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Lifelong Learning and the Homeplace

by

Patricia A. Gouthro

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

at

Dalhousie University

Halifax, Nova Scotia

July, 1998

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by Patricia Anne Gouthro

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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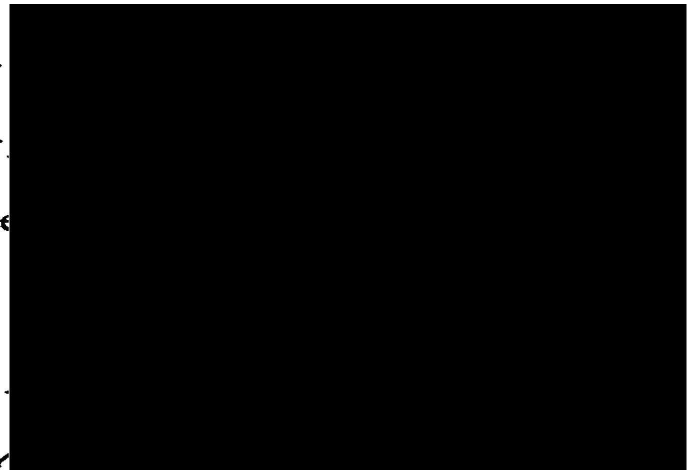

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ABSTRACT

Lifelong Learning and the Homeplace

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The dominant discourse in lifelong learning currently centres on connections to the marketplace. In this dissertation I explore the implications of this narrow construct of lifelong learning and question how gendered differences in experience are often overlooked in current educational discourses. I argue that the homeplace is an important site of living and learning that has often been overlooked or subsumed into other categories, such as community, and that connections between the homeplace and formal educational experiences need to be examined and explored.

I draw upon critical and feminist theories to suggest how alternative discourses may inform a broader adult education practice. My analysis draws upon Jurgen Habermas's theory of communicative action and maternal discourses to inform a critical feminist pedagogical approach in lifelong learning. I argue that educational practice may be enhanced by developing a life-affirming approach to adult education that recognizes gendered differences in experience, and supports values that challenge the dominant marketplace discourse in lifelong learning.

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INTRODUCTION

THE DOMINANT DISCOURSE

Change is the word that always comes up in discourses surrounding lifelong learning. We are told that we need to continue learning throughout our lifetime to be able to cope with, adapt to, and develop a world that over the last century has been characterized by an increasingly rapid rate of change (Dave, 1976; Methven & Hussen, 1997; Longworth, & Davies, 1996). As Edwards states, "it is the triumvirate of demographic, technological, and economic change which is constructed as heralding the need for lifelong learning" (1997: 22).

The key questions that I address in this dissertation are what kinds of changes are we preparing ourselves to deal with, and what are the underlying value assumptions contained within the current dominant discourse in lifelong learning. I raise these questions to develop a framework for a counter discourse that draws upon feminist and critical theory to challenge the current marketplace orientation within lifelong learning, and provide an alternative, more inclusive worldview of the potential for lifelong learning. In doing so, I address the gendered differences in experience by drawing connections between lifelong learning and the homeplace.

Within the field of adult education, lifelong learning is

a term which has been discussed in different contexts. The concept of "lifelong education" (Faure,E., 1972) and the idea of a "learning society" (Husen, 1974) received enthusiastic interest from the academic communities in the 1970's, as an educative discourse that was both idealistic and hopeful. The ameliorative aspects of developing educational opportunities that continued from childhood into adulthood could be used to fulfil democratic dreams of universal freedom and development.

In more recent literature on lifelong learning (Knapper & Cropley, 1991; Longworth & Davies, 1996; Edwards, 1997) it appears that the technical-rational influence of modern society has led to a differently skewed focus whereby education continuing into adulthood is perceived as a necessary aspect of competing within the context of a global economy. Currently, the dominant discourse in lifelong education attends almost exclusively to government and corporate agendas which support lifelong learning as a means to upgrade vocational and professional skills (Employment and Immigration Canada, 1989; Human Resources Development of Canada, 1994; Segal Quince Wicksteed, 1988; Hatton, 1997). Within this narrowly defined context, the broader concept of lifelong education has been conflated to mean lifelong training.

The focus of my research is on lifelong learning and the

homeplace. My dissertation highlights an essential area of adult learning, which in the past has tended to be overlooked or subsumed under other categories. It focuses attention upon the significance of family life and responsibilities, on the construction of individual identity and on the societal differentiation in gendered expectation of labour, roles, and responsibilities. By examining the implications of the influence of the homeplace on the lives of adult learners, I provide a framework for analysis that links experiential feminist research, which has attended to the difficulties, challenges, and uniqueness of the adult woman learner's experiences, with the broader theoretical discourse of critical theory, focussing particularly on Habermas's (1981) theory of communicative action.

I argue that we need to examine our support of lifelong education to broaden our perception of adult education by examining the underlying value systems which define the various discourses in lifelong learning. Drawing upon Habermas's theory of communicative action I use his concept of the system/lifeworld dichotomy to argue that system imperatives have overtaken the lifeworld initiatives within the dominant discourse of lifelong education. The goals of industry have reduced the dominant discourse in lifelong learning to a form of propaganda for industry which excludes

many important educational and societal concerns (Collins, 1995). This agenda has been enthusiastically embraced by government, and is shaping the educational policies of our universities and colleges to develop a narrowly constructed concept of lifelong education which benefits capitalist interests in industry by encouraging people to compete as educational consumers and producers (see Cooper, Velde, & Gerber, 1995; Downey, 1996).

The increased participation in adult education programs as a result of this marketplace orientation in lifelong learning has been motivated primarily by the widespread perception that continuing education is needed within a globally competitive economy. Shipley argues that a lifelong learning perspective demonstrates "the potential that continued education and training offers in resolving unemployment dilemmas in the Canadian labour force, [and] in allowing Canada to compete effectively in a growing global economy" (1994, p. 9) This is reflected in situations ranging from the professional who chooses to take an extra degree in order to get a pay increase, to universities which design executive business programs that bring in higher tuition rates, to governments which have community colleges design programs (such as the 1-800 call operators in New Brunswick) in order to attract businesses to the region. Ultimately, it

appears that it is big business and industry that gain from this competition, and a number of individuals who work within this context to situate themselves so that they too can profit (Forrester, Payne & Ward, 1995; Henkel, 1997).

The situation that I have described here is not a surprising revelation for anyone who lives in the Western world. At either a conscious or unconscious level we are all aware of the rhetoric and the underlying sense of competition that grids our attitudes towards education. Since democracy has often been perceived as being inextricably linked with capitalism, many people would perceive this situation as being unproblematic. If, as I once read in a comic somewhere, the secret to life is being happy with what you get, then what's important is to "Get enough".

In critiquing this general acceptance of the dominant discourse in lifelong learning I am not advocating that we should have a general levelling out of education so that it is no longer used as a means of assisting personal advancement in the labour force. Nor am I suggesting that there should never be competition between various academic programs or institutions. Like many people, I have been imbued with the belief that one should be allowed to reap the rewards which result from individual effort and hard labour.

By allowing the discourse of lifelong learning to centre

primarily on the narrow interests of industry, however, we are limiting the potential for adult education to foster democratic possibilities and freedom, and we overlook many important areas of education which exist outside of the vocational realm. We fail to address some of the underlying ethical concerns that are so frequently and conveniently waylaid by corporate leadership. The interests of elite groups are favoured over those of marginalized people, and structural barriers are created which limit access to educational opportunities, thus minimizing the capacity for individual initiative. The importance of family life, personal or spiritual growth and development, and community concerns are often given low priority on the corporate agenda.

I am concerned that within this narrowly constructed concept of lifelong learning, there is a widening disparity between the "haves" and "have-nots" in our world. Rather than leading to egalitarian opportunities, where people can learn to improve their own life conditions, adult education programs become yet another item for consumption which demarcates the difference between those who are "successful" in life, and those who are not. The postmodern approach (Richard Edwards, 1997; Jansen & Wildemeersch, 1996) notes how individuals use education to construct a sense of identity, in a context where education becomes a commodity that one purchases. Education

in this sense becomes little more than a status "label", and it would seem that the reason for entering a program is no different than why someone would choose to buy a pair of Levi's jeans for the red tab on the rear pocket. Both are marketed as "quality" products, and the capacity to purchase these items is an indicator of power and status.

The marketplace orientation in lifelong education reduces the critical orientation which has long been associated with the field of adult education (Collins, 1991). When industry and government assume responsibility for defining the types of curriculum and programs which will receive financial support and funding, there is a concern that this may start to infringe upon academic autonomy and freedom (Preece, 1997). Despite recent discussion over the need for employees to have "critical thinking skills", I argue that in vocational and professional training programs, students are usually not encouraged to develop the capacity to be truly critical. Issues such as sustainable development, the exploitation of human rights, and discriminatory practices are rarely explored in depth (Kurfiss, 1988; Hart, 1992).

Within the context of the dominant discourse in lifelong learning, scant attention is paid to life-affirming work which is often centred within the homeplace, such as parenting. This creates a gendered disparity which overlooks the

difficulties, challenges, and uniqueness of adult women learner's experiences. Within the discourses on lifelong education, the value of learning which occurs in the homeplace is generally overlooked or subsumed into the larger category of community. The importance of the homeplace with regards to relationships, identity development, and as a site of labour is usually ignored. In order to challenge the underlying value structure which guides the competitive, profit-oriented perspective of dominant paradigm in lifelong education, and to understand gendered differences in experience in adult learning situations, the significance of the homeplace in relationship to lifelong learning needs to be further explored.

The concept of what constitutes lifelong education needs to be broadened in order to develop a more holistic approach towards learning which encompasses family, community, and the broader social spectrum. I suggest the maternal discourses that centre on life affirming practices may provide a basis for the development of a counter discourse. If lifelong education is centred only on the marketplace and other learning possibilities are neglected, we will have an educational agenda that is not beneficial to the larger society. This approach would serve to perpetuate the marginalization of disadvantaged groups and ignores the

importance of subsistence labour. We need to develop an understanding of lifelong learning as a means of developing an educated citizenry committed to improving life, not just profits (Hart, 1995).

By centering attention on the homeplace as an important site of living and learning, I attempt to shift the focus of lifelong learning towards understanding a broader spectrum of human learning experiences. Drawing upon a critical and feminist analysis, I am able to demonstrate how the marketplace orientation in lifelong education serves to marginalize disenfranchised groups in our society, focussing particularly women's experiences in adult education.

As adult educators we need to be cognizant of our own beliefs and values which underlie our teaching practice. I believe that it is important to develop a rich tapestry of educational theory which can be useful to help educators in the field develop sound educational practice. Theory is an important and valuable resource, as it serves to focus attention on significant issues, raises ethical concerns, challenges existing conceptual frameworks, and posits new ideas which can be developed through practice and discourse. The intention of this dissertation is to contribute to the multiple discourses which currently influence adult educators in the development of both theory and practice by providing an

analysis which links feminist experiential research with Habermasian theoretical discourse to focus on lifelong learning and the homeplace.

Defining Lifelong Learning

The expansion of various forms of education to facilitate learning throughout the lifespan is the primary reason for the development of various discourses surrounding the concept of lifelong learning. While the concept of lifelong learning is one which has gained common usage in recent decades, there is some confusion over definitions of the term.

I choose to use the term "lifelong learning" because under this broader heading there are several relevant educational discourses which I use in my analysis. I draw upon literature that is defined by the authors as lifelong education, recurrent education, workplace education, adult education, higher education and continuing education. Each of these terms has a slightly different meaning. Lifelong and recurrent education generally refer more to structured rather than informal learning experiences. Workplace education refers to vocationally oriented training or upgrading given to employees in the paid work force. Adult education is concerned with adult learning experiences rather than learning that takes place over an individual's whole lifetime. Higher

education focuses on post-secondary institutions, while continuing education refers to extension programs offered by post-secondary institutions.

While lifelong learning, lifelong education, and adult education are often used interchangeably, it has been argued that there are distinct differences between these educational areas. For instance, Brookfield (1984) suggests that lifelong education refers to formal, institutionalized educational programs and opportunities, while lifelong learning is the wide range of knowledge and skills that adults naturally pick up over the course of their lifetime.

Knapper and Cropley (1991) explain that when they discuss the concept of lifelong learning, they are not talking about the day to day skills which people automatically learn. They state that the "kind of lifelong learning that is the object of lifelong learning is what Tough (1971) called "deliberate" learning" (1991, p. 20). This is differentiated from "spontaneous, unplanned, and even unconscious" types of learning that goes on in the everyday lives of adults. They argue it is necessary to make this distinction because it is "the systemic, purposeful, organised learning that lifelong education procedures seek to foster" (1991, p. 20-21). So, unlike Brookfield, they use the concept of lifelong learning to talk about focussed, intentional learning, rather than

incidental, everyday types of learning.

