THE CIRCLE OF LIFE:

THE EVOLUTION OF THE DOMINANT HUMAN RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EARTH, WHAT THIS MEANS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, AND THE HUMAN CONDITION

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the argument that Ontario's abdication or absence of environmental education is the result of a series of developments in the evolution of dominant culture and the relationship it has developed with the Earth. It examines how human relationships with the Earth changed since the beginning of time and that the most significant changes occurred during the domestication of animals and plants. These changes sent the Earth/human relationship on a negative path. Industrialization and the onset of the digital technology made these changes move even faster.

The paper explains the Environmental Movement as evidence of a need for a healthier relationship with the Earth. Aspects of Indigenous epistemologies and their similarities to early Neolithic cultures bring forth the idea that the primacy of ancestral knowledge in the lives of people living on traditional territories is the distinguishing characteristic that creates the healthiest relationship with the Earth. It details research that supports that Indigenous people have deep spiritual and emotional connections to the Earth where one's growth into adulthood and becoming fully human means truly knowing the nature of the spirit in relation to the environment. The paper explains that there may be connections between incomplete psychological developments of individuals due to the ever increasing disconnection with the natural world and that this condition is the consequence of being educated.

An examination of environmental education in Ontario ensues with examples to prove it has abdicated the responsibility of Earth learning entirely. The paper concludes with the thought that the way out of the contradictions of environmental education includes a return to a mythopoetically and experientially based spiritual educational

praxis and to do this, there needs to be an understanding of Indigenous metaphysics. In that hope, it concludes that it is time to give experientially authentic environmental education back to its originators since the practice is not being conducted in ways that fully develop us humans for sustaining ourselves on the planet.

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Preface

I am a teacher, citizen of the planet, a mother, a wife, a daughter, a sister, an Aunt, a woman, a friend – human. The role of human is a complex and diverse story on our planet Earth. I believe that developing and nurturing an intimate connection with the Earth is a human responsibility. In each of my diverse roles as a human, I ask myself if I have developed or promoted an intimate connection with the Earth. I have, in the ways that I have been socialized to understand and know.

As a mother, I am raising children in a home that is surrounded by forest and water. We feed birds, cross-country ski and go on regular canoe trips every summer. As a woman and friend, I spend every spring and fall taking women on canoe trips where we laugh, talk and meditate about the wonders of our planet. As a wife, I spend hours of leisure time with my husband, amidst the beauty of our home and much of our social time is spent on canoe trips and walks, jogs or cycles through the bush. As the daughter of my mother, I spent time wandering the landscape of my childhood neighborhood when she would tell me to be home before dark. Her trust and faith allowed for the relationship with the Earth to grow. As a sister and an Aunt, I have spent countless hours with my nieces, nephews and siblings as we ventured out on extended family camping trips and more recently canoe trips. I have now extended my love for the natural world to my role as a cousin and niece as I have recently encouraged my Aunt and cousin on one of my latest 'all woman' canoe trips. I am an elementary school teacher in the Ontario public school system. Unfortunately, in my role as a teacher I have sensed incongruence and frustration. I have worked exhaustingly through pages of curricula to find as many ways as possible to relate the lessons I teach to the Earth and our connection with it. In other

words, I have tried to integrate environmental education topics into everything I teach. I have thought long and hard about my role as a teacher and I came to the conclusion long ago that it is not easy to try to develop a relationship with the Earth while inside a four walled-classroom and having to follow a particular set of curricula and this caused me great stress. I did not wish to quit. I would have felt as though I would be abandoning my students, my own children, and all the other lives of those I touch. I would have been casting away the responsibility/opportunity I had to make change. I wanted to change the deteriorating relationship we have with the natural world but I felt helpless. Once, all education was about the Earth. A change followed and now only a small portion of education is environmental. The 'environmental' in education hardly exists anymore. Why is this? How did this happen and what does it mean for the future?

Introduction – Map of the Case

What you are about to read in this thesis is an interpretation of an explanation why education is no longer environmental. By examining how human relationships with the Earth have changed over time and what caused these changes, the argument will be made that Ontario's abdication of environmental education is the result of a series of developments in the evolution of Western thought and dominant culture.

The thesis will show: a) that dominant culture is in fact destroying itself and the natural world as a consequence of its relationship with the Earth b) that being educated in the ways of the dominant culture results in an incomplete psychological development of the individual – a condition Shepard (1982) calls permanent adolescence - and with it, the inability of rationality to confront that psychopathology and c) that environmental education in Ontario perpetuates the above conceits and manufactures what

C.A. Bowers(2001) calls a culture of denial. In addition, the paper will also demonstrate that environmental education has always been a discourse and set of practices informed by Indigenous Knowledge and traditional teachers and that the way out of the contradiction and absence of environmental education includes a return to a mythopoetically and experientially based spiritual educational praxis.

My thesis will be presented in two chapters. Chapter One will present a type of chronology of humans and their relationship to the Earth. Based on the literature I have researched I will report how humans' relationship with the Earth has changed through time and how it evolved into the relationship that exists in Western dominant culture. Chapter One will also show how this evolution brought with it new ways of educating children that did not include psychological development through spiritual and experiential interactions with the Earth; the kind of learning that our ancestors and many Indigenous people of today engage in; the kind of learning that could secure our survival on this planet. Chapter Two will tell my story about my time on Earth thus far. It will be, therefore an environmental autobiography.

Chapter One will unfold in six sections, each contributing to the argument.

The first section will explore the development of the relationship between the Earth and early humans as a consequence of education. I will examine the behaviours of humans during the Paleolithic and Neolithic times. During the Neolithic time, the Earth/human relationship changed greatly in that people began to farm and live in settled villages. The domestication of animals and plants caused the start of great change in how these humans related to the Earth (Sheppard, 1982). In an evolutionary perspective, these changes were the beginnings of western 'civilized' thought and dominant culture and its

changed way of viewing and relating to the natural world. I will examine seven ways (quality of attention, place and space, place and gender, duality, food patterns, material possessions, and domestication) that these changes took place and how they affected psychological development and paved the way for the birth of what would become formal 'indoor' education.

The second section of Chapter One will explore the development of industrialization and how it gave new meaning to the Earth/human relationship. During industrialization, the Earth was being viewed not just as a means for subsistence but for economic progress and wealth (Sessions, 1995). I will trace how industrialization began by studying some works by Ronald Wright (2004) and Van Doren (1999). Here, I wish to take a look at the way humans moved from agricultural existences to the beginnings of civilizations and then onward as the rise of science and machines made their mark. Toward the end of this section, the case that Western thought and dominant culture are destroying themselves will begin to be made. Industrialization was like a runaway train where people could not foresee the future and where rationality could not/would not confront the effects these changes were having. At the end of this section, it will be noted that the industrial path of change was not always viewed as a positive one. Many began to question the way things were heading. Henry David Thoreau was one who said this about life in an industrialized market economy:

> Most men, even in this comparatively free country, through mere ignorance and mistake, are so occupied with the fatitious cares and superfluously coarse labors of life that its finer fruits cannot be plucked by them. Their fingers, from excessive toil, are too clumsy and tremble too much for that... he cannot afford to sustain the manliest relations to men; his labor would be depreciated in the market (Bode 1964, p. 261)

Accounts such as these tell of an evolving discomfort in the hearts and minds of some people about their way of life in the times of industrialization. Much has been written of these accounts and indeed there came a growing movement of environmentalism that proved there was something wrong with the way people were being educated to exploit and neglect the natural world.

The third section will explain how this growing desire for change developed and how it evolved into some of the current ideas such as deep ecology. This desire for change, was proof that there were growing concerns about the fact that Western thought and culture were causing an ecological crisis; a crisis that would destroy the culture itself. A deeper and different relationship to the Earth was being called for. In this section, rationality begins to confront the psychopathology of permanent adolescence that Shepard (1982) describes as the consequence of being educated. Some people began to confront the 'wrongness of the way things were going' in ways that they had been taught and socialized to know such as writing, escaping, rebelling, living the 'old ways' and eventually collaborating, researching, creating and making powerfully proven statements about the state of the human condition in relation to the Earth.

The fourth section will examine the impact that the development of computer and digital technology had (and is having) on humans' relationship with the Earth. I will discuss how digital technology further transmits the inability of rationality to confront the increasing evidence of environmentally destructive patterns of learning and living that began in the industrialized world. By examining digital technology's implicit use of Western cultural root metaphors, language and subjectivity, it will be demonstrated that the digital age is contributing to what C.A. Bowers (2001) calls a culture of denial – a

denial that there is a need change our mindset by changing the way we learn and develop in relation to the Earth. Computer technology has become an enormous part of many peoples' lives as a result of education and its affects on how we relate and view the Earth and natural world is very worthy of examination.

The fifth section will look at the Indigenous cultures whose development was of a different sort in comparison to the development that was taking place elsewhere on the planet. By examining the ways that Indigenous people perceive the Earth and cosmos, by explaining how many of the people in these cultures interact with the land and by describing their tradition of storytelling, I will show that Indigenous ways of knowing develops an ecocentric (rather than ego/anthropocentric) view of the Earth, a holistic development of the psyche and a kind of education that reinforces a responsibility to the natural world. To the Indigenous people, their relationship to the Earth is established in their minds and hearts (Cajete, 1994). The environment is an essential reality for learning to become fully human. "Learning about the nature of the spirit in relationship to the environment is considered central to learning the full meaning of life"(Cajete 1994, p. 43). Cajete (2003) explains, "Traditional systems of Indian education represent ways of learning and doing through a Nature-centred philosophy. They are among the oldest continuing expressions of 'environmental' education in the world" (Cajete 2003, p.21). This is significant because it relates to a deep, ethical and spiritual part of environmental learning that could move dominant culture away from denial toward a set of practices in education that could secure and sustain human survival on this planet as these ways have sustained Indigenous people.

In the sixth section of Part One, I will discuss some of the problems with the dominant Western education model (which will also be called First World Education in my paper), how its general implementation could be regarded as anti-ecological and that it exploits human vulnerability (Bowers, 2001). I will also suggest that First World Education has an anti-humanitarian agenda that acts out in human/Earth relations since it ignores alternative knowledge systems such as traditional, intergenerational, non-dominant cultural knowledge. I will then narrow my focus and examine education in Ontario schools. I will show that the same goals exist in Ontario schools. I will provide an overview of the history of schooling in Ontario and how mass schooling embedded these goals into an anti-environmental ideology that education continues to operate in. I will do this by analysing policies and practices, and summarizing them into three kinds of environmental learning that occur or have occurred in Ontario schools, none of which truly develop the full human psyche that would complete growth into adulthood. This will demonstrate evidence that Ontario has abdicated environmental education as a consequence of Western ideological frameworks that resulted from the evolution of dominant culture. Ontario Education leaders have our students relating to the Earth in the perpetually destructive ways that are the result of the developments of Western thought and dominant culture. Indeed, it was these policies and practices in education that shaped my experiences in school and informed my thought as a child and as an adult. As a teacher, I have come to recognize how education has changed over the years and how it has increasingly excluded environmental learning. After this section, my story will begin.

My story will be Chapter Two of my thesis. According to Kieran Egan (1986), the telling of a story is a basic yet powerful form in which we make sense of the world. My

story will do just this by providing my personal account of experiences in my life that relate to the topics I discussed in Chapter One of my paper. My story will be a cognitive, emotional and spiritual journey for me. Through story, I will examine where I came from, where I have been, where I would like to be going and how I might get myself, my children and my students to a place where they can be fully human and can live in fulfillment, happiness, health and harmony (sustainable ways) with the Earth. Chapter Two will also be a personal opinion about environmental education and how environmental learning has happened in my life.

Kieran Egan (1989) explains that through individual story, change comes from within and if all people could let their story unfold, the world might itself heal. Story allows oneself to become fully human and understand the meaning of life.

My story will tell about my relationship with the natural world from childhood to adulthood and how it was shaped mainly by the ideals of the society within which I was raised but also by the many experiences and people I encountered. I will provide a description of the kinds of environmental learning that I was exposed to in and out of school and how it affected my feelings about the natural world and my personal growth. In my story, I will also talk about my struggles to define why it is that I yearn to spend time 'surviving' in the wild as I tell of my canoe trips and my survival experience. The story will tell of my feelings of contradiction and conflict from living in a 'modern western' society. I will explain my relations with Aboriginal people and their influences in my life and on environmental thought by telling of my experiences as a teacher, student and friend.

Overall, my story will be a philosophical perspective of my experience that will tell of my journey toward a state of mind and living that seeks happiness and fulfillement through a deep connection and responsibility to the Earth. My story will tell about the natural condition of my childhood as being ecophilic – having affection for nature. As the story progresses, it will describe a movement away from the Earth as a result of feelings of domination and exploitation of my childhood needs toward the needs of the modern world – a condition that could be termed ecophobic (Puk, 2002). The story then will turn back to the Earth as I tell about my struggles and successes at making meaning in my life.

The ending of my story will be my description of a realignment of childhood's environmental intimacy, how I might develop this in the children I teach and in my own children. I will examine some of the traditional models such as Cajete's (1994) idea of ecological spirituality and comment on the place for this belief in my practice.

Finally, I will conclude this thesis with a summary of the main ideas presented and how through story, I brought meaning to them. I will explain what this entire process has meant to me, what I hope the story will do for the reader and how I have become a better person because of the process.

Chapter One

Early Humans/Earth Relationships and the Origins of Environmental Learning

Paleolithic Age

A while ago, I read an article in the newspaper about a new archeological discovery. A skull was found in the year 2004 on a remote island of Indonesia. Scientists revealed that it was a "new species of miniature humans that lived 12,000 years ago"(Mitchell 2004, p.A3). This new species of human, called Homo floresiensis, is a

descendant of Homo Erectus, an early hominid of the Paleolithic Era (3 million years ago). Mitchell (2004) recounts in her Globe and Mail article, that scientists believe this miniature human existed alongside our ancestors around 12,000 years ago. What caught my attention most was the fact that scientists think that "the finding has a deep psychological resonance for humans...It plugs into the myths about magical little creatures such as elves and leprechauns" (Mitchell 2004, p.A3). The merit of such a scientific discovery brings truth to the many childhood tales and legends of various cultures about tiny creatures like elves and fairies. These tales represent ancestral knowledge that gives clues to human behaviour and relationships with the Earth and have often been regarded as make believe; perhaps no longer. Indeed, long before the recent skull discovery, local residents of the island of Flores told of a "strange little creature who lived there in caves...locals would describe them in detail, including their habits and which ones they associated with" (Mitchell 2004, p.A3). Locals spoke of sightings as recently as less than two hundred years ago (Mitchell, 2004). This means that a separate species existed at the same time that homo sapien sapiens were starting to cultivate the fertile crescent of the Middle East and develop cities, democracy and writing (Mitchell, 2004).

The above information is very significant for my paper because it presents the need to establish a storied timeline of two humanoid species and behaviour patterns with Earth and it confirms my belief that different human groups with, quite likely, different worldviews of the Earth existed simultaneously. One group (homo sapien sapien) grew to exclusively dominate the planet and all other human groups. Scientists are telling one story of human origins which is beginning to coincide with stories of Indigenous peoples

around the world. The scientific story has been a linear one, in that it continues to progress forward in its complexity. Now with a puzzling 'offshoot' there is evidence that the story of human origins and existence is not so straightforward after all.

About 5 million years ago, the bloodlines of apes to humans split (Wright, 2004). The appearance of stone-making tools marked the existence of the hominids and the era known as the Paleolithic Period – 3 million years ago to the melting of the last Ice Age at 12,000 years ago (Wright, 2004). Among the first Hominids of the Paleolithic Era were Homo Erectus. These fire-keepers originated in Africa and by a million years ago spread to several temperate and tropical zones on the Eurasian landmass (Wright, 2004). This supports the theory of the recent skull discovery of Homo floriensis, that Homo erectus reached the Indonesian island of Java millions of years ago and then crossed the water by boat to the island of Flores. Once there, (a few 100,000 years ago) that population evolved into a separate species, scientists are now calling Homo floriensis (Mitchell, 2004).

Homo erectus hunted and gathered food and lived in cave dwellings. Their time on Earth is known as the Stone Age. There are controversial debates that these hominids may have either died out or they may have mated with strangers of other tribes and evolved into the Neanderthal (Wright, 2004).

Neanderthal evolved around the same time as the Cro-Magnon (Homo sapien) 130,000 years ago (Wright, 2004). Neanderthal was "heavy-set and brawny and Cro-Magnon was slighter and more gracile, a track athlete rather than a bodybuilder"(Wright 2004, p.21).). Indeed, there are humans today that demonstrate the variations between Cro-Magnon and Neanderthal. Wright (2004) suggests the "bony remains of Arnold

Schwarzenegger and Woody Allen might exhibit a similar contrast"(Wright 2004, p. 22). But, the skulls were different and the Neanderthal brain was bigger.

Neanderthal had low foreheads, strong brow ridges, robust jaws, strong teeth and broad noses – traits that were suited specifically for living on the 'front lines of the Ice Age" (Wright 2004, p. 23). Just as scientists suggest Homo floriensis moved south to Indonesia millions of years ago, Cro-Magnon began moving north and west from the Middle East and out of Africa, about 40 000 years ago (Wright, 2004).The invasion was a possible result of climate instability – similar to the worst predictions of modern climate change- that would have wiped out animal and plant communities on which the Neanderthal depended. The Neanderthals and Cro-Magnons fought for about 10 000 years (Wright, 2004). Both groups hunted large game and did so by ambush and moving close for the kill. They were not nomadic but rooted and lived in the same caves and valleys year-round (Wright, 2004). Their battles were characterized by stealing fire, game and perhaps seizing women and children and by the end of "that unimaginably long struggle, Europe and the whole world belonged to our kind and the classic Neanderthal was gone forever" (Wright 2004, p. 24).

No one really knows if the Neanderthal line died out or if it was assimilated or if in fact it had disappeared as a result of genocide – an idea Wright (2004) suggests is fraught with emotion as it means that we are descended from a million years of ruthless victories, genetically predisposed by the sins of our fathers to do likewise. Wright (2004) says that the last Neanderthal bands held out in the mountains of Spain and Yugoslavia, "driven like Apaches into rougher and rougher terrain" (Wright 2004, p.24).

At this point, I wish to research and report on the behaviours of these early humans. Other than the fact that their life was based on raw survival by hunting game and gathering plants, seeds and water, what we know about the behaviours of these early humans is based on research done by archeologists, anthropologists and other scientists. Speculations about ways of life are based on archeological findings of artifacts, cave paintings suggesting rituals, ceremonies and other forms of living. Paul Shepard (1982) speaks about early humans as relict tribal people who had very different views of the Earth than those held by citizens of the developed countries. He speaks about humans as very specialized animals. He asserts that ontogeny, or the coming into being as the first twenty years of life, of tribal people was more normal than ours and that it "may be considered to be a standard from which we have deviated" (Shepard 1982, p. 6). Indeed, Shepard (1982) believes that we function as permanent adolescents. The ontogeny of tribal people was one that:

> fostered a calendar of mental growth, cooperation, leadership and the study of a mysterious and beautiful world where the clues to the meaning of life were embodied in natural things, where everyday life was inextricable from spiritual significance and encounter, and where the members of the group celebrated individual stages and passages as ritual participation in the first creation (Shepard 1982, p.6).

This ontogeny is an example of people who live at peace with their world and feel themselves to be guests rather than masters (Shepard, 1982). Shepard (1982) believes this seed of normal ontogeny is present in all of us. In infancy and childhood, one is surrounded by living plants, rich in texture, smell and motion. These realities are literally inhaled and swallowed by the infant as he/she moves into childhood:

> The unfiltered, unpolluted air, the flicker of wild birds, real sunshine and

> rain, mud to be tasted and tree bark to grasp, the sounds of wind and water, the calls of animals and insects as well as the human voices – all these are not vague and unpleasant amenities for the infant, but the stuff out of which its second grounding, even while in its mother's arms, has begun (Shepard 1982, p.7).

Shepard's (1982) assertion here is that as infants and children, these early tribal people did not regard these Earth experiences in childhood as irrelevant, trivial things to be forgotten or hidden in the subconscious but rather were the foundation for movement into adulthood. As a child moving through puberty to adulthood "he/she is not given the worst of the menial tasks. He/she is free, much as the creatures around him/her ...among whom life is not ranked subordination to authority" (Shepard 1982, p.8). Conformity for him/her is a result of social pressure and custom, not force. It is a time where, all the Earth experiences in infancy and childhood move him/her into a lifelong study, a reciprocity with and a miracle of interpretation of the natural world where he/she will transform its liveliness into poetic analogies of human society (Shepard, 1982). This was their education – a deep connection with the Earth.

Wright (2004) describes the early hunter-gatherer societies in similar ways where the social structure was more or less egalitarian, with slight differences in wealth and power between greatest and least. Leadership was either shared, voted or earned by merit and example (Wright, 2004). If a person disliked a majority decision, he/she could leave and "in an uncrowded world without fixed borders or belongings, it was easy to vote with one's feet" (Wright 2004, p.48).

As the CroMagnon (Homo sapiens) began to displace the Neanderthal, Ronald Wright (2004) describes a different picture of their relationships with Earth. Wright (2004) does not describe a harmonious and reciprocal relationship between early humans

and their environment. Instead, he sites evidence from his research that describes these people (CroMagnon or Homo sapiens) as wild hunters who, by 15,000 years ago were established on every continent (Wright, 2004). He notes that this expansion had the same profound ecological consequences as the expansion of Europe just 1000 years ago (Wright, 2004). Though Wright's (2004) research indicates evidence of large scale hunting and thus extinction of species, it suggests that this was more a consequence of the Homo sapien (CroMagnon) not the Neanderthal (Homo Erectus). He quotes the anthropologist William Howells from 1960, "The Neanderthals were surely able and valiant in the chase, but they left no such massive bone yards as this" (Wright 2004, p. 38). So, there seems to be a split in the kind of behaviour these two early humans exhibited, where CroMagnon (the closer ancestor to modern humans) had the 'darker' side and the 'bad smell of extinction around the world wherever they were concerned', as Wright (2004) puts it. Were Neanderthal gentler and more harmonious in their behaviours living on Earth and if it is CroMagnon we have descended from then would this explain our current behaviours and the surge of population and exploitation of the Earth?

CroMagnon was much better equipped than Neanderthal who they displaced. CroMagnon created "lighter, sharper, longer-ranged, more elegant and deadly weapons" which essentially perfected hunting (Wright 2004, p. 36). Indeed, Wright (2004) notes that besides the taming of fire, the perfection of hunting had a profound affect on behaviour because it created a food surplus and therefore leisure time. "The hunters and gatherers were producing more than mere subsistence, giving themselves time to paint the walls, make beads and effigies, play music and indulge in religious rituals. For the

first time, people were rich" (Wright 2004, p. 36). Wright (2004) sees a resemblance of this pattern of behaviour in the Old Stone Age to the unconnected era of the past half millennium of Western 'discovery' and conquest which has led the industrial age and now the digital age. Before that time, however, life was played out by perfect hunters who killed game until extinction then migrated across the globe for more until the land became bankrupt of large game. They then adapted to using smaller flint blades and instead of killing large mammals, they were killing rabbits (Wright, 2004). Wright (2004) even talks about this evolutionary path as a progress trap and that some of the CroMagnon (Homo sapien) descendants –who have survived into recent times- learned to restrain themselves but "the rest of us found a new way to raise the stakes: that great change known to hindsight as the Farming or Neolithic Revolution"(Wright 2004, p.40). Wright (2004) is referring to what remains of Indigenous peoples around the world when he talks about those who 'restrained' themselves for Indigenous people whose lifestyles exemplify restraint and balance with the Earth rhythms are quoted by Wright (2004) as "steward's of their ecologies" (Wright 2004, p.39). Wright (2004) even uses the term 'modern hunter gatherer' when describing them. However, being Indigenous does not negate agriculture as we see in the Hopi or Haudenosaunee. The point is that their practice of farming didn't disembowel the environmental ethic that derived from their satisfaction with Creation as it was (Sheridan, 2006). It is critical for me to further address the relations of Indigenous ways with the Earth in an upcoming section of my thesis. Perhaps it is within the life ways of Indigenous people where some answers may be found about sustaining ourselves on the planet. For now, it is necessary to continue with history of human relations to the Earth and further examine the Neolithic period.

Neolithic Age

The Neolithic period was a time that many authors feel was a significant bend in the road of evolution. Ed O'Sullivan (1999) for example declares the Paleolithic time period was a time of primordial harmony with the Earth. O'Sullivan (1999) refers to the Neolithic period as a time of "transition from an integral presence on Earth to the beginnings of permanent villages and control over the forces of the Earth through agriculture and domestication of animals" (O'Sullivan 1999, p.217).

> At this point we see a dramatic change taking place that affected the presence of the human forever as regards to their relationship to the natural world. A new power was exercised by the human; one with profound consequences that altered the history of the Earth. We are referring here to the power of humans to domesticate the world in specific ways (O'Sullivan 1999, p.217).

The Neolithic period is a very complex time to study because of the overlapping patterns of life in villages and civilization. Shepard (1982) acknowledges the fact that we know almost nothing of the 'felt experience' of this era. I know myself, that I can only skim the surface of what historians and archeologists spend lifetimes studying. For my purposes, I wish to examine this period and how, generally, humans behaved in relation to the Earth, as a result of their learning, as it shows the earliest clues to the ideological framework of modern environmental education. Finding clues from the past can help us to understand why we behave the way we do and critically examine the rightness or wrongness of it. There is so much information about specific villages and civilizations of this ancient era of time. I will focus on significant ones that are mentioned in the writings that I have researched. More often, I will speak in very general terms.

Life was modified gradually from that of the hunter gatherer ancestors. However, the early lessons in farming happened at a very high speed in comparison to earlier

developments (Wright, 2004). There were four major areas where farming developed about the same time, the Middle East, the Far East, Mesoamerica (Mexico, Central America) and South America (Andean region) (Wright, 2004). These areas date back 8 000 and 10 000 years ago. Animal domestication occurred about the same time. Wright (2004) blatantly expresses his feelings about the changing behaviours of humans at this time, "Over generations these animals grew tame enough and dim-witted enough, not to mind the two-legged serial killer who followed them around" (Wright 2004, p.43).

A lot happened to the way humans related to the Earth during the Neolithic time. Shepard (1982) categorizes some of the significant changes or shifts in human consciousness and how humans related to the Earth. These shifts affected the quality of attention humans paid to the environment, their concept of place, space, gender, the theme of duality (I will explain), food patterns, thought, expression, possessions, domestication and the way people saw themselves, the land, plants and animals (Shepard, 1982). I would like to elaborate on these effects because I think they present a good summary for my purposes of this thesis. Before I go into detail here, I feel the need to encapsulate what a Neolithic village was to demonstrate how scale and human relations also changed with the rise of the urban defined human settlements in the Agricultural Age.

Wright (2004) suggests a Neolithic village is very much like that of a modern Third World village. He describes these villages as small peasant communities in which everyone worked at similar tasks and had a comparable standard of living (Wright, 2004). Land was communally owned or not at all and farmers, whose effort and skill made them wealthy were obliged to share (Wright, 2004). Over time, however, differences became

strong, "freedoms and social opportunity declined as populations rose and boundaries hardened between groups" (Wright 2004, p.48). It was at these times that Shepard (1982) notes a change in the way humans began to relate to the Earth through the formerly mentioned categories. I will elaborate.

Quality of Attention

First, Shepard (1982) talks about quality of attention as "the cultural and habitual differences in the style of day-to-day hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting and touching (of) the surroundings" (Shepard 1982, p. 21). People were still as vigilant to sounds etc in the natural world but eventually these would become deadened by the noises of the larger village or towns to come. Sounds in the village/town were fixed in place and regular. Even attention to visual cues changed. The hunter would not look 'tranquilly' in one direction the way the farmer could now do. The hunter had to focus on not being inattentive. He/she was always on alert in the natural world whereas the farmer could, gaze every now and then. The hunter/gatherer had to be extremely aware of his/her surroundings in order to know where to find food as its whereabouts was myriad. The farmer, became less of a looker or listener but more of a focused gazer. In addition to this, farmers had to be more attuned to the weather and calendar, an awareness that would become meteorology and astronomy (Shepard, 1982). The hunter/gatherers were sensitive to these also but did not get devastated by potential storms because their diet which was more varied, had a longer cycle of animal growth and contained perennial plant foods all of which "blunted bad years" (Shepard 1982, p.22). This change in attention was significant because the:

> seasonal pattern of the birth, growth, death, and rebirth of crops would burn itself into the minds of these grain farmers so profoundly that it

> might be said to be the first feature....of civilized thought. If these farmers ceased to listen to a million secret tongues in the wilderness it was, in retrospect, to develop techniques of domestication which will alter the Earth and to gain a symbolic foundation for a vision of a cyclic cosmology and eventually a concept of immortality (Shepard 1982, p. 23)

Shepard (1982) emphasizes that farmers had great sensitivities to seasonal nuances as did the hunters to their surroundings but the difference was most profound in the diversity of animals and plants as village life and cultivation of specific crops meant lack of variety. Village life and activities were focused in the centre and not requiring anything farther from that. With the narrowing of land and its diversity, came a narrowed potential for the full development of the human psyche. This leads in nicely to the significance of place – the next shift in how humans related to the Earth.

Place

The meaning of place to people who are nomadic is very different than what it means to sedentary village people. Shepard (1982) talks about place for the hunter as something that is internalized and assimilated into the identity. It is a distinct though unconscious element of the self (Shepard, 1982). Places are "mnemonic; integrated components of a sacred history and the remembered and unconsciously felt past" (Shepard 1982, p.24). To help understand this concept, Devereux's (1996) explanation of place in the mind versus place on a map is useful. Most people have a mental picture of the landmarks on the way to any given destination which over thousands of years in a tribal or hunter-gatherer community would become embedded in the mind generation after generation. This is clear in the stories and songlines of the Australian Aborigines as I will explain. The Aborigines believe in a Dream Time when their ancestors were giant

beings who walked the land before them and established a topography that currently exists. Everything they did left a mark on the country that can still be seen today. When these giant beings left, they turned into rocks or re-entered the ground. For unknown generations, Aborigines have traced the footsteps of their ancestors and sung their stories creating mental images of the land. Stories about the landmarks make up the deeper significance of the place and produce a 'sense' or feeling every time that place is visited. This becomes part of the tribal and personal identity. But once put onto a paper map, these stories (which used to be included on ancient maps) slowly disappeared from the map and so place soon would become nothing more than a simple location and an objective physical feature of a locale (Devereux, 1996). This is perhaps how the idea of place began to change for the farmers living in villages. Rather than being part of the vast landscape that was foraged and hunted on, farmers became localized and eventually borders were established which would protect them from growing outside populations and visitors. The idea of defending a specific territory meant building boundaries such as those built out of stones.

Place and Space

The concept of space in place like mental mapping is a neurological process. The idea of place is related to space. A place (say a tree or some other object) exists in the space it takes up. The space in relation to the object is called 'relative' space and the space alone, without the object is 'absolute'(O'Keefe and Nadel in Devereux, 1996). Relative space is the 'egocentric' (a term coined by the psychologist Jean Piaget) space where the focus or the centre is ourselves and everything radiates out from that centre. We perceive things in relation to the 'egocentric' space. Devereux (1996) suggests that

this is a deep rooted expression of space that has been with us throughout human history, across all cultures. "We carry our egocentric space with us, in turn, it is mapped against and within a framework of non-centered absolute space, giving us an integrated mental model of the environment" (Devereux, 1996). If we don't get opportunities to do this kind of 'cognitive mapping' then our mental model of the environment becomes fragmented and as some ecopsychologists might argue, so does our mind.

Piaget's (a well studied psychologist in education circles) theory is such that a child is unable to view an object from another person's perspective (Devereux,1996). The child's sense of space is relative only to him/her and not any other person/object. Put metaphorically, the young child cannot 'put himself/herself in another person's shoes' and the ability to do so, gradually develops until around the age of ten or twelve. "Piaget....saw a progression in which the way a child moves and acts (reflexes of grasping, sucking) helps him/her form an understanding of the spatial environment (Devereux 1996, p.175). Starting out from this egocentric stage of infancy the child apparently learns to understand absolute space (a stationary void, a unitary framework that contains all things (Devereux ,1996)) at about the age of ten or twelve years. However, OKeefe and Nadel (in Devereux, 1996) believe that the ability to *map* absolute space is not a learned skill but an instinctual one that a child has at birth. Thus, the ability for a young child to *understand* absolute space may in fact be learned but they have an instinctual ability to *map* that space right from infancy. The neurological processes involved in understanding how the brain maps that space is still being researched and beyond the scope of this paper. In Neolithic villages, the absolute space would have been separated by stone boundaries, walls or hills thus offering no chance to learn, understand

and work with the absolute space of the larger landscape. This neurological process was stifled by boundaries to the point where only the egocentric view of space would have developed and the ecocentric view neglected. The gradual inability to map absolute space meant that people of Neolithic times, may not have had the potential to develop an intuition of the vastness of the Earth and their rootedness within it. To have this instinct stifled would diminish the potential for one to develop a deep union with the planet and all its healing powers. This kind of instinctual and metaphysical knowledge, is the kind ecopsychologists suggest makes the human whole and mentally well, rather than the disputed idea of Freud who believed it was a sign of illness or neurosis (Devereux, 1996). Psychotherapists talk about childhood wounds as a kind of psychological 'baggage' we carry with us as adults. Like some unfinished business, it prevents us from learning to be completely human. Perhaps this unfinished business is the stifled opportunities for exploring the innate sense of absolute space that began as far back as the early Neolithic farming days.

Place and Gender

Shepard's (1982) idea of place diverges from Devereux's and I think it is very worthy of comparison here. He suggests that the territoriality of farmers in villages and the ways they built walls (usually around a fertile lowland) was simulating the fertile body of the Earth as Mother (Shepard, 1982). Shepard (1982) asserts that the concept of Mother Earth was prevalent in all the great agricultural civilizations that followed and this created a change in how they related to the Earth. "Their focus was on the nourishing and protective aspects of the world, evoking the experience of being mothered...The gods were becoming more humanlike, the plants and animals subordinated to a kind of

family drama"(Shepard 1982, p.26). There is a point to make here about how this may have created a change in relationship with the Earth: First, to the hunter, the Earth gave and the hunter would receive but to the farmer, the Earth had to be laboured in order to receive. Labour is not a desired occupation by most but rather a disliked chore. Sometimes the fertile Earth would fail to produce despite the control of the farmer and this would create a sense of lifelong subordination to the Earth and thus resentment (Shepard, 1982). Resentment can lead to "masked retaliations, displaced acts of violence, and the consequent guilt (Shepard 1982, p.28). Shepard (1982) wonders if this affected men (humans) in similar ways and I wonder if this was the beginning of the change in relationship with the Earth - one that many would argue is destructive?

What seemed to be acts of violence in mythic and celebratory forms in early agricultural societies were however, often forms of release for feelings of disorder in their lives (Shepard, 1982). Such celebrations in which rules were broken and norms of behaviour violated were ways to dissipate the burdens of dissonance and start fresh from chaos and rejuvenate society (Shepard, 1982). These rituals of 'barbaric violence' are not to be confused with the organized human invasions by force which are more likely due to the breakdown of human social behaviour rather than a form of release or expression. The acts of violence in either form are a result of the deep seated psychological feelings of resentment and subordination to the Earth Mother (Shepard (1982). These early acts of release and irrational behaviours are not very different from those of modern adolescents and many modern adults for that matter. Perhaps this is where the psychological development of humans took its greatest turn to produce what Shepard (1982) suggests is a condition of permanent adolescence.

Shepard (1982) makes serious implications that unhealthy relations humans have with the Earth are a result of poor Mothering. He describes on thought that "the bad Mother Earth – as well as the good – was implicit in the attrition of gender to the soil, for there is a time in infancy when the mother is indeed two persons, one of who is fearfully and infuriatingly withholding" (Shepard 1982, p. 27). He goes on to say that if this is true, then attitudes toward the feminine Earth are influenced by the role of women in a particular society and the land used accordingly (Shepard, 1982). The role of the woman became one of producing children in the hopes that the farmers could make the Earth produce crops. Farmers controlled maternal processes by 'ritually copulating in fields so that they, like the crops in which they saw themselves mirrored, also might be fruitful (Shepard 1982, p. 138). The number of children born increased to as high as sixteen, (four times the number born to women in a hunting and gathering society) wet nurses and surrogate mothers were utilized. Farmers and villagers had a strong sense of belonging to the land and became fierce patriots in societies that controlled the food supply by controlling maternal processes (Shepard, 1982).

To summarize, from the moment farmers began defining their territory by building boundaries around a fertile section of land, they began to regard the land as the gigantic body of the sheltering and nourishing mother – the natural metaphor for sedentary people, and to agricultural people, the dominant mythological figure (Shepard, 1982). The mythological figure of Earth as a withholding Mother meant the development of feelings of resentment and retaliation. Feelings such as these were learned attitudes about the Earth that governed a changed relationship with the planet – one that would soon characterize the growing dominant culture.

Shepard's (1982) idea of the implicit connection between the Earth Mother withholding crops and the woman mother withholding her love and fertility has huge implications that I can not delve into except to state that there was clearly a development of a mindset where women and the Earth were beginning to be seen as forces to be reckoned with. Could it be that the future exploitation and manipulation of 'her' resources that would ensue was as a result of the repressed feelings of resentment in humans (men?)? If this is what Shepard (1982) is saying, then the withholding of love from women and hence the psychological scarring from poor mothering could be seen as the cause or creator of a 'sick' Earth? The burden of this for women is completely and maliciously unfair. I should rather like to think that our mothers, like anyone else Shepard (1982) refers to, are victims of the condition of permanent adolescence – a stifled psychological state as a result of being educated.

Duality

Another significant area of change during the farming era was in the idea of duality (Shepard,1982). Everything was in or of the village or it was not, "they favored the crops or hindered them, were wild or tame, weeds or crops, useful or worthless" (Shepard 1982, p.28) Where a thunderstorm to hunters would have multiple and diverse effects on his/her life because of the variety of interests and foods, to the farmer it would be either destructive or quenching (Shepard, 1982). The simplified ecosystem of the farmer actually created a narrower view of life where there existed only two (dual) modes of opposing perceptions. This created ambivalence. Any ambiguities hunters had were able to be faced up to in their mythologies. The farmers on the other hand, repressed them (Shepard, 1982). Shepard (1982) notes that the ability to resolve the ambiguities results in

mature thought and personality. "Getting stuck in the binary view strands the adult in a universe torn by a myriad of opposition and conflict (Shepard 1982, p.29). Once again, it is demonstrated that the relationship with the Earth for early farmers was a changing condition in that, mature thought and personality became somewhat diminished from a world of multiplicity to duality and continual conflict of opposition characteristic of Shepard's (1982) condition of permanent adolescence.

Food Patterns

Food (trophic) pattern governed farming life (Shepard, 1982). For the many thousands of years that humans have lived as farmers with the worries of food scarcity and its psychic disablement, "it is not surprising that civilized people find it difficult to understand the absence of such worries among hunting-gathering peoples, making them seem careless and imprudent" (Shepard 1982, p.30). Shepard (1982) furthers this thought by noting that the repressed distrust of the mother and the maternal Earth can be re-directed onto those people and to the rest of the natural world "making it easier to believe that all animals are insentient" (Shepard 1982, p.31). With this belief, there were fewer people who included animals in their belief systems or as Shepard (1982) puts it, their poetic mystery and complex behaviours, leaving wild animals and the abstract Mother Earth as victims of this thought (Shepard,1982). With civilization, there were fewer than twenty varieties of plants and animals harvested and even the "broadening of agriculture to embrace many more organisms left it far short of the rich cosmos of the hunter" (Shepard 1982, p.31). Wright (2004) makes note of this fact also: "Farming achieved quantity at the expense of quality...people gave up a broad array of wild foods for a handful of starchy foods...as we domesticated plants, the plants domesticated us. Without

us, they'll die and without them, so do we" (Wright 2004, p.47). This idea illustrates the governing role that food (trophic pattern) plays in the agricultural society. Farmers made themselves responsible for "food production, storage and distribution which would weigh heavily on them....a responsibility in a situation of certain failure...being held responsible for things beyond their control" (Shepard 1982, p.31). This created feelings of helplessness and chaos (Shepard, 1982). Shepard (1982) continues to relate the causes of these changes in behaviour of humans in relation to the Earth, to a (mistaken?) view of the Earth as the mother who did not provide for her child. "Civilization increased the separation between the individual and the natural world as it did the child from the mother, amplifying an attachment that could be channeled into aggression (Shepard 1982, p. 31). If this is the foundation of Western thought and dominant culture that informs how we educated our children then our children are being educated by adults who are suffering form the psychological wounds of separation.

Material Culture

The fifth significant change that Shepard (1982) says occurred during farming peoples is the kind and amount of possessions. Possessions were few and small among hunters and gatherers (Shepard, 1982). Perhaps the best way to understand this change is in one of Shepard's (1982) quotes:

> This absence of wanting belongings seems more likely to be part of a psychological dimension of human life and its modification in civilization. "Belongings" is an interesting word, referring to membership and therefore to parts of a whole. If that whole is Me, then perhaps the acquisition of mostly man-made objects can contribute in some way to my identity – a way that many compensate for some earlier means lost when people became sedentary and their world mostly man-made landscapes (Shepard 1982, p.34).

Shepard (1982) notes that possessions came to define the farmer by enhancing their identity. Something happened to the concept of the self in the transition from hunter-gatherer societies to farming societies. The sedentary village life narrowed the mind view of the larger natural world to the point where people did not see themselves in the vast 'non-Me' world of the wilderness. To the hunter, this "Me in a non-Me world is the most penetrating powerful realization in life. The mature person in such a culture is not concerned with blunting that dreadful reality but with establishing lines of connectedness or relationship" (Shepard 1982, p.34). To the farmer, food, tools, animals, structures, whole landscapes are human-made – they are made rather than given and they are extensions of the self in a 'Me' world that was made and determined by the 'Me'. As Shepard (1982) puts it, the infantile ego glories in this great consuming I-am. In farming societies, impulses, dreams and fears which were (are) the realm of the unconscious were no longer represented by the meaningful relationship one developed with the natural world (Shepard, 1982). The unconscious is (was) driven deeper and away with the wilderness and new definitions of the self by trade and political subordination took hold and replaced the metaphoric reciprocity between the natural and cultural (Shepard 1982, p.35). David Abram (1996) speaks of this reciprocity as an active profound and intimate interaction between the sensed natural world and the self. The sensed thing is not inert or passive but active in the interaction. As metaphoric language suggests, it 'beckons the person' or 'responds to his/her summons'(Abram, 1996). This concept of reciprocity becomes clearer when one thinks about looking at trees in a forest. The person is not alone in his/her world. He/she is watching and being watched by the trees themselves. It is as if the trees (animate objects) are alive. The ability to perceive the world in this way

was lost in the farming societies as a result of being around too many man-made things that centred attention on extensions of the self rather than on the larger animate aspects of the wild. This was the exclusivity that led to anthropocentrism and finally anthropocentrism on a global scale.

Domestication of Animals

The last idea about how relations changed between humans and the Earth is that of domestication of animals. In hunter-gatherer times, animals were viewed belonging to their own nation and to be the bearers of messages and gifts of meat from a sacred domain (Shepard, 1982). "In the village, they became possessions" (Shepard 1996, p. 38). Animals were captured and changes began to occur in their behaviours and physical appearances. They became more docile and submissive. The message is one of mastery over and simplicity of animal life –this was a representation of the natural world at a new and cruder level (Shepard, 1982). There were only a select few that became domesticated which came to represent the whole of animals of value to people. Thus, the ancient human approach to consciousness by seeing – or discovering – the self through other eyes and the need to encounter the otherness of the cosmos in its kindred aspect was soon lost (Shepard, 1982). In the end, the child, born to expect subtle and infinite possibilities when educating his/her powers of discrimination and wonder, instead was presented with "fat hulks, vicious manics and hypertrophied drudges" (Shepard 1982, p.39). Shepard (1982) glaringly states that, "the psychological introjection of these as part of the self put the child on a detour in the developmental process that would culminate in a dead end, posted, 'You can't get there from here.'(Shepard 1982, p.39). Animal domestication like, attention, place, duality, possessions and food anxiety altered the way people viewed the

Earth and ultimately set the stage for Western civilized thought that would bring with it the next phase of development known as the Industrial Age and with it, came a growing sense of discomfort among people regarding the state of the planet and life.

Industrialization

Ronald Wright (2004) provides an excellent short version of the history of progress on the planet. His account is also a story about human development. Another excellent reference is The History of Knowledge by Charles Van Doren (1999). Wright (2004) and Van Doren (1999) provide tremendous detail that I have sifted through in order to find evidence of a changing relationship humans had with their world/Earth. The fact that humans were evolving on both sides of the globe and in many isolated parts of the world is common in both the works of Van Doren (1999) and Wright (2004).

Wright (2004) speaks about the evolution of humans from the beginning of time, through to present day as he touches details of hunter/gatherers, early farming and the beginnings of civilizations such as the Sumer, Incas, Mayans, Romans and the Greeks. Wright (2004) details the story of the inhabitants of Easter Island which fell around 1400 A.D as a result of humans using up all the islands resources (Wright, 2004). Wright (2004) is saying that as soon as humans stayed in one place, the village evolved and then civilizations which he defines as "large complex societies based on the domestication of plants and animals and humans" (Wright 2004, p. 33). He uses the Easter Island example and many others to examine what it is humans may still be doing and what we need to learn about past mistakes but have not yet. Wright (2004) notes that the experiments of civilization as they are seen in hindsight, began accidentally, " a series of seductive steps down a path leading, for most people to lives of monotony and toil" (Wright 2004, p.47).

Wright (2004) notes that the rise and fall of civilizations due to the land's carrying capacity is/was imminent except maybe in areas such as the fertile crescent of the Nile or the layers upon layers of fertile ground that makes China, and that we can attribute today's mass civilization to human ingenuity in farming methods. Human ingenuity allows for the existence of more food to feed a population that will then grow to what we are at now – 6 billion. Interestingly, at the time of Rome (2 A.D) the world population was 200 million, "adding 200 million after Rome took thirteen hundred years, adding the last 200 million took (only) three years" (Wright 2004, p. 109)!

Van Doren (1999) focuses on the progress of knowledge and human ingenuity rather than critically examining its impact on the planet. While Wright (2004) says that sex, food, wealth, power and prestige lure us onward, make civilizations 'tick' and make us progress, Van Doren (1999) might suggest that the advancement of knowledge will guarantee sex, food wealth, power and prestige. The idea of progress in its modern meaning of material things getting better and better, was never more explosive than during the age of industrialization. Industrialization was the catalyst for our present state of civilization and our learned relationship we (most) have with the Earth right now.

Industrialization was actually born from the scientific method which goes back to the classical Greeks (Van Doren, 1999). This new method of acquiring knowledge was invented by a series of European thinkers from about 1550-1700 (Van Doren, 1999). As Van Doren (1999) states, anyone could possess knowledge, but when it became science, it became a very special kind of knowledge that only 'scientists' could possess. Aristotle was one of the first scientific thinkers who was challenged by many about the theories of matter, motion and the universe such as Galileo (1564-1646) and Descarte

(1596-1650) (Van Doren, 1999). These early scientists used an inquiry method that built on previous knowledge, tried and tested new theories and proved each right or wrong by supportive evidence. Hence, old knowledge would be supplanted with new improved, knowledge; a concept that would become known as progress, something the ancient humans had not known of and something that would change the humans and their relationship to the Earth forever. As Van Doren (1999) notes,

> The ancients had had no concept of progress, at least in the sense of a steady improvement over the centuries and millennia. The ancients had been aware that conditions changed, but they had supposed that, in general, the changes were cyclical: sometimes things were better, sometimes things were worse. The eighteenth century not only believed in progress, it even began to believe in necessary progress; things had to get better because that was the nature of things (Van Doren 1999, p.217).

Let me explain how this 'new' knowledge system created the industrial age. With it came the refinement of the five simple machines (Van Doren, 1999). The work of Galileo, Descartes and Newton brought "discoveries in mechanics that came with astonishing rapidity, one after the other, and each new discovery called for the next" (Van Doren 1999, p. 214). Machines began to improve in efficiency, require more efficient sources of power such as coal or steam. It soon turned that humans were beginning to be perceived as machines that could be made to work better, hence the birth of modern scientific medicine (Van Doren, 1999). Even the "universe was regarded as a machine with God at the controls, if in fact God was needed at all" (Van Doren 1999, p. 214). Van Doren (1999) suggests that perhaps the most important mechanical invention was the factory which combined human and mechanical elements to produce an unimaginable amount of goods, which "in turn were absorbed by a market that was also viewed mechanically" (Van Doren 1999, p. 214). The basis behind the factory was that of

dividing up the work between workers so each worker does one small isolated bit of work (all day long, every day for at least 30 years) in order to collectively produce one marketable product. This method would prove to be much more efficient than if the person were to make the entire product on his/her own. This was industrialization. But there were problems with this division of labour that remain today despite its growth and continued success and use. Take the making of a woolen coat as Van Doren (1999) describes: "an artisan would tend and shear the sheep, sort and comb the wool, dye it and spin it, weave it and shape it, and finally deliver it with a smile to the fortunate recipient" (Van Doren 1999, p. 216). Peasant artisans could not compete with the mass produced products of factories and soon saw advantages to abandoning their way of life to go work the demanding, harsh and often dangerous job of the factory Van Doren (1999). "But human beings had not yet learned how factory-induced specialized labor also destroys the souls of human beings by treating them as the parts of a machine" (Van Doren 1999, p. 216). Indeed, one could suggest that the same condition has been interiorized by education. The use of scientific knowledge and inquiry thus lead to new and better inventions such as the machine which was ultimately incorporated within all aspects of existence specifically the factory which was the fundamental operating mechanism for production and consumption of products within a greater machine known as the market: industrialization was born.

Wright (2004) notes that Karl Marx was the first economist to see that if it were not for the discovery of the New World and all of its riches there would be no accumulation of capital which is a very necessary condition for the establishment of a manufacturing industry (Wright, 2004). The ideas of industrialization, mass production,

and progress began in Europe, were facilitated by the plundered wealth of the New World and remain the basis for our current definition of 'Western thought'. Wright (2004) wonders if industrialization would have even occurred if European exploration did not take place. He says it probably would have but at a slower rate and possibly in China. Instead, industrialization has created what has been an unfathomable speed of change. Increases in manufacturing and production resulted in increases in the extraction of raw materials from the Earth and an increase in the use of different sources of energy to fuel machinery and operate industries. Wright (2004) talks about industrialization as a 'runaway train' and wonders if humans' inability to foresee long-range consequences is "inherent to our kind, shaped by the millions of years when we lived from hand to mouth by hunting and gathering" (Wright 2004, p. 109). He suggests that it may also be

> "little more than a mix of inertia, greed, and foolishness encouraged by the shape of the social pyramid. The concentration of power at the top of large-scale societies gives the elite a vested interest in the status quo; they continue to prosper in darkening times long after the environment and general populace begin to suffer (Wright 2004, p. 109).

Shepard's (1982) and Devereux's (1996)interpretation of humans' inability to foresee the long-range consequences might be explained as a result of no longer exercising the absolute space of the larger landscape which in turn stifled psychological development and resulted in the egocentric condition of permanent adolescence. Examining further, Wright's (2004) hint at the social and political reasons *why* the Earth/human relationship might be in decline would be beyond the scope of my thesis. In keeping with my plan, I will continue to examine *how* the Earth/human relationship changed over time and how this relationship contributed to current Western thought and dominant culture which

informs education and thus the development of us. Industrialization was indeed an enormous change in human history and possibly the result of immature adolescent greed.

Deep Ecology and the New Environmentalism

It is clear by now that where once the motives for living were for the basics of food, water, shelter and reproduction we now see that with the industrial age, the purpose and motivations for living (in the 'modern western' world) have become that of progress, wealth, consumption and power. In examining how industrialization has affected our relations with the Earth, I shall provide and overview of the rise of the ecological revolution and how it gave rise to Deep Ecology and the New Environmentalism. Through the chronicle I will explain how humans began to question the social and political values of Industrial (modern) society. We will see how many writers, activists, poets and scientists began examining the effects of detachment from the Earth on a much deeper level. The inherent connection and sense of belonging to a larger cosmos was being suppressed by what Wright (2004) might refer to as the seductive lure of the progress trap. The negative consequences were being felt by a growing number of people and they began to talk.

Dissention, anger and sorrow from witnessing the deterioration of the Earth's ecosystems were evident among a growing number of people struggling to survive the modern economic life ways. Within any institution/organization or dominant ideology, there are always critics.

Among the first nature philosophers to write against the dominant industrial ways was Henry David Thoreau. With the onset of the industrial age, here was a man who chose to live a simple life alone in the woods, philosophizing and writing. His essays,

poems and journals are classics now as they continue to provide inspiration and motivation for present day activists and philosophers. He wrote, "In wildness is the preservation of the world" (Sessions 1995, p.44). This quote of Thoreau's has come up in many of the works I have been reading on deep ecology. Many scholars have discussed it, including Gary Snyder (Sessions, 1995) who responded, "Wildness is not just the preservation of the world, it is the world ... Nature is ultimately in no way endangered; wilderness is. The wild is indestructible, but we might not see the wild" (Sessions 1995, p. 44). Clarissa Pinkola Estes (1992) also speaks about wildness. She argues excellently that it is "no accident that the pristine wilderness of the planet is disappearing as the understanding of our own inner wild nature fades" (Estes 1992, p. 1).

The Life of Grey Owl is another example of a person choosing to live outside the mainstream grips of the Industrial age. Adopted by an Ojibway tribe living on Bear Island in Temagami, Ontario, Grey Owl learned the ways of the Anishinaabe after adoption confirmed his new identity while extinguishing his past. Grey Owl lived as a trapper during the decline and chaos of the failed fur trade and witnessed the devastation of the wilderness, mainly the beaver population all for the sake of satisfying the European fashion fad for beaver hats. He and his Haudenosaunee wife Anahareo were "one of the early voices to sound an alarm for increased conservation ... Grey Owl hoped to evoke sympathy and caring for the land that sustains us all" (Grey Owl 1999, inside cover). Their works symbolize the connections of Indigenous Knowledge to what later became deep ecology which I will discuss later in my paper. It was not until the end of his life that his original identity was revealed – that of an Englishman – a fact that only surprised white people and in their disappointment arises the irony that white people can be

adopted by the Anishinaabe and do well in their status as convert. His life story has become a legend.

The stories of Henry David Thoreau and Grey Owl are two of probably many untold stories including those of the world's Indigenous people whose lives were the first and maybe the last to feel the cutting affects of detachment from the Earth. Many people were simply buoyed along in the currents of the Industrialized society and had no chance to challenge what was happening. There came a growing number who did and by examining the works of the various other philosophers, writers, poets, naturalists, hikers, etc of this movement, it will become very clear what Deep Ecology is, how is was born and how it responded to the values of an industrialized, consumer based civilization. Deep Ecology most certainly was a call for a different relationship with Earth and a call to confront the psychopathology of permanent adolescence that Shepard (1982) talks about.

The Deep Ecology movement originated from a number of scholars, particularly Aarne Naess (Sessions, 1995) who believed of the importance of thinking clearly and deeply about ecological issues (Sessions, 1995). Naess asserted that "the deepness of questioning is an essential part of the Deep Ecology movement... and that deep questioning should lead to an awareness of the need for deep changes in society" (Sessions 1995, p.191-192). The deep questioning process put forward by Naess and other supporters resulted in characterizing Deep Ecology as an ecophilosophical and social/political movement (Sessions, 1995). The concept of deep ecology was exemplified by Rachel Carson's deep thinking when she wrote Silent Spring and awakened many to the dangers of indiscriminate use of pesticides and raised overall

questions about the serious threats the fruits of modern technology had on human health (Sessions 1995). Carson challenged the goals of Western society which is a fundamental aspect of the Deep Ecology movement - to bring about a major paradigm shift – a shift in perception, values and lifestyle – as a basis for redirecting the ecologically destructive path of modern industrial growth societies (Sessions, 1995). The whole idea of dominating and managing the Earth where nature exists for the convenience of 'man' known as anthropocentrism, was challenged.

Before the ideas of Deep Ecology took hold, the basic argument for the protection of wilderness areas was an anthropocentric (nature exists for the convenience of humans) one. Wilderness areas were protected primarily for the purpose of tourism and recreational activities – not as ecological reserves (Foreman in Sessions, 1995). From as early as the 1870's (in the case of Yellowstone National Park) wilderness areas were being set aside for these purposes and conservation groups consisted mostly of hikers, backpackers, climbers, fishers and hunters (Foreman in Sessions, 1995). These protected areas were regarded as 'worthless lands' according to economic viability and so their preservation was not a statement against exploitation of the Earth (Foreman in Sesssions, 1995). "This approach, of course reinforced the willingness of conservationists to exclude rich forestlands, grazing areas and mineralized zones from their proposals (Foreman in Sessions 1995, p. 52). Furthermore, these protected lands were regarded as separate, discrete units, standing apart from the lands around them (Foreman in Sessions, 1995). "Ecological concepts of habitat fragmentation were generally ignored (or unknown) (Foreman in Sessions 1995, p.52).

During the 1970's scholars around the world began looking at environmental ethics and attitudes towards nature as a focus of study (Foreman in Sessions, 1995). Arne Naess (Sessions, 1995) made the distinction between 'shallow environmentalism' (as was believed to be the practice of earlier conservationists with their anthropocentric ideals) and deep ecology (ethics) emerged (Naess from Sessions, 1991). At the heart of the ethics question was "whether other species possessed intrinsic value or had value solely because of their use to humans" (Foreman in Sessions 1995, p.52). The debate focused around the question of what, if any, obligation do humans have to nature or other species (Foreman in Sessions, 1995). One of the problems with the evolving environmental movement was that few scientists or biologists were willing to get involved with its political climate of the 70's (Foreman in Sessions, 1995). However, by the 1980's there came a growing number of botanists, ecologists, zoologist and soils scientists who did involve themselves in the ethics issue and they were able to provide sound research evidence to back up the preservation arguments. The research was showing truth to the devastation of land as is demonstrated in the example of the Pacific Northwest timbermen in the 80's where they called for the muzzling of certain government old-growth researchers because the researchers' findings were drawing too much attention (Sessions, 1995). As data accumulated among researchers, the inescapable conclusion could not be denied: "due to the activities of industrial human beings, the Earth was in the throes of an extinction crisis greater than any revealed in the geological record" (Foreman in Sessions 1995, p. 54).

Enter Earth First! This group, according to Foreman (Sessions, 1991) went beyond the accomplishments of conservation groups and worked to "bring the discussion

of Deep Ecology out of the dusty academic journals" (Foreman in Session p.55, 1991). Foreman (1991) asserts that Earth First! put the idea of biocentrism (ecocentrism/Deep Ecology) into action and "emphasized biological diversity values over recreation and utilitarian ones" by protecting portions of remaining wilderness by promoting the reintroduction of extirpated species and restoration of wilderness tracts (Foreman in Sessions 1995, p.55). Earth First! helped prepare the soil out of which could sprout the necessary spectrum of groups within the wilderness movement (Foreman in Sessions 1995, p.55). Foreman (1991) noted that "like an orgy of intertwined serpents with environmental philosophers, conservation biologists, and independent grassroots groups, the Earth First! movement played a key role in creating the necessary conditions for the emergence of a New Environmental Movement of the 90's (Foreman in Sessions 1995, p.55).

The discussion I presented about how the New Environmentalism emerged is significant when talking about the Earth/human relationship because it proves that humans were beginning to question existence in terms of their connection to the Earth. Something was not right. The questioning began to include deep discussions about much broader issues of the human condition including world poverty and its connection to sustainability. Naess (1991) and his ideas on Deep Ecology make us think about quality of life as a function of sustainable living. He points out that "the economies of some traditional North American native cultures were superbly sustainable in a broad sense" (Naess in Sessions 1991, p.400). Deep Ecology and understanding the New Environmentalism makse us examine other ways of existing and developing that might be ecologically sustainable including the ways of traditional Indigenous cultures. Shepard

(1982) discusses the subject of human existence and development also by looking deeply into issues of the psyche that I discussed as key areas of change in the Earth/human relations during the Neolithic age. Understanding the development of the New Environmental movement demonstrates that there was a search for a better way to learn how to live on Earth than what was already becoming an ecologically destructive 'runaway train'.

We now enter into the 21st century of today, nearly fifteen years later. The environmental ethics debate has deepened. We have now entered a highly technological and digital age that feeds the consumer oriented society which continues to extract resources from the Earth at ever increasing rates. The speed with which the digital age has come upon, seems to have created a desperate 'cry' from an increasingly broad number of scholars, including in the world's Indigenous people. Indeed, Indigenous peoples' beliefs are beginning to be realized as perhaps the roots of Deep Ecology, which I will return to in a later section of my paper.

The Digital Age

The digital age that is upon us is most certainly worth analysis. One can not stop the discussion at the age of industrialization. I wish to talk about the digital age and how it has affected the relationship between humans and the Earth. I will focus on two ideas: that digital technology further transmits the environmentally destructive patterns of the industrialized world by way of its implicit cultural monopoly (this works through the root metaphors of the wrongful mythopoetic narrative of the western culture which I will explain) and that digital technology reduces our connection to the Earth as a result of the subjectivity of computer based activities that contributes to and reinforce an

anthropocentric view of the Earth. Both of these ideas contribute to the loss of local knowledge (knowledge learned and tested over generations of cultural experience within an ecological context) as data based knowledge of computers displaces it.

The impact of the digital revolution on people and the planet is enormous. We have already chronicled the effects on humans' relationship with the Earth while living in the industrial world. Now that our reality has become digitized and/or computerized, we are experimenting with hyper stimulation from video/computer/movie screens, high speed travel of information to global corporate electronic marketing and consumer spending. One could argue that the participant in western modernity, has no direct relationship with the Earth at all. Indeed, it is the change in the cultural patterns of human beings as technology becomes entrenched in the social landscape, that has created the ecological crisis we face at the present time (Franklin, 1990).

C.A. Bowers (2004) believes that "the globalization of computer-based culture is becoming an even more destructive form of colonialism (industrialization) than was experienced in the nineteenth century" (Bowers 2004, p.10). C.A. Bowers (2004) is concerned that the design of and the ideology behind computers reinforces anti-ecological cultural assumptions and ways of living such as the current consumer lifestyle that exceeds the sustaining capacity of the Earth. One of the assumptions is that computer technology is culturally neutral. He says, "If we are to understand the errors of representing cyberspace as a culturally neutral medium and the ways the technology deepens the crisis of a consumer lifestyle that exceeds the Earth's sustaining capacity, we must examine more closely the cultural patterns reinforced in computer-mediated thought and communication"(Bowers 2000, p.22).

Root Metaphors

C.A. Bowers (2000) argues against the claim that electronic communication in cyberspace is culturally neutral. Before he does this, he defines his use of the word culture and uses the anthropologist Clifford Geertz's (1973) definition: "The culture concept...denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbol systems of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by which men (and women) communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life (Bowers 2000, p.23). C.A. Bowers (2000) emphasizes the idea of "historically transmitted pattern of meaning" and suggests that computer software designers ignore this aspect of language. The shared patterns, meanings and norms of a certain culture function through and are renewed and modified by language (Bowers, 2000). No culture is immune from outside influences of other cultures but there always remains a core set of patterns over generations (Bowers 2000). These patterns originate from what C.A. Bowers (2000) calls the root metaphor of the culture. Root metaphors are based on the cultures ancient mythopoetic narratives (or cosmology) (Bowers 2000). He notes that The Book of Genesis (the dominant metaphor for Western society) is the root metaphor that led to the viewing of men as dominant over nature and women (Bowers, 2000). Further examples of root metaphors are the ideas of patriarchy, the mechanistic view of life processes and the individualism that (undergirds) our social attitudes toward the external world (Bowers, 2004). Indeed the "growing acceptance of the evolutionary theory as the total explanatory framework, and thus a model of authoritative thinking is an example of a root metaphor that is still developing" (Bowers 2004, p. 27).

Root metaphors form the basis for thinking and acting in many areas of cultural life (Bowers, 2000). The industrial model of production is a modern root metaphor and therefore forms the basis of thinking. C.A. Bowers (2000) emphasizes that the most important feature of root metaphors is that they are "grounded in the mythopoetic narratives and powerful, evocative experiences and their self-perpetuating nature is in the analogic thinking that occurs across the panorama of cultural experience"(p.27). Analogic thinking involves comparing a new dimension of experience with something we already know as we do when we use the highway as the analogy for moving piles of information around the world – "information highway" (Bowers, 2004). If you are from a culture that does not have highways, how are you supposed to understand this analogy? Analogues are the current day to day tools used in the languages of cultures that have their origins in the root metaphors. Even when language is used without analogues, the words themselves have images associated with them that continue to reproduce the cultural patterns stemming from the root metaphors. Root metaphors are the conceptual and moral 'glue' so to speak of a culture and they often go unnoticed as they are reproduced through linguistic processes that are mostly taken for granted (Bowers, 2000). This implicit nature of the root metaphor, therefore helps to marginalize the need to consider differences and this contributes to a culture of denial (Bowers , 2000). Because of these root metaphors, people who are not from the cultures of those who design computers must adapt themselves to the radically different patterns of thought and deep culturally bound ways of knowing and if they accept these ways uncritically, they may not recognize how computers are changing them (Bowers, 2000). Because of this, computers strengthen the core patterns of dominant culture while undermining traditional cultures (Bowers, 2000).

If we examined two pieces of writing from two cultural groups with different mythopoetic root metaphors, it becomes evident that the language used in each assumes the underlying narrative that defines the deep ways of knowing for that culture. Language is not just a "conduit for ideas and data, or as a sender and receiver of communication – a view that dominates the discourse on how computers are improving the quality of our lives" (Bowers 2000, p.31). The language used in cyberspace is so closely connected to the mythopoetic narratives of western culture that when its root metaphors come out during its use, it often goes unnoticed and therefore undermines the cultures of the non-electronically mediated world, many of whose narratives are ecologically based. In this process, the worldview or mindset of the modern materialistic, consumer based western society, which is based on the root metaphors of its mythopoetic narrative, has a monopoly over the socialization of other world cultures. This mindset perpetuates the destruction of the environment (Bowers, 2000) and is the foundation of our education systems.

Subjectivity

Bowers (2000) speaks about another aspect of digital technology and its affects on the Earth. He speaks about subjectivity. The modern, western digital culture reinforces the idea of self determination and progress; a kind of individualism that interprets the self as superior to the Earth. Franklin (1990) shares this idea also when she speaks about humans' egocentric and technocentric approach to seeing everything in the world with reference to ourselves. "It is *our* environment, not the environment or habitat of fish, bird or tree" (Franklin 1990, p. 87). The digital activity is a subjective experience of interacting with texts, images and graphics on the screen that are objective, separate and

distant from the self. The activity is a solitary one and the individual interpretation thus becomes the authority. On the other hand, the experience of self in orally based, non-western cultures is influenced by ongoing relationships where memory and the five senses attune themselves to the context of the experience (Bowers, 2000). Using the senses involves physical and mental participation in the reciprocal patterns of ongoing community life (Bowers 2000, p.35). Franklin (1990) gives a good example of this physical and mental participation when she describes her memories of the changing seasons:

> As a child in Berlin, I still experienced a sense of special occasion when participating in small festive events around the family table to celebrate the first asparagus of the season, the first strawberries... today there is little sense of season, there is little sense of climate. Everything possible is done to equalize the ambience – to construct an environment that is warm in the winter, cool in the summer – equilibrating temperature and humidity to create an environment that does not reflect nature (Franklin 1990, p. 87)

Indeed, Franklin (1990) asserts that technology, in general, denies the existence and the reality of nature. She believes we need the sensual experiences of the seasons for the sake of our mental and physical health and that we need to "clean up the technocentric and egocentric mindset"(Franklin, 1990).

The reduction of sensual reciprocal experiences in cyberspace works to further reinforce subjectivity. Cyberspace relies on decontextualized data (information not in its context, receiving information/images when sitting in a chair at a screen that is not in the real location from which the information is coming) as the basis of our thinking and this further strengthens our sense of rational, autonomous individualism (Bowers, 2000). Autonomous individualism is reinforced by being able to choose which aspects of media we wish to hear or see as is the case with portable music devices and their capacity to

store personally chosen and sequenced songs. A recent article in the Globe and Mail (January, 2006) noted the tendency of people of the modern digital culture to use new media selectively (described as 'egocasting') to avoid challenging our own opinions and tastes. Even one of the interviewees in the article failed to realize the culturally exclusive nature of the digitized world when he said egocasting is not all doom and gloom. "We're not talking about rampant individualism, but networked individualism" (Pearce, 2006). If we are only 'networked' with 'our own kind' while we sit in solitude, listening to what we want, when we want, responding in print when we want then I can certainly see how this activity would be doom and gloom – it reinforces the egocentric/anthropocentric view of the Earth which has put us in the ecological crisis we sit in right now. Bowers (2000) makes the same claim that David Abram (2004) discusses in his book, The Spell of the Sensuous; print based language (as opposed to oral) reinforces the individual perspective and an anthropocentric view of the Earth.

Abram (2004) states that the senses are the primary way that the Earth informs and guides our thoughts and actions. Bowers (2000) states that "genuine sensory experience can not be preprogrammed and predicted without a direct physical relation to the environment" (p.35). Computer generated simulations of reality (virtual reality) do not involve all the senses. The use of all the senses is necessary for our connection to the Earth and therefore our care of it. Data based knowledge from computers is valued over knowledge of the senses perhaps because it is easier to see and based on scientific methods. Abrams (1996) notes that:

> Only when we slip beneath the exclusively human (abstract) logic continually imposed upon the earth do we catch sight of this other, older logic at work in the world. Only as we come close to our senses and begin to trust, once again, the nuanced intelligence of

> our sensing bodies do we begin to notice and respond to the subtle logos of the land.....Huge centralized programs, global initiatives and other "top down" solutions will never suffice to restore and protect the health of the animate earth. For it is only at the scale of our direct, sensory interactions with the land around us that we can appropriately notice and respond to the immediate needs of the living world (p. 268).

Indeed, the above quote is an excellent introduction the next section of my paper which will explore these older forms of logic that still exist in many of today's Indigenous cultures. As I have explained the changing relationship humans have had with the Earth as we moved through linear historical phases, I have stopped at our present stage of digitization. Now, I am going to step off my linear path to examine some of the older/traditional forms of Indigenous Knowledge that had existed throughout modern linear history but were marginalized. Indigenous Knowledge, and the knowledge of oral cultures were bypassed and usurped in favour of western thinking. It is essential to explore Indigenous Knowledge systems because many of them are based on a view of the Earth and its creatures as either equal to or superior to humankind – a relationship with the Earth that is very different to the current/dominant western view.

Indigenous Ways

Amongst all the research that I have been doing, I have read many books and theories on my subject from authors who are not from Indigenous backgrounds. Why should this be an issue? If I am to begin a discussion in this section about Indigenous epistemologies, then I need to learn from Indigenous authors. Having completed my research in this area, I discovered that there are two bodies of knowledge that are converging. The ideas of the new environmentalism and science that I talked about earlier are actually the Western technical way of talking about the Indigenous logic of traditional

cultures. Modern Western scholars are trying to understand and piece together the knowledge of Indigenous cultures with their own knowledge systems as we see in David Abram's The Spell of the Sensuous (1996) and with Paul Devereux's Re-Visioning the Earth (1996). Indeed, there are Indigenous scholars trying to do the same as Gregory Cajete has done in Igniting the Sparkle (1999). Efforts by Indigenous and Non-Indigenous scholars to connect these knowledge systems so that both have a place in creating human relationships with the Earth that will sustain life are worth exploring.

Indigenous knowledge is born from the quest to understand oneself by seeking the inner world (Ermine, in Battiste and Barman, 1995). "Aboriginal epistemology speaks of pondering great mysteries that lie no further than the self" (Ermine, in Battiste and Barman, 1995). The people of the plant and animal world steward certain doors to knowledge of the inner space (Ermine, in Battiste and Barman, 1995). The young people are taught that the Earth's life is a system of interconnected beings and that only through journeys into the metaphysical can they fully understand the natural world (Ermine, in Battiste and Barman, 1995). The old ones who made countless journeys into the inner space have embedded this knowledge in future generations by telling their stories (Ermine, in Battiste and Barman, 1995). Cajete (1999) sums this explanation up by saying, "Ecological education provides the foundation that enables human beings to resonate individual and communal 'inscapes' with the natural landscape" (p. 76). My intention in this section of my paper is to show that the Earth centred Indigenous epistemologies develop people who relate to the Earth in very different ways than the people of Western knowledge systems. It is this deep way of relating with Earth, this mindset or worldview so to speak that I believe is at the core of our survival. Within the

works I have studied, I will focus on three central aspects that are common among the literature on Indigenous knowledge: perception, landscapes and stories/myths. These central aspects of Indigenous knowledge "offer profound insights for cultivating a sustainable relationship to place and a spiritually integrated perception of Nature" (Cajete, 1994). I shall begin my discussion by examining my first idea: perception.

Perception

We can be trained to perceive things around us in specific ways and how we perceive the Earth will determine our relationship with it. We have been trained in Western cultural thought and existence that in order to believe that a fact is true, it must be scientifically proven – that is by using the Western Scientific Method. Cajete (1999) notes that though the Scientific Method claims objectivity, it is, in fact biased. Jeremy Hayward (1984) states that the work of scientists is a fabrication and that observations can rarely be made without the influence from the historical and cultural context within which they are made or from within the context of the person's own belief system (Cajete, 1999). Cajete (1999) translates the Western Scientific Method into the principle of "I'll see it when I believe it" (p.38) Therefore an agreed upon belief system within which people (scientists in this respect) are trained can determine how they will perceive phenomena to be true. The belief system will decide which observations to reject and which to accept. It is very important for us to realize that Western Science is "conducted within an unquestioned paradigm" (Cajete 1999, p. 40). These are very significant claims and I would like to invite the challenge to myself and my readers of stepping outside the Western paradigm and into one of a different sort – that of Indigenous belief systems as

these systems contribute to the development of a complete mind, make us fully human and take us out of what Bowers (2001) calls the culture of denial.

If we look at the Ethnoscience movement that Cajete (1999) talks about where science reflects the characteristics of a particular culture "one begins to develop intuitive insights concerning that group's way of living, perceiving, learning and acting in relationship to their natural environment" (Cajete 1999, p. 73). Western Scientific thought is characterized by a non-reciprocal logic which is also known as linear thinking – meaning there is only one cause and one effect and each are isolated from all other phenomena. The notion of progress is also characterized by linear thinking in that we describe our histories in a linear chronological fashion as I have been doing in this paper. Indeed, I am finding at this very moment that I have begun to move sideways in my thoughts and purposes as I am challenging my own perceptions simply by reporting on others! Logic is fragmented in Western thought. We learn the parts of systems before we begin experiencing the whole.

The Ethnosciences (a perspective that is very similar to Indigenous perspectives) are characterized by reciprocal logic in that the cause and effect in nature have a reciprocal effect on each other. They cannot be isolated from other causes and effects with which they share a holistic relationship within a system. For example:

> The Navajo believe that natural phenomena can be manipulated by humans through the application of practical and ritualistic knowledge. In turn, the natural phenomena, forces and other living things can affect humans in a number of ways. Therefore everything affects everything else through a complex web of inter-relationships. Everything that is part of the natural world has distincitive qualities which can be dangerous or beneficial to a human, depending on his or her behaviour toward these natural entities (Cajete 1999, p.76).

Understanding the complex nature of natural forces and their 'ways' of interrelationship is the basis behind Indigenous ideas of well being (Cajete, 1999). Maintaining and perpetuating the harmonious interrelationships with elements in the natural environment is the goal (Cajete, 1999). This so called complex nature of natural forces is also known as the mystery and as Ermine (1995) says, by tuning into the inner world, we learn of these forces and of ourselves – this is the reciprocity between the physical and the metaphysical that creates wholeness. The traditional attitudes of Indigenous people toward their environments reflected a pervasive and deeply internalized appreciation for nature and its aesthetic beauty (Cajete, 1999).

There are many examples of practices of Indigenous ways that could help the 'Westernized' mind grasp an understanding of their traditional ways of perceiving and relating to the Earth, I will explain a few that affected me very deeply and helped me to realize that way of thinking could have immense far reaching effects on our future. Both examples demonstrate the concept of perception. The first example is from an experienced Ecologist/Philosopher and Magician, David Abram (1996) had when he was visiting tribal shamans in the South Pacific for his research. This example involves the people of Bali who are not Indigenous but their (most notably) Hindu influences are "thoroughly intertwined with the Indigenous animism of the Indonesian archipelago; the Hindu gods and goddesses have been appropriated, as it were by the more volacanic, eruptive spirits of the local terrain" (Abram 1996, p.15). Abram (1996) tells the story of regularly receiving breakfast in his hut by a local woman hostess. In addition to the tray carrying Abram's food, the hostess also carried a small platter carrying many tiny boat shaped platters of rice. He asked who they were for and she replied that they were for the

household spirits. He watched her place these platters in various locations outside the hut and one day he peeked at one of the platters and noticed that the rice had in fact been eaten. The next day, Abram decided to return to one of the rice platters immediately after the hostess gave the offering so he could 'watch' the spirits in action. He noticed that " every single rice kernel from every tiny platter was being carried off by ants! In Abrams words:

> I walked into my room chuckling to myself: the balian and
> his wife had gone to so much trouble to placate the household
> spirits with gifts, only to have their offerings stolen by little
> six-legged thieves. What a waste! But then a strange thought
> dawned on me: what if the ants were the very 'household spirits'
> to whom the offerings were being made? I soon began to discern
> the logic in this. The family compound like most on this tropical
> island, had been constructed in the vicinity of several ant colonies.
> Since a great deal of cooking took place in the compound.....
> the grounds and buildings at the compound were vulnerable to
> infestations by the sizable ant population (Abram 1996, p.13)

These daily gifts kept the ants satisfied and persuaded the insects to respect the boundary and not enter the buildings. This example helps us understand two different ways of perceiving: the Indigenous way where ants are the spirits and need to be communicated with by a ritual practice of offering gifts so that they will respect boundaries or the Western way of perceiving that ants are pests and need to be dealt with in what ever way that rids them from the home. The key difference is where each perception places the human in relation to the ants. Indigenous people regard the ants as a living thing of equal value to themselves where as people of Western culture regard the ants as inferior beings to themselves with little to no value. If we can understand the Indigenous perception then, we can begin so see the holistic view of the Earth and cosmos just like exercising the experience of absolute space (ecocentrism) Devereux (1996) talks about.

Another example of perception comes from Cajete (1999). He explains the deep abilities of many Indigenous people to see things in their surroundings that others can not. He explains this by using the metaphor of concentric rings. Each ring represents a process that is occurring and sending rings/affects outward. Simultaneously, there are other processes happening that are also represented by rings. All the outward movements of the rings touch/overlap one another. "Concentric rings can form the basis of learning how a learner can track idea and intuitions, observe fields of knowledge and see patterns and connections in thought and natural reality"(Cajete 1999, p. 106). The ability to use ones senses and intuition to sense observations from one ring while quieting the observations from others demonstrates profound connection to the land. "Tracks can be read from many perspectives. In reality, tracking strategy begins with scanning the rings of a landscape with a kind of macro-vision. Such scanning eventually leads one through the smaller concentric rings down to a micro-focus on a specific animal"(Cajete 1999, p. 106). An example of this type of tracking is "the older hunter of wide experience in a particular environment who can tell a fox is coming when a blue jay begins to scold in a certain way"(Cajete 1999, p. 107). Cajete (1999) sees great connections between the physical process of tracking (using sound, site, smell, feeling and visual acuity) and the process of scientific investigation. The above examples about perception help us to grasp an understanding of traditional Indigenous ways of perceiving and relating to the Earth – ways that are experientially and spiritually based. The examples also show that many Indigenous cultures are very Earth centred.

To further grasp the concept of perception, it helps to try to understand it as a neurological process that works to develop a culture's worldview. Worldview can be

defined as how people view the world around them as demonstrated by the way they live and behave. Worldview then is very similar to say, a specific mindset, way of relating and a way of thinking, perceiving and behaving. It makes sense to say that a specific worldview is based on the root metaphors (ie such as genesis, the creation stories of Turtle Island or the evolutionary theory) of the mythopoetic narrative that makes up the culture in question. Indeed, a culture's worldview could be regarded as the its mythopoetic narrative. It is like a tree, where the roots are the root metaphors and the trunk and canopy are the mythopoetic narrative. The mythopoetic narrative is the outward expression of the deep underlying root metaphors of a culture. What has all this got to do with perception and Indigenous epistemology? Well, I am suggesting that perception as a neurological process is what ultimately permits these narratives and metaphors (worldviews) to exist as they do. Changing how we perceive the world around us is like changing our worldview or mythopoetic narrative. Is this possible? I believe that over time it is. Examining differences in perception is the first step in realizing that the Western mythopoetic narrative, that is, the Western worldview, may not be ecologically based. We need an ecologically based worldview due to the ecological crisis that is upon us today.

By changing our perception of the world, the world can change for us (Devereux, 1996). This is a very profound statement because it implies that by 'simply' changing our perception of the world, the world itself might heal. Indeed, there may be no distinction between people needing to heal and the natural world needing to heal. David Orr (1992) speaks about the changed perception/mindset as a form of ecological literacy:

"...the shape of the individual mind is affected by the land as it is by genes"(Orr 1992, p.86). He quotes Barry Lopez (Orr,1992):

> The quality of thought is related to the ability to relate to 'where on this earth one goes, what one touches, the patterns one observes in nature – the intricate history of one's life in the land, even a life in the city, where wind, the chirp of birds, the line of a falling leaf, are known'. The fact that this kind of intimate knowledge of our landscape is rapidly disappearing can only impoverish our mental landscapes as well (Orr 1992, p.86).

Orr (1992) sees the capacity to distinguish between health and disease in the natural world and their relation to health and disease in the human world as good thinking. The neurological processes involved in perception have been explained by psychology. The processes taking place in the brain when believing that ants are spirits requiring offerings would have current 'Western" psychologists/psychiatrists diagnosing a possible state of delusional schizophrenia. How do we know that these perceptions, including ones where we think the owl is actually speaking words, are not the deep psychic ways our mind/body relates to the Earth? David Abram (1996) refers to this perceptivity as a form of animism. He notes that "only by affirming the animism of perceived things do we allow our words to emerge from the depth of our ongoing reciprocity with the world" (Abram 1996, p. 56) Relating to the Earth in deep emotional, psychological and sensual ways as in many Indigenous cultures develops an unbreakable connection with the Earth and thus the development of the whole individual. Indeed the Earth and the human are one. Perception is an important factor to consider when understanding how Indigenous knowledge helps us to get out of the state of denial and realize the importance of changing our narratives to reflect Earth centred forms. The next concept to grasp when understanding Indigenous knowledge is the ideas around landscapes and mapping.

Landscapes and Mapping

Devereux (1996) talks about the history of mapping and provides evidence that the invention of the modern technical aspects of the grid system in mapping had serious consequences for how we viewed the world:

> The Western map, this worldview, this brand of consciousness, traveled over the Earth bringing with it its attendant science and rationalism, history and linear time, and even, to a considerable extent, its Indo-European languages, encoding the very psyche of the West (Devereux 1996, p.156).

Prior to the modern map, Indigenous people long before us mapped their landscape in cognitive and sensual ways that involved imaging. To understand this, it is necessary to understand the term 'chora' and the meaning of place. In our "growing monophasic mind-state" (Devereux 1996, p.82), we view place mainly by superficial ways such as grid coordinates. If an event occurs in some place, it is usually remembered only as the events that occurred there and the place is often less significant. Ancient Greeks had two senses of place, chora and topo (Devereux, 1996). Topo represented place in much the same superficial way we do now, with emphasis only on the objective physical features of location (Devereux 1996). Chora, on the other hand was a "holistic reference to place: place as a trigger to memory, imagination, and mythic presence" (Devereux 1996, p.82). Devereux (1996) informs us that when ancient people were visiting an unfamiliar place, they would ask questions of the locals, listen to the stories and myths of the place and observe, listen to and obtain a 'feel' for the place.

Devereux (1996) talks about Native Americans having their own way of spiritually mapping their landscape. The names given to specific places in the landscape of the Western Apache of Arizona, encode the cultures ancient wisdom about moral

relationships and moral character (Bowers, 2000). Thus, " the name of a water hole, location of a grove of cottonwoods and an outcropping of white rock serve as reminders of the first storied experiences of the ancestors" (Bowers 2000, p.38). Education of their children comes from learning about the ancient moral insights from the stories and names of the places which guide them in their relationship to the land and each other (Bowers, 2000). The land is part of their cultural identity so when it is destroyed, altered or placed off-limits for whatever reasons, there is damage to this identity. This is an example of how the 'chora' of a place not only increases its significance to a level of sacredness but builds deep respect and responsibility towards its protection.

The idea of cognitively mapping one's landscape is known in other traditional cultures as well. The Greenland Inuit mapped their coastline using carved pieces of wood, Puluwat navigators used the shape of a triggerfish as a mental map and some (in Italy around 2500 B.C) carved elements of maps in stone (Devereux, 1996). Even as the maps became more 'rational' and Western-like, there was still mythic and expressive aspects about place depicted as drawings and stories directly on the places on the map.

One of the best ways to truly understand the depth of meaning that landscape had for ancient people and "peer back to the remote past of human consciousness" (Devereux 1996, p. 166) is to read about the Australian Aborigine songlines. The Australian Aborignes believe in a Dream Time when their ancestors, giant totemic beings emerged from the Earth. These beings walked the land and created the topography that currently exists.

> They left their tracks across the surface of the world, they camped, made fire, defecated, dug for water, fought, copulated, conducted rituals and so forth. Everything they did left on the country a mark that can still be seen to this

> day. When these world-creating beings left, they turned into rocks or re-entered the ground. Aborignes, for unknown generations, have traced the footsteps of their Dreamtime ancestors. These routes are variously known by the non-Aborigines as 'songlines', 'dream journey routes, or 'dreaming tracks' (Devereux 1996, p.166-67).

These songlines are like maps of the landscapes and no other navigational method was necessary. The songline would be sung to each generation of tribal members and the landscape forever planted in the mind. Sometimes new information about the songlines would be transmitted through a member's dreams and new rituals, songs or dances would be changed or added to the existing songline (Devereux, 1996). I think it is difficult to begin understanding these deep connections these people had with the landscape from a Western perspective but a very important task that should be done. The land they cross is part of themselves, the journey renews them since they are inseparable from the land, they enter into the metaphysical when they journey the song lines (Devereux ,1996).

The ancient traditions of people and the landscape are deep neurological processes that are not an active part of our Western psyche and are greatly significant for our understanding of how we can change our mindset and how we relate to the Earth. Paul Shepard (1982) believes these processes are inherent in all humans:

> There is a secret person undamaged in every individual, aware of the validity of these (processes), sensitive to their right moments in our lives (Shepard 2001, p.129).

Shepard (1982) asserts that these inherent processes, or intra-indigenous processes as Neills (2001) puts it, have been tainted and forced into other forms of practice by Western culture:

> All of them (processes) have been assimilated in perverted forms in modern society: our profound love of animals twisted into pets, zoos, decorations, and entertainment...(Shepard 2001, p.129).

Inherent in all of us, these mind processes get usurped by other mind processes as a result of our immersion in Western culture as I have described earlier in my paper. Shepard's (1982) evidence of these inherent processes is somewhat harsh but in examining some of the ideas of other scholars, we can see that these processes (the term 'processes'could be interchangeable with perception or worldview) are in fact a very real and inherent part of our brain pathways. All that we see, feel, touch, taste and smell – all that we perceive - is in a sense, nothingness that gets generated into something by our brain-mind that is influenced by the cultural ways of knowing that we immerse ourselves in (Devereux, 1996).

Storytelling

The third and final concept I wish to elaborate on in this section is the story. The activity of storytelling is not to be confused as just "some form of casual entertainment, (rather) it reflects a basic and powerful form in which we make sense of the world and experience" (Egan 1986, p.2). Kieran Egan (1986) says that the story form is a "cultural universal, everyone everywhere enjoys stories" (Egan 1986, p.2). All cultures have stories. Indeed there are many, many authors including the likes of Sean Kane and Clarissa Pinkola Estes who have examined myth and stories from centuries of history and cultures. What makes Indigenous stories so significant is the way they demonstrate moral codes for living with the Earth. Stories and myths of Indigenous cultures are closely connected to the land; many are born of the land itself. Stories of Indigenous cultures reinforce their mythopoetic narratives (worldviews) as ecologically based. The stories told within Indigenous cultures are their outward expression of their worldview or mythopoetic narratives.

The stories of Indigenous cultures are deeply connected to the land and are not static. They are a dynamic force that is continually relived in the minds of the people as they move about the land. The stories indicate how they are supposed to relate to the land. Migratory people held mental/cognitive and spiritual connections to every place they stopped. "The land is like a textbook of ecological understanding, interpreted through the traditional stories and activities of tribes"(Cajete 1994, p.91). There is a common frame of reference that has been formed by the long journey of Indigenous people that can be experienced in the myths that underlie their guiding ethos (Cajete 1994). Tribal guiding myths are unique and diverse but each complex reflects similar principles and foundations for understanding environmental relationships (Cajete,1994). The Distant Time stories of the Koyukon people for example tell of the:

> emergence of the world into its evident form, and by thus articulating the formal relations that exist between the various entities in the cosmos....the Distant Time stories make explicit the proper etiquette that must be maintained by the Koyukon people when dealing with the diverse presences that surround them, the kinships that must be celebrated and the taboos that must be respected if the human community and the land are to support and sustain one another (Abram 1999, p. 151).

These Distant Time stories for example, tell of a time when humans and animals shared the same language and they went through dreamlike transmutations from animals or plants to humans. It is believed for example that the Caribou can 'sing through' human beings "when in their vicinity and certain people who hear these songs upon waking from sleep remember them. When they sing the songs later during a hunt, a caribou is ensured" (Abram, 1999). This intuitive communication between the animal/plant and human world maintains a moral code of behaviour. The stories serve as guidelines for living with the land. Within the stories certain animals carry messages as in the example Abram (1999)

gives about the great horned owl which is rarely seen but often heard and utters what is certain. The great horned owl's cry was heard once by a Koyukon as 'Black bears will cry'. For the next two seasons the berry crops failed and many bears found it hard to survive.

Stories and myths tell us where we came from and where we are going when we die. The Myth tellers, as Kane (1998) says address these questions in ways that preserves respect for the ecology of life. The respect is enforced by the element of boundary (Kane, 1998). The boundary is between the Otherworld where life has its source and the current world where life has its manifestations (Kane, 1998). "Boundaries are the magic points where worlds impinge" (Kane 1998, p.103). These boundaries are reflected differently in different myth telling cultures. For example, in a farming society, "beyond the stillness of village life is the edge of the forest...you must be careful out there" (Kane 1998, p.105). The Haida of the West Coast speak of a membrane for their sense of boundary – "it stretches skin-tight and resonant over everything in the world of Haida myth" (Kane 1998, p.105). Kane (1998) gives an excellent description of the act of story telling in the Haida culture:

> The metaphor of the resonating drum-skin is deliberate. The shaman beats on a drum to summon the animal powers. The effect of a membrane is also felt in Haida box carving where the faces of the gods seem to push against the two-dimensional surface of the box. Still more creatures of power well up and press out at the viewer. They might also burst through. Presumably the spirit beings exert that same almost-bursting-through effect on the membrane during the telling of myth (Kane 1998, p.105)

I can only imagine the incredibly powerful emotions that would be experienced in such a setting as this! Boundaries exist in all myth telling. Boundaries between places act as the

channels (tunnels) between the metaphysical and the physical realms. Those who travel across a boundary undergo a transformation. Myth tellers emphasize this to further differentiate these worlds. The change can be anything from a physical one to even death. But the change implies existence in both realms simultaneously (Kane, 1998). Sean Kane (1998) explains that these boundaries function to keep certain kinds of knowledge separate from each other. These boundaries are markers of categories of knowledge saying: "Beyond this point is a zone where ordinary human thinking cannot go. You must shift to another kind of thinking. You must think like an animal now. Enter at your peril"(Kane 1998, p.113). Myths warn about excessive curiosity of what is on the other side of the membrane (Kane, 1998). "The ideas and emotions of the Earth should be inaccessible to (human) manipulation. Too much knowledge of (the ideas and emotions of the Earth) will alter the whole ecology" (Kane 1998, p. 120). A myth teller negotiates dialogue with nature. He/she protects a balanced and flexible exchange between two kinds of knowledge – one through ritual, skill and dream and the other through some form of purposeful behaviour. Sean Kane (1998) notes that the continual exchange between these divergent modes of knowing is crucial to a myth telling society. So, in stories, the boundaries between the metaphysical and the physical function to preserve the sacred knowledge of the natural world which is in the metaphysical. If one does not have an active relationship with the Earth and all of its creatures then access to the knowledge is denied, for it is through this relationship with the Earth that journeys/visions/strange occurrences take place and get explained by the myth tellers. I am only scratching the surface when it comes to the depth and meaning of stories in Indigenous cultures. The common theme throughout however is that these stories are the

windows to the inner space where all the 'answers' lie. It is the elders and the shamans who are the protectors of the knowledge. To know this knowledge is to know the other world and it is to know the self. For my purposes in my thesis, it is essential to make sense of what lies behind the concept of story because stories are powerful forms in which we make sense of the world and in the case of Indigenous stories it is making sense of the natural world. The stories are knowledge. The stories of Indigenous people can teach us about the journeys of the elders into the inner space, into the metaphysical where knowledge there is sacred and respected. Stories develop the whole person and diminish ambiguities and repressed emotions. They can teach us about how to live. Indeed, I am only beginning my personal journey of listening to and reading about these stories.

