitch. Three separate narcissus florets have been placed as if fluttering down to land in a clear plastic bowl that waits in the water to gracefully catch whatever falls from high above.

Concerned with a transformation process, and intent on developing more my intellectual capacity within a formal academic setting, my sewing 'piece' has served as the vehicle for the necessary preparatory inner work. I began taking measurements,

arranging and rearranging smaller pieces on the bigger picture while scrambling and rummaging around on the floor. A friend told me it was time to get up off my knees and so, together, we made a makeshift worktable out of old plywood and my kitchen table. Ninety-nine percent of the sewing was done by hand. A borrowed electric sewing machine was used to make material tubes, and a glue gun was used to 'glue and fix' before the hand sewing of the main attachments began. Not able to complete the stitching from one stationary position, I sewed while sitting in different chairs or standing, and moving around the table; it depended on the particular piece of fabric construction. I used an array of textured materials, an assortment of colours, and worked ninety percent of the time with invisible thread.

For the most part, sewing my installation art piece was a solitary task and initially, I oscillated between degrees of excitement because of the creation of something new and degrees of anger and sadness as I 'got in touch' with painful memories of the past. The hidden curriculum of my body had a powerful impact on my experience in the now; memories were evoked and insights elicited that contributed to a better understanding of the life I was presently living (Slattery 2001). Stitches became like stepping-stones through, across, up and down an invisible web of connections. The invisible thread I used became the connector in a matrix of past and present experience.

My first 'un-habited', yet, inhibited teacher was Mrs. Garside. Every day I attended elementary school, Mrs. Garside, a large woman, heaved her ample bosomed-body onto the podium stool from where she had a bird's eye view of the classroom. She kept constant watch from this lofty perch, slowly waving, more often than not, a pointed yardstick to remind us all to sit still, sit up straight, with heads bowed of course, when reading, writing or doing another task of her bidding - and to speak only when spoken to by her. Amongst other things, Mrs. Garside taught me how to pull a single thread from a square piece of linen fabric, how to block the other threads by a continuing single backstitch and how to sew a straight hem by hand.

At Macclesfield Central School, the second school I attended after leaving Mount Carmel convent school, I exchanged a needle for a hand, then a treadle and then an electric sewing machine. The first garment I made was an apron; a piece of clothing that paid particular attention to ‘covering up’ and protecting a person’s outer appearance.

It was my grandmother, on my mother’s side, Nanny Binks, who taught me how to embroider. Standing by her side as she sat in the large, oak-carved chair in a living room warmed with the distinct smell of burning coal and burnt toast, I would quietly watch as she deftly made a satin stitch, a French double knot or some other fancy stitch. I really did try very hard not to let my gaze wander and linger too long on the box of coloured skeins of silk that lay on the table, so inviting of touch, next to her. I did not want to hear the tone of disapproval too often in the words, “*Jayne, pay attention.*” I was so disappointed when I learnt much later that old age and arthritis had rendered Nanny’s fingers not so nimble, and she had given that box of rainbow threads to a cousin I hardly knew.

And Margaret Atwood (1996) wrote a novel, based on a true story, about Grace Marks who had been convicted and imprisoned for her involvement in the vicious murders of her employer, Thomas Kinnear and his housekeeper, Nancy Montgomery. After many years of imprisonment, Dr. Simon Jordon, an up-and-coming expert in the field of mental illness, listened to Grace’s story. Grace had earned a reputation for her ‘fine sewing’ and as she told her story, she hand-sewed beautiful quilts for various prison community members. Telling her story, from her family’s difficult passage from Ireland to Canada, to her time as a maid, Grace relived her past. During these conversations, Dr. Jordon drew her closer to a dark maze of relationships and her lost memories of the day her life was shattered.

As I sewed, I too, like Grace Marks, remembered. Among other things, I remembered a frightened child, almost four, unbeknown to her parents, peering through the top banisters on the staircase, listening to the final fighting words of mother and father. I remembered a small child sent away from home, and lying in a big bed in a very

big room, smelling and watching the spread of dank patterns of dampness on the wallpaper closest to the high ceiling. Bandages, like gloves and socks, covered the chilblains on her hands and feet. The sudden break in the symmetry of her young life and the shocking disruption in the steady circulating flow of life's energy had resulted in poor circulation of her body's blood. After awhile, the skin covering the joints on her hands and feet cracked open, revealing glistening, raw flesh that had to be covered for infection prevention. Hands and feet are extremities of the body, parts that reach out naturally to and for connection.

Sometimes I had to deliberately move away, putting down the needle and cloth because tears prevented me from seeing and thinking where to put the next stitch. The back and forth movement of stitching, diving down into the unseen dark and returning to life's shimmering becomes easier with practice. A troubled well of loneliness slowly filled, providing clear, clean water from which to drink and replenish myself in my day-to-day living.

When the tears stopped, my thinking was clearer, not so muddled by misplaced or forgotten emotions. And the completed 'piece' was hung on one of my walls in a prominent place in the room in which I did most of my reading and which contained my computer. In fact, the 'piece' was always visible from where I sat, working on the outside – on the computer – from my inside process.

Grace Mark's story does have a happy conclusion in the book; at least one is to presume so. She meets a kind and gentle man, Mr. Walsh, they get married, and she thinks she is pregnant. Grace plans to sew a '*Tree of Paradise*' quilt for herself and her new family.

On some levels, my installation-sewing piece may be compared to the '*Tree of Paradise*' quilt that Grace was to create. The creation of my piece is a concrete expression of personal empowerment, hope for a brighter future of connection in relationships. It became a portal, and once completed gained me access into academic

realms. It has become as Slattery (2001) wrote, “...an aesthetic representation in a public space, the piece is available for others to experience, evaluate, critique, and apply to other contexts.” (p.385)

For several days, I stared at and mused on my sewn installation piece on the wall. The feeling was one of awe; similar in some ways to the feelings I had had when I first gazed upon the children who came into this world from my body. I found it difficult to comprehend that it was I who had played some part in the creations. I still do. For quite some time, I could not concentrate on reading or writing and did neither. I connected with the feelings in my body. Then, I woke one morning knowing it was time to begin again to read in order to write. I was excited about the thought of learning from the reading. I was able to pay more attention, to hear more of the words and make sense of the theories and ideas of others without becoming defensive, ‘closing off’ - consequently hearing and remembering little of what I had read. In retrospect, I was now responding and no longer reacting to what was happening around me - and that included reading. Connecting with something solid in myself, I had acknowledged some experience that, to date had been denied. The process of creating through stitching had become a process of re-creating my life. I felt ready to ‘take charge’ of my life, and put my mind to work with a child-like wonder that had re-surfaced.

In this thesis, there is space for feeling and emotion, intimacy and connection as well as the dominant values of analysis, critical thinking, and self-sufficiency. In this way, reproductive alienation from my body is circumvented; I transgress from the linearity of dominant values, as I do not separate mind from body and thought from action. Therefore, not only am I becoming an educated woman, I am receiving a liberal education (Reed, Roland F. and Johnson, T.W.1999). And so, I find my own way as I continually grope for life’s meaning.

Feminist thought has also contributed to the reconstruction of the history of educational thought. Listening to the full range of conversations, both male and female, necessitates a change in the notion not only of what counts as bona fide topics of study

but also of what counts as a bona fide source of data. Of data collecting, Jane Roland Martin (1999) comments, *“The general expectation that any educational theory worth recording is readily accessible in books or academic journal becomes unreasonable when the objects or the subjects of educational thought are considered marginal.”* (Martin quoted in Reed, and Johnson, 1999, p.184).

Being female and financially poor, relatively speaking, there are those who place me in the margins of society. It has been common thinking that marginalized people do not normally have access to established channels of communication. And if they do, those channels rarely give equal time to topics concerning marginal people. ‘*Times, they are a-changin’*’, sang Bob Dylan in the sixties and they continue to change.

Thus, as the larger effort of reclamation proceeds, we will have to look to sources of data that the history of educational thought regards as far from standard: to personal letters, diaries, pamphlets, newsletter, pieces of fiction, and to oral sources as well. (Jane Roland Martin. 1999, p.184)

Information for this thesis text was gathered, stored and then sorted from a diverse selection of sources - educational journals, text-books, fictional pieces, poetry, newspapers, hand-made buttons with quotes on them, conversations listened to on the CBC radio, a video, and conversations with family, friends and colleagues. Overall, my own experience has had the greatest impact on the production of this finished text.

The acquisition of data for the actual study was researched, for the most part, on line; the seed of the idea was planted for germination by a conversation with one of my university committee members. Spending part of my ‘Life on Line’ (Markham.1998) enabled me to collect various accounts of real experience in virtual space. Initially, my intention was to rely solely on the text-based ‘*e-interview*’ (Bampton and Cowton, 2002), as a qualitative research tool for the development of emerging and reflective dialogue between the six participants and myself. Computer mediated interaction, according to Moss and Shank (Gibbs, Friese and Manabeira, 2002, 4 [9]), is to be considered as

neither oral nor written language, but as a post-literate transformation of language itself. It is further suggested that this transformation of language can only be properly understood by the use of qualitative methodologies. The reference to the use of 'e-interviews' as a tool in the post-literate transformation of language fits well with the present image of myself as a post-kindergarten late bloomer!

As a woman of quality, interested in hearing and re-telling, publicly, quality stories of others who are marginalized by certain elitist circles, I too, as do Gibbs, Friese and Mangabeira, content that, "...., *the e-mail might enable research about new social groupings, given that constraints of time travel and financial resources do not apply.*" (Gibbs, Friese and Mangabeira, 2002, p.7)

Technology was to become the means of communication between the researcher and the researched. A sequence of e-mailing - '*episodes*' (Bampton and Cowton, 2002), took place between each woman, and myself separately, and over a period of fifteen and one-half-weeks. However, although the use of e-mails is becoming more widespread and more firmly embedded into social processes, there are certain limitations to its use - lack of visual contact being a primary one. "*There is already a great interest in the visual aspects of culture and in the importance of embodiment in understanding human actions.*" (Gibbs, Friese and Mangabeira. 2002, p.29). Therefore, the impact of collecting qualitative data by electronic means from human subjects requires a lot more research.

Interviewing is predominantly a verbal process; body language and other non-verbal cues are lost in the episodes of e-interviewing. As I progressed in the e-interviewing episodes, I became more acutely conscious of the lack of immediacy, becoming quite anxious, worrying about the effect and affect of the use of my chosen words in the construction of meaning. E-mail is a form of communication that does not exactly mirror the oral forms found in the traditional interviews and conversations.

As a qualitative researcher, I realised in hindsight that I was interested not just in what the women said but how they said it, and I found myself severely restricted.

As a qualitative researcher, I realised in hindsight that I was interested not just in what the women said but how they said it, and I found myself severely restricted. Bampton and Cowton (2002) contend “...*the dis-location of interviewer and interviewee in an e-interview reduces the richness of the messages that pass between them, opening up an increased possibility of both ignorance and real misunderstanding when compared with the face-to-face interview.*” (p.6 [16])

After several e-messages back and forth, one of the women requested a face-to-face meeting to be assured of my embodied integrity. The line that some of my questioning responses had taken, had put her ‘on alert’, and she wanted to see and talk with me in person. Using an analogue technology of audio recording, I conducted a well-established method of interviewing during an approximate two-hour period and in the woman’s own home.

Electronic interviewing (no transcription necessary!), as a source of data collecting, required only the very basic of skills, on my part, in the rapidly advancing field of computer technology. For this, I was grateful. There were no computers in the institutions in which I was schooled in my early years and having only recently begun to travel on my own in cyber space, I am barely ‘computer literate’.

When it was time to analyse the hard copy printouts of the e-interview episodes, I began to wonder if, in fact, I had used the best method for this inquiry. I started to worry about possible threats to quality because of biased ‘readings’ (Gibbs, Friese and Mangabeira, 2002, p. 9[24]), especially since I had not conducted face-to-face interviews with five of the women. As a novice researcher undertaking qualitative analysis, I realised that I was going to have to pay particular attention to how I wrote about the data and presented the written text. The six other women in the study were to become ‘proof readers of relevant ‘bits and pieces’, and would again be requested to engage in a technological interactive dialogue. Only after more ‘online’ communication and a confirmation from them would the writing be considered satisfactory, and therefore, ready for submission.

Electronic communication is fast becoming the media of choice for those who can afford the necessary equipment and have the power of electricity, and as Annette Markham (1998) states, "*We give online communication a variety of labels to help us to define what it means: Information Superhighway, Worldwide Web, Internet, Cyberspace, Electronic Frontier, and the like*" (Markham, 1998, p.224). These metaphors over time, space and continued use will become templates we apply to our experiences of these technologies.

"....without a name you don't exist, no-one will talk to you." (Markham, 1998, p.224) says Sheol, a character who comes to life in a literary work about e-interviews conducted in electronic research, and which reveals the complexity and diversity of technological realities. Although Sheol is referring specifically to realities created in cyberspace, her comment seems quite appropriate for a study of women in British Columbia, Canada, who chose to name themselves. By choosing their own name, these women demand to be spoken to or with in a manner appropriate to the realities of their lives. Naming is a very important act: A name signals an existence. It has the power to create and generate realities in a multiple of locations in space, whether close by or at a distance far away.

To conclude this chapter: I have employed an inclusive, eclectic methodology with a particularly strong leaning towards qualitative rather than quantitative inquiry. This has provided the means to explore and capture multiple realities within the multiple locations of the women who participated. Simultaneously, the genre has provided the space for personal engagement in a process of self-discovery.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW: WANDERING IN WONDER

Introduction

In this chapter, I wander in wonder as I explore literary findings that are relevant to the concepts, ideas, theories and thinking of naming. There are multiple voices in this chapter, many of them mine. These voices speak not only in the present, in the form of the first person, but also from a past, recently remembered, in the third person form. Different size and style of fonts distinguish different voices.

The chapter begins and ends with a poem. The first poem acknowledges my search for identity. Poststructuralists would call this subjectivity, signalling that a person is not only shaped by social and cultural norms but also shapes herself through the discourses she takes up. Acknowledgement of subjectivity must occur before change can happen.

The poem at the end of this chapter recognises the change that has occurred. It speaks to acceptance of my self in a wholistic world, while acknowledging the power of language in the telling of whom it is we think we are.

Immediately following the first poem and preceding the poem at the end of the chapter, are two vignettes of 'the past remembered'. The inclusion of these vignettes - with accompanying footnotes - is a means to an end; ways to purge some negative conditioning in a small child's adult perception that no longer serves a purpose. I am no longer naively prone to the subtleties of the need in others for compliance in the formation of the person I am to become.

Contained between the vignettes is a written commentary that reviews literature pertaining to language and the implication of language for identity and self. In conversation, self is, more often than not, associated with a name, a proper noun in the grammatical terms of language. Naming of anyone or anything is powerful. Language and its use are powerful. Therefore, for lucidity, a substantial amount of this chapter

examines relevant reading material regarding language, and the definition of self. It is towards the end of this chapter that one will find specific reviews of work relevant to the actual naming of persons.

There is also interspersed throughout the chapter, a running commentary, made as I paused to reflect while reading and then writing the text. Using my writing as a medium to take up the question of how to live (as the ancient Greeks did), I am in the process of - to use the postmodern terminology - reconstituting myself. And so...

Poem #1

Charged with the making of meaning.

*I stand on trial
to be judged by a jury of peers.
Those others who stalk
the corridors of my conscious and unconscious being,
waiting, always waiting
to remind me I am merely
a trespasser in some-one else's text.*

*I'm an adult now,
or so I'm told by those who
look at me,
look up to me,
look down on me,
look in me,
look through me and beyond
with eyes of commonality, acceptability and respectability*

*Pretending that I am safe,
safe from the ghosts of a past who haunt the future of my
presence.*

*I pull down the blinds, close the curtains,
and pretend I have shut out the outside world,
and am alone.*

And how do you plead?

Guilty.

*I plead guilty to charges of ethnocentrism, elitism,
ageism, sexism, naiveté, ignorance, innocence.
And all those other ways of looking at, seeing, perceiving
those who are not me.*

*I stand in front of the mirror.
The person inside a female body that is mine stares back.*

I don't know her.

*I look harder,
trying to find something that resonates with memories
of the child, the teenager, the young woman
and all the others that I was.*

*I don't see them.
I don't hear them.*

*They've gone, temporarily hidden themselves
to trick me into thinking
I never was who I think I am.*

*I see only an ageing, female body,
definition blurred by
the closeness of my breath as*

*I press closer, trying desperately
to breathe life into the flattened image
so it may speak some words of truth.*

The mirror shatters.

*The woman stands alone, without reflection.
Momentarily stunned,
she falls to her knees, unable to move.*

And on the floor lie the broken pieces of life.

II

*There's a fire piled high with dry wood
that's burning hot.
The air smells of smoke, fear and scorching flesh.*

*Between patterns of well-laid twigs, tree branches,
I catch a glimpse of other limbs twisting in agony
as flames take hold,
devouring with such greed.*

*I hear no other sound,
only the leaping of the flames,
the thumping of my heart.*

My eyes look upwards.

*Amongst the reds, whites, blues and dark wood of the open fire,
I see the outline of a face.*

*Straining forward
But not too close because of the heat.*

*I am horrified to see the contorted face of a human being
with an open mouth but still I hear no
scream of pain.*

*The features, barely visible seem somehow familiar
and it is with sudden shock
I recognise them as my own.*

Stepping back quickly,

*I look at faces in the crowd,
standing
so still; staring;
and see nothing
but fear wrapped up and decked out.
Coloured cloth of self-blame, smugness, apathy, righteousness;
Humankind qualities,
far-reaching, hurtful.*

*Peering more intently at the faces,
I hunger for a sign so I can understand.*

*I am sick.
I see my own face everywhere.*

I live my life with a veneer of the other.

III

*A glint of something bright catches her eye
as she gazes on a piece of splinted glass before her.
Saltwater, unpolluted as yet, sparking
from the radiance of the sun above*

send ripples of discontent to the beaches of her mind.