In defining the concept of lifelong education, Dave gives the explanation:

> Lifelong education is a process of accomplishing personal, social and professional development throughout the life-span of individuals in order to enhance the quality of life of both individuals and their collectives. It is a comprehensive and unifying idea which includes formal, non-formal and informal learning for acquiring and enhancing enlightenment so as to attain the fullest possible development in different stages and domains of life. It is connected with both individual growth and social progress. That is why ideas such as "learning to be" and "a learning society" or "an educative society" are associated with this concept (Dave, 1976, p. 34).

This is a very broad definition, which incorporates many different types of learning experiences, not just structured, formal types of educational situations.

As Wain (1993) notes, there is no single, consensual agreement of what exactly defines lifelong learning. He proposes that there is both a maximalist and a minimalist position, both of which have been confused and used interchangeably with adult education, to the detriment of both. Minimalists interchange the term "lifelong education" with "adult education", perceiving it simply to be "either a 'stop-start' provision of vocational opportunities throughout adult life, or as a 'topping up' of professional or academic programmes on the traditional school provision" (1993, p. 93). This is contrasted against the maximalist position, which

argues for a more encompassing approach to lifelong learning which would lead to an "educative society' which is marked by a total and co-ordinated mobilization of institutional and personal resources for learning and by a particular mentality" (1993, p. 93). Wain also argues against confusing adult education with the concepts of lifelong learning or lifelong education, since adult education does not focus on the full spectrum of a person's life.

Amidst these varying explanations, I see that the concept of lifelong education implies a more deliberate approach to learning. However, I would include it under the umbrella of the concept of lifelong learning, rather than establishing it as a separate, parallel category. In the same way, I also include adult education under the auspices of lifelong learning. While it cannot be used as an interchangeable term, since the notion of lifelong learning includes childhood as well as adult learning, the literature in lifelong learning tends to centre primarily on adult learning experiences (Wain, 1993; Knapper & Cropley, 1991).

"Lifelong learning" is the broadest term for the various concepts discussed. Knapper and Cropley, who use lifelong learning and lifelong education in an interchangeable fashion, argue that

> when viewed as a unifying principle linking existing trends and tendencies, lifelong education

> is a useful device for bringing together under a common heading a number of ideas and practices which, although possessing an inherent unity, would otherwise have continued to be treated as distinct from each other (1991, p. 17).

In the same way, I use the concept of lifelong learning as a means of drawing together research and information from various different, yet interrelated discourses.

Rationale for Lifelong Learning

The rapid rate of change our society has been experiencing, particularly in the latter half of this century, is the main justification given for the need to develop lifelong learning (Methven & Hansen, 1997). A philosophy of lifelong learning recognizes that learning takes place over a lifetime, and does not end after the formative childhood years. It focuses on the importance of adult education in shaping the future. As Methven and Hansen point out, traditional attitudes towards learning must be changed because "the inherent weakness of a system in which it is assumed that one can be *educated for life* is that life itself changes" (1997, p. 5). As we head into the twenty-first century, there are indications that change will continue as an even more rapid rate, thus intensifying the need for lifelong learning (Longworth & Davies, 1996).

In this information age, our knowledge bases are quickly

expanding. Knapper (1988) notes that the information one learns in universities in many disciplines will be outdated within just a few years after graduation. The new information technologies and increasing globalization has resulted in a trend whereby most professionals are continually upgrading their educational skills to meet the demands of a constantly shifting workplace. The economy is unpredictable and competitive, with rapid technological changes that lead to the need for employees to continually learn new skills and improve their educational qualifications. Adaptability is a key characteristic required for industrial survival. As Dave (1976) noted, "What is unique in the present spiral of change is that many of the developments have taken global proportions, transcending the national and regional boundaries more rapidly than ever before" (1976, p. 16). While acknowledging that the change is not uniform across different countries and cultures, it nonetheless is quite broad-reaching.

Mature Students

There are more mature students today than in the past and changes in our society indicate that these numbers will continue to increase over time (Barer-Stein & Draper, 1988; Kulich, 1991). The age medium in North America is increasing,

as the largest cohort [baby boomers] are reaching middle age. Birth rates are declining, while people are living longer. As a consequence, Knapper & Cropley note that

> older students have been courted with increasing eagerness by some American colleges and universities, which have seen this group as a heaven-sent solution to the problem of declining enrolments among traditional age students. In the United State, the population of 18-24 year olds peaked in 1981, and it is for this reason that mature students are seen as a potential "new market" for higher education (1991: 51).

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) point out that many older people are returning to school. The elderly may constitute a new generation of students in the future (Ray, Hartley, Bayles, & others, 1983). Research has shown that elderly people may learn a little more slowly than younger students, but they are still quite capable of continuing their education during the later years of their life (Apps, 1981). Continuing education has many benefits, including better mental awareness and physical health (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). Radcliffe states that "there are unjustified assumptions about declining intellectual ability and the difficulty of "returning" to educational activity. These deny the value of a lifetime of experiential growth and relegate learning to narrowly defined patterns of formal education" (1981, p. 143).

The academic performance of mature students generally matches or exceeds that of traditional, younger students.

Mature students are more likely to enrol in part-time programs, which generally do not have as high completion rates as full time programs, so they may have a slightly higher attrition rate than younger students. Mature students may also drop out for other reasons unrelated to academic performance. Overall, however, they are just as capable of doing well in school as younger students (Richardson, 1994).

Mature students return to school for a variety of reasons. Often their decision to continue their education is linked to vocational aspirations, but adult learners are also motivated by personal interests (Clayton & Smith, 1987). Some mature students return to school as a result of a transition or crisis in their personal lives such as the loss of a job, a divorce, or a move to a new area (Apps, 1991).

The majority of students in adult education programs are women (Blundell, 1992). Women may return to school to pursue their own personal interests. Education often serves to boost their self confidence and broaden their outlook on life (Campbell, 1993; Mendelsohn, 1989).

Increasing divorce rates means that many women have to attain financial independence, and education is often an avenue to the work force (Tian, 1996). After divorce, mothers with young children and older homemakers tend to suffer the greatest financial hardship (Rowe, 1991). Anderson and

Sabatelli notes that

> Recent legal reforms have resulted in most alimony awards changing from permanent to "short-term, rehabilitative" awards. The intent of these laws is to provide women time to find employment or gain the skills, training, or education necessary to become self-supporting (1995, p. 284).

Women in these situations may return to education under tremendous pressure to successfully acquire the skills they will need to attain financial independence, realizing that they only have a short period of support before they must assume financial responsibility for themselves, and in many cases, their children. Rosenberg (1990a) discusses the dilemma of "displaced homemakers". These are women who after raising their families, and who are "over forty-five who lose their jobs in the household and are forced onto a labour market that discriminates against them because of their age and lack of skills" (1990a, p. 64). For women in these situations, continuing their education is an economic necessity.

Adults have different concerns than traditional post-secondary students. Many of them are juggling work, family, and community responsibilities in addition to their academic work (Apps, 1991). Mature women students often find themselves caught between two "greedy institutions", as they try to meet the demands of both school and family (Rosalind Edwards, 1993).

Knapper and Cropley (1991) present an argument for a philosophy of lifelong learning which would provide flexible learning alternatives and which would also forge stronger links between educational institutions and industry and community. This approach to leaning would ideally provide both vertical and horizontal linkages. Vertical linkages are traced from the beginning of one's education to later life educational experiences, emphasizing the importance of learning as a continuous, lifelong activity. Horizontal linkages provide connections with the community and the workplace. Within vertical integration, students would acquire a perception of themselves as lifelong learners, and develop the capacity and motivation to continue learning throughout their lifetime. Within horizontal integration, students would be able to take a broader, interdisciplinary approach, value learning experiences from the larger society and be open to learning from other students. I suggest that we should have horizontal and vertical linkages connecting with the homeplace in addition to linking the community and the workplace to lifelong learning.

In the pivotal book, Learning to be (Faure et al., 1972), which evolved from a UNESCO conference, the concept of lifelong learning was broadly endorsed and perceived to be a hopeful approach to achieving some of the democratic goals of

the United Nations. The concept of lifelong education was perceived to have emancipatory potential, to benefit and enrich people's lives. Education has traditionally been viewed as having an ameliorative effect (Dewey, 1916), but in the past, most discussion over formal education centred around childhood schooling. The Faure Report argued that while lifelong learning could not be perceived as a new concept, there is now a need for structures to be put in place to enhance this process.

> Hundreds of millions of adults need education, not only for the pleasure of perfecting their capacities or contributing to their own development, as before, but because the demands for over-all social, economic and cultural development of twentieth-century societies require the maximum potential of an educated citizenry (Faure et al.,1972, p. 142).

Over the years, UNESCO has taken an active role in promoting the concept of lifelong education so that it will be used to improve the quality of life for people across the globe. In the 1947 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UNESCO argued that "for the first time in history, education has been universally and officially accepted as a human right" (Dave, p. 17). In promoting these democratic and egalitarian ideals, it was thought that through lifelong learning, disadvantaged and developing nations could strive towards educating their populace, and thereby improve the quality of life for all citizens.

Unfortunately, the initial enthusiasm for lifelong learning as a solution to world problems, seems to have largely dissipated. Methven and Hansen write that "Much of the original idealism associated with the idea of lifelong learning now appears to have evaporated, and seems to have been replaced by an economic agenda" (1997, p. 5-6). The trend in lifelong learning is now largely focussed on a competitive and capitalist agenda.

The optimism of the seventies, seems to have given way to a more pragmatic, some would say cynical approach to attending to global issues. The recent Delors (1996) report for UNESCO indicates the concern that education may be used to further divide the rich and the poor, North and South, by increasing the knowledge gap and limiting access to learning technologies. Frequently, education is used to obtain a competitive edge in the marketplace, rather than to work towards global cooperation and development.

Trend Towards Vocationalism

In the last couple of decades, the concept of lifelong learning has received fairly enthusiastic endorsement from government and industry (Shipley, 1994; Longworth & Davies, 1996). As this has happened, however, the original meaning and goals for lifelong learning have become conflated to a

narrower, economic agenda. The support for lifelong learning is not to lead to a more democratic and egalitarian world, but rather to place individuals, groups, and even nation-states in a more competitive situation (Forrester, Payne & Ward, 1995).

The dominant discourse in lifelong learning in Canada has been greatly influenced by the technical-rational orientation that has permeated Western thinking since the time of the Enlightenment. With the development of modernity, Hearn argues that "reality comes to be defined in terms of the scientific, instrumental logic of technical rationality" (1985, p. 23). In this discourse, lifelong learning is defined by the profit oriented goals of industry, corporations, government, and policy makers. It is increasingly present in academia, as is demonstrated by the trend towards vocationalism in post-secondary institutions and in the development of "professionalization" which requires continuous educational upgrading and certification (Collins, 1991). It can seen in the movement towards privatization in higher education (Rae, 1996). It is reinforced through the rhetoric much of the adult education literature and government policies which discuss agenda for adult educators which is defined by the need to prepare students to adapt to the exponential increase in information technologies (Hatton, 1997; Merriam & Cafferella, 1991). This discourse on lifelong

learning focuses primarily on connections between adult education and the paid workplace, and is based on the underlying assumption that the value of education is largely determined by how useful it is in training people to successfully participate in and adapt to the evolving global marketplace. Within this discursive forum, the primary motive governing educational policy decisions is the rendering of greater financial profits, which are perceived to be beneficial for industry, government and society as a whole (Tasker & Packman, 1994; Hyland, 1991). Competition is the driving force behind this rationale for lifelong learning, whether it is the individual motivation that encourages a particular student to upgrade his or her academic qualifications for the workplace, or the funding support provided by industry or government to academia in order to provide specialized training programs (Cooper, Velde & Gerber, 1995).

The marketplace orientation in education is reflected in the consumer attitudes of the student population, and the response of academic institutions to meet these (Barrett, 1996). Mature students often desire education which will have immediate practical applicability in their lives. Apps writes, "historically, educators have worked on the assumption that what young people learn now will be useful to them in some

indefinite future. For most adults, the future is now" (1991, p. 42).

At the same time there is diminishing economic support and government funding for post-secondary institutions. Universities are looking for ways to attain public funds in order to be competitive. There has been increasing pressure to attend to the needs of the marketplace. Hyland (1991) notes the trend towards vocationalism in British universities that support competence based education. Downey (1996) argues that Canadian universities need to be attentive to the political climate that supports closer links between academia and the marketplace. Ryan and Heim (1997) argue for the mutually beneficial aspects of universities working in closer alignment with industry. They write, "As we move into the twenty-first century, with increased competition, unanticipated demands and forces, and accelerating change, a significant growth in partnerships between universities and business and industry is inevitable" (1997, p. 42-43). The orientation towards the marketplace in adult education is garnering support from many sectors, including students, universities, and private educators, as well as government and industry.

Critique of the Marketplace Orientation

There are a number of criticisms which have been made

about this orientation towards the marketplace in lifelong education. These concern the trend towards treating students as clients or consumers, an approach which leads to a commodification of education (Barrett, 1996). Treating education as a commodity on the open marketplace may discourage the development of critical capacities on the part of the learner, and it also raises issues over the politics of access to education.

Some adult learners are only interested in being taught information which they perceive will have a practical application. Many educators, however, would argue that this is a very limiting conception of the potential for adult education (Apps, 1991). This poses some moral concerns in determining curriculum for mature students. Hyland (1991) discusses the importance of education preparing a person for life - not just a vocation. By limiting the focus of education to the marketplace, there is a risk that the curriculum will become trivialized, and educators will become no more than assembly line workers processing students through the system (Sears, 1990).

Collins (1991) raises concerns over whether the vocational trend in adult education means that lifelong learning will become equated with continuous training. In the publication Adult Education and Training in Canada (Human

Resources Development Canada, 1994), the terms appear to be synonymous. Collins (1991) argues that this erodes the traditionally voluntary nature of adult education. Approaching the debate from a postmodern perspective, Bagnell (1994) questions whether continuing education will become a tool which benefits the corporations and the elite, since in a consumer environment, they will have more purchasing power than the average citizen to influence the development of particular curriculum designs.

Pursuing this debate further, Forrester, Payne, and Ward (1995) note that access to lifelong learning is creating a schism between the core and peripheral workforce, with the core workforce having greater opportunities to continue their education than those who are frequently unemployed or underemployed. They note that "the core labour force is narrowing but requires a wider range of skills" (1995, p. 295). As Hart (1992) also notes, women and minorities are more likely to be represented in the latter category.

Instead of fostering cooperation and being used to foster development, the concept of lifelong learning today is often being used within the dominant marketplace discourse as a forum for advancement. It reflects the overall ruthless nature of global capitalism. The Delors report (1996) report notes that

> the general climate of competition that is at present characteristic of economic activity, within and above all between nations, tends to give priority to the competitive spirit and individual success. Such competition now amounts to ruthless economic warfare and to a tension between rich and poor that is dividing nations and the world, an exacerbating historic rivalries (1996, p. 92).

Instead of helping disadvantaged people, lifelong learning generally benefits those who are already well off. Even within Canada, for instance, the people who are most likely to be engaged in adult education programs already have a good education and are employed (Human Resources Development Canada, 1994).

Although more women than men participate in adult education programs, there are gendered differences in experience that need to be examined to understand how lifelong learning connects with the homeplace. Women's participation in education programs seems to be coordinated around their domestic and childrearing responsibilities. Mothers of more than one preschooler are less likely to attend adult education programs, while men at the same stage in life are more likely to participate (Shipley, 1994). There are more women than men at the lower educational levels, but their numbers decrease at each successive stage through graduate school (Caplan, 1994) Women are underrepresented in full-time faculty and administration, and generally are paid less than their male

counterparts (Caplan,1994; Stalker & Prentice, 1998). Blundell (1992) argues that since about a third of all adult education programs taken by women concentrate on traditional women's skills, such as cooking or sewing, they serve to reproduce domesticity. Many women report that they experience difficulties in continuing with their education because of unsupportive partners, childcare and domestic responsibilities (Edwards, 1993; Mendelsohn, 1989). Many women in academia find they face discrimination in working around their pregnancies and child-rearing responsibilities (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988).

These examples indicate that there are gendered differences in experience in lifelong learning. To understand the significance of these differences in experience, and to develop a counter critique to the dominant discourse in adult education, I draw upon both critical and feminist theories. Critical theories draw attention to the negative repercussions of narrowing the focus of lifelong learning to attend to marketplace needs. Feminist perspectives indicate how the emphasis on marketplace values is also detrimental in that it overlooks gendered differences in experience and discrimination within academia. The focus on vocational aspects of lifelong learning within the dominant discourse ignores ties to the homeplace. The significance of gendered

differences in experience in lifelong learning are often connected to experiences with the homeplace, and this needs to be examined more closely in order to adequately address the importance of women's experiences in adult education.

The Homeplace

There is not an easy, single definition that can be given to describe the term "homeplace" as it is a word that means many things for different people. Rather, it must be understood as an important component of the lifeworld, which varies in form across time, space, and place. Just as the notion of "family" is a concept which must be viewed as a fluid rather than static concept (Jones, Tepperman & Wilson, 1995), the homeplace must viewed in a similar light.

I use the concept of "homeplace" as a conceptual construct which has three main focal points which I use to draw attention to the significance of family life and relationships, identity construction, and domestic labour responsibilities. I argue that each of these has a significant impact on the experiences of lifelong learners, which as a consequence of societal roles and expectations, tend to be gendered in nature.

To do this I briefly explore some of the theoretical discourses surrounding the notions of family, home, identity,

and gender roles. I then explore the potential of feminist, particularly what I term "maternal discourses" to inform a new direction for the development of a counter discourse in lifelong learning. Ruddick (1989) suggests that "maternal thinking" can provide insights into developing an alternative worldview, while Hart(1997) uses the concept "motherwork" to propose a radical educational alternative that focuses on life-affirming work. I argue that by looking at the ideas raised within these maternal discourses, and focussing attention on the gendered differences in experience in relationship to the homeplace, adult educator can recognize and foster important learning opportunities. The differences in power, academic experience and aptitude, and different approaches to learning are all examined as key areas in adult education which are influenced by differences in gender.

In defining the homeplace as a key area in adult education, I am drawing attention to a site which has generally been overlooked or subsumed into the category of community in most research in adult education and lifelong learning. I argue that this oversight has significant political dimensions, as it is a reflection of how a masculine perception has largely been responsible for the development of most research and writing in the field of adult education and within the discourses of lifelong learning (Butterwick, 1998;

Blundell, 1992).

By focussing attention upon the homeplace, it becomes clear that gender is an important variable in determining differentiated experiences in lifelong learning for men and women. The decision to return to school often has a significant impact on the family lives of mature students, as they are forced to renegotiate family relationships and responsibilities (Campbell, 1993; Mendelsohn, 1989, Johnson-Bailey et al., 1996). Despite the importance of these different factors, they are rarely discussed by university or adult educators.

Power within the household is an important issue which has been highlighted by feminist theorists. Quite often there are gendered differences in perception. The male may view the homeplace as a place to relax in, while a woman may see it as a place of continuous labour and responsibility (Rosenberg, 1990). For some women, it is also a site of violence and oppression (Tierney, 1982). Recent studies of domestic labour indicate that women still assume primary responsibility for childcare and housework in most situations (Luxton, Rosenberg, & Arat-Koc, 1990).

Family relationships play an important factor in determining women's educational experience. Pascall and Cox (1993) found that many of the women in their survey made

decisions not continue with their education when they were younger because of family pressures, or upcoming marriages. When women further their education they may start to challenge previously accepted roles and responsibilities, such as doing the majority of the housework (Mezirow, 1978). Conflict and sometimes even violence may occur when women start to challenge previously defined roles and responsibilities (Mendelsohn, 1989; Campbell, 1993).

The homeplace helps to shape individual identity, through factors such as location, parenting, culture, ethnicity, class, and ability. Women who have grown up in abusive or dysfunctional families may have difficulties articulating their experience, and having confidence in their capacity to learn (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986). Childhood experiences have a strong influence on developing attitudes and cognitive approaches into adulthood for both males and females (Baxter-Magolda, 1992).

Parenting is also an important aspect in the lives of many adult learners. Women are still the primary caregivers and nurturers of children (Ruddick, 1989; Waltzer, 1996). Hart (1995) discusses the concept of motherwork, and how the underlying values implicit in this work demonstrate a different approach to understand the notions of productivity. She suggests that life-sustaining work should be given greater

attention and recognition.

The importance of valuing the experience which adult learners bring to the classroom is usually recognized by adult educators (Draper, 1988). However, if we are to value the richness of female experience, then the importance of living and learning within the homeplace must also be acknowledged.

In order to give women a voice in adult education, women's experiences should be validated in all aspects of their lives, including the homeplace. Angela Miles argues that "adult educators also will have to join feminists in working toward the very transformation of knowledge through the incorporation of the female point of view and experience" (1989, p. 11).

Theoretical Analysis

As adult educators, I believe that we must continue in our role as learner as well as teacher. The rapidly changing society we exist in not only puts pressure on our students to learn and adapt, but also creates this same state of flux for us as educators. We must continually grapple with the need to make sense of what we are doing. It is in this spirit of contributing to the continuing and evolving discourse of theoretical development in adult education that I wish to frame my thesis.

Brookfield supports the development of formal theory in adult education, arguing that "formal theory has an important contribution to make in helping to convert situationally specific, informal hunches into well framed theories of practice" (1990, p. 80). Critical theory is a useful framework for analysis, having a long history of providing a means to study various societal issues and problems (Bronner & Kellner, 1989). In particular, I am intrigued by Jurgen Habermas's (1981) theory of communicative action, and his concepts of lifeworld/system. I draw extensively upon Habermas's work to develop my critique of the dominant paradigm in lifelong learning. At the same time, I recognize that critical theory, while not developed with the intention of being a masculine theory, has grown from the work of various European male theorists whose perspective on many issues has skimmed over or discounted the influence of gender in the development of their analyses. Rather than discounting this work as being of no value, I prefer to explore what is useful to my analysis, and engage in a discourse which draws upon various feminist perspectives in addition to critical theory.

Feminist research provides experiential accounts that give an immediacy and potency that is often removed from the abstract work of critical theorists such as Habermas.

Feminist maternal discourses also draw attention to the underlying masculine values that have helped to shape the dominant discourse in lifelong learning.

In my discussion, I attempt to draw connections between the abstract conceptualizations of Habermasion critical theory, and experiential feminist epistemologies and maternal discourses. Each of these approaches have value in developing my analysis of the connections between lifelong learning and the homeplace.

Alcoff and Potter (1993) argue that to engage in a discourse with traditional, malestream theories can be perceived as entering into a healthy debate, "which involves appropriation and respect as well as criticism and rejection" (1993, p. 2). To do this is not a form of co-optation, but rather a means to advance the development of academic discourse.

Gore discusses the reasons why feminists are often not inclined to spend much time evaluating critical theoretical perspectives. She writes

> Critical pedagogy discourse is often dismissed as patriarchal and masculinist with little demonstration that this is so. Reasons not to engage these criticisms might include reluctance to spend intellectual time and energy on this material, a belief/"knowledge" that critical pedagogy *is* by definition, patriarchal and masculinist, and the attitude (common among oppressed peoples) [here she quotes from Kenway and Modra] "besides why should feminists constantly

offer men this service?" (Gore, 1993, p. 27).

There is a justifiable resentment amongst many women that much of their education has already been defined according to a male agenda, so they are unwilling to continue to have to engage in work characterized by a masculine framework of analysis.

While I examine the feminist critiques that suggest ways in which Habermas's work would be improved by developing a more extensive analysis of the importance of gender in his work, I draw upon his theory because I believe that he has developed a very sophisticated and conceptually useful analytical framework. By linking this with feminist experiential research and maternal discourses, I argue that Habermas's framework is useful for developing an alternative discourse of lifelong learning.

Drawing upon larger theoretical frameworks strengthens my analysis by providing insights that individuals would be unable to derive based upon focussing on their own unique individual experiences. Smith (1987) gives a good example of this when she discusses an effective scene in the movie, "Slaughterhouse Five", in which people are seen going to market while children play around outside. Most of these people are dead the next morning because of the fire bombing of Dresden. These people have no knowledge of what is to

come, because they are not aware of decisions being made in other places. She says, "These are events creating changes in or intruding on people's lives. The changes do not arise out of a logic of organization that is part of the local setting in which they occur" (1987, p. 94). Without broader theoretical frameworks, it is difficult to comprehend what is happening in the larger social context. Formal theory provides the analytical scaffolding for developing insights into how our world is structured.

The importance of feminist experiential research is that it is grounded in the everyday lived world. The immediacy of the issues, the pain, and the emotions women experience as they face learning challenges are recorded as such. This is important so that this will not get lost in the abstract discussion of much theoretical research.

Critical Theory

Critical theory provides a theoretical framework with which to challenge the underlying assumptions of the dominant paradigm in lifelong education. The dominant discourse in lifelong learning is supported by the corporate industrial and government-policy sector that are permeated with a technical-rational orientation in which lifelong learning becomes ongoing skill training. This orientation serves to erode the

traditional voluntary nature of adult education (Collins, 1991) and stifles the democratic potential for social justice and critical discourse which challenges power inequalities (Hart, 1985). Lifelong learning should enhance the individuals ability to initiate social change, participate in a democratic society, and to develop a civil society (Welton, 1997: Cohen & Arato, 1992).

Jurgen Habermas's theory of communicative action provides a means of critiquing the domination of instrumental rationality in adult education, and offers an alternative perspective, which promotes the values of community, citizenship, and democracy. Welton writes, "Jurgen Habermas's works help us to think imaginatively about knowledge, learning and the human condition" (1993, p. 81). Through Habermas's theory of communicative action, adult educators can draw upon the critical tradition in adult education to develop an emancipatory perspective.

Habermas argues that the "lifeworld" - a communicatively shaped place formulated through human interaction in the sphere of family, religion,and community, is being pressured and gradually eroded by "colonization" from the "system" - the political and economic institutions in our society. The pervasive influence of the "system" can be seen by the increasing technical-rational influence in education and the

trend towards vocationalism.

Habermas's concept of the lifeworld provides an important focus for discussing the underlying value systems which influence decisions about how our society and educational institutions should be developed. Pietrykowski writes that the "The daily stock of meanings which remain unquestioned and form the backdrop for our actions is referred to as the lifeworld" (1996, p. 87). The lifeworld is a place of human connection and interaction, shaped by intersubjectively defined human values.

In reclaiming the lifeworld as an area of central and utmost importance, focus is reasserted on the importance of human factors. One way in which educators can resist the technical-rational influence of the dominant paradigm is to work at developing other spheres which enhance the potential for communicative action to happen. The notion of civil society is one such arena (Welton, 1997), while Hart (1997) suggests that the focus should be on motherwork. Both of these areas offer hope, and in my research I draw attention to another important area by focussing upon the significance of the homeplace as an important part of the lifeworld.

Habermas's theory of communicative action is also integral to my discussion. Collins describes Habermas's theory of communicative action as one which

> envisages consensual interactions between adults, free of coercive elements and various forms of distortion, that lead to decision-making based on rational discourse." (1991, p. 38).

Communication is the basis for developing human potentiality. White argues that by focussing on language and action, Habermas wants to prove that linguistic interaction has "a sense of rationality which is not reducible to strategic or contextual dimensions" (1988, p. 28).

Habermas focuses on the usage of language to provide opportunities for creative and hopeful interactions between people. He has developed a theory of communicative action, which suggests that people can use language to rationally debate various issues and put forth logical arguments for their positions in an attempt to reach a consensus. People base the strength of their arguments on different levels of validity claims. "Every consensus rests on an intersubjective recognition of the criticizable validity claims; it is thereby presupposed that those acting communicatively are *capable of mutual criticism*" (Habermas, 1981, p. 119).

According to White, Habermas believes language has a "problem-solving capacity for interaction" through which people can make sense of their world and their actions within it." (1988, p. 35). Through language, people have the potential to reach an understanding, and through that

understanding to coordinate their actions. Thus language can lead to change and growth within society through the use of "communicative action" (1988, p. 36).

Numerous adult educators (Collins, 1991; Mezirow, 1985; Welton, 1993, Hart, 1985) have drawn upon Habermas's work to critique the technical-rational influence in education, noting that if education is to fulfil its democratic potential, then it must allow students to become critically reflective. Mezirow (1991) has drawn upon Habermas's theoretical framework to develop his own transformation theory. Collins suggests that we should look to Habermas's theory of communicative action to demonstrate why emancipation should be a goal of educational practice (1991, p. 51). In her analysis, Hart critiques "a narrow, instrumental view of work [which] translates into a view of education which places 'immediate relevance' and efficiently above concerns for overall human development and well-being" (1992, p. 90). Welton (1997) suggests that critical theory provides a basis for developing a civil society.

Likewise, I argue that Habermas's theory of communicative action can be used to explore the homeplace as an important site within the lifeworld which is often overlooked in the discourses in lifelong learning. The homeplace is an important learning site, which influences the development of identity,

is a centre for relationships, and provides valuable labour which is often rendered invisible in the profit oriented perspective of capitalist society. We need to focus more attention on the various sites within the lifeworld which offer opportunities for human interaction and development, such as the homeplace.

The value of Habermas's theory of communicative action is that it allows for competing interpretations, and suggests that humans are capable of using discourse to develop a better understanding of the world around them. His work has been challenged on a number of fronts, however, with regards to its lack of sensitivity to gender differences, and failure to fully acknowledge differentials in power and how that affects communicative interaction. His emphasis on rational discourse has been challenged by feminists as being constructed under a masculine viewpoint, and his understanding of the "public" is more reflective of male than female experience (Landes, 1995). As Welton notes, "Habermas does tend to over stress the formally procedural requirements of a discursive democracy" (1997, p. 215). The abstract language of his research has alienated many feminist scholars, who feel that his work is too far removed from the everyday lived experience that grounds most feminist research.

My decision to link Habermasian critical theory with

feminist experiential research is a somewhat daunting task, as Habermas's work has often been critiqued for failing to adequately address feminist concerns (Fraser, 1995; Benhabib, 1995). Habermas's work has been criticized for being too narrowly focussed on male, European, Western thought, and not adequately addressing inequalities linked with factors such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, and social class (Foucault, 1980). Ellsworth (1989) argues that dialogue is not powerful enough to eradicate structural differences in power.

These criticisms raise some very important challenges to Habermas's work, some of which he has attempted to address in his more recent writing (Habermas, 1997). One of the most interesting aspects of Habermas's work has been his willingness to respectfully engage in discourse with other theoretical thinkers (Fleming, 1997).

Meehan argues that "while Habermas's discussion of gender is limited, his discourse theory is one of the most persuasive current reflections on politics and moral and social norms, and thus of great interest to feminists theorists despite its failure to specifically thematize gender" (1995, p. 1). It is in this spirit of critical engagement that I approach Habermas's work. His analysis of modern society offers insightful perspectives that serve to strengthen my own analysis of lifelong learning and the homeplace.

Feminist Theories

Over the past few decades, feminists epistemologies have developed because of the inadequacies of traditional theories to clearly account for or willingness of traditional theorists to include women's experiences and perspectives.

Aggar (1992) notes the political underpinnings of feminist theory, in which there is a move to "cannonize" women by including their experiences in the curriculum. In the past women's work has often been ignored, excluded, or conflated with male experience so that female experience is subsumed under a universalistic perspective. This is especially problematic "where women's experience and perspective have been shaped by historical forces of domination, making it even more preposterous that men should be the only writers (and the only ones to be given a hearing)" (1992, p. 117).

Feminist theory challenges mainstream theories and research strategies by pointing out gender biases and omissions of women's contributions to knowledge, and by asserting alternative perspectives and approaches to understanding the world. The notion that the experience of men can be used to understand all human experience is not accepted, and the accuracy of male interpretations of female experience has been questioned.

Women's perspectives have a long history of being marginalized or suppressed within academic milieu. Dorothy Smith discusses how women have been brutally silenced in the past, and not given the control or opportunities to produce ideas and knowledge. Smith talks about how "The means women have had available to them to think, image, and make actionable their experiences have not been made for us, and not by us" (1987, p. 19). She writes:

> women's consciousness did not, and most probably generally still does not, appear as an autonomous source of knowledge, experience, relevance, and imagination. Women's experience did not appear as the source of an authoritative general expression of the world. Women did not appear to men as men do to one another, as persons who might share in the common construction of a social reality where that is essentially an ideological construction (1987, p. 51).

Universities are still very much male dominated institutions (Smith, 1987). One way in which women have historically been silenced, is by excluding their presence in texts which have been mediated by local historical factors. As a consequence, women's experience is often excluded, underrepresented, or presented in a distorted fashion.

Butterwick (1998) and Hugo (1990) note how women have been left out or marginalized in historical accounts of adult education. Hugo (1990) attributes this to women's historical lack of access to positions of power in institutions, the loss of records from women's educational groups which often tended

to be more informal in structure, and the fact that "men held the power in defining the field and discussed it in terms that reflected their experiences" (1990, p. 8). She suggests that early adult education attempted to define itself as a field by developing a professional status which involved aligning itself with the upper levels of institutions such as industry, the military, and government, places where "women were more likely to be structurally excluded" (1990, p. 7). As a consequence, over time, the perception of what constituted adult education became a narrower, more professionalized approach to education, which excluded areas where women were more visible, such as their work in settlement houses, or mother clubs (1990, p. 7).

Gore (1990) is also concerned with the lack of historical presence that women have had in the field of adult education. Drawing upon the work of Dorothy Smith, Gore suggests that there has been a "circle effect", where men's experiences are viewed as the most important ones, and women's experiences are only understood in relationship to men (1990, p. 8). The data source used to construct adult education history is also problematic, as many of the reports from smaller, less formal organizations, which women were more likely to participate in, have been lost over time, which makes "it more likely that women would be written out of the adult education story"

(1990, p. 10).

Blundell (1992) discusses the lack of representation of women in curriculum in the adult education field. While the majority of the student population and part-time teaching ranks are women, they are a minority as full-time faculty and administrators. Some programs seek to expand the number of male students because "the feeling here seems to be that adult education will never be taken seriously as long as it is packed with women" (1992, p. 201). Blundell argues that much of the curriculum in adult education which purports to be "gender-blind is in fact profoundly male-centred" (1992, p. 200). Attempts to "add-on" women's experiences in the curriculum are insufficient because they fail to address underlying structural inequalities. She argues that "Men may now be prepared to give women a share in their knowledge, but they are not prepared to reconstruct it" (1990, p. 202).

Traditionally, the literature on lifelong learning has also neglected to significantly address gendered differences in learning experiences. The pivotal Unesco report, *Learning to Be* (Faure et al, 1972) overlooks gendered differences in education, except to mention that women have lower rates of school attendance, and higher rates of illiteracy as a consequence. The possible reasons for this are not discussed.

Otherwise, the report fails to address women's

experiences in education, and how it might differ from men. While it expounds the benefits and possibilities of technology, it makes no mention of the domestic and childcare responsibilities which often hinder women's active participation in educational ventures. Women's experiences are either overlooked, or considered to be no different from that of men. This androcentric perspective in lifelong learning fails to acknowledge the gendered difference in learning experiences.

Even the language of the Unesco report is revealing, in that while it is supposed to discuss opportunities for lifelong learning for all humans, it is couched in masculine language and imagery. For example:

> Whatever the almost pathological state to which a past of poverty and violence may have reduced him, we are becoming more and more convinced that man is not necessarily a ravening wolf to other men, that his biomental structures predispose him to love ad creative work, and that if his deeper drives my have found expression in negative forms of violence and irrational aggressivity, this has been because throughout his history he has lived in what may be called the vicious circle of human underdevelopment (Faure et. al, 1972, p. 138-139).

The term "man" used in a supposedly generic sense, is indeed quite often a representation for "males". As feminist academics have noted, the power of language can be used to either empower or exclude women (Lewis, 1993; DeVault, 1990).

Language has profoundly political implications, because

of its capacity to either oppress or empower people. Lewis (1993) argues that in order to understand women's positions, we need to be able to understand not only what women are saying, but also the reasons for their silence.

In challenging traditional approaches to developing theory, Lewis argues for the right for women's experiences to count as an important form of research. Lewis writes:

> If the intent of patriarchy is reproduce the status quo of masculine knowledge in support of masculine privilege (and I believe this is precisely the political intent of the schooling enterprise), then the role of feminism is to be indiscreet - to speak our experience of alienation, to apeak that about which we have been invited to be silent, and to refuse to concede power to the bedrock of that failed yet seductive democracy of individual liberalism (1993, p. 68).

Lewis claims that women's experiences are often attributed diminished importance as a form of research and their personal accounts are rendered as insignificant. This serves to silence women. To validate this type of knowledge would "threaten the foundation of Western intellectual thought and political power" (1993, p. 5).

Feminist experiential research has indicated that women have many concerns when they make the decision to continue with their formal learning, which are often connected with their experiences in the homeplace. By ignoring or minimizing these concerns, educators sometimes fail to provide adequate supports for female students. This contributes to what Sandler

& Hall (1985) have described as the "chilly atmosphere" in universities for female students.

Gendered differences in life experiences shape how women experience learning throughout different phases in their lives. Hayes and Smith (1994) in their analysis of adult education literature, argue that

> a lack of attention to the significance of gender in women's lives and experiences as learners creates severe limitations in this perspective's contribution to theory or educational practice for women, or to general knowledge in adult education (p. 213).

For instance, how many men would return to school after a divorce so that they could become self-supporting? How many men have their schoolwork burned in front of them by an abusive partner? Or even how many men miss classes because their kids have the chicken pox? While there would be a few men who would answer the affirmative to some of the above questions, these examples relate situations that women more frequently than men have had to contend with. Research on mature women students indicates that there are gendered differences in experience in relationship to the homeplace that often impact on their educational experiences (Campbell, 1993; Mendelsohn, 1989).

It is also important to recognize that gender is a complex variable. Alcoff and Potter note that "gender identity cannot be adequately understood - or even *perceived* -

except as a component of complex interrelationships with other systems of identification and hierarchy" (1993, p. 3). Race, sexual orientation, ability, and social class are just some of the other factors which configure the relationship of the individual to the larger society. In order to understand the connection between lifelong learning and the homeplace, the issues at stake will be very different for a white middle class women living in an urban centre in Canada, than a black African woman living in a rural community in South Africa. Therefore, feminist researchers recognize that there is not just one position which explained gendered differences.

Black feminist scholars have written about the different challenges which face women of colour (hooks, 1988; Collins, P., 1991; Johnson-Bailey et al., 1996). As Carty (1991) notes, "Black women, in particular, experience extreme marginality in the academic arena" (1991, p. 16). While gender is an issue of central importance to understanding, I also acknowledge that on its own it cannot begin to explain the diversity of human experience. Gender is one of many variables that affect individual life circumstances.

Pedagogical Implications

As adult educators, I believe that we need to be conscious of the structural influences of our society as well

as the lived experiences of our students, for both have important implications for their learning and our teaching practice. We need to encourage our students to attend to both their individualized experiences and the theoretical work of the field. Welton speaks of the critical tradition in adult education, arguing that "In an increasingly disenchanted world, bleached of spirituality and dominated by a manic market mentality, we are hungry for philosophical orientation and depth" (1995, p. 11). Many educators are committed to developing a reflective pedagogical approach to their work, recognizing that ideally, our teaching practice should be grounded in both theory and experience. Reflecting upon connections between the homeplace and lifelong learning involves reexamining the gendered dimensions of adult educational experience.

As adult educators, it is important to develop a critical awareness of what we are teaching. Apple (1990) argues that "until we take seriously the extent to which education is caught up in a world of shifting and unequal power relations, we will be living in a world divorced from reality" (1990, p. vii). Educators must become aware of the political dimensions of their work.

Cranton argues that adult educators need to develop a conscious theory of practice to guide their teaching. She

writes:

> A theory of practice can be defined simply as a set of assumptions, beliefs, and values about education. These assumptions are based: on past experience as both an educator and a learner, on observations of other's behaviour as educators and learners, on reading and learning about educational practice, and on reflection on one's own practice. Every educator has a theory of practice, a set of assumptions about his or her work with learners. Many educators, however, are not conscious of their theory and consequently do not use it to make consistent and informed decisions about their teaching (1992, p. 208).

In order for educators to develop a well informed basis for their teaching practice, they need to read in the field, and reflect upon their own beliefs as an educator.

Collins advocates that adult educators seek to recapture a sense of vocation in their teaching practice, and argues that as intellectuals, we as adult educators have to be prepared to read and reflect about theory in our practice (1991, p. 51). He critiques the influence of the technical-rational approach which has led to a sense of professionalization in adult education that serves to maintain the status-quo rather than encouraging educators to take a critical approach to the field.

Brookfield (1991) also argues that educators need to develop what he refers to as a personal vision of teaching. His argument is that if your teaching is grounded in a rationale, it will give you the conviction needed to make you

more effective in dealing with students, administrators, and to work through challenges you may experience as a teacher.

Teaching from a critical or feminist stance often creates difficulties in implementing a pedagogical approach that affirms difference, but embraces respect. Orr (1993) discusses the challenges of developing a theoretical approach to deal with resistant male students in a feminist classroom, arguing that it is necessary to work to overcome their antagonism as it otherwise hampers the learning experience for all students. She has frequently encountered male students who attempt to disrupt and challenge a feminist approach to teaching, so she believes that it is important to develop positive pedagogical strategies for dealing with this.

Orr teaches that masculinity is not only "historically and socially constructed but as antipathetic to men's genuine interests, that is, as a form of false consciousness" (1993, p. 249). Working from this position, she then tries to engage her students in critically reflective exercises, to cause them to reconsider some of their taken-for-granted assumptions about the world. By working with theory to develop her teaching practice, she believes that she is able to surmount many of the difficulties she would otherwise encounter in the classroom.

Burstow (1994) notes that sometimes it is the male

faculty which are resistant to the changes suggested by implementing a broader, feminist pedagogy. She argues that most feminist theory and research is marginalized in the adult education field, with feminist writings inserted only as token representations in most courses. She writes that:

> The impact of literature and curriculum frame-works which leave out women, women's ways of knowing and relating, and feminist concerns generally are often difficult for male faculty to comprehend. Of course, it is in their interest to be confused, to not understand, just as it has always been in men's interest to not understand, "just what is it that women want". Could it be that they are afraid of their new critically aware feminist colleagues and students who raise objections to cherished ways of operating and who threaten their power? (1994, p. 12).

In order to incorporate feminist teaching and research into the adult education field, men are being challenged to change the way they have been teaching and to alter some of the material which they have included in their curriculum. While some male faculty are supportive, others feel threatened and are unwilling to accommodate these changes.

If educators take differences in women's life experiences into account there are numerous implications for their teaching practice. Litner, Rossiter and Taylor (1992) argue that "The relationship of women and knowledge is fraught with tension between the need to refuse the harm done to us by traditional epistemology and the need to correct through our own representations" (1992, p. 300). Women need to be able to

draw upon their own experiences to facilitate their educational endeavours. They argue that "mainstream knowledge, with its white middle-class male historical and social perspective, and with its aura of universality, must no longer silence those whose lives have lead them to fundamentally different perspectives of the world" (1992, p. 287). Gendered differences in experience must be taken into account in adult education.

In addition to tensions over power relations with regards to gender, other factors such as race may also contribute to conflict or repression within the classroom. In their study of black female reentry students, Johnson-Bailey and Cervero found that "the practice of exclusion and stereotyping was customary for students and faculty alike because it was so routinely apparent and accepted in the larger society. Indeed, participation in this hierarchal subterfuge seemed unconscious and automatic regardless of the expressed intent of the participants" (1996, p. 153). Educators need to develop sensitivity to the different backgrounds of their students, and reflect upon their own teaching practice to consider whether they have fully developed an awareness of their own personal prejudices or perceptions of people who are differently situated.

Manicom discusses this capacity for reflection which is

often demonstrated by feminist teachers, arguing that "whatever questions feminist teachers ask, they do so with a remarkable intensity, gazing inward, reflecting on their classroom practice, and outward, refining their critique of, and action in, the broader social world" (1992, p. 365). This need for reflection is an essential component for both male and female educators.

Educators need to become aware that traditional pedagogical approaches may not always work as well for women as they do for men. Martinez Alemen writes that many college women are uncomfortable with "traditional argumentation, a pedagogy that they see as inhospitable. They do not see the win-lose debate paradigm as intellectually challenging. On the contrary, traditional argumentation is not viewed as a way to challenge thinking; it is perceived as "antagonistic," as "degrading" of individual thinking" (1997, p. 144). They are less likely to actively participate in a classroom where they feel a level of discomfort with speaking out. Some feminist literature supports the notion that women prefer "connected" ways of teaching (Belenky et. al. 1986; Baxter-Magolda, 1992). It is not only the content that needs to be challenged, but also traditional ways of teaching.

If adult educators are to consider how lifelong learning is connected with the homeplace, then the implications for

this involve reconsidering both content and practice. Educators need to reflect upon the different life experiences of their students in order to develop effective pedagogical practices.

Conclusion

In order to broaden the current parameters of the discourse on lifelong learning, we need to extend our discussion of the concept of lifelong learning to move beyond the dominant discourse and its limited vocational orientation. Drawing upon critical and feminist perspectives, we can see how the current debate is narrowly constructed by a technical-rational perspective. By drawing upon Habermasian theory, feminist experiential research, and maternal discourses it is possible to incorporate an understanding of how other sites, such as the homeplace, should be considered so that a more holistic and inclusive perspective of lifelong learning can be attained.

CHAPTER ONE

LIFELONG LEARNING AND THE MARKETPLACE

Since the Faure (1972) report, a cooperative discourse in lifelong learning has been advocated my UNESCO. According to this discourse, lifelong education could be used to benefit all citizens. Richer countries with more advanced knowledge and technology could share with less developed nations to foster growth and development (Delors, 1996).

The dominant discourse that has emerged in lifelong learning, however, is a competitive discourse defined by the marketplace. Individuals strive to attain higher credentials to compete on the job market (Strath Lane, 1983). Business and governments promote lifelong education as a way to be able to compete in a rapidly changing, global marketplace (Longworth & Davies, 1996). Education becomes a consumer good, and the gap between the "haves" and "have-nots" continues to widen.

In this chapter I examine the reasons why the dominant discourse has gained a great deal of support from educators, students, government, and industry. There are five main areas that I explore which reflect the current marketplace orientation in lifelong learning. These include a "bottom

line" mentality, consumerism, accountability, credentialism, and professionalization. As I discuss these different aspects that reflect the influence of the dominant discourse, I examine some of the critiques that have been made by educators about the influence of the marketplace on lifelong learning. I then focus on the gendered differences in experience in lifelong learning that are unaccounted for under the dominant discourse. In the next chapter I explore the notion of the homeplace and then I move on in the following two chapters to explore how critical and feminist theories can inform the development of a counter discourse in lifelong learning that takes a life affirming perspective.

Lifelong learning, as adult educators readily acknowledge, is not a new concept (Faure, 1972; Brookfield, 1984, Knapper & Cropley, 1985). Humans have always had a capacity and interest in continuing to learn new ideas and skills throughout their lifetime. However, the need to continue to learn in order to function effectively in our society has been highlighted over the past few decades as a response to the rapid social, economic and technological changes which have occurred.

Chapman and Aspin suggest that there are three main aspects to lifelong learning. These are "education for a more highly skilled workforce; personal development leading to a

more rewarding life; and the creation of a stronger and more inclusive society" (1997, p. 157). There are various interpretations of what these three aspects of lifelong learning mean for the agenda of lifelong learning, however, depending upon whether the goal is cooperation or competition.

The term "lifelong education" gained widespread usage and popularity after the Faure (1972) report, *Learning to Be,* was published by UNESCO. The concept of lifelong education was enthusiastically endorsed by the United Nations as a means to deal with inequities and development problems in non-Western countries. Lifelong education was perceived to be the answer to many of the problems plaguing these countries, and would be an effective way to adapt to the rapid social and economic changes created by the swift technological advances of the twentieth century. Since expenditures on primary education were often wasted in the sense that many children dropped out before attaining adequate literacy levels, the Faure report suggested that educational opportunities should not be limited to the childhood years (Faure, 1972).

In *Learning to Be*, the authors discussed the importance of moving beyond traditional concepts of education to a broader spectrum of education that would be connected with all aspects of a person's life. They argue that "for far too long education had the task of preparing for stereotyped functions,

stable situations, for one moment in existence, for a particular trade or a given job" (Faure et. al., 1972, p. 69). The nature of paid work has been rapidly altered by technological developments, and traditional forms of education do not prepare individuals to adapt to the constant pattern of change in work requirements. The Unesco authors suggested there was a need to develop a different, more encompassing approach to education. They wrote,

> Learning to live, learning to learn, so as to be able to absorb new knowledge all through life; learning to think freely and critically; learning to love the world and make it more human; learning to develop in and through creative work (Faure et al., 1972, p. 69).

Arguing that education is a basic human right, the authors suggested that in order to attain democratic goals of equality and justice, every person should have the opportunity to pursue an individually tailored education.

In fostering the development of lifelong education, the role of the teacher is "less and less to inculcate knowledge and more and more to encourage thinking" (Faure et. al, 1972, p. 77). This approach would enable people to continue to take up new learning opportunities throughout their lifetime.

While noting that lifelong learning has always taken place, the Unesco authors stated that up "until the present day, there were few structures in which this natural dynamic could find support, so as to transcend chance and become a

deliberate project" (Faure et. al, 1972, p. 142). Suggesting that developing countries learn from the mistakes made by industrialized nations, the authors argued that innovative educational structures should be put in place, and new pedagogical strategies be developed. These should be sensitive to the potential hazards of modernization, such as environmental damages, yet take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the new technologies, such as computers. The authors concluded by suggesting that a broad based international program for developing education and sharing technology and innovations between different countries should be developed to enhance the potentiality for lifelong education in all countries.

Finger writes about the UNESCO discussions of lifelong education in the sixties and seventies, stating that:

> Industrial development, it was argued, should be parallelled by human development thus leading to an enlightened citizenry capable of meeting the challenges of industrialized societies. Adult education was to be part and parcel of the humanizing process (1995, p. 111).

Therefore, lifelong learning would encourage the development of adaptive work skills that would benefit all nations. As a "human right" lifelong education would allow each individual to develop his/her unique potential. Finally, by sharing education between nations, we would have a more integrative and cohesive global community.

Learning Society

On a similarly optimistic note, Hussen (1974) initiated discussion around the concept of the "learning society". Hussen suggested that what was needed in education was a recognition that learning needed to be sustained throughout one's lifetime. He wrote that "we can no longer regard the years of childhood and youth as the exclusive preserve of education, as the years which give us all we 'need to know for the rest of our lives" (1974, p. 23). As information continues to expand, students will continue to learn throughout their lifetimes. Coming to similar conclusions that were reached by the Unesco authors, Hussen argued that the most important task of schools is to teach students how to continue to learn throughout their lifetime. Preparatory education is then defined as giving students the skills and motivation which they will need to continue learning, rather than providing training and a basis of knowledge which will serve them for the remainder of their lives.

Hussen argued that within the context of a learning society, greater numbers of people would have access to formal types of learning, and there would also be more informal learning opportunities. With this in mind, he suggested that "education will not have clearly defined 'cut-offs' as in the past...it will become more of a continuous process" (Hussen,

1974, p. 198). Early education would be designed to teach about citizenship and to provide basic skills for entrance to the work force. Students would be encouraged to develop a positive outlook towards learning that would motivate them to continue with their education at later stages in their lives. They would continue to seek nonformal and informal means of learning to supplement their education and there would be no set point at which a person's education ends.

Even though the ideas of a "learning society" and "learning to be" imply a holistic approach to lifelong education, there were early indications that this concept might be overtaken by a competitive rather than a cooperative spirit. Hussen (1974) noted the trend to use education for social mobility, in which a meritocracy was being established in industrialized nations. Education became a means for people to obtain economic advancement. Although other types of learning were recognized, the emphasis was on connections between education and the paid work force.

In the report, *Towards a Learning Society,* the Carnegie Commission suggests that "the 'optional' society is replacing one where people were more likely to be 'tracked' for life" (1973, p. 14). In this type of society, people may choose to engage in education and work at different stages throughout their lives. People are less likely to pursue a single,

linear career than they were in the past. They may decide to enter formal schooling at different phases in their lives, and there are far more options available for people with regards to the workplace and educational programs than there were in previous generations. Again the emphasis is on connections between paid work and education.

Knapper and Cropley (1985) discuss the connections between lifelong learning and higher education, arguing that in a society where lifelong learning is a broadly accepted concept, learning would extend vertically throughout a person's life, and horizontally across the various activities and interests each person engages in. Vertical integration "must facilitate learning throughout the entire lifespan" (1985, p. 31) by providing linkages between different stages in education. People could enter and exit university at different stages in their lives, continue to be involved throughout their working career in professional development courses to keep their skills upgraded, or choose to retrain for different types of work. The diversity of the student population, with more mature students mingling with traditional, younger students, also provides opportunities for vertical integration.

By developing horizontal integration, linkages would be provided between formal, nonformal, and informal educational

opportunities. Attending lectures at a museum, improving your game of tennis, or discussing politics at the pub, are all examples of events that could be considered learning activities. Universities could also establish horizontal links with industries, such as putting cooperative education programs into place, or have students work in the community to attain skills ie. a social work student could do volunteer counselling.

Knapper and Cropley are adamant that the concept of lifelong learning does not entail lifelong schooling. They argue that they do not wish to support a concept of "educational imperialism", noting that everything in our lives does not need to be educationally organized (1985, p. 33). They emphasize the value of learning outside of formal settings, and suggest that there should be a balance between formal and non-formal types of education.

Despite this, the main emphasis in Knapper and Cropley's (1985) discussion is on connections between education and the marketplace. In more recent discussions on lifelong learning, a similar trend has developed. Educators often note the importance of learning for enjoyment, and may advocate that employers provide support for this as it helps to create a well rounded person [or employee] (Longworth & Davies, 1996). Yet at the same time, the main *reason* for lifelong learning is

always, inextricably, linked with marketplace forces.

Change and Technology

The emphasis on change and technology are continually emphasized in the discourses surrounding the notions of lifelong learning. The economy is unpredictable and competitive, with rapid technological changes that lead to the need for employees to continually learn new skills and improve their educational qualifications. Adaptability is a key characteristic required for industrial survival.

Dave states that "the increasing speed of obsolescence of knowledge and skills calls for the consideration of new educational goals and strategies that will be capable of educating every individual, not only about the known, but also for the unknown" (1976, p. 16). In *Learning to Be*, the authors argue that for the first time, education emphasizes educating people for what may happen in the future, rather than focusing on learning what has occurred in the past (Faure et. al, 1972).

The rapid rate of change experienced in the latter half of the twentieth century is unprecedented in human history. Science and technology have played an important role in the development of an industrialized society. In *Learning to Be*, the authors note that "more than 90 per cent of scientists and

inventors in all of human history are living in our times" (Faure et. al., 1972, p. 87). There is a narrowing gap between the time an invention is produced, its usage in the wider society, and subsequent improvements. For instance, it took 112 years to develop the basic principles which led to the development of photography, but only two more years to produce solar batteries (Faure et. al, 1972, p. 88). Scientific developments are expanding at an exponential rate, occurring more quickly now than they ever have in the past.

One of the consequences of rapid knowledge production is that people are having to adapt by not only learning new information, but also by discarding old information just as readily. The knowledge that I developed as an undergraduate student in sorting computer printed cards is no longer useful, and my understanding of computer programs today will be of little use to me ten years in the future. Hiemstra (1976) draws upon the concept of a half-life, taken from nuclear physics to further explain this situation. He states that:

> occupational half-life is base on the assumption that enough new developments, techniques, and/or knowledge evolve in a short period of time, say 5-15 years, so that a person becomes roughly half as competent to do the job for which his or her initial training was intended. Consequently, adults frequently must turn to learning activities just to maintain or regain competence (Hiemstra, 1976, p. 8).

Darkenwald and Merriam note that the "half-life" of knowledge

in professional schools, such as medicine or engineering, is only about five years (1982, p. 4). Knowledge is becoming obsolete so quickly that people are having to continually upgrade their education not only to get ahead, but to prevent from falling behind.

Higher Education and the Marketplace

The dominant discourse in lifelong learning is increasingly influenced by the marketplace. Linkages between the workplace and schooling are stressed. Increasingly, universities and colleges are becoming more geared towards answering the demands of the workplace (Downey, 1996). As funding is being cutback from government sources, universities are forced to look closer to the private sector for financial assistance. Tasker and Packman point out that:

> The relationship between higher education, industry and the government is still seen by many as unproblematic: industry needs highly trained employees and it is the function of government to see that universities provide them (1994, p. 182).

Turning to the private sector in order to fund higher education is perceived by many to be a practical alternative in the face of huge government deficits (Downey, 1996). Students who are worried about employment prospects when they graduate are anxious to obtain job-related skills and information. As a consequence of this influence of the

dominant paradigm, there seems to be support for an increasing marketplace influence on higher education.

An example of this can be seen in Cooper, Velde and Gerber's (1995) article on training adult and community educators in Australia. They begin by pointing out that "adult and community education is an activity oriented towards lifelong learning, and is a fundamental part of our society's education and training system" (1995, p. 79). They then proceed to discuss the importance of developing flexible courses, suited to various "customer needs". The marketplace orientation of the dominant paradigm is clearly revealed in choice of language which draws upon numerous business analogies throughout the article as the authors' develop their analysis of the respondents' viewpoints. They argue that adult and community education can be perceived as "essentially consumer-driven and client-responsive" (1995, p. 79). The suggestions made by respondents about accepting prior learning assessments, and providing flexible educational structure such as modular courses, are discussed as indicators that educational institutions need to develop programs that are adaptable and competitive within an open market system in order to attract more clients. The authors suggest that developing research initiatives in order to better understand "consumer needs" in education, will lead to the goal of

"achieving organisational effectiveness, that is, high quality in courses and in teaching" (1995, p. 80). It is interesting that the determination of "high quality" is determined according to the needs of the marketplace.

In a similar vein, Apps (1991) discusses various metaphors that teachers sometimes use to describe their teaching practice, such as gardeners, or lamplighters. He notes that:

> The factory supervisor metaphor has gained considerable credence during the last decade or so. To be more competitive, businesses have streamlined their production and marketing and expedited their research and development activities. It seems logical that these firms would apply principles of efficiency and expediency to teaching their employees (1991, p. 24).

Thus the business metaphor is carried over into the teaching role. Within this paradigm, the educator would assess his or her teaching practice according to a business agenda defined by productivity and efficiency.

Francis Hill argues that universities need to examine the discrepancies between consumer expectations and experience to ensure "customer satisfaction" (1997, p. 212). In order to assure "quality control", students need to be guaranteed consistency with regards to performance and dependability, and it should be made clear "to all personnel, that student satisfaction is an institutional priority" (1997, p. 228).

Ryan and Heim (1997) advocate the development of closer

linkages between industry and universities, arguing that this can be a mutually beneficial arrangement, providing financial benefits for the institution, employment opportunities for students, and research funding for faculty (1997, p. 46). They discuss three ways in which alliances can be formed between higher education institutions and the industrial sector.

The first type of initiatives are institutionally directed partnerships, where universities market their intellectual and research capacities to the open market. Ryan and Heim state that:

> Universities are often viewed as a reservoir of intellect and often aggressively market technology to potential users in the private sector. If a successful relationship is developed, a partnership is formed that enables the technology to transfer to the user with the right to gain value from it. In addition to the commercial potential resulting from the transfer, the partnership often results in further joint research activities that continue to enhance the value of the relationship. The technology-based relationship often requires a component of ongoing training and continuing education that enables the innovation to take hold in the workplace (1997, p. 46).

Industry-driven partnerships result in a similar relationship, however, the initial approach is made by the industry that is looking for research targeted to a specific problem. The final option is government-supported university-industry relationships when the government sponsors relationships between universities and the industrial sector. In this

instance, "the state and the university often team, projecting a seamless set of attributes that make an attractive package to an expanding or relocating industry" (1997, p. 49).

Ryan and Heim cite a couple of examples of these types of projects, drawing upon their own experience at Penn State. In one case, university researchers discovered an environmentally safe way to remove hazardous materials from spent foundry sands, a problem which was threatening to end the foundry industry. Through this work, they were able to benefit industry, the environment, and their own institution (by obtaining financial support) (1997, p. 47). Seemingly, the relationship between industry and universities is a symbiotic one.

Downey (1996) provides a similar argument about the need for universities and industry to develop closer ties. He suggests with the rapid increase in information, universities have "assumed an importance in strategic economic development never before known in Canada" (1996, p. 80). However, in order to take advantage of this, "both the corporation and the individual faculty members with marketable intellectual property have had to find faster ways to respond to transfer opportunities" (1996, p. 80). There is a need, therefore, to establish stronger linkages between academia and the corporate industry sector.

Downey describes the university as a trinity composed of three interrelated components; corporation, collegium, and community (1996, p. 74). He argues that financial cutbacks will lead to the corporate aspect of universities will being emphasized. The demands for accountability will increase since universities will have to rely more upon student tuition and private sector funding in order to operate (1996, p. 78). As a consequence, universities will foster stronger relationships with industry.

With decreasing government funding, there are economic incentives for post-secondary institutions to develop closer alliances with industry. As Slowey notes:

> corporate clients who will pay the full economic cost for programmes tailored to their training needs represent an important potential source of additional income. While attracting *individual* mature students may not reap much in the way of direct financial rewards, the skills which institutions of higher education acquire in catering for their needs are equally applicable in work with *groups* of adults sponsored by their employers (1988, p. 304).

Currently, Moser and Seaman (1987) note that businesses do not perceive colleges and universities to be the most viable provider for continuing work training. They suggest that "it would behoove educators to be as flexible as possible in structuring activities, while at the same time conveying this willingness to members of the training community" (1987, p. 228). In this way, they may be able to attract more

opportunities to provide training for businesses and corporations.

There is a strong and pervasive influence from the marketplace working upon academia from the larger government and corporate industrial sector. Hartley (1995) notes that "In education, as in other parts of the welfare state, the maxim of the hour is 'doing more with less', or 'optimising resources' "(1995, p. 412). Education is being pressured towards a competitive rather than cooperative mode, and is linked with national success.

The marketplace orientation in lifelong learning, which gives primacy to employment training and industrial interests, has been critiqued "as presenting a too narrow and limited understanding of the nature, aims and purpose of lifelong education" (Chapman et al., 1997, p. 156). Chapman and Aspin note that recent policy papers (OECD, 1996; UNESCO, Delors, 1996; the European Parliament, 1995; and Nordic Council of Ministers, 1995) support a broader definition of the concept of lifelong education (1997, p. 156). Lifelong learning is perceived to have intrinsic value, in which

> people engaging in educational activities are enriched by having their view of the world and their capacity for rational choice continually expanded and transformed by increasing varieties of experiences and cognitive achievements that the lifelong learning experience offers (1997, p. 156).

The marketplace orientation in lifelong education is rejected

as too narrow a conception of the potentiality for human learning.

Yet at the same time, the interests of the marketplace continue to be the predominantly represented within political and economic discourses. Quite often only "lip service" is paid to other focuses for educational attainment. Educators working from critical and feminist perspectives raise a number of serious issues that need to be addressed as we examine the future direction for discourses in lifelong learning.

The Bottom Line

In discussions centering on the ties between industry and academia, quite often the notion of the "bottom line" is raised. In the current era of cutbacks in university funding and public demands for accountability, Downey argues that

> There is a strong sense in both Canada and the United States that we have for too long been too concerned about the bottom rung and not enough about the bottom line. The governments we have of late elected with unambiguous mandates have assured us they will correct this imbalance. We in the universities are not immune to the political temper of the times, any more than we are to the fiscal and social policies that our governments enact. It seems clear by now that, in Canada at least, universities will participate in a process of corporate restructuring similar to that which has characterized business and, more recently, government (1996, p. 81).

The "bottom line" mentality asserts that in order to maintain credibility, universities need to focus on their economic

contribution to society. There are demands for accountability, an orientation to developing education as a profitable enterprise, and a suggestion that educational institutions should not be given preferential treatment. In order to justify their existence, they need to prove that they are producing a valuable product which somehow to contributes to benefit our society. Value, of course, is a key word here, as the notion of "value" is closely tied with economic profit.

There are numerous concerns in attempting to follow a narrowly deterministic economic agenda. There is a practical difficulty with regards to determining what is "valuable" education, even within the context of the marketplace. Collins writes that "in the present political climate, so-called competency-based education defines useful knowledge in the light of bureaucratic and corporate needs" (1991, p. 45). One of the problems with this approach, however, is determining the needs of industry. As Dyke has pointed out, "defining the needs of industry has proved to be quite elusive (1997, p. 5-6). Prickett also notes that "historically we have rarely been able to predict in advance what subjects may turn out to have practical value" (1994, p. 174). Even if educators chose to follow this route, it is not as clearly marked out as one might initially think.

As Jevons (1994) has pointed out, even determining the

"bottom line" is not as simple as it sounds. He asks: "What bottom line are we to consider? Is it the successful completion of the research, or its successful commercialisation, or its commercialisation in such a way that benefits accrue to the nation?" (1994, p. 161). Since technology and industry are now developed on a global scale, if universities conduct research, and that research is taken out of the country by an international corporation, then who benefits? He argues that quite often the country in which research was developed does not profit, and as a consequence, neither do that country's universities.

If lifelong education is defined by competition rather than cooperation, then research developments become a sought after and fought over resource. Jevons (1994) argues that in the current state of affairs, multinationals may profit, but not individual nation-states. He would prefer to see the money generated from successful commercialisation ventures in academia funnelled back into the country of origin.

Moving beyond this initial critique of determining educational "value" to a broader analysis, educators raise numerous points about the limited context of an education oriented towards the marketplace. Morely (1997) argues that this approach undermines any commitment to social justice or equal rights. She points out that "as concepts of consumerism

and individual rights and choice gain currency, questions arise as to how equity values can be sustained in the increasing emphasis on economic/efficiency models" which educational institutions are currently being based upon (1997, p. 234). Within this context, the demand for accountability is based upon maximizing profit, and serves to reinforce rather than challenge inequalities in the distribution of wealth and power in society.

Morley is critical of this approach, noting the "the new culture in the public services obscures the fact that what counts as efficiency and effectiveness is itself both a political judgement and a social construct" (1997, p. 234). Ultimately the definition of what is an efficient or effective means of educating people is subjectively defined.

The notion of educating citizens is undermined when education assumes a profit orientation that is determined by the industrial sector. Osborne argues that "the values of the marketplace, which have become increasingly dominant in recent years, are often antagonistic to such democratic values as compassion, co-operation and equality" (1994, p. 418). The emphasis on teaching vocational skills is perceived to undermine other equally important areas. Woods argues that "turning our attention to preparing workers comes at the expense of preparing democratic citizens (1990, p. 100).

Gutmann (1987) suggests that universities should not be based upon a utilitarian framework if they are designed to serve a democratic society. She argues that:

> Universities serve democracies best when they try to establish an environment conducive to creating knowledge that is not immediately useful, appreciating ideas that are not presently popular, and rewarding people who are - and are likely to continue to be - intellectually but not necessarily economically productive (1987, p. 184).

Gutmann believes that universities will ultimately be more productive if they are not focussed on an immediate return on academic investments. She suggests that people can be productive in ways that are not assessed under an economically determined agenda.

This issue of academic freedom is also raised under a market oriented approach to education. How free will scholars be to pursue their own academic interests if they do not prove to be profitable? Gutmann (1987) argues that "academic freedom of scholars and of liberal universities serve as safeguards against political repression, not just for scholars, but also for citizens (1987, p. 177). Within the context of academic freedom, she argues that scholars have a duty to resist improper influences, such as doing research because it will be personally profitable, rather than because it is research that the professor thinks is important. At the

same time, she argues that universities should protect the scholarly autonomy of its faculty and not exert influence on them to focus on financially lucrative research rather than other important interests (1987, p. 179).

Yet it is clear that the influence of the marketplace is leading academia towards developing research that will be financially profitable (Ryan & Heim, 1997). As Downey (1996) notes, many academics are interested in establishing personally profitable relationships with business. The "bottom line" for many academics and institutions is determined by how profitable a particular venture will be, rather than how beneficial is it to the global society.

Accountability

Increasingly, academics are forced to defend their work on an economic agenda. Universities, and the academics who work within this environment, are held to be "accountable" for their work. Under the dominant paradigm, this notion of accountability refers to obtaining economic justification for the work done within academia. Dyke states that "the political culture of the 1990's requires advocates of educational reform to provide economic legitimacy for their policies" (1997, p. 8). Knapper and Cropley also note that there is an "increasing call for accountability by

universities and for detailed scrutiny of activities for 'performance'" (1985, p. 89).

The problem with this approach is that it influences how narrowly constructed the notion of academic excellence becomes. As Wolff argues, whenever

> administrators attempt to apply the principle of efficiency to the operation of their institutions, they have a natural tendency to measure efficiency in terms of whatever they can quantify, rather than measuring it in terms of what is genuinely related to the real goals or values of the institution (1969, p. 81).

We can see this in Canada in the annual MacLean's evaluation of universities, where a popular magazine assesses the overall "quality" of all the universities in Canada. In order to do this, universities are statistically ranked according to quantifiable numbers under headings such as the number of Ph.D.'s, the number of publications, and the amount of funding received. Other, non-quantitative measures are not included. The magazine has a powerful influence in determining the public's perception of the academic worth of various universities, so as a consequence, internally there is pressure on faculty and administration to improve in the areas which are assessed as being of value according to this survey.

Beyer writes that:

> Indeed the most disturbing quality of current debates about "educational excellence" is the frequent substitution of technical, managerial, competency-based, and positivistic language for

> discourse embedded in those political, social, and ideological decisions that await curriculum workers, especially teachers, at every turn" (1990, p. 25).

Under an economic agenda, the value of an education is closely linked with how effective it is in providing the student with employment opportunities. Thus courses that cannot be seen as providing students with skills that will be useful in the workplace, may be undermined in an academic arena which is determined to be "accountable" to a public which wants to see "results" after investing a great deal of money towards educating students.

For instance, Allman and Wallis noted that when enrolment for their Freirian courses declined, they were cancelled, as their department decided to more towards offering more `market friendly' courses (1991, p. 115). These types of issues are problematic as students may not have any interest in engaging in critical discourses initially, because they have never been exposed to them. If the purpose of a liberal education is to broaden students' perspectives, and challenge them to develop critically reflective thinking capacities, then they need to be exposed to differing viewpoints. However, if programs are determined largely by market interests, it is doubtful that this will happen.

Henkel found that many academics are leery of new approaches to assuring "quality" in university education as it

is linked with "market values: consumerism and the idea of customer-led higher education" (1997, p. 141). She summarizes the concern expressed by some academics that "quality assurance" is "connected with an under-valuing of individualism, excellence and risk, espousing instead a 'predictable mediocrity' (1997, p. 141).

Hartley (1995) draws upon Ritzer's (1993) concept of 'McDonalidization' as a "heuristic device" to understand what is currently happening in higher education in Britain (1995, p. 420). Like the fast food restaurant chain, universities are now expected to provide efficient, predictable service. To do this, there is a need for "product standardisation" (1995, p. 417). Increasingly, the government is becoming involved in regulating academic standards.

I can recall teaching in the community college system and being handed a list of teaching "objectives". I was told that I could cover other points if I wished, but I had to be sure that my students knew those particular objectives. In a situation such as this, control over the curriculum is taken away from the instructor. Currently, there is a great deal of support for having industry establish closer links with post-secondary institutions (Segal Quince Wicksteed, 1988; Downey, 1996). This may lead to students learning practical skills that will be beneficial in the paid workforce, but political

issues should not be overlooked. For instance, I was teaching in a day care training program. I noticed that day care centre administrators never suggested that we include in the curriculum a discussion of low wages, unpaid preparation time, lack of societal respect for this occupation, or the fact childcare is almost always women's work. Yet these are issues that are central to day care workers everyday lives. I found that instead the students were encouraged to think of themselves as "professionals" in dress and demeanour, even though this did nothing to address the inequities of their actual work situations.

Consumerism

Within the dominant discourse in lifelong learning, education becomes commodified. Students are referred to as customers, clients, or consumers (Barrett, 1996; Cooper et. al, 1995). The focus of education is on how to effectively "market" one's product (Cooper et. al, 1995). The notion of consumerism in lifelong learning raises numerous issues that have been addressed by various educators who are critical of this approach.

Barrett (1996) warns against the idea of treating students as "customers", arguing that "the term `customer', unlike `student', `scholar', `learner', and `intellectual'

involves no implication of engaging in the life of the mind, and embodies no preference for making intelligent rather than unintelligent choices, or for proceeding in a disciplined rather than a desultory or capricious manner" (1996, p. 70). Barrett argues that customers do not have be responsible for their actions in the same way as students or learners do. They do not approach education with the same focus or commitment. He writes:

> A customer can be satisfied simply because of the end-use features of what has been purchased in the mall. This is entirely compatible with total ignorance of the product's method of fabrication or of any externalities, such as pollution or resource depletion, or of any attendant issues, such as the use of foreign labour. The satisfied customer can then be a model of contented narcissistic superficiality. This is hardly the inspiration for improvements in education (1996, p. 70-71).

While one would hope that all customers and consumers are not as blandly ignorant of issues such as environmental degradation as Barrett implies, his point is a valid one in that there is no onus on the customer to develop this awareness. As educators, however, we would hope that developing a more acute critical awareness of the global nature of our society would be a key and important issue to address in teaching our students. If education is designed to provide students with credentials to advance themselves to a more competitive position in the paid workplace, however, it might very well overlook some of these more profound and

disturbing issues that should be addressed.

In order to market courses, and encourage student attendance, the quality of educational programs may sometimes be compromised. The packaging of programs to look attractive becomes more important than the actual substance of what they contain. Barrett discusses the glossy `viewbooks' put out by academic institutions, to attract students by presenting "visually attractive externals" (1996, p. 73).

Richard Edwards (1997) notes how education today is often linked with entertainment. Witness Disney's latest commercial venture - adult education classes at a vacation resort. I am not arguing that people should not enjoy themselves, or be able to take courses that they find entertaining. If all education is reduced to this, however, it would be like eating a steady diet of cheese puffs. Short (1990) discusses the concern with curriculum becoming watered down or trivialized. He describes this as:

> Irrelevant content, watered down texts, oversimplified treatment of subject matter, routinized teaching procedures, readily consumable and measurable course requirements, acceptance of appealing electives in place of basic knowledge - these are characteristic of trivial curriculum (1990, p. 203).

In a consumer oriented market, students may elect to take the easiest, most attractive route. Decisions may often be based on superficial characteristics of a program.

Bagnell argues that

> The contractualist inclination to enhance efficiency and effectiveness by precisely specifying intended outcomes or consequences would also have a simplifying, perhaps a trivializing effect on curriculum. The educational enterprise may be invaded by tokenism - a tendency to replace the attainment of educational outcomes with tokens of attainment which become detached from actual substantive learning (1994, p. 51).

Students may become more concerned with obtaining initials after their names or acquiring a particular certificate or course. They may enter a course with specific objectives in mind, and become "dissatisfied" customers if their expectations are not met.

Collins also discusses the trend towards consumerism in education, and the difficulties in deciding upon curriculum. Rather than advocating that the teacher take complete control, or that educators provide either what the students or the corporations/government wants, he suggest that:

> Even though true needs cannot be identified by merely asking people what they want, it is not the role of adult educators to make the actual distinctions on behalf of others. Rather, their task is to organize pedagogical situations where it becomes possible to understand more clearly how needs are constituted, whose interests are served, and in what ways they emerge in the context of their everyday lives" (1991, p. 68).

In order to do this, educators need to have a broader understanding of adult education theory. Students need to be actively engaged and involved in defining the educational

agenda, not as consumers selecting the best product on the market, but by questioning their own underlying assumptions and beliefs in order to develop greater critical capacities as reflective learners.

If the consumer model becomes a predominant characteristic of lifelong education opportunities, one of the issues that is raised is which consumers will have more power. Prickett questions who would have the strongest influence if consumerism were the model on which higher education was based. He asks "is the competitive market-place to be determined by student demand or international commerce?" (1994, p. 177). The consumers that would have the most strength would likely be large corporations rather than individual students.

Bagnell (1994) presents a similar argument that the distribution of controlling authority to the consumer may resulting larger groups, such as corporations, gaining too much power and control in terms of determining what courses will be offered. He argues that "organizational interests may therefore be favoured overwhelmingly over those of individuals" (1994, p. 51). This could lead to continuing education becoming more orthodox, and less likely to challenge the existing power relations, a trend that would serve to further empower the elite.

Another issue that arises in discussions of a consumer mode of adult education, is how education can serve to perpetuate rather than eradicate inequalities. Numerous studies (Merriam & Cafferella, 1991; Slowey, 1988; Shipley, 1994) acknowledge that the people who are most likely to participate in adult education programs are people with higher levels of education to begin with. The people at the lowest end of the social spectrum are less likely to be involved in formal types of education in adulthood.

Forrester, Payne, and Ward (1995) note that access to lifelong learning is creating a schism between the core and peripheral workforce, with the core workforce having greater opportunities than those who are frequently unemployed or underemployed. They note that "the core labour force is narrowing but requires a wider range of skills" (1995, p. 295). As Hart (1992) also points out, women and minorities are more likely to be represented in the latter category.

The effect of multinationals on developing the global economy has further perpetuated these differences. Forrester et al. (1995) argue that

> the influence of multinationals is far from benign. While they may be functional from the abstract point of view of capital, they are dysfunctional for both marginalized sectors of society in the North and whole national economies in the South which have inherited the mantle of colonialism (1995, p. 294).

Hart (1992) also discusses this trend in global capitalism, where capital is able to be mobilized and transported to countries which provide "cheap labour". She argues that "By undermining the bargaining power of workers, this global dispersement contributes to a reduction of labor costs, or the "cheapening" of labor in industrialized countries themselves" (1992, p. 28).

The contracting out of employment and the increase of part-time work has resulted in more employees in the peripheral workforce. These workers are poorly represented by unions and have little access to the benefits of full-time employees, including job training opportunities (Forrester et. al., 1995).

Recurrent unemployment is common amongst employees in the peripheral workforce. In order to understand unemployment, Forrester, Payne and Ward argue that:

> Unemployment may be understood not as it is typically presented in official discourse as an aberration of the economic system, or as arising from skill deficiencies in the workforce which are in turn the result of rapid technological change, but as a deliberate policy designed to depress labour costs, improve productivity and profits, weaken union strength, strengthen industrial discipline and divide the working class against itself (1995, p. 295).

In this climate, people who have job security will fight to maintain it through various means, such as making themselves more competitive in the workplace by continually upgrading

their skills. This further marginalizes workers who are unable to compete with the core employees.

The fractured workforce is one driven by constant competition and the need to "upgrade" skills in order to survive. In a Darwinian sense, only the "fittest" who have best adapted to the workforce, will succeed.

Apple (1990) points out that while it is important for industry to have workers who possess a high level of technical skills, they do not need for everyone to have it (1990, p. 37). In fact, Hart (1992) argues that industry purposely uses technology to deskill many tasks. The clerks at McDonalds do not even have to have basic literacy skills to operate the cash registers - they just push a button with a symbol depicting the correct size of hamburger. Rifkin (1996) argues that as technology continues to advance we are facing a global epidemic of unemployment that we will need to address as jobs continue to be lost in traditional manufacturing and service sectors.

Dyke (1997) examines the historical tensions that are created by having an educated citizenry, noting that "education is viewed as essential to the reproduction of the economic structure, yet feared as a potential source of individual empowerment" (1997, p. 5). In order for the elite to maintain existing power relations, it is important to

educate the population to the skill level which is needed to function in the highly technical workplace. To go beyond that, however, may create dissatisfied populace. This is one of the reasons why Freire's (1974) work was so threatening, because it challenged people in the lower working classes to think for themselves and challenge the existing power structures.

The notion of lifelong learning may be enthusiastically endorsed by the corporate industrial sector, but it is worthwhile to spend some time investigating the type of education which they are advocating, and who will benefit from it. Power and control are often subtly exerted by the business sector to develop the educational framework which best serves the interests of the existing elite.

Credentialism

The changing nature of the workforce has led to an employer's marketplace. Corporate restructuring and downsizing has resulted in high rates of unemployment in Canada, and a large increase in the marginalized workforce. Many people do not have permanent jobs or careers, but sustain a tenuous existence on short-term contract positions or part-time forms of employment (Rifkin, 1996). Many jobs that were full-time positions have been contracted out by businesses in

order to save money, as contract employees are rarely paid benefits, and can be terminated (a lovely word) whenever their services are no longer required.

Since for many people looking for work is now a lifetime occupation rather than a short-term activity, in order to be more competitive, many people strive to attain better academic credentials. Employers often use education as an initial screening device to obtain the most highly qualified employees (Strath Lane, 1983). Many jobs which used to only require a high school education, now require a university degree. While this is partially due to changing technology, it can also be argued that "credentialism" is part of the problem. For example, a person really does not need a grade twelve education to sweep a floor or assemble a pizza, yet many employers require a high school diploma even for menial types of work such as this.

The difficulty with credentialism is that it undermines the value of levels of academic achievement if the market is flooded with too many people possessing these credentials. As Morley notes,

> increased access seems to be leading to educational inflation and negative equity, with the value of qualifications tumbling as more representatives from marginalized groups acquire them. Rather than associating widening access with enhanced quality and diversity,it is perceived as dilution, pollution and inflation of certification (1997, p. 239).

As more women and minorities attain higher academic qualifications, the value of these credentials seems to be diminishing. In addition, education qualifications alone are an insufficient indicator of financial success in workplace. There is little difference in the levels of education between men and women, yet "the average income for women working full-time in 1995 was only 72 percent of the amount earned by their male counterparts" (Spencer, p. 205). So even as minorities and women seek to improve their status by obtaining academic credentials, there is no guarantee that it will result in greater individual economic success. Employers will have a better educated and highly skilled population of workers to draw upon, but in a globally fragmented and competitive workplace, they will not necessarily have to provide better financial incentives or employment security.

The quickly expanding knowledge base, and the pressures it creates for people to continue their education creates problems with regards to the voluntary nature of lifelong learning. Collins suggests that the "rationality of mandatory education measures has prevailed over a more democratic disposition to enshrine voluntary participation in adult education" (1991, p. 18). Many people may find themselves pressured to upgrade their educational skills, whether or not they wish to, simply to keep up with the expanding knowledge

base and remain competitive in the job market.

This trend poses particular problems for women, who are more likely to have interrupted career patterns because of a combination of factors centred primarily around their responsibilities in domestic work and childcare, and who therefore may have longer breaks from the workforce and educational system (Shipley, 1997; Kelly, 1988). They may find themselves pressured to continually upgrade their education in order to keep their employment opportunities open.

Thomas (1988) discusses the fierce debate over whether there should be mandatory continuing education for professionals (1988, p. 15). He writes that

> If a student comes freely, feels free enough to share experience, and believes that the experience is not only welcome but important, then that individual will offer his or her attention, will, and imagination to whatever is the developing objective of that particular educational enterprise. That is the essence of adult education (1988, p. 17).

This seems to suggest that to encroach upon the voluntary nature of adult education would compromise the "essence" of adult education as a personal choice and decision to continue learning.

Professionalization

The increasing support for the notion of lifelong learning will provide opportunities in higher education and

adult education to provide programs for the increasing number of mature students and adult learners. Coldstream seductively discusses the number of opportunities for adult educational ventures, noting "What a market for trainers, distance-learning packages, college and universities" (1994, p. 167).

Educators are no more immune to the challenges of working in an increasingly globalized workplace than any other sector is. Few full-time academic positions are coming open, and competition is stiff (Caplan, 1994). The temptation to reap the profits from new academic ventures is a very tantalizing prospect. However, as adult educators we need to examine the underlying values which determine the thrust of these educational opportunities.

Michael Collins (1991) warns that the increasing support for the notion of lifelong learning may be an opportunity for adult education to shift from its marginal status to centre stage. He cautions against this move, arguing that in the eagerness of many adult educators to gain further recognition and support for their field, there may be a tendency to incorporate what he terms "the cult of efficiency" (1991, p. 2). This is a privileging of technical rational knowledge above all others.

Adult education has often been perceived as a somewhat marginalized field within the larger educational sphere

(Collins, M., 1991). In the United States, one of the first educational institutions was an intellectual discussion club called the Junto, started by Benjamin Franklin and some of his associates. In the 1800's the lyceum movement developed in the United States as local study groups, from which other local service clubs, parent-teacher associations and other community groups evolved (Heimstra, 1976, p. 18). Thomas (1988) notes that as an immigrant country, Canada has a history of adult education. Adult education was often linked with movements for social change, such as the Antigonish movement and the Radio Farm Forum (Welton & Lecky, 1997).

Wilson (1993) argues that the professionalization of the field of adult education has meant that the field has been largely shaped by a technical-rational influence. The trend towards professionalization is a movement away from the critical perspective of adult education movements that were interested in initiating social changes.

Michael Collins notes the "eagerness amongst adult educators to take on the trappings of professionalized associations" (1991, p. 19). The problem that Collins perceives with this approach, is that "professionals" don't tend to take on radical new discourses. They are far more likely to work to entrench the status quo.

Wilson (1993) argues that as the field of adult education

developed, there was a movement to create a distinct body of knowledge and methods of practice. He argues that to control knowledge production "is essential to defining what constitutes the profession" (1993, p. 13). Therefore, the work of Malcolm Knowles (1980) in establishing andragogy as a specific approach to teaching adults helped to define adult education as a separate and legitimate field of expertise, with a group of professionals who could be drawn upon to provide specific educational services.

Instead of striving to achieve 'professional' status, Michael Collins argues that adult educators should "foster their marginalized outsider status" (1991, p. 84). This will help them to retain their critical focus on societal issues.

Apple points out that

> It is understanding these hegemonic relations that we need to remember something which Gramsci maintained - that there are two requirements for ideological hegemony. It is not merely that our economic order 'creates' categories and structures of feeling which saturate our everyday lives. Added to this must be a group of 'intellectuals' who employ and give legitimacy to the categories, who make the ideological forms seem neutral (1990, p. 10-11).

Therefore, educators who promote programs which support the dominant economic paradigm are an important part of the process of legitimating this approach to education. By buying in to the notion of professionalization, many educators may be compromising their critical focus.

Gendered Differences in Experience

The professionalization of adult education has also led to predominantly masculine bