Cultivating Leisure:

Moving from arrest in habitual patterns to participation in conscious choice

by

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ABSTRACT

This inquiry begins with a focus on the experience of constrained leisure. Using a critical, feminist lens the 're-search' evolves into an exploration of everyday experiences of constraint in three particular arenas and the relationship of these experiences to the social forces that shape them. These arenas are; epistemology and research, the meaning and practice of leisure and participation in my health. The autobiographical narrative in this thesis illustrates a shift in awareness and understanding that has enabled me to move within these arenas from arrest in habitual patterns of constraint to participation in conscious choice.

Important to this process has been the development of a meaningful understanding of leisure and the realization that this inquiry is an embodiment of leisure; the development of awareness and understanding in the pausing to question and critically reflect. This study illustrates possibilities of human agency within leisure.

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"An interpretive stance is...one that opens itself to the ongoing processes of human beings constituting their world" (Hemingway, 1990, p. 308). This interpretive study has been a process of being open to and exploring experience. It has been an experience of living leisure.

I have needed the four years and the many interuptions in my focus on my work, to grow - to take in, comprehend, knead, question, gain insight and try out those things I have heard, read and come to understand better. I could not have done this any faster and have developed and grown as much.

This has been hard work; often painful, often enlightening. I am so grateful for the safe harbours I have found and have been welcomed in to to do this work. Antoinette invited me into her harbour where I have learned to explore, to write, and to value my personal experience and understanding, and from which I have set out to explore uncharted waters. My husband Cliff has believed in me and my work. As I entered the waters of exploration, I have felt his loving support.

My life line has been in the form of the Tuesday Noon Group with the dedicated attendance of Dianne, Joan, Heather, Peggy and Daphne. Our weekly sessions have ranged from anchoring and validating each other's work to challenging and rocking each other's boat. Each person has shared the gift of their unique self, perspective and understanding. Each

one of these women have contributed to the creation of a mutually supportive, caring and growthful environment in which we have all flourished. In our meeting we have sought nourishment and have nourished, sometimes we have simply been present and other times blossomed forth. Over these past few years while each one of us has been on a voyage of exploration, our weekly rendezvous of sharing our excitements and discoveries, our discouragements and defeats and our knowledge gained from experience, has kept me motivated and true to my mission.

Such a voyage of exploration takes much time and dedication. Any hints of imminent time deadlines and personal agendas could have very easily had me turning my ship around and heading for home port, with little learned and even less to share. I am grateful to my committee members, Martin Collis, Doug Nichols and Antoinette Oberg, who have given me the time, space and encouragement to experience this voyage, who have not pressured but have encouraged me to travel further with their questioning as I proceeded on this meaning-full voyage.

I also wish to acknowledge my parents Lois and Dick Miller, who since my childhood, have given me the space, time and encouragement to explore.

Leisure is pausing to reflect, to develop awareness and understanding of our self and the world in which we live

Catherine Miller, August, 1997

AN INVITATION TO LEISURE, ACCEPTED

Walking alone in the woods one day, with troubles on my mind,
I came upon a reflecting pool.
I paused, to gaze upon its surface.
Intrigued by the myriad reflections shining back at me
I knelt beside the waters.

Time slipped by, I know not how short or long
For now I was peering into the depths
Be-side the waters as I knelt, I could now see in to the depths.
There I discovered wondrous things; silvery fish, delicate grasses, decaying lacy leaves...
I adjusted my eyesight so that I could see more beneath the surface reflections
Then I shifted my body and could see still more

The sediment, the thin, craggy fingers of a dead branch
And then, nothing...just darkness
What lay there was beyond what I could see.
Startled, I jerked my head
My perspective shifted once again
I was now looking at my own reflection

Again, an involuntary movement
And I had shifted my viewing.
The surface reflections smiled up at me,
The wisps of clouds scattered about the blue sky above, the overhanging branches of the red-skinned arbutus tree...
My own limbs began to speak to me...it was time to shift again,
Time to ease the stiffness seeping in from sitting in one position

I listened to my body, I stood up and stretched
Then looking about me, I choose to kneel down at a different place
To peer into the depths, to see what else I could see.
My in-sight was improving, my awareness was developing and I began to understand more.
I had sipped the waters from the pool, and my body felt nourished
Softly, my tears fell to the pool's waters
I was opening up, I was giving back
I now saw and understood more than I had before
I felt enlightened, I felt free.

Catherine Miller, November, 1996.

INTRODUCTION

Reflections on a Different Practice

'Leisure! What leisure?!' Such is the familiar refrain I have heard amongst my acquaintances, in news documentaries and from participants in research studies. I have heard this refrain repeatedly in my own thoughts too. The focus of my research has been to make sense of my experience of constrained leisure. I wanted to understand why, although I desired leisure, I allowed myself very little of it. Little did I realize as I stepped out on this quest, that my focus would shift from the question 'why is my leisure constrained'? to 'what is going on when I experience constrained leisure'? Not only would I develop my understanding of what constrained my leisure behaviour but I would also engage more often and more consciously in leisure. As I developed my ability to engage in leisure - to pause, question and reflect - I developed meaningful insights from my experience of constrained leisure. Little did I realize that this understanding would reach far beyond my experience of constrained leisure. In my journey to understand the particular experience, I have revisited and seen anew many of my other life experiences.

My intention was to put my research findings in the language of everyday experience which would be more accessible to others, but this became problematic. In speaking from and in the language of my personal experience, I challenged the dominant values and assumptions of the positivist tradition taught and sanctioned in my society. In addition, my research did not produce answers, but illuminated situations, developed

understanding and allowed insight as it demonstrated different practices. These outcomes also challenged the dominant social expectations of knowledge. As I struggled with the challenges my research experience presented to my previously taken-for-granted assumptions and beliefs, I began to realize that my education within various social institutions has formed not only my knowledge base but also my ways of knowing. My initial research focus on my experience of constrained leisure evolved into an exploration of my personal everyday experiences of constraint and their relationship to the social forces that shape them (Smith, 1987).

My research process can be illustrated with a metaphor: when I take a photograph I adjust the focus to create an interpretation of an image. I can increase or decrease the focal point. My research experience resembles the act of looking through the viewfinder of the camera as I adjust the focus ring. I begin with an opaque impression, then focus on the details of my personal experience. Doing so enables me to see personal, habitual patterns of constraint. As the personal becomes more clear, I broaden and deepen my focus to bring my surroundings into the field of view. Looking through the viewfinder of my research, I begin to see and interpret these surroundings as social and political forces that inform and influence my personal experience. As I bring the context into view I see different aspects of the personal. My photographic image, created under the influence of social and political forces, becomes a social and political statement. What I am aware of and choose to bring into focus in this image is influenced by social and political forces. This 're-view' enables me to broaden and deepen the focus of the image as I become more aware of the presence, and

recognize the influence of social and political forces on my habitual way of seeing.

I began this research planning to study the constrained leisure experience of others. I had hopes that the results would inform my understanding of *my* constrained leisure experience. As I prepared a pilot study, it became obvious that I needed to clarify what I meant by 'leisure', not only to the study participants, but also to myself. This led me to review current and past definitions in the literature and the history of leisure. I initiated an ongoing critical reflection on the meaning leisure held for me, articulated in page upon page of journal writing. I engaged in a process of 're-searching'; reading, reviewing, writing, critical reflection, reading, reflection, and writing again. I looked and thought and looked again. I began to experience glimmers of insight, to gain new perspectives on both the meaning of leisure and my constrained experience of it. I sought out relevant theory. The theory illuminated the socio-cultural and historical context of my personal experience, affirming my experience and clarifying the socio-political ramifications of it. The theory validated and helped me to understand the method of my research, that of developing an awareness of socio-cultural forces, and understanding their influence by critically reflecting on my own experience of them.

It gradually became evident to me that the philosophical beliefs and assumptions of critical and feminist theory affirmed the practice that was emerging in my research. These include: critical reflection on dominant social practices and their influence on personal practice; the intent to empower change, both on a personal and social basis; and the study of

personal experience to better understand the individual in relation to the social world.

Through the lens of a critical feminist orientation the focus of the research shifted from the experience of others to that of my own. I was no longer trying to understand my experience of constrained leisure behaviour through studying that experience in others or through listening to their understanding of their experience. I realized that I had much to learn from my own experience, a rich, vast source of information with which I could work intimately. Ethically and theoretically, before I could ask others to participate in this research with me, it was necessary to examine closely "the traumas, assumptions and ideologies which shaped so many of my decisions and behaviours, including how I [constrain my leisure and] engage in research practices" (Brookes, 1992, p. 148). What right had I to ask others to examine and share with me their understanding of their experience if I had not done so myself? How could I appreciate their understanding if I had not come to an appreciation of my own? I began to recognize an habitual pattern that my research revealed: my habit of looking to the knowledge of others to inform my own understanding and turning a blind eye to that of my own. By working through my own experiences with the aid of theory, I would be "better able to see the implications of specific ideologies in my own social history and thus [be better able to] choose if and how I want to engage in certain [of my] social practices" (Brookes, p. 154). My focus of inquiry emerged: to develop awareness and understanding of assumptions, values and beliefs, uncritically adopted from the teachings of our social institutions, which give rise to habitual ways of constraint in myself. "Writing

autobiographically, my intent [has been] to begin to *disentangle* myself from a social history which continues to inform and shape me" (Brookes, p. 148).

The written experience which illustrates my process of developed awareness and understanding may also invite others to engage in developing critical consciousness through the lens of their own experience. It has been my experience that through examination of my own practice with both my naked eye and the lens of theory, I have not only learned about but also have developed a personally meaningful understanding of the presence of dominant social values and assumptions and of how they inform my personal assumptions and behaviours. Autobiographical writing can provide others with affirmation of their relevant personal experience, and offer insights into the relationship of their own "perceptions and actions to the power structure of the larger society" (Bain, 1989, p. 22), so that they, too, may develop ways to change if they so wish.

An unexpected source, from which I gained renewed commitment, purpose, and faith in the value of my work, presented itself in the mid-course of this 're-search' journey. Ten years ago (1987) I developed a chronic illness, myalgic encephalomyelitis (M.E.). (The reader may more readily recognize this chronic illness by one of several names associated with it. In the early stages of naming this illness, when it was believed to be linked to mononucleosis, it was called Epstein-Barr Syndrome. This term was replaced with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (C.F.S.). M.E., however, involves much more than fatigue: it involves myalgic and arthritic pain and neurological difficulties. Fibromyalgia is related to it.

The C.F.S. terminology caused confusion between the chronic illness and the common ailment of chronic tiredness in our society, so the medical terminology of M.E. is now used more frequently.)

Following my initial recovery, I attempted to ignore the frequent relapses, until the symptoms reached such heightened stages of pain and fatigue that I had to give in. As I became engaged in my research, explored my thoughts and feelings, and synthesized the theory and literature related to my topic through my journal writing and critical reflection, the presence of this illness and its crucial effect on my life tried to make themselves known. After years of practiced denial of this illness, I felt a pressing need to write about my experience of it. I wanted and needed to understand more about it so that I could learn to live more effectively with it. I resisted this persistent sense for several months in the belief that it had nothing to do with my research. Finally, I allowed myself to explore my thoughts and feelings in writing, and in doing so began to see habitual behaviours and assumptions that gave rise to the frequent resurgence of illness. The theory that proved helpful in my developing awareness of my constrained leisure behaviour, also informed my recognition of those behaviours and assumptions which related to my experience of illness. I also saw in my experience of illness, behaviours and assumptions that were implicit in my experience of constrained leisure.

Added to this enlightening reflection on behaviours and assumptions which give rise to illness and constrained leisure, was another dimension - that of the physical. My bodily-felt symptoms of relapsed illness were empirical touchstones for my understandings relevant to my health and

illness. I began to detect the presence of symptoms at earlier stages; I would pay more attention to what I was doing, and what sorts of messages filled my thoughts and directed my choices. As I became aware of certain habitual ways of thought and action that were not conducive to my health, and consciously altered them for the better, some aspects of my health have improved. Attention to body signals and messages has become a vital element in my ability to participate in my health. The physical symptoms provide reliable barometric readings; they prompt me to become aware of my actions and assumptions and to question their appropriateness at the time. On the other hand, frequent bouts of physical suffering have provided the imperative for me to understand 'what was going on', to reflect critically on my behaviours and assumptions, and to pay attention to the vital information my body offers to my consciousness. Recurrent bouts of physical suffering have motivated my quest to comprehend my experience of constraint in leisure and in health and have informed my understanding by providing physical feedback.

The process involved in my experience of constrained leisure has become evident as I struggle in three apparently distinct contexts, which, upon critical reflection are actually very much connected. These contexts, treated separately, are methodology, defining the meaning of leisure and living with chronic illness. These three areas have been studied congruently for the most part and often in this process the insights from one have illuminated my understanding of one or both of the other two. The interconnected awareness and understanding gleaned from these three areas informed my understanding of my experience of constrained leisure. With greater awareness developed from this research process I have been

able to recognize and acknowledge certain habitual ways of being, particularly a lack of response to my autonomous self, an insensitivity to my bodily-felt needs and a denial of self-knowledge. These habitual ways are reflected in the broader social context by my unconscious and uncritical adoption of social and cultural values that instruct and sanction the separation of the body from the mind, the person from the institution and the knower from the known.

The purpose of this inquiry is multifold. The intent is to illustrate my journey of developing awareness and my grasp of 'what is going on' in my experience of constrained leisure, in order to:

bring to light that some of my assumptions, beliefs and habitual behaviours have constrained my leisure and my health,

reveal and express tacit assumptions and beliefs that have informed some of my habitual behaviours,

illustrate and illuminate the powerful yet often imperceptible influences which the socio-cultural context exerts,

provide a new awareness of this experience of socio-cultural influences for those who wish to understand it more,

illuminate possibilities for individuals to develop different perspectives on their experience, i.e., construct a framework for others to reflect on their own situations, and

enable change for those seeking it, including myself.

My premise is, that in becoming able to speak of and from my critical examination of my experience, I will provide material that illustrates the possibility of empowerment and change. My hope is that through my research others who relate to or have an interest in the experience of constraint be it in chronic illness, constrained leisure or some other context will gather relevant threads to excite their critical reflection and enable them to move from arrest in habitual behaviour to participation in conscious choice.

The form that the thesis writing takes illustrates my struggle of personal growth. Out of the initial dominant voices which originate in the research of others, you will hear the increasing presence of my voice as I examine my experience. At first my voice appears and fades, but gradually it builds in strength and conviction as the research process unfolds. Initially an interjection, my voice integrates with complementary theory and finally emerges confidently on its own.

In order to develop awareness and understanding and for the strength of conviction to emerge, I revisited, researched, rewrote and reflected again and again on what I thought I knew about myself and the world in which I live. As illustrated in the poem, *An invitation to leisure, accepted*, each

time I searched I gained new insight and understanding. Each time I searched I approached from a different perspective, informed by the insight and understanding gleaned previously. With each repetition I moved and was moved. With each repetition my awareness was broadened and deepened, my learning was transformed to understanding and I became better able to transform my understanding to my action. With this repetitive motion I was able to loosen the bonds of constraint; I was able to experience a greater sense of self.

In the Kierkegaardian sense, this repetitive motion of critical self reflection and writing is a process of 'repetition forward' (Caputo, 1987). It is a creative process in which with each repetition I see and learn more about particulars of my habitual ways of thinking and being and about the assumptions that give rise to these ways. It has taken repetitive efforts to coax that which is unconscious into my consciousness.

The writing style of this thesis corresponds with my actual practice of 'repetition forward'. This repetitive process demonstrates that there are multiple angles from which to approach the viewing of assumptions and habitual ways, and that assumptions and habitual ways take on multiple, sometimes subtle and often complex forms. Each re-viewing creates possiblities for new insight - new insight contributes to holistic understanding. The repetition provides numerous possibilities for the reader to develop his or her understanding of that to which I have given voice.

I begin the thesis by sharing with the reader my struggle to understand what constrains my leisure; a quest that leads me to question methodologies, define leisure and narrate my experience of living with a chronic illness. This quest takes us into the realm of leisure as I become aware of the tacit assumptions, values and beliefs I unquestioningly took for my own. Through a developing consciousness which I have found to be personally transformative, I question those values, beliefs and assumptions and reflect on my experience and knowledge. Cultivated by this process, the depth and breadth of my understanding has expanded to include different methodologies, awareness of cultural influences and a personally meaningful definition of leisure. I conclude with illustrations of my own development of new perspectives, meaning and understanding.

EMERGING MEANING IN METHOD

Positivist research on leisure constraints

Leisure has primarily been studied from the perspective of natural science (Hemingway, 1990; Jackson, 1988). The predominant research on leisure, defining it as an activity or as time, has focused on leisure participation. In the early 1980s, leisure scholars began to study non-participation in leisure and the barriers which inhibited participation or which detracted from enjoyment of leisure participation (Searle & Jackson, 1985). The positivist approach to studying factors constraining leisure behaviour has been used to provide information to enable recreation service agencies and practitioners to develop effective policy and to provide valuable services and appropriate facilities. The intent has been to remove barriers and constraints to leisure participation and to encourage, support and facilitate the publics' leisure participation (Iso-Ahola & Mannell, 1985; Jackson, 1988).

During the past 10 to 15 years, over 100 items have been administered in studies to identify factors constraining leisure behaviour and enjoyment of leisure (Jackson, 1988). Over the past decade, studies in natural science have identified many factors constraining leisure activity participation, some of which can be addressed by leisure services management, some of which are particular to the individual (Jackson, 1988).

Surveys and interviews have been used frequently to determine factors constraining leisure behaviour. Responses are obtained from study

participants that can be categorized into social, physical and personal factors. The following factors, for example, have been revealed as determinants of constrained leisure behaviour; social factors of prohibitive costs, insufficient time and inconvenient scheduling; physical or external factors of too great a distance and inadequate facilities; and subjective or psychological factors of a person's knowledge of leisure opportunities, interests in leisure activities and personal abilities to perform (Iso-Ahola, 1980; Jackson, 1988). With these findings, leisure service practitioners and providers have valuable feedback to which they can respond to make leisure facilities and services more accessible to more people.

Jackson (1988) points out another class of constraints that "are influenced by family [and social] relations" (p. 210). He acknowledges that these have been overlooked in most of the leisure constraint research because of the inherent "attention to individual leisure as opposed to family leisure" (p. 210) required.

Many personal or social factors or some combination of the two contribute to constrained leisure behaviour (Iso-Ahola & Mannell, 1985). It is within the individual where change can take place. Results from surveys and interviews tend to feed back to participants the information they provided. Personal and social factors evident in responses such as 'not enough money' or 'inconvenient times' whether supplied to the participants for selection or provided by the participants, reflect their awareness of constraints to their leisure (Green, Hebron, & Woodward, 1990). While this information is useful to researchers and those involved in programming leisure activities, it does not inform study participants or empower them to

move beyond their experience. I found that those factors identified as constraints to leisure did not enable me to change my behaviour either. I still could not make sense out of my experience of feeling restrained from leisure.

There are many gaps in our understanding of constrained leisure behaviour. When we address individual experience, different perspectives come to light that enhance our collective understanding. Different research methods enable us to develop different understandings of the subjective experience of constrained leisure, which in turn can inform others and give them a means for change.

Feminist research on leisure constraints

By acknowledging a broader social context of constraints on leisure behaviour, feminist researchers have identified different sources of constraint. Green, Hebron & Woodward (1990) sought to comprehend the meanings and motivations participants attached to their leisure behaviour. They were particularly interested in situating their study of leisure in everyday life in order to understand the subjects' experience of leisure in relation to the forces that shaped their lives.

Many feminist researchers have contributed to knowledge by stepping deeper into the waters of social relations to understand and make visible constraints experienced in leisure. Their focus has identified three subjective constraints in particular that reveal the influence of social and cultural forces on women. One is the ethic of care, the socialized female gender role that establishes the expectation on a woman to consider and to respond to the needs of others before herself. Study results have demonstrated the determinant force of this ethic for women as they establish their daily priorities. Caring for others leaves little opportunity for leisure (Chambers, 1986; Glyptis & Chambers, 1982; Green, Hebron & Woodward, 1990; Harrington, Dawson & Bolla, 1992; Henderson, 1991).

Closely associated with the ethic of care as a constraint is a sense of lack of entitlement to leisure experienced by some women. Although they believe in the value of and want to have leisure, many women put family or work or both first at the expense of their own opportunities for leisure. Some women "have difficulty accepting that they deserve consideration for their

own needs, including their need for leisure" while others find it difficult to get the burden of their manifold responsibilities "off their mind long enough to enjoy leisure" (Harrington, Dawson, Bolla, 1992, p. 217). Other women still, experience guilt if they 'indulge' in some leisure (Henderson, 1991).

A third constraint identified in women's leisure behaviour involves their concern for their safety. Fear for their physical and /or psychological well-being prevents many women from partaking in desired leisure activities. Women generally accept these social limitations, and the constrained leisure behaviour that results, becomes unconscious habit (Henderson, 1991).

These feminist perspectives have focused exclusively on the leisure experience of women. With this focus, they have been able to identify and make visible gender issues in regard to leisure. This research delves deeper into the individual experience of the social world and illuminates the influence of gender roles on leisure behaviour.

As I read the experiences articulated by the researchers and the subjects of the feminist studies, I felt excitement and relief. These experiences had not been acknowledged in the literature before, but they resonated with and validated my own. They also provided insights for me into socialized values and their influence on individuals. I felt that I had entered waters where I could develop more meaningful understanding of my own experience of constrained leisure.

The issues of health and safety, ethic of care and a sense of lack of entitlement became aids in navigating my further exploration. With these taken-for-granted issues illuminated, my awareness of social and cultural forces and their potential influence on the individual and especially on me, was heightened. Still, I did not have the means to change my experience. Despite my new appreciation for the influence of social forces on my behaviour I remained stuck in my habitual ways. This research perspective had brought me into new waters, but I needed to venture further.

The elusive nature of the meaning of leisure compounds the problem of understanding constraints to leisure behaviour. Leisure has a multitude of interpretations in the literature. It is translated to mean recreation in free time by the popular culture, and is intuitively understood but not easily articulated by many. Many of the participants in Green, Hebron and Woodward's (1990) British study of some seven hundred women referred to leisure as a 'vague and amorphous concept' (p. 36).

So what is leisure? How can I make sense out of my experience of constrained leisure and how can I change this experience? Over the past four years I have worked with these questions as my guides.

Methodologies

What we do and do not know and understand about leisure has much to do with the ways we have studied it (Hemingway, 1990) and the epistemological assumptions upon which these methodologies are based. In the domains of both natural science (positivist) and human science (interpretive) research, the method used relates to the question being asked. "A research method," says van Manen (1990), is "a way of investigating certain kinds of questions. The questions themselves and the way one understands the questions are the important starting points" (p. 1). Positivist and interpretive research methodologies are informed by different philosophical assumptions which shape the kinds of questions asked (Carson, 1986).

Positivist or natural science research seeks to "identify nonrandom patterns, relationships, and empirically based generalizations...with the intent of developing, modifying, and/or expanding knowledge that extends our understanding of sociocultural phenomena" (Glassford, 1987, p. 299). Natural science studies objects of nature, natural events and the behaviour of objects (van Manen, 1990). Positivist theory assumes that immutable natural laws, each based on a single reality, govern behaviours and relationships (Bain, 1989; Thomas & Nelson, 1990). Research conducted in the positivist realm seeks to discern these laws using systematic, objective observations and investigations in which the researcher detaches him or herself (Thomas & Nelson, 1990); "the knower is separate from the known" (Heshusius, 1992). Once known, these laws can be used to control and predict relationships and behaviours (Glassford, 1987). These truths can

usually be observed in a cause-effect relationship where the "cause (of an effect, pattern, relationship, behaviour) is fundamentally external in nature" (p. 295). The truth value of these methods rests on criteria of reliability and validity. Research findings should be replicable, should relate to the experimental variables and should be generalizable (Thomas & Nelson, 1990).

Interpretive research, (also known as hermeneutic or human science), aims to provide an understanding of the ways people subjectively and culturally experience their social world. The emphasis is on experiential knowledge (van Manen, 1990), "the kinds of knowledge with which humans operate" (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 15) their daily lives. Interpretive inquiry studies persons as beings who have consciousness and who act purposefully. The human world is characterized by mind, thoughts, consciousness, values, feelings, emotions, actions, and purposes. Some of the ways through which people experience their culture and subjectivity are perception, interpretation, planning, acting, feeling, and valuing (van Manen, 1977).

Interpretive inquiry seeks to understand how the individual makes sense of a particular experience or behaviour (Glassford, 1987; Locke, 1989; Mezirow, 1990; Short, 1991a; Thomas & Nelson, 1990). When the key question is posed, 'what is going on?', this mode of human science research aims to further our awareness and understanding of human social behaviour, including our own (Sage, 1989, p. 28).

There is an important differentiation made between positivist and interpretive inquiry: the former seeks knowledge, the latter understanding. Knowledge in the empirical-analytic sense has a different meaning from understanding in the hermeneutic sense. Understanding can never be objectified, writes Palmer (1969). "An existing human being cannot survey understanding from without; understanding is always the position from which all that is seen is seen" (p. 228). Understanding is a subjective experience. Ouspensky (1949) refers to knowledge as the information we gather intellectually. Understanding, he explains, occurs in the synthesis of knowledge, feeling and sensing, in the integration of a person's knowledge and being.

It was to the interpretive mode of inquiry that I was intuitively drawn as I began my study to understand my experience of constrained leisure.

Assumptions of interpretive inquiry

Fundamental assumptions of interpretive inquiry reside in the belief of personal and social constructs (Bain, 1989; Kirby & McKenna, 1989; Locke, 1989). The social world is perceived to exist "as a set of multiple realities" (Locke, p. 4). Each person has their own perspective and that drives behaviour. Glassford (1987) explains this assumption saying "human behaviour originates in the individual's interpretation of reality" and "people are conscious social actors capable of controlling their behaviour" (p. 295). He goes on to note that we "possess the ability to interpret and to communicate meaning" and by that we "actively create or reproduce that which we call society or culture" (p. 297). Socially, there exists an "intersubjective overlap among our personal realities" (Locke, p. 4). Thus, reality is constituted through the dynamic interaction of a person with others.

Polkinghorne (1989) refers to interpretive inquiry as the 'epistemic' conversation - the discourse concerned with knowledge and understanding relevant to and operational in the daily lives of human beings. We use these interpretations from human science research "to enlarge and enhance our own meaning structures...It is a productive action which informs our own lives" (p. 36).

Shifting the perspective from objectivity to subjectivity: External - internal tensionality

Interpretive inquiry holds a different view of the individual(s) involved in the research than that of positivist research. The latter's methodology separates the knower from the known by making the subjects, the people involved in the study, the objects of study. The intent is to separate out subjective experience in order to reveal immutable laws of nature. The former's methodology connects the knower with the known by asking the people involved in the study for their understanding of the topic of the study. In interpretive research, the intent is to draw in and on subjective experience in order to broaden our understanding of human experience.

The different underlying epistemological assumptions and intents of positivist and interpretive research are summarized by Lakoff & Johnson (1980) who write that objective studies help us "to understand the *external* world in order to be able to function successfully in it" (p. 229). Subjective studies help us to understand "*internal* aspects of understanding - what the individual finds meaningful and what makes his life worth living" (p. 229).

Subjectivity in the post-modern perspective

In the post-modern perspective subjectivity refers to a person's meaning-making of themselves, others and the world. Our subjectivity is informed through our everyday discourse in which is embedded historical and social structures of ideology, cultural values, beliefs and assumptions. Our

subjectivity is constantly in process as it is constituted and reconstituted by these myriad influences present in our daily lives (Davies & Banks, 1992). Research conducted with a post-modern orientation "seeks to understand the processes through which the person is made subject" (Davies & Banks, p. 3). As we become aware of our subjectiveness to the dominant forces of society and culture we can begin to see the potential of our subjectivity as a site for human agency, for personal struggle and change (Lather, 1991).

Feminist orientation

A feminist research orientation implements methods of self-conscious questioning and examination of conditions that inform meaning-making. These have proven to be useful places from which to identify and to seek deeper understanding which both reflects and affirms our relationship with self and with others (Lewis, 1990). Through expanded understanding comes new perspective and insight.

"Feminism ideally rests on a transformative cognitive approach, which validates subjectivity and direct agency" (Bannerji, 1991, p. 77). "[T]here is no better point of entry into a critique or a reflection than one's own experience. It is...the beginning of an exploration of the relationship between the personal and the social and therefore the political" (p. 67). "[T]he stories we tell from our immediate life...serv[e] as the first steps to an active/interpretive definition of self, which bears a constitutive relation to our social world" (p. 85). To begin from the author's subjective experience and understanding of it in a socio-historical and cultural

framework, provides the grains and seeds of a social explanation and analysis.

Subjectivity is constituted not only from experiential but also sentient knowledge. Human perception and sensation is informative. In feminist post-modern writings, the body is seen as a vehicle for developing our understanding of our experience of the world (Shapiro & Shapiro, 1995).

In my personal experience of this research, I have found that my subjective constructs can be informed significantly by my physical body, when I pay attention to it. Contrary to Cartesian epistemology where a person's physical sensing and feeling must be 'dis-connected' from knowing, I have found that I have much to learn from my body. When I am conscious of my body, I pause in thoughtfulness, and in that pause, I develop more understanding. In that pause, I draw on my physical and emotional senses, my memory of experience and my knowledge. Rather than my habitual behaviour of moving onward with the predetermined purpose to function effectively in my social world, being almost exclusively outwardly attentive, I pause to consult and learn from the awareness I have and continue to develop from within. I pause to be inwardly attentive as well.

In both feminist and interpretive inquiry, everyday experience is considered a context for knowledge. The narrative style of writing is considered an effective method to both make sense and to convey the nature of the experience and the knowledge implicit in it (Grumet, 1992, p. 28). Developing understanding of human relationships and behaviours is "fundamentally a writing activity", notes van Manen (1990, p. 7). Writing

has been a primary means for me to connect with my authentic thoughts and especially my physical and emotional feelings. As I write I am able to explore my experience and question my interpretation of it. Writing has also been my primary means to synthesize theory and experience which has enabled me to clarify my research interest and to develop my understanding of the problem.

Struggling with subjectivity:

Coming out of the closet

Learning to embrace my subjective self has been a process full of challenges and surprises. It has been painful, liberating and fraught with self-doubt; it has brought forth personal growth, critical voices and both positive and undermined self-worth. At times, I have never felt so connected with meaning as when I have dwelled in my subjectivity, particularly as I questioned and explored my thoughts and feelings by writing about them. As I commit my thoughts and feelings to the page, I begin to have insights into their meaning and to view things from a different perspective. New understandings emerge about my self, my experience, and my relationships with others. These understandings also help me to understand the experiences and understandings of others.

At other times, I have never felt so uncomfortable as when I have dwelled in my subjectivity, squirming under the critical voices in my head that keep telling me that to focus on my self is narcissistic and...here I have difficulty putting words to a message that is embedded in my sense of moral conduct. I simply hear the voice that tells me, as it has for most of my life, it feels, that to spend time and attention on myself, on my thoughts and feelings is not appropriate. To do so bids ill things, such as self-centredness. And to make more than mere mention of thoughts and feelings stemming from my subjectivity is a sign of ill-breading. In conversation and action, I should attend to the cares and interests of others.

There are other voices that clamour to be heard as I try to hear my own. They tell me that what I think and feel is not important to others or not as important as those of others. The critical voices tell me that my thoughts and beliefs are inadequate. I don't really 'know' yet. I seem to have only a tentative grasp on understandings that are meaningful to me and these are easily threatened and submerged upon hearing the understandings voiced by others. I struggle between feelings of needing to articulate that which is meaningful to me and fearing loosing my voice to that of others. It is a matter of negotiating understanding instead of abdicating mine to that of others.

It has been my experience that I have focused primarily on learning from my external world in order to be able to function effectively in it to the near exclusion of listening to the wisdom of my inner being. I have at times passively and unconsciously and at other times quite consciously and actively taken up the knowledge, beliefs and values held out by those I deemed by our cultural values, 'older and/or wiser'. After thirteen years of working in domestic and international banking, I went back to formal education to learn 'the Truths' of the world from books and teachers. Despite thirty years of living, I did not believe that I 'knew' anything - that is, anything of value, anything that would help me to understand the important things in the world. What those important things were, I had only a notion, but I was certain that I would learn all that I needed to know at the institute of higher education. I had little awareness or regard for the knowledge and understanding that I had developed from my own lived

experience up to that point. Since it was personal, I had learned from somewhere, that it did not count.

I learned a great deal at university, more than I could ever begin to share with you here. Information, facts, theories, procedures, ideas, histories, equations and much more were proffered and I readily drank them up. I continued unawares to re-enact again and again the old pattern of looking almost exclusively to external sources for knowledge, permission, and direction as to how I should conduct my life. Such an imbalance has contributed to illness. The reoccurring symptoms of this illness, I have come to understand, are signals of this imbalance. When I am arrested by illness, I have been caught ignoring some important inner needs and silencing my own voice. When I am arrested by illness, I am constrained in my ability to function successfully in the external world and my own being is severely compromised. In my practical, everyday living, I have realized that I need to develop my awareness and practice of subjectivity so that I can choose my actions more appropriately, as I bring into balance the integration of my objective knowledge with my subjective understanding.

This struggle to bring in subjective understanding and to integrate it with knowledge from external sources is portrayed throughout this thesis, as I learn about what was an unconscious habit of relinquishing my own values, beliefs and understandings to the unquestioned authority and knowing I presumed of others. This personal struggle is situated in my social and cultural context. To value what I know, based on my experience, thought, feelings, theory and reflection, and to speak up from that knowing, puts me in conflict with values of obedience and authority that I have

learned since childhood. As I have worked in the three sites of this research, the methodology, defining leisure and becoming a participant in my health, I have experienced this struggle.

All of this seems to boil down to a struggle between values. In examining my particular experiences of struggle, I have developed an awareness of social and cultural values that are bound up in these personal struggles. The struggles are not solely personal nor are they solely social in nature. They are not about one value being more true or correct than another. These struggles are about the dynamic interaction and tension between values, and learning through the interactivity of reflection and practice, to value differences and to consciously choose from these different sources in a way that enables a person to act with thoughtful consideration, being responsive and responsible to him or herself and to others.

Shifting perspectives; Socialization-interpellation

In the context of this research, there are two theories worth considering about the relationship between cultural and social forces such as values and norms, and individual subjectivity such as beliefs, assumptions and behaviours. It is generally agreed that social norms, rules and roles are derived from cultural and social values. The culture represents the shared ideas, ideologies, values, beliefs and knowledge that have developed over time and which give meaning to actions and objects. Social values represent a consensus amongst the dominant group on what is desirable or undesirable in society and are reflected in the social norms (Ibrahim, 1991; Smith, 1987). Social norms are represented by the common interpretations and standardized practices found within a culture. Once established as group norms, they become internalized, implicitly and pervasively influencing individual beliefs and the formation of expectations (Iso-Ahola, 1980; Parsons, 1966/1977; West & Williams, 1978).

From sociology, we have the theory of socialization. Each individual learns the roles, values and norms of society from significant others, such as parents, teachers and peers; from institutions such as family, schools and workplaces; and from cultural forces such as ethnicity, regionalization and social-economic status. With this information, the individual develops and displays his or her self identity through body image, personal values, beliefs, expectations, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours (Clebone & Taylor, 1992; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Hubbard, 1984; Ragheb, 1980). "Socialization is the process of learning and adopting cultural and group norms" (Crandall, Nolan & Morgan, 1980, p. 286).

In post-modern theory "a person is not socialized into the world but is *interpellated* into it" (Davies & Banks, 1992, p. 3). Rather than passively learning and adopting cultural values and social norms taught by others, one actively takes up these social discourses with the desire, whether conscious and/or subconscious, to have a sense of certainty as to how one should think and act so that one can be assured of acceptance in the social world. In other words, a person has some complicity when he or she takes on the assumptions, values and beliefs that they do, whether they are aware of it or not. This means, that with awareness, a person also has the means to develop his or her assumptions, values and beliefs differently (Davies & Banks).

These two perspectives reflect different philosophical orientations. Socialization theory argues that a person is a passive recipient of the social forces that shape him or her. Post-modern theory asserts that a person is an active social player who unwittingly 'buys into' the available, pre-formed, social and cultural values, wanting to be accepted by others and to fit in with the norm. Both theories, upon learning about them, gave me insights into understanding my world and my experience of it.

I came upon socialization theory first. It helped me to become more aware of social norms and cultural values, especially in the context of my personal experience. As I examined my personal experience, I became more aware of my own values, assumptions and beliefs, how these were influenced by social and cultural forces and how all of these informed my behaviour. Interpellation theory gave me a different perspective to consider on my

relationship with society and culture. As I recognized my complicity in 'buying into' certain values and norms - examples from working in the institution of banking come immediately to mind - I could see also that I am able to change those assumptions and beliefs and thus some behaviours that compromise my values. As with the post-modern perspective on subjectivity, the theory of interpellation offers us a different perspective on the nature of the relationship between individuals and society - a perspective that illuminates our potential for personal agency. The shift of perspective illustrated in these two theories exemplifies a fundamental shift that has occurred in my research - a shift from passive acceptance to conscious choice.

This shift in perception has been an empowering experience for me. Frustrated by my frequent experiences of both constrained leisure and chronic illness, I began to reflect critically upon my concomitant behaviours, values, beliefs and assumptions. In doing so, I became conscious of ways in which I had habitually and unconsciously reacted to circumstances. I questioned what forces had given rise to these ways and sought out their source. I became aware of social norms and cultural values and their influence on my thinking and acting. I also came to see evidence of my own complicity particularly in my experience of illness and constrained leisure. In all of this reflection, I began to see contradictions between and within my values, beliefs, assumptions and behaviours. These contradictions have provided the grounds for and the opportunity to re-evaluate my assumptions and beliefs, to clarify my values and priorities and to consciously choose my actions. With awareness of my own complicity, both as an uncritical, passive recipient and as an uncritical,

active player, I feel empowered to question, re-evaluate and change certain assumptions, beliefs and behaviours that I recognize as problematic in my experience of constrained leisure and illness.

Subjectivity is a valuable site through which we can develop our awareness and understanding of social and cultural forces and their impact on an individual's and our own assumptions, values, beliefs and behaviours. "It is to the detailed examination of *subjectivity* that we turn to try to understand how old patterns are held in place and how they might be let go" (Davies & Banks, 1992, p. 4). This research is oriented to developing awareness and understanding of certain of my habitual ways of thinking and acting and how these old patterns have been formed and maintained.

Critical theory orientation

Consciousness and subjectivity are of primary interest in critical theory, particularly the "juncture between human agency and structural constraint" (Lather, 1991, p. 109). A particular goal of critical theory research is to provide people "with the insight necessary to demystify and critique their own social circumstances and to choose actions to improve their lives" (Bain, p. 22). This is a value-based methodology (Bain, 1989; Thomas & Nelson, 1990) which aims to promote critical social consciousness (Henderson, 1989; van Manen, 1990), "to generate knowledge in ways that turn critical thought into emancipatory action" (Lather, p. 109).

The essential ingredient that makes an inquiry a critical one, writes Sirotnik (1991), is the direct challenge to underlying human interests and ideologies. Mezirow (1990) enlarges on this, explaining that a critical orientation involves "the process of rationally examining the assumptions by which we have been justifying our convictions" (p. 5). The sense we make out of experience that guides our decisions and actions, is

> influenced by habits of expectation that constitute our frame of reference, that is, a set of assumptions that structure the way we interpret our experiences...What we perceive and fail to perceive and what we think and fail to think are powerfully influenced by [these assumptions] (Mezirow, p. 1).

Our perceptions and thoughts are influenced by our awareness. What we are aware of, vaguely aware of and not aware of, also has much to do with our frame of reference, that is, the social constructs and ideologies informing our uncritically acquired assumptions. Critical theory

"examines the relationship of participants' perceptions and actions to the power structure of the larger society" (Bain, 1989, p. 22).

Williamson (1981/82) notes that the first possibility of critical thought resides in the idea that we all participate in ideology. Social institutions, such as family, religion, workplace and education, teach and exhibit ideologies to the members of their society (Kaplan, 1975; Saul, 1995). If students leave their institutions of further education realizing that "one's language and thought are not immutable and natural" (Williamson, p. 83), that they are informed by social constructs in the form of assumptions, values and beliefs, then education will have done them a good service.

Critical reflection

The epistemological grounding of critical theory assumes that those who are living an experience have conscious and unconscious knowledge of it (Carson, 1986). To bring unconscious knowledge into the conscious, and to develop awareness of and insights from our experience, we use reflection, critical reflection and critical self reflection. Critical analysis has been used in the human sciences to develop understanding of the human realm (Polkinghorne, 1989; van Manen, 1990).

Mezirow (1990) explains that the aim of reflection is to explore experience in order to develop new understanding and appreciation. Critical reflection involves the critique of taken-for-granted, unquestioned cultural values and social norms that inform our personal assumptions, beliefs and behaviours.

Critical self reflection involves "reassessing the way we have posed problems and reassessing our own orientation to perceiving, knowing, believing, feeling and acting" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 13). It is critical reflection focused specifically on our self experience. The reassessment and insight that occurs in critical self reflection can bring about a transformation in perspective. "Perspective transformation", writes Mezirow, "is the process of becoming critically aware of how we perceive, understand, and feel about our world" (p. 14). It is the critical awareness a person develops about his or her assumptions, values and beliefs.

We best learn to acknowledge the possibility, to see, and to question the influence of social and cultural forces when we are confronted with our contradictions (Williamson, 1981/82). Taking this thought a little further, Shepard (1984) writes, "take heed of your own feelings, ask what may be causing them, and whether cultural forces are at work" (p. 185). Packer (1985) brings this thought full circle, saying "generally it is only when we reflect on what we are doing, prompted by confronting a problem, that we begin to see the network of interrelated practices, skills, and habits that support all our apparently simple everyday actions" (p. 1083).

Prior to becoming acquainted with the theory of socialization and reflecting critically on the impact of socialization on my life experience, I had not thought consciously about assumptions or their influence on beliefs and behaviour. I did not realize that I made and held assumptions. What insights that gave me, as I somewhat painfully and somewhat in amazement recognized assumptions in my thinking and in my habitual

acting! Immediately I saw a few things in a different light. In other aspects of my beliefs, values and behaviours I have experienced a more gradual dawning of awareness. I began to develop my awareness of social norms and cultural values and their influence on my choices, conscious or otherwise.

This was illuminated in an experience of leading a volunteer organization three years ago. A crisis in an otherwise smooth sailing endeavour, provided the grist for critical reflection and a transformation in my perspective, as illustrated in the following journal excerpt.

March 16 -17, 1994

While struggling to detach myself from the massive entanglement of broken masts and shredded sails - my own and the others' emotions and personal issues around this controversy, I came to know myself better. I can see now that I have had personal conflict between wanting to be the flag ship one moment, providing the direction, leading the group on (motivated by my sense of urgency to get things done, no doubt) and wanting to be the escort ship another moment, encouraging, nudging the others along, helping to bring out the abilities of others while sharing the vision and keeping us on course. The directive leadership approach is an approach that has been highly valued in our society - it is a way of leading that I have expected of myself and that others make known that they feel I have the ability to carry out well - however, any steps in taking that direction have created great stress for me. I have come to realize that it does not fit for me - that it is not my style and that I do not value it as the only or best way to do things. I have felt the expectation of me, placed by others and myself, that

this was the direction in which I should be developing myself and my skills. Over the past two months, I have painfully come to realize that I have had expectations of myself to act in certain ways that are not cohesive to my way of being.

Enlightened subjectivity

I have come to name this experience of developing self awareness and understanding, of gaining new insights and different perspectives, 'enlightened subjectivity'. With enlightened subjectivity, it is possible to view one's own and other's beliefs and behaviours with compassion and understanding, no longer as entangled in one's ego-centredness. I have come across several authors who write of the process of developing greater self-knowledge in which a person also develops greater acceptance of difference, particularly difference and contradiction she or he encounters within her or himself. This awareness and acceptance generates a sense of empowerment. With this understanding and empowerment a person can take action, act consciously and change how one has habitually acted before (Lather, 1991). With this understanding and empowerment comes the means for change on a personal and a social level (Brookes, 1992; Dustin, 1992; Lewis, 1990; Moore, 1992).

We can also consciously or unconsciously keep ourselves in the dark. Sharon Butala (1994) points out that unexpressed thoughts and feelings remain deniable. For years, I tried to deny my experience of chronic illness. By not speaking to others of the frequent bouts of pain that I experienced or of how this illness affected my life, I thought I could carry

on as if 'I was just fine'. In doing so, I was denying my experience of illness to myself as well.

As I have developed awareness and understanding through this research process, I have come to appreciate how that which I believed to be personal, so personal that I kept it secretly to myself, actually permeated in myriad ways into my social context, and in doing so, became political. This reflects the concept in feminist theory that the 'personal is political'.

The truth value

Smith (1987) points out that we are informed by what people tell us about what they do in the everyday world, but that "we cannot rely upon them for an understanding of the relations that shape and determine the everyday" (p. 110). With theory we can investigate these relations of the everyday experience with understanding of forces that shape it.

This inquiry slips into the "juncture between human agency and structural constraint" (Lather, 1991, p. 109) to understand what is going on in my experience of constrained leisure. A particular goal of critical theory research is to provide people "with the insight necessary to demystify and critique their own social circumstances and to choose actions to improve their lives" (Bain, 1989, p. 22). This involves reflecting critically on assumptions and beliefs that have given rise to habitual ways of doing and thinking about things. It is a means to understand how old patterns have been made and maintained and how they might be let go (Davies & Banks, 1992). Using theory to understand subjective experience and experience to understand the theory, this inquiry looks at three particular contexts in which unquestioned assumptions, beliefs and behaviours are problematic.

The first context is constrained leisure, the initial focus of the inquiry. With realization that the results from positivist research were not enabling me to overcome my experience of constrained leisure, the focus of the inquiry widened to include a different methodology, interpretive inquiry, with its inherent values and philosophical underpinnings. The study of interpretive inquiry unveiled different methods of research, which, as they

were put into practice, began to open doors into realms of insight and meaning. I developed an understanding of what gave rise to my experience of constrained leisure which enabled me to begin letting go of some of my habitual patterns that constrained me. I began to engage more often in leisure as my comprehension of methodology and theory broadened, as my understanding of leisure deepened, and as my awareness of personal patterns and social influences developed. My understanding of leisure and my awareness of personal patterns constitute the second and third context of this inquiry. Social influences infiltrate all three. All of these contexts are inter-connected and mutually informative.

In order to develop my understanding of what was happening in my experience of constrained leisure, I needed to associate more attentively to my subjective experience and at the same time become more aware of my social circumstances. In doing so, I have developed understandings that enabled me to choose a methodology that unearthed personally meaningful understandings which gave me the means to change habitual ways and develop a personal understanding of leisure. This inquiry enabled me to improve personal circumstances that were problematic at the start, an improvement that I have felt particularly in my health. The practice of this critical inquiry enabled me to move from habitual constraint to conscious choice. My praxis has embodied the method and the topic. As committee member, Dr. Oberg wrote in a personal communication, this inquiry "is what it is about" (May 31, 1997).

Guba and Lincoln (1989) comment on the problematic nature of human knowledge. They assert that "human knowledge consists of a series of

constructions, which, precisely because they are humanly generated, are problematic, that is, indeterminate, unsettled, and ambiguous" (p. 69). People create constructions in an attempt to make sense out of their situations and experiences. Some aspects of a construction will be personally unique but there will be elements that are extensively shared. "The nature of a construction that can be held about anything depends on two things: the range or scope of information available to a constructor, and the constructor's sophistication in dealing with that information" (p. 71). This inquiry has delved into a range of contexts in which information on assumptions have been unearthed including epistemology, research and method, developing a meaningful understanding of leisure and developing an understanding of habitual patterns that constrained my experience of health and leisure. I have researched, learned and put into practice skills of critical reflection, critical self reflection, narrative and autobiographical inquiry to develop and present this interpretive inquiry. The scope of information and the sophistication with which this information has been dealt are two other possible criteria by which the truth value of this inquiry can be judged.

Not only does the experience of one affect the experience of others, but also the experience of one is relevant to the experiences of many. This belief underscores the purpose of this endeavour and is congruent with the beliefs of feminist theory, critical theory (Bain, 1989; Short, 1991a; Sirotnik, 1991) and human science research in general (van Manen, 1990). The 'yes's' experienced by readers as they identify with the insights shared in the study and the 'aha's' experienced by readers as they suddenly are able to

make sense out of that which was previously obscure, indicates the validity of the understandings shared in the study.

Embedded in the richness of personal experience and a person's expressed understanding of it, are catalysts for insight and grains of emergent understanding. These are sparked or evolve with those who have an interest in the experience or who can relate them to their own behaviour (Carson, 1986; Short, 1991). In the interpretation, the reader may recognize elements of his or her own experience and may develop his or her own meaning-making. The change that has occurred and is illustrated in this research provides others who have relevant experience the opportunity for new insights and understanding, that "might serve as a basis for action" (Bain, 1989, p. 22).

The understandings that come out of this study will not be valid for everyone or even for all people in any particular sub-group. They will be valid for some, however, and therein lies the importance of the inquiry. If for some, making audible and visible certain social messages that resonate for them and help them to understand at a deeper more meaningful level that (and what) previously unknown, unrecognized influences have been contributing to their beliefs, habitual behaviours and particularly to their experience of constraint, be it in leisure or otherwise, then the inquiry has increased their and our understanding of the experience of constraint. If the particular messages brought to light are not relevant for some, the realization alone of the existence and influence of invisible social messages on one's beliefs and behaviours may provide valuable insight. And for those not personally affected by the insight and understanding raised in this

inquiry, the information shared may contribute greater understanding for them of others' experience of constraints on their leisure behaviour or their behaviour in general. As Kirby and McKenna (1989) write, "if you can increase the understanding of an issue or a circumstance, illuminate one person's story in a new light, you will have helped others to understand the social world a little better" (p. 96).

On the other hand, if this work creates dissonance or angst for a reader, if it brings into question certain values and assumptions, be it in the style of the thesis writing, the method of the research, the philosophical underpinnings of the methodology, the definition of leisure, the expressed personal issues and scenarios, and/or my expressed understanding that I have come to out of these, then the work is engaging the reader in its very topic, that of leisure. This is what it is about.

Leisure: the arena for critical reflection, perspective transformation and enlightened subjectivity

Leisure is "a primary arena for first order interpretive activity [in which] people seek to understand their world"..."Leisure is a window onto the larger structure of social practices, with which it is joined" (Hemingway, 1990, p. 308). Leisure resides in the juncture between human agency and structural constraint.

Through its use of qualitative data interpretive inquiry aims to illuminate situations that are often invisible to others and give expression to beliefs and assumptions not readily articulated (Bogden & Biklen, 1982). This description acknowledges the active flow back and forth between the inner and outer focus experienced in leisure, as people seek to understand what happens in their personal world within the social world and to understand their social world in reference to their personal world. Through the contemplative and reflective activities of leisure, people seek to understand something of their experience. Because personal experience exists in a social context, what people understand of their own experience, informs their understanding of their relationship with others, thus developing their understanding of the 'larger structure of social practices with which [their personal experience] is joined'.

Leisure is a primary means for individuals to develop understanding of their world and their experience in it. Such understanding provides the means for transforming personal insights and self knowledge into greater understanding of one's relationship with others (Heise, 1993). Greater

understanding of one's relationship with self and with others enables one to consciously choose appropriate behaviours and thus engage more 'tactfully' (van Manen, 1990), with more thoughtfulness, responsibility and responsiveness, towards self and others. Greater understanding of one's relationship with self and with others constitutes enlightened subjectivity.

Leisure is the site for this interpretive inquiry. Leisure creates the pause for critical reflection, and in particular, critical self reflection and perspective transformation. Located in leisure is the pause required to reflect. Reflection and thought require a pause, notes Mezirow, (1990) to reassess one's thinking and actions.

AN INTERLUDE:
'RE-SEARCHING' THE MYTH OF NARCISSUS

The myth of Narcissus, as interpreted by Thomas Moore (1992), illustrates the possibility of transformation through reflection. This myth is an analogy of my journey.

Narcissus, son of a river god and a nymph, was a beautiful youth of sixteen. Many of the young people were attracted to him but he spurned their attentions, believing that he was superior to and more beautiful than them. Narcissus tightly held on to this rigid, preconceived image of himself. It gave him a sense of power. But his pride and power were fragile and needful of constant protection.

One day, as he strolled through the woods, he came upon a dark, quiet glade in which there was a mirror-surfaced pool of water. He knelt down at the pool's edge to get a drink, but was arrested in his intent by the visage he saw looking back up at him from the water. Never before had he seen such a beautiful image. He was mesmerized by it and fell in love with it. Desperate to have it for his own, he attempted to embrace it. Each time he broke the water's surface, however, the visage disappeared. Never before had he felt such a longing in his heart, such a love for something outside himself. Never before had he not been able to have that which he desired. Repeated attempts to unite with this visage resulted in failure. In despair, Narcissus sat by the water's edge, and gazed at that which he loved and could not have.

It was some time before Narcissus was struck with the realization that this visage he so loved was actually his own. This startling realization transformed Narcissus. All his life he had believed himself to be exactly that of his preconceived self image. Never before had he reflected on himself. Upon having fallen in love with an 'other', however, he discovered that there were different aspects of himself and that they were lovable as well. His preconceived identity was shattered by the reflection in the pool and Narcissus was offered the opportunity to see another image of himself.

In experiencing this transformation, Narcissus had to surrender the rigid self identity that he had created and maintained for so long. In doing so, he experienced the death of this self-image, and he grieved its loss. His physical body wasted by the water's edge until it too surrendered, transforming its mortal existence into the symbolic. When his friends came looking for him, they found not his body but a flower, rooted where he had last sat, at the edge of the reflecting pool.

Narcissus, caught up in his habitual ways of thinking, had come upon a pool of water and paused to drink from it. Little did he realize that in that simple, momentary, self-serving act, he would become engaged in self reflection that would enlighten his consciousness and transform his being. From the rigid, hard-shelled, self-contained individual, who could not share his beauty, he became a soft and supple flower, able to share his beauty in a way that all could see and enjoy. In coming to know himself differently, Narcissus flowered forth. "Love of a new image of self" writes Moore (1992), "leads to new knowledge about oneself and one's potential" (p. 63).

Moore (1992) relates this lesson about narcissism to psychological polytheism. He refers to the idea that we live within multiplicity: we allow ourselves to experience the tension of many claims made on us from within our psyche.

> An attitude of polytheism permits a degree of acceptance of human nature and of one's own nature that is otherwise blocked by single-mindedness. A neurotic narcissism won't allow the time needed to stop, reflect, and see the many emotions, memories, wishes, fantasies, desires, and fears that make up the materials of the soul. As a result, the narcissistic person becomes fixed on a single idea of who he is ..." (p. 67).

Should a person be arrested by what he or she has not seen and should that arrest prompt him or her to reflect, however, then the possibility exists to develop new self knowledge and from that, blossom forth, having more of his or her authentic self to offer than was possible before.

This interpretation of the myth of Narcissus presents humanist values with a post-modern perspective. Like Narcissus, we have the potential to see the multidimensional and fluid nature of our own experience and of our own selves. As we engage in self-development, we loosen the bonds of structural constraints, expand our sense of self and develop our capacity to experience freedom within our social context.

This interpretation of the myth of Narcissus illustrates the path and topic of this inquiry. I began this research with rigid, preconceived ideas of how to live my life, how to do research, what constituted knowledge and what leisure meant. I was accustomed to my headstrong ways. And yet, I was

becoming aware of a growing dissatisfaction with how I lived my life, the kind of information I could expect to gain from my research and even with the familiar definitions of leisure. Gradually, as I walked through the woods, a glimmer caught my eye. I was drawn to the 'pool of reflection'. As I gazed at the surface, I began to see into the depths. The research became a process of re-visiting, re-considering; it became a process of 're-searching' as I looked again and still again. I walked to different places around the pool to gain different perspectives. Each time I looked into the water I saw new things and I saw many of the same things differently. With insight, I gained new awareness and developed different understandings which live on in me. They enable me to grow. I now see that I have choices where I did not consider choice before. I can now act on choices that improve my life by bringing more meaning to my understanding and practice of both research and leisure. In this inquiry, research and leisure blend, as I pause to reflect on that which I thought I knew.

A PAUSE FOR REFLECTION:

THE PROBLEM WITH LEISURE

"Modern leisure leads us away from any true confrontation with ourselves, our lives, our society"

Hemingway, 1988, p. 190.

EVOLUTION OF A MEANINGFUL UNDERSTANDING OF LEISURE

At the beginning of this research process, I sought to understand what constrained my leisure behaviour. As I delved into the literature and reflected on my experience, however, I realized that I needed to define what 'leisure' meant to me. Confused by the multitude of definitions and the subtle interpretations which are used in the literature, I responded to my inner sense of something more central to the concept of leisure than that portrayed socially; I began to explore a personal philosophy of leisure.

In frequent casual conversations, I discovered that most people believe they have an intuitive sense of what leisure means. Articulating that meaning, however, seems to be a difficult undertaking. In reviewing the history and literature on leisure, I found that developing a comprehensive definition of leisure has been a focus of study amongst practitioners, scholars, researchers and philosophers for over 2000 years (Roadburg, 1983). Apparently, it has been difficult to reach a consensus on leisure's meaning. Today in the literature (Leitner & Leitner & Assoc., 1996) amongst leisure practitioners (Miller & Nichols, 1996) and the general public (Green, Hebron & Woodward, 1990), there are many different definitions of and perspectives on leisure. For many, leisure is a vague and amorphous concept (Green, Hebron & Woodward; Henderson, 1990).

Three authors respond to this problem of multiple definitions (deGrazia, 1964; Arnold, 1985; Hemingway, 1988). They state that the real problem

now is the absence of meaning in our present day leisure. We have too little appreciation today for leisure's authentic meaning and its classical roots.

I was heartened to read of this complaint. I had an intuitive sense that there was more to leisure than that captured by any of the definitions in use. What that was, however, I could not articulate. I needed to clarify my own understanding of what informed the definitions of leisure in the literature and what informed my intuitive sense of leisure. I believed that certain elements in the writings of others would resonate with my intuitive understanding of leisure. This process became an inquiry of its own as I tried to make sense out of the definitions provided and the meaning I sought to understand.

Captivated by my desire to better understand leisure, I reviewed the definitions in the current literature, the history of leisure, the word's etymology and my own experience of leisure. I read and considered what others had written. I explored the relevance of their interpretation to my experience. I considered the understanding that emerged as I critically reflected on my own experience. This process resembled the weaving of a tapestry as the different strands illuminated patterns and informed my inquiry.

Dominant definitions of leisure in the literature

In the literature, leisure is most commonly defined in unidimensional or multidimensional terms of time, activity, experience, and/or some combination of these. Also cited in the literature are criticisms of these definitions for their inadequate description of the whole or the essence of leisure.

The most frequently encountered definition of leisure is the objective, unidimensional concept of free time, meaning unobligated time, time free from work, time with which one can choose to do as one pleases (Godbey, 1981; Leitner & Leitner & Assoc., 1996). In terms of this definition, leisure and its distribution can be studied quantitatively. Problems arise, however, determining what constitutes free time. For example, time spent at work or with family may be leisure for some people and not for others.

In our post-industrial, market economy society, the definition of leisure as free time has taken on a relationship with work. This is problematic. It ignores the experience of leisure, and it ignores those sectors of the population who are not engaged in our social construct of work - that is remunerated activity.

The difficulty of defining leisure in terms of free or unobligated time in relation to work is compounded by the disparity of opinion among various authors in regard to the definition of work. 'Work' ranges from non-enjoyable activity (Roadburg, 1983), to obligatory time or activity committed to one's occupation or profession (de Grazia, 1962; Dahl, 1972), to civil and

family responsibilities (Ibrahim, 1991), to "productive activity which yields a result of economic or social value" (Kelly, 1982, p. 115). Despite its common usage, defining leisure as free time, especially in relation to work, is problematic.

Brightbill (1960) referred to leisure as discretionary time, recognizing not only the concept of time free from attending to the needs of existence and subsistence but also time free to use according to one's wishes. This definition recognizes the role of freedom in leisure from two perspectives - freedom from something and freedom to do something. Choice and activity are also important aspects of this definition.

Many authors refer to leisure as an activity or range of activities in which people choose to participate (Bernard, 1984; Jackson, 1988; Philipp, 1992). Inventories of activities have been used to identify leisure, but results have shown that one activity may be leisure for one person and not for another, or that it may be leisure for one person under some but not all circumstances (Horna, 1994; Iso-Ahola, 1980).

Recognizing that there are different forms of or purposes to activity, Dumazedier (1974) defined leisure as a special type of activity, "the principal aim of which is self-expression and inter-personal exchange" (p. 57). He developed this idea further stating that leisure is "the liberation of self-expression from the work ethic, from the religious ethic and from the family ethic" (p. 56). In this statement there is the suggestion that these social values constrain an individual's ability to partake of leisure - particularly the activity of self-expression.

Neulinger (1974) considers leisure as a subjective experience and in the sense of a verb.

> To leisure is to be engaged in an activity performed for its own sake, to do something which gives one pleasure and satisfaction, which involves one to the very core of one's being. To leisure means to be oneself, to express one's talents, one's capacities, one's potentials (p. xii).

Neulinger is speaking explicitly of the experience of being oneself and implicitly of the freedom in leisure to have this experience.

As I studied the definitions of leisure presented in the literature, I searched my own experience through critical reflection and journal writing in an effort to recognize what leisure was in my life and what made it meaningful. In one of my earliest attempts to articulate what I thought constituted leisure, I wrote about the concept of leisure as a subjective experience of positive affect derived specifically from physical activity.

March 23, 1994

One of the most rewarding ways of having fun for me is through active leisure pursuits. There are certain physical activities that I have come to realize give me a tremendous sense of freedom. I can lose myself in the doing of them. I no longer feel self conscious, that I am on view to others, to their criticism or to my own. I experience a heightened sense of being one in mind, body and spirit. I have a sense of outpouring positive energy that is not draining but healing, relaxing and even invigorating. My mind and thoughts are keenly focused on what I am doing, my body is responding to

the activity and I am very aware of kinesthesia. I feel wholly engaged, grounded, at peace with myself. All other thoughts and worries are swept from my mind. When I come back to them after this leisure activity, I feel renewed, a new person, stronger to deal with them, equipped to see the bigger picture and often equipped with a new sense of purpose and motivation.

At this stage in my journey I was aware that a sense of freedom from judgement by myself and others was an essential element of my leisure experience and that this sense of freedom was associated with a sense of being grounded. I connected these elements of being free of judgment and feeling grounded with Dumazedier's and Neulinger's concepts of 'self-expression' and of 'being oneself'. I found their definitions and my own articulation to be relevant, yet still missing 'something'. I continued to explore.

Some feminist research has focused on the subjective experience of leisure, identifying five perceptual factors. These are the perceptions of enjoyment, freedom of choice, relaxation, intrinsic motivation and lack of evaluation (Shaw, 1985). These elements address the quality of the experience which is shaped by the individual's attitude and consciousness. The subjective perspective of leisure places great emphasis on experienced affect and state of mind, rather than time or activity, as determinants of whether an experience is or is not leisure.

I found that I was moving in that direction myself, no longer focused on physical activity as the sole or even best means to achieve the specific

subjective leisure experience, and I realized whether an experience was leisure or not had much to do with what I was telling myself at the time.

April 20, 1994

...I stepped out to sit in the sun on the sundeck - to enjoy the warmth of the sun and to listen to the birds singing - to take a break from my work on this writing. While the break was beneficial, the sights, sounds and warmth massaging my senses, my thoughts still centred on my preoccupation of this writing and the topic of leisure. Thoughts flowed, so much so that I could not stay out for more than five minutes, for fear I would forget them before getting them down in writing. It felt good to be outside and to allow my senses the experience of the outdoors, my body muscles to relax and my perception to be that of a little indulgence rather than deprivation had I stayed diligently at the computer, indoors. However, I did not allow my mind, my preoccupation with thoughts on my work, to take a break. Thus, the experience did not feel like leisure. It did not attend to the body, mind and soul as a whole. It did feel leisurely. It attended to aspects of my body and soul by providing a change, enjoyment, something for self, relaxation of body. My mind, however, was still engaged in its main occupation and I felt obliged to be working, to be producing, thus experiencing judgement from self and the perception of judgement from others stemming primarily, I suspect, from social conditioning...

In this writing I became aware of the influence of social values on my perceptions and behaviour. This was a step in the direction of my realizing the influence of social values on my experience and understanding of the meaning of leisure.

Going back to the literature, I found that another approach to defining leisure was to combine two or more of the unidimensional definitions of time, activity or state of mind, recognizing that although each may contribute to our understanding of leisure, none alone completely defines it. Kelly (1982) wrote that leisure is the quality of an activity defined by relative freedom and intrinsic satisfaction (p. 23). Ibrahim (1991) combined all three unidimensional elements when he described leisure as "a state of mind or being that allows a person to choose contemplative, recreative, or amusive activities at the time in which he or she is relatively freed from work, civil or familial obligations" (p. xiii).

All of these definitions are contained in the current literature. They exemplify the range of meaning for leisure. Beyond these, there are still more perspectives that draw on some of the elements presented here but put them in a different light. For example, leisure is defined as having a spiritual orientation (Pieper, 1952), as any activity in which one experiences enjoyment (Roadburg, 1983) and in relation to power (Rojek, 1987).

In an attempt to make sense of the diverse meanings of leisure in the literature, Kaplan (1975), amongst others, categorized them by their primary focus. The first of six categories mentioned is the humanistic model which portrays leisure as an end in itself; it is found particularly in the classic definitions of the Ancient Greek philosophers. The second category is the therapeutic-change model which sees leisure as a means for change, as instrumental. The third, the quantitative model, views leisure as a measurement of time. The fourth category is the institutional concept.

It attempts to distinguish leisure as a social institution, with its own behaviour and value patterns, such as those of religion, family, education and politics. The fifth category is the epistemological concept that relates leisure activities and meanings to either traditional, analytical or aesthetic views of the world, that is, those views that either confirm, examine or transform the world. Lastly, the sixth category is the sociological approach which sees leisure as an antithesis to work, personally perceived as voluntary and pleasurable.

Kaplan (1975) comments upon each category of meaning, stating that "each ...is right - for its purpose" (p. 50). The purpose is implicit in the assumptions that underpin the definition. When considering the individual, he notes, it is important to respect that "leisure to the participant, like his religion and his love, is what he thinks it is, because on that kind of assumption he acts out his life" (p. 50).

Indeed, assumptions give rise to how we understand things and how we act (Ibrahim, 1991; Smith, 1987). I found myself frustrated by the diversity of definitions in the current literature yet intrigued by glimmers of personal insight in certain perspectives as I delved into them. These perspectives shed light on my intuitive sense of what leisure meant, but I still had difficulty acting on that sense and still I was unable to articulate it effectively. I was as unaware of the way in which my own assumptions informed my sense of leisure and leisure behaviour as I was of those which informed the definitions and behaviour theory in the leisure literature. I continued to study the literature and critically reflect on my own experience of leisure; assumptions and their concomitant values emerged.

Demystifying assumptions and values attached to the meaning of leisure

Out of the diverse meanings of leisure presented in the literature, two elements took on particular importance for me. Firstly, I realized that freedom, in some sense, had a significant association with leisure. This concept was the most prevalent feature amongst the definitions, although it was applied in a variety of ways. Secondly, an element not mentioned in the definitions but of note in Kaplan's (1975) writing, is the role of assumptions. Like freedom, there are many ways to consider assumptions in relation to leisure, but they barely receive mention in the volumes of leisure literature (c.f. Kaplan, 1975; Rojek, 1987).

A third concept derived from the current definitions began to take on greater importance as I considered the classical meaning of leisure developed by the Ancient Greek philosophers; the humanistic perspective of self development. As I turned to the philosophical roots, the history, the etymology and more of my own experience to develop my understanding of leisure further, these three concepts of freedom, assumptions and self growth would continue to take on ever greater significance.

Investigating leisure's roots

'Civility' is perhaps the best word to describe the meaning of leisure described by the Ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle. To engage in the activity of leisure was to engage in activities that cultivated the body, mind and soul, where effort brought enrichment and personal growth (Politics, 1338a; Ethics, 1102a; Hemingway, 1988). Leisure, Aristotle wrote, was a

necessity for developing knowledge (Politics 1338a), virtue (Ethics, 1102a) and civil character (Ethics 1079b). It was the responsibility of the state to provide the necessary education (Ethics, 1095b, Politics 1099b, 1337a) and leisure (Politics, 1269 a & b) to develop this goodness and civil character in each citizen. Politics was the public arena in which a person demonstrated his civil character. Leisure was the arena in which a person cultivated it. Hemingway (1988) summarized Aristotle's concept of leisure; "leisure is seen to be the arena in which the virtues of civil character are sought, demonstrated, and refined" (p. 179).

It is important to realize that leisure was an end in itself and not a means to some other end, as it came to be for the Romans and other subsequent cultures. In Ethics, Aristotle explains that "activities desirable in themselves are those from which we seek to derive nothing beyond the actual exercise of the activity. Actions in conformity with virtue evidently constitute such activities; for to perform noble and good deeds is something desirable for its own sake" (1176b). Rest, on the other hand, is for the purpose of further activity (1177a) and therefore, does not constitute leisure.

Two primary assumptions are evident in Aristotle's concept of leisure. One, stated in Metaphysics (980a), is that man has a natural desire to know, and the other stated in the opening lines of Ethics (1094a) is that all action is aimed at some good. Aristotle understood leisure in humanist terms that reflected "a central concern for the dignity and worth of a person and the development of human potentialities" (Murphy & Howard, 1977, p. 6). To Aristotle, leisure was the highest form of human activity and human attainment (Ethics, 1079b; Hemingway, 1988).

In the activities of cultivating one's mind, virtue and excellence, one attained wisdom, the ultimate stage of personal development in which one moved from understanding, habituated by social environment and education, to moral consciousness (Politics, 1277b, note 2). A wise man is one who acts rightly and nobly, informed by his intelligence that is cultivated through the active enterprise of contemplation. Intelligence is that potential, unique to humans, that brings them "the most akin" to the gods (Ethics, 1179a). The activity of developing one's wisdom was that of leisure.

Some contemporary definitions reflect elements of Aristotle's leisure. One element is that of the humanistic philosophical base that promotes the development of one's self and the ethical and responsible engagement in one's relationships with others. Of the dominant definitions previously reviewed, these humanist values are most prominent in the definitions of Neulinger and Dumazedier.

The association of freedom with leisure is the most constant element that is found in contemporary definitions. At one point in his writing, Aristotle referred to leisure as "freedom from the necessity to labour at menial tasks" (Politics, 1269a). In this statement, he was referring to the social structure of the polis which created the opportunity and encouraged citizens (i.e., created the freedom) to engage in leisure (Hemingway, 1996). While the concept of freedom is found in most current definitions, its association with leisure varies greatly.

In the dominant discourse, leisure is defined by freedom, such as free time, freedom from work or obligation, freedom to engage in leisure activities, freedom to choose activities, and freedom as an experience or perception. It would seem that the dominant discourse on leisure has minimized or dismissed the classical meaning of leisure established by the Ancient Greeks, and has focused on its association with freedom instead. A look at the etymology of the word leisure, will help explain this shift in understanding.

The etymology

Plato and Aristotle are credited as the first philosophers to seriously study leisure (Kelly, 1982). In the Ancient Greek language, leisure was referred to as 'schole' (Arnold, 1985; Barker, 1946), from which in both English and French the word 'school' was derived (Barker, 1946). This association seems fitting when we consider the close link of leisure to learning and self development through education, contemplation and discussion, in the Ancient Greek understanding of the word. As Arnold notes, "contemplation or reflection would take place only when a condition of leisure was experienced" (p. 15). For the Ancient Greeks, leisure was the "experiential integration of thought and action" (Arnold, p. 14) which was the primary intent of schole (Politics, 1333b).

The Greek concept of schole was carried over to the Roman school system. Schola, the Latin equivalent, came to mean a place to listen to learned lecturers and to discuss. While this concept of schola continued, the Greek concept of leisure underwent some changes to suit the pragmatic nature of

the Romans. Leisure for the Romans was not an end in itself but a means to other ends such as entertainment and training for war (Iso-Ahola, 1980). The Latin word 'licere', root of our modern word 'leisure', described what came to be the Roman practice of leisure - particularly that of 'license' within leisure, observable in the public's increasing hedonistic and vulgar behaviour at festivals and spectacles (Arnold, 1985; Kraus, 1971). This was a stark contrast to the disciplined, contemplative and participatory nature of leisure behaviour at Ancient Greek festivals (Arnold) and reflected the different philosophical underpinnings of the meaning and practice of leisure in both cultures (Iso-Ahola, 1980).

Today's 'leisure' has its roots in the Latin, 'licere', which meant 'to be permitted'. This developed into the Old French, 'leisir', carried into the Middle English, 'licere' and eventually became our present day spelling (Arnold, 1985; Webster's, 1986). Leisure, today, is commonly understood to mean having freedom, particularly, freedom to choose one's activities and freedom with one's time (Leitner & Leitner & Assoc., 1996).

Associating freedom and self development with leisure

My thoughts swarmed with leisure's diversity in meaning. My journal pages swelled with thoughts as I struggled repeatedly to construct a meaningful understanding.

March 16-17, 1994

It has just crossed my mind that maybe what I experience as leisure, is freedom, a freedom to be ME, a freedom to express myself without the constriction of judgement or expectation or standards...

Freedom has been associated with leisure throughout history, but the understanding of the association has changed. Contemporary views tend to understand freedom as that which defines leisure, such as free time, or as a state of freedom created by withdrawing from, being free from external influences, such as employment, obligations, external reward or motivation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Iso-Ahola, 1980; Pieper, 1963). Aristotle viewed freedom as a necessary provision for leisure.

Dahl (1972) provides a different insight. He explains that leisure creates a sense of freedom. "Leisure means freedom, to be sure," writes Dahl (p. 61) but this does not mean free time, freedom from work or freedom from preoccupation by distraction. Leisure, he writes, is "that sense of freedom which is realized when a person experiences more fully both his uniqueness and worth as an individual and his acceptance and relationship as part of the world around him" (p. 70). According to Dahl when we develop and value our awareness and knowledge of self and our relationship with others and our community we experience a sense of autonomy within an ethical relationship with self and others. Freedom, then, is the authentic sense of self we experience in relationship with self and with others, which is developed in leisure.

Once again my attention was drawn to the concepts of a sense of freedom and the authentic self. Dahl's perspective deepened my appreciation of their relevance to leisure.

To understand leisure as a sense of freedom gained from experiencing one's sense of authentic self and giving expression to that, indicates an assumption that leisure takes place in a context of constraint. We gain a sense of freedom by doing something we were previously unable to do. This definition echoes the critical theory orientation. It hints of the need to become cognizant of our social circumstances in order to make choices that enable our self development. Leisure understood as the sense of freedom gained from experiencing and giving expression to one's sense of authentic self invites us to look at the "juncture between human agency and structural constraint" (Lather, 1991, p. 109).

Goodale and Godbey (1988) succinctly describe leisure as the "gradual process of gaining freedom and finding meaning through self understanding and improvement. It is the process of moving from being, essentially, directed by others, to becoming self-directed" (p. 254). They point out that others, particularly through social and cultural forces, have an often unperceived influence on an individual, reflected in his or her perceptions, choices and actions. "Cultural influences", they note, "are subtle and complex and for the most part we do not feel culturally compelled. Being unaware of such forces is not a mark of freedom; it is only a mark of lack of awareness" (p. 9).

Dumazedier (1974) too, refers to the presence of social constraints on the development and expression of one's individuality when he writes of leisure as a "liberation of self-expression" (p. 56) from the social obligations and ethics of religion, family and work.

Dahl's, Dumazedier's and Goodale and Godbey's perspective illuminates the influence of socialization on the sense of freedom experienced in leisure.

Dumazedier, (1974) identifies "leisure as a framework for a cultural revolution" (p. 57) that will change the way we work, work schedules and life styles in general. Leisure is the culmination of activities which aim to move a person from being an "engine of society" (p. 57) to becoming self expressive, engaging in "inter-personal exchange" (p. 57) and becoming personally fulfilled. This is not a narcissistic state, but one that, as in the myth of Narcissus, enables a person to flower. When a person becomes more aware of and connected to his or her unique self, a person is better able to give expression to self and to engage more fully in relationships with others. An individual is able to move from habitually living out unconscious patterns to making conscious choices. Such a revolution invites a critique of values.

April 15, 1995.

Leisure, in the form of taking time out for myself, of being with my thoughts and feeling my feelings and of expressing these thoughts and feelings, is, I have discovered, a very rich, deep source of life and well-being for me. I find that taking a walk or writing invoke leisure experiences.

Whenever I am doing something in which I experience being in touch with myself and act in harmony with that, I am experiencing myself, autonomy, being me. I am experiencing leisure.

It has crossed my mind then, that when I am not attending to my well-being, when I allow myself to be 'run' unconsciously by perceived external needs and standards, I am experiencing less of myself, I am experiencing diminished autonomy. I can also recognize the roots of obedience in this experience. I (and others) learned so well to respond to the words of others, to be unquestioningly obedient and to attempt to please. When in this frame of mind, when acting from obedience or responding unconsciously to external factors, I am not acting with self awareness. Considering that I have spent a great deal of my adult life in this frame of mind, it is no wonder that I felt constrained in my leisure!

Dumazedier explains that in his view, leisure is "a kind of ethical revolution, which concerns art in general, but also the art of living with one's body, with one's spirit, and with the other" (p. 57). Self expression and personal fulfillment are outcomes of the art of developing awareness of one's relationship with self and with others. Dumazedier's statements indicate his belief, echoed by Dahl, Goodale and Godbey, that in the post-industrial socio-political climate, a person needs to seek freedom to develop and/or experience freedom by developing his or her awareness of self and relationship with others. In order to develop one's sense of self or to give expression of one's self, a person needs to disengage to some degree from the socialization forces of his or her socio-political environment.

"Freedom" asserts Hemingway (1996), "...does not exist independently of the contexts in which human beings find themselves" (p. 29). Different socio-political environments require different means to experience and/or attain freedom. These contexts influence the perception of freedom. Hemingway explains further that socio-political "contexts consist not only of the social and material conditions in which people are located, but also include the forms of *rationality* these conditions make available to us" (p. 29, emphasis added). In other words, not only what but how a person questions and constructs is informed by social forces. Social forces, Hemingway notes, are historically conditioned.

The previous chapter outlined the influence of historically conditioned social values and assumptions on our beliefs regarding research and methodology. Consciously or otherwise, we experience these forces in our everyday thinking and acting as well. To help me become more aware of the social and cultural forces that influenced my assumptions and beliefs about leisure, I turned to the pages of history.

Historical reflections

"The domain of leisure is intricately tied in with values, social norms, and political structures, and understanding these relationships will certainly be helped by historical probing and analyses" (Neulinger, 1981b, p. 51).

Human beings are born into a world of traditions, historical conditions and rules which govern social practice. These factors, evident in our everyday language, influence how we think, and inform our understanding and practice. Our beliefs and values are informed by our social and historical context and by the messages conveyed via social norms and cultural values throughout our lifetime (Hemingway, 1990; Packer, 1985).

Looking back over the pages of leisure history, it becomes apparent that social conditions, institutions and predominant values have changed over the centuries and have had their impact on the social interpretation of, and values associated with leisure. For example, when we speak today of leisure time and leisure activity, we are speaking of elements of leisure dressed in contemporary clothing. The concepts of leisure as time free from obligation and as activities freely chosen for enjoyment, are relevant to our late 20th century social values of work and freedom of choice, practiced in the context of industrialization, technology and democracy. Over the centuries, concepts of leisure have varied. It has been valued as the highest form of human activity and as a most sinful activity. Leisure has worn many styles of period clothing.

Our current social perceptions of leisure have developed out of a long history of competing values, especially throughout the Ancient Greek, Roman and Judeo-Christian eras. Affecting the meaning and practice of leisure in particular are values supporting the secular and the sacred, humanism and asceticism, and the individual and the institution.

What has frequently been painted as a struggle between leisure and religion, the pleasures of the human life versus the austerity and dedication to the life hereafter, the secular versus the sacred, is more accurately, as Kelly (1982) has elucidated, a struggle between two very distinct philosophical bases. At the heart of this struggle, dating back to at least the first centuries B.C., are two distinct values; one, the value of the individual and individual expression, and the other, the value of the institution and instrumentality. The former humanistic perspective upholds the belief that "human beings need to express themselves, to create, to respond to their environment and to relate to each other" (Kelly, p. 66). This philosophy begins with and values the individual, in the belief that human development is possible and that this personal development is beneficial to the well-being and development of society. Leisure, as understood by Aristotle, Dahl, Dumazedier, Goodale and Godbey, and reaffirmed by myself provides the opportunity for such personal development.

The latter, ascetic perspective upholds the belief that human beings are not to look to themselves for personal development but to invest themselves in the serious work of dedication to the church, the family, the state and the work of the world. "Any aspect of life has to be justified in terms of the

priority of the economic, religious, family, or political institutions" (Kelly, 1982, p. 66). Leisure, or more correctly, recreation as it would be in this context, has solely an instrumental social role, in that it is a means for people to recuperate and to replenish themselves, in order to be productive at their work again (Murphy, 1974). This is a common interpretation of leisure found in many historical periods, and most notably associated with the work ethic that is still evident in our society today.

These contrasting values and practices are well illustrated in many societies throughout history. We first pick up this significant shift in values in the early centuries B.C. The theology of Greek dualism had become the dominant doctrine during this time. With the intent to prepare for eternal life after death, those following the life of faith devoted themselves to communion, contemplation and prayer. All bodily and cultural pleasures, expressions and recreative and amusive forms of leisure were condemned. Such activities and those involving personal development, relationships and enjoyment were considered secular and potentially evil (Kelly, 1982).

Significant social changes occurred in Greece during the time of the great philosophers, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Aristotle in particular believed in the value of self development for the benefit of the individual and ultimately, for the benefit of the state. Self development, he believed, came about through human self understanding. This came through the primary leisure activities of contemplation and thought - philosophical contemplation and thought directed to the person and to the present world -

not to the divine and the life hereafter, as had been the focus of dualistic contemplation.

This illustrated a significant change in thinking. Until then, it was believed that self understanding occurred through the process of dedication to one's faith (Kelly, 1982): when one surrenders oneself to one's faith, one can begin to know one's self. Instead, Aristotle believed that first one must understand one's self and other matters of this world before one can have faith (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1995). This understanding was developed through the leisure activity of contemplation.

To understand a society's values of leisure, states Pieper (1952), one needs to observe the public's leisure behaviour. The different leisure activities of the Ancient Greeks and Romans exemplified the different prevailing cultural values, social norms and beliefs of each society. Greek citizens viewed work as a means and leisure as the final goal. Leisure, in the form of self development, was regarded as the highest form of human activity and achievement (Iso-Ahola, 1980; Kraus, 1971). Through this leisure there were considerable developments in language, philosophy, education and culture (Ibrahim, 1991).

In contrast, the Romans, during their warring, Empire-building period, used leisure as a means to fulfill their work. Leisure, meaning unobligated time, was used to develop war skills and physical strength through games and sport (Iso-Aholla, 1980; Kraus, 1971). As social classes emerged, the majority of the citizens were of the common people, the plebeian class. Slaves and labourers did most of the work, leaving the plebians with much

time on their hands. As conquering episodes decreased, the need for military training also decreased. Those who had participated in gymnastics and sports in their leisure time to become physically and mentally fit for war, now sought entertainment instead. In ever-increasing numbers and gruesomeness, the games and sports of war-training times became bloody combats between animals, between humans and between humans and beasts. The Roman citizen had an insatiable hunger for greater stimulation and more thrilling entertainment to fill his ever-increasing amount of free time (Kelly, 1982; Horna, 1994).

The Athenian concept and use of leisure was for personal and community development. The Roman concept and use of leisure was for political reasons, first for preparing for war and later for distraction and detachment from personal and community or social issues (Kaplan, 1975; Horna, 1994). The Greek and Roman leisure activities reflected the social norms, cultural values and beliefs of their time. Humanism prevailed in Ancient Greek society, institutionalism prevailed in Ancient Roman society.

The shift of prevalent values between humanism and institutionalism and the concomitant impact on the understanding and practice of leisure is evident in other epochs as well. Leisure was used as a political tool during the middle Ages. Feudal lords, religious leaders and ruling classes provided celebrations, games, tournaments, circuses and festivals to entertain the labourers during the hibernal season. The intent was to keep the masses preoccupied in order to pacify any unrest that might stir when

the labourers had the opportunity to reflect on their condition and to discuss such matters amongst themselves (Horna, 1994; Ibrahim, 1991).

The Catholic Church emerged as a civil power during the political and social upheaval of the Middle Ages and brought with it values of asceticism. "[T]he dignity of labour and self-deprivation in order to save one's soul" (Horna, 1994, p. 7) was the dominant message preached to the masses. A life of penance was believed to be the highest and noblest form of human activity (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1995). Similar to the beliefs of Greek dualism, leisure was viewed as idleness, and therefore sinful, as were all forms of worldly pleasure.

By the beginning of the fifteenth century, 'secular men of letters' in Italy had initiated an intellectual movement to free men from the cultural domination of the church. At this time, the works of the Ancient Greeks, notably Aristotle's, and the Scriptures were retrieved from the Islams and translated (Ibrahim, 1991). The humanistic values central to this cultural revolution known as the Renaissance affirmed human life and "its potential for creativity, learning, community and discovery" (Kelly, 1982, p.62). Human beings and human values took precedence over ascetic and institutional values and leisure was sanctioned once again.

Over the next two centuries the values of the Renaissance spread to other parts of Western Europe, particularly France and England, at a time when these parts were undergoing an historical cultural revolution of their own. The Reformation was a revolution within the Western church, beginning in Germany under the leadership of Martin Luther. He replaced the

dominant belief in work and self-sacrifice to obtain a life eternal as the most high and noble thing to do, with the belief that life in the present world held great value as did the individual lives comprising it. Luther stressed the importance of the secular calling, that one's work and family life are God's calling just as much as are prayer and holy orders (The New Encylcopaedia Britannica, 1995; Kelly, 1982). No longer was one's obedience solely to the spiritual but now also to the community, through work and family responsibilities.

John Calvin took up some of Luther's teachings and took them to Switzerland. The Reformers' fundamental belief in predestination was a dramatic change in thinking from Roman Catholic beliefs in the need to earn favour with God to have an eternal life. Calvin took the idea of predestination into the world of commerce, and more specifically into capitalism. Financial wealth was proof of being one of God's chosen: to ensure one's financial wealth, one worked. Work acquired a moral status - it was the moral thing to do.

Leisure's status changed as well. It held an instrumental social role. Leisure, in the sense of rest and relaxation in one's unobligated time, was considered useful primarily for recuperating from labour in order to be ready to labour again, and thus continue to be productive. Leisure was also to be used for religious contemplation, creating sacred art, learning about one's faith and as a means of building family solidarity (Kelly, 1982). Any leisure other than sacred or re-creative, was considered frivolous and inappropriate.

In contrast to the humanistic values of the Renaissance that began with and valued the individual, the ascetic values of the Reformation began with and valued the social institutions of economy, religion, state and family. Human expression and development versus repression and productivity are the matters at the heart of the different philosophical and religious differences of these two cultural revolutions (Kelly, 1982). In the Renaissance philosophy, creativity and creation were invited and nurtured, drawing on individual abilities and potentials, evident through the flourishing arts and beginnings of science and technology. Under the Reformation, capitalism was born, money became a medium for investment as well as exchange and financial wealth became a measure of status. During the Renaissance, leisure embodied humanistic values of personal development and expression. During the Reformation, leisure embodied aescetic values of instrumental re-creation.

The Protestant Work Ethic, to which the values of productivity and asceticism are still commonly referred in the 20th century, evolved from the values of the Reformation and particularly those of the Puritans.

Persecuted during the Restoration in the early 1600's and displeased with compromises made in religious values by the clergy, many Puritans left Europe to found a new colony in America (Horna, 1994; Kelly, 1982; Dulles, 1965). More stringent than the Reformers in Europe, these New England colonists molded their lives and the land on the basis of strict, sober asceticism. Behaviours of idleness or unprofitability were unlawful and were punished under General Court law (Dulles). Indeed any activities other than prayer, worship and hard, productive work (known as sober

enterprises) were believed to be evil (Horna). These beliefs coincided with the need to work diligently in order to clear and cultivate land and eke out an existence but did not coincide with the beliefs and needs of a large number of the settlers in the same area. Dancing, drinking, socializing and entertainment in the streets still occurred despite the Puritan imposition of laws (Horna; Dulles). Puritanism "brought on the inevitable revolt against attempted suppression of human impulses" (Dulles, p 20) yet like the movements before it, Puritanism has left a deep imprint on our social norms, cultural values and the ways we think and behave in twentieth century America, including how we understand and practice leisure.

As I learned of the different perspectives on and uses of leisure over the centuries I began to see what has given rise to the range of definitions of leisure used today. This has helped me to be more aware of contradictory messages communicated in our society that state what constitutes leisure, what leisure behaviour is sanctioned and for whom.

For example, the ethic of care - a leisure constraint cited by feminist researchers for many women - represents historically-influenced social norms and cultural values. If social norms and cultural values are a means to establish appropriate behaviour in a society, and if norms and values associated with the ethic of care discourage people from engaging in leisure, does this suggest that in our society, leisure is considered an inappropriate behaviour or inappropriate for some people? On the other hand, leisure is promoted through the media, consumerism and politics. There appear to be conflicting messages translated through social norms

and cultural values that create confusion over leisure's value and appropriateness for different people.

I have been enlightened as I learned of the social and historical influences on our current definitions of leisure. This awareness has freed me to re-consider these definitions, let go of those that I do not find meaningful and re-constitute my understanding of leisure. As I do so, I critique the influence of social forces on my beliefs and assumptions, take into account my understanding derived from my experience, and with more personal and social awareness choose a personally meaningful understanding of leisure.

Reaching a meaningful understanding of leisure

My understanding of leisure developed through critical reflection, critical self reflection and writing. I examined my experience of leisure. I surveyed the variety of definitions in the literature, reviewed the historical roles and meanings of leisure and considered the historical and current influence of humanistic and institutional ideologies and the concepts of freedom and self development.

Through this process I also began to appreciate that leisure was not a concept about which I could study solely objectively or theorize and write about in a "logically precise analyses...in an endeavour to convey its meaning and understand its nature" (Neulinger, 1981b, p. 54-55). Leisure is also a subjective experience. To develop a more complete understanding of its nature and to convey the essence of its meaning we can also approach leisure in the way of an artist (Neulinger), that is by sharing our interpretation of our experience and understanding. The artist "conveys truth through creating experiences and having us participate in them. The knowledge and understanding gained through this active involvement may not be as ordered, easily verbalized or communicable, but they tend to be deeper and certainly more directly absorbed into our own being" (Neulinger, p. 55). It has only been in later reflection on my own written attempts to understand leisure that I can now see that I was seeking and intuitively drawing out the artistic expression of what is to me, the vital essence of leisure...

Leisure is pausing by the reflective pool in thoughtfulness. It is searching the water, questioning, reflecting upon, and contemplating what one sees, and re-searching to see even more. It is developing one's awareness and understanding through the activities of critical reflection and critical self reflection.

August 21, 1996
Leisure is...a process of letting go of the certainty of what we think we know and discovering much more.
Leisure is...a process of letting go of the certainty of what we think we know about our self and discovering much more about our self.
Leisure is the process of developing our enlightened subjectivity.

Like the myth of Narcissus, this is not about a state of rigid withdrawal of self from others and pre-occupation with one's self. It is about learning of one's uniqueness, worth, assumptions and behaviours, and with that subjective enlightenment to flower forth, be able to think, choose and act consciously, responsibly (for freedom entails responsibility) and in a caring manner in one's relationships with self and with others - thus to flower forth with one's own uniqueness engaging consciously with one's self and with others.

Leisure is the activity of critical self reflection, through which one develops awareness and understanding of one's self, emotionally, spiritually, physically and intellectually, and critical reflection, through which one develops awareness and understanding of social norms and cultural ideologies, the "inherited ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge" (New

Collins, 1982), that influence one's personal assumptions, values, beliefs and behaviours.

Leisure exists in the relationship between the individual's inner being and exterior world. It is the place where values are examined and sometimes changed. While society may strongly influence the meanings we ascribe to leisure, engaging in the fundamentals of leisure enables the individual to transcend socially prescribed meanings by critically examining cultural, social and personal values. Our perception of leisure is greatly determined by economic and social forces, and yet, when we engage in leisure, we can develop our awareness of these forces and our relationship with them.

February 23, 1995

- the aspect of leisure that I am interested in is the unique opportunities it provides for increased self-awareness, self-determination and growth; for connecting with oneself and to one's values, for reflecting on one's behaviours, actions and habits and looking for fit with values - and consequently, seeking personal growth through making changes in one's actions so that they better match one's values. Leisure is connecting with oneself to answer for oneself what is meaningful, rather than automatically buying into what the culture says is meaningful. Leisure is the opportunity to determine for self one's values, one's beliefs and to gain understanding, awareness of that which holds meaning for oneself.

In this study, the interest in self development is focused on developing and deepening awareness and understanding of the personal, in the form of

assumptions, values, beliefs and behaviours, and of the social values and cultural ideologies that influence the personal.

Personal awareness and self knowledge can also be developed by paying attention to one's physical and emotional feelings. Connectedness with one's authentic feelings is a barometer, a form of biofeedback that informs a person of the physical and emotional effects social, cultural and personal forces are having on his or her physical and emotional well-being. This inner knowledge, which stems from a person's awareness of physical and emotional feelings, and from understanding developed from experience, is exemplified in recognizing certain physical symptoms or emotional feelings and knowing how best to respond to them for the sake of one's own and other's well-being. With deepened awareness and understanding of self, a person has the means with which to engage more responsibly (response-ably) and 'tactfully' (integrally) in relationships with self and with others. Implicit in this understanding is a moral and personal consciousness. Hence, the primary value in this humanistic understanding of leisure, is that of humanitarianism and the primary assumption is that leisure provides the opportunity to develop our human potential for humanitarianism.

It is important to notice that this understanding of leisure does not involve time or place in any physical sense. Leisure takes place in the pausing and reflecting, which can occur at any time, in any place and for any duration. The pausing takes place at the pools of our consciousness.

To engage in leisure requires an invitation, an attitude that is open to leisure. Attitude manifests assumptions, values and beliefs, which are informed by subtle and complex social forces. People have the potential to consciously choose to engage in leisure. Whether they are aware of or experience this potential is another matter - one greatly influenced by social forces.

A person's awareness of social forces influences their experience of constraint and freedom in leisure. The degree of freedom experienced is related to the degree one is aware of and understands the influence of social and historical forces on one's assumptions, values, beliefs and behaviours, and with that awareness and understanding, makes conscious choices. We need awareness and understanding of what we need freedom from in order to develop the personal awareness and understanding that provides the basis from which we think, choose and act with personal integrity.

March 30, 1995

It has been my experience that I have had to learn to give myself permission to engage in leisure. In my adult life, I have been aware that some 'thing' has habitually arrested my engagement in leisure. Developing my awareness and understanding of what that 'thing' is, is the primary purpose of my inquiry. I have been seeking to understand what constrains my sense of freedom to engage in leisure and thus, from what or whom I needed to be granted permission to engage in leisure.

A sense of freedom is realized in the initial step of becoming aware of the concept that social and cultural values inform our personal values, beliefs, assumptions and behaviours. A sense of freedom is realized in becoming aware of personal assumptions, values, beliefs and behaviours. A sense of freedom is realized in critically reflecting on one's personal assumptions, values, beliefs and behaviours, and on prevalent social and cultural values. A sense of freedom is realized in differentiating between those assumptions, values, beliefs and behaviours that contribute to, in Csikszentmihalyi's (1993) words, "harmonious complexity" (p. 215) and those that do not. A sense of freedom is realized, not only when one "experiences more fully...[one's] uniqueness and worth as an individual and [one's] acceptance and relationship as part of the world around him" (Dahl, 1972, p. 70), but also when one becomes aware of and understands the influence of social and cultural forces on one's sense of self.

While the term recreation is often used interchangeably with leisure amongst leisure practitioners and the public, and is viewed as an integral part of leisure in theory, I believe that recreation is distinct from leisure. Recreation is the means we find to re-create that sense of freedom which comes from re-connecting with our sense of self that is developed in leisure.

August 21, 1996

Leisure does not need to be an umbrella for recreation, as it is portrayed in the literature - both have their distinct values.

recreation is re-creating, getting back in touch with our self, our values and beliefs that we have come to know through leisure;

leisure is the process of developing that awareness of that which is our self.

Leisure is different from recreation. Leisure is about growth - emotional, intellectual and spiritual. Leisure is about nurturing our awareness and understanding of our connections with self and with others.
Recreation is about self-replenishment and re-creating those connections.

Recreation is re-creative.

Leisure is growth-full.

My earliest understanding of leisure expressed in this chapter actually reflects recreation. As I critically reflected on the literature, the etymology and history of leisure and re-searched my experience, I gradually began to recognize elements of leisure that differentiated it from recreation. In doing so, I gained a profound appreciation for their individual benefits and a keen awareness of how I experienced each.

To engage in the on-going development of personal awareness, to learn to better articulate that awareness and act in accordance with it, to me, is a vital aspect of leisure - one that encourages an individual's growth and creativity, that broadens one's thinking and deepens one understanding and compassion for self and for others.

Developing my understanding of leisure has been such a process. As I searched my inner knowledge and re-searched the knowledge presented by others, I loosened some of the structural constraints that have constrained

my leisure in the past and came to a personally meaningful understanding and practice of leisure.

Leisure is pausing by the reflective pool in thoughtfulness. It is searching the water, questioning, reflecting upon and contemplating what we see, and re-searching to see even more. It is broadening and deepening our awareness and understanding through the activities of critical reflection and critical self reflection. A sense of freedom is realized as we engage in leisure, as we develop our enlightened subjectivity.

AN INTERLUDE:

A JURY OF MY PEERS

There was a me I thought I knew
Before I began this journey,
But as I walked along the road
I met, one by one, the members of my jury.

"Who are you, really?"
"Honestly, how do you feel?"
"What do you really think?"
"Of what are you really guilty?"

What surprising questions!
The answers seemed so easily apparent.
Why should they have to ask?

But as I walked along the road
These questions rose up to meet me.
They flew on the wing of birds from the bush
They sighed from the lofty elms,
They wet my lips as they fell with the rains
They invited me to reflect.

I questioned what I thought I knew
And questioned the answers to my questions
Who am I really? About what do I really care?
How am I feeling, anyway? To whom do I need to answer?

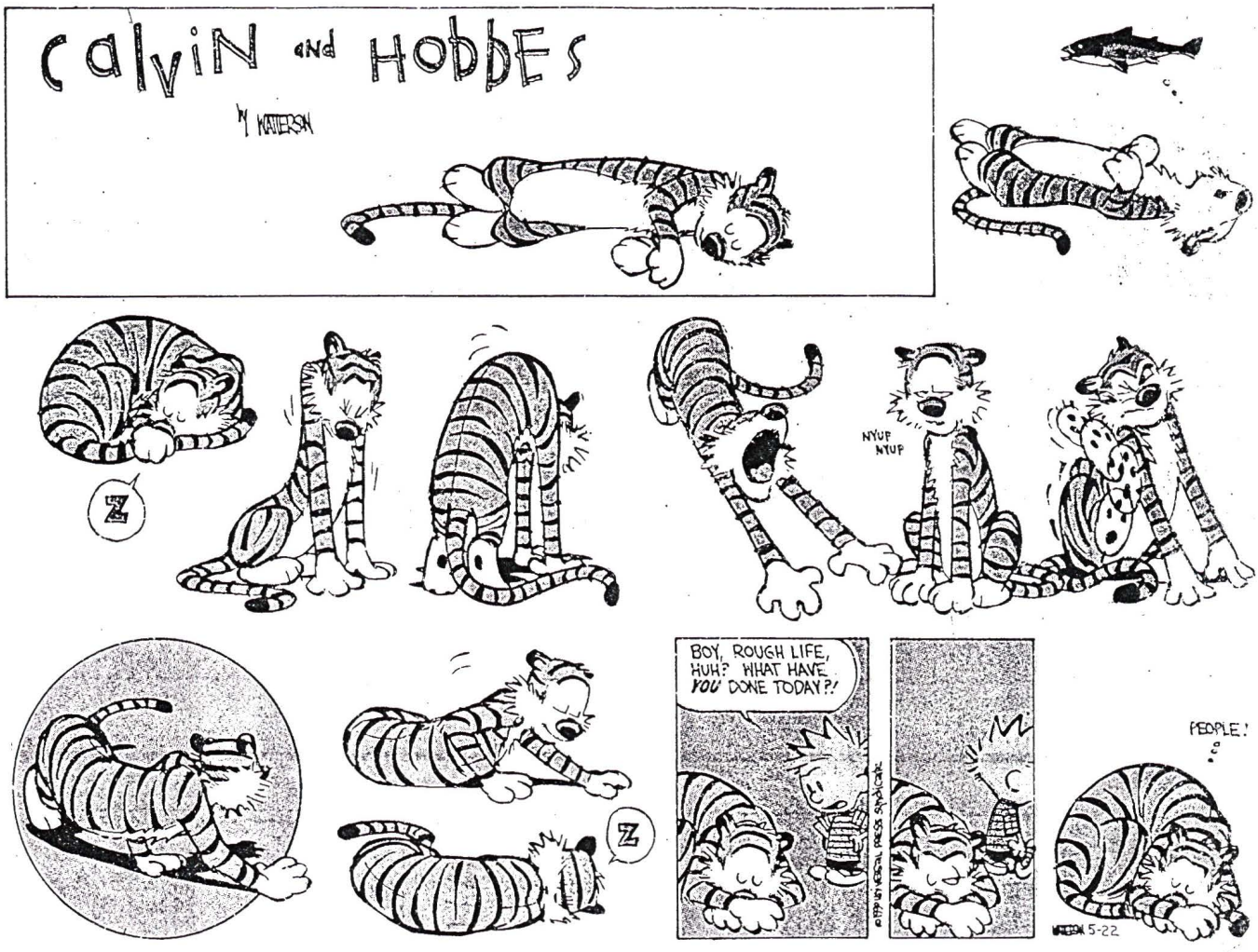
I began to see things in a different light
To hear things I had not heard before
I began to feel more than I had ever felt
And my thoughts tumbled to the fore.

My journey continues through storm and bliss
And as the questions arise
They give me reason to pause and assess
If my assumptions are truth or lies.

Catherine Miller, April, 1997.

A PAUSE FOR REFLECTION:

JUDGEMENT



AN EMERGENT, EXPLORATIVE WORK IN LEISURE...

We "learn best to 'see' the 'invisible', ideology, when it becomes in [our] own interest to - when [we] are actually caught in a contradiction, believing things which are directly hindering [our] own well-being or wishes, or which conflict with a change in experience" (Williamson, 1981/82, p. 85).

The exploration of different methodologies and their philosophical underpinnings to develop and articulate a personally meaningful construction of leisure was, for me, a challenging and risky endeavour. However, I was strongly motivated to engage in this process. I sensed that I was influenced by many contradictions in my life and that many of these related to epistemology and the meaning of leisure. So I sought out the 'invisible', the ideologies which give rise to these contradictions, although I knew that I was stepping out of the mainstream epistemology of my academic department and was leaving my 'safe' habitual practice of uncritical acceptance of the knowledge of others.

The pursuit of underlying ideologies in my personal experience of constraint in leisure and health presented further risk. I continued to step away from 'safe' habits of conforming to socially sanctioned norms. Through writing and critical reflection, I engaged in a subjective exploration of my personal experience of constraint. By examination of my subjective experience, I have come to see the 'invisible' ideologies that shaped and 'held old patterns in place', particularly those that counteract my health and well-being. Writing and critical reflection have developed my awareness of what has shaped and maintained these habitual patterns.

This consciousness enables me to let go of old, counteractive patterns (Williamson, 1981/82; Davies & Banks, 1992).

I put this consciousness into practice when I sought out a personally meaningful understanding of leisure, only to realize that my practice of critical reflection, reading, critical self reflection and writing was a means of engaging in leisure. I developed my awareness and understanding of my self and my social world as I engaged in a "confrontation with [my] self, [my] life and [my] society" (Hemingway, 1988, p. 181).

AUTOBIOGRAPHY - A SOURCE OF STRUGGLE AND UNDERSTANDING

> I want to begin from the assumption that as knowledge is socially organized it is therefore necessary to focus on the ways in which subjects are organized to know. From this kind of knowledge we can learn to critique the values and assumptions which bind us to outmoded social practices. Autobiographical writings, I suggest, enable us to identify, analyze, and change those assumptions and social practices which work unconsciously to sustain social illusions (Brookes, 1992, p. 61).

As Brookes suggests, writing from and about my own experience has enabled me to identify patterns of contradiction in my own social history. Evident in my writing is my habit of constraining self development by denying my physical pain, silencing my emotional feelings, and borrowing the understandings and words of others to use as a lens through which I glimpsed and expressed my own experiences and ideas. Throughout the research process that has culminated in this thesis, I have become aware of an habitual pattern: I look and listen to others to inform me as to how I should feel and what I should value. As I developed my theoretical knowledge, I became aware of the larger structure that has informed those I hold in authority. This larger structure is the dominant philosophy in our society informed by assumptions and beliefs, particularly those that value and sustain the institution and instrumentality. Smith (1987) refers to these assumptions and beliefs as the "status quo". With awareness came the means to re-search my own assumptions and values, to consider what has shaped them and to reflect critically on my own practice.

This research has provided me the opportunity to write autobiographically about my experiences of constraint. As I chronicle my experience and reflection, I critique my behaviours and the assumptions, values and beliefs that give rise to them. Putting my thoughts and feelings into print brings my experience into a different dimension - one that I can re-visit.

Writing autobiographically has been like writing a letter to a significant other to explain my feelings. Through my practice of autobiography, I have become my significant other. I write to become aware of my emotional and physical feelings. As I write, I acknowledge how I am feeling and gain a better understanding of what is going on for me. I write to grasp my situation and my response to it. I write to better understand the interaction occurring within me and between myself and others.

After years in which painful emotional and physical feelings remained hidden, I struggled to articulate my sense of them. My habitual ways of thinking and being that had kept me silent for years fought to still my pen. Writing about and from my experience of painful emotional and physical feelings was a significant move out of old habitual patterns for me. I had to deal with barriers that had constrained my attending to these feelings and thus to me.

To share my personal writing and thoughts publicly brings into play many of my socially informed assumptions and beliefs with which I have grappled privately. My censor, my critical voice, attempts to silence me again. To expose my awareness of these personal issues publicly, however, furthers my move beyond their constraining grip.

Anne-Louise Brookes notes that by writing from and about our own experience we become aware of and come to name the structures of authority that we have unconsciously allowed to constrain us (Brookes, 1992). As we synthesize our experience and theory through reflection and autobiographical writing, like Narcissus kneeling by the reflecting pool, we begin to see ourselves and our world differently. In doing so, we loosen the bonds of structural constraints, develop our sense of self and expand our capacity to experience freedom within our social context.

As I read Anne-Louise Brookes' autobiographical dissertation, Feminist Pedagogy (1992), I appreciated the value of an individual sharing her private struggles publicly. Although her context was not mine, I felt many of my own thoughts and feelings affirmed in reading hers. Her analysis gave me insights into my own. As she wove her autobiographical reconstruction with theory, she illustrated the theory in real life terms which I found furthered my understanding. Autobiographical research and writing has commonalities with the experience of others. Many of our personal struggles are also social and even political.

Autobiography as a form of research raises the question for some, 'Is this research?' I have struggled with this question for four and a half years. I knew from my experience of writing autobiographically that I developed life-changing perceptions about myself and about my social world. That was significant. I knew from the work of others that writing autobiographically was not only legitimate research, but also a form of research that bridged the problematic 'gap between research and reality'

(Carson, 1986; Plantinga, 1990). This was what I sought from the onset of my Master's program - to develop an understanding of what constrained my leisure behaviour in a way that would enable me to improve my situation. Available research on constraints to leisure provided me with labels and categories. Such information did not lend itself to my situation or to my ability to implement change within it. The epistemology and methodology of prevalent research did not contribute for me a useful method to examine what constrained my leisure. Autobiographical research offered the practice and provided the grounds for me to develop insight into my personal situation.

My struggle continued: I was caught in the tension of conflicting values. I had learned that what we learn from the study of the experience of others was an objective, valuable contribution to the body of knowledge: what one learns from the study of self was subjective 'navel-gazing'. This stance, I now realize, echoed not only political values of positivist research methodology, but also the social values I had been taught throughout my life that frowned on self-regard and praised self-sacrifice. My personal struggle was social and also political, located at the juncture between human agency and structural constraint. Here was that historical struggle rooted in the tension between humanism and asceticism, between self expression and self denial. Here, too, was the epistemological struggle between interpretivism and positivism, between subjectivity and objectivity, between that which is experienced and that which can be observed.

I began to write autobiographically a year and a half into my program. Writing became my primary means to develop my understanding of what

the concept 'leisure' meant to me and 'what was going on' when I experienced constrained leisure. I wrote from and about my own experience and gradually wove in the theory that I found to be relevant upon critical reflection. As I proceeded autobiographically over four and a half years, I intended to add the contributions of study participants to my thesis documentation. I was still uncomfortable with a single focus on my own experience and understanding.

My thesis developed in tandem with my autobiographical writing in the last year; both were informed by theory and by my growing awareness of the socio-historical influence on my pre-formed beliefs. I formed the conviction that the practice of autobiography not only as research but also as thesis writing put what I had learned from my research into practice. I had learned to value my subjective experience.

My autobiographical writing has not been solely a study of self. Primarily, it has been a study of self in relation to the topic of my research. The topic is the focus; personal writing is a means to understand and to illustrate this topic. I discussed some of my angst concerning autobiographical work with visiting Professor Jim Field. He pointed out that this method examines how the self reflects the research topic, exists in that topic and is reflected by the topic. He noted the self is not only in relation to the topic, but also in relation with others too, some of whom in turn, are in relation to the topic. All form community.

Many times my autobiographical writing has been initiated and/or informed by something someone else has said. As I listened to the

epistemological struggles of committee members, I became more aware of my own. The struggles articulated by people I have met with M.E., have given me reason to reflect on the manner in which these struggles may be present in me. Complaints about constrained leisure expressed by friends, family members and acquaintances resonate with my own. The struggles articulated by others become catalysts for more critical reflection which informs my understanding and my autobiographical writing. These struggles have not been solely my own.

I have changed over the course of this re-search. Through engagement in a process of critical reflection and writing, I have become more attuned to habitual patterns in my thinking and acting. Mutually informed by theory and experience, I have reflected critically to better understand 'what is going on'. I can now appreciate that social values inform these patterns and I can see what values are dominating. Enlightened, I have made choices that improve my relationship with self (particularly evident in my health) and enrich my relationships with others. I now value and practice some of my values, differently.

The following autobiographical excerpts illustrate my ongoing transformation from a habit of unresponsiveness to a practice of 'response-ability' to my subjective experience. These excerpts are an illustration of my journey to explore, value and speak from my subjective experience.

THE ARREST OF C.

Her arrest was sudden, unexpected. One fine morning in the spring of 1987, C. awoke to her alarm as usual but found her inability to get out of bed most surprising. After repeated attempts to rise as the clock hands moved from 7 to 7:30 to 8, she gave up. She phoned her office manager at the bank, laughing a little self consciously while she told him that she did not know what was wrong with her, but that she would not be in to work that day. C. did not know it at the time, but she had begun a life sentence without parole for the next three months. Unaware, she had been accused, tried and convicted, and of what, she was unaware as well.

C. was stunned by her arrest. At first, she was too ill to question. She spent two months in bed. Living alone, there was no one to care for her and she was too ill to even care. There were many days when she had to will herself for over an hour to get up and feed the cat. Over the two months, she suffered from nausea, aching muscles and joints, acute headaches and absolute fatigue: a fatigue that left her drained of energy with none in reserve. She felt less than empty inside. She felt like a vacuum. The days and weeks passed as if in a vacuum too. Gradually, the symptoms started to abate. Applying the same will that had kept her going before the arrest, she managed to make some meals and to get out for a few groceries. By the end of the third month she was working mornings at the bank, coming home for lunch and a one hour nap, than forcing herself to get up and out for a walk. In the fifth month, she began an introductory aerobics class. Before the illness, she had instructed two weight circuit training classes and taken two to three intense aerobic classes a week. Indeed, the doctor

told her, had she not been so physically fit and strong willed, she would have become sick sooner with something less severe. How sadly ironic!

Believing that she was completely over the illness a year later, C. was back to her old ways. Unfortunately, such ways were those of treating herself like a machine, a behaviour her landlady had pointed out to her during the early stages of her recovery. At first C. did not understand what her landlady meant, or perhaps she could not accept the accusation. "Not guilty", said C., but the accusation returned to her thoughts. What was it to treat one's self as a machine? Was it so bad to do so? Hadn't she been able to do everything she wanted to, everything she set her mind to? Wasn't she one whom everyone recognized could accomplish so much? She prided herself on her ability to cope well with stress. What was wrong with treating herself like a machine? So, she had been sick with some mysterious disease, but she was over that now. She had been victim to something afoul in the environment, maybe a malfunction on her body's part too, but all was repaired. She could once again jump out of bed, pop into top gear and go strong all day long. Now that she was back on her feet, she could put the unpleasant memory of the illness behind her. There was no point dwelling on it.

C.'s arrest and behaviour mirrors that of K. in Franz Kafka's The Trial (1937/1956). K. was a banker and he too was arrested early one morning at home, before he had arisen from bed. K. was arrested not by physical illness but by warders who enforced the legal system. K. never understood the reason for his arrest and he never considered the possibility that he could be guilty, for K. was not a reflective man. He was a "socialized,

conditioned being" (Pinar, 1994, p, 30), who uncritically adopted a life of habits. K. embraced a social role that estranged him from his subjective experience.

K. attempted to understand his arrest and trial in his usual fashion, in an objective "linear-rationalistic mode" (Pinar, 1994, p. 42). He said to those attending his trial, "I am quite detached from this affair, I can therefore judge it calmly" (Kafka, 1937/1956, p. 45), but he was unable to move them. Then he sought out the knowledge of others to try to understand how to conduct his case. Constrained by his habitual ways of looking for answers outside of himself, he was unable to learn from his subjective experience. A year to the date of his arrest, K. was apprehended and led to his execution, never comprehending the point of his arrest, his trial or his execution. Kafka gives us to understand, however, that K. had been charged with an unexamined life.

K. had only one trial. C. was to have many. Despite her belief that she was over the illness and could carry on in ways as she had before, she was given a second, a third, a multitude of arrests and trials over the subsequent ten years.

PAUSING AT THE REFLECTIVE POOL

Moving within judgement, awareness, understanding and compassion

Like the arrest of K. in The Trial, the story of C. concerns an arrest in both a very real, physical sense and a metaphorical one. This is my story, but it could be the story of others. Although I initially believed my arrests by illness to stem from an external source, from my environment, upon reflection I grew to appreciate that they were just as much a desperate cry from my body and my psyche. My arrests signalled my detachment from my subjective experience. Eventually, distress generated by my chronic disconnectedness, mobilized my body and soul to arrest me. In my case, my body was the warder, the force which immobilized me; my psyche was the magistrate, the voice which questioned. Paradoxically, if I was to have any hope of salvation, I had to become a prisoner of my self.

The initial onset of chronic illness did not convince me to reflect critically on my ways of being. I attempted to carry on as before, but chronic illness kept getting in my way. Repeated bouts of illness over a period of eight years eventually spurred me to question what was going on for me. The constraints of pain and fatigue prompted me to engage in leisure, to pause, question and critically reflect. It was a gradual process, like the action of waves with the incoming tide. I would emerge with an insight and I would be drawn back to habitual ways of thinking. I became aware of an habitual practice of ignoring my bodily symptoms but I would find myself still practicing the habit. My process of engaging in leisure; grasping theory, developing awareness of habitual patterns and recognizing presuppositions

which support these patterns, and applying my understanding to change my own practice ebbed and flowed like the tide, with my tideline ever changing.

The following journal entries illustrate this process of an incremental development of awareness and understanding. Our "individual practices contain a number of different patterns of thought" (Haug, 1983, p. 58) which can present themselves in a number of different guises. The following journal entries are only a handful of hundreds I wrote during the past four and a half years as I worked to see beyond the surface of the guises: to see beyond my taken-for-granted perceptions, interpretations and constructs. I wrote repeatedly from my feelings of dissonance. Despite what seemed like different situations and circumstances to me, through my writing I would find a common base of assumptions operating underneath. This was enlightening. Each time I wrote I was moved in a way that broadened my awareness and deepened my understanding. Each time I wrote I was better able to move from arrest in habitual ways to participate in conscious choice.

JUDGEMENT: The act of silencing

June 10, 1995

Once again, I had hit bottom. I was being stopped in my tracks, or more accurately, ground down to a level where I was barely functioning. My muscles, racked in pain and sapped of energy, could barely hold up my weary bones, yet I knew that there were many things still I needed to do, I wanted to do, and was committed to doing. My eyes hurt, my glands were

swollen, my joints hurt and my head throbbed. I carried on with one more meeting and two errands that I felt were absolutely essential, willed myself through the grocery store to pick up food for dinner and thankfully made it home. Taking painkillers and sleeping for two hours, I was able to make dinner before the symptoms started to come back.

At the time of writing this, it had been eight years since I first became ill with the chronic illness, myalgic encephalomyelitis (M.E.). This journal excerpt is one of the first times that I wrote about what M.E. was like for me. It had become my habitual practice to deny the symptoms, to pretend that 'I was just fine' and so keep the truth a secret. Most people in my life had no idea that I suffered from a chronic illness and those few who did had little familiarity with it, including most of the medical practitioners I saw over this time. It was an invisible, non-measurable condition. In my day to day interactions, even when I was very ill, I appeared to be reasonably healthy. I preferred it this way. Being able to hide my illness meant that others would not know that I was sick, again. Silencing my experience of illness enabled me to diminish my awareness of it too.

I had practiced silence and denial for so many years that I found it difficult to write about my experience of M.E.. A sense of dread came upon me as I began to write about how my body really felt when I was ill. In order to write I was forced to recall feelings of pain and distress previously ignored. Writing about it gave voice to that which I had kept silent. Once I began to write, I could no longer deny my experience or my physical feelings. As I gave expression to my thoughts and feelings, I began to take them more

seriously, to recognize that they were legitimate. I continued to probe and to write.

May 17, 1995

I was thinking about how I suppress expressing and sharing how I am feeling, even physically to my husband and others...It crosses my mind that this is an act of dishonesty - this keeping from others how I am really feeling and pretending that I am fine and carrying on as usual. In fact, I now realize that I am not carrying on as usual. How can I when it even hurts to think?!

Evident in the facade I presented to others and in my denial of M.E. symptoms to myself was my habitual pattern of negating my subjective experience. How had this practice been formed and informed? As I re-searched the history of leisure, social theory and the philosophical underpinnings of different methodologies, I began to see cultural values that had informed my own.

I grew more critically conscious of positivist values regarding subjectivity and objectivity. I learned that that which is observable is considered knowable and thus holds social value. That which is invisible (such as thoughts and feelings existing in the person's mind) cannot be objectively studied and thus is not considered knowable (Polkinghorne, 1989). The personal perspective cannot be distilled to generalizable immutable laws, thus it is believed to hold no social value or contribute to the body of knowledge.

I experienced this belief in my everyday: that which is not in the experience of others and is not visible to them is quickly discredited and invalidated. This is particularly true of negative subjective experience, such as pain or fatigue or illness. I learned of this dismissive social practice from others through their words and actions. In turn, I uncritically accepted this norm and translated it into my own practice. I was an accomplice in the public's ignorance. I perpetuated the invisibility of my experience of illness and silenced it as well.

To be responsible to both myself and those with whom I interacted required acceptance of my chronic illness and appropriate acknowledgment of the symptoms when they flared up. This, I learned, is not a straight-forward matter. It would require volumes of writing to chip away at my rigid, unconscious, pre-conceived ways of seeing myself and my social world in order to see habitual patterns and the assumptions that shaped and maintained them.

GLIMMERS OF SELF AWARENESS - GLIMPSES OF ASSUMPTIONS:

The show must go on

February 14, 1995

As I write, it seems to me that I do better at tapping in to how I am feeling and value that better over spring and summer than over fall and winter - there are many examples of this, notably this last spring/summer (1994) when I pulled myself out of a dark stormy period (Jan - April) and then blossomed with renewed spirit and strength - until I became so worn down with the events of selling and buying a home, packing, moving, getting married, and settling into our new home, building the suite, creating and

writing wedding/moving announcements, Christmas preparations and finally getting through our birthdays and Valentines - just one long continuous special events stretch that I seem to put a lot of thought and energy into on top of working at Seacoast and trying to do my own work on my thesis, take courses, think and sort out the entanglements of thoughts and ideas in my mind, my involvement in the Alliance and ITC and this spring the Power Squadron Course... Maybe I do better in the late spring and summer because there are not the same demands on me - I have the time, I feel that I can take the time, anyway, to attend to myself - the other times, I'm on a roller coaster and am simply trying to hang on and do what I can to keep up with the demands and my perceived expectations.

June 10, 1995

...I have learned to ignore, push aside and override my physically felt symptoms for the sole purpose of 'doing things'. It is as if I don't trust my body and the messages it is sending to me. It is as if I only trust the messages that I have heard passed down through the years, the messages that emanate from a tone of voice, from words spoken, from actions taken. It is as if some other knowing knows better, as if some other knows 'what is good for me', 'what I should be doing' - which has nothing to do with resting, letting down, getting in touch with my thoughts and feelings or attending to them.

These messages penetrate my consciousness. I believe that to be worthy of the love and respect of others, and maybe myself, I must always be on top of things, be busy, be productive, be contributing to society and to the welfare of others. There is no time to rest and I must not be seen to be resting either.

That would be 'copping out', taking the easy way out, practicing avoidance, not pushing myself enough to get past my human weakness, not drawing on or developing my inner character and strength. Tendencies to 'succumb' to one's bodily weakness, such as taking rests, are viewed by many with disdain. To even have physical ills requiring rest is a sign of personal weakness. I know. I have heard others being thus judged during my lifetime and I have so judged myself, and others.

February 1, 1995

I realize that I have plugged into an ideal - an ideal that appeared out of nowhere, so it seems, as I was not conscious of it seeping under my skin and presenting itself as my own thoughts about how I should live my life. I had learned that I should drive myself to be constantly on the go, busy, productive, doing things of worth (but worth defined in who's eyes, I might have questioned). Without questioning or being cognitive of the messages played day in and day out, I responded to them and lost touch more and more with the messages from my body and soul.

For years, I was chronically driven. Eventually, I became chronically ill. So now I have the personal challenge of accepting my human limitations and realizing that I need to take care of myself. I need to pause, reflect, and slow down in order to be able to listen to myself, to make choices and to take actions that will enhance and support my well-being - and not just physically, for that matter, but also emotionally, spiritually and mentally. I am learning to listen to my inner self, to my physical and emotional feelings, to my understandings and beliefs from my experience - not just to the social messages that I have unquestioningly accepted as my own.

To attend to myself is not an indication of weakness. In fact, for me it takes a lot of strength and courage to withdraw from the mainstream, to rest - which is a way of being quite different from what I thought was the status quo.

Like K., I conducted my life in a headstrong fashion. I was proud that I lived up to valued social norms and expectations. Like K., I was an obedient citizen, dedicated to working diligently and being productive within my social context. My identity and sense of worth were founded on accomplishing, producing and giving of myself to others. This way of being had earned me acceptance and recognition. I would not let illness sever or even fray this lifeline to my social world. Although I was fulfilling norms and values of the Protestant Work Ethic and interpellating its attendant beliefs and assumptions, I did not realize it.

In order to keep going, be productive and fuel my sense of worth, I had to override my physical feelings of pain and exhaustion. Determined to maintain this rigid sense of identity, I separated that which was bodily felt from that which I believed, habitually overpowering the former with the latter. By dissociating from my bodily felt experiences (i.e., the subjective realm) and conducting my life by what I had learned from others (i.e., the objective realm), I literally embodied values rooted in the Cartesian mind-body split (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 23). The more I wrote and reflected the more critically conscious I became of the manner in which my thoughts and actions supported this dissociation.

As I experienced arrest repeatedly, these chronic bouts of illness invited me to search honestly inward, to explore my faint suspicions that my actions, values, assumptions and beliefs might have some connection with my frequent arrest by illness. It took at least six years of physical suffering before I summoned my courage to question this complicity. As I look back now, I can see how with each exploration inward I moved into new realms of consciousness which gradually improved my relationship with my self and others.

My interpellation and socialization of values, assumptions and beliefs affected myriad levels of my way of being: I negated the value of my subjective experience; I tried to be deaf, blind and numb to my bodily felt messages, I viewed the need to rest with disdain and adopted productivity as a primary source of my identity. Many threads wove the tapestry of my constraint. As I began to recognize my own complicity in my arrests, I also began to see how I could participate in my own freedom.

Gradually I realized that my unconscious embodiment of this value system also gave rise to my experience of constrained leisure.

April 15, 1995

It has crossed my mind then, that when...I allow myself to be 'run' unconsciously by perceived external needs and standards, [when] I am experiencing less of myself...when I am not acting with self awareness...it is no wonder that I [feel] constrained in my leisure.

I was urged on not only by recurring bouts of pain and fatigue but now a growing sense that I was beginning to see and understand aspects of my self that I had not before.

May 20, 1995

I am beginning to see that when I start to experience the symptoms of M.E., I draw on my defences to both 'hang on' and carry on, in spite of how I feel. This is typically at some barely conscious level, when my body and emotions respond by tensing up and 'psyching up' in an effort to guard and to draw on all of my resources so that I can put up a front of 'normality' and carry on with all of my daily activities.

I hate to admit this, but I can see that this is when I begin to display those Type A characteristics, most notably those of being driven, impatient and anxious. I am not aware of nor do I care about Type A characteristics at the time. I am in a hurry to get all the things that I need to get done, done, while I still can. I am very focused on what I am doing and I speak quickly. I quickly relate to what others are saying and interject enthusiastically.

Something just reminded me of an article I read that talked about how anger is associated with Type A personalities. I don't think that this applies to me. When I am driven like this, I am in a positive frame of mind. I joke and quip with others as I hurriedly speak or listen. This anger thing is getting under my skin 'though. I find my thoughts being drawn back to it. It bothers me.

As I probe a little further, I am starting to feel a little horrified and sick. I think I can detect a few signs of anger. I have not been aware of feeling angry, but, yes, I can see it now. Anger is present as I attempt to carry on. I think it is anger that provides those lasts rounds of energy when my physiological resources are depleted. I have often wondered how I managed to keep on going when I felt there was nothing left.

Where does this anger come from? What is it about? Hmmm...I think some of it has to do with not wanting to be sick, especially for the umpteenth time, not wanting to have to put up with pain and fatigue, and not wanting to be prevented from doing what I was accustomed to being able to do. But there is something else...I think some of this anger stems from feelings of not being understood...

It was difficult and painful to be so honest with myself. I had prided myself for years in my ability to cope with illness, to get so much done in spite of it and to do so in a cheerful manner.

As I reflected, I realized that I did not like the possibility that my habitual reaction to the onset of M.E. symptoms put me into a 'hurried' mode of interaction with others. Here, however, was an empirical touchstone that could signal an early warning. Each time I find myself feeling 'hurried' in my interactions with others, I might be developing M.E. symptoms and so need to attend to my health. In becoming aware of a pattern of behaviour I did not like in myself, I had found one way to tune into physical feelings of illness which typically I had denied.

It was most difficult to acknowledge my feelings of anger. I traced these feelings to frustration over feeling that others did not understood me or appreciate the difficulties under which I operated. But then how could they? I have kept my experience to myself and even from myself. I have not listened to the signals of physical pain or emotion emanating from my subjective self, so what of my subjective experience do I have to tell others? If I am unaware of my subjective experience how can I begin to make that experience understood to others? I probed deeper and realized with a sickening thought, maybe I was the one who did not understand me...

This affected me more deeply than any of the other observations I had faced concerning the value of the knowledge proffered from my body or my experience. As I cautiously considered the possibility of my lack of self understanding, I did not have to look far or deeply for evidence.

Nov. 1, 1995
I don't stop to check in with myself - to pause - because I ***assume*** *that I know how I feel...*
...but now I realize that my awareness of how I feel is at a superficial level - a combination of being numb to how I really feel and assuming that I ***should*** *be feeling just fine...*

Through journal writing and critical reflection I became aware of a multitude of ways I negated my subjective experience in my daily interactions and I began to understand what was convincing me to do so. I began to find the courage to treat myself differently and the strength to practice ways of attending to my subjective experience. As I continued to

question, critically reflect and write, I began to pay more attention to my self, not in a socially discouraged self-centred way, but in a way that allowed me to learn more about myself. Learning more about myself enabled me to respond more ably to my external and internal environments and more compassionately to myself and to others.

COMPASSION: Realizing the difference between self criticism and critical self reflection

April 30, 1997

Over the past couple of days, I have been working on developing more awareness of my critical voices that play over and over like a broken record in my head. There was a time, only some five years ago, that I honestly did not think that I engaged in negative self talk. I believed that I was very optimistic and positive, that I treated myself kindly and well. During a course on counseling, a discussion about negative self talk in class triggered my self questioning. I found it difficult to think about, but gradually the veil of denial lifted and I glimpsed evidence of my own self-judgement. At first, I saw only examples here and there, but as I developed my awareness and sensitivity to picking up on it, I became conscious of a fairly steady stream of negative self talk. I criticized what I said, how I said it, what I did, what I did not do, how I felt, how I dealt with my feelings and how I interacted with others. Funny, I never seemed to criticize myself for being so hard on myself, 'though.

I have come to realize that there is an important difference between self criticism and critical self reflection. When I am caught up in self criticism, it feels as though I have a parrot sitting on my right shoulder,

watching every little thing I do with its beady little eyes, giving me a running commentary on the goodness and worth of all I do, say, think and feel. He squawks in my ear and when he is most upset with me, he paces back and forth along my shoulder. I find this behaviour very distressing and distracting. I find myself paying more and more attention to his ongoing disapproval and paying less and less attention to how I am really feeling and thinking. I hear his criticism loud and clear. I shut down my feelings, to dull the pain. I shut down my thoughts in order to hear better what the parrot is telling me. This is how I should behave, what I should say, how I should feel, he tells me. I attend unquestioningly to the voice of the parrot: I stop listening to my own. I jump ship and immerse myself in the waters of self criticism.

Critical self reflection is a much different experience. When I am critically reflecting I am aware of me, not the parrot. I am prompted to engage in critical reflection when I recognize that I am struggling with my thoughts and feelings. I can feel the turbulence inside; my stomach churns, my shoulder and neck muscles are tense, my teeth are clenched. I feel distressed. These are indications to me that I am in the midst of a struggle; maybe a contradiction between values and behaviour, or trying to make sense out of an experience, or acting incongruently with my physical and/or emotional needs. I respond to this awareness by questioning and reflecting in thought and writing. I explore and reassess the way(s) that I have interpreted and dealt with personal issues and interactions with others. I question my assumptions, beliefs and values. I look honestly at my habitual behaviours. As I do this, I gain insight and develop understanding. I see things in a different light, I gain a new perspective

which enables me to see that I have choices, that I can choose to act differently. Such insights empower me to act differently. I can choose to act differently because I am more aware and better understand what influences my actions and how those actions impact on both myself and others. As I engage in critical self reflection I feel that I am developing my autonomy and with that, I feel that I am able to take greater responsibility for my choices.

The parrot still seeks me out, ever waiting a chance to alight on my shoulder and begin his monologue of criticism. Sometimes he overpowers me, but more often these days, when I hear his voice, I take that as a signal to pay more attention to my own.

There is a difference between self criticism and critical self reflection. Self criticism ties me up in knots and throws me into a self destructive spiral. Critical self reflection empowers me, giving me the insight and strength to flower forth.

Over the past three years I have paid increased attention to the symptoms of M.E.. This has enabled me to respond to the pain and fatigue earlier and more effectively than I did years ago. The symptoms remind me to re-search my recent operating assumptions and patterns, to re-evaluate my priorities and to select my actions more consciously and responsibly.

January 24, 1996

- so, if I need a rest, I find ways to take that rest, now knowing that I can feel so much better and enjoy doing things like my various works so much

more if I respond appropriately to the messages from my body. This goes too with responding to my emotional needs - rather than trying to bury them or deny them. I am learning to feel them just as I have learned to feel my physical symptoms of illness and to respond 'response-ably' to them.

Over the past two years, my writing has focused less on my debilitating experiences of M.E. because they are much fewer. In this past year I have not written at all about my illness.

While I still live with the chronic illness of M.E., I feel much healthier than I have for years. I am aware of that, now that I pay attention to my physical feelings! I no longer resist but accept my illness. With practice I am getting better at checking in with how I am feeling and better at re-prioritizing my plans within each day as necessary. With practice, I am able to withdraw graciously, change plans or postpone commitments as my need arises. With practice, I am taking the events of a day at a pace suitable to my health. M.E. has helped me to become aware of my bodily knowledge and to develop my appreciation for its value. The symptoms have been empirical touchstones which have not only provided the impetus to become critically self-reflective but have also provided the gauge with which I can monitor the effects of my choices and actions. As I have developed my understanding of myself, I have become a participant in my health.

Developing my awareness and understanding of myself, my habitual patterns and the social forces that have shaped these patterns is a life long

venture for me. I still struggle with old patterns, especially when faced with new challenges, but now I become aware of my situation earlier and I pay attention to how I am feeling. When I engage in self judgement or feel distressed I allow myself to acknowledge those thoughts and feelings; I write about them and reflect critically upon my perspective. Each time sharpens my awareness and illuminates my understanding of my habitual patterns, of my social circumstances and the interaction between them.

REFLECTION

Like Narcissus pausing at the reflective pool, I have experienced letting go of the certainty of what I thought I knew about myself. I have let go of a cherished but rigid pre-conceived self image. In letting go I see myself anew and understand myself differently. I have come to love and care for myself much more. I have learned to value my subjective experience and knowledge.

I have let go of what I thought I knew about how I should conduct my life and learned instead how I can choose to live. I was arrested in the habit of keeping up certain appearances of health and productivity which disconnected me from my subjective experience - a disconnection I enforced through my practice of silence and dishonesty. Through this inquiry I have become aware that my habitual practice of self-judgement has perpetuated my practice of disconnectedness. Through this inquiry I have recognized socio-historical values and assumptions which give rise to these habitual practices. Perception of these patterns has helped me realize how poorly I have understood myself and how little I have listened to myself. My unconscious assumptions, beliefs, values and behaviours have constrained my ability to respond appropriately and responsibly to my self. This has had a negative impact on my relationship with myself and with others. Through this inquiry I have been able to move from judgement to acceptance. Acceptance has opened up possibilities for understanding and understanding has enabled me to feel compassion for myself and for others as we struggle to think and act with greater consciousness at the juncture

of human agency and structural constraint. Understanding and compassion have enabled me to shift from conducting to composing my life.

This inquiry has been an act of leisure for me. Through the practice of leisure, developing my awareness and understanding, I have been able to move from arrest in habitual patterns to participation in conscious choice. Leisure has enabled me to experience the sense of freedom that comes from my developing sense of self.

EPILOGUE

At the outset of this inquiry, leisure was an elusive experience although I had an intuitive sense of what it might feel like. In my view, thesis research had a distinct form and practice but I found that it was not satisfactory for my focus of interest. With these disquietudes I cautiously began my inquiry.

March 16-17, 1994.

How easy it is for me to devalue that which others cannot see - my innermost feelings and beliefs. How skilled I have become at disguising painful symptoms of illness, at covering up feelings of distress and anger and at silencing many of my beliefs. How often I over-ride these feelings and beliefs in order to conform to what I think is expected of me. I expect that producing a thesis should be hard, serious and stressful work, in order for the product to be of any worth. I get the impression from comments I have heard made by other graduate students, that it is a chore that they are in a hurry to get done and over with. But I have made a vow with myself. I found that during my undergrad. years, when I was studying leisure, I suffered severe relapses of illness, was frequently in a state of distress from my desire to perform well, and worked long and hard but always felt that I could/should still work harder and longer at my studies. Around all of this I tried to stick in employment, homelife, friendships, fitness and a bit of recreation. What a treat it was, usually after finishing a paper or exams, to finally be able to do some laundry! I pursued leisure academically, but not in practice. My life in graduate studies was going to be different.

After five years of studying leisure, I thought, surely I had learned enough about it to know how to let it become a part of my own life. I knew that I had not been living what I believed. I believed in the value of leisure. I believed that engaging in leisure enriched a person's life, gave them respite from work and allowed a person to connect holistically to aesthetic and meaningful experiences. Sitting in a mountain meadow comes to mind, gazing at the surrounding vista, breathing in the sweet scents lofting through the air, feeling the ease of relaxing muscles, hearing the steady drone of a bee, all else quiet, letting thoughts drift through the mind, being at peace with self and with nature. Could re-searching and writing a thesis embody leisure? How true that would be to my topic if I could live it as I worked with it!

But the critical voices come tumbling to the fore. Does leisure, as a subjective experience, have much community or social worth as a topic of study? And if it does, how could this be a valuable piece of work if I undertake it in a 'leisurely' way? If I am not in a state of stress, straining and toiling long hours to produce this academic work, what good can come out of it? I am well aware of the puritan work ethic still present in our culture today. To toil was virtuous, to take pleasure was amoral. I suppose it is no wonder I feel uneasy about how my interest in leisure and my personal vow to study it leisurely will be regarded by others. Of course, only I need to know that I am enjoying it, that I am working in a leisure state of mind!

March 16-17, 1994

When I first began to study leisure, I perceived it as time and activities set aside from work and daily maintenance. I now understand leisure to be less concrete than that. It is exemplified in my experience of writing these journal entries. Objectively, this writing is a form of work in that it is commenced for the reason of furthering my work on my thesis-to-be and to fulfill course requirements. It is much more than that to me on a subjective level, however. I can and do become intensely absorbed in my thoughts and feelings and experience a great sense of relief to be able to have a means to express them - to reach down to the depths of where much of this matter has been suppressed and or just gathering for a long time. It has been trying to come to the surface, but because I did not know what to do with it and was afraid of what it might tell me, I have had to work harder and harder to try to ignore it or to try to take tidbits of it and try to make it fit into the existing acceptable structure in which I have been schooled. This has created a great deal of stress for me and I suspect, has contributed greatly to my chronic ill-health. On the other hand, as much as I want to do what fits for me (as that is what I believe is vital for my own well-being, mentally, physically and spiritually) I am fearful of the outcome. It is unknown. If I do not let go of the security blanket offered by the traditional structure and system in which I have been schooled all my life, however, I will not be true to myself. Therefore, I am increasingly motivated to branch out of the mainstream of my peers and educators to pursue what feels right for me. It is a scary process.

During three years of growth, invigorating insight, intense thought, reflection, critical reflection, moments of 'aha' and periods of strenuous

effort, I have developed a new appreciation of leisure, research, my self and my social world. These understandings carry significant personal substance and contribute to my growing sense of congruity.

June 7, 1997.

Now, as I near the end of this particular 'leisure in progress', I am happy to acknowledge it publicly for what it is. This is an act of leisure. This is an act of leisure that I will continue to practice after the academic requirements have been fulfilled, because it is now a vital element in my life. The academic requirement of a thesis has provided me with an opportunity to re-search, to question and to engage in "true confrontation with [my] self, [my] life and [my] society" (Hemingway, 1988, p. 181) by examining my relationship with self and with others, how I have habitually conducted my life, and how I am informed by social forces. Through practicing leisure, I have learned that I have agency. I do not have to react habitually in the manner to which I had become accustomed. Through practicing leisure I have learned to pay attention to and to respect my subjective experience, particularly my emotional and physical feelings. I have learned to welcome leisure into my life. Once invited, I am finding that leisure is popping up at the most surprising times and places in my day to day experience. Leisure has become an increasingly conscious practice in ever-increasing aspects of my life.

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