*Filthy is the water now,
discoloured by the spilling of blood.*

*Large and small pieces of shit jostle for a place
among the broken body parts of those whose cries for help
were too weak
or went unheard.*

*I stand at the helm of my little wooden boat,
navigating and manoeuvring with difficulty these treacherous
waters.*

*Scanning the future distance,
I breathe uneasily,
not wanting to see the suffering of those like me.*

*Babies the size of plastic dolls float face up; face down.
I can no longer tell
which one was real.*

*And I wonder if they ever could see,
those who denied themselves with thoughts
that life is cheap, up for grabs, for sale?*

*And if they couldn't, wouldn't see,
what difference did it, does it make still?*

IV

I move faster now, taking the oars, rowing as hard as I can.

not waiting for the answer and deceiving myself
into thinking there is no price around my heart.

It is the only way I know to continue,
without throwing myself overboard
And drowning in my own crap.

The sun overhead burns red and offers no respite this time.

Waiting helpless and hopeful for the moon to show mercy,
I grow weary,
longing for the coolness of the touch of the night air
to shroud and protect me from myself.

v

There's my grandmother,
her bloated body grotesque with the dis-ease of life's sickness.
A pain of which I know nothing deforms her face,
yet I feel somehow responsible.

She's trying to tell me something.
I sense it but can't read it
in the holes that once contained her eyes.
I never really listened to her words,
being too young to know why not.

Where is my grandfather?
Why has he floated in obscurity for so long?

Now is the time to bury the last of my dead with respect:
To pick off scabs to uncover
the raw vulnerability of a middle-aged-adult-child.

Deep wounds of rape, incest, slavery.

Other heinous acts, too terrible to speak,
demand in the name of justice that
festering, stinking sores be made visible
for the healing balm of those who care.

VI

I see him, out front, in a long line of marching men
who serve and protect us from the evil in ourselves.

Did he shoot; press the trigger?
Was he the one who dropped the bomb?

Or was he speared, mortally wounded, decapitated,
disembowelled, deprived of water, of the company of his family
and friends,
tortured horribly in a war
that was or wasn't of his choosing?

Did he drown unwanted baby girls?
Or did he teach my sister how to be a warrior?

Under a colonial cloak of greedy materialism,
what uniformed colours did his forefathers wear?
What other colours beneath the façade of snowy white does
he hide,
while nonchalantly marking, so violently and vehemently
a territory he mistakenly thinks is his?

He is a dangerous offender, a pretender,
under the presumption that
the world is his oyster to be pried open at will
and destroyed if necessary
to satisfy whatever the cause of his hunger.

He strides, full of his own self-importance,
squashing any that inadvertently step in his way.
Unable to focus beyond himself, he exists on the surface,
separated from the universal rhythms of his heart.

I am related,
this granddaughter of my grandmother and grandfather.
Their genes are in my genes; in the streams of blood
that flow endlessly towards infinity.

VII

And so, where is the end for now for you
who stand so straight and tall in the witness box,
watching with patience for the jury's deliberation;
for the judge to begin sentencing and
a new day to begin?

Silently, in single file, the jury returns.
some shuffling, some with eyes downcast,
anywhere but the witness box.
They take their seats and quietly disappear.

Vignette #1

*And a small child, just turned four, with curly dark
brown hair, blue eyes opened wide, sits swinging skinny little legs,
feet five inches off the marbled floor, at a large oak-fashioned
classroom desk. She wears a brown pleated tunic, white blouse,
brown tie with diagonal gold stripes and long brown woollen
stockings held up by hidden suspenders made of rubber. Her first*

proper dress-up in uniformed conformity. Wriggling on her wooden seat like the worm on the end of a fishing line, she waits her turn. Then, on cue, she stands and side steps to her allotted space, a place in the right aisle. Arms down, close to her body, looking straight ahead, she focuses on a holy picture of a Virgin Mary or maybe it was a Mary Magdalene, above the nun who sits, watching like a big, black, beady-eyed crow. She opens her small, child's mouth, "J.....A..... Y.....N..... E. " It was a spelling lesson at Mount Carmel Convent School.'

One of the first words a child learns to speak is its name, and in most Western formal learning settings, a child begins to speak before learning to write. A primary task in learning to write is learning how to spell individual words by putting together letters of the alphabet in ordered patterns, sometimes-chaotic patterns. In this way, like wild horses, language sounds are corralled, harnessed and made to work in established forms appropriate for any given cultural setting. In a poem titled, "Spelling", Margaret Atwood (1981) draws attention to the simple yet deceptively complex task of learning to spell.

*"How do you learn to spell?
Blood, sky & the sun,
Your own name first, your first naming,*

¹ Mount Carmel Convent School was run by nuns of the Carmelite Order who wore long black habits with white wimples. On certain days, only certain nuns spoke or were allowed to be spoken to. Jayne was my first name then and Jayne was the first word I was formally taught how to spell and speak out loud on command.

This serves as one example of the ways in which the dynamics of power have been experienced by me in relation to formal educational contexts.

Your first name, your first word.” (p.64)

In the poem, there is an implied message that learning to spell, for a young child, is a crucial task for the overall development and integration of language in the life that is to be lived. The act of learning to spell your own name may be seen as an ‘initiation’ ritual into the scholarly world of written and or spoken language.

Atwood uses a ‘witchy’ metaphor to evoke the unveiling of the magical power of language: *“a word after a word after a word is power”* (p.64). A name is a word; a word is spoken and written in language, and it was Foucault (1983) who wrote about language governing mentality and of the power that works through language. He maintained a notion that language not only describes and defines human beings but also creates social contexts in which human beings are constructed.

Atwood’s poem addresses the blotting out, historical silencing of women by society, when the woman in the poem becomes like a burning witch with *‘her mouth covered by leather to strangle words’* (p. 64).

Although the time is now for me, a “witchy”, female, writer to (re) recant, open her silence and explore, albeit briefly, the use of language in the telling of stories of whom it is we think we are. *“Scholars have suggested that language forms do not assert anything; rather, language reveals the tentativeness of all discourses, universal and totalizing discourses in particular, and demonstrates the essential insufficiency of words for expressing truth”* (Slattery 2001, p.373).

The sheer volume of literature available on the subject of language, particularly words, is indicative of the powerful impact of words within diverse inter-personal contexts. Words are a form of communication, and, according to Freire (2002), the word is the essence of dialogue and dialogue is the essence of cultural synthesis. In Freire’s thinking, language functions as a double-edged instrument, which is used to facilitate the

integration of generations into the logic of the present system and brings about conformity. However language may become the '*practice of freedom*', the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. Advocating the use of words in language that is inclusive rather than exclusive, Freire is best remembered for his literacy work with disadvantaged, marginalized people in South America, linking education to life-long learning, equality and social justice. His critical pedagogical perspective examined and revamped the use of language in the process of liberating oppressed peoples. Regarding the word, Freire (2002) writes,

But the word is more than just an instrument which makes dialogue possible; accordingly, we must seek its constitutive elements. Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed – even in part – the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus to speak a true word is to transform the world. (p. 87)

Searching for words that resonate with my lived experience, I tread critically through a labyrinth of reading material, and come across complicated and elaborate tales spun by writers of all sorts. I have become more conscious of a growing need to look for literature, the written commitment to language, which is discursive, and addresses questions of representation. The significance of the demystification of ideologies based on pervasive, systemic hierarchies of power intrigues me. I find myself engaged in a process of producing knowledge that is not prescriptive, but knowledge that is personal and based on the experience of relationships in my social and political life.

Sometimes when I close a book, or put away an article I have read, I am aware of a tightening up in my whole body that began with a slight pressure in my head. I try to understand the meaning of words that have little relevance in the life that I live, and I grapple with the confinement of an academic straightjacket.

At other times, I close a book or put away an article that I hurried to finish because the meaning of the words aroused me. There is an unfolding energy of joy in my life like

a gift unwrapped as I read and turn the pages. Then I return to my daily life and everything seems different. The limbs of my body appear to move more freely, the trunk of my body feels more solid, more “thickly” grounded in the experiencing of the unlimited circling of connection. Choosing my reading texts carefully, I involve myself personally in a universal movement against adult suffrage. In the reading and interpretation of others’ writing, I struggle with the untying of a string of hermeneutic knots to discover that people use oppression for propaganda purposes in order to create power for individual selves. And I know I am changed by the words I read, and the closed book is put away for now.

When I talk with some whose lineage is not Anglo-Saxon, such as an African-Canadian friend, it becomes clearer that the Western tradition of language has been primarily concerned with the written word. It is the written word that has largely influenced the creation and fostering of the Western illusion of essentialism and permanence (Atwood, 2002). Many years ago, European missionaries left for so called developing countries in a mythical Third World with copies of the Bible tucked away neatly in trunks or under their arms. Contained in this biblical work, perhaps the first official self-help publication, were ‘bible-thumping’ words that described how an individual person was expected to act and behave in order to attain a life everlasting. This book, considered sacred and holy to those in ‘holier than thou’ positions became the Master reader for those who suddenly discovered they had a soul that needed saving.

Languages, alphabets, and calendars are creations of mind that exist only in the mind and are part of the mind. Their logic depends on the consistency of their form and structure. An alphabet is a set of symbols representing the sounds of the language arranged in a definite order; a calendar is a consistent ordering of days, months and years. Language, ‘*an agreement, like Greenwich Mean Time*’ (Rodriguez, 2002, p.109), more specifically the use of words, especially for indigenous peoples, had been primarily an oral tradition until the time of colonisation. A Canadian First Nations Elder, knowledgeable in ‘old ways’ of her peoples, told me that it used to be the custom for one or more ‘witnesses’ to be present at gatherings on important occasions. The ‘witness’

became the 'ears', for the purpose of sharing and telling stories. Nothing was recorded in a written format.

The terms, '*mother tongue*' and '*father tongue*' (Chambers; Oberg; Dodd; Moore, 1994) are used metaphorically to contrast ways of using language and are used differentially by, and thus associated with men and women in Western cultures. For example, Simone de Beauvoir (1953), describes how historically, women have compared experiences pregnancies; births, their own and their children's illnesses and household cares that have become essential events of the human story. Their work is not a technique; by passing on recipes for cooking and the like, they endowed it with the dignity of a secret science founded on oral tradition. There is a socio-cultural implication of '*mother tongue*' and '*father tongue*', which is, "*That monologicistic discourse, as opposed to conversation, has come to be the most privileged form of speaking/writing for both coming to know and displaying knowledge cannot be linked to an essential or biological difference between men and women.*"(Chambers, Oberg, Dodd, Moore, 1994, p. 108)

These writers, Chambers, Oberg, Dodd and Moore, (1994) point out that the differences in the language between '*mother tongue*' and '*father tongue*' appear to be embedded firmly in socio-cultural habits and traditions. An institutional practice in language has profound consequences on the overall treatment of men and women in general.

Losing my way constantly as I journey in and out of remote, outlandish areas of the '*languageland*' (Daignault in Pinar, 1992b) of academe offers me glimpses into a heady ramble of white European, especially French, discourses regarding the subject of language. Take, for example, '*semiology*'. In the Random House College Dictionary, '*semiology*' is defined as '*a general theory of signs and symbolism usually divided into the branches of pragmatics, semantics, and syntactics.*' Although Roland Barthes (1988) does not '*experience himself as an image, the imago of semiology,*' he is considered by many who walk in the intellectual circles of society to be The One responsible for the

semiotic movement. This movement provides yet another layer in the ongoing exploration of language as a way of communicating.

Since the advent of structuralism, other discourses have reared their heads to become caught up in the odyssey of Barthes' semiological adventure. Barthes (1988), himself, states,

Propp, discovered through Lévi-Strauss, made it possible to apply semiology with some rigor to a literary object, narrative; Julia Kristeva, profoundly transforming the semiological landscape gave me personally and principally the new concepts of paragrammatism and intertextuality; Derrida vigorously displaced the very notion of sign, postulating the retreat of signifieds, the decentering of structures; Foucault accentuated the problematics of the sign by assigning it a historical niche in the past. Lacan gave us a complete theory of the scission of the subject, without which science is doomed to remain blind and mute as to the place from which it speaks remain blind and mute as to the standpoint from which it speaks (p. 6).

And no matter how brightly shines the sensibility of semiotics; I continue to search for a language in discourse that speaks to me personally of experience in a world that is forever changing. There are times I stare blankly at black words on white paper. The letters become non-letters, and appear only as linear-shaped lines, signs, and symbols. I have no immediate access to the language (Trinh, 1991) and become an outsider, one of the 'others' as I grope my way through the darkness of the markings on the sterility of the page. I catch myself before I fall too far into the abyss wondering about the deadness of words. What about praxis; how can dead words bring to life the practicalities of application? And I am left frozen, out in the cold, to thaw in the warmth of a well-worn security of exclusion. And these words come to mind,

The dead may guard the treasure, but it's useless treasure unless it can be brought back into the land of the living and allowed to enter time once more - which means to enter the realm of the audience, the realm of the reader, the realm of change. (Atwood, 2002, p.178-179)

Language not only reflects our thinking, but the language we use colours and determines largely how we think about things; that is, it describes multiple realities within the context of a universal whole. According to Daly (1978), within dominant discourse, it is majority 'mal(e)stream' thought, expressed in written and/or spoken conversation, that is the all pervasive language of myth, whether conveyed overtly or subliminally through religion, 'great art', literature, the dogmas of professionalism, that has the major role in the acting out on life's centre stage. The use of a language that is systemically and intrinsically male-oriented serves to deceive and imprison men and women who would speak with a different voice from alternative realities that are concerned with a more equitable and equal distribution of the earth's natural resources. As Daly argues, "*Deception is embedded in the very textures of the words we use*" (p. 3).

Prentice and Pierson (1982), noticing a lack of female identity, female subjectivity, and female presence within the written accounts of history, were prompted to write, "*Women's invisibility is rooted in the language itself. Often embedded in conventional language are usages that marginalize the experience of women or leave them out of the picture altogether*" (p.163).

It was Audre Lorde (1981), whose radical determination to make visible marginalized women everywhere and to create change by advocating the positive power of the diversity in difference, who said, "*The masters' tools will never dismantle the masters' house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.*" (p.99)

And left behind in the wake of the dismantling, the denouncing of male scholarly androcentrism, feminist critical thinkers root around in the ruins searching for debris with which to re-build. Finding little of worth to use as effectors of change in the transformation of a more just society, they use the backbone, ribs, sinew and heartbeat of their lives to reconstruct new houses with multiple rooms. Language speaks in many voices (Serres, 1997), and "A Room of One's Own" (Woolf, 1945), no longer provides space for the plurality of nonunitary subjectivity in the expression of human diversity

(Bloom, 1996). Trinh (1991), an award winning filmmaker and theorist, offers new challenges to Western regimes of knowledge. Often citing '*the master and his tools*,' she brings to her subjects an acute sense of the many expressions of meaning, by examining Asian and African texts, the theories of Barthes, questions of spectatorship, the meaning of art, and the perils of anthropology.

Then there are the languages of Aboriginal peoples that differ from English. Ross (1996) in a written exploration of aboriginal approaches to justice and the vision of life that shapes them draws attention to the English preference for nouns as opposed to verbs. According to him, there is a core conviction among Aboriginal (First Nations) people that life is change and because people are part of life, people are change too. Ross theorises that the language within First Nations' communities reflects this understanding and so the focus of talk, conversation, is not on 'things' (nouns) but on processes, (verbs), not on people but on relationships. Thinking about underlying subliminal concepts in the use of languages, Ross inquires,

And what is the fate of languages that depict so differently who and 'how' we are? Will they disappear in favour of European languages that make us feel protected and in control but at the same time seem to leave us with a sense of being alone and unconnected? (p.129)

And Mohanty (1991), writes about alternatives to written narratives of resistance that undo hegemonic-recorded history. She writes about differently lived ways of doing things and invents at the same time, new ways of speaking and of remembering. Mohanty gives as an example the Jamaican collective, Sistren, whose creative performances in public provide a safety net for the exposure of the most subversive elements of political domination during nonrevolutionary times.

Nell Noddings (1986) writes about the impact of language in relationship issues of ethical caring in the classroom. She observes that '*the language of the father*', like '*the masters' language*' promotes a consciousness that is distorted by a slanted and necessarily biased view from a male perspective. She states,

Several theorists in education - among them, William Pinar. Madeleine Grumet, Dwayne Huebner, Elliot Eisner – have suggested that our pictures of the world are unduly cramped and narrowed by reliance on a restricted domain of language. Pinar and Grumer, in particular, have looked at this problem in the context of gender studies. (p.2)

And bell hooks (1994), strives, like Noddings, for transgression in education by the rethinking of teaching practices and the use of language in the age of multiculturalism. Although both educators stress the importance of language use because of far reaching ramifications, hooks, like Lorde, compares the negative use of the English language to colonial domination and refers to the Meta language as, “...*the oppressor’s language yet I need it to talk to you.*” (hooks, 1994, p.167)

“I know that it is not the English language that hurts me, but what the oppressors do with it, how they shape it to become a territory that limits and defines, how they make it a weapon that can shame, humiliate, colonise.” (hooks, 1994, p.168)

A great deal of harm occurred in parts of the world during the time of ‘colonisation’, and there is a danger that this may happen all over again under the guise of ‘globalisation’. There is a need for a more inclusive world created by more inclusive people who speak a more inclusive language. Language that is more inclusive addresses the deficiency of people in the human factor (hooks, 1999). It speaks to the spirit of connections inherent in all relationships whether it is teaching and learning, learning and teaching, or sitting at home reading a book as opposed to being in a classroom listening to students write. hooks (1999) reminds us that we are not just teachers when we enter our classrooms, but are learners/teachers in every moment of our lives. Lest we forget, hooks reminds us again of the power of language when she comments, “*Remember that violence is not just physical aggression; violence can be making someone invisible; violence can be making someone other.*” (p.125)

And Alice, when wandering in Wonderland, met creatures of all sorts such as a queen, a rabbit, a cat, Tweedle Dum and Twiddle Dee and, of course, Humpty Dumpty.

She had a most interesting conversation with this egg-shaped, shell-covered fellow, Humpty Dumpty, talking with him about his name. The conversation went like this.

“Must a name mean something?” Alice asked doubtfully. “Of course it must,” Humpty Dumpty said with a short laugh: “My name means the shape I am – and a good handsome shape it is too. With a name like yours, you might be any shape, almost.”
(Rosenkrantz and Satran, 1992, p.91)

And coming out from behind the veneered wall of the Other into the spotlight of imagination enters Samaya who joins Humpty, Alice and the words on pages that construct illusions of reality.

‘Who or what are you?’ asked Humpty Dumpty, nearly loosing his balance and falling off the wall trying to look closer at her. “Me, I am Samaya.” “Samaya, You, Me and I. That’s four names. And which is your real name?”

And *“naming, whether critically or not, is to dive headlong into the black hole of un-naming”* (Trinh, 1991, p.2). Naming has a power of its own. Names, words, spoken in different contexts create an assortment of meanings. Language and its intent provide the means for conformity, possible domination and is the means for liberation of thought and so action. The examination of cultural divisions is an exacting task, and Hubbard (1984) and Trinh (1991) posit that critical inquiry exposes over codification, de-individualised individualism and reductionist collectivism. When proper names are given, the moments are positional, and become immediately transitional in an emergent world (Trinh, 1991).

And individuals who seek ‘power-within’, yet live and operate in the realities of a world teeming with situations of ‘power-over’ may well become aware that

The function of any ideology in power is to represent the world positively unified. To challenge the regimes of representation that govern a society is to conceive of how a politics can transform reality rather than merely ideologize it. As the struggle moves onward and assumes new, different forms, it is bound to recompose subjectivity and

praxis while displacing the way diverse cultural strategies relate to one another in the constitution of social and political life (Trinh, 1991, p.2).

Individuals assign names, sometimes to themselves and sometimes to others: A name is given to a 'self'. And perhaps now is the time to inform the reader that although there are mountains of literary works that attempt to seek, and find the elusive 'self', there is no evidence that is conclusive. To summarize: The 'self' remains hidden in the language of 'I', 'Me', 'You' and other pronouns. Philosophical, psychological and sociological discourse pursue a definition of 'self' that is grounded in theoretical belief, which, according to Canfield (1990), prompted Margaret Mead and Carl Marx to pronounce, "...the 'self' is not real, merely a figment of the social imagination" (p.129). Therefore, Canfield proposes that Mead and Marx supported the notion of a social construction of the 'self', which presupposes that the 'self' is not static and is in a state of constant motion with the sun and other constellations within universal consciousness. However, the idea of an absolute social construction of 'self' appears somewhat at odds with students of Carl Jung's theory of personality and his theoretical and philosophical assumptions that acknowledge recognition of a thriving life inside as well as outside the body. One such student is Daniel Myers (1980), who wrote,

When we enter the inner movement of our whole life history and connect ourselves to it from within rather than merely constructing an intellectual perspective of our life, we are extending our life in harmony with the inner principle that is trying to unfold through it (p.22).

And when we talk of harmony, we think in terms of relationships, of the spaces betwixt and between resources and people with whom we share this universe. We walk in constant subjectivity among chaotic ghosts of an objectified life of picked-over bones - skeletons, rocks, rotting branches of fallen trees, filigreed leaves. It is in these depths of relationship that potential exists; the past and the present become the future, the unknown becomes known. In the evolution of life, the self is continually transformed, is continually emerging, and is in a constant state of rebirth, so to speak. Life's singular birth canal: Trinh's (1991) 'hyphen'; Laing's (1969) 'and' in "Self and Others" the space

between Martin Buber's (1970) 'I' and 'Thou', provides what Watts refers to as a 'space interval'. Although it is uncommon practice to look and listen closely to silence and hear the vibration of existence, Watts (1966) comments,

Because of this habit of ignoring space-intervals, we do not realise that just as sound is a vibration of sound/silence, the whole universe (that is existence) is a vibration of solid/space. For solids and spaces go together as inseparably as insides and outsides. Space is the relationship between bodies, and without it there can be neither energy nor motion (p.23).

And according to Deleuze (1994), common sense, that is, unitary subjectivity does not exist. The very idea of the 'seamlessly unified self,' posited in Western humanistic tradition, is part of a phallic logic that penetrates and permeates the universality of non-conformity (Bloom, 1998). Deleuze defines common sense as a moral vision of the world that is extended and represented in the subjective identity affirmed as a COMMON SENSE. However, in a world that is not monocentric '*Representation is a site of transcendental illusion*' (p.265).

And if the sheer volume of relevant literature on library shelves is any indication, from purely a psychological standpoint, it appears that the topic of human subjectivity and identity has been primarily a middle-class, white, male obsession. The driving force may conceivably be coupled with an undeclared desire on the part of the Western Grand Patriarchy for domination in the exclusiveness of epistemology. Subjectivity and identity provide agency for participatory relationships within the universe. Relationships are inter-twined in chaotic, inter (dis) course that create meanings in living lives. Ricoeur (1973), supported by Kerby (1991), in belletristic efforts to untangle the messiness of identity in subjectivity, makes the point that it is only as a character in our own (and other people's) narratives that we achieve an identity. Ricoeur argues,

Our own existence cannot be separated from the account we can give of ourselves. It is in telling our own stories that we give ourselves an identity. We recognise ourselves in the stories that we tell about ourselves. It makes very little difference whether these

stories are true or false, fiction as well as verifiable history provides us with an identity.
(p.214)

Implied in Ricoeur's statement is that identity of the self is generated and given unity in and through its own narratives, and therefore through understanding of itself. The self believes Kerby (1991) is essentially a being of reflexivity, coming to itself in its own narrational acts. The self is not static, and subjectivity is nonunitary, according to a new breed of feminine postmodernists, intent on contributing to the balancing of scales in the production of diverse goodies that are sold in the academic market place. Leslie Bloom (1996; 1998) is one such market vendor. Bloom draws attention to internal connections that are grounded in personal experience and supports theory that recognises a multiplicity of selves, a multiplicity of subjectivity and a multiplicity of identities. Bloom's thinking evokes the concept of a self that is both subject and object. Therefore, the self as subject becomes an objectified 'site' for knowledge and knowing. Subject and object are complete units possessing the eyes of experience that make them nonunitary in the plurality of diversity. Subjectivity of the self is according to Robinson (1991) "*...an ongoing process of engagement in social and discursive practices... a continuous process of production and transformation (and)....a doing rather than a being.*" (p.11)

And Gee (2000-2001) writing about the subjectivity of identity, states,

Being recognized as a certain "kind of person" "... in a given context, is what I mean here by "identity". In this sense of the term, all people have multiple identities connected not to their "internal" states" but to their performances in society. (200-2001, p.99)

Both Gee and Goffman (2000-2001; 1959) theorised about the affects and effects of identity formation from external influences. [Those who name themselves, as the conducted study indicates, pay attention also to internal factors in the choosing of a name]. Goffman wrote about appropriate and acceptable behaviour in places of work, about '*performances*', and of the part etiquette plays in the presentation of self.

Moreover, it is not easy to understand a person whose foundation of 'self' is invisible (Heider, 1986). Many have tried, philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and still do try to fathom the essence of life. According to Berman (1981), "*the majority of these great thinkers used a disembodied intellect to confront what he calls, '...loaded terms in Western culture', - 'matter', 'data', or 'phenomena', to maintain the subject/object distinction*" (p.183).

Berman's early scholarly works tracked a Western historical overview of the developmental flow of knowledge, that is, the search for truth. He was, at that time, considered radical in his ideas, consequently, academically controversial. In his writing, he, like Watts, searches for a New World balance in the transformation of cultures capable of gentle and self-sustaining relationships to and with the earth. Berman writes,

With this paradigm (subject/object) discarded, we enter the world of sensual science, and leave Descartes behind once and for all. Whereas a mediaeval denial of participating consciousness would have amounted to a denial of ghosts and fairies, the Cartesian denial of it is quite simply a denial of the body, a denial that we even possess a body. But once the body is understood to be an instrument of knowledge, and it's denial seen as constituting as much of an error as any of Bacon's famous 'Idols', we have made sensual or affective science theoretically possible (Berman, 1981, p.183).

Berman did not leave Descartes behind because, as Sheldrake (1988) reminds us, when conversing of the present, it is nearly impossible to forget the past. Berman himself makes the point that it is presently impossible to think discursively in purely non-scientific categories although he has struggled to do so. Using non-scientific, qualitative language in his own intellectual backpack-unpacking journey in seeking the real treasure of life, that is, truth, Berman reminisces about the lost mediaeval art of alchemy. The alchemical tradition views the traditional imposition of Western order or identity, '*as an aborted metal that sulphur fixed too quickly*' (p.90). Berman compares the alchemist's search for the golden truth to a miner who probes deeply into the veins of the earth for ore. As he gets deeper, he becomes more and more detached from the dictates of his own

nature, more desperate and more dependent on a programmed 'identity' formed by institutional, and artificial controls. Berman comments, "*One vein leads to another, there is no right answer. Life, and human personality, are inherently crazy, multifaceted; neurosis is the inability to tolerate this fact.*" (p.90)

Berman observes that thinking only of the manufacture of gold as an end in itself, not of the process involved, is revealing, and indicates how contracted our own knowledge of the world has become. He writes,

We cannot know the alchemical process of making gold until we know the personality of gold. We, here and now, have no real sympathetic identity with the process of becoming golden; we cannot fathom the relationship between becoming golden and making gold. The medieval alchemist, on the other hand, was completed by the process; the synthesis of the gold was his synthesis as well. (p.93)

And I am reminded of a conversation about fishing that I overheard between a First Nations' man and a non First Nations' man. The non First Nations' person was told that if he wanted to catch a fish, he must think like a fish. In other words, process becomes significant; matter is permeated, not confronted and/or dominated.

Traditionally, some scientists have become old, bent, and tottering while trying to balance a great but one-sided simplistic view of the world. This view concentrates on the linear logic of facts and figures that can be evaluated, measured, and proven right or wrong. Until quite recently, people associated science with knowledge and a power intent on eliminating superstition, ignorance, disease and poverty. However, the natural world around us is not running harmoniously. New diseases, global pollution, species extinction, climate change, and human inequities are all results of the unexpected impact of simple-minded science and technology on nature (Sardar and Abrams, 1998). Now mathematics and computer power have produced another theory - chaos theory - that helps researchers to better understand the wholistic complexities of the nature of the universe (Hall, 1992; Mullin, 1993; Sardar and Abrams, 1998).

Katya Walter, (1994) '*the philosopher queen of the global village*' (Whole Earth Review. April 1995-2002), reflects on the hard sciences' inability to describe, really describe natural phenomena such as a cloud, coastlines, tree bark and the meaning of life. She writes,

For a life's meaning is to be found merely in its own experience, in each fleeting moment, scientifically unprovable and nonreplicable. Thus reduced to chilly statistics and lab experiments, the vast population of anonymous urban society lost sight of the vast wonder in each personal unreplicable moment, in our unique multiple visions that when overlaid, can connect the world into a holistic flow of qualitative meaning. (p.26)

And deterministic rules of science within monocentric systems have been called into question by the new chaos-based understanding of nature that requires a new notion of the appropriate form of scientific praxis. Western science is incapable of producing firm predictions of the future states of such chaotic complex systems. "*When safety is an issue, as in medical science, rather than knowledge or power, conventional science is an invaluable servant for decision-making, but it can be a very misleading master*", (Sardar and Abrams 1998). And Ravetz, a chaotic scientist and humankind educator, according to Sardar and Abrams, reflects,

We confront issues where facts are uncertain, values in dispute, stakes high and decision urgent. The only way forward is to recognise that this is where we are at. In relevant sciences, the style of discourse can no longer be demonstration, as from empirical data to true conclusions. Rather, it must be dialogue, recognising uncertainty, value-commitments, and a plurality of legitimate perspectives. (In: Sardar and Abrams, 1998, p.157)

Ravetz does not suggest throwing out the baby with the scientific bath water. Instead, recognising the importance of the contribution made by traditional Newtonian science, he reflects that in post-normal science, inclusive of chaos theory, quality replaces truth: "*In the heuristic phase space of post-normal science, no particular partial view*

can encompass the whole. The task now is no longer one of accredited experts discovering 'true facts' for the determination of 'good policy.' (In: Sardara and Abrams, 1998, p.15)

And Walters, in a study investigating the similarities between the Chinese I Ching and the genetic code, concludes that the I Ching preceded Leibnits binary code by more than 3, 000 years. She found that the same structure scientists found in DNA also exists in the ancient book of wisdom, I Ching, as well as in spiders' webs, sunflowers, and antique Indian rugs. This says Dr. Walters (1994) is evidence of a Master Plan in which God is the all-encompassing pattern present in all life. Using chaos theory as the basis for her revolutionary idea, she talks about creating order in our minds and the fundamental order of the universe. *"Chaos theory had enabled us to see pattern within apparent random events. With it we rise to a new level of vision and discover that there is simplicity in the complex flux."* (p.78)

And patterns of relationality and relativity are not new to an understanding that has been indigenous to non-Western societies. Traditional people have been aware of the mutuality of relationship; for example, *'no rain, no trees'* also meant a feedback loop, *'no trees, no rain.'* Universal interdependence must be honoured if there is to be harmony in the balancing of the shared resources of life.

Repeatedly
Over and over again in development work, the critique of non-Western experience has urged that the complex initial conditions of non-Western civilisation and environments have been insufficiently understood. Thus, grand schemes of community and world development by means of deterministic programmes have not achieved their projected ends. There are many case studies to substantiate this in alternative development literature, for example, critiques of the Latin American schools of dependencies, the Indian criticism of modernization, and the Muslim scholarship on Westernisation (Sardar and Abrams. 1998).

In complexity, there is no duality, as there is no duality in man and nature in non-Western universal views such as the Islamic, Chinese and the Hindu. And it is not surprising that the complexity has often been compared to Taoism. Brian Arthur, a Stanford University professor, notes,

The complex approach is total Taoist. In Taoism there is no inherent order. The world starts with one, and the one become two, and the two become many, and the many led to myriad things. The universe in Taoism is perceived as vast, amorphous, and ever changing. You can never nail it down. The elements always stay the same, yet they are always arranging themselves. So it's like a kaleidoscope: the world is a matter of patterns that change, that partly repeat, but never quite repeat, that are always new and different. (Sardar and Abrams, 1998, p.165)

And presently, scientists, psychologists, historians, educators and common people grapple to comprehend the phenomena of mind, consciousness, biological forms, and social structures - great mysteries of life. The very idea of a chaos theory provides a new way to think about nature, the physical world and humankind. Chaos theory provides another way of thinking and exploring random acts that on the surface might appear to be in isolation, connected to nothing before. Chaos theory blends the quantifying of linear logic and the qualifying of analog to produce thinking that is 'anilinear'. As Walter (1994) explains,

Taking a traditional linear approach is intellectually hazardous in dealing with the natural world nowadays. It doesn't suffice to explain atoms or quarks or DNA. Binary merely indicated the 0-1 of a discrete chain of logic. It discounts the integration and transcendent properties that are inherent in analog number, and thereby, it loses the complex sophistication of cycling proportion in relationship. (p.169)

And so, like the alchemist who seeks to transform lead into gold, anilinear thinking becomes a natural potion that has the power to change confusion, on whatever level, into insightful clarity. In present times, some therapists and counsellors use anilinear thinking

in the new age treatment of persons suffering from a variety of life's troubles. (Epstein, 1999; Goleman, 2001).

And so: what of names, those proper nouns that we are taught to write properly, always beginning with a capitol letter? According to Dan Scott (1993), naming has acquired a bad name for itself, having become tainted with a sense of command and order. We are called by name, commanded as it were by some one else, and commanding is a way of controlling, directing, and in some places of oppressing. In his thesis, Scott refers to Paz (1973) who presents an alternative way of thinking about names, and suggests that naming is not always a way of taking command but is a way of entering relationship. Paz makes the important point that what is unnamed cannot be engaged. Paz, so writes Scott, like Tournier (1975), perceives naming as an attempt to indicate the nature of what is not yet named: to recognise character. Scott maintains that a name can be used to command, but such an understanding limits and comes from a view that regards command as more important than exchange.

Naming and being named is a way of beginning exchange; of approach. It assumes a world of other and inclusion; that a relation is possible and through it, a knowing. It assumes dialogue; alternately. Naming is response to otherness and to difference. It is also a journey to the limits of self, involving risk through encounter. There is always the danger of misnaming, of being misnamed. Language is always dangerous (p.82).

There is very little written specifically about names, those proper nouns that speak to ownership, although when one looks deeply into the 'dark-mooned mystery' (Williams, 1991), literature brings light to lives that have been fractured by domination. Some have names and some do not have names (Stegner, 1990; Le Guin, 1987; Nagarany, 1993; Harjo and Bird, 1996). To date, it is in discursive writings that one reads of names per se. These writings do not conform to the Grand narrative of white majority rule; yet, they are indeed grand in narrative; they frequently and purposefully break free from the rule of conformity to speak in tongues that break the silence of conventionality. In so doing, the way is cleared for stretching, twisting, turning, and

moving in the re-telling of historical tales by those who may be considered 'counter-culture'.

To name a force, creature, person or thing is important because names have several connotations. Anderson (2000), a Cree/Metis writer and educator, speaks about a woman's sense of purpose being validated when she receives her Indian name. Some cultures, such as First Nation communities, choose names carefully for their magical or auspicious meanings. For these communities, knowing a person's true name means to know the life path and the attributes of that person's soul. The reason the true name is often kept secret is to protect the owner of the name so that he or she might grow into the power of the name. Sheltering the name protects it from denigration or distraction so that one's spiritual authority can develop to its full proportions (Estes, 1992).