Perception, mapping landscapes and story telling are three aspects of Indigenous and ancient epistemologies that demonstrate the deep relationships these people have/had with the Earth –relationships not unlike those I described at the beginning of my thesis, the earliest human/Earth relationships. What does all this mean? Within the literature I have reviewed, it is necessary to note that the healthiest Earth/human relationships are those characterized by the people who lived prior to domestication of animals (before industrial and digital age) and by the Indigenous people living their traditional ways. Indeed, they may be the same people. Neither of these relationships is the dominant one that prevails on Earth today. As it stands right now, while many Indigenous people are trying to return to their traditional ways and while environmentalists are promoting more ecologically friendly ways to live and relate on this Earth, there are people living in ecologically damaging ways. Indeed, I am the first to admit that I am one of them.

However, finding the roots of this behaviour has allowed me to understand why and how it continues from generation to generation even in the face of an increasingly noticeable ecological crisis. One of the ways that attitudes, relationships and behaviours are maintained and perpetuated is through education systems and schooling. In the next section, I am going to examine how education and schooling influence the kinds of relationships students develop with the Earth: this means looking at the state of environmental education that is provided in our schools. First, I shall look at what kind of Earth/human relationship is fostered in Western education systems in general (this would include systems of education in all first worlds).

Education and the Earth

Overview of Western Education Systems

According to Orr (1992) much of the current reforms and research in education, including the work of Allan Bloom (whose research has had great impact on education policies and initiatives), is "indicative of the closure of the purely academic mind to ecological issues" (p.99). For example, Orr (1992) writes about Allan Bloom's defense of teaching the classics (Great Books) in the classroom as a way to develop higher order thinking in students. Orr's interpretation of Bloom's argument is that students' minds are empty, intellectually slack and morally ignorant and the exclusion of the classics in education has culminated in an intellectual crisis and the crisis of civilization (Orr p.99, 1992). In Bloom's defense, Orr (1992) notes that there is no reason not to include ancient wisdom in one's education but the question is, which ancient wisdom is being consulted and what is it doing for the intellectual and moral qualities of the educated person? The classics of Western tradition are deficient in that they first, have been written mostly by

white males and second they exclude the vast majority of human experience (Orr, 1992) Furthermore, there are issues that studying the classics has not resolved including the human/Earth condition. The only older wisdom we do have in Western education that speaks to the Earth/human relationship is that of Thoreau. C.A. Bowers (2001) reiterates the lack of ecological consciousness in education as a result of the limitations of science (Bowers, 2001). Science has created the idea that systems of knowledge are formed in the same way that the laws of thermodynamics operate: systems move toward more complex patterns after states of disorder until new patterns are formed and old ones discarded (Bowers, 2001) Scientifically based knowledge systems infer that knowledge progresses in a linear fashion that increases in complexity and Bowers argues that we are lead to believe that this is the natural order since it occurs naturally in the world of molecular science (Bowers, 2001). The dominant culture has operated on the above premise in education and it has asserted these beliefs on other (marginalized) cultures. This view, according to Bowers (2006) is anti-traditionist. Many education theorists' (such as Freire, and Giroux) frameworks are based on emancipatory (anti-tradition) approaches to education and Bowers states that these approaches ignore the ecologically sound traditions of non-dominant culture that live closely balanced with the natural world. Orr (1992) quotes Whitehead, saying, "First hand knowledge is the ultimate basis of intellectual life...The second-handedness of the learned world is the secret of its mediocrity" (P. 99). First hand knowledge would be the intergenerational oral knowledge past down from the elders of some of the Indigenous cultures of the world.

The imposition of First World Education on non-dominant cultures exploits human vulnerability. C.A. Bowers (2001) exemplifies this point when he speaks about

the core goals of high status institutions as the search for new ideas, values, technologies, personal identities and economic opportunities. He notes the similarity between the above goal and that of multi-national corporations. C.A. Bowers (2001) gives an example of human exploitation when he speaks about a person from a different (non-dominant) cultural group wearing corporate name brand clothes like Nike in order to 'fit in' and feel a sense of belonging with dominant culture. The person may not know of the intentions of the corporate giant whose motives of profit and progress undermine and degrade the very culture of the person wearing the clothes. C.A. Bowers (2001) calls this the double bind. The double bind is also prevalent and demonstrates an anti-humanitarian agenda in education in the fact that science and its ideals of linear progress are the informants to educational reform. First World Education teaches that new scientific innovations hold the answers to the world ecological and humanitarian crises, when in fact, many of the solutions get implemented with little to no examination of the long range affects they will have on future generations which are usually negative (Bowers, 2001). First World Education and its anti-humanitarian agenda act out in human/Earth relations since it ignores alternative knowledge systems such as traditional, intergenerational, non-dominant cultural knowledge. To further the argument, Orr (1992) writes about what Western (First World) education does not do. Education does not develop the whole person. Education for the development of the whole person means to connect the mind and the feelings of individual. A comprehensive definition of the whole person is:

> one who has fully grasped the simple fact that his self is fully implicated in those beings around him, human and nonhuman, and who has learned to care deeply about them (Gray, in Orr 1992, p. 100).

In an age of ecological deterioration, not being educated to become fully human, means an inability to "speak to the urgent needs of the age" (Orr 1992, p.100). Unable to grasp their implicatedness, they (educated beings) have not learned to care deeply about anything beyond themselves (Orr 1992, p.100). Shepard (1982) speaks to this argument when he suggests education results in a psychopathological condition of permanent adolescence. Students are not being educated holistically in a psychological sense. As a result of their education, they come into adulthood with incomplete childhood and adolescent needs. Dare I suggest this is to say that our world (or much of it) is being run by psychologically wounded adults?

Education has been largely implicated in the world ecological crisis. The United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization in response to growing concerns has created the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development. DESD signals that education and learning are at the heart of approaches to sustainable development (www.unesco.org). The main values of the UNESCO initiative are generally: respect for the dignity and human rights of people throughout the world and committment to social and economic justice; respect for human rights of future generations and intergenerational responsibility; respect for greater community life and its diversity which involves the protection of the Earth's ecosystems and respect for cultural diversity and the committment to build locally and globally a culture of tolerance, non-violence and peace. The vision emphasizes holistic, interdisciplinary approaches to knowledge and skills needed for a sustainable future as well as changes in values, behaviours and lifestyles. The DESD requires us to re-orient education system policies and practices in order to empower everyone, young and old to make decisions and act in culturally

appropriate and locally relevant ways to redress problems that threaten our future (www.unesco.org). Everyone is a stakeholder in Education for Sustainable Development because everyone will be affected by its success or failure. Stakeholders may be non-government organizations, government, civil society and private sectors. UNESCO recognizes that Indigenous peoples have a particular role in the DESD because of their intimate knowledge of the sustained use of their environment and they are especially vulnerable to unsustainable development (www.unesco.org). I feel hopeful when I read information like this. But I am skeptical because the task is huge. The task requires a shift in educational paradigm. Sustainable education is not just an added piece of theory that can be integrated into existing curriculum or teaching approaches. Existing curriculum and teaching approaches are prevalent as a result of the current educational paradigm which supports ideals of Western society of competition and consumption. Much of the professional development and educational reform initiatives that seem to be based on some of the values UNESCO recommends are welcomed and needed but their actual implementation is riddled with roadblocks and complications. Despite these attempts, education will continue to operate within and ideological framework of Western values systems as long as there are insufficient numbers of stakeholders who do not collaborate, elaborate, develop and argue for a changed educational paradigm. A closer look at how the current paradigm operates will come from my next section. I will discuss how locally, the Ontario public school system has developed or not developed the human/Earth relationship by speaking about environmental education in schools.

Environmental Education in Ontario Public Schools

What is happening in Ontario schools with regards to environmental education? I will begin this section by providing a brief explanation of early schooling in Ontario and how it evolved to accommodate the changing values of society as it became industrialized and more market oriented. The established goal of mass education at the onslaught of industrialization (to develop productive members of society for the advancement of economic wealth and well being for example) continues to influence education initiatives to this day. The larger part of this section of my paper will examine this goal as the foundation of an education system and how it has become the ideological framework within which certain types of environmental programs operate. I will then establish and describe four kinds of environmental learning that take place in Ontario schools and discuss how they have evolved through changing government policies. Next, I will describe and analyse some of the barriers that exist in getting even limited environmental programs implemented in today's current political climate for education. In the end, I will report on what this has meant for education in Ontario and for environmental learning. I hope to provide the information required to determine if our schools are teaching our future generations how to live in harmonious ways with the Earth. I would suggest that what one might discover in this section is that the type of environmental learning that occurs in Ontario schools is not of the same kind that would advocate experiential, sensual and affective development but rather concrete, scientific and technical knowledge made purposeful for the advancement of technologies to further economic growth. I will comment on what this means for future generations of the education system and the overall health of the human/Earth relationship.

Early Schooling and Environmental Education

Educating/teaching was originally the responsibility of parents in the days before mass schooling, around the early 1800's (Osborne, 1995). Prior to industrialization, when rural Ontario was characterized by farm after farm, children were educated to become inheritors of their family farm where they would learn to work and harvest crops and care for the domesticated animals in order to provide sustenance. As industrialization began, farming became more mechanized and purposes for educating children followed that technologization. Eventually, families collaborated and collectively educated the village children in local one room school houses with multi-grade classes. This was the beginning of formalized schooling of children. The control of curriculum and expenditures were handled by the local families themselves. Some local schools did receive government funding but it was limited and never intended to provide schooling to the general population (Osborne, 1995). This funding changed and was later available to schools that would follow regulations and policies set out by the government. The government began to take a greater role in deciding what the curriculum would be. Mass education (a plan to educate all children of Ontario the same way and in institutions) was the idea of the political and economic elite (Osborne, 1995). With the coming of industries, the aims of education evolved to include job training for factories for establishing strong economies and improved standards of living. Mandatory mass schooling was born.

Current Issues in Environmental Education in Ontario

The main goal of education today continues to be the preparation of students who will be successful adults in an economic, market oriented society. The underlying

political/ideological motivations for reforms are economic growth and the production and consumption of wealth (O'Sullivan, 1999). This goal makes sense and is reasonable given that Western history can be read as an Industrialized, consumer based/market oriented society...whose values are quickly becoming global ones. However, those conceits have become ingrained so deeply within the structure of modern society that they now form the ideological framework within which almost all public school curriculums are founded upon – including environmental education curriculum. The questions then become: Are processes and practices of the ideological framework of Western society detrimental to the Earth? Are the goals of public education systems supporting the destruction of ecological systems? If the answer is yes to both, then acting is inevitable. What needs to change first, education or the ideological framework within which it is founded? This paper can not prove that education is anti-environmental. However, based on my research thus far, it would appear that Western societal values tend to perpetuate destructive behaviours toward ecological systems. We can see from my paper so far, where humans have come from and where (most) humans are heading. Changing Western societal goals would mean changing the mindset or worldview of its members. I have talked at some length about this in my previous section on Indigenous ways. To change worldview is an immense undertaking but this is not to say that change can't begin with education. Education is informed by government policy so while the decision to change education can come from the government, education can also be the tool to create change. The media is also as Al Gore is trying to do with his movie, An Inconvenient Truth. A large percentage of the proceeds will go to creating commercials

that promote and educate about issues relating to global warming and how to change our current mindset (Dana, 2006).

The Western ideological framework informs policy making in education in Ontario. Education policy making in Ontario has long supported the aims of Western society. In Ontario alone, there have been many changes in policy over the years of mass education. Change is mainly due to the alignment of education initiatives with the goals of the particular government in power. Ontario has had a history of mostly Conservative governments. Some governments have supported environmental education initiatives more than others. Here is a look at the changes that have occurred in Ontario over the last fifty years or so. As I describe the policy models of the times, I will report and critique the types of environmental programs that were offered. The evidence that the government supports using the Earth in increasingly exploitative ways in order to advance economic wealth will be demonstrated in how education policy changes affected the types of programs offered and in the ability of the teachers to implement them. Government policy changes and its abdication of Environmental Education as a consequence demonstrate its anti-ecological and anti-humanitarian agenda.

From my perspective as a former student and now a teacher in the Ontario public school system I have recognized that environmental learning takes place for three main reasons. First, to promote technical, scientific knowledge and skills in understanding the land as a resource, second, as a means to become active through exploring the outdoors such as outdoor pursuits in hiking, camping and physical education programs and third, to learn about the declining ecological systems of the world and to find solutions to slow it down or prevent it – most ideas for solutions are highly scientific and technological

regarding technology as the answer to the ecological crisis. There is no evidence that I have found where environmental learning exists for its own sake. That is, as a means to understanding the rhythms of the Earth and how we are related to all of its parts and that understanding the natural world in affective ways makes us fully understand ourselves. The physical activity programs such as outdoor pursuits often include components on the affective development of individuals but these are usually to develop traits such as leadership skills, confidence and motivation that will help them to succeed in ways that are congruent for living in an economic, market oriented world. Essentially, there are four kinds of environmental learning, three of which most often (if not only) take place in Ontario public schools. These four kinds are a) learning to gain knowledge of the Earth as a resource for economic purposes, b) learning that promotes physical activity by outdoor pursuits, c) learning to gain knowledge about managing the declining Earth's resources and d) learning to understand the Earth's rhythms in order to fully understand ourselves. The first three kinds of learning, I propose, take place within the confines of the ideological framework of the Western economic, market oriented society. The fourth kind of learning does not. It attempts to operate outside the ideological framework and I will show the consequences of this later. After examining the first three forms of environmental learning and the programs that support them in Ontario schools, it is evident that even these programs, despite the fact that they comply, so to speak, with the ideological framework of Western society, have themselves become marginalized over time as a result of government policies.

During the 1970' to the early 1990's, students in Ontario schools were receiving lessons in environmental education in the forms of class excursions outdoors to

conservation areas, local ponds or streams or to camps. Most of the lessons and fieldtrips were to supplement the science and physical education disciplines. Governments at this time allowed more power for decision making at the local levels. Decision making for education was de-centralized. This was a time of rapidly expanding economies and learner-centred, progressive educational ideas. School boards and their teachers had power in deciding curriculum (Bedard and Lawton, 2000). Curriculum policy was suggestive rather than prescriptive (Bedard and Lawton, 2000). The types of environmental programs offered in Ontario schools at these times grew to include specialist councils of teachers who would design environmental science credit courses for high school, plan and implement professional development in environmental/outdoor education and advise future programming. Because curriculum was suggestive rather than prescriptive, teachers were free to be creative in including environmental learning in all aspects of their teaching. Generally, this was a time of growth for environmental learning, despite the fact that most programs operated in the confines of the Western ideological framework –at least they existed. There could have been a time where they may have evolved to include the fourth type of environmental learning I described previously – the affective learning of the Earth's rhythms, however the political climate changed in Ontario around the early nineties. These days of abundance created debt and the new government began trimming the budget for efficiency and accountability. It did not take long before the effects of cut backs were felt. This was a very significant time for education in Ontario and it is therefore important to detail some of the changes in policies.

One of the biggest political changes was the establishment of a new funding formula for Ontario education. Bill 160 made changes to education in Ontario that has left permanent 'scars'. Besides severe financial cut backs, curriculum was completely controlled by the government. Environmental education credit courses were removed from high school curriculum, grade thirteen was eliminated, the amount and intensity of expectations for students across the grades were increased, curriculum was standardized across the province, teachers were laid off, planning time was diminished and any outdoor excursions or fieldtrips came under increasing scrutiny. These were difficult times for education in Ontario and no doubt, despite the already limited environmental learning that went on under the confines of Western ideological society, it meant further decline.

Currently, in Ontario secondary schools there are no Environmental Science/Studies credit courses offered. These courses did at one time exist in limited numbers but, as I mentioned, in 2002 the government removed them as credit courses (Wendland, 2003). In fact, these types of courses were discontinued as teachables in 1996 in Faculties of Education. Despite the fact that only 4 per cent of Canadians say they have adequate knowledge about the environment to make daily decisions to maintain a healthy environment, the Ministry of Education removed credit courses in favour of integrating them into other science and geography courses (Wendland, 2003). In a later study to check the effectiveness of the integration model (infusion model) Puk and Behm (2002) found that these concepts had been afforded little instructional time. These changes came about, as I have mentioned, during a time in Ontario where the policy making was influenced by a government whose power was very centralized (Bedard and Lawton,

2002). In fact,"education policy in two terms of office seem to be subordinated to larger political goals such as the restructuring, downloading and downsizing of public services and a series of ambitious tax cuts" (Bedard and Lawton 2002, p. 252). This was a very political time for education in Ontario and some believe that the government's (Premier Mike Harris) message was that educators "had a vested interest in short-changing the clients and taxpayers" (Bedard and Lawton 2002, p. 255). The Harris "government reduced the education budget by one billion per year while requiring the Deputy Minister of Education to agree in writing to cut six hundred and sixty seven million dollars from her ministry's education budget, as the contractual price of being awarded her job" (Corson 2002, p.3). The government then redistributed this money in the form of tax cuts for mainly the well-off members of dominant sociocultural groups (Corson, 2002). The fallout from the Harris agenda and Bill 160, one of Harris's legacies, had a profound affect on environmental education. Indeed it had a profound affect on teacher morale for many teachers' talents in this area of environmental education were subordinated. Teachers who used to teach these subjects, no longer had jobs in their expertise. Many physical and health education programs suffered as the environmental components such as outdoor excursions were relegated to extra-curricular activities. For no other reasons than those offered by the people in power, Ontario secondary schools have no credit courses to speak of in environmental learning.

During the Harris regime, there were a total of three thousand, nine hundred, ninety three expectations that had to be taught between grades one to eight. That was about five hundred per year or one and a half hours per expectation to ensure that all twenty five to thirty students in a class mastered each expectation – in reality, about three

minutes per student (Leithwook,McAdie, Bascia, Rodrique, Moore, 2005). Environmental learning would not stand a chance.

Curriculum creation was designed solely by the Ministry of Education. School boards at this time no longer had this responsibility. Instead, a bidding system was implemented whereby, companies, organizations or groups of individuals (that met Ministry of Education specifications) would compete for contracts to design segments of curriculum (Bedard and Lawton, 2000). Policies were explicitly pruned to make them good for business (Corson, 2002). This market mentality was clearly informed by the ideological framework of Western society that I have discussed and it clearly was hurting even what little environmental learning existed. Even groups with a genuine interest in environmental education bidding for a curriculum contract had their projects relegated as optional components of curriculum rather than mandatory. The Eco-Schools (York University, 2004) project was/is an excellent recent example of curriculum but it is not mandatory. The Premier at this time was in fact quoted as saying, "Social Studies and Humanities scholars lack the skill sets that are needed in a high tech economy" (Corson 2002, p. 6). Curriculum at this time was tightly controlled by those in power and environmental learning was not a priority.

Many stakeholders in education continued to assert the importance of environmental education/policies around the time the Harris government. In 1999, the Canadian Teacher's Federation approved a policy recommending that education for sustainability be incorporated within the curriculum and related activities. The Elementary Teacher's Federation of Ontario developed an environmental policy stating that environmental education be an integral part of the curriculum, that environmentally

friendly practices be adopted by the district school boards and that programs and procedures that actively promote environmental care and concern be developed by district school boards (ETFO website, 2004). Despite these policies and recommendations, the government's continued financial cutbacks caused the Ottawa Carlton District School Board to close the MacSkimming and Bill Mason Outdoor Education Centre in June of 2003. In 2004, the government closed the Leslie M. Frost environmental centre and shut down the opportunities for "thousands of children from across the province to learn first hand about the importance of conservation and sustainable development at the centre" (Miller, 2004). Six months after this, the government launched its new interactive environmental website called Campsite 21. The Ontario Secondary School Teacher Federation wrote their response to the website:

> Thanks to corporate sponsors, the website is operated at a fraction of the cost of operating a real outdoor education centre. Yes, that's right – Pepsi Corporation, perhaps growing tired of fighting the ban on pop machines in schools, has moved on to promoting other healthy options such as sitting in front of a computer to experience the outdoors. C'mon folks – there's no substitute for the real thing! (Ontario Secondary School Teacher's Federation, 2005)

It seems that the government was favouring the replacement of real outdoor experiences with virtual/digital ones. Whether this was a cost saving measure is uncertain, however, it is certain that there was an increase in reliance on Corporate/business funding by school boards for other initiatives including environmental ones. This demonstrates the irony in school board environmental policies and the programs they support. I will provide examples.

Green Team

The irony of school board environmental policies is most exemplified by the fact that teachers, indeed policy makers and curriculum designers themselves in many cases are participating in the Western ideological framework unintentionally which is a example of Bower's (2001) concept of the culture of denial. They go about promoting environmental programs and teaching environmental curriculum that represent the first three types of environmental learning I described earlier. These are not the kind of programs that I advocate, nor are they the kind that will help a child mature fully in his/her relationship with the Earth. Let me explain an example in the Simcoe County District school board which boasts the most progressive environmental policy. The facilities department developed an Environmental Incentive Program. After careful analysis, it is clear that the framing and wording of the text in the policy shapes and controls the organization of what programs will be implemented and how. The wording in the policy makes it look like the school board is meeting the needs for environmental educaton, when in fact it really is not. For example, the excerpt below demonstrates the careful choice of wording in the text:

> All school boards have a special responsibility to take a leadership role in environmental awareness and action based on environmental principles. These environmental principles recognize interdependence, the inherent right to a healthy environment and that everything we do has an effect (SCDSB Policies, 2003).

The use of the term 'awareness' instead of 'education' removes the control of content from teachers and gives it to Facilities personnel who would not otherwise teach. In fact, the entire policy, which was devised by the Facilities staff, promotes environmental practice within the confines of the Western ideological framework and therefore does not

allow any kind of environmental learning to take place that would represent the fourth type I described previously – learning to understand the rhythms of the Earth to better understand the self. I will explain how. Much of the policy is geared toward supporting the implementation of the recycling programs in schools. The Green Team is an example of an initiative from the Facilities Department that would have most believing that it was a fantastic environmental program ahead of its time. However, close scrutiny of the program shows what is really happening.

The Green Team is a committee of students in a school who, under teacher guidance organizes the coordination of the recycling jobs. Although they are welcome to do more creative activities such as those that might be characteristic of the fourth type of environmental learning already explained (activities such as daily forest walks and meditations, animal tracking and observing, or learning traditional Indigenous stories) most do not because of the demands of the recycling job. Teachers and students are made to view this extra-curricular job as honorable since it helps the environment. However, some teachers may view it frustratingly as an excuse for making teachers do the jobs of the custodians since boards have had to cut back their hours to meet budget restraints. This is true. In fact, when the budget cuts of 1995 came in to place, school boards were required to find ways to reduce costs. The Simcoe District School Board invented this environmental incentive policy with Green Teams where schools are rewarded if they show how they cut energy costs and improved recycling. Teachers and students are told that they will see a return in energy savings by receiving a monetary reward of anywhere from $200.00 to $3000.00. What is not mentioned is that a very lengthy questionnaire and information/tally sheet must be filled out correctly including all possible energy

savings from water usage to heating and lighting savings. Teachers and custodians must commit hours of time to do this. The rewards are only given to first, second and third place schools. So, while all schools may be reducing energy costs, not all are receiving it back in money. Furthermore, the costs to the school board are offset by corporate donations from Coke and Pepsi Canada since their pop machines were adding to the school board's energy costs. Instead of removing the machines and teaching students how to recognize and participate in non-commodified activities, the school board chooses to take advantage of an opportunity to increase capital and subordinates (exploits) teachers, students and custodians in the process. This environmental policy is an example of not only the irony of policy making but of how a specific environmental program is obsessed with pro development agendas even when pursuing sustainability as a result of it being informed by the ideological framework of Western society. Something that should be working to help the Earth is in fact doing the opposite. Furthermore, it is an example of the struggles and barriers teachers are faced with when trying to pursue basic prepared environmental projects as the Green Team. Teachers who pursue more creative projects that are reflective of the deeper, affective and spiritual characteristics of the fourth type of environmental learning such as the ones I described above (forest walks, meditations, tracking etc) are faced with even more complicated, convoluted and confusing processes and protocols. These processes and protocols, metaphorically speaking, are the barrier that blocks the success of operating programs etc that do not support (are not informed by or work outside) the ideological framework of Western society. I will explain this further with a personal example from my experiences working as a teacher in the Simcoe District School Board and address my efforts in light of the ecological heritage I have understood

by study of human evolution and my own experiences with the bush and Indigenous people.

Forest Vision

I am a teacher who has tried desperately to develop the fourth type of environmental learning in my practices. As I have explained, this kind of learning operates outside of the ideological framework of Western society. At the school I teach at, a number of years ago I had the vision of creating environmental programs and activities for students based on using a small one acre forest that was part of the school property. My vision included learning that would get children outside daily, doing activities that would teach the rhythms of the Earth and the seasons. I had plans to get students understanding how the Earth is part of them and how it would help them learn about themselves. I had plans to make connections with local Aboriginal elders. I found that as I started to articulate my ideas to others including my administration, that I was not being taken seriously. I began to recognize that if I wanted to see this project to fruition, I would have to disguise these plans as something more 'realistic' such as using the forest for tree identification, soil studies and science experiments. I would no doubt use these ideas anyway, but my point is that even though I was beginning to be taken seriously with these new 'realistic' ideas, I still encountered an incredible amount of frustrating processes and protocols to get the project running. In addition to these plans I also suggested that we create nature trails and develop an area within the forest to conduct lessons and assemblies such as an amphitheatre.

The plan was born in 1998, when the school board was going to sell the property, which the teachers were unaware belonged to the board in the first place. Through a letter

requesting to halt the sale, signed by all the teachers and Principal, the school board did not sell the one acre forest. When I embarked on this project, I had no idea what processes would act to control the outcome. I thought I was initiating a wondrous environmental idea but what I was actually doing (unknowingly) was participating in a series of processes and protocols that acted to subordinate me as I attempted to work outside the Western ideological framework. The place where this was most evident was with the architect. Before the board would consider the amphitheatre project, they asked me to make sketches and take measurements of the site. This was the winter of 2000. As vague as it seemed, I went ahead with the tape measure, wooden stakes, string, paper and pencil and began this work and then submitted it to the Principal who then sent it to the facilities department. At that point, I waited until the spring of 2001 before the facilities department decided to send their own staff to verify my work. They could have done the whole thing themselves in the first place, while consulting me. This is an example of a 'make work' process for a teacher, which is unnecessarily exhausting and time consuming. When the men from the facilities department came to verify my work, I was not introduced to them. My students and I watched them work from my window as if trapped in the classroom, not allowed out, to take part in our environmental initiative. The Principal and the custodian were included in the verification process. I should have been provided with supply teacher coverage for this process but was not. When they left, I was not consulted about what was to come of things. I had to ask the Principal, who was often unapproachable. I learned some days later that the facilities department forwarded the plans to the board architect so that the blue prints could begin. I waited. After a few months I telephoned the architect and left a message on his voicemail. A few days later

my Principal informed me that the plans for the blue prints were at the bottom of the architect's list and would probably not get started for a few months. Later that week, the Principal forwarded an e-mail notice to me from the board, stating that I should never contact the architect again and that my actions were outside the procedural protocol. Clearly, as I began to 'step' (unintentionally) across the boundary of the framework that informs these institutionally authorized processes; I was purposefully and swiftly put back into a subordinate place.

I continued with forest activities such as nature trails, walks, class readings under the shade of the trees and lessons on journal writing and meditative exercises in nature, all of which required lengthy submissions of lesson plans and rubric evaluation forms to the Principal and superintendent to prove that the activities were relevant to the current Ontario curriculum. The meditative exercises were questioned by some parents due to the 'spiritual' nature of them – another roadblock. Finally, in March of 2002, I worked up some courage to ask my Principal if she had heard from the facilities department and she informed me that she had had the blue prints since January. She was holding them for three months without informing me of the fact. By this time I was beginning to feel that the project would not happen. I soon learned that the blue prints called for a massive construction project requiring an estimated budget of forty five thousand dollars and that I would need to fundraise for it. I could not believe that what began as a plan to involve community, parents, teachers and students in the collaborative building of a simple outdoor lesson area in the forest turned into a meaningless, overpriced construction project with a zero budget. I persevered however and devised a long range plan for fundraising which got started but soon dwindled due to lack of support and the project

died. These processes and protocols made it impossible for this project to materialize. They are the roadblocks that prevent all activities that are not informed by the Western ideological framework from taking place. This is why there are very few examples of the fourth type of environmental learning existing in Ontario schools today. I wonder what would happen if these roadblocks could be knocked down so to speak? What then would learning look like in Ontario schools? What would society look like?

Education from its early beginnings as mass schooling is informed by and perpetuates the Western ideals of economic growth in a market oriented society and it subordinates, and exploits teachers and students. I have traced and summarized from my perspective, four different kinds of environmental learning that take place in Ontario public schools, noting that most environmental learning occurs within the confines of the Western ideological framework which works to perpetuate societal ideals that tend to be ecologically damaging. I have described Ontario's recent political history, reported the changes that have taken place in Ontario's education system as a result and explained how these changes have affected environmental learning and ultimately the development of children. Finally, I have described the types of barriers teachers face when trying to implement environmental programs and initiatives including attempts at implementing the kind that operate outside the Western ideological framework. These barriers act to subordinate teachers, students and most of all the development of a kind of environmental learning that might threaten the decline of a market oriented, consumer based world and all the economic wealth and benefits it breeds.

It is difficult to imagine a changed world. Yet we are increasingly being faced with having to make decisions now so that our children will not inherit an Earth that can

not sustain life. It has become clearer in my mind how humans used to behave on this planet and how they behave now. Theirs is a story that flows rich with strong connections to the land but gradually this bond weakens and there is a change in their relationship as a consequence. Though there are people on this Earth who are not participating in the changed relationship, I am not among them. I am among a minority of people who hog the Earths's resources, consume products made from the exploitation of the Earth and enjoy the benefits and luxuries of this unhealthy relationship. On the other hand, I often reject these ways and feel a sense of isolation as I struggle to live and behave in ways that are 'outside the box'. Because of this, I live and struggle with a paradox. I wear two faces: One that is the participant of Western society and enjoys the benefits of consumerism and wealth and one that denounces these ways and embraces living simply and within limits; a face that embraces slow life and wandering on the land and lakes of the Earth feeling its rhythms.

I have told the story of humans and their relationship with the Earth; how we have arrived at our current destination and what that has meant for education and the human condition. Now it is time to tell my story.

Chapter Two

Kieran Egan (1986) defines story in a way that is very useful for my purpose. He says:

> The sense of story I am dealing with here is not so much the typical fictional kind, but something nearer to what a newspaper editor means when he asks his reporter 'What's the story on this?' The editor is asking for an account of the particular events embedded in some more abstract context which readers already understand. The editor basically wants to know how the particulars fit into some binary conflict: How do these particulars give body to the ongoing story of good vs. bad, or secrity vs. danger, or political right vs. political left. The editor's question is one about how this particular knowledge is to be made meaningful and engaging to

readers. (Egan 1986, p. 37-38)

This is what I am going to do. I am going to try to make meaning of the knowledge I presented in Chapter One of my thesis so that I can engage readers in a deeper way. I include myself as a reader for I know that this task will allow me to grow in both cognitive (intellectual) and affective (emotional) ways. I am certain that I will return to this thesis throughout my life and continue to derive and revise meaning from it.