Naming can be empowering and affirming of value. When a person takes on a new name, it is indicative of the continuous spiral dance of life; it may be a concrete affirmation of a new beginning or a transition. Starhawk (1987), a peace activist and leader in the feminist spirituality and eco-feminist movements in the United States and Europe writes,

When we name ourselves, or take on a new name, we may be seeing an aspect of our power that is new...A new name can affirm a new beginning or a transition. Names can be taken on for a temporary occasion: for a particular ritual, for a season, for an action. (p.121)

And in fairy tales such as the Grimm brothers' story of Rumpelstiltskin and another European folk story, Manawee, searching and learning the 'right' name of a person is paramount in the securing of fortunes and living '*happily ever after*'. Furthermore, Clarrissa Pinkola Estes (1992), a senior Jungian analyst, believes that there are several additional aspects to naming in fairy tales and folktales. There are tales in which the protagonist searches for the name of a malevolent force in order to have power over it; Rumpelstiltskin is one such story. However, Estes contends that, "*...more so the*

questing after the name is in order to be able to summon that force or person, to call that person close to oneself, and to have relationship with that person.” (p.122)

And in the story of Manawee, a man called Manawee travels back and forth searching to discover the name of twin sisters. The sisters’ father tells him that he may only marry them after he learns their names. Estes, re-tells the Manawee story, pointing out that the man is interested in naming the sisters, not in order to seize their power but to gain self-power, self-knowledge and what Starhawk (1987) refers to as power-within. Estes (1992) reflects, *“To know the names means to gain and retain consciousness about the dual nature. Wish as one may, and even with the use of one’s might, one cannot have a relationship of depth without knowing the names.” (p.122)*

And what of those who have no name? Maxine Hong Kingston, a first generation Chinese American woman, writes of her internal struggling to create an authentic identity from experiences of her own in America and the lived experiences of her Chinese born parents. She writes about Chinese ghosts of the past who haunt her presence, about her mother’s sister, her aunt, ‘*No Name Woman*’. This aunt committed a ‘spite suicide’ after she was raped by a neighbour and gave birth to a baby girl when her husband was working in America. No Name Woman believed she had shamed her family, so she drowned herself and her newborn infant in the family well. Her mother told Maxine this particular story when Maxine began to menstruate. It was intended to be a warning about the perils of sex and the importance of saving the ‘family honour’ at all costs. Maxine was instructed not to talk of this to anyone. Consequently, because her mother refused to talk about it further, because the aunt’s name was never mentioned, and because of the need of a vulnerable young girl to understand life, Maxine drew her own conclusions. She created a reality that existed only inside her own head, but a reality that greatly influenced her active participation in the world at large (Hong Kingston, 1989).

And Yamanaka (2000), a Japanese woman, wrote a book, “Name Me Nobody”, for teens about growing up and searching for self and place. The book contains fifty-two short stories about the life of an Asian teenager, Emi-Lou, living in America. Emi-Lou, as

a first person narrator, tells tales of vicious name-calling, and other elemental dramas of friendship, betrayal and love. Emi-Lou tells an outsider story of trying to cope with the immense task of locating a place, a space that is uniquely comfortable. With bravado not unique to many teenagers, Emi-Lou attempting to deal with her feelings of discrimination, bigotry, disregard and unimportance declares, *"Names don't matter because we're all really family under the skin."* (p.5)

And what of names in places where part of the family is literally covered up? There are parts of the world where women are kept under cover by the Taliban's regime of the burqua? Taslima Nasrin grew up in post-war Bangladesh and was weaned on a particular brand of Muslim fanaticism. As a teen, she was forced to wear the burqua when her maturing body robbed her of what little freedom she had enjoyed as a girl. As an adult living in America, she writes about her experience of coming of age as one of the most disadvantaged people on earth: a girl in Bangladesh. In the writing of her second novel, Nasrin (2002) found it necessary to create a new language to denote her passage from birth to adolescence as none existed in her native tongue. The Bengali term for childhood is 'chelebel': boy-time. Nasrin, in an act of radical linguistics made up the word, 'Mayebela', which means girl-time. There is a female character in Nasrin's haunting memoir that has no name at all. When asked why her mother has no name, the daughter replies, *"So what if she doesn't have a name? What would she do with it? What does it matter whether a poor woman has a name or not?"* (p. D12.).

Mohsen Makhmalbaf (2001) made a film called "Kandahar". In the film, Nafas, a young Afghan journalist who has taken refuge in Canada, returns to Afghanistan looking for her sister who was forced to stay behind after being crippled by a land mine. The sister had grown depressed because of the oppressive situation for all women living under the Taliban regime, and she had decided to end her own life before the imminent eclipse of the sun. Nafas makes the dangerous trip across the Iran-Afghanistan border in the hope of saving her, documenting events as she goes by tape recorder and camera. Close to the beginning of the film, when describing the countryside and its people, Nafas informs the

viewer that 'each ethnic group has a name and an image of its own'. However, she continues,

Women, who make up about half of the society, have no name or image because they are all covered. Perhaps that's why they are called women under the covers or black head.....For a woman living under cover, hope is the day she will be seen (2001).

Vignette #2

A small female child, not yet six, watches patiently but excited, trying hard not to squirm on her wooden seat as she waits her turn to walk slowly to the front of the class for the return of her lined-paper, exercise book. Standing quietly by the side of her first formal teacher, a nun dressed in the black and white habit of positivism, she looks, not fully understanding the implication of the significance of blood-red crosses over most of the pages of her writing. This had been an early attempt at joining written sentences: a time of personal triumph, of being included, and connected. Bending over, she sees more clearly the bloodied cancelling out of all her 'ands'. And the nun said, "Too many

*'ands' Jayne. Don't use them again. Use another word like 'but'.*²

And I have come to know from personal experience that 'ands' announce, for me, spaces and places in which I can connect, disconnect, and reconnect, again and again, with relationships that are infinite. No longer wanting, consciously, to 'but' out of engagement with the now, I try hard to be inclusive in my use of language and so to use instead of 'but' an 'and'.

And when now I listen back, there are times I hear still the rustle of the flapping of black veils, the dark folds of heavy serge material moving in sync with the free swing of rosary beads. Sometimes, I quickly glance around for the darkening shadow that blocks the light and am reminded of black crows looking for fresh, fertile feeding grounds on which to land and gorge themselves while cawing their exclusive talk of no 'ands'.

As I have read and reviewed literature that pertains to the role of naming in the identification of the self, I am left wandering in wonder. I have found relatively little published by ethnic writers of the African or Australian continents, although European and American intellectuals have published copious volumes on the subject of self and identity. Within the last decade, there has been a noticeable increase in the literary contribution of those labelled 'minority'. For example, First Nations writers; writers from Latin regions and those who immigrated to America from a birth country in Asia. I notice also that many so-called 'minority' writers write in different ways than the voices that tend to 'shout out' in Meta discourses. They write far more about people; they tell stories

² Those very visible 'red marks' covering the pages and intended to point out some errors in my beginning writing skills became invisible marks of shame that permeated my psyche. They did not aid in the overall development of a healthy attitude towards learning: Silent intentions, however well-meaning do not necessarily achieve the desired results. In retrospect, I became afraid to make mistakes in public and if I did, I became terribly ashamed. I became 'resistant' to educational opportunities for 'connection'. I have since come to acknowledge that I came into this world to learn, and teaching does not equal a 'breaking of spirit'.

of the practicalities of living a real life, grounded in the experience of the earth, not the experience of dis-embodied heads.

I begin to think once again about the *loci* of control, 'gatekeepers' of knowledge. And so, intent on balance in living a wholistic life, I will continue to wander, wondering in '*a-maze-ment*' at the matrix of knowledge available in both literary and non-literary works.

Poem #2

*I don't know who I am.
I just be.*

*And you, an other
me and I;
Who are you?*

*Do you know?
Can you tell,
who it is you truly are;
I truly am?*

*Like stars in the universe,
we live among words in language.*

*Words, signs, symbols, forms,
shapes wielding power.
Shapes that keep us in a place,
providing space to twist and turn.
To move.
To shift those forms to not conform
to other forms.*

*To shift those forms to not conform
to other forms.*

To liberate.

To just be.

CHAPTER 4
THE STUDY: SIX (I MAKE SEVEN) WOMEN
WHO CHOSE TO NAME THEMSELVES

This chapter examines in a broader context the significance of a qualitative study of seven women who chose to name themselves other than because of marriage.

Each woman in this study experienced the process of legally changing her name, some more than once. The women are the same and they are different: They have all changed their names, yet, their experiences are not the same. It is the commonalties and differences in the lives of these women that provide the substance for this inquiry.

In an expanding global community one model of discourse, like one voice, is not sufficient to meet the needs of a pluralistic world of diversity. The notion of 'sisterhood' that was the vision of the early years of the second wave of feminist discourse is no longer taken for granted. More commonly recognised now, especially within paradigms of poststructuralism, is the notion that every individual experiences differently the swirling and twirling of systems circling the various layers in society.

Thinking globally, this study is comparatively very small, and reveals the experiences of only six white, middle-class females living in British Columbia, Canada. Relatively speaking, these women may be considered privileged, not only because of easy access to, or ownership of, a personal computer, which was a pre-requisite for the study's participation but also because they are not without homes, food or money. Women in other parts of Canada, and the world may have no home or money to buy food, and are therefore less advantaged. The women participating in this study have greater opportunity for choice than do others in different regions of the globe.

The six women were recruited primarily by using a 'snowball' sampling technique. I asked women I knew who had changed their name to refer me to others they knew who had also changed their names. An initial e-mail request, "*Tell me about your name*

change?” began a two-way dialogue, which generated an assortment of responses. The emergent responses were used for further exploration, probing and clarification. The content of the responses, on paper printouts, provided the hard data for analysis. Towards the end of the e-mail dialogues, each woman was requested to provide personal information that was to be made public, suggest an artistic form, symbolising the name change process (see Appendix B), and to pick a colour that was to be used in a graphic representation by way of introduction.

Initially, and for anonymity and confidentiality purposes, I had intended to use pseudonyms of my choosing in the writing of the text. However, because of one request, the women chose whatever name was most comfortable for them. Consequently, five women chose pseudonyms.

Angela, Delaney, Nancy, Leah, and Starr are pseudonyms used by five of the women. It was important to Rowan that she used her own names. Therefore, Angela, Delaney, Leah, Nancy, Rowan and Starr were the participants in the study of women who named themselves. Samaya’s story is not told in this chapter as her tale wags throughout the preceding chapters, although she is included in number references.

All seven women have been divorced: All seven women are professional women. All have participated in formal higher education of some description: All the women, with the exception of Rowan, have children. And all are within an age range of early forties to sixty.

Therefore, using a blend of voices, theirs and mine, what follows is an exploration of the personal naming of Angela, Delaney, Leah, Nancy, Rowan, and Starr.



Angela

...I felt that having a foreign sounding name allowed new people to make assumptions about me, about where I might have been born, about what kind of personality traits I might have because of my heritage. I felt boxed in by their preconceptions.

Angela is a woman in her mid-forties. She was born in Austria, immigrating with her family to Canada when she was four. Angela has a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and has worked as a career woman all her adult life with the exception of three years off to raise her two children. When she married, she kept her own name, the name she chose, as the relevant Canadian marriage laws permitted this. She was divorced from her children's father before she was thirty.

Arriving in Western Canada as a four-year-old child, she was very conscious of being different. *"My clothes were different, my parents spoke a different language, and when I went to kindergarten at age five, I could not yet speak English. And my foreign sounding name added to that sense of being different."*

Angela remembers that as a teenager having a foreign sounding name made her feel more self-conscious, insecure and ashamed. Having an unusual name contributed to a negative self-image. She thinks that perhaps her childhood would have been easier in respect to peer relationships if her parents had had the wisdom to anglicise her given name, helping her to fit in.

That was in the early sixties, and nowadays I see how much times have changed in Canada, and how much we now embrace multiculturalism. We seem to be much more open and almost celebratory of unusual names and people maintaining their cultural heritage.

Working in a doctor's office in her early twenties, she was very aware of the difficulty some patients had in remembering her name and of the fact that it was

invariably mispronounced. *“How do you present yourself or get comfortable with yourself if you are not comfortable with the sound of your own name?”*

Moving into a ‘hippie’ neighbourhood during the seventies, Angela became interested in eastern philosophies and other alternative ways of looking at the world. *“The whole idea was to reinvent yourself as authentic and true to your inner being, not being boxed in by roles and old definitions. You could change day-to-day if you wished. There was a sense of freedom.”*

After changing her name to a name that had resonance with her, the meaning and origin having more importance than the numerological equation of which she was a little sceptical, Angela did notice that people no longer made assumptions about her based on having come from an European country. *“I could just be me and let them get to know me in terms of who I was, not my nationality of birth. I felt more free in the moment to be myself without their expectations imposed on me.”*

Angela points out that in leaving her old name behind, she was also cutting off painful memories of a very difficult childhood. Many years later, still trying to come to terms with an unhappy childhood, she realises that in cutting off that childhood identity, she had also cut off a vulnerable part of herself.

When Angela changed her name, in order to mediate the pain her parents felt at this decision, she kept her old name as a middle name. When she remarried a few years ago, the ceremony required use of the full legal name in several places. This made her very uncomfortable, and apprehensive about hearing the dissonance of her ‘old’ name. However, she reminded herself that the old name was her middle name as a way of honouring her mother who had died some years before. Angela coached the Justice of the Peace before the ceremony on how to pronounce this foreign sounding name. She was pleasantly surprised that he pronounced it correctly, and that it sounded “OK” and “almost musical.” She wrote this about her old name, *“Other people heard it. They heard what I would not let anyone in my life speak. It was spoken in front of strangers...I*

realise it is I who cannot speak that name, who chokes on it when I try to say it, who finds it does not roll off the tongue easily....”

Angela chose her name and the names of her children, based on three things: Their meaning, which in all cases has a spiritual element: their resonance, or how pleasing they sound, and their numerology. Numerology played the least role in the namings, yet, she is sure that she would not have used those names if the readings had been negative.



Delaney

“In having to change our names so often, we learned to recreate our lives and move outside some of the other constraints handed down to us by others”.

Delaney is a woman in her early forties who has two dependent children. Prior to the first official name change, after a divorce from a violent, biracial marriage, she had high school education and a few marketing certificates from previous employers and community colleges. During the last six years, Delaney, intent on re-educating herself, participated in education from a distance. For safety reasons, involving the relocation of herself and her children, she, at times, had to temporarily interrupt her formal education. However, she has since enrolled in a university campus program, hopeful of completing without having to relocate.

Changing her name and the names of her children for the first time ten years ago was an attempt to escape from harm, and was part of the overall safety plan. She went through the trying and frustrating process of dealing with bureaucracy to obtain all the necessary relocation papers three times; this does not include the initial two aliases she used that were not sealed with the official legal stamp. She wrote, *“Without birth certificates and social insurance numbers the children and I were non-entities. The name changes corresponded with my moves.”*

Delaney always had to time the moves *“properly”* so that *“I could totally shut down one identity and have had enough time to gather a few new pieces of identification before arriving in our new city or town. I did this three times.”*

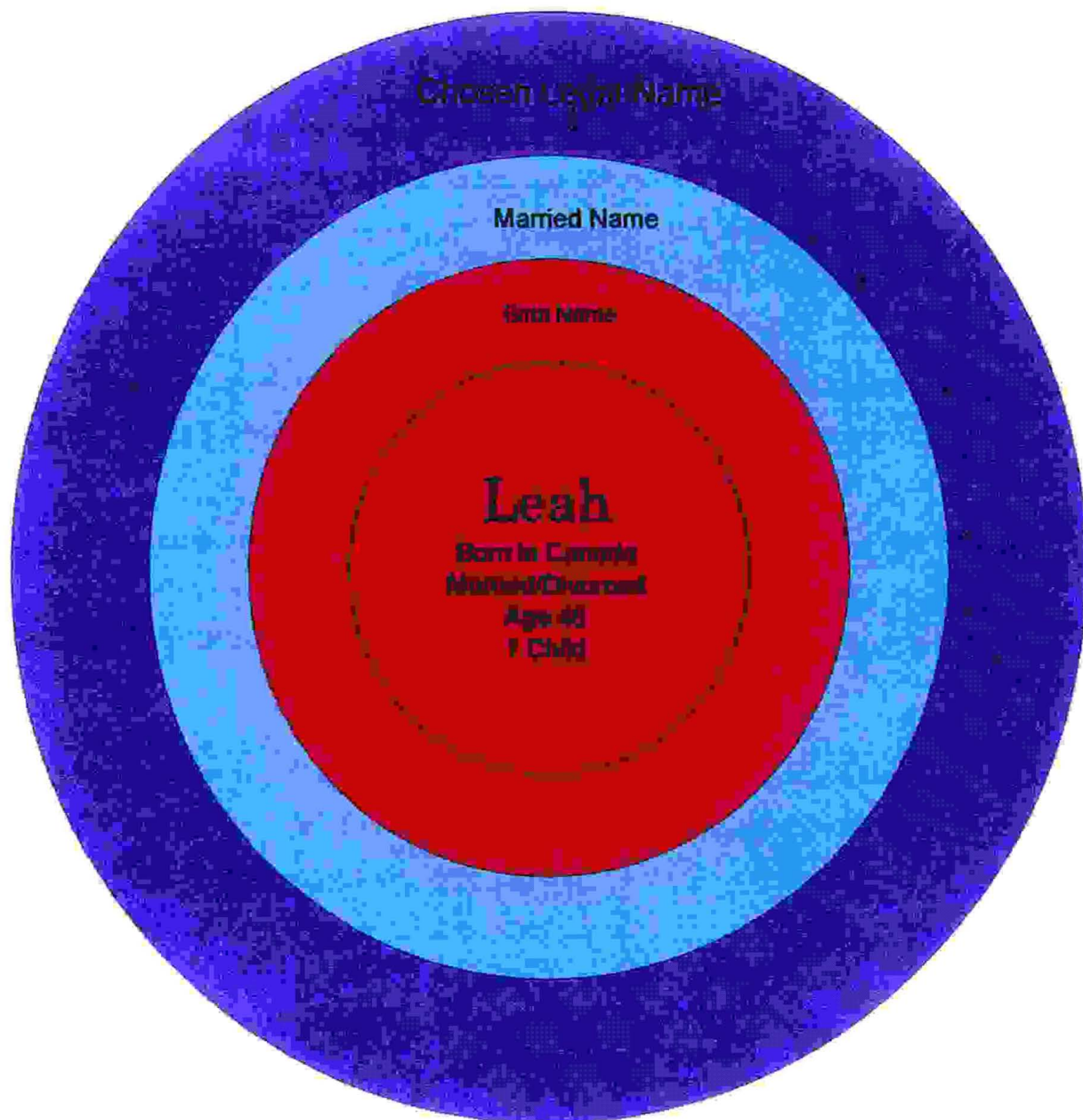
Believing that it is unlikely that she would have changed her name and the name of her children if it had not been for outside influence, Delaney purposefully chose names that spoke to issues of truth, conflict and victory; and because of the necessity of having to choose a number of names, she has become quite interested in the study of genealogy.

The experience that led to the initial name change and future ramifications have led Delaney to believe that her place in the world is precarious and that outside of her friends and family her life does not matter to anyone. She stated,

As women, if we try to live outside the mainstream belief system, we are ostracised, psychologised and blamed for our own dilemmas. We sell ourselves short, get married, prostitute, develop addictions, numb out, get sick and maybe die. Some women consciously choose other spaces but I think a lot of us only do that after some kind of horrendous experience that alters our cultural perceptions of who we are.

Because of circumstances far beyond her control, and for purpose of personal survival, Delaney has had numerous dealings with the various levels of bureaucracy. In her mind, the whole government system enforces rules that drives capitalism, promotes obedience and helps maintain an ordered society in which people engage with rules rather than with their brains and hearts. She has come to understand from very real experience that tolerance is a far cry from acceptance. Of one particular interaction with a system representative, she wrote, *"I do not believe I was a real person to her in any human sense. Her commitment was to an administrative protocol."*

After Delaney's son and daughter are grown and safely on their way in the world, she intends to change her first name and surname again. She spoke of the resistance of her son to change and the fact that he will likely only change his surname in the future. Both Delaney and her son, currently use their legal middle names, rather than their first names. The daughter is presently expressing a wish to change her name again and Delaney is unsure of what to think about this latest request. She expressed a sense of relief that her daughter has been able to move in and out of the numerous name changes as easily as she has. Understanding that the desire for this latest change simply reflects a better personal image her daughter has created of herself, Delaney still wonders about the various theories on identity development and worries whether another name change might undermine the development of a healthy identity.



Leah

Changing my name gave me undeniable and tangible knowledge about what I am not. I am clearly not my name, since I am still here, even though my name is not. I have also come to know through various means that I am not my job, my relationships, my body, my thoughts or my feelings since these can all change just as easily as a name, while I remain.

Leah is forty-six years old, the eldest of five children. She took over the running of the family house when she was twelve because her mother went into a severe depression after separating from her husband, Leah's father. Leah left home when she was eighteen, married when she was twenty-one and divorced after ten years. She is presently sharing her life with a male partner and they have a young daughter of nine, who regularly changes her first name. Leah has travelled in Europe and has lived in Mexico and various parts of Canada's West Coast.

The decision to change her name corresponded with some major shifts in Leah's thinking and her lifestyle – *“while I appeared to be successful and doing well, I didn't feel that I fit in anymore.”*

Regarding her name change, Leah wrote this,

In the beginning, I did not consider changing my name legally. I simply wanted to be called by another name. I was interested in not 'knowing' who I was, in questioning my identity, in having people who 'knew' me make a bit of an effort to label me and in shaking up my recognised world in any way I could.

Leah found it wonderful to live in the freedom of not knowing and not referencing herself to her old name. She felt like she was literally creating herself anew in each moment.

While some people may change their name to find a new identity for themselves, I changed mine to drop who I thought I was....to cease identifying with a particular label and sense of myself....to see what would arise from the unknown and the unfamiliar.

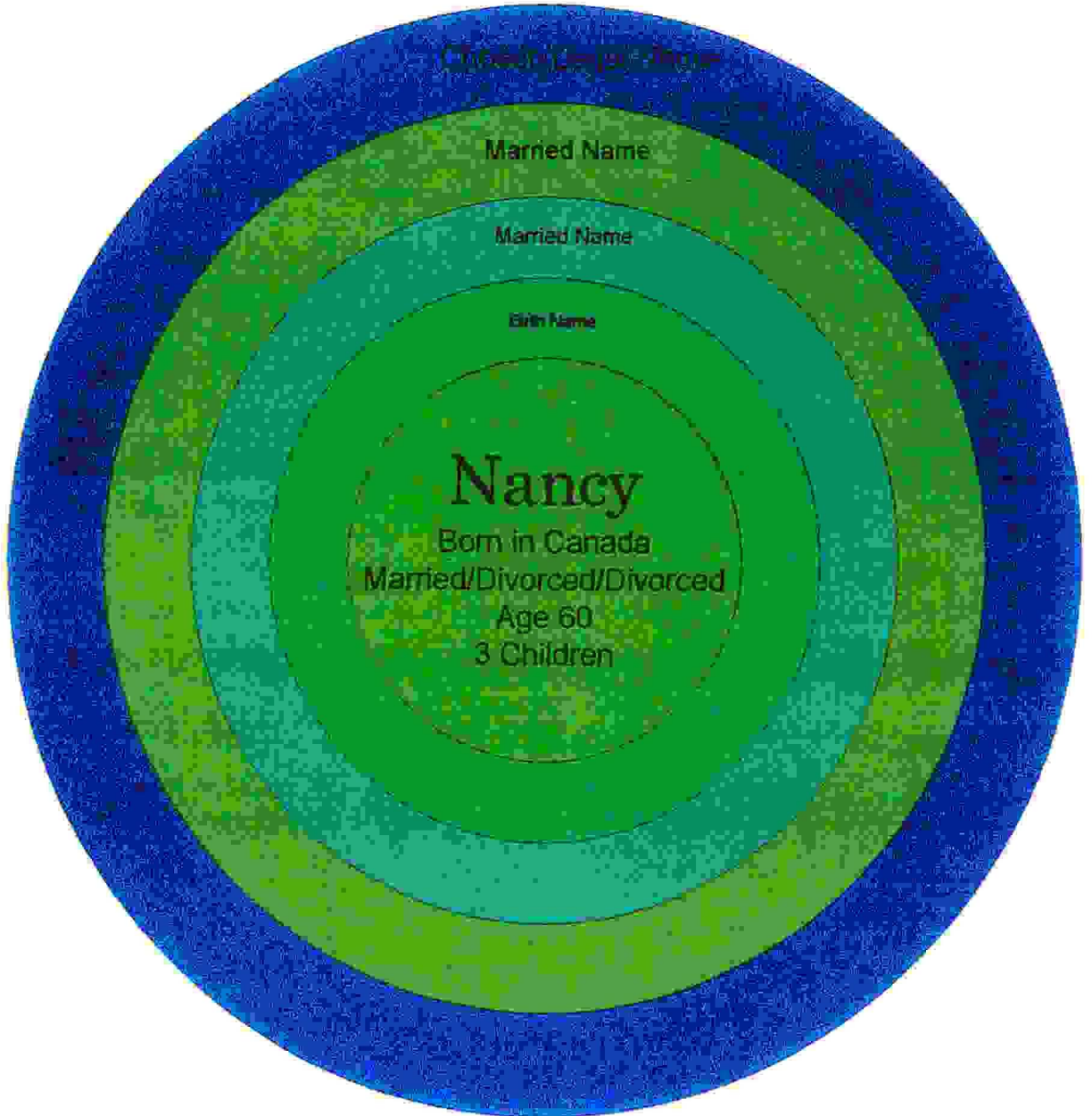
Leah 'legalised' her name for purely practical reasons. For example, she had found it troublesome to have people come to know her by her new name but ask them to write a cheque for her in her original name. Although she is 'inhabiting' the change, she does not feel 'committed' to the name or identified with it.

I could easily change my name again. It is merely a label that I like, but it does not have any meaning or inherent value to me. I do not think of myself as Leah, I am simply me without limit. In a similar way, through various meditation and other practices, I am also less identified with my mind, my body, my work, my family and my friends than I have been in the past. This dis-identification allows me a freedom to be more spontaneous and surprising to myself and the people around me.

When Leah talks of 'dis-identifying', she refers to her acceptance of the usefulness of labels but her non-acceptance of labels as a substitute for herself. *"What I mean by dis-identification is simply remembering that I am not the label, that who I am cannot be accurately described, categorised, named, located, or limited in any way. ('The map is not the territory'.)"*

For Leah, changing her name was just one of the many things she did in the pursuit of liberation. And liberation, she defined so,

Liberation is the true and effortless balance between freedom and responsibility. (By freedom, I do not mean license and by responsibility I mean the purest ability to respond.) Effectively this translates into the total, unquestionable recognition /realization/remembrance that there is no separation between myself and anything outside of myself.



Nancy

Language, names and otherwise, has a massive impact. Look at the fight over Miss/Mrs/Ms (in the city I would be Ms – here in the country they can't get beyond the MRS.) In Japan, where conformity is the most important aspect of society, the last name comes first. In China, they have a milk name which the child is called until school age at which time it is given its real name; even so, within the home, children aren't called by their name but rather 'oldest son' or "second daughter" etc. Here, in the west, we are so ego-centric that we go by our first name – me, me, me,!!!

Nancy is sixty years old, has been married twice and divorced twice. Her father was a *"Danish, Italian displaced person, one of the tens of thousands, who came to this country after the war,"* and her mother was of English heritage. She was born in Canada, and grew up in a household where the relationship between her mother and father was, in her words, *"sick, co-dependent, violent. She wore the pants in the family. He was frequently ill. My brothers say she emasculated him. I saw him as an alcoholic hypochondriac and her as a martyr bound by a Victorian sense of duty."*

Nancy has had an assortment of jobs and an assortment of places she has called home – with and without her children. The thought of doing the same thing in the same place for the rest of her life, *"terrifies"* her.

She left two marriages; the first to a husband who had refused to use a condom or have a vasectomy and she had undergone a legal abortion and tubal ligation on her sixth pregnancy – *"furious at the necessity"*. The second marriage was a bi-racial marriage and ended in divorce after she was beaten and a threat made to kill her by the husband.

Having travelled extensively, Nancy gravitates towards lifestyles that some would consider unconventional. She shies away from *"urban lifestyles that are too normal."* She had this to say about 'normal',

Normal now, is t.v. – potatochip – passivity and people leading lives they don't want. Normal drives me to despair. Yet I hide behind its appearance – sometimes – cut my hair, talk the talk and act the act, Overseas, I could be anyone I wanted to; they didn't know what a normal Canadian was.

Nancy has always thought of herself as a “freak.” She wrote,

Freak: abnormal. Yes, I see myself as a freak. My life pattern has not fit the cookie mould. Worse than that, I hold a well kept (I hope) aversion to the material grabbing blinkers-on passivity and acceptance of CDN society. I would only describe myself as such to people I know very well or in a confidential situation. Normally, it would serve no purpose, or perhaps a negative response, to describe oneself as a freak. I prefer a low profile. Freaks make society look at their own fears and inadequacy. The wider the Global Community, the more open each society has to become as it realises the huge diversity of cultures in this world. War and violence comes out of our inability to accept differences. We must open to man, nature, the universe; not set boundaries then defend them to death.

Nancy asked, “Genetics?” when speaking of her twenty-nine year old daughter who has insisted on using, to date, five different first names. It is only her new surname that she legally changed. Nancy mused on the impact that her numerous name changes may have had in her daughter's life. She also recognised the possibility of other contributing factors, and commented, “... *the long time debate of 'nature vs. nurture' continues.*”



Rowan

"A name is like any other word – it's a construct that we make ourselves that we tie very powerfully to an object - this body, or this thing - table, and we start to identify with this body, this thing."

Rowan is a fifty-four year old lesbian of English/Irish origin who immigrated to Canada at the age of twenty-four. She was an adopted, only child, has been divorced, and is diagnosed as having Chronic Fatigue Syndrome.

Looking back at her childhood, she had a sense of "restriction" and realized that she had always felt herself to be *"different than the members of her extended family."*

This feeling of restriction or narrowness seems partly related to the scope of our family's pursuits but also to a kind of blinkered mind-state.... There was a lack of inquiry about life in its largest sense. As a young adult, I felt this as a lack of general education. Later in life, I saw this as a readiness to accept certain clichés about life, rather than ask the deeper questions. Still, the love of nature and the simplicity of our lives then has been profoundly nurturing as I have grown older.

An ex-therapist of seventeen years, Rowan is committed to a lesbian relationship, *"married (in my own terms)"* and considers herself to be *"an outsider who is comfortable (mostly) with that..."*

Rowan's first legal name was changed within a few weeks of her adoption. She became known as Rowena Jennifer Hunniset and her decision to change this name was made after her move to Canada and over a number of years. She changed her first and last name, living with her new name for some time before she made it formal by applying for legal status.

I didn't dislike my name when I changed it – but I felt it was too focussed on "pretty" and feminine to the exclusion of other qualities notwithstanding that fact that my name, all of it and Rowena in particular, was such an unusual name that its meaning

became fairly synonymous in my mind and, I think, in the minds of those close to me with my personality as a whole.

Interested in the deconstruction of her life for living as authentically as possible, as Rowan became older, she became aware that her adoptive parents had carefully chosen her name. Lady Rowena is a legendary character from a novel by Sir Walter Scott called, *Ivanhoe*, a Knights of the Round Table story. Her mother insisted that her fair (flaxen) hair be grown long and braided, (plaited) in keeping with the publicly famed association of this fabled lady.

Although these myths behind my name were more my parents than mine, by the time I wanted to change my name they were like shadows in my psyche that I did not want any moreBeing schooled in Latin I was very conscious that the a-suffix at the end of a name denoted female and I didn't want that as an immediate part of my identification.

Rowan Jennifer Percy was a name chosen with much thought and deliberation. The Arthurian motif remains in the name. Percy comes from the name Percival, a Knight of The Round Table, and was her father's first name. It was chosen to honour his memory. Percival was the Knight who eventually found the Holy Grail and brought it back to the dying Arthur, helped him revive and bring honour back to his court for a short period before his final battle.

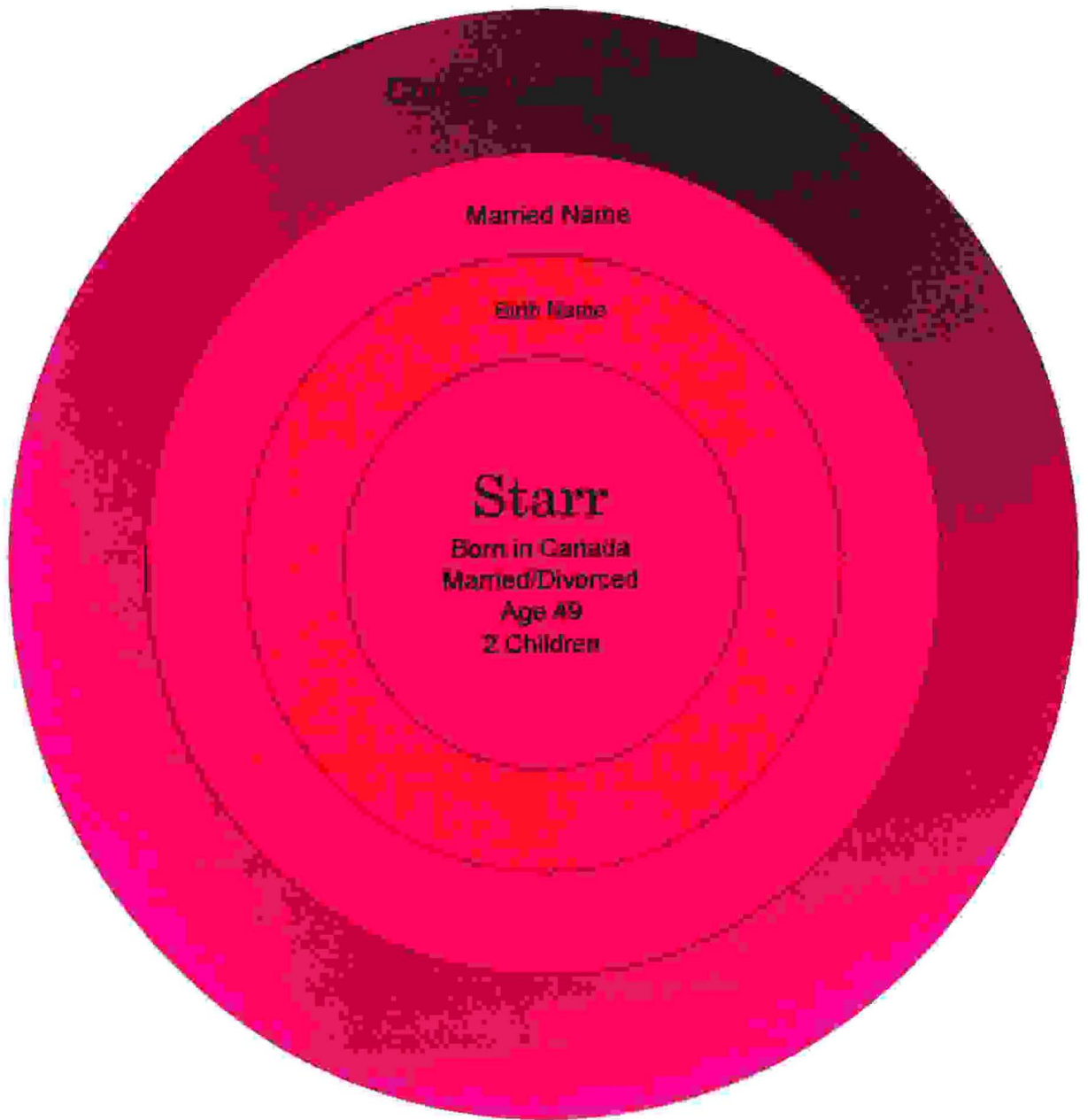
At least that is one of the versions of the story. I would certainly rather be identified with the seeker than a lady who was an auxiliary to a man. And there is no doubt that I am a seeker in many dimensions of my life, as a feminist, as a lesbian and as a spiritual person.

Jennifer was kept because "I like it", and Rowan was chosen, not intentionally to take a name that was close to Rowena in sound and appearance but because she loves the rowan tree, which in Canada is referred to as the mountain ash.

The tree has very strong wood... The berries are red and red was a favourite colour when I was a child. The leaves are serrated and interesting, delicate and unusual. Strong, sensitive (rather than delicate), bright and unusual are qualities that I believe describe me. It is a tree that is native to British Columbia where I have made my home and feel I belong, to the landscape and geography that is. The rowan tree grows in England too, so my name is not uprooted from my past.

Being sensitive to vibrations, Rowan finds her new name pleasant to speak and listen to. It is a simple word, not hard to say, and “embodies” the qualities that she seeks in living her life. She wrote, *“To me a name that ends in a consonant sounds strong and grounded, clear.”*

Her first name was also chosen because it is androgynous and given to both boys and girls. She is glad to have a name, which, on paper makes it impossible for readers to know immediately what her gender is. She prefers to delay being put in a gender box.



Starr

“For myself it (my name change) was an opportunity to gain and regain my inner strength and equilibrium and move ahead on a path of my own choosing.”

Starr is a forty-eight-year-old mother of two grown daughters who has been divorced for eight years. After completing two years of post secondary education, Starr most recently worked as a mental health worker for twelve years. She experienced her first ‘lay-off’ when she returned to work after recovering from a motor vehicle accident, and she enrolled as an adult learner in a formal learning environment after many years of absence.

Starr has had three legal names, her birth name, and her married name and a third name that she chose for herself five years ago. As a child she questioned why girls had to change their name when they were married and why they had their father’s name when growing up.

I felt like being a female wasn't important and that we were appendages to males and not more.....When you are a female, you get a name from your father or your husband and it is not a personal “match” or choice. I married and took my husband's name because it was a reflection of the time.

When Starr divorced she did not revert to her maiden name because of memories of childhood abuse. She did not want any name associations with past people who held positions of authority over her, such as parents or a husband. She relocated and began the process of creating her “own history”.

I wanted to be my own self and the first step was to name myself. It was a birthing process. It involved such soul searching and heart to soul intimacy with who I was as a woman, who I wanted to become, and who I wanted to be remembered as.

Although Starr broke the cultural norm by the re-naming of herself, her continued relationship with her daughters was essential. She did not want to sever those ties.

Acknowledging that her daughters have been a catharsis for change, from their conception to the present day, Starr combined their middle names to make her new middle name and so created a common name bond. She wrote, *"I felt that I had retied that bond, in a way that brought immense pleasure, pride and humbleness to me. It really was a new beginning."*

It took Starr two years to find a name that resonated with how she felt on the inside. Having had since a young child a genuine appreciation for the natural outdoors, it is the smell, feel, sound and sight of the earth that has provided Starr with comfort and experiences of deep cleansing and rejuvenation. For Starr, Mother Earth has become the 'Higher Being', and it is within the woods and forests that she feels really nurtured and a sense of connection to a stronger being than the people around her.

The day the new name of Starr became 'official' at Vital Statistics, became Starr's adopted birthday.

Legally it isn't. But in every way that counts it is. I acknowledge quietly to that little girl inside, on the actual day that I was born, that her birth was important and I won't forget that. There is no other celebration that day. I celebrate my "new birthday."

Angela, Delaney, Nancy, Leah, Rowan, Samaya, Starr are seven women who have had twenty-three legal names between them. Although the circumstances surrounding each woman's decision to change her name were unique, there appears to be three major themes. Like thread, these themes criss-cross and weave in and out of the experience of all seven women, creating chaotic patterns that move rhythmically with the unfolding of life's fabric.

Recurring Themes

What follows in this chapter is an analysis of the data, presented in the preceding section, of six women who chose to name themselves. Representation, change and power are the three emergent themes.

Representation

Representation has many faces, voices and comes in a wide variety of colours. It is a complicated and complex concept and unlike a paintbrush, which washes over flat surfaces, it penetrates into every aspect of life. Representation has to do with language and its use as well as other forms of expression. The Random House College Dictionary (1975) supplies a list of fifteen possible meanings. They are:

representation ...n. 1. the act of representating. 2. the state of being represented. 3. a designation by some term, symbol or the like. 4. action or speech on behalf of a person, group or the like, by an agent, deputy or representative. 5. the state or fact of being so represented. 6. Govt. the state, fact, or right of being represented by legislative delegates. 7. the body or number of representative, as a constitution. 8. presentation to the mind, as of an idea or image. 9. a mental image or idea so presented; concept. 10. the act of rendering in visible form, 11. a picture, figure, stature, etc. 12. the production or a performance of a play or the like, as on the stage. 13. Often representations, a description or statement, as of things true or alleged. 14. a statement of facts, reasons, etc., made in protest or remonstrance. 15. Law an implication or statement of fact to which legal liability may attach if material... (p.1120).

The participants in this study are women and so, as within any cultural setting, there is an unspoken expectation of the way they are to behave and conduct their lives. A female role is usually assigned before birth; the fact that these women, for different reasons, chose to name themselves, an unusual act, indicates the error in any assumption of representation or presentation that 'lumps together' women as a homogenous group. The seven females in the study are presented as representations of difference in a western monoculture of white, middle class women, as viewed from the standpoint of a white woman of privilege.

Angela, Delaney, Leah, Nancy, Rowan, Samaya and Starr have challenged some of the mainstream norms, traditions and institutions of the societal cultures into which they were born. They have not obeyed one of society's unspoken rules; it is others who 'do' the naming. They have named themselves, representing themselves in a way contrary to expected female presentation. Like two sides of a coin, it is difficult to separate the concepts of identity and image. Both play an integral role in representation - how you are seen by others and how others see you. Perspective and experience contribute to individual and collective presentation in representation.

Delaney, when thinking in terms of the interplay of identity and image, aptly remarked,

... .. perceptions of instability were attributed to my situation rather than the actual name change; however because we often define people by their situation it was hard for people to tease the two apart.

Resisting the imposition of dominant ways of knowing, looking and imagining new transgressive possibilities for the formation of identity and representation (hooks, 1992), these women have named themselves. Identity, the condition or fact of being the same as something else is not possible without duality in the relationship to the self. Identity fuses objectivity and subjectivity. It connects inner and outer experience.

Each woman has transgressed the boundaries of the status quo - Delaney initially for reasons of personal safety - and the others in seeking lives to call their own. They search for knowledge, and ways of knowing, necessary for living as authentically as possible, and, to free themselves from the threat of the violence of domination, to lesser or greater degrees.

Although Leah contends that she does not equate her name change as relating to gender, each woman has seemingly negotiated the political image of a conditioned female identity, which is at odds with her own values and beliefs. It is not common for women to name themselves. Perhaps they dwell still, at times, in shadow lands with invisible thoughts of whom and how they want to be; thoughts that have little congruence with how they are seen and thought of by others. However, prior to their choosing a new name, their identities were much more bound up, more entangled in interpretations and influences from the outside. That is not to say that interpretation plays no role (by themselves and others) in who it is they think they are now (Gee, 2000-2001).

Five of the women, Angela, Nancy, Leah, Rowan, Starr, associated their given or married names with traits that, in their minds, did not match with whom it was they thought they were – at the time. It was not until Delaney had changed her name, felt “safe”, that she began to think about who she ‘was’, ‘is’ and her relationship with her names. Moreover, it is only in retrospect and as a natural consequence of conducting this inquiry that a seventh woman, Samaya, has come to know how deeply entrenched and ingrained has been, and is, her sense of personal identity in her naming. At the time of her own self-naming, working hard to stay ‘afloat’, she only existed by ‘skimming’ life’s surface. Being too afraid to delve, alone, into her past, she had no words, as yet, to voice her silence. She did what she did with no conscious connection to the source of her agency.

Angela writes about a sense of freedom that accompanied the thought of the possibility of re-naming herself, of creating new images in the presentation of herself. She wrote, *“The whole idea was to invent yourself as authentic and true to your inner*

being, not boxed in by roles and old definitions. You could change day-to-day if you wished. There was a sense of freedom.”

Leah spoke of the complexity of attempts to define identity. She commented,

I think a more significant influence on the identity that is created by the mind (i.e. who it is we think we are) are the choices and/or responses we make in each moment. And since the mind is attracted to patterns and without sufficient training and experience does not function well in the unknown, in fairly short order we create a very limited 'menu' from which we make ourselves up and a very limited appreciation/opinion of ourselves Which makes sense since the mind's primary job is 'to know'.

After her divorce, Starr did not want to keep her married name; she did not want to perpetuate an image she thought was a sham - keeping her married name and presenting herself in public as a wife. She stated,

After my divorce, I could not stay with my married name. It wasn't who I was and never had been. I always felt inside that this is not who I am. It felt like I had my shoes on the wrong feet. I could walk but it was with discomfort, and sometimes pain that I lived as a person who was not her own person.

Rowan commented on her name change and her identity.

About my name change: The overview is simply I wanted a name that reflected my sense of myself more accurately than the name I have been given.....A name is just a name – it's important as it refers to this being in this body.

Names reflect the caller's attitude and instil expectations, wrote Nancy. “So, best to choose your own”. Looking back on the name changes she has had, she remarked, “...cute - ToTo; formal- Suzetta; normal – Susan; don't you love me – Susi: Sweet but simple – Trout; 1st husband – bitch, face 2nd. husband – sweetheart.”

Nancy's name changed so many times that it became a standing joke within her family circles. She e-mailed,

By the time I changed to Carpenter, it was a standing joke – who do you think you are? Ironic, eh, that is my essential question. I think because I moved so frequently, people saw this searching as running away from family/past etc.

In Delaney's case, "it was unlikely that she would have changed her name if it were not for outside circumstances", and she had no immediate thought of self-identification with her initial name change. She was on high alert, wanting protection for herself and her children. New names were chosen to provide images for identification purposes; to hide. It was part of an overall plan for survival. She said,

...name changing has become a family event or experience and does not happen in isolation from each other... For me, my three name changes are symbolic of many things: a failure of systems, a search for identity, relocation, new beginnings, re-creation, etc. For other people, my three name changes represented trauma and the pathological theories we hold about people who have experienced trauma (there is no way I can have experienced what I did without being attributed a negative label.) In my case, the need for safety led to a degree of secrecy, which in turn undermined my credibility and authenticity (who knew what was real and what wasn't?).

Stereotyping is another form of representation that has affected the lives of the women in this study. Nancy wrote of 'cutting her hair' to fit in with the ambience of rural life. Delaney observed the unwillingness or inability of some in administrative positions to see her as a human being, and not as a statistic, and of the tendency for judgements based on ignorance and fear. Stereotypes, like fiction, are created to serve as substitutions, standing in for what is real. In discussing stereotypes, hooks (1992) has this to say,

They are there not to tell it like it is but to invite and encourage pretence. They are a fantasy, a projection onto the Other that makes them less threatening. Stereotypes abound when there is distance. They are an invitation, a pretence that one knows when

the steps that would make real knowing possible cannot be taken or are not allowed.
(p.170)

I am a white woman who speaks with an English accent, a middle-aged student, relatively poor who has worked to support a return to university. I have an interesting and unusual name. I do not fit the stereotypical image of a white English woman that some may have: I am not rich and I often feel marginalised in the western communities in which I find myself. In my conscious attempt to stay real and claim the realities of my life, I will continue to resist the continual displacement of others' attempts to name my realities.

Change

Toffler (1980) warned us over two decades ago, that society, by its very nature has always been in a constant state of flux and is presently undergoing rapid and dramatic change. Angela, Delaney, Nancy, Rowan, Samaya, Sarah and Starr have all experienced episodes or 'passages' (Sheehy, 1981), of great change in their lives. Change happens and 'no-one is an island unto herself.' Consequently, change affects not only the quality of future relationships; change affects how we live in the world in the now.

Angela and her family emigrated from Austria to Canada when she was four years old. Rowan and Samaya arrived in this country from England when they were both twenty-four, a coincidence. To keep from harm, Delaney, has relocated four times, Starr moved from one Canadian province to another because of memories of abuse she preferred not to be reminded of. Leah began life in another province, and has lived in other countries before settling in British Columbia. Nancy has travelled extensively in Asia and has lived in Europe, Africa and North America. She is presently settled in British Columbia's interior.

Angela and Rowan draw attention to the impact of the sound of names, spoken language, on those who speak and those who hear. Given names spoken in other countries may be heard very differently in Canada. Angela experienced a great deal of

distress growing up feeling different, with a name that sounded different from those around her. She commented,

I am very sensitive to sounds and noises, whether they are harmonious or irritating. The sound of my original name developed negative associations because of serious problems in my family. The negativity clings to my old name, and I don't like to hear the sound of it. Also, the sound is not one that we are used to in Canada, so it jumps out as different, slightly disharmonious.

Rowan, who has been schooled in Latin, was especially sensitive to the implication of gender conditioning because of the suffix "a" at the end of her adopted name. She wrote, *"Being schooled in Latin I was very conscious that the a-suffix at the end of a name denoted female and I didn't want that as an immediate part of my identity."*

Not too long ago, I heard of a woman with an unusual sounding name. To me, the name was grating to my ears; sounds I was not used to hearing. It sounded 'harsh and heavy' and immediately I had images of over-weight, over-bearing, plain women and ploughed fields. The woman, who was born somewhere in Europe, was proud of her name and told me that it meant, *"Angel of light"*. I am left, yet once again, to deconstruct the conditioning of my life, the meaning my experience gives to the words I speak and hear.

With the exception of Rowan, all the women have children. Leah has a daughter just ten. Delaney has two children and the adult children of Angela, Nancy, Samaya and Starr are living independent lives. Delaney, Nancy and Leah mention that their daughters have insisted on calling themselves various names. Delaney's daughter, *"...loves changing her name and would do so on a regular basis should I agree to it."* Delaney also noted that although her daughter loves changing her name, her son is resistant to the name changing.

Nancy speaks of five names that her oldest daughter has used as her first name, to date. Leah talked of the various self-chosen names of her daughter and observed, *"She*

has since changed her name a few times with each change seeming to coincide with a significant leap in development."

All the women were married and divorced once, except for Nancy who married and divorced twice. Both Delaney and Nancy were in biracial marriages. Angela is currently in her second marriage, which is very happy and stable. Rowan is presently very comfortable in a same sex relationship.

Change in location, use of language, marriage, living with growing children, work, etc. requires a constant change in relationships. Relationships involve engagement, participation and exchange of time, place and space. Individual and social expectations come into play, manifesting in the outward action of all parties present. Value and belief systems mutate, affected by new experiences and new information gained in day to day living. It appears that in the case of the women in this study, not only is the relationship with their surrounding communities important, but also each woman's relationship with herself. Each woman has demonstrated a sense of responsibility and as Adrienne Rich (1979) wrote,

"Responsibility to yourself means refusing to let others do your thinking talking and naming for you; It means learning to respect and use your own brains and instincts; ..." (p. 233).

I have come to realise that when in relationship, it is impossible to be the one without being the other.

Change in relationship is determined by the complexity of the interrelationship of past and present. Differences in the heritage of facts are not the only reason for disparities in outlook of those whose values and beliefs systems are the impetus for individual and/or collective action. It may be observed that the women in this study are active agents in emergent new cultures, breaking up a monocratic world. Certainly, within a monoculture of white, relatively privileged women, these women have not been content

to sit quietly and speak softly at all times. When and where necessary, they have acted on their own behalf, fragmenting still more the chaotic, cultural patterns of society.

Bourdillion (1993) an educator in Zimbabwe, recognised that cultures are not static but constantly changing. He believes that culture is not independent of the material factors in people's lives but develops in response to a particular social and material environment. When these environments change, culture must adapt. There are many types of cultures. Macro cultures that generalise, stereotype, separate and distinguish between peoples of different countries. Micro-cultures exist within the boundaries of a macro-culture. Both micro and macro cultures are defined in relationship to the particular context under which they are observed. Cultures are contextual, relative to the flavours of a particular time in space. Mergers of any description, inclusive of personal relationships, involve change. Change happens whether we want it to or not. It concerns itself with the balancing of forces. How this plays itself out determines the extent of subjective realities, and as Fullan (1991) stated, "*Ultimately the transformation of subjective realities is the essence of change*" (p.36).

Like the natural ebb and flow of the tides; the waxing and waning of the moon in the spiralling of evolution, women cope every day with change. Change happens because of or in spite of us. However, it is not every woman who is motivated to break the cultural norm by an official, legal naming of choice. Looking closely at some of the norms of society's wallpaper, one may note that those who do choose to name themselves stand out like embossed shapes, and contribute to the creation of brand new patterns.

The women who participated in this study may be viewed as 'change agents'. They are managing to change the way society operates. They have the strength and courage to determinedly seek changed lives. They want meaningful lives that defy the odds and free them from what hooks (1992) describes as that "*...terrorizing force of the status quo that makes identity fixed, static, a condition of containment.*" (p. 22).

It has been relatively recently that I have come to recognise change as a constant in the journey of life. Growing up, I was ill prepared by those who had charge of the various

aspects of my overall well-being and general education in developing much needed skills to cope with change. Concerned with resistance, born out of survival, I have paid attention to the impact of external change, using my energy to react, placate, and accommodate, rather than in learning how to respond. I was not aware that how I presented myself in public was a 'carry-over' from days of childhood when I had little or no say in what happened to me. Feeling 'safe' in particular contexts, I have been able to 'let go' of certain rigidity in perception, action and of who it is I think I am. I have used the released energy to empower myself. I am now more conscious of my unconscious and subconscious in the engagement of the present.

I wrote the following poem as part of an assignment for the very first course that I completed in a master's program in the faculty of education. The poem reflects some of my thoughts about change and the relationship between teaching and learning.

*You and I,
I and You,
We are the agents of change.*

*Change how?
Change when?
Change where?
Change whom?*

But why?

*To empower or oppress?
For the common good of all or the need/greed of self-interest?*

How change?

*What thinking to put into praxis?
What to do and think?
What not to do and what not to think?*

When change?

What time of day?

What time of year?

What time in life?

The life of a child?

The life of an adult?

Where change?

Inside, outside, inside-out or outside-in?

Upstairs, downstairs, in the person's chambers?

In a formal setting, a non-formal setting?

Close-up or at a distance?

On the road, in the house, in the yard, in church?

In the market place, anywhere?

Who change?

Do you teach or do you learn?

Who are they – the others?

Their needs – are they less or more than whose?

Are they special and extraordinary?

Do you know the name of their mother, sister, father, brother?

Do you know where they live, from where they come?

Do you know for whom their hearts beat?

Do you know who it is you think you are?

We are change agents, the agents of change.

*Change does not stand still.
 Change is constant.
 Change happens because of or in spite of us.
 Change happens.
 Change is.
 It's that simple. And ...it's not!*

Power

In telling their stories of how they came to name themselves, Angela, Delaney, Leah, Nancy, Rowan, Samaya, and Starr all speak to issues of power; the use of power over, power-within and power-with.

It was not until some years after immigrating to Canada to escape from, among other things, family pressures to do with exclusion and non-acceptance, that I began a process of self-introspection, a deconstruction of my life. I had little intellectual understanding then of power dynamics and how these played out in life. As I write, I reflect a glimmer that on some unconscious level, I was very conscious of the negative ramifications of the forces of power. To protect my 'sanity', my self-worth, I instinctively removed myself from the situation in the only way I knew then – to remove my physical body and get as far away as possible. Since then, I have been exposed to many different realities in a diversity of cultures; I began to learn about power, and its impact on individual lives. I have come to believe that the use of power over, separates, divides and marginalises people. Power over determines who is 'less than'; 'who has', and 'who has not'. One day, I saw my neighbour working in her garden. As I passed by, she was hitting the ground repeatedly. When asked what she was doing, she replied, "*I'm killing a snake. It looks strange*". I walked away saddened and frightened by the thought the 'power over', taken to extremes, can kill, or at the very least, hurt.

Power-with, I have come to associate with the context of any given interaction. It is necessary to remain ever vigilant regarding the entanglement of the dynamics of power that play out constantly in the macro and micro community of cultural contexts. And in

my worldly travels, I have come face to face with “Ethics’ who, like the spider, waits for the unsuspecting fly to pass by, close enough to become ensnared and forced to give up life juices so another can live. Protecting my vulnerability with the veneer of the ‘other’, I have crept closer to discover that ‘Ethics’ is merely the guardian standing at the entrance of a veiled portal into muted and invisible realms of power.

Power-within is a relatively new concept, and for me, concerns itself with a positive diversion of the energy of power that produces personal empowerment. Early maternal abandonment and its backlash in the development of a diminished self-worth, has necessitated the reclaiming of my own power. The writing of this thesis has permitted a ‘re-right’ (pun intended) of my personal narrative. Conducting the study of six women, who, like me, chose to name themselves, has provided the opportunity to ‘connect’ and I am empowered because I am in the process of ‘disentangling’ from the muddled messiness of the past.

Power, ever present circumscribes our relationships. If we cannot do away with it, we can at least try to understand the parameters of power and try to ameliorate those forms that silence some, centre others, give voice to a few and place the rest of us at the borders, seeking passports and identity cards. (Tierney, 1998, p.61)

I no longer fool myself into thinking that because the structures of power can be altered, power dissolves and disappears. It does not. It shifts. Power is a constant and our challenge is to recognise it and decide how we will function within it. (Tierney, 1998)

By shifting my thinking in the making of meaning, I reclaim some power for myself, and I am empowered to use a voice that speaks “MY SPEAK” more often than the words of thoughts I merely ‘parrot’ from conditioning by those in my past or in close proximity. Moreover, Starhawk (1987) contends that power is never static; that it is not a thing to be held onto or stored. Power, according to her, “*is a movement, a relationship, a balance, fluid and changing*”. (Starhawk, 1987, p.268)

Every relationship in which we are engaged, or not, is inherently infused with power. Foucault (1980) reminds me that power constantly moves in differential patterns circumscribed by context, individuals, culture and society. I am in relationship all the time; with others in the communities in which I walk; with those whose invisible presence is in my now and perhaps, more importantly, I am in and have a constant relationship with the universe as a whole.

Delaney described changing her names as "*an act of resistance.*" She wrote, "*At the end of the day, I think it's about power. Those who have it don't want anything to change,*"

Leah does "*not experience the world in terms of power and control*", but sees herself "*free to choose*" the life she leads. She recognises however, that it is "*not without consequences.*" Neither does she relate the fact of being female with the choice to change her name. This is a rare and unusual perspective for a female born into a dominant western society where a female is worth apparently less than that of a male.

Indigenous groups and other minority groups also suffer from what Delaney refers to as, "*a western Canadian practice to pathologise non-conformity.*" She wrote,

I think it happens across the world. However, in my own culture, I think Christianity plays a role, or may be it's human nature: I'm not sure. In a broad or philosophic sense, I don't think anyone really benefits (although we think we do). In a more general and immediate sense, those in power or the rule makers benefit: professionals like teachers, psychologists, social workers, police, psychiatrists, doctors, the clergy, policy administrators, parents, etc.

Since before the time women were able to vote, women have struggled, collectively and individually, publicly and privately with issues of equity and social justice, in an array of efforts to balance the scales. In other words, their struggle has been one of power relations.

Nancy's first husband was a man born and raised in Canada; her second husband was from China. Comparing her relationship with the two, she commented, "*Left patriarchal control for racial discrimination*".

From this comment, it is unclear as to whether it is Nancy or the Chinese husband who is to be accused of racial discrimination. Distinction in favour or against any person, male or female, on a categorical basis rather than according to actual merit is necessarily detrimental to an overall well being.

Delaney is convinced that the only action taken against her perpetrator husband was based on his race and not his behaviour. Her violent treatment at the hands of a foreign born husband and her fear for her children's safety prompted a major disruption in her daily life and a household move three times. Out of necessity, she tolerated endless frustrating, patronising meetings with representatives from various departments of government and made this comment.

I think our Christian teachings are ideals but generally speaking not realities. At the end of the day, each person is viewed as either 'deserving or not deserving' and a woman who suffers at the hands of her man, or any man, likely did something to deserve it. I'm sure that all this sounds very negative and harsh, but I guess I believe that my culture is still unevolved and rather barbaric 'we are not who we say we are' and confuse technological advancement with human/racial advancement.

Starr talks of childhood abuse, of her wish to move away to a place where there were no unfriendly ghosts, where she was able to "*begin to build her own future without prejudice from the past*". When growing up, Starr wondered about the practise of girls having to change their names when they were married, interpreting it as an apparent unequal distribution of human rights. She asked, "*And why they had their father's name when growing up. I felt like being a female wasn't important and that we were appendages to males and not more.*"

At the age of twelve, after her parents' separation, it was Leah, the eldest of three brothers and one sister, who became the one responsible for the general running of the house and care of the siblings. Very early in a western life, she became a 'mother figure'. She commented, *"Our parents separated when I was about 12 and my mother went into a severe depression. I basically took over the running of the house until I moved out with my boyfriend when I was 18."*

Angela spoke of learning *"at an early age to deal with unwanted attention"*, observing that as a teenager she *"had low self-esteem and felt ugly inside and out, obviously from issues other than my name."* Although not mentioned specifically, there is implied here a possible misuse of power resulting in the feelings and thoughts of self-negation and inadequacy.

Rowan talked of the power families have in the moulding and shaping of children's minds as they grow into adulthood. As Rowan grew up she had, *"a growing sense that Rowena was not really me."* She went on to write,

Yes I think parents sometimes use names to denote expectations. In the case of my parents I think they did have both conscious and below- the-surface expectations but I have no clear way of demonstrating that idea. When I was growing up in the 50's femininity was so intrinsic to women's behaviour, it was a given that my mother would expect me to be feminine. Any expectations she had which were related to my name can't be separated out.

Therefore, Rowan's decision to change her name may have been entwined in the power of language and the use society makes of language to contain and maintain order. Rowan also draws attention to the societal influence of those times in the choosing of names. Born into a female body, adopted as a female child, she was expected to look and act like a female according to the regulated codes of behaviour. Regarding the sound of her old name, Rowan noted, *"Also, the sound is not one that we are used to in Canada, so it jumps out as different, slightly disharmonious."*

Angela wonders too about the influence of language in society and its affects on human development especially as a result of being called by a name that is not common within a certain context, a certain country. She grew up in the early sixties and wonders if in current times her “*foreign sounding*” name would sound so out of place. Demographic movement has expanded greatly, resulting in an overall public exposure to strange, interesting, sounds in languages that are unfamiliar to certain ears.

Power is not neutral. It is relational and changes within any given context. These women who chose to name themselves not only address outside forces of power that contributed to an official name change, they also speak to issues relating to the inner dynamics of power, and of personal empowerment.

It was “*a sense of freedom*” that Angela felt when she officially changed her name. Her name was associated with her image and her identity. In the act of officially changing her name, Angela had “*rebelled against any assumptions being made about me.*” At the time, all she wanted to do was to “*fit in.*” In all probability, Angela’s parents, when choosing a name for their daughter in Austria, were unaware of their plans to immigrate to Canada four years later, and the possible negative consequences of a foreign sounding name. Notwithstanding, it was Angela’s personal interpretation of her experience and the need for a more positive self-image that appear to have been contributing factors in Angela’s decision to re-name herself. Her perception of coming to know herself initiated a self-renaming. She wrote, “*I felt I almost had the means to reinvent myself and my life now that I had a new identity. It was quite liberating.*”

Delaney’s first official name change was more to do with resistance than rebellion. She stated,

Changing my name is the outward representation of who I am, as a person, and where I’ve been. My ideas and feelings about name changes and my own future renaming are now less related to my situation and more connected to a consciousness of who I strive to be. Renaming had also become an act of resistance. I refuse to silently take that which is given to me if it does not promote my survival.

An act of resistance may be seen as a more desperate, a more deliberate act than that of rebellion. Both are valid, closely connected, and often used synonymously. Delaney experienced the abuse of power to such a degree that the routine of an established lifestyle was abruptly arrested – several times. For safety reasons, she chose to ‘uproot,’ and leave ‘a place she called home.’ She created new homes, new identities by, among other things, naming herself – several times.

Nancy’s name changes, with the exception of the last, may be considered relative acts of rebellion against a system seemingly intent on generating gender inequality and social injustice. Indeed, all the women, with the exception of Leah, may be considered to have changed their names, as an act of resistance or rebellion against a system they think is unfair and unjust, to lesser or greater degrees.

Leah does not think of “*the ‘system’ as unfair or unjust... ..the system is simply how it is and my opportunity is to respond to it in the most creative, open and loving way I can.*” The changing of her name was the result of a desire to open herself to greater degrees of freedom, not as an act of rebellion, but as an “*act of expansion and inclusion*”.

Nancy thinks of both her marriages as “*vignettes of her life - best forgotten*”, circumstances in which she were constantly dealing with situations of power-over. When first married, Nancy thought of marriage as

...symbiosis. I must merge. Me a totally emotional being: he emotionally constipated. Nothing was laid out on the table. The violence in my birth family taught me to avoid confrontation at any cost. After I left that marriage, I had pneumonia twice....finally, all that phlegm in my throat got out. What a price to pay. I was taught girls were to be seen, nor heard.

I reached adulthood with many beliefs; one being that nothing is free in this world, there is a price to pay for everything. The misuse or abuse of power is no exception. The

body stores memories and the hidden curriculum of the body, (Slattery, 2001) bides its time for a display of symptoms, due to the distress and/or dis-eases of past treatments, whatever the form of abuse.

Angela speaks of her difficulty in speaking her birth name and her low self worth as a young woman. If she did not like her name, how could she like herself? Nancy alludes to a direct correlation between her inability as a child and young woman to express herself in situations of verbal confrontation and the sickness of pneumonia. Pneumonia, an acute affectation of the lungs often manifests in temporary breaks in speech and speech patterns. I connected the appearance of chilblains on my hands and feet to my body's reaction to the trauma of early childhood abandonment.

Nancy's last name change, the final response after the reaction of removing herself from a physically abusive marriage may also be described as an act of resistance. She rebelled against and resisted the abuse of physical power in a system in which the question of who is more powerful often turns on who is less dependent. The more alternatives one possesses, the less dependent one will be on the perpetrator (Augsburger, 1992).

Nancy draws attention to the power of interpretation and its influence in telling and retelling stories. Interpretation becomes destructive when exerted negatively rather than positively, when it does not come from respect for a person's ideas, but more from a place of fear of her or his reaction when crossed (Starhawk, 1987). Nancy changed her name officially four times, and her immediate family interpreted these name changes as ways of "*running away from*" responsibility to and for herself. However, she saw the name changes as ways of "*running to*" responsibility to and for herself. Nancy describes her name changes as, "...*common, essential, transformative. My choice. Now I can be anyone, I wish to be.*"

Leah's decision to change her name was, she e-mailed, one of

...many other deliberate choices to continue to open myself and to know myself on a deeper and deeper level, not as a label or an object, but who I truly am without a goal or end point in mind. It has been that willingness to go for the truth of myself, whatever it is, that lead to the decision to change my name and changing my name lead me closer to God.

Striving to live in the 'now', Leah rejects the idea that she is working with power issues and stated she is, "*...not moving away from something but toward something, not in reaction to society or her past.*" It is important that she makes herself, "*...truly available to current experiences that will cull the most for her.*"

I found it interesting that the word, 'power' never once appeared in concrete form in several of the e-mail 'episodes', although its presence was implicated many times. And I am reminded that like beauty, power is in the eye (I) of the beholder. Moreover, it is the perception of the eye (I) that plays an important part in the exchange of experience anywhere and everywhere.

Starr wrote, "*Every day, I try to remind myself that it is me that controls the "wheel" of my life, I can make my own turn and choose one road over another, I can stop, slow down or speed ahead. I need to remind myself of the power I have to make changes in my own life.*"

It can be said that Starr's choice of name manifests the qualities she seeks to embrace in the journey of her life. Stars shine, they are one among many and reflect and refract light and warmth from the solar heat of the sun. Stars twinkle and glow. Stars burn out when their time is done, replaced by another constantly. In her search for a personal name of meaning to her, Starr could find no "*human mentor*". She looked to nature. She looked away from herself and left behind the darkness of abuse by those in positions of authority, those who misused their positions of power. She connected by disconnecting and discovered her own place of power. She has become her own transforming star, Starr.

And what of another power, a power that works magic in wondrous and mysterious ways? It is a brilliance that can illuminate dark shadows into shapes of sparking wholeness: It smudges the lines of definition and arouses respect for the unity of one. This power is not a knowing that comes to life under the scrutiny of a scientific microscope. Neither does it do well trapped inside the cages of condemnation or disdain. It is a sacred knowledge that you cannot trade, own, buy or sell. This power may warm the cold, comfort the lonely and provide hope in desperate situations.

Some seek this power inside formal places of worship such as a mosque, temple, and church or before an altar of their own making. There are those who seek to connect with this power in nature, among the other animals, trees and rocks of the earth. This power is everywhere; it has HUGE PRESENCE and is many times referred to as the power of the spirit – spirituality. In Western discourse, spirituality is often mistaken for, confused with religion, and the words are very often used synonymously. There are many who would argue strongly and fiercely for and against the points of difference.

Thinking and writing about her relationship with the power of the spirit, Angela had this to say:

Spirituality is what keeps me connected to my inner self, and my journey of growth and learning as a human being in this life. I believe there are lessons to learn, and the thread that guides me on those lessons is my own connection with spirituality within myself and the world around. I see relationships more deeply, there is more meaning that what appears on the surface. I see my life challenges as gifts and opportunities for learning, rather than something to be feared or avoided. I accept that we cannot understand the reasons for everything that happens,

Delaney spoke of spirituality and commented:

I think about spirituality more than I practice it – something I hope to change. I would say that my interest in spirituality coincided with my disillusionment in my country and its professed Christian ideologies... Spirituality means having a belief in something

greater than my own power and taking the time to honour those beliefs, whether it be through prayer, ritual, a walk to the ocean, writing or whatever. It's paying attention to daily miracles, remembering to be thankful, and having faith that I will always find my way.

Nancy tries to live her life *"spiritually and in the moment."* She wishes she were an enlightened Bodhisattva. *"But alas, I'm nothing but a lazy egotist."* She wrote,

In a state of awareness – a bodhisattvia is an enlightened soul who returns to earth to help mankind reach enlightenment – i.e. Jesus and the Dali Lama. My mother read the Koran, Buddhist Suttras, Zen, The Bhagavad Gita etc. very interested in spirituality. When I spent two years in the bush in the Yukon in my late twenties, I read 4 books, again and again and again: The Tibetan Book of the Dead, Tibetan Yoga and Liberation, Tibetan Book of Liberation, and a little book by Ramana Maharshi who said all you need ask is "Who am I". I accept Buddhism as my philosophy because it states enlightenment (or heaven or God – whatever) is available to every being each through their own path. No intermediaries necessary and no exclusivity.

Rowan spoke about her movement away from traditional religious and spiritual practice to more unconventional practices. She remembered,

In Toronto in my mid-twenties I gravitated to a spiritual path called Eckankar. The patriarchal component of the daily practice – contemplating on a Master who had to be male – was a major stretch for my young feminist consciousness but I stuck with it for a few years. I left Eckankar because of frustration with my practice, suppression of criticism and sexism within the organisation. So then I was in a kind of spiritual wasteland until some time in the early eighties when I began to be interested in an eclectic mixture of feminist spirituality, New Age beliefs, earth based spirituality, channelled books etc. I mediated off and on for years, often using guided meditation on the chakras, energy healing, work with crystals...stuff like that. I believed in a Higher Self, personal guides, reincarnation, a loving God/Goddess.

Shortly before she moved to one of the Gulf Islands in 1999, Rowan was diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, and discovered that the newly purchased house had been badly misrepresented. This personal crisis prompted Rowan to look again at some of her beliefs. She wrote:

I entered another spiritual crisis in which I questioned my belief in the existence of a creator who cared about the lives of individual humans (something I had questioned for a long time but had not needed to grapple with until then. Last spring I gravitated to a Zen meditation class and am now focussing on understanding the Buddhist concept of emptiness and the absolute and sustaining meditation practice.

Leah finds it impossible to separate the two paths, religion and spirituality, when thinking in terms of how the two played out in her decision to name herself. However, she stated,

What I can say is that I feel very fortunate to have been exposed to the Anglican Church when I was growing up. The community of people, the beauty, predictability and dependability of the rituals, a sense (however distant at that time and age and life experience) of God, the glorious music and the costumes and pageantry are an integral part of who I am especially on a personal level (which is, of course, a subset of the spiritual me.)

Leah is of the opinion that religion and spirituality are both “*legitimate and effective invitations to God.*” She further wrote,

I think it is possible to use the words interchangeably if both people understand each others' meaning.....Religion is the attempt to come close to God through a process or processes. Spirituality is the attempt to reach God directly by realizing one's true nature ...For the sake of differentiation, using these definitions, a religious person would come closer and closer to God (without ever getting there.) and a spiritual person would be conscious of themselves as God.

Starr looks to the earth as a source of and for strength. She stated,

I have always, - since early childhood memories- found the smell, feel, sound and sight of the earth to be deeply cleansing and (a) rejuvenating experience. It is to the woods that I have always turned to heal my sorrows and feel the connection to earth that we have. Religion has not played a part in my life, at any time. I consider myself to be spiritual. I believe in a higher being. When I was young my mother told me that I needed to believe that there was something or someone who held strength and beauty in my life. I could not find that in a living person. I found that strength in trees. I love the size, beauty, texture. There is feeling of being nurtured when I am in a forest I believe that stronger being is Mother Earth.

The three emergent themes, representation, change and power will continue to play out not only in the lives of the women in this study but also in society as a whole. How an individual is identified, the image portrayed waits silently patient, under cover for the grand unveiling presentation in representation.

Change is a constant. Every breath we make in the present creates a chaotic movement in the settlement of the past, of what went before, and creates a new and different space for the future.

Power is an energy source used in power over, power-within or power-with. It is dependent on a myriad of external factors and subtle agreements. Every day, individuals are engaged in cultural dynamics of power negotiations. These negotiations become a context of wills, of force, of courage to rebel, to resist, to compel, to coerce, or simply, just to be.

Naming oneself is an uncommon practice for females in cultures of Western society. The women in this study use power as a structure in relationship; to 'empower' themselves. By naming themselves, they use power positively to change their images and identities. Like shinning, sharp needles, forged at different times and different temperatures, each woman has begun to unpick and unravel stitches in patriarchal

patterns on the rolls of domination and discriminating material. Intent on designing and developing their own material, they have created a new ritual, a new pattern of female self-naming.

This ritual evoked by the power-within of women, who chose to name themselves, supplies a power-with of its own. The ritual of female self-naming challenges power-over in society and has the potential to eventually reshape the culture – society - around them.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION: AND SO...

Angela, Delaney, Leah, Nancy, Rowan, and Starr, like me, chose to name themselves other than because of marriage. Angela decided on a name change before she married. The others changed their names after a divorce. What role marriage and divorce actually played in the decision-making process is difficult to fathom. It is complicated, complex, and has to do with choice, the freedom to choose, and the personal philosophical base of individual action. This is not examined in the thesis; that discussion is beyond the scope of this study. Because of my active participation in the study, e-mail dialoguing with the six other women, the reading and viewing of material relevant to this thesis, a shift has occurred in how I assimilate certain information, how I think. I used to believe in pre-destination – little room for choice really. Now, I am uncomfortable making any blanket statement regarding things I know very little of or have read little about. I am no longer sure.

Listening to the multiple voices of the six women reflecting on the experiences that initiated a name change, I feel a connection. I can relate to the individual struggle of each woman to live in peace and harmony within cultures that reward compliance and are threatened by difference. I have a better sense of my self, mediated by the image I have of the other women. Their strength in voicing personal motivating factors that influenced their action provided the support of solidarity, permitting me to look from the outside in, and, at other times, from the inside out. My own voice has grown stronger; I have found strength in difference, and agree with Trinh (1991) who wrote about essential difference. She wrote,

Essential difference allows those who rely on it to rest reassuringly on its gamut of fixed notions. Any mutation in identity, in regularity, and even in physical places poses a problem, if not a threat, in terms of classification and control. If you can't locate the other, how can you locate yourself? (p.73).

And as I wend my way towards the end in sight on this path of a poststructural journey, I become aware that I draw to a conclusion that which can never be more than a temporary cessation of meaning – my life continues on (Leggo, 1998).

‘Who Do You Think You Are?’ is the title of a book containing a collection of fictional stories by Alice Munro and the question is an underlying one for those who search for self. My answer to that question has changed over time and it is my learning within a disciplined philosophical approach of careful and rigorous critique that may well prompt me now to retort, “*Who do YOU think I am?*”

Leggo’s definition of ‘deconstruction’, founded in the philosophical view that the world as known and experienced is constructed and disclosed in language, demonstrates that language use constructs plural meanings (Leggo, 1998). Therefore, to some, you and I have many faces seen from a multiplicity of multiple sightings.

The ‘snatches’ of the autobiographical kind that I presented in earlier chapters and in this concluding chapter, “...*represents the sum total of all the social judgement and prejudices, semi-scientific theories, everyday opinions and so on we carry around in our heads and which serve – usually implicitly – as models for our interpretation of the world to-day.*” (Haug, 1985, p.47).

The world changes, I change, you change and how I view, perceive, deconstruct, construct and interpret my experience changes. Thus, the gaze I cast today on my self of yesterday becomes the gaze cast by one stranger on another (Haug, 1985). I am not the person I was when first I started to write this text, I am different. Neither am I, as a researcher, presented as disembodied, - an objectified knower. I have found it impossible to draw concrete lines that separate and divide my whole, as if preparing my parts for the butcher’s chopping block or the scientist’s microscope. Connecting not only with parts of my self that lay forgotten or dormant, I connected also with the circling rhythms in the heartbeat of the universe. Every individual is an indivisible whole. It is not the result of laborious and unending synthesis, it is how we come into this world with all its still

veiled richness, of which one goes on discovering endlessly more and more (Tournier, 1975).

There is a quote by Thich Nhat Hanh (1991) that is in keeping with my personal quest in life and for *“remaining true to my heart, while remembering to pay attention to my mind.”* *“Please call me by my true names, so I can wake up and so the door of my heart can be left open.”* (Hanh, 1991, p123-124)

I have discovered and learnt much in the thinking of this text. I have come to know that to some, a name, is not only the symbol of the person, it is the person itself - the person's liberty, a capacity for responsible commitment. A name signifies the person and signatures are used in the signing of contract agreements that necessitate some outward show of commitment (Tournier, 1975). I have come to understand that there are some that are not committed to their name until they discover a name that truly liberates and empowers them. Some are not committed to a name at all. A name may be merely a means to an end; the end is context dependent, changing as the name changes.

This thesis text is a conscious effort to, *“...include many voices and to offer various levels of knowing and thinking through which a reader can make their own sense”* (Lather and Smithers, 1997, p. XV).

As I wrote, the words came out of my past experiences, and the experiences themselves were somehow transformed during the very act of writing. My two previous legal names became like outside glaze on a piece of moulded clay, society - the 'potter'. I grew more conscious of a growing awareness of new meanings, which settled like warm winds on the uncharted terrain of the sands of time, reshaping my imagination and my life. Something happened. Perhaps, it is as Lillian Smith (1949) wrote, *“...the writer transcends her material in the act of looking at it, and since part of the material is herself, a metamorphous takes place; SOMETHING HAPPENS WITHIN; a new chaos, and then slowly, a new being”* (p.14).

Growing into adulthood in the small mill-town of Macclesfield, Cheshire in England, I very often felt like I was out of place, a 'mis-fit'. I did worry now and again, whether I was 'normal', not knowing then that "*Normalcy is a cultural construction.*" (Tiernery, 1998). Macclesfield, according to historical text, achieved fame and fortune for the production of silk in mills, and the making of buttons in the turrets of the row houses, some of which are still to be seen lining the cobbled streets that have not disappeared with time. However, the invention of plastic and the ever-increasing open trade with Asia resulted in a much cheaper supply of buttons and silk for the common market.

Unfortunately, Macclesfield, like many other small mill towns was not able to compete with the international and industrial giants, so for the sake of prosperity, worked hard to maintain an identity of sorts, and now is recognised, within the world of travelling tourists, as a 'museum' town.

My father was manager of one mill, not a silk mill, a paper finishing mill, 'Backhouse and Copperts'. I was born when the affects and effects of major industrial transitions in other parts of the world were beginning to be felt in hometowns such as mine. Mills were closed; machines left to rot in the dusty rust and the lives of locals were left to chance and the winds of change. If my fate, my destiny or whatever else you want to call it had been anything other than it was, I could very well have become and lived the rest of my life as a 'museum piece.'

I am grateful it was not so. I do not do well under glass, on display or stuffed in cupboards to be brought out regularly for inspection and or cleaning by those who are not me!

There is a character, Edna Pontellier, the female protagonist, in Kate Chopin's book, "The Awakening", who speaks loudly and directly to me. Edna, a woman in search of self-discovery turns away from convention and society, towards nature and the senses. Born in the eighteen hundreds, when options were scarce for a woman intent on living

authentically, she commits suicide by walking determinedly out to sea. Left behind in the wake were two young sons, a husband, friends and a legacy of 'stifling' conditions under which women of those times were expected to conduct their lives. I have felt 'stifled', in the past. I have wanted to run away from situations in which I have found myself, not having the faintest idea really of the steps taken to lead me there, and feeling completely alienated from those around me. "*I wanted to go some place where I could just be: I was homesick with nowhere to go*" (Pratt, 1984, p.24). Pent up in a place of unresolved emotion, I have had neither thoughts nor words to express the pain that dulled my senses and disconnected me from relationship. I have questioned my own sanity, and it could very well have been me that Mr. Pontellier was referring to when observing his wife.

It sometimes entered Mr. Pontellier's mind to wonder if his wife were not growing a little unbalanced mentally. He could see plainly that she was not herself. That is, he could not see that she was becoming herself and daily casting aside that fictitious self which we assume like a garment with which to appear before the world. (Chopin, 1988, p.75).

What was it then that came hurtling through the universe, causing me to stop, take stock of, and re-evaluate my life? A man in Jamaica tried to kill me not so many years ago, (I had already renamed myself) and a woman in England abandoned her child when I was four. I created a narrative, rich with symbolism that enabled me to enter into and engage in an intense examination of the relationships in my life. The narrative also served to create personal distance from the vulnerability of raw emotions as I cut through flesh, pulling and picking apart the brittle bones of obsolete belief systems that protected a broken heart.

Using a distorted, binary and very much a patriarchal lens, I conjured up the illusion that I was not wanted, I had no place on this earth; my white mother abandoned me and my black father had attempted to kill me. Therefore, for some time, I had no feelings I could articulate. I had no thoughts that I could give expression. I was connected and unconnected at the same time. I was. Floating out there somewhere in the space of negative picture frames of past experience; I waited wretchedly to feel again the warmth

of the sun, to watch moonbeams dance in and out of tree branches, and bounce off the faces of those I love.

And so, as I look back from where I am now - in true Kierkegaardian fashion - the renaming of myself was an unconscious act that heralded my own 'awakening'. Others may define it as an act of liberation, an act of freedom, an act of survival, an act of rebellion, an act of resistance, an act of love, or just an act. My name straddles the place between the many realms of my conscious and unconscious selves. My name fills the space; it is the 'glue' that keeps me 'together', grounded, connected in relationship. As a human being, I have discovered my place among the other animals on earth, and will continue to pay attention in developing the art of knowing when to look through the eyes of a mouse instead of seeing like an eagle and *visa versa*.

Mary Catherine Bateson (1990) wrote 'Composing A Life'. Using, as a backdrop, the lives of five successful professional Western women, she explores the creative potential of intricate lives, where energies are not narrowly focussed toward a single ambition but rather are continually refocused and redefined. Since the renaming of myself by myself, not only am I listening and hearing more attentively as I compose my life, I see and watch more closely 'a work of art in progress.' And I have come to understand, to know that, like everyone else, I have the power within to use in my everyday relationships in the creation of my emergent selves.

Chosen Legal Name

Maiden Name

First Name

Samaya

Born In England

Married/Divorced

Age 60

2 Children

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Re-enchantment of Make-believing

The Re-enchantment of Make - Believing



Appendix B
Artistic Representations of Name Changes
For
Angela, Delaney, Leah, Nancy, Rowan, Starr

Angela

*"The song I associate most closely with my name change is **Suzanne** by **Leonard Cohen**. The song speaks to me of identity connected to a name. The name fits the person described. The melody was haunting and the words matched my experience of myself in the world.*

*There was another song at the time that deeply spoke of my experience in the world of my twenties. **Bob Dylan's Sad Eyed Lady of the Lombard**. Words and melody expressed my loneliness and separateness. But, it also expressed an individual as her own person, doing her own thing, which seem to be the theme of my life and the key to my choice to change my name."*

Suzanne

Suzanne takes you down to the place near the river
 You can hear the boats go by
 You can spend the night beside her and you know that she's half crazy
 But that's why you want to be there
 And she feeds you tea and oranges
 That come all the way from China
 And just when you mean to tell her that you have no love to give her
 Then she gets you on her wavelength
 And she lets the river answer
 That you've always been her lover
 And you want to travel with her. And you want to travel behind.
 And you know that she will trust you
 For you've touched her perfect body with your mind.
 And Jesus was a sailor when he walked upon the water
 And he spent a long time watching
 From his lonely wooden tower
 And when he knew for certain
 Only drowning men could see him
 He said "all men will be sailors then
 Until the sea should free them"
 But he himself was broken
 Long before the skies could open
 Forsaken, almost human
 He sank beneath your wisdom like a stone
 And you want to travel with him
 And you want to travel behind. And you think maybe you'll trust him
 For he's touched your perfect body with his mind.
 Now Suzanne takes your hand and she leads you to the river
 She is wearing rags and feathers
 From Salvation Army counters
 And the sun pours down like honey
 On our lady of the harbour
 And she shows you where to look among the garbage and the flowers
 There are heroes in the seaweed. There are children in the morning
 They are leaning out for love and they will lean that way forever
 While Suzanne holds the mirror
 And you want to travel with her. And you want to travel behind
 And you know that you can trust her
 For she's touched your perfect body with her mind.

- Leonard Cohen

DeLaney

" Gustav Klimt's painting of Death and Life. I have a large print of the "life" side of the painting that I have carried around with me for many years. "

Kahlil Gibran: "Children" in "The Prophet." *" It has helped me sort through some of the parental issues that arose for me throughout our experience."*

Children, The Prophet

And a woman who held a babe against her bosom, said, Speak to us of Children.

And he said:

Your children are not your children.
They are sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you.

And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,

You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

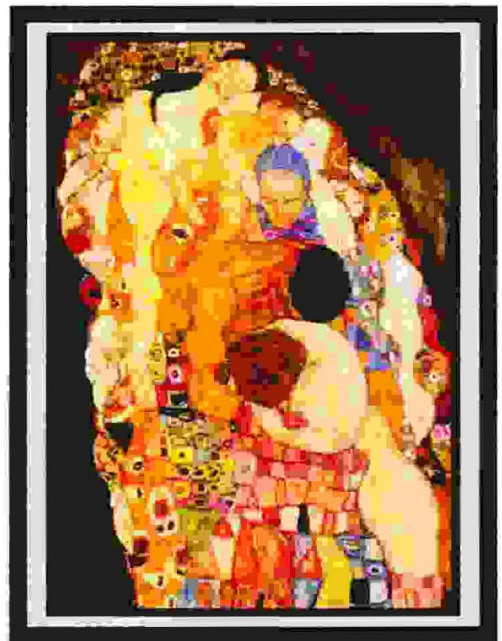
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;

For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable.

- Kahlil Gibran:



"Warrior by The Wyrld Sisters is a song that inspired me and moved me for a long time. "

Warrior

I was a shy and loney girl
With the heavens in my eyes
And as I walked along the lane
I heard the echoes of her cries

I can not fight
I can not a warrior be
It's not my nature nor my teaching
It is the womanhood in me.

I was a lost and angry youth
There were no tears in my eyes
I saw no justice in my world
Only the echoes of her cries.

I can not fight
I can not a warrior be
It's not my nature nor my teaching
It's the womanhood in me.

I am an older woman now
And I will heed my own cries
And I will a fierce warrior be
It is my nature and my duty
It is the womanhood in me.

I can and will fight
I can and will a warrior be
It is my nature and my duty
It is the sisterhood in me.

- The Wyrld Sisters

Leah

" I actually read the book that the quote comes from about two years before I legally changed my name. We were living in Portugal and a young American woman gave me the book, which she had just finished reading. I was very taken with the poetry of the writing and immediately wrote that particular excerpt in a journal. It has stayed with me ever since. When I hear or read these words, the level of reverence and awe that I feel for the world rises to the surface of my awareness and I am filled with gratitude for 'the wonder of it all' which seems to occur when I look at things anew. The changing of my name was a great assistance in recognizing "...there is only present and nothing to remember".

"They say that each snowflake is different. If that were true, how could the world go on? How could we ever get up off our knees? How could we ever recover from the wonder of it?"

By forgetting. We cannot keep in mind too many things. There is only present and nothing to remember."

- Jeanette Winterson in the novel called
The Passion, First Vintage International
Edition, October 1989,
Copyright 1987 by Jeanette Winterson,
published by Vintage Books, a division of
Random House, pgs 42-43.
ISBN 0-679-72437-0.

Nancy

"Two fantastic pictures – one the ideal woman, the other the reality. The Western ideal of woman, a creature of beauty and purity. She exists only in myth.

The world reality of women, beasts of burden for patriarchal greed, for economic and political power over others. World religions with their roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition, see women as the helpmate/handmaid of man. He states we are here to serve man."



Sandro Botticelli, "The Birth of Venus", 1485-86



Photo: Provincial Archives of Alberta

Forging the Prairie West

Doukhobor women pull a plow near Swan River, Saskatchewan, 1899. Historians George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic describe breaking land with teams of women as 'an important symbolic event' in Doukhobor group tradition, one that they had 'woven into their mystique' of "Peace and Useful Toil". (The Doukhobors [Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977]) But photographs of Doukhobor women harnessed to plows shocked Canadians and mobilized nativist opposition against any government compromise that would allow the Doukhobors to prove up their homestead lands communally rather than as individual families.

Rowan

"I know I want to choose a quote from T.S. Eliot's The Four Quartets. It is a poem that have been with me all my life, since my late teens, and over the years of reading and re-reading it has revealed more and more truth to me. None of the sections I would choose have anything directly to do with my name change, but they all speak to me profoundly."

We shall not cease from exploration
 And the end of all our exploring
 Will be to arrive where we started
 And know the place for the first time.
 Through the unknown,
 remembered gate
 when the last of earth left to discover
 Is that which was the beginning;
 At the source of the longest river
 The voice of the hidden waterfall
 And the children in the apple-tree
 Not known, because not looked for
 But heard, half-heard, in the stillness
 Between two waves of the sea.
 Quick now, here, now, always –
 (Costing not less than everything)
 And all shall be well and
 All manner of things shall be well
 When the tongues of flame are in-folded
 Into the crowned knot of fire
 And the fire and the rose are one.

- from *Little Gidding. The Four Quartets. T.S. Eliot, 1959, London, Fabbo & Faber.*

Starr

" A quote I cut from a magazine and have had in my office for several years is by Mahatma Ghandi. This quote gains significance over the years. I know it to be true. "

**"You must be
the change you
wish to see."**

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Author



Samaya VanTyler

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