Everyone has their own story of their life and as Kieran Egan (1986) suggests, "telling a story is a way of establishing meaning" (p.37). I never really cared too much about finding meaning until I started working full time. Until that time, thinking about the meaning of life always directed me toward purpose and the expectation to get a good education, find a well paying and enjoyable job and raise a family. Throughout those years of meeting expectations and finding my way, I always felt the need to 'be away from it all'. Hiding in my room in university residence while blasting Vivaldi and writing poetry, taking off on long runs around campus and partying hard, were my methods for expressing frustration at not being able to be where I wanted to be – which I believe now was to be near the Earth – not in just a physical way but in an emotional way. At the time, these moments of 'release' may have been the result of coping with basic life stresses such as relationship break-ups, family or friendship issues etc. but these were disguises, masking the deeper conflict within myself. When I began building my career and family, that's when the conflict came to the forefront. The meaning of life would be put to test. I had arrived at my so called destination and I found myself asking – now what?

I think I shall like to tell my story not so clearly that the reader will see exactly where it fits in to the topics of Chapter One but in a way that will create an exercise for

the reader to find the connections him/herself. Each reader will interpret my story in their personal way and will find their own ways of making it connect based on their own experiences and interaction with the text. My story will be a chronology of my life with particular pivotal stories of experience as metaphors to illustrate some of the points in Chapter One of my thesis (Knowles, 2001) Knowles (2001) notes that stories should hinge on turning points or critical incidents (epiphanies) that bring meaning to underlying message or purpose of the story. For my purpose of understanding the connections myself, I will probably make note or give reference to ideas in Chapter One. Let us begin.

Roots

I was born in the afternoon during a Canadian winter in 1964. My mother was in her mid thirties and had emigrated with her family from Britain in the 1950's. She was born in Wales. My grandfather owned a silver plating company which eventually came to a close and found him and his family of two (my mother has only one sibling, sister) immigrating to the new world where opportunity was plentiful. My father was actually a 'lodger' (as my mother calls it, which in Canadian terms is a boarder) in my mother's family home in Toronto. This is how they met. He was born in Glasgow, Scotland of a family of five (I think). My mother and father began dating, despite the fact that my grandmother completely disagreed, for my father was some sixteen years older than my mother. They eventually married and had five children of which I am the fifth. I have three older sisters and one older brother.

I was born and raised in Malton, Ontario where jobs were booming in the airline industry. My father worked for Orenda and Avro designing the After Burner for the aircraft called the Avro Arrow. During his time in World War II, he was a navigator for

the Mosquito fighter plane. I like telling this fact about him. I am proud of my father's contributions to the world during the times of industrialization. He lived and worked his dream of progress and development for the good of humankind. He was soon laid off at Orenda because John Diefenbaker cancelled the Arrow plans in favour of buying aircraft from the United States. My father began his final career working for the Ministry of Transportation and Communications designing highways.

I often think about my roots. I can't say I know a lot about my father's life. He passed away suddenly when I was just eleven years old but I remember the short time I had with him. I remember him returning from work and taking off his stinky shoes, raising his feet on the foot stool, reclining in his rocker with a pipe, eating dinner and smoking his pipe during news hour. I enjoyed being in his company at these times – except for the stench of his feet. I liked watching him because he always made noise with his food. His teeth would clack as he chewed. Apparently mine do the same as my daughter tells me, however I have recently learned it is not my teeth but my jaw bone clacking. Maybe all those years, it was my fathers jaw bone and not his teeth. He always had comments to make about the news. We would get into one way conversations about issues. I would just listen to him even though I often did not always understand. He never spoke to me as a child, only as an adult. His strong Scottish accent and deep voice, is still in my memory. It was a soothing voice. Especially at night, when my brother and I would argue over whose bed he would sit on for the Ali Babba and the Forty Thieves story and the glowing cigarette show in the dark. Everyone smoked back then. It was the norm. My father would tell us stories of his childhood.

I remember one story where he used to steal Christmas tree lights off the trees and throw them behind old ladies to make them jump. It wasn't long before his stories were played out in my childhood for I can remember doing similar things like throwing crab apples at passing cars to hear the 'plunk plunkety plunk' of a hit. We hid behind my neighbour, Allan's fence flat on our stomachs, apples in hand ready for the launch. It wasn't long before one car stopped, and the driver got out and chased us. We ran like jaguars but not fast enough for Allan was pinned against our house wall and yelled at by the man. It was quick and he left us alone after that but we never did that again.

My father's stories were never often enough. Like most fathers, he was busy. When he was not working, he was doing yard work. I do remember a lot of his yard work was always for us. Though I can not really remember conversations or stories (sadly) I do remember all he did for us. He used to make an annual toboggan hill at the front of our house. All the neighbourhood friends played on it. He would make us roll the heavy boulders of snow created by the snow ploughs on the side of the road and pile them high for the hill. He made ice rinks in our backyard, mostly to practise throwing his curling stone (which was made from frozen water in a kitchen pot) but we of course skated on it. We never once played ice hockey though. Imagine that! I do remember a few years later trying ice hockey at a friend's house on a huge frozen puddle for the very first time. I can not begin to explain the incredibly awesome sensation it was to me. I know this sounds strange but the feeling is so vivid with me, even now. Pushing the heavy, hard, black puck with the end of my stick and watching it glide with speed across the ice was like something I had never experienced before. It was a kind of experience that was not a part of my upbringing and I remember feeling like I could do it all day. Funny because the

only other time I ever had skates on with a stick and puck in hand was when I played some ice hockey with my boyfriend (now my husband) on one of our dates, at the same lake I am sitting at right now as I write. The feeling was just the same only not as new. My father was a curler not an ice hockey player. He was also a boxer, golfer and enjoyed soccer and camping. These are the skills he passed on to me. He spent much time teaching me how to golf, play soccer and box. I liked boxing the best because it meant I could defend myself against bullies. My father also taught me how to fix things – especially bicycles. I fixed a lot of bicycles in my days and one time I even built one from old scraps. The technology and mechanics never scared me. I would take sections apart to figure out how they worked, then put them back together until I could use this knowledge to repair and build my own. One of the main skills my father passed on to me was his love of the outdoors. Never a summer passed by without a camping trip to one of Ontario's provincial parks.

My father talked a lot about Scotland. I can't imagine what it must be like to leave the country (land) you grew up in. One might not see the extent of the effects something like this might have on a person but even I feel some sense of disconnection having moved North from my hometown roots of Malton. Re-establishing one's roots in a new place takes years before feeling like the new place is home. Even then both my parents referred to Britain as 'home'. I suppose it is not so much the physical land itself but the culture of the people that is missed. Land is land, Earth is Earth. One could feel at home anywhere on Earth if their mind was set that way. Still, when I travel to Scotland and Wales, I feel at home too. I feel like I have two homes. I feel like Britain is a part of me –

my genealogical roots and bloodlines of ancestors all walked the Earth of Britain and when I am there some unconscious part of me makes a connection.

My father died from a heart attack on December, 23, 1975 at the old Toronto City Hall. I was eleven years old. His life and stories only come to me now through the words and memories of my sisters, brother and mother. Many of the aunts and uncles on my father's side have also passed away but their children (my cousins) still live and through them I can remember and connect. One day I will re-connect and take my own children to see them.

My mother still lives, thankfully and I get stories from her about her life in Britain too. Though she was born in Wales, she lived in England for some time I think. She tells of her life during World War II. She was only eight or nine at the time and remembers how they would hear the sirens at night. Her memory is not of fear but of being wakened from her bed and carried down the back garden in her mother's arms into the bomb shelter. The shelter had a cement floor, bunk beds and some shelves filled with a few non-perishable foods. She says she doesn't remember being afraid. She says it was a routine part of life then and never really thought about fear.

This makes me wonder about fear. It seems to be something that might be put into the minds of children by the grown ups around them. In my childhood, I remember fear but it was not something that ever stopped me from doing things. The fear was just fear that was a biological part of our being. We continued on our adventures with fear on our side. Today, we debilitate our kids with analysing fears and projecting fearful thoughts of injury or death. I know I put fear into the minds of my own children. To this day, I wonder about my daughter's serious fall from a Welsh pony she had been taking

lessons on for so long. I watched every lesson in fear (yet deep pride) and one day all my fears became reality when she landed on her head from a buck from the pony. It was the worst experience of my life to see her land on her head – luckily, she is fine and got straight back on the pony, but I often wonder if fear made this happen. I should have just let the fear be there and nothing more but I festered in it and it built in her and I am told that horses will sense the rider's fear and thus 'misbehave'. Then, what is all this about anyway –people riding on the backs of large animals? I would often look at the horses and be amazed at their strength and power one minute but then amazed at the control and power we humans have over them. How can I teach my daughter that she needs to be assertive and take control of her horse and discipline it when it does not do what it is asked? This seems foreign to me. It is the same with dogs. We never had dogs as kids. We had cats. Cats do their own thing. Dogs require humans to take control of them – I guess this is what domestication is all about. My kids want dogs. My daughter wants a horse. We have three rats. I like these rats! Sometimes I sit and stare at them in amazement, watching them clean themselves and pick up bits of food with their tiny hands and chew. Their noses stick out far beyond their mouths. Sometimes I will even pick them up and hold them. They feel warm, furry and soft.... but then I feel sorry for them in their cages. What is it all for? Why do humans own pets? Part of me has always dreamed of owning and riding horses. Part of me has always dreamed of living on a farm around animals and cultivating crops. It never happened. I have made dreams happen but somehow this one has not. Taking control of animals might require the absence of fear but perhaps a dose of respect. Yes, I can see it happening with this mindset. How else can

one ever get a chance to relate and interact with the Earth's other beings? In my life and times this might be it.

My mother has connections with Welsh ponies. She loved watching the Welsh ponies run wild in the forests and fields of her childhood home in Wales. She would recall their long manes and tails blowing in the wind as they galloped. I remember visiting one of these forests in Wales with my mother and siblings. We walked through trails and came to open fields and there were the wild ponies. My mother was so relaxed and in her element. I was comforted by her courage or lack of fear, so to speak, when my fear was quite strong. No harnesses, saddles or bits were to be seen on these ponies. Free and wild, they were. Imagine. I suppose it is like seeing deer in our country. Nobody ever rides a deer though. What the hell? Who started all this domestication anyway?

Watching – my mother does a lot of observing and thinking. She is an intense, sensual and emotional being with very strong intuitions. Three weeks before she even heard that the King Tut exhibit would be arriving in Toronto some years ago, she found herself picking up items while shopping that were Egyptian looking in style. She bought pieces of jewelry with Egyptian figures and hieroglyphs on them for no particular reason. Not until the exhibit was announced as arriving in Toronto, did my mother make the connection with a spooky sense of awe.

Another time, she told me she was sitting at her kitchen table doing her crosswords and as she glanced at the television, there appeared a figure on the screen – a dark shadow of a man. She froze in a state of definitive knowing that there was indeed an intruder around the corner in the living room and his reflection was that in the television. She sat still for a moment and stared at it. Her mind soon turned that reality into a new

one in which the shadow was to be a reflection of some other object in the living room which in fact was the case. Her comment and analysis (which is typical of my mother to analyse things) of this situation was that our minds can do what we want them to do. My mother has intuitive abilities that she has learned to recognize and understand. She has passed these strengths on to me.

I have much to learn still from my mother and I know that distance and culture (we are not the story telling, extended family kind, passing down recipes and traditions kind of culture) have prevented me from learning more. See, it is part of our being human that we do or have not always seen the value in traditional ways and have therefore embraced new ways leaving the old behind. My upbringing has been one that tells me that new ways are the best. My aunt and uncle were often up to date on the latest in technology. They always had new gadgets or ideas to share with us. Gazpacho soup was the new delicious funky appetizer at family gatherings instead of deviled eggs. The soup was delicious and now it has become an item I share (with pride and storytelling about where I learned it) when I go to pot lucks. When my grandmother died a few years ago she passed on her deviled egg tray to me. Deviled eggs are a big part of my potlucks. Everyone loves deviled eggs! My sister is the only one in our family to remember my grandmother's delicious Trifle recipe. Some things will stay alive forever. Trifle and deviled eggs rule. My mother's Christmas pudding on the other hand - well despite the memories of lining up in her kitchen taking turns stirring the batter and making wishes, I still have not made this a part of my repertoire of food. My brother appears to be taking this one on. However, there are certain things that I cook, that come so naturally to me – I never need a recipe. It is like the instructions are part of my psyche. I make a great roast

beef and Yorkshire pudding dinner, fabulous potato soup and good greasy bacon and egg breakfasts. The most I have learned from my mother, and continue to learn, is her deep thinking and her metaphorical words of wisdom. She rarely talks at length or debates like my father did. Instead, she just says a few words that always take on increasing meaning as time passes by. One may not understand the words at the time but reflecting on them in retrospect, they come to make perfect sense. My mother lives in Toronto in a humble ground floor apartment, close to my siblings.

Infancy

The first memories I have of life are more like feelings or sensual experiences than memories. When I was born, we lived in a small bungalow in Malton, as we had for thirteen years after my birth. I am told that when I came home from the hospital, I looked like I was not a member of the family. My eyes were narrow and my complexion dark. I know I have not been adopted. I must have inherited some remote ancestral genes from our family genealogy. My mother calls me a gypsy. I sometimes wonder if there is some Spanish blood in me. I have had an unexplained affinity for the Spanish culture. I visited Spain when I was in high school, maybe this explains the affinity or maybe not. Knowing my roots is important to me in certain ways because it makes me feel grounded on this planet, especially when I know I have relatives on another side of the planet. The migration of my parents from the other side of the globe producing offspring on this side of the world and having it carry on so that there is a huge mix of different cultures within the family tree makes me believe that when it comes down to it, we are all humans on this planet not really that different from one another. Where we've come from is really a question of identity. Learning ones genealogy is really just scratching the surface.

Like most, I have no memories as an infant, just feelings. When I was a toddler, memories began to accumulate. I have noticed that almost all of them are memories of being outdoors. My mother and father used to take the family to a local lake for a day at the beach. These were my first experiences with sand and mud, in my training pants, in my hair and in my mouth. Wet, saggy, originally white bottoms would nearly fall off my behind as I walked to the water's edge to fill my bucket. Indeed, these were my first memories of water. I can remember my father trying to teach me how to swim. I hated this. Why is it that parents seem to think that holding a child horizontal on the surface of the water will teach them to swim? My neck would ache with pain from keeping my face as far away from the water as possible. Every now and then, as I grew taller, I would find myself standing in chest deep water, unable to swim, yelling for my father as he would venture out deeper to retrieve my brother. A wave would set my balance off and under I would go. My father was always there to pull me up. There were many times when I would inhale water through my nose. It is strange because, even today when I occasionally get water up my nose, these memories return in a flash. They're sensations really, rather than explicit memories. The same thing happens when I drink milk from a straw. I get these strange sensations of warmth and coziness like I am back in the womb or the arms of my mother, protected and safe. I am assuming these are my unconscious memories of my days as an infant.

My sisters used to terrorize me at the beach. They would dig deep holes in the sand under water and laugh as they watched me sink (sometimes over my head) when I would come upon one. My father would scold them. My mother enjoyed basking in the

sun on her lawn chair, reading a good book under the shade of her wildly colourful straw hat.

My mother stayed at home to care for us and the house full time. I do recall having her all to myself when all of my siblings were finally in school. She visited friends a lot. On one occasion, she was getting my carriage ready for a walk up the street to visit a friend. It was chilly outdoors so she bundled me up in the carriage which was in the sitting position. She then proceeded to put thick wool socks over top of my saddle shoes. I can remember not wanting to have anything to do with this act. I retaliated. I did not want socks over my shoes! It would look ridiculous. I specifically remember this feeling of embarrassment. However, she won that battle and I do recall the nippy chill in the air as she pushed me along.

Every summer my family would go camping. This was my father's influence. When I was probably three or four, we owned a navy blue station wagon with a knob at the back to open and close the window. My mother would stack the glove compartment with life savers and with me in the bassinet which acted as a car seat; we'd drive from sun up to nearly sundown toward Bon Echo Provincial Park. We owned a huge orange canvas tent that was separated into two rooms by a large canvas flap. The canvas was oiled and so it had a very distinct smell. We slept on cots. At the entrance to the tent was a large fly cover that we used to place a picnic table under. Here we had our kitchen, complete with red checkered vinyl table cloth and Coleman stove. Our days were spent at the beach and our evenings by the campfire. We took part in the park evening programs at the amphitheatre. We shopped in the local grocery store for food and best of all water toys. My mother relaxed with her books and lawn chair, my father chopped wood, my

sisters played cards and drank tea and my brother and I played in the dirt, found bugs and chipmunks and fed the seagulls. We spent seven days at Bon Echo every summer until my sisters became teenagers and my mother grew tired of the chores of camping. Bon Echo park is known for it's immense rock face that towers out of the water. My father would have us pose as a family in front of this rock. We still have this beautiful photograph and it speaks a thousand memories for me when I look at it. The rock contains petroglyphs from the early Aboriginal people from long ago.

One of the most vivid images for me of these camping days is on the campsites themselves. The campsite became our home for a week. For one whole week we would live outside. Tall white pines would tower above us leaving the smell of pine wafting through the air. Smaller deciduous trees would border the site closer to the ground and right in the middle of our home would be the hearth – the fire pit. We were not lucky enough to have a fireplace in our home in Malton. It's funny because I can remember a time when I was about twelve years old and stayed at a friend's house which happened to have a fireplace. I never left that fireplace. It was clearly a novelty that brought me much comfort, warmth and a sense of calm. The two of us just sat there all night stoking it, sipping tea and playing cards – this is a fond memory about fire. The fire pit at the campsite was central. Making the campsite home was such fun too. The tent and clothesline would go up first, and then the lawn chairs would come out with the cooler. To this day, I take great joy in preparing campsites when I go canoe tripping with my family and friends – though these sites are quite different from the park ones with much less involved for set up as it is only ever one night we stay - but the comfort, the smells, the relaxed sensations and the pleasantries of living outside are all the same. One of my

sisters visits Bon Echo every summer with her family. I have re-visited once with my husband and young daughter some years back. We have a history there and it feels good to go back. These early memories of my pre-school days are kept alive mostly by photographs and by sporadic, yet vivid memories.

Childhood

Childhood for me was a time where I began the indoor activities of formal schooling however my memories of this stage of life are not about school but about the play times outside (and some inside memories too) more than anything. Except for a few incidences or a fleeting memory of a fieldtrip, school is not where I developed a relationship with the Earth at this stage in my life. My neighbourhood friends and the activities we engaged in around the streets and vicinities of my home are what built the foundation of my love for things outside – my bond with the Earth. The Earth and its unconditional giving was my teacher. It provided all that we ever needed to have fun for hours.

When summer vacation arrived so did freedom. Often, my mother would not see me from sunrise to sunset. She would be inside and I would be out. Our days would be spent riding our bikes to special places for adventures. Many days would include the plans to buy junk food at the local variety store, sit in the shade of our large maple tree eating it, and planning the sleepover in the backyard tent. The ride to 'Jet Variety' was a long one and we prided ourselves in its accomplishment. I ate a lot of candy as a child. I used to choose sweet tarts, bottle caps and always pumpkin seeds as my treasure to nibble on. We always looked forward to the newest kinds of candy on the market but sweet tarts and pumpkin seeds were my mainstay. These bike adventures were nearly a daily

happening in the summer. One particular adventure had my friend Allan and I visiting our usual park, called Wild Wood where our explorations of its creek took us to a very special place. Pushing and pulling our bikes along the banks of the creek, we soon came upon a large pool where the creek widened and its depth increased to about two or three feet. Here we placed our bikes down and walked to the water's edge to test the depth. The bottom was sand and gravel and the bank was flat and beach like. We took our shoes off and waded in. It was cold and refreshing and it was ours! Above us was a large hardwood tree with a thick branch jutting out at a height that was perfect for us to reach by climbing. There each of us would sit and pretend to keep guard of our special place. On that same adventure Allan and I found a second special place. We soon rode on, leaving the water hole and vowing to tell no one for this would be our spot that only we would return to as often as we wished. Our next special place was quite different from the first. As we rode further, we found ourselves on the highway of Airport Road heading towards the Skyport. Skyport was a large open lot where several hangars were constructed for the storage and repair of various aircraft. Allan and I loved watching the commercial airplanes land and take off as did the rest of my friends. We would ride to the hamburger place called Pepi's and order burgers and fries and sit on the picnic tables watching planes land. This was actually where Allan and I were heading. These planes were huge in my eyes! I had never been on one and to watch them seemingly float past us, intrigued me to no end! How did it work? Who flew them? What was it like to be on one? Well, on that day, Allan and I took a detour on our way to Pepi's and ended up at Skyport. We found ourselves in a vast parking lot where smaller airplanes were parked. A little nervous that we had come upon an out-of-bounds place, we started to ride away when all

of a sudden we found ourselves in front of a large set of stairs leading to a slightly larger craft. At the top of the stairs a man called down to us, "Hi, want to come aboard?" We had no hesitation; we were up those steps in a flash and on the aircraft. We sat in the chairs of the cockpit and walked up and down the isles. It was a DC-3 propeller plane and we soon learned from the gentleman cleaning it that it belonged to the Toronto Maple Leaf's. He told us the story of Darryl Sittler shooting spitballs through a straw from his back seat of the plane. What a great adventure we that day - two special places in our world that were equally fascinating and enchanting. We would race home to tell everyone our stories. All our friends yearned to go on a similar adventure. The thrill of the airplane may have been bigger than the water hole but it was short lived for even though we went back to find it, we never did. We never could repeat the airplane tour but Mother Nature never let us down and our special water hole at Wild Wood park was there to greet us every time we returned.

Besides the usual catching of crayfish, minnows and insects, we used to dig clay from below the muddy bottoms of whatever creek we could find. My friend Kelly and I got into a tradition each summer where we would ride our bikes an even longer way to a local human-made lake called Clairville Conservation Area. We would pack a lunch and towels and stay all day. We always came home with a bag full of clay. It was light gray in colour. You had to dig deep beneath the sandy/muddy surface to reach what we felt was the 'gold'. We'd take the clay and sit atop my wooden fence my father built that connected our house to our garage and sculpt in the hot sun. I distinctly recall the enjoyment I received from working with the clay and creating pieces of art.

On one such occasion upon returning from Clairville Conservation area, Kelly and I spotted a small featherless bird on the ground below a tree. We picked it up expecting it to be dead but it was not. We immediately went into action. You see, we could not leave it alone like we might have if we had understood the purpose or circumstances under which it had fallen or been pushed from its nest. We assumed all of its needs and emotions. Immediately, we dug worms, chopped them up and tried to feed it from a spoon. Chopping up the worms for this nearly dead bird was like a rite of passage for me. I was learning to be the rescuer, protector and the controller of the natural schemes of the living world. I was going to reverse the natural process of this bird's timely death. Plus I was tough – no one else would do the disgusting job of chopping up worms. The bird would not eat from the spoon and eventually died. We were quite upset at our failure to control the outcome. We moved on.

Bicycles were our mode of transport as children. Though we could walk down the street to our friends' homes, we often rode our bikes just in case an adventure waited. There was another local creek in the area that we would visit now and again. We called it the ravine. It was basically a human-made cement valley that allowed for the run off from the streets to flow. In any event, it was another place of intrigue and thrill especially since we could ride our bikes up the cement banks and down again, through the shallow water flow and back up the other side. I never knew where the water started or where it ended, nor did I care. All that mattered was how to get into the ravine, which was under a broken part of fencing and where we were to get out. The ravine flowed toward two long white round cement tunnels under a road to the other side. It was here where we would often end our tour. But we would always play about inside the tunnel. Riding bikes through it

was a thrill because it was only four or five feet in diameter. The water here was polluted with stinky algae and scum. I did not get the same feeling of beauty and paradise from this place as I did from my water hole at Wild Wood. I saw lots of dead crayfish at this ravine as well as a huge dead muskrat. It was at this ravine where I would go in my later rebellious years and smoke my first stolen cigarettes. Here too I witnessed seeing the 'indecent' act of two neighbourhood dogs mating! How disgusting and embarrassing, yet so fascinating to watch, I thought.

Another great creek we visited was Mimico Creek. This creek had very high banks that were muddy. We called it Fairy Creek because of all the fluffy dandelion seeds flying around. This place also served the run off from the streets. In fact, to get to it from the road, we had to step off the street and climb down its steep bank. The white cement tunnel below the road had a metal grate covering it. Its diameter was much smaller than that of the ravine's so we could not get inside. We didn't spend as much time here as with the other creeks. There seemed to always be lots of garbage and litter lying around its banks which made me feel sick. It was farthest from 'real nature' than even the ravine was. Wild Wood was the closest place to paradise for me – I remember good feelings there of clean water and no evidence of waste. I felt comfortable at Wild Wood even though it was farthest away of the three creeks and the most remote. As a child this fear never entered my mind. Our bicycles allowed us to travel a little further beyond our street. Not everyone owned a bicycle, however. There was much activity happening on our street on a daily basis in my summer days and nights that often we never had to go anywhere.

Walking was a good method of getting around too, of course. On foot, our reality was a smaller area than on bikes, however, the area we explored on foot was known in more depth. I have vivid memories of every backyard and every bush, tree and hedge. I remember three types of hedges: the hawthorn hedge in our backyard, a cedar hedge down the road and another type of hedge which was very common but it's name fails me. Everyone had hedges like this one. On my way to school everyday I would pass at least five or six houses bordered with this hedge. My friend Tracey and I made one of our most awesome discoveries one day with regards to this hedge. While playing cops and robbers, we were stalking our enemy and hiding in the hedge. We noticed several of the leaves were rolled up like tubes. Some had white cottony webs wound around them. We picked one up and began to slowly open it. When we reached its inside it was as if we had found a diamond or pearl! Inside the rolled up leaf was a thick, bright green caterpillar! I don't remember feeling scared as such, only fascinated. We would find more and more of these cocoons as we passed by these hedges, pick them open at times and other times we would learn to leave them alone as we grew bored of the discovery. Many of the cocoons were often empty. We never learned that they were probably turning into moths or butterflies, we just moved on and left the mystery unexplained. It may have been explained to us or learned in school but I have now memory of knowing it at the time.

I lived on Capricorn Crescent and hide-n-go-seek was the guaranteed game of almost every summer evening on Capricorn. And the street pole on my corner lot was home. Just about every evening when the pavement of the road cooled enough to sit on, we would gather in a circle on the road to play clapping games. I can still recall the warmth of the pavement under my legs. The air may have cooled somewhat requiring a

sweater but the pavement was like a warm blanket. We never wore shoes either. Our feet would be black from the road. We didn't care. This pavement thing is quite a memory for me because I also remember the hot humid days of summer when at the days end, it would pour rain with lightning and thunder. The smell of the wet pavement is etched strongly in my mind. Puddles would form on the edges of the curb and act as mini swimming pools for us little kids. We would run through the puddles in bare feet splashing ourselves under thundering skies. I liked the pavement. I disliked sitting on grass. It was too damp and sweaty. I still much prefer sitting on a leaf or pine needle coated forest floor than grass. Pavement was all that was available then and it was dry and warm. In the evenings the pavement was the meeting spot. After a few circle games and chatting while we would wait for the rest of our friends to finish their late summer meals or while we would wait for dark, hide-n-seek would begin. It had to be dark. Some kids were not allowed to stay out but I was. There would be about ten of us. Sometimes these games included my older siblings and some of their friends. I loved this game. Here I had the chance to run, hide and spy on the perfect moment to make my charge home and hit the pole before the 'it' got me. I loved the excitement of being hunted down, chased and then winning. I loved hiding. My best spot was up in a tree right next to the pole. I would wait up there until almost the game was over then make a run for it. Another great spot was the spot that never was. This meant that you would not stay in one spot but move around. We would run behind the houses and jump from yard to yard over fences until we eventually made it to the pole. Children still love this game. I wonder why as an adult, I don't get the same excitement?

Tree climbing was another great activity and right of passage for me as a child. We had a beautiful maple tree on our lawn that I needed lifting to reach the first branch. Once I was there, though, there was no stopping me. Every branch was an arm reaching out to me for support. It felt great to be on top of the world. My son has a favourite climbing tree that he frequents. His tree is located at a public access point to the beach near our home. It has grown on the public property but sits very close to a private piece of beach property. He has learned how to use specific branches growing out of its sides as supports to get to the top of the tree. One day, we went for a walk so my son could do some climbing. As we approached the tree, he prepared to place his foot on the first branch support and suddenly realized it had be sawed off. So too had the second and third branch. My son was devastated. He stood staring in confusion, bewilderment and anger as if his best friend's arms had been cut off. Now what was he to do? He could not get up to the top of the tree. The tree just stood there as if to say, "I had no way of stopping this from happening, I am sorry my friend." If only trees could talk, then we would have known who had trimmed the tree. Was it the cottager not wanting a child looking over his/her property from such a height as the climbing tree allowed? Or was it the township doing routine trimming? We don't know, nor will we ever know. My son soon found a new creative way to get up and all is fine now. Trees are so giving and innocent, really. I love trees… so does my son.

Every summer, during the years between eight and ten, my father would take just my brother and I camping. I remember these days well. My sisters were no longer interested in going, nor was my mother so they stayed home. My father had a Styrofoam sailboat he would bring and carry to the beach. It was about eighteen feet long. My

mother made an orange nylon sail for it. The three of us would sail out to an island in Georgian Bay at Kilbear Provincial Park where we would fish. This sailboat was a great source of fun. I can remember playing in it at the beach without the sail. My father would turn it upside down and my brother and I would get underneath it where the air pocket was. We would giggle and scream with joy at this phenomenon. The sail boat was also a source of frustration as I can remember the rashes I would get on my forearm as it rubbed against the gunwales when we would have to paddle in low wind. Furthermore, the sailboat also reminded me of some discomfort I felt about being a girl in the outdoors. I can remember fishing off the boat as my father sailed to the island. I dropped the line (we just used a roll of fishing line and baited a hook, no rods) into the bay. Down it went to the bottom. I felt so ashamed of myself and incompetent. This was not a good feeling. I don't know why but I remember feeling that it was because I was a dumb girl trying to do what should have been a boy's activity – fishing. This is a significant story because as a young girl in the outdoors I felt that I had to prove myself. I had to prove that I was not just any 'sissy' girl who screamed at the sight of a worm on a hook. I needed to be part of the action. I wanted to be part of the activities that were viewed as meaningful and valuable. Most 'girlish' activities such as Barbies, make-up and the wearing of pink frilly clothes were viewed as a frivolous, useless waste of time. At least that was the message I got. From who, I am not sure. Perhaps it was my father's message. At any rate, I knew there was a part of me who wanted frilly clothes, nail polish and long hair but my desire was never enough to make it happen. My friend Connie in grade three had beautiful long hair. She always wore pink ribbons and frilly dresses with sequins. I had short hair and wore plaid skirts with sweaters. Sometimes this bothered me but I was valued for my

skills in running fast, climbing the tallest trees and beating my friends up. Connie's role model was Raquel Welch. My role model was Carol Burnett. I wanted to do what the boys were doing and most of that was playing outside with play guns, going on adventures to forests and creeks and building go-carts and forts.

I was so fortunate to have had two very close lifelong friends to these desires with. I have already mentioned Kelly and our trips to Clairville Conservation Area. Tracey was her sister. Tracey was a 'tomboy' like me yet my fondest memory with her at this stage had very little to do with nature. Rather, it had everything to do with what I see as the opposing force of nature – shopping. The two of us looked like twins. We used to spend our summer days at the local plaza. We would get some money from our parents and walk to the plaza in bare feet, buy a pop and some chips and sit on the benches in air condition and watch people. One the particular occasion I remember fondly, we had been saving our money so we could buy two matching white vinyl purses and two matching pink hats! I can remember the detail of the purses. Mine was slightly different to Tracey's. It had a draw string closure while hers had a snap closure. This was a good experience. In fact, all our plaza adventures were good feelings.

Tracey and Kelly's parents owned seventy five acres of farm land in Owen Sound where they built a cabin. They used to invite me every summer to spend a week or two there. These were days spent immersed in the natural world with no restrictions. There was a creek on their property that we used to spend most of our days. The water was considered so clean that we could have drunk from it. But there were cows roaming their property (they rented the land to local farmers for grazing) so we were told not to drink the water. We used to wade in the deepest part of the creek at the lower end of the hill

that lead up to their cabin. Here we discovered water spiders and water snakes. One water snake slithered right between Kelly's legs. Water spiders were everywhere. We were amazed at their ability to stay on top of the water. We also spent hours trying to catch the minnows. At night, we would take jars outside and catch the fireflies. Many of them clung to Kelly's nightgown and lit it up light fireworks when we went inside.

Next to their cabin was an old abandoned farmhouse made of cedar shingles. This was a great place for exploring. The floors were slanted, the staircase barely standing and a porcupine inhabited the upper floor. Their beagle came out of the house yelping once with several quills in its nose. We never ventured back into that house – porcupines were a feared creature. So were cows. I can remember being stranded on a large rock unable to get back to the cabin because the cows were crowding around us. All we could do was scream and Kelly and Tracey's mother laughed and laughed before she came to our rescue. Next to the big rock we were stranded on was a place of the greatest enchantment and intrigue for me. It was a cedar grove where we spent many afternoons building forts and creating a world of imagination.

On one such occasion, my brother was also with us at their cabin and we ventured into the cedar grove to play. Kelly worked with my brother Andrew creating their home while Tracey worked with me. Later we would share our creations. As Kelly and Andrew proceeded to show us their living room equipped with television (piece of old plywood) and couch (metal roofing), they sat down on their couch to demonstrate. They had each a tin pie plate acting as a bowl of popcorn (rabbit droppings) and as they sat down, the metal roofing bent and sent the rabbit droppings high into the air and then landing on their heads. Our laughter could be heard for miles I am sure! Playing house and making

forts were always great reasons for being in the natural world as a child. Just the other day in fact, I was looking at a book of tree forts for my children and realized that I still have the same desire as I had as a child to build and live in one. I wonder why kids (and adults in my case) love fort building. Is it because of the fascination with using natural materials and innovative designs to create structures? Or is it because the Earth is telling them to come home? The natural world beckons and children hear it better than many grown ups – I'm sure.

Even in winter, we would build forts. I can remember the perfect snow type. We'd wake up in the morning to check the temperature and see what type of snow we'd be dealing with. Packing snow was the wet snow that held itself together when rolled into balls. The balls would become the walls of our forts. On colder days after a thaw, the snow would have a thick layer of crust and we could cut out flat slabs of hard snow and build our walls using these. Winter fort building was not as prevalent as summer fort building, simply because we were in school during winter months. School recesses never allowed enough time for fort building. Despite this, recesses were sacred to me. I can remember anxiously waiting for the recess bell in class, so we could get outside and get on with our own lives as kids. Everything in school got in the way of our 'real' lives. Fort building required the existence of surplus time and in school there was rarely any of that.

When I built forts and played in the natural world, I always felt like an early human, primitive like, hearty, strong – a protector of sorts. I used to collect red berries and crush them into a paste and pretend they were soup. The plant we called Queen Ann's Lace was potatoes, various leafy plants became our salad and mud pies were dessert – this beats rabbit poo for popcorn. Even catching minnows was an act of my

desire to role play early life. I can remember how difficult it was for my brother and I to catch the fish by hand. There were always so many of them swimming in schools but we could never get any until our innovative minds took over and we began seeking better methods. We tried cups and buckets to no avail. With no other resources at our disposable, we suddenly had the idea to try using our towel. With each of us at an end, we pulled the towel through the water slowly toward the school of fish and swooped up thousands! We never did much else with them except watch in amazement of how we had solved our dilemma. We always let them swim away only to try the technique again. The towel was our own advanced technology and we were very proud of it.

In one section of the cedar grove where we built forts at my friends' farm, I can remember seeing one of the fence posts bordering the grove. It was being swallowed up by a cedar trunk! The cedar tree was growing over top of it as if it were ingesting it. This astonished me. I had always felt that trees were stationary, stiff, unmoving things but this told a different story. This was nature encroaching on human. It was a bit of a creepy feeling, much like the trees one sees in fairy tale books with faces and arms. This tree was alive and movable in a way I had never explored. It puzzled and scared me. It reminds me of the grapevine in my grandfather's backyard. This grapevine grew up the side of his garage that faced into his garden and lawn. He used to joke with us and tell us that if we stood in front of it long enough, it would wrap its arms around us. I used to stand there for lengths of time and everyone would laugh at me. My grandfather knew deep down that he was not joking – I know it.

The whole idea of trees or animals having spirits or being 'alive' like us so to speak sort of scared me but created a sense of longing in me. I badly wished I could talk

to the animals and be their friends. I would cry sometimes because I could not do it. I felt absolutely desperate. The closest I could get to making this connection was to repeatedly watch movie 'The Wilderness Family'. This would temporarily take away my feelings of desperation, anger and longing. I needed something but wasn't sure what and I had no way of getting whatever it was I needed. It wasn't long after these intense emotions that I learned how to communicate with phenomena that is unseen or heard. I learned how to pray to god. My parents enjoyed attending the Anglican church in our community at this time of my life when I was around ten years old. In fact, Kelly and I often attended with them and sang in the church choir. The revelation that we could 'tap' into the power of something beyond our reality came to us one day when we were riding double on her five speed bicycle. We were riding along the gravel rode toward a water hole. The trip was a long, meandering and hilly one. We were approaching our third, steep, gravel hill and getting off the bike to walk. Sweating and panting we decided that we would see if this 'god' thing worked and pray like hell as we pumped our legs (well as Kelly pumped, I was the passenger) to make it up the next hill. As we reached the next hill, I closed my eyes and concentrated on asking for strength for Kelly to make it. Kelly pushed and pushed in silent concentration and just as she could push no more, we found ourselves at the crest of the hill. We had done it! We would forever believe in some other power beyond our reality. Having this knowledge and faith of spirituality buoyed me into a new phase of growth in my life and I soon found that my childhood days of play and exploration of the natural world began to be taken up by organized sport and activities, homework and boys.

The freedom and time I once had to spend in the natural world soon became filled by homework and after school jobs or activities. Any kind of exploration of the natural world that did occur in school was always a teacher pre-planned outing to an outdoor centre or conservation area. I can remember one such place called Glen Haffey Conservation Area. I don't exactly recall what grade I was in. It may have been grade six but it may also have been grade nine. At any rate, the experience was in the name of Science. We were to dip nets into a pond and collect water to look at under a dissecting microscope. I recall my fascination at the number of protozoa found in such a small drop of pond water. But I also recall my fascination at a particular incident that occurred that day. One of the male students picked up a crayfish and brought it to the girls picnic table to scare us. He accidentally dropped it and it landed on its back. With its legs kicking frantically, it lay upside down and exposed for all to see were thousands of tiny black eggs under its fanned tail. Everyone screamed. I was disgusted and angry at the idiotic behaviour of this boy. The black eggs got smeared across the table before someone finally picked it up a put it back into the pond. I never wanted to ever go on another net dipping adventure again in my life! And then there was Colin in grade six. During a unit on animals, he decided to bring in a live frog to try dissecting it. I still cannot believe I experienced this! He pinned this frog to a piece of cardboard – during class time – and took a small scapel and made a cut below the neck. The teacher did nothing until the frog got loose and started to hop away. The skin had been cut. I am sickened every time I remember this incident. The teacher made Colin catch the frog and take it outside – thankfully. I knew something was not right with how I was learning about living things. It simply did not feel good. – at all. But this is how it would be for years to come in

school. The natural world was to become an exploited medium through which we would learn.

Adolescence

As adolescence approached, hide-n-go-seek was not happening as much around the neighborhood, neither was the summer bike riding and camping. My repertoire of friends expanded as I attended a new middle school. My summers now, at age twelve, were spent traveling to soccer practice and games in the evenings, going to 'boy-girl' parties, shopping ,visiting tourist and amusement parks like Ontario Place and the Canadian National Exhibition and 'hanging' out at friends' houses playing cards, watching television and phoning friends. By this time, after the death of my father a year earlier, my three older sisters had moved out of the house and my mother, brother and I lived alone. The house was proving to be too much work for my mother and she was making plans to move the three of us to England. This plan only lasted a few months, however and our move in March turned into a visit to the 'old country' instead.

My grade seven and eight years were strange years for me. I can't say I have the greatest memories as I can say about my childhood. These years were difficult for me, I believe because of the absence of my father and my sisters. It was a time of change and adjustment. I was also growing into a woman.

When I think about my relationship with the natural world at my age of twelve and thirteen, it was as though I was taking a hiatus from it. Nature was no longer a part of my reality. This was a time when I began to question existence and wonder about life. My friends did the same. My reality expanded beyond the ground or the land so to speak and moved to the cosmos. I can remember countless sleepover parties where we would

find ourselves trying to stay up all night. We would begin conversations about what life is and who we are. These talks would always create unexplainable feelings about existence. We would end up screaming and shivering at the immense thought of what it means to be alive in this world. Every essential tool at sleepovers was the Ouija board game which would take us to unknown planes of existence and make us communicate with dead people. Rubbing our temples and closing our eyes in séances was another great pastime at sleepover parties. Trying to explain the feeling of deja vu was another way to get us 'freaked out'. These activities were the mainstay of sleepovers and helped us get to the 'other world'. We never got there – just shivers and screams at the thought of it.

I used to sleep over at Tracey and Kelly's house very frequently. One night when we were staying up late, her younger sister woke up late at night crying. We ran upstairs to see what was wrong. We ran to her bedroom to find her window glowing in orange. She was frightened! I took a look out the window to see that the sky was lit up like orange red in colour. My first response was that it must be the Northern Lights. I had heard about this phenomenon but now I was finally seeing it. In a short time, her sister was back asleep and our late night movie continued. Ten minutes later a huge explosion rattled the house. Tracey and Kelly's mother jumped out of bed yelling, "That was an explosion!" I was terrified. I thought a war had started. We put the news on and learned that a train full of chlorine gas had been derailed in Mississauga and what we were seeing was the glow from the fire. What I thought were the Northern Lights was instead the Mississauga train derailment in the South! So much for my knowledge of the cosmos. We had two weeks of volunteer work at our local schools to prepare for the evacuations. It was quite a disaster.

I loved soccer. I played soccer from age twelve until twenty two. I played on a community league and at high school. Soccer kept me in the natural world – or semi-natural. The soccer fields were where I could run as fast as I wanted and where I could become primal and fight for possession of, well, a white leather ball? I loved the fight! I loved the feeling of pushing the ball past opponents, preparing for the pass and then feeling the power of my legs lifting the ball to where I planned it to go. I especially loved rainy weather games because the grass would turn to mud and we would slide all over the place getting covered in mud. The smell of fresh grass and mud was a constant in my soccer playing days. Stuck between the cleats of my shoes, I would never clean the mud for fear of losing the evidence of a great game – or maybe for fear of losing touch with the ground on which I played; my only connection to the Earth at that time.

I can still recall my first goal in soccer. It was a home game. One must understand that I lived very close to the Pearson International Airport (Toronto International at the time) and the sight of enormous jet airplanes floating directly above one's head was not an unusual occurrence to the local resident. While playing on a soccer field with these jets floating overhead with their wheels down preparing for their landing at Pearson, the opposing team became quite distracted. That's when I went in for the strike. Standing at centre field I lifted the ball high into the air and with moderate speed, it slipped over the hands of the goal tender and fell into the net neatly behind her. What a feeling! I had scored!

Soccer did more for me than just provide exercise. It was my release from the struggles of adolescence and a way of keeping me in tune with the land. Of course, I did not realize this at the time. It is only now in retrospect that I believe this. It was all I had

at the time to satisfy an unexplained longing to be in another place. A place I could not identify but when I played soccer, I felt I was there. Soccer continued through out high school but field hockey became the dominant school sport. It did the very same thing for me as soccer did. Both these games taught me how to live. They taught me how to be a team player and a leader. These were valued traits. I was not playing the games because I wanted to become a leader or team player, I was playing because I needed something else. I needed to be outside, smelling the scents of the ground and my own body sweat, feeling the anger and longing vanish as I ran like a mad woman on the field chasing white balls big and small. Anger and longing had me asking (unconsciously), "This is all I get - a piece of grass and some running? I want more!"

Nineteen seventy six was a good year for rekindling a relationship with nature. I can remember going cross country skiing for the first time in my life at Mansfield Outdoor Centre. This was an extremely positive experience. Finally, an outing that was not linked to pencil paper tasks! I absolutely loved this experience. Despite the struggles of learning to maneuver my skis, I distinctly remember skiing through beautiful snow covered stretches of pine trees, approaching hills, falling down and laughing with friends. This is a very vivid and positive memory that would forever affect my future.

That same year, my grade six class took a year end trip to the YMCA Camp PineCrest in Muskoka. We did this trip over three separate days. Once again, this was another extremely positive experience that would forever have an impact on my life. I remember three things in particular. I remember the Arts and Crafts cabin with splashes of paints and glue all over the place. We made name tag necklaces out of sawed tree trunks. I remember the swimming docks and hiding behind a towel for fear of seeing the

boy I liked. The water was cold. What I remember most of all was the canoeing. This was my first time in a watercraft that was not a Styrofoam sailboat. We learned the different strokes while sitting on the dock and away we went. I paddled the canoe with one other friend and while we struggled with direction, we had a blast. So did everyone else. I would soon relive these memories later in life.

I had lots of boyfriends in elementary and middle school. They were mostly just friends but one boy named Robert was most intriguing to me. No one liked him but I secretly thought he was very handsome. He had beautiful long dark brown hair and a soft dark skin tone. He used to throw packs of gum across the classroom to me. That was his way of keeping me interested. He wrote letters to me wishing I would go the local fair with him. He would list his entire plans for the evening – first he'd buy me popcorn, then we'd go on the rides, then we'd eat a snow cone and then he'd walk me home holding my hand. I would lock myself in the bathroom at home and read his letters with my sisters teasing me from behind the locked door. I liked Robert. I went to his house one day and his mother had even longer, darker hair. She was beautiful, I thought. He moved away the next year and I never saw him again.

By the time I got to high school, my mother, brother and I had moved into a condominium near a busy intersection of town. The local hockey arena occupied one corner and a McDonald's occupied the other. Moving out of our house was the most difficult thing I had to do. I tried everything to change the decision to move. I had a hard time leaving the place of my childhood behind. We had to go. We soon made the new place our home and a new chapter would begin for me. Here was a place now whose only access to the ground was via two flights of stairs. Once on the ground, most of it was a

paved parking lot. I can't say I remember this bothering me too much. I enjoyed having the variety store on the main floor, a McDonald's restaurant across the street and a games and exercise room in the basement. It was a popular place for our friends to come and visit. Furthermore, we happened to be right across the road from Wild Wood Park, the place we explored as young children. Andrew (my brother) would still go on hikes to the park while we lived at the condo. He did one hike in the winter with his friend and while jumping on the frozen creek ice to try to crack it, he fell on his forehead. I remember this because when I returned home from an outing, there he sat at the table with an icepack on his head. When he took it off to show me, I nearly fainted at the size of the bump! The woods were becoming a symbol of danger and risk to me now. I preferred 'civilization'. I felt safer there.

Two of my oldest sisters had moved to Alberta and in grade nine my brother, mother and I took a train ride to visit them. What a wonderful chance to see the land across Canada. It took us three days to get out of Ontario. On either side of the train, all we could see for three days were rocks, trees and water – the Canadian Shield. The land was beautiful. I was getting the best geography field trip ever! As we reached Manitoba and the prairies, all that was visible were fields of wheat and grain elevators. The flat prairies eventually turned to rolling hills and then to mountains as we entered Alberta. Our country is beautiful, I thought.

While in Alberta, I learned about the Aboriginal people. My sister told me about their anger towards 'white' people because we took their land. I was trying to understand this and remember feeling a bit scared. We visited the Bad Lands and other places that demonstrated this fact. Later when I was in university and visited her again, we were

walking the streets in downtown Calgary when an Indian was approaching. She said, watch because they often spit at ground at white people. I was scared. This person walked past my sister and I, looked at me, smiled and nodded. My sister was surprised by this. I was relieved. I would soon have more to do with issues around Aboriginal people later in my life.

During high school, my days were spent less and less outside and more and more inside. Recesses no longer existed. Almost every evening was spent in the quiet of my bedroom, doing homework. Grade nine Science was my favourite subject. Here, we did not learn about living things – I was turned off from past experiences. Here we learned about 'matter'. We learned about the tiniest of particles and how they interact with other particles. This topic fascinated me. I found myself once again (like taking the bicycle apart) taking apart matter and examining its parts. I was learning how matter worked. Each day was a new adventure that would uncover the mysteries of life and matter. I learned about entropy – how all matter has a tendency toward disorder. It wasn't easy but it was compartmentalized information and I was successful at learning and understanding the parts.

Biology was a different story. I disliked Biology. I never liked dissecting anything – even the formaldehyde ridden specimens. I can remember the teacher doing an experiment where she soaked an egg in a jar of vinegar over night and showed us how the acid dissolved the shell to expose the membrane. She picked the egg out of the jar right over my desk (I sat at the front) and dropped it! It reeked! Something was not right about how I was learning about living things. I am not sure how to explain this feeling but I can say that it was uncomfortable. Learning about atoms and molecules was more abstract

and so it was less connected to the living natural world around me. But biology was very connected to the living world and learning about it in the way I was required made me feel uneasy – I don't know why.

The Human Body Unit was another different story. I liked this unit. I truly enjoyed learning how things worked and in this unit, we learned the basics of how our bodies function. In fact, it was this unit that led me to further my studies and focus on Physical and Health Education. I took phys-ed every year in high school. I was an active person and I loved moving my body. I released a lot of energy in gym classes. I don't think I could have made it through the stresses of life in high school had it not been for my gym classes. Art class served the same purpose for me. Art gave me the opportunity to touch various materials like clay, plaster and paint and create works according to my image and not anyone else's. Art and Gym were my refuge from the struggles of life as a teenager.

Around grade eleven, I began to look at life in deeper ways. My yearning that followed me became more demanding at this time. I would often sit and yearn to be some place else. This 'other' place was always an outdoor place like the ocean, a mountain top or a forest. I would write poetry revealing this yearning. I didn't want to be in a four walled classroom! I wanted out! I wanted to be outside and was extremely frustrated because of the lack of control I had over this fact.

It was around grade eleven when I had found a person who felt the same way I did. I soon entered my first long term relationship with this young man named Jim. This relationship was very significant in terms of my relationship and interactions with the natural world. Jim's dad trained thoroughbred race horses at Woodbine Race Track and

this soon became the place that satisfied our mutual yearning to get away. Jim and I would often go and spend time at the stables watching, and sometimes grooming the horses. I enjoyed this very much. We would go for jogs around the training stables and look at the horses. These horses were huge. They fascinated me. One time, the blacksmith came to change the shoes of one of the horses whose name was Harbour Pride. Jim gave me Harbour Pride's old shoes. I cleaned them, mounted them to my bedroom wall and painted the horse's name beside them. The next race day, Harbour Pride (not a favourite to win) came in first place!

One autumn day, Jim and I got a group of friends together to go horseback riding a Circle C Ranch. What an awesome feeling to be on the back of such a large powerful animal and be (somewhat) in control. I felt no fear what so ever and went away from the experience wanting to take riding lessons. I had a few lessons at a friend's barn at twenty dollars for an hour and realized that I would not be able to afford it. I would have to settle with just admiring horses from a distance.

It was with Jim that I returned to my camping days of my childhood. One summer, the two of us decided that we would go camping for a weekend. Jim owned a nineteen sixty six Buick Skylark. We loaded the car with tent, sleeping bags, food and guitars and headed north to Kilbear Provincial Park. We were seventeen years old. This camping trip was our way of getting to that special place and saying, "To hell with the establishment!" You see, nature was a place where all the rigid rules of institutional life like school, were nonexistent to us. This was not just a camping trip, it was a getaway. It was rather humorous, really, because I can remember leaving the car trunk open and leaving a pan of leftover wieners and beans on the edge of the fire pit. Later that night a

raccoon visited and stole our onion buns from the trunk and slurped up the remainder of our dinner. Raccoons always sound bigger than they actually are. We were terrified until we realized what it was. We had to throw a shoe at it before it finally left. We had also thrown some leftover food into the bush behind us and this also must have attracted the animal. It wasn't until grade twelve leadership phys-ed when we finally learned the 'proper' way to camp. The grade twelve gym course at my high school included a six day canoe trip. The first four weeks of school was spent in preparation for the canoe trip. Every time I went to this particular gym class I felt as though I was going to my special place I talked about earlier. The impact this canoe trip and gym course had on my feelings about the natural world was immense. I will explain.

Every year the grade twelve gym class went on a mandatory canoe trip for the outdoor education component of the leadership course. Jim and I were both in this course as was my friend Tracey I have spoken about before. We had to learn how to pack bedrolls, food, roll tents, light fires and read maps. Our class was split into two groups for two separate trips. The whole class received two day intense leadership training at Camp Tawingo in Huntsville prior to the trip. Team building and bonding had to take place to ensure good cooperative skills would prevail during the arduous trip. I discovered that neither Jim or Tracey were in my group. This devastated me. I was going to be going on a canoe trip (first time ever) with complete strangers whom I never associated with in school – ever. These students were not my friends. Some were bullies, some were 'geeks'. What was I to do? There was nothing I could do. None the less, I prepared for the worst week of my life. Well, I can say, that it was not the worst week of my life. It was the best!

The whole time I was out in the bush canoeing, I wanted to be at home. It was too hard and it was uncomfortable. It was cold. It rained and we had to wear these horrible 'keyhole' lifejackets with rain ponchos over top. Paddling a canoe in this outfit was most uncomfortable. Portaging made me cry at times. All I could think about, was how would I ever get through it. Then, on the first rainy night, the rain subsided and the guide cooked up a huge pot of hamburger stew. Potatoes, carrots and onions in a ground beef base with glasses of juice. It was dark when we ate but I had never enjoyed food so much. My mood lightened. Furthermore, the conversation among these strangers was beginning to happen. We shared stories and laughed about the first day's events. Each day on that trip got better. Food tasted better, stories, laughter, tears and bad weather made us bond in ways I could never have imagined. We needed each other – all of us – to get through this trip. We could not do it alone. Each of us had to take turns leading the group and navigating our way through lakes and portages. We sang songs, woke up each morning freezing and watched as we all became progressively dirtier and uglier each day. There were no ways to cover any kind of faults, we were who we were. Walls came down and these strangers became my best friends.

I particularly remember the guide. He was god-like to me. I could not believe his skills in the outdoors. One day the wind and rain was so bad that I could not believe he was going to set up for a lunch stop. I thought, "How could we possibly make a 'picnic' in this weather"? Well, he did it. I will never forget how he whipped out this huge red tarp, tied it to four trees, set up the camp fire and cooked a pile of Kraft Dinner for seven people! He made us all feel so comfortable in the worst weather imaginable. This affected me greatly and would play a role later in my life.

When we returned to school on the Monday morning after the trip, I was not sure what to expect. Jim and Tracey were my usual morning acquaintances who walked the halls with me and visited the cafeteria before first class. On this particular morning, I was on my own for whatever reason and as I turned the corner of the hall, I saw one of the guys from my canoe trip group who I would normally never associate with. We saw one another and the 'walls' instantly dropped. We hugged and jumped up and down in excitement for seeing each other again. This same scenario happened for everyone in my group. I truly believe that despite the fact the our interactions with the natural world on that canoe trip were for the purposes of developing leadership skills and team building, it never would have happened in any other setting. The natural world is the only thing that made all those wonderful experiences happen. I don't believe that the same kind of growth can occur in any other setting. It was because of the Earth that we grew in so many ways – a true life changing experience! I am very lucky to have had this experience through my schooling. I would never have had it, if not for the gym program. Mentally and emotionally I grew more than one can imagine from that canoe trip. The Earth called me, the Earth took me in it's womb and nurtured a wounded part of my psyche, be it low self esteem, pain and anguish of abandonment- what ever and it propelled me to new heights. This was the place of my longing. This would forever be the place where I would truly be settled. Still it would only come to me in isolated experiences, each one requiring a return to 'real' life where my longing would return.

I volunteered on the canoe trip the following year with the grade twelves. I would do anything to be back on a canoe trip after my first experience. However, this year the grade twelves only did a four day trip and they stayed at the same campsite for the entire

time. It was pathetic. I did not respect the guide much. No work was involved. It was too easy and too domesticated. I wanted to move. I loved the feeling of discovering how little one needs to live. When one moves from campsite to campsite, the equipment is minimal, the food is minimal, the luxuries from home are non existent. New luxuries take over like resting with a cup of tea on a bed of pine needles writing in a journal or swimming in a set of rapids a washing away the sweat and dirt from a hard day. I was disappointed about this second trip and so was left still wanting more.

My camping experiences continued with Jim and our friends but none of them ever paralleled the experiences of the canoe trip. Most of our trips were to drive-in provincial parks. They were still enjoyable but something was different. Perhaps they were too domesticated and resembled our usual day to day existence too much. We did not have access to the kind of equipment and skills needed for canoe tripping and so we could not do it. Despite this, these years of summer camping with friends are remembered fondly.

Young Adulthood

In nineteen eighty three I was going on another adventure. I was going to university. My chosen path was Physical Education. I couldn't decide which to specialize in, Art or Phys-Ed. I was warned that studying the Arts might land me in poverty. At least in Phys-Ed there would be more job prospects. Plus taking phys-ed was the closest I could get to participating in outdoor pursuits. What I really wanted to do was to go the Lakehead University in Thunder Bay because they had a great program in Outdoor Education. But I didn't want to go so far away from my boyfriend. So I settled for York University – closer to home. In addition, the field hockey coach was the Canadian

National Women's coach and I wanted to be coached by her. My first couple of years in York Phys-Ed program had me up at 6:45 a.m. for field hockey practice, going straight to early classes with wet feet, sweaty and hungry, traveling to other Ontario Universities every weekend to play games and living in residence. The first summer I returned home and worked at Shopper's Drug Mart as I had in high school. Jim and I would spend our vacation camping together with friends, listening to Bruce Cockburn, Bob Dylan and playing our guitars. These were good years. I enjoyed the adventure, the discipline and the studying. But again, I felt that longing and I felt stifled. I felt that I was not quite where I wanted to be. I would spend many hours contemplating life over cups of tea and while on long jogs around campus. My favourite place of contemplation was Stong Pond where I would sit after my jog and wonder about life.

Stong Pond was located right in front of the residence I lived in. It was a small patch of nature in the city that I was grateful for. We used to play football, have picnics and sit by the edge watching the geese. In winter, we would use the cafeteria trays as toboggans and slide down the hill onto the surface of the pond. We had to be very careful because apparently there was a current under the ice and it was unsafe to support anyone. Because of this fact, we never skated on the pond in winter – what a shame. I remember one stormy night, at a party, I let my discontent get the better of me and went running from my summer apartment on campus to sit under the protection of a small tree next to the pond. It felt great to be in that spot. I wanted to be nowhere else. Whatever it was that upset me, I could find respite in my small patch of nature at Stong pond. I needed Stong pond. I was beginning to see that nature was my refuge but I wanted a bigger natural

world. I didn't want just some small patch of bush in the city. I wanted to be forever in the wild. How would I ever get this? Was I crazy?

In third year, I quit the field hockey team. This freed my stifled spirit somewhat and that summer I found myself employed in a job I had always dreamed of doing as a youth – I was working as a lifeguard, swim instructor and sports camp counselor at the York swimming pool. Within six months I had received training to become a lifeguard and swim instructor so that I could take this job. I loved this adventure! It was where I wanted to be! As a child, I never went to camp. I had my first taste of camp life when I went to Camp Pine Crest in grade six and Camp Tawingo canoeing in grade twelve and I discovered in third year that this is what I needed. I needed to get there and working at the York pool and sports camp was my ticket.

Swimming came naturally to me. I was always a good swimmer. I would swim lengths at friends' backyard pools and everyone would watch in amazement. I never had formal lessons, I just loved swimming. Somehow I learned front crawl on my own. I could do it forever. That's why it was so easy for me to get my certifications to lifeguard. I can remember these dreams I used to have about flying where I would jump from the ground, get my feet up so my body was horizontal and I would begin doing front crawl in the air. What a great dream! I still have this dream occasionally.

My employment at Recreation York had me outside every day. If we were not outside doing sports then we were in the water. I was active, I was teaching and I was physically fit. Every morning I would arrive an hour early and swim one mile in the pool. Sixty four lengths equaled one mile. Around the tenth lap, I would melt into a sort of trance from the sound of my rhythmic bubbly breathing. I could go on forever. When I

finished I felt strong, never tired. I actually never even learned how to swim correct strokes like the breast stroke and whip kick until I got to university, so this was a great learning curve for me. I always wanted to teach swimming and lifeguard when I was younger and now I was finally doing it.

Water is one of Earth's elements and it was where I wanted to be. Eventually, I learned scuba diving also and with all these added skills I felt completely at home in any water. Often on camping or canoe trips I would dive down to the near bottom of lakes and swim around the rocks and weeds like I was a fish. I loved this feeling. The only thing that ever stopped me was the cold and the fact that I needed air of course.

While at York University, I took any course I possibly could that was as close to outdoor education as possible. This is what I had decided I wanted to specialize in. I wanted to become a teacher of outdoor skills. I took one course that confirmed all my feelings about nature. I could have taken courses in Environmental Science but they either did not exist at the time or I found no interest in studying the physical aspects of the Earth. I wanted to study the emotional and mental aspects of the Earth. I didn't know this at the time. I am assuming now that that is what I must have wanted. Roger Seaman was the course director. This course was an overview of outdoor education. It was more of a philosophy course that looked at the ideas of outdoor philosophers and conservationists. This was the first time I contemplated questions like: Are we separate, more superior beings than animals or are we equal? This course made me realize that I had to pursue this topic further. However, practicality got in the way and I found myself focusing more on doing what I needed to get into the education program. I needed to do something that would ensure future employment and besides my first love was teaching

kids and while I wished I could stray from this route, it was a route I also wanted to pursue. I figured I would later be able to combine these two loves later in my career.

In third year, I had an opportunity to go on a canoe trip. Some students from a Sports Administration course were required to plan and implement a sport event. I guess canoe tripping fit in the category of a sporting event. This trip was only three nights. It began on the first of November. The group hired a guide from Algonquin Outfitters to lead us on the trip into Algonquin Park. The park was closed but he was willing to take us. I felt the same way about this guide as I did about the guide on my first trip in grade twelve. He was so skilled and knowledgeable. However, because of his closeness in our age, he also acted as part of our group and a friend. Because of this, I learned from him in ways I could not from the other guide. He sensed my desire to learn some of the ways of paddling a canoe, of navigating and of hanging the food at night. I learned how to stern the canoe on that trip. I did not want to go home. I did not want to leave. I remember the drive home distinctly. The closer we got to the city, the tenser I became. To confuse the issue of wanting to stay in the wilderness, the guide and I had developed a mutual attraction for one another. This was terrible because it interfered with my feelings about the natural world. Was my strong desire to be close to the Earth only a result of some man I had grown attracted to? These emotions confused me. Was my longing to be back 'out there' just a longing to be with him? Or did I truly want the wilderness? I remember being back in my tiny cement room in residence. I slept in my sleeping bag for two nights and kept sniffing the pine sap on the food hanging rope in a desperate attempt to hang on to the feelings and memories of the wild. I suppose if it was the guide I was longing for, I might have been sniffing an old shirt of his rather than the food hanging rope. Strange

emotions were flying around in my life at this time. I continued to see the guide from time to time after the trip but distance and different outlooks on life slowly eroded what could have evolved. I would see him at Algonquin Outfitters each time I did future canoe trips. He remained a good friend.

I took a practicum course in the York University Phys-Ed program called Outdoor Pursuits. This course was a ten day course, seven days of which were spent on a wilderness canoe trip in Temagami, Ontario. This trip would be my fourth canoe trip. It was a tough one because we moved everyday. The terrain in Temagami was rugged. We were portaging over jagged rocks three and four times a day. We paddled long lakes and rapids, in stormy windy weather. We also paddled beautifully calm lakes and swam in fresh flowing bubbly rapids. This trip was very different to my first canoe trip. The emphasis was not on what it was doing for me emotionally but on the physicality of the land. I remember the land better than how I was feeling at the time. The land was rough. I remember paddling across a lake in the aftermath of a bad thunder storm. The water was green, the waves were huge but swaying rather than flowing as though they were settling from being so stirred up from wind. As we paddled, just ahead of us were two small islands which we were going to paddle between and straight over head was a brilliant rainbow! I had never seen anything like this. We stopped on the shore for lunch and hot chocolate.

I also remember dinner on an island one night of rice, canned chicken pieces and pineapple all mixed together. It was delicious. Later in the middle of the night on that same campsite, the loons would not stop. It was as if there were thousands of them right at our shore. It was wild!

There was one aspect of this trip that I did not like. The professor made the guys on the trip carry a canoe and a backpack. The girls ended up carrying packs and paddles and any other loose ends. His goal was to get through the portages in one passing rather than going back and forth. Time was saved, we covered much territory but I always felt very rushed. I also didn't like the idea that I was not offered the challenge to try carrying a canoe. I was too shy to assert myself and ask for a try. I really wanted to try this but never got the chance. I wanted to see if I was strong enough to be able to do this for myself. Being independent and self sufficient meant a lot to me. I know this was a personal thing in retrospect but I was angry. It bothered me that a leader could not sense the needs of some of his group members. I also never got a chance to try sterning the canoe. These were skills I wanted to try and never had the chance on this trip. Honestly, in looking back, I know I felt resentment toward men and their strength. I felt anger toward women and our lack of it. I wanted to be able to survive in the wilderness without anyone's help and the men were in the way of letting this happen! I wanted a relationship and a connection to happen with the wilderness and it was being held back because of a strength issue! I felt like I was almost where I wanted to be – that place I've talked about that I contemplated before. That place where I felt contentment. I was so close to it and it passed me by. I would forever vow to change this.

I continued to take canoe trips each year. I was slowly acquiring bits and pieces of equipment. These canoe trips became my sole connection to a place I knew I needed to visit often. Whatever that place was – physical Earth or emotional escape– I did not care to know or understand. I just knew I needed it. Most of my subsequent trips were short stints with a bunch of friends having a good old time in the bush. These were more

relaxed trips allowing me time to learn new skills and consolidate old ones. The focus of these trips was to work hard and have a good time; a focus that would begin to change in later life.

By my fourth year at university I had entered another long term relationship and was thinking about marriage and future career plans. I had been accepted into the consecutive teacher education program a York University and was on my way to the destination that would make meaning out of the real reasons why I was where I was. I signed a teacher contract for Simcoe County; the same place my fiancé was working. As it turned out the relationship did not work and we split up; even before my job began. That summer, I found myself looking for a job. I decided that after all the years of wanting to work at a summer camp, I would finally try to do it. While I was wandering around the displays at the Toronto Sportsman Show, I discovered a booth advertising Camp Pine Crest! I wondered whether this was the same Pine Crest from my grade six year. I looked at pictures and for sure it was. I took an application, filled it out and was hired as the Arts and Crafts Director. I bought my first car. I took a drive to see the place of my new summer employment before my big career start in September. It certainly was! The feelings I got from walking around the land was unexplainable. I was returning to a natural place from my childhood. I felt at home and at that moment, everything felt right. I would work the summer there and begin my 'real' job in September as an elementary school teacher.

My experience at Camp Pine Crest has an extremely special place in my memory. I worked there for two summers. The first summer as an Arts and Crafts Director, I planned and prepared many activities for kids of all ages. The craft building was not the

old one I remember from grade six. It was located in a larger building a little further from the centre of camp. The grounds around Camp Pine Crest were spectacular. Here were six hundred acres of Canadian shield in the middle of Muskoka. The walk to the dining hall was over rocks and hills. I was a newcomer to the so called Pine Crest family. Most of the employees were returnees. I felt proud to say I was a teacher. They respected this. I met many new friends who showed me all the wonderful camp traditions.

One of these traditions was the Night Paddle. We would float candles inside large glass pickle jars into the lake and then paddle our canoes around them. It was absolutely the most beautiful sight. All one could here was the soft chatter of voices, the odd paddle hitting the gunwales and the loons. It was my favourite evening program. Every evening there were programs. Every minute of my day was jammed packed with either teaching, or participating in some kind of activity or tradition. The evening camp fires were also a favourite of mine. We would gather at a place called First Point, where the sun would be setting and light the fire. Guitars would come out and the whole two or three hundred campers and staff would sing songs and do skits. One very significant observation I made that summer was the fact that all these social happenings were void of any alcohol. After six years of university life with most social activities ridden with opportunities to drink and foggy memories, these camp evening activities around new friends were very real indeed. Living day to day and night to night at a wild, rugged place in the natural world was where I had always wanted to be. It was that summer that I had the opportunity to take a canoe tripping course and learn all the 'official' techniques of tripping. It was tradition at camp for every camper to go on a canoe trip during their stay. The young kids would go on short overnight trips around the back of the camp while the older the

campers got, the longer the trips and the farther away they'd be. I can remember one particular canoe trip guide. She would be seen occasionally in the dining hall after returning from one of her trips. She looked so different from every other staff member. She looked at peace with herself. She looked strong and weathered yet feminine and pretty. I remember her hands. They were tough looking with ground in dirt, yet clean. I wondered what it must be like to be on a constant canoe trip. The next summer, I would apply for this position.

The summer I spent guiding canoe trips for kids at Camp Pine Crest was the best summer of my life. I guided four trips that summer. One seven day trip with fourteen to sixteen year old boys, a seven day girls of the same age trip, a five day eleven year girls trip and a fourteen day trip with fourteen to sixteen year old boys. These trips were all great experiences. I think that the experiences for the campers were very different from the experience I had in high school. These kids were quite skilled in canoeing. They had been going to camp every summer and were quite prepared for tripping. However, many of them had not ever done a trip longer than a few days.

On the eleven year old girls trip, I can remember the fear in many of their voices, one night as we were settling down to sleep at night. We had three or four tents and the girls kept calling my name and asking me what this specific sound was they kept hearing. The sound was a kind of scraping sound as if someone was carving something. It was rhythmical. My only explanation was that it may have been a bat or frog or something. The counselor and I slept in the same tent. That night we had hung the food pack directly over a perfect thick tree branch which happened to be partially over the water. This noise went on and on unexplained until most of the girls were asleep except for Wendy (the

counselor) and me. I was writing in my journal when suddenly the noise was succeeded by a loud crack and then a splash. Wendy and I were certain that a bear had swung our pack and branch into the water. We did the unthinkable task of getting out of our tent to recover our food. When we shone the flashlight in the direction of the food pack it was still hanging. We quickly jumped back into the tent for fear that the bear was roaming elsewhere if not near the food pack. We had no idea what the noise was. Wendy soon fell asleep and left me alone. About ten minutes later the same crack and splash came after the noise. It was then that I had the revelation. This noise was not a bat, or a frog or a bear. It was a beaver felling trees. To this day, I am not sure what made me realize this but I do know that it was a huge relief. Sleep came instantly and I can remember feeling a sense of pride in myself for figuring this out. The next day we paddled around the campsite and found the two or three trees that the beaver had felled and very near to them was the beaver hut. I love this story. I tell it every year to my current students I teach.

One of the things I really love about canoe tripping is the fact that you experience every part of the natural world thinkable. You have no where to escape in times of rough weather, you must pass through whatever terrain is given even if it means tredging through bogs, over rocks or through rocky shallows – you're in it! During a very heavy rain storm, one of the boys on my first trip had the most hilarious experience of sinking up to his thighs in what he thought was just a puddle. It would not have been so funny if he had not been carrying a sixteen foot aluminum canoe on his head. All we could see ahead of us was this silver canoe plunge three feet into a mud puddle accompanied by a yell for help. We first took his canoe off then lifted him from the stinky bog. Another experience had us learning about the destruction of the old growth forests of Temagami.

Often, we would come across logging roads as part of portages and find huge signs asking us to "Place a rock and save a tree!" Placing a rock on the road would create a blockade for logging trucks. We eagerly placed many rocks, if it meant protecting the land we enjoyed canoeing through. At one spot there was a poem written by a local First Nation group indicating the land is sacred. Another sign by others, probably environmental activists read, "Rapists, go clear cut in hell!" I remember feeling spooked yet thrilled to be present at the spot where I had heard of such conflict and turmoil over saving a part of the ancient Earth.

I have many great stories from my summer as a canoe trip guide. Many that tell of the fun times people have when roughing it in the wilderness and many that act as stepping stones to understanding my relationship with the Earth. For example, when back in civilization, I used to yearn like a mad woman to get out on a canoe trip again and when I was out there in the wilderness after about seven days I could not wait to get back to some of the luxuries I had in civilization. A juicy steak and glass of wine was mostly the thought on my mind. I suppose I could have hunted or something to get this but that was impossible under my circumstances. I also remember the odd feeling I would get upon returning to camp and getting into my car. It was almost as if I had forgotten how to drive. Then I would start the engine, turn the music on and drive away amazed at the power. These were instances where the paradox of my life was played out - loud and clear. I loved my car, my warm bed, hot baths and steak but I loved being in the bush too. What would I do? I am not sure why it had to be one way of living or the other but that was how I saw it. "Why invest time and interest in an activity like canoeing when you know it really is not reality?" I thought. I would say to myself, "People don't live this

way anymore, you can't do this forever." It wasn't enough to just do the odd canoe trip. I wanted to be out there all the time or not at all. I would become frustrated because I would realize how little I really needed to survive while out in the bush and then return to civilization having so many needs and dependencies it drove me crazy and often put me in debt! Yet there was a part of me who loved spending money, wearing nice clothes and eating extravagantly on occasion. "Why did this have to be such a conflict?" I would think. These canoe trips were a necessary part of my life in understanding where I fit in the scheme of the natural world.

Adulthood

My work as a teacher was establishing itself. Although I wanted to include canoe tripping or some other form of environmental learning in my practice, I soon learned that there was no policy that allowed elementary students to go on canoe trips – not even grade seven or eights. Furthermore, I discovered that my employment over the summer at camp had pushed my income to another tax bracket and I was taxed badly for this. I owed almost one thousand dollars to the government! This felt like sheer punishment. My next plan would be to volunteer. However, the year after my second summer at camp, I was introduced to someone who shared very similar views about life and the natural world as I did. We began dating and it was not very long after that I moved into his home-made house. The summer I would have been at camp, I decided to take a remote wilderness canoe trip with my partner, Stephen. We took a trip on the Missinaubi River to James Bay. I was not very comfortable with prospect of river paddling so I took a white water course a few weeks before I went. The course was held on the French River. This course had me paddling, swimming and saving other people in fast moving water. Never before

had I been so engulfed in nature's power. The water consumed me every time I entered a rapid either in the canoe or out. The opportunity to learn how to move with the powerful force of the water made me feel deeply connected to the Earth. The power of the water was very humbling. My respect for nature grew deeper as a result. To learn to immerse myself in a part of nature that often scared me was a milestone for me. I can't explain why I wanted to do something like this so badly. The experience was so rewarding and I still examine why I am so interested in doing things like this. It is not just because I like to challenge myself because I could do other activities that would provide a challenge to me. It is because it brings me closer to the forces of nature; to feel the strength with which the Earth has had in producing, protecting, sustaining and teaching us. These experiences make me feel connected to a force so large that I feel strong and empowered.

Paddling on the Missinaubi River was a whole new humbling experience for me. Compared to the lake paddling in local Provincial Parks around Ontario with seven other campers, this trip was remote, rugged and exhausting. Furthermore, I was with only one other person so it was quiet and put me more in tune with my surroundings since I could not be distracted by so many other people. There were no designated campsites. We had to camp where ever and when ever we were finished for the day. The days ended at around six o'clock instead of between two or four o'clock like my guiding trips at camp. It was on this trip that I learned about the powers of human development when it comes to damming rivers. The Mattagami River was dammed as was the Abiti to allow for hydro electric stations. The Mattagami flowed directly into the Missinaubi as it headed towards James Bay. The water was full of silt and the width of the river became so wide and shallow that paddling was difficult. I felt a bit disappointed that even in the far North

there was evidence of the destructive exploits of human progress and economic activity. I also learned a great deal about my partner and how we get along. After a fabulous night on a campsite facing the fork in the land where both rivers met, we decided we would camp one more night close to the train tracks and get off at Moose River crossing to get the train back to Cochrane. Moose River is a small First Nations community. We had to walk along the train tracks with our packs and canoe to get to the small station where we met two workers playing cards. They said hello. We asked when the next train was scheduled. They said in two hours. We waited. The train arrived and we put our canoe and packs into one of the cars and ourselves into the dining cart where we enjoyed an ice cold beer! The train was coming from Moosonee and there were many local people riding it as a regular trip to get to Cochrane for some shopping. I can remember being curious about the people and what sort of lives they lived so far North. I was a bit nervous after the stories my sister told me about the anger felt by many Aboriginal people in Alberta towards non-Aboriginals. My husband and I were a minority on the train. No one spoke to us. Everyone minded their own business, except one couple who was very interested in the trip we had just completed. They were non-Aboriginal. We chatted with them for some time and then eventually turned our attention to the landscape swiftly passing by through the train windows. I knew I needed to find out more about the people I saw. I was uncomfortable. I wondered what their story was.

In my first year teaching grade four, the unit on Aboriginal people did not depict them as anything remotely similar to the people I saw the train to Cochrane. This unit was full of images of Indians in buckskin dresses and loin cloths, hunting and gathering food. Students were to do projects on specific tribes having no clue that this was not the

way these people lived today. The people I sat with on the train were not in buckskin dresses. They were not hunting. They were going shopping. I knew at that moment that the unit needed to be revised. Moreover, my colleagues at that time actually wanted to cancel teaching the unit because it was during the Quebec Oka crisis. They felt it would have been too political. I still think this was an excuse for their ignorance. Needless to say, the curriculum I had been given was missing something to complete the story I was seeking.

The next year, I taught grade seven and I made a vow with myself to find out the whole story of Aboriginal People. Feeling somewhat ashamed of myself for the lack of knowledge about social studies, I had to dig to find out information. I was a specialist in Physical Education and the Sciences and so that was my excuse for not knowing about history. No one else seemed to know though and I wondered what their excuse was. The curriculum called for the teaching of Aboriginal People and European Explorers. My planning of this particular unit was a turning point for me... and my students. Since I had a difficult time locating resources for students to use, I chose to tell them what I had learned in all of the research I had done. I told them the story of the arrival of the Europeans. I then showed them the impact it had on the people who were already living in the new world. I let them watch the CBC Series called The War against the Indians. I created question sheets and thoughtful essay questions and discussions for them to engage in. I probably learned more during that experience than they did and than the entire four years I spent at University. Here were role models of modern Aboriginal people being interviewed about who they are, what happened to them and where they believe they are headed. Embedded in every story we listened to, some of which were

very sad and depressing, some of which were heroic and inspiring, was their deep spiritual connection to and their deep respect for all the living things on the Earth including the land, sky and the entire universe. Their stories told how this connection, this lifeline had been severed by the changes that were imposed on them by the newcomers. Now, I understood the anger my sister had talked about – no wonder! I would forever teach about Aboriginal People through the perspectives of the Aboriginal people themselves. I would tell their story in the best way that I could to all my future students. That would be a promise – to tell the truth.

During these first years as a teacher, I became involved in the Outdoor Education Subject Council at my school board. This council would meet once a month to discuss the subject of Outdoor Education – which no longer exists as a subject, I might add. It was through this council that I got involved in organizing an Outdoor Education Conference. This conference was my only refuge from the day to day ick of four walled, fluorescently lit classrooms. At this conference, I could show teachers how to get their kids outside and still cover curriculum. It wasn't too difficult in those times of good government funding to public education because field trips were plentiful. I soon moved on to teaching high school teachers the skills of being safe, certified canoe trip leaders through The Ontario Recreational Canoeing Association. I devoted a great deal of time and energy in this initiative every year, but the school board supported it with good funding. I took a ten day Canoe Trip instructor course in Temagami when my first born child was only nine months old. My husband stayed home to care for her. I was nearing the end of breast feeding and can still remember the final swelling after two days in the bush with no baby to relieve the pressure. It soon subsided and that connection with my daughter came to a

close. The timing was right. I missed her dearly but knew that I would soon be having her at my side while in the bush, for my husband and I had planned our first family trip for later that summer in Kilarney Provincial Park – that's where we had our first bear encounter.

My daughter was eleven months old and she was going to be going on her first canoe trip. My husband and I planned this trip carefully. We were only going to spend two nights in the interior of Kilarney. We decided we would paddle the less traveled west side of the park. For a long time we had to think about how we would keep my daughter occupied in the canoe while we paddled. We tried a number of things – many ideas came from my students. One was to Velcro her diaper into the bottom of the canoe – obviously a cute joke. We ended up using the child back pack carrier in a standing up position in the canoe. It didn't work too well. She cried and cried. We had to stop to give her a bottle and then look at the map to find the portage. The sky was also looking kind of dark green. I felt sick at the thought of a storm approaching having no shelter. It was as if the Earth was rejecting me, testing me – telling me to turn back while I could. "What a fool I am to bring a young child out here," I thought. We did not turn back. We finally made it to the portage where my husband did most of the carrying. Our campsite was very close from the portage. It was a small site with the typical white granite characteristic of Kilarney. It would have to do. We set up a screen tent and a tent. Everything was good. We had a lovely dinner and I put my daughter to bed with a bottle of milk. Now, for some very strange reason my husband and I decided not to hang our food. We could not find a good branch first of all, and well, we were using these air tight barrels and figured it would be fine. There were some nights on my guiding trips at camp when we never bothered

hanging the food – we were lucky. On this night, we were in the tent when the loons were calling more wild and ominously than I had ever heard before. I had mixed feelings about the whole adventure. My husband fell asleep. My daughter was on my left, right next to the wall of the tent, sleeping peacefully with only a drop of milk left in her bottle when I heard the sound. I knew this sound was not a moose or deer. Usually these creatures crack branches when they walk. This animal did not. I lay there silently trying to figure out what was approaching. The sound was that of large pads pressing on the ground with great heaviness, grinding the bits of stone and broken rock pieces beneath them. I heard it knock the canoe. Then there was the odour and then the grunt and snort. It was for certain, a bear. I felt like I was going to throw up. I began to shake uncontrollably. All I could think about was how awful a mother I was bringing my young baby into the bush. I was also lactating very slightly and had heard that bears were attracted to the scent of mother's milk. I had always refused to believe this fact to be true just as I refuse to believe that bears are attracted to menstruating women. I think these are just plots to keep us women out of the bush. Anyway, had this been a trip without my daughter, I most likely would have not felt so scared and responsible. I felt completely helpless and unable to protect my child. This was the first time I wished I had a gun. The bear finally left and when morning approached, we packed everything up and returned to the office to report the bear. As I walked around the outside of the tent near the side my daughter was sleeping on, there at my chest height was a muddy print of the nose and nostrils of the bear – the big bear! I knew it would forever take great convincing to go on another canoe trip. The next summer, I met an Ojibwa woman at a course I took for Aboriginal Studies and when I told her the story, she simply nodded and said, "What an honour for your

daughter. The bear is her spirit animal." There was no mention of how lucky we were for not getting eaten alive or that we never should take young kids out in the wilderness – just a wise acknowledgement of my story and an understanding that there was a reason for the bear's visit that night. I don't know the reason but I do know that with no convincing necessary, I was ready to go canoeing again.

I learned a lot when I took that Aboriginal Studies course. It was offered through the Woman Teacher Federation as a way to expand Aboriginal education in the classroom. One of the best things about the three day course was meeting Aboriginal people and learning from them what their culture is all about. We talked openly in circles about the struggles of teaching Aboriginal studies in classrooms. We talked about other struggles. We shared a lot of feelings in these healing circles. In fact it was then that I first voiced some feelings of shame for being of European ancestry. Many of us attending the course were Non-Aboriginal and felt similar feelings. I also remember learning a little about what it meant to be a woman in First Nation culture. Menstruating women, or women on their moon time as it is called, are not supposed to participate in the ceremonial smudging before the circle. Immediately, everyone in the circle knew who was on moon time or not. I found this a little embarrassing despite the fact that I was not. However, I was two months pregnant. I can't recall if I asked about the procedures for pregnant women. I never really got a full explanation as to why women had to step outside the smudging or why men used sweet grass and women used sage. From what I understood, being on moon time meant that women were in a powerfully sacred state with Earth or cosmos and therefore could not participate at that time. I was skeptical again about my womanhood and being told I could not do certain things. I respected the

ways despite this. The circle talks were good and I wished I could participate in more of them.

I met a Mohawk man named Bill (not his real name) at this course. He was an amazing character. He took such pride in knowing some of the old ways of his people, particularly the survival skills like fire starting. He was a consultant for schools to hire to bring some hands-on Aboriginal culture right to the classroom. I called him the next year to come to my school. I wanted to combine his knowledge and lessons with a class overnight camping trip at our local Provincial Park. He preferred to do his demonstrations and show his artifacts inside a gymnasium. So we settled on doing the job outside on the school grounds. The custodian made a fire pit for us and Bill set up his twenty four foot tipi. He was a great story teller. My entire grade seven class sat in the tipi for some stories. He made them laugh. He also taught them how to start a fire without a match and we made bannock on sticks. Bill let them know that the old ways are good. He was an elder of sorts and had a fabulous rapport with the students. He stayed at my home that night since he had driven a long way. My husband and I learned that he was the Executive Director of the Aboriginal Harvesters Canada. I kept in touch with Bill after his visit from time to time. I called him once to see if he would be interested in doing a workshop at a student conference I was helping to organize at my school. The organization that I was assisting was known as the Canadian Metis Association. Bill let me know right away that he associated with the Metis Nation of Ontario and had not heard of this Canadian organization. He worried it was some splinter organization funded by the federal government. He voiced that these kinds of things happen a lot and one must be cautious as to which organization is the original, authentic one and which is not.

He voiced that sometimes he thinks the government gets these new organizations started with funding just to instigate internal conflict within existing Aboriginal organizations. I was enlightened and embarrassed. I trusted Bill more than the local Metis group I was working with at that present time. He did not come to the conference and helped me to understand why. I later distanced myself a little from the local group and decided to focus on in-class teaching.

Starting a family was a major distraction from my yearnings to be out in the bush or on a canoe trip somewhere. But every summer, the yearning would return, even with a baby in one arm and another holding my hand. My daughter had the privilege of doing a couple more short canoe trips before my son was born. By this time, we had purchased an eighteen foot bow rider motor boat. I was certain my canoeing days were over. We would begin a long journey of boating problems and big water issues over the next five years of owning that boat. First, we learned, after being stranded in the middle of Georgian Bay, near Giant's Tomb Island with a stalled boat, that the builders had dropped a pen cap in the gas line by accident and it was causing us to stall every time we pushed the throttle. That stressful situation repeated itself all summer long before we got it figured out. The next summer, I kept noticing the smell of gasoline – not exhaust but fresh gasoline. No one would listen to me. Finally, my husband had it looked at and sure enough the gas tank was leaking. We had it replaced. Many times we took the boat far into the islands around Georgian Bay and a number of times we came to near death situations. Once, we stalled in huge wave, in a wide open stretch of Georgian Bay. My instinct was to get to shore of which there was no shore, only sharp, jagged shoals that would rip our boat apart with the crashing waves. My husband's instinct was to put the anchor down – thank god!

Another boat eventually towed us back to Sans Sousi where we learned the problem was only a dead fuse. We carried extra fuses with us from then on. I can honestly say I was as scared during that episode on the boat as I was when I encountered the bear. Except that my anger was not at myself but at the boat manufacturer- I was angry at technology for that matter. I wanted to blow the power boat up and get back in my canoe. "A power boat was supposed to be safe, fast and keep us close to civilization, in case we needed it." I thought. It did no such thing. In fact it made us spend more and more money on a lifestyle that was all about consumption, noise and extravagance. We rented a cottage for three summers with my sister and her family as part of the extravagance package. For three years we lived a cottage life like so many do. I felt bored and misplaced. I had a hard time living partially in the bush and partially in luxury so to speak. Our days focused around happy hour and what we would cook for dinner. I am making it sound simply awful but we did have some good times at this cottage. However, the first summer we spent there, I was getting the 'bug' for a canoe trip. I was four months pregnant and took my two nieces, nephew and two brother-in-laws on a five day Algonquin canoe trip. My wonderfully supportive husband stayed at the cottage to look after our three year old daughter.

It was around this time, in nineteen ninety six that things began to change in my profession. A new government had come to power in Ontario and it was cutting funding from public education like never before. Besides trying to fight for public education by staging demonstrations at Queen's Park, campaigning and walking a picket line with every teacher across Ontario for two weeks, I was beginning to believe that as a teacher, I was a worthless, greedy person who didn't know what hard work was. I had never felt

such a loss of pride in my entire life. The government made the public hate teachers. It was a losing battle right from the start to try and stop the passing of Bill 160 which would change the way schools would be funded. I felt defeated and silly. I could not believe the power one man could have over people who clearly protested against a piece of destructive legislation. This was clearly not a democracy. I knew I would never see the Outdoor Education Conference ever again. In fact, it became increasingly difficult to do any kind of outdoor type of activity within the school system what so ever. Outdoor education was viewed as a frivolous luxury not a necessary part of curriculum. Needless to say, my attention to my yearnings to be near the Earth was directed elsewhere and it was around this time that I decided to get some of my woman friends together to go on what became annual Spring and Fall canoe trips. I will talk about these later.

Before these trips truly got under way, I was mourning the loss of my only form of respite from the drudgeries of indoor teaching – the Outdoor Education Conference. For six years of university life, I was outside every day doing some sort of physical activity – moving my body, feeling the weather, the wind, the wet, the humidity or the cold. When I started my career, I was spending upwards of eight hours inside a stuffy building with fake lighting. So, I would take every opportunity I could to do any sort of outside activity. Most activities were science related which I disliked. I wanted to take my kids camping and teach them survival skills, hunting, gathering and tracking kinds of things. However, I was working towards this. In the meantime, I knew that these science-related activities were the valued lessons at that time and if it got me where I wanted to be then that was fine. The conference however was the icing on the cake. We taught teachers survival techniques, search and rescue, first aid, canoeing skills, navigation in

addition to curriculum based workshops. It included many aspects of Outdoor Education. I have to say, it satisfied my need to be involved in Earth activities, not to mention the other aspects of being human such as the spiritual and the physical. When the conference got cut from the school board budget, it left me with a very empty feeling. Times were horribly stressful in education because of tougher curriculum expectations, less and less money and time to do lessons and activities such as outdoor ones that nourished the kinesthetic, emotional, physical and spiritual aspects of the child. The only time and money that did exist was to be used strictly for what was considered most important for competing with other countries and for producing students ready for the economic workforce, and that meant a greatest focus on the cognitive abilities of children only – no time or money for the others. Educating the whole child was not important. These changes had a huge impact on me. I believe I am a very intuitive person which is not necessarily a positive trait for I tend to take on a lot of the pain and emotion of other people. I tend to feel the effects and consequences of actions more than others. I am like a sponge, really. At any rate, I felt the pain, loss, emptiness and the void of not having the whole human being nurtured. This was the silent pain from my students – I know it and I felt it. Emphasis was on paper/pencil tasks, writing, reading, mathematics, computers, technology, science – not a single second could be spent on outdoor learning or even the arts. These kids were going to suffer. The Earth was going to suffer. With no children learning the Earth's rhythms and cycles, with no children getting outside regularly and being in nature, how in the world can anyone expect to maintain a healthy relationship with the planet that supports and nourishes every aspect of our humanity? This sickened me and I mean this literally. I became depressed, anxious and began having panic attacks.

I was living and working against everything I believed in. I was angry, resentful and left feeling helpless and disempowered. Like the planet, my body was out of balance. My nervous system needed repair. I reached a point where I could not function. In acute fear and anxiety, I could no longer go to the place where I was supposed to teach children all the wrong things in life. I could hardly face my own children of which I now had two – my son of three years and daughter of six. My psyche needed healing and I decided to go on that journey to do it. I was told by doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists all of whom I have the utmost respect, that I had panic and anxiety disorder. There was medication for this disorder. I didn't want it at that moment. I chose to take time off work to try and work through some apparent childhood wounds using cognitive behavioural therapy. I rejected this at first. I wanted a shaman or something. I wanted to speak to someone who understood my deep yearning for being close to the Earth. I felt like I was being silly. I had nowhere to turn except to what I knew best in my Western upbringing and that was to give cognitive behavioural therapy a try. This therapy was amazing and I was very grateful for its existence but it was not the sole healer for me. I also turned to Eastern philosophies such as Buddhism and began understanding how to let go of or reject certain things that I believed were necessary to make me happy. This was the most lightening time of my life. One of the things I concluded within myself was that everything I truly needed to live could come from the raw Earth. I say raw because, everything does ultimately have its source from the Earth despite the amount of processing involved. But, that's just it – the processing moves whatever is being made farther and farther away from its root source until it becomes indistinguishable as being from the Earth. Not seeing the connection to the Earth causes severance and illness. That is why, as a child I

needed to take things apart to find their origin which ultimately was from the Earth. I needed to feel connected and grounded in the planet. Taking things apart was mistakenly viewed as a knack for science. I wish someone could have shown me what it really meant. I wonder if this is what the troubled work of all our world scientists is all about- searching for Earth? Canoe trips made me feel great because they let me know how little of those fake processed luxuries I needed to live and be happy.

In the process of my healing, I was coerced by some people to try and get long term disability pay. I knew I needed to slow down somewhat to heal and my sick pay was running out. Working full time seemed to be too much. I decided to return half time to work after three weeks so that my sick pay would last. This took me to summer vacation. I checked into getting long term disability on a part time basis for September and was basically laughed at by the insurance representative. They let me know promptly that to be eligible for LTD, I needed to be sick full time and would require a psychiatrist's report, show proof of requiring medication not homeopathic remedies. I could not believe this. I was trying (and successfully but slowly) to heal myself in natural ways and was being punished for this. Choosing methods outside of the 'standard' protocol meant complete exclusion. I got the psychiatrist's report which was rather scary with its vocabulary and labeling of my condition. I also decided to go on an anti-anxiety medication called Paxil. I heard about it from a friend and my doctor easily filled a prescription for me. During the summer, the medication showed its power! I could not believe the change. I was warned about the initial short term side effects and to persevere for at least three weeks until they passed. I endured days of extreme anxiety, tremors, dizziness and nausea until my poor body gave in and let the medication do what my body

had be trying to do naturally but never had the chance. In a way it was a nice break for me, being on Paxil. I was more focused and less distracted by sounds, thoughts and things. I was less intense, less stressed, less hardworking. I liked it. I never did get LTD because I was responding too well to the medication – I assume. What a joke! Drug us up so we can continue with participation in the world rat race of full time work of production and consumption of unnecessary luxuries! Whatever! I stayed on the drug for the year because I felt calm and better able to perform my job as a teacher, wife and mother. It must have been a good drug because that year when I taught grade six, I had my class involved in a huge project of building a sixteen foot birch bark canoe in my backyard! Sometimes I secretly wonder if the whole project would have even happened if it were not for being on Paxil. Who knows? Maybe it would have been even better. The canoe did have some leaks, after all. I have done a lot of reading about medications and I have seen their brutal long term affects on people who come to rely on them for life. I too felt the side effects even for the short time I was on Paxil. I gained weight, had horrible night sweats, decreased sex drive and worst of all was the returned anxiety, dizziness, nausea and tremors when I fought to get off it. I went off the drug at the end of the year, two weeks before we unveiled our canoe to the entire school and community. I was very lucky. It could have been a very bad experience for me but somehow I knew I would feel so much better and besides I knew that my bark canoe project was my safety net.

The canoe project was year long and it acted as a form of healing. Through it, I had friends, family, students, parents and community members visiting my house every evening and weekend in May and June. Furthermore, the project brought me closer to the local First Nation community. I can remember telling my First Nation student's father at

interview night that I wanted to build a birch bark canoe but had no clue where to start. I was afraid I would embarrass myself telling him because how should he know how to do it? It wasn't as if he traveled around in a canoe like his ancestors. I knew this but something inside me wanted to involve the First Nation community and I really didn't know how to go about doing that. He looked with some approval and then asked, "How big?" I said, "I want to build a freighter!" He laughed so hard I didn't know what to think. He responded with, "That's a good idea. Good luck."

I called another member from the First Nation community whom I heard built canoes at the local historical site, Saint Marie Among the Hurons. He was going to charge me twenty dollars an hour. I could not afford this and surely since cutbacks were alive and well in Ontario Education, the school was not about to subsidize this. In fact, by the end of the project, I had not been given a single minute of time outside my regular teaching duties to work on the canoe – I ended up having to falsely use my personal sick days so I could finish the canoe for the scheduled time line. Anyway, I did some serious research about how to build birch bark canoes and began to believe that it could work. As the project progressed, so did the involvement of the First Nation community. The uncle of that same student whose father I told about the project, helped me to find a tree cutter for the felling of the birch from the bush in my yard. He also helped me find a drum carrier to perform a ceremony at the house when the tree was to come down. A gentleman from Parry Island arrived with six student singers, their classroom teacher and a big drum. My class gathered 'round in a circle and he told them about the smudge. He told them they would need to take tobacco and go find the boss tree in the forest. Once they all agreed on which tree was the boss, they were to place the tobacco as an offering

for that boss tree letting the birch be taken from its family. All the while Tomahawk Tree Cutters were preparing their chainsaws for the felling of the chosen birch. The tree came down and the project began. That was April 17, 2000. Many parents came to help and many friendships were made. People just kept showing up at the right times when we would get stuck and not know what to do next.

I can remember a particular moment of discomfort when the CBC host had come to my backyard to do a story on us. One of my students really enjoyed the drumming and singing from the previous week and was trying it out himself. He had not been given lessons but badly wanted to sing. He tried his best but I was afraid this was not a good situation. I did not want it to look like he was mocking the song. I expressed my concern to my student's uncle who happened to be there at the time and he said that perhaps it may look that way a bit but that the boy was at least singing as he knew how and that was not a bad thing.

Traditional methods for making pine pitch for birch bark canoes require mixing bear grease with the pine sap to make a substance that won't be too sticky or too brittle when sealing the root seams of sewn bark. Lard was the modern substitute, but the uncle of my student was kind enough to bring me a sample of bear grease which I used on part of the artwork I had done on the canoe. He told me he went to some length to get the grease and that it was used by a shaman for healing. I felt honoured. When I massaged that bear grease into the canoe, it felt like a very sacred act. In fact the entire building of the canoe was a sacred act. I have great respect for the knowledge that is required of the Earth's materials in order to create something as wondrous as the birch bark canoe. It was not built by machines behind closed doors in a factory. I was aware and involved in every

step of the process of its creation. I did not have to use chemicals or pollute the ground getting rid of waste. Any unused materials went back into the bush if we did not use them. My students, Aboriginal and Non-aboriginal were living history in my backyard. My Aboriginal students were proud to show off a part of their cultural heritage to the entire school community and that made me feel good. I received a call from the Girl Guides wanting to look at the canoe. I also was asked if the canoe could be used as part of a float in a parade by the local Native Friendship Centre. When I took the canoe to the centre, the woman gave me some sweet grass as a gift. The canoe looked great in the parade. It now sits in the local museum down the road from the school. Later the next year, I received an award of excellence in teaching from the Elementary Teacher's Federation and then an Honourable Mention for the Governor General Award for excellence in teaching Canadian History. I was also encouraged by my student's uncle (he was the brother of the Education Director of the band school and a councilor) to apply for a teaching position at the local reserve school which I was very excited about doing. Unfortunately, logistics and financial constraints (the salary was much less than provincial salaries) made me retreat and back out of the opportunity.

The summer after the canoe was built, I stored the it under an awning at my house, until I could get it to the museum. Something very interesting happened. Later that summer, I went on a canoe trip with my family. We left one of our cars behind as we always did. It was parked in our driveway in close proximity to the canoe. This was the car I used to carry the canoe on top of when I was taking it here and there to celebrate its completion. When we returned from our trip I could not believe the site before my eyes! Beside our car was an old rotting birch tree. It had fallen right on top of the car and

crushing the roof so badly it smashed the windshield to bits. The canoe – untouched! After the shock of this tragedy, my husband and I began to wonder if there was some meaning behind it. We laughed, thinking it might have been some sort of message to us to reject modernity. Or worse, what if the birch trees were getting back at us for taking one of their own? Who knows? It was a bit spooky. I am planning to build another canoe with my class this year. I think I will park my car far away from my house.

Another time the next year, I was going to a workshop at the Mnjikaning First Nation Reserve in Rama. The workshop was to introduce some new curriculum to teachers. It was developed by a team of mostly First Nation members. The curriculum was excellent. It provided information and activities about the modern culture of the surrounding First Nation communities. It was current and focused on positive achievements and successes of the people. However, at the time I felt that it failed to show any traditional aspects of the culture, particularly First Nations' and their deep spiritual connections to the Earth. After all, this was of great interest to me and I wanted to learn about these things but was grappling with who and where to learn them from. I wanted to ask but I was afraid I would appear completely ignorant. I thought, "Perhaps, I have it all wrong. Maybe I am searching for answers from the wrong people." I got the courage and I politely asked why there are no references in the curriculum to First Nations' relationship with the Earth?" The Non-aboriginal leader of the group answered the question saying that that image is a stereotype. I was not surprised with the answer but not convinced. I did not press any further, but a similar spooky tragedy happened to me that day. It was winter at the time and as I walked out to my car, I noticed the headlight and surrounding moldings had been crushed as if something had hit my car –

hard. I recalled seeing some snow removal equipment maneuvering about the school parking lot while our workshop was taking place. After some investigating, it was in fact one of the workers who had unknowingly clipped my car with his machine. Everyone, including the snow removal company was very kind and apologetic about the matter and took good care of me. I was given the company's insurance information and able to make the claim. But I still had a damaged vehicle and the head ache of getting it repaired. I also had very mixed emotions that day about my relationship with Aboriginal people. I was again spooked by this incident as if I was being told to stay away from mingling in an aspect of a culture that is no longer or that I had no right exploring after what my ancestors did. How dare I suggest what is missing from curriculum. It was not my place to be an authority on Aboriginal business and perhaps I was being brought that message through psychic events. But I was getting mixed messages. When I participated in the Aboriginal Studies course a few years back, I learned of a very deep connection the people had with the Earth. It was real. It was alive in their smudging ceremonies, in the sunrise ceremony and it their conversation like the advice the woman gave me about my daughter and the bear. I truly wanted to learn more about this aspect of the culture but every book or place I turned to rarely had sources that were Aboriginal. Many resources were written by Non-aboriginal people. I did not feel right about this. For example, anyone can buy a book on traditional healing herbs or smudging but to actually practice it and have it become part of one's living I happen to think that one should be taught the skills by someone who is an expert in that knowledge. In my case I would have liked to learn this knowledge from an elder or shaman. No one seemed to be able to direct me or even assure me that the knowledge did belong to Aboriginal people, still does and is at

least being recovered. All I could do is get bits and pieces of the knowledge from various sources many of which were non-Aboriginal. For example, I had learned about a two schools in the United States that taught traditional skills of survival. I had read a few of the books about the founder of one school called The Tom Brown School. I was fascinated by Tom Brown's story of his childhood. He was taught traditional ways of relating to the Earth, by an Aboriginal elder he called Grandfather. I learned that Tom Brown was the founder and operator of his school in New Jersey which teaches the 'old ways'. I researched more and learned that there were no Aboriginal elders teaching there. This bothered me. I did not feel I would get the right teachings from someone who is not from the culture. Finally, a couple of years later, I decided to go ahead and take a survival course in Ontario. The course was not endorsed or taught by Aboriginal teachers as I wished it had been but I could not find a teacher anywhere so I had no choice. The course was good but it focused on the psychology of wilderness survival and being lost in the bush. It was stressful. We had to put our skills of traditional fire making, shelter building and food gathering to the test under stressful circumstances such as lack of sleep and dehydration. The philosophy was 'human against nature'. The lessons had an underlying message that nature is dangerous and to be respected. Learning the skills was not to develop a spiritual/emotional relationship with the Earth but solely for the purpose of staying alive. I still learned a lot and I was glad I took the course. It taught me that survival in the bush with nothing is extremely difficult and that nature will not necessarily always be our protector or guardian as I had rather ignorantly dreamed it would be based on the romanticized teachings I had read about, but that nature can ultimately be what will kill us. I learned that I did want to get the physical skills of bush

life and that practicing the skills separately from the spiritual was a start and I was okay with that. The spiritual would have to wait. I can remember trying to do some of the exercises from a Tom Brown book on getting the psyche to a different realm of consciousness by sitting in the forest and staring beyond the greenery. I couldn't quite get to where he claimed one could get. I felt somewhat foolish as I would tell my kids, I was just going into the bush (forest in our backyard) to sit for a while and they would look at me as if I was crazy or something. But I knew deep down that some place was there for me. I never got to it. Perhaps I got scared. I am not sure. Maybe I just needed more time and guidance.

Around a year later, in 2002, I was teaching a grade six class and one of my Aboriginal parents lent me some books. She was an elementary supply teacher and often taught at our school. One of the books she lent me was a true story about a shaman who was unjustly executed for killing a Wendigo. I was fascinated with the story yet at the same time spooked by what she called the 'dark side' of Aboriginal culture. It spooked me because it was really about a Shaman protecting his people from the forces of evil, the Wendigo. Forces of evil are spooky in any culture. What I learned from that book was that shamanism exists and almost all of the spiritual workings of it involve the natural world. Shaman's and holy people of the culture learn to pass into different realms of consciousness and speak in ways that become translated to others as warnings, messages or teachings. I was not ready for the complete understanding of the issues in that book. I returned it saying it was my favourite but knew I would be needing much more work to understand this aspect of the culture.

A few months ago, I was very happy to bump into this parent again because I was thinking a lot about that book. I thought I would like to read it again to better understand the idea of the shaman and a term I had heard come up at the Pow Wow's I attend – the shaking tent. She happily lent me the book again. A few days later, I learned that there was an underlying, spiritual and intuitive reason that book came back into my hands. My husband had been talking to a Cree friend he hadn't seen in a long time and at the dinner table one night, my husband mentioned his name. The name sounded very familiar to me – as if I had just read or heard it. I suddenly realized I had read the name in the book I had recently been lent. I ran for the book to show my husband. Sure enough, the same name appeared. It was the name of a Chief. My husband took the book to his friend to see if he had seen it. He had never seen the book before but he knew the Chief. The Chief was his late great, great, grandfather. The setting of the story was the home town of my husband's Cree friend. He knew the oral version of the story. He borrowed the book. I got it back and I still have it. What an awesome story. I wonder what the oral version would be like.

In the coming years, I came closer to the conclusion that education in Ontario was, in my opinion, in a seriously flawed state. I did the best I could to I try to get a few more outdoor projects going at school but politics, poor administration and lack of funding were all roadblocks. I had increasing resistance from every angle especially if my activities involved any sort of spiritual connection to the Earth. Resistance never came from the students – ever, only anger that we could not do more. I wanted to take my students on quiet walks in the forest where they could find a spot and sit to observe and perhaps write and talk about it back in class. Word got out that we were going on spirit

walks and that was the end of that! I was frustrated. I just wanted to get the kids into the natural world to experience it in deep mental ways and I was unable to do so. In a way, I guess I gave up. I retreated and fell with conformity. It was all I could do to keep from becoming angry and very unhappy in my job. I began to focus on my own needs and those of my family. My job would become just a job for a while. I resented the system. I would turn my teachings of the natural world toward my own children.

Our family canoe trips continued each summer and it was here where I continued to find refuge from the struggles of living in ways that I did not agree with. My husband and I would agree that day to day life was a rat race, what with getting the kids off to school, making lunches, getting them to lessons, homework, grocery shopping, home repairs, car repairs dentist appointments. Next to school pressures for the kids, Christmas shopping was the worst. What was it all for? Canoe trips reminded me that there are other reasons to be alive. My children never once refused to go despite the fears of their wilderness. Most of the time, they only became afraid at night when the smallest sounds at the campsite are amplified. They feared bears. Especially when they would see my husband and I fussing over the food hanging job. The only other fear they had was that of being lost and not being able to get out. They never liked waiting around either in the canoe, or at the end of a portage while my husband and I tried to figure out the map. Bugs would start biting, wind would blow, hunger would strike – whatever discomfort presented itself – it would strike at map reading time. But these fears get overcome and the stories that go along with them are what make the connection with the wilderness happen.

On one trip, we had arrived at the perfect island campsite after a very long, hot day. We liked island sites because bear encounters were less likely. This particular site was gorgeous. It had a bed of pine needles, a slight slope upward wear the fire pit and tent spot were located. We jumped around excited, preparing to unload the canoe when I decided to walk down the path to the water. I was just ranting about the lovely rock steps someone had made to the water's edge, when all of a sudden I felt a soft, gushy texture under my foot and a loud rattling sound! I realized it was a Massassauga rattler and must have jumped at least three feet high. It did not bite me, Thank God! However, there was no way we were going to stay at that site. It was home to the rattler and I was not about to take that kind of risk with children around – nor were they! We left the island and paddled up the shore to another spot which was smaller and on the mainland. We settled in, my children picked about in the fire and I noticed my husband being extra fussy over the food hanging. It wasn't until the next day that he told me he had seen a pile of bear scat on the beach beside large footprints in the sand. I was glad he did not say anything. On the other hand, it is important to see the clues of what animals are watching us I am sure. I remember my survival instructor telling us there was a bear skulking around us the entire afternoon when we were practicing shelter building. None of us had a clue of its presence. She proved to us that we were not vigilant enough and that we must learn to look peripherally at all times and use all our senses. I get freaked out sometimes when I focus too much on what animals are watching me. My kids do too. Sometimes I like to just 'be'. It's funny because when I return from a canoe trip, my senses are very acute. When I visit the city, now after living where I do near a forest with few neighbours and stimuli, I become over stimulated and by the end of the first day of a two day visit, I am

visually and mentally exhausted. I return home and realize how quiet it is. Most of my guests can't sleep at my place because it is so silent. Seeing wildlife and any evidence of it is not as easy as it might seem. It requires practise and patience.

I am more nervous when on canoe trips with my children than when I go with adult friends. I worry about whether they are having fun or not. I want them to enjoy it but truthfully, being in the wilderness is not always fun. It is work. When the weather is good, it is still work. It was on about our third canoe trip as a family that my kids started to enjoy the challenge of carrying packs on portages and paddling the canoe through windy weather. On one trip, it rained heavily for about six straight hours. We were already at the campsite but had not set up yet. My daughter and son both in their two-piece raingear just walked the beach playing with the ducklings that paddled the shallow water on shore. They looked like little ducks themselves. The rain was unrelenting! No complaints, just joy and laughter as they played with the ducks. In the morning huge puddles had formed on the campsite and the ducks made their way into the campsite and made one puddle their new home. It was very humorous. I can always count on little animals to lighten the darkest moods on canoe trips.

We were on a trip in Temagami when my kids were five and eight years old. We got stuck on Obabika Lake because of high winds. We stayed two nights on one campsite and tried to get as early a start as possible when the wind was somewhat calm. By the time we were halfway down the lake the waves were so huge we had to tack the canoe to avoid being swamped. We did not want to get too close to shore because that's where the waves were breaking but being too far from shore risked deep water capsize. My son fell asleep while resting his head on the gunwales. My daughter just sat still and low in the

canoe. My husband and I, in tandem, paddled in one direction, yelled "TURN" then paddled in the other. Gradually we made it to the portage where there must have been upwards of ten kids and their canoe guides waiting and wondering what to do. We told them to stay put.

I know my kids would sometimes rather be somewhere else when we are canoeing. Of course they would rather be at an amusement park, riding roller coasters, playing in fake water parks, eating cotton candy and buying overpriced souvenirs. I don't deprive them of this despite how resentful I am of the power it has to steal the hearts of my children. But I loved these things too, as a child. However, I loved the natural world too. I had the chance to be in it more than my own children because we had less money to afford the parks. The natural world was our amusement park. Video games steal hearts too. My son is surely not deprived of this kind of leisure activity. I worried because I let him bring his electronics on our latest canoe trip and I thought it hindered his adjustment to the wilderness. It seemed to take him longer to settle in to the remoteness and seek new kinds of games and activities like he used to do. I always knew when my son had fully adjusted to wilderness living. He would be seen on his own on a rocky outcropping of a campsite in deep role playing of karate chopping or sword fighting. The sounds from his mouth like the sounds of cracked whips, swords clanking and bullets flying through wind were all I needed to hear to acknowledge that he was totally at home in his new setting. These sessions would be enhanced and easier to come by when he was allowed to wear my belt with knife and tools around his waist. My daughter would soon enter his realm and the two would go fishing, play cards or just talk. These will always be cherished memories for me and I hope for them. But on this latest trip, my son did not do any of

this kind of activity. He was very anxious, particularly in the evenings. I was certain it was because he was unable to detach from the video screen of his electronic games and immerse into the surroundings. I was angry at myself for allowing him to bring them. I was very resentful at the makers of these toys. How can parents compete with these things? We have been on a trip since that one, and we allowed no electronics. It was only a three day trip so it was hard to assess whether he would have ever settled in. He was still anxious and claimed he did not enjoy being out in the wilderness, despite the fun he and his sister had dangling from our newest innovation of ropes and pulleys for hanging food packs, singing, "I believe I can fly, I believe I can touch the sky." I caught him having too much fun and challenged his opinion of canoe tripping. He said, "Well, certain parts of the trips are fun but I don't want to come back." I won't make my son return to the wilderness until he is ready. His anxiety was very debilitating for him especially at night and I felt sorry for him. There was nothing I could do to comfort him. Only time will tell if he will ever go on a canoe trip again. I feel quite certain that as he gets older he will overcome his fears and we will go again but for now we will respect his concerns. My daughter had fears too but she was not always as vocal about them. I always knew when she had made her full adjustment to the wilderness too. She would be seen dappling around the campsite, sweeping the tent, preparing our beds or washing her shoes or clothes. She was always the first one to locate the best tent spot. My daughter joins me on my canoe trips with the women. She sterns a canoe and loves to cook.

The women trips I do every Spring and Fall are the focus of these beautiful seasons. These trips are very different from family trips. They are a time for me to fully immerse myself into the natural world when I do not have to be the protector of my

children. I started these trips in nineteen ninety six with three of my female friends. The women who come do not always have experience. I always encourage their participation. They always find it most empowering when they are on these trips. We have had some great times and some very special moments that have truly strengthened my connections with the Earth. On one particular occasion, we were very lost! We were all teachers and had to be back in class for Monday morning. We honestly questioned whether we would make it. We simply could not find the portage to get out. We had paddled down a narrow section of the lake to no avail. We had slipped into a smaller lake entrance and paddled the entire shoreline. We walked into the bush to see if we could find a trail but nothing. We were paddling the Magnetewan River which is crown land and unlike Provincial Parks there are no signs posting where portages and campsites are. The Provincial Park portage signs are bright yellow with a black silhouette of a person portaging a canoe. We were so desperately lost that we had visions of using my cell phone and getting a helicopter to airlift us home. My cell phone did not work. We talked about praying hard. I told them that our night custodian who is Catholic believes in praying to St. Anthony, when one loses something. She prayed to him once for me when I lost my class's ski trip money. "He is the Saint of lost and found", she said. The next day she found the money. Custodians are teachers' lifelines, really! Well, we sat in our canoes and said, "Well let's pray to Saint Anthony." One woman suggested trying the narrow part of the lake again thinking maybe there is another way out. But we had already been down as far as we could. We had no other choices and we were truly feeling lost in every sense of the word, paddling around in circles for at least two or three hours. We tried the narrows again. As we approached we looked on the shore and there on a huge tree trunk was a big, bright,

yellow Provincial Park portage sign! I felt like I was in a dream. This was impossible. We screamed and laughed and screamed and laughed. None of us cared to contemplate the impossibility of this sign posting. We were just happy to have found our way. But later on, we talked about it. We knew we had been past that tree and there was no sign. We allowed ourselves to believe that a higher power helped us that day. The next year, we were sure to check if there was in fact a sign posted at that portage and sure enough there was NOT! This event had a huge impact on me. I finally felt like the spirit of the natural world is alive and well, be it in the form of a Catholic Saint or a bird flying overhead with some kind of message. I am learning to read the natural world in ways I have not done before. I take these stories with me into my classroom and tell them to my students and leave them with feelings of mystery and awe. Students always have similar experiential stories and we just tell and listen to each other. This is what I do now. Stories have become my education model. It doesn't matter what culture anyone is from. Stories cross boundaries. They open minds to mystery and make people learn about each other and other worlds including the natural world. If stories are the only way I can make kids connect to the natural world right now, I'll do it.

Closing Thoughts

I worry about my students and my own children and their lack of outside time. I also worry about the ecological crisis. I dislike seeing how vulnerable they are to the powers of consumption. Buying 'stuff' makes them happy but it is always short-lived.

I do not fear politics and roadblocks anymore when it comes to ecological initiatives. I speak out about my opinions of how anti-environmental the Ontario education system is but I follow the rules and respect most policies. I will also respect

that policies can change and I believe that this will be where I might spend some time and energy in the future. I can no longer let myself get overwhelmed by the anti-ecological ways in which we live. I must now be proactive rather than reactive.

I vow to take my students outside every day. I want to take them for community walks around our town and teach them about the place they live, the land, the water and the stories. I don't know if I will ever get education policies to change with regards to canoe tripping but I truly believe that the canoe trip has immense potential for creating deep connections between people and the Earth. Taking teachers on canoe trips makes teachers view the natural world differently and this must filter into their teaching practice. I continue to develop new friendships with the local First Nations people. One of my very good friends on the local island reserve is a former parent of two students I taught. We get together frequently but always at their annual Pow Wow. I continue to learn a lot about their culture. She has lots of stories about spirits and shamans she wants to tell me sometime. Perhaps one day I will teach or be an administrator at the local island reservation school, maybe I won't – and that's okay. But one thing I know for certain and that is that we will never heal our ailing planet by science and technology alone. We must get outside if we are to care about the Earth. We must try to understand the metaphysics of ancestral people. We must examine some of the ecologically healthy ways that some Indigenous people live and think about alternative lifestyles for ourselves. We must seek happiness not through material wealth but through the wealth of being part of a healthy natural world. We need to know moderation in times of extravagance and indulgence. We must conserve, not find new forms of energy so that we can continue consuming to our heart's content. We must respect and be in awe of the accomplishments in our past and

understand what may have been mistakes. We do not need to go backwards, we need to combine ways of life to live in ecologically sustainable ways.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have tried to explain how and why dominant culture has developed the relationship it has with the Earth. I have traced the behaviours of humans as they have interacted with the Earth since the beginning of their existence on the planet in search of some answers to some fundamental questions: a) Why is this dominant group of humans leaving the largest ecological footprint in history? b) Was their evolution to this point in history inevitable? c) What about other human groups like Indigenous people who live in remote areas in ecologically balanced ways? How have they survived living such different ways compared to the dominant group of humans? d) What did/does education and learning look like to these people? e) Will they evolve and live in poverty and eventual extinction as a result of not assimilating in the dominant Western ways in the same ways that other Aboriginal people of the world have done? f) Why does the Western way of living on the planet seem to over power all other ways? If it is the wrong way to live in terms of our survival, why is it so hard to change? g) What role does education play in all of this? h) Why is it so difficult to get environmental programs running in schools? i) Why does education so strongly support the cognitive rather than the affective and the spiritual/emotional development of children? j) If change is so difficult, even in education, maybe it is not necessary after all. If I just ignore my feelings of incongruence and injustice about the way the natural world and some of its non-dominant cultures are treated and just embrace the culture I have been raised to know

then maybe I will be happier and realize there is no crisis after all. How do other people go on living the Western ways without guilt or worry?

These questions were the reason for beginning my research. I reviewed works from a variety of authors in order to find some answers to my questions and formulate a written work to share my findings. I included a narrative piece to illustrate what my research has meant for me.

In the paper, I show that certain aspects in the stages of human evolution contributed to the faster growth of dominant culture and its unhealthy patterns of behaviours that characterize its relationship with the Earth. In doing this I have demonstrated education used to be about the environment and how to know and survive in it. With the series of developments in the evolution of dominant culture, the 'environmental' in education has gradually disappeared to the point where it is non-existent in Ontario education and increasingly difficult to implement.

By detailing facts about humans and their relationship with the Earth during the Paleolithic Age, I show how Earth experiences were the foundation for movement into adulthood. My description of life during the Neolithic Age focuses on seven aspects of behaviour changes in humans: 1) Attention to the land narrowed due to boundaries around farming villages. 2) The concept of place and space narrowed and the larger Earth has less significance and created needs to defend their territory by violence. 3) By regarding the Earth as a female entity that nurtures made men resent her in times of poor crop yields and contributed to feelings retaliation or the need to subordinate her. 4) The concept of duality and opposing perceptions resulted in getting stuck a binary view of 'push and pull' mentality. 5) The domestication of food creating feelings of distrust in

mother and maternal Earth, helplessness, abandonment and aggression. 6) Material possessions demonstrated the psychological need to identify oneself in an increasingly egocentric world. 7) Domestication of animals diminished the number of animals known to humans and infinite possibilities of otherness, cosmos and all the creatures living in it. Animals were no longer viewed as having spirits.

During the Industrial Age, there came scientific thought and the idea that new ways are the better ways. The invention of machines and factories created a world of possessions and reinforced the anthropocentric attitudes toward the Earth. This 'runaway train' contributed to the inability of people to foresee future consequences and confront what was happening.

The beginnings of the Environmental Movement were evidence of a growing number of people who were not comfortable about the way things were going in terms of the Earth and the exploitation of it. The movement's purposes evolved from anthropocentric reasons for protecting land to ideas around ethics from scholars of Deep Ecology toward ecocentric reasons such as the identification that the human condition can improve with attention to ecological issues.

Despite the concerns from the spectrum of groups within the Environmental Movement, the evolving dominant culture continued on its path of ecological exploitation and with the coming of the Digital Age, the culture of denial is going global. With the implicit nature of the Western root metaphors and mythopoetic narratives prevalent in computer technology, the need to consider differences is non-existent and this undermines cultures of non-electronically mediated world – many of which are ecologically based. In addition, the subjective, decontextualized nature of computer

interactions diminishes the sensual awareness and reciprocity of the natural world, reinforces autonomous individualism through text and the notion that we are not related or connected to the cosmos.

Studying the epistemologies of Indigenous people and the ways they relate to the Earth give clues to solutions to living in ecologically balanced ways in this world and makes us realize that while they may be the same people as the early hunters and gatherers, the primacy of ancestral knowledge in the lives of those living on traditional territories is the distinguishing characteristic between them and the anthropological conceit of the Neolithic powers. I examined three aspect of Indigenous ways 1) Perception: where seeing the world as Indigenous People do contributes to a fully developed mind and can take us out of the culture of denial. 2) Landscape and Mapping: where receiving moral insights from names and stories of places and walking the land develops a part of the brain that reinforces the ecocentric and spiritual view of the world. 3) Storytelling: where the oral aspect of language reinforces the ecologically based root metaphors, with their emphasis on environmental ethics, over and over again and helps make better sense of the world while becoming whole individuals.

Finally, I looked at education in the dominant culture. Education used to be all about the environment and in some Indigenous cultures it still is. I described Western forms of education and explained how some authors believe it to be anti-ecological and anti-humanitarian. I then looked at education in Ontario, provided a brief history of the beginnings of mass schooling and the perpetuation of the Western ideology of market oriented goals for learning. I distinguished, from my perspective, four kinds of environmental learning of which only three have happened in schools and today almost

no environmental education occurs. The four kinds were a) gaining knowledge about the Earth as a resource for exploiting, b) learning about the outdoors for the purpose of developing physical activity and leadership, c) learning for the purpose of managing the declining Earth resources, and d) learning as a means to understanding the Earth's rhythms in order to fully understand ourselves. I then provided examples of these kinds of learning excluding the fourth kind since it does not happen except in subordinated attempts, and how the government of the day influenced what policies would direct what was taught and how. I gave examples of how the Western ideology permeates all educational objectives and contributes to the culture of denial. I concluded with the fact that Ontario has abdicated environmental education and with that has perpetuated the Western ideals of economic growth in a market oriented society making it ant-environmental and subordinating to teachers and to students.

In Chapter Two, I told the story of my life and relationship to the natural world and in so doing, demonstrated personal examples of some of the concepts in Chapter One. I talked about how I felt about my roots and where my ancestors were from. I told of my childhood as very ecophilic – with stories of many outside learning experiences and opportunities I had to relate to the natural world with all my senses. As I moved to talk about adolescence I show how I spent less and less time outside and in my young adult years I tell of the consequences of this as a constant unmet yearning to 'get away from it all'. Some part of my development into adulthood was not being nurtured and the lack of nurturing played out in later adulthood in the anthropocentric form of a psychological disorder – a disorder that I assert was that of an enforced ecophobia and a stifled Earth/human relationship. I demonstrate resolve when I tell of stories of returning

to the natural world by living in a forested area, canoe tripping with my women friends and family, and continuing my search for deepening my relations to the Earth by understanding Indigenous ways and interacting with my local friends, colleagues and acquaintances of the First Nation community. I make a final statement or motto about how I wish to change the way I teach which included the idea of returning to a mythopoetically and experientially based spiritual educational praxis. In the words of Joe Sheridan, "While we won't create an Indigenous people, we can understand their metaphysics and that might make us suitable to re-inhabit Turtle Island and in that hope it is time to give experientially authentic environmental education back to its originators since those who appropriated the practice in the first place and their bosses have blown it completely."(Sheridan, 2006). Maybe then, our spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical development will be allowed to complete its Circle of Life.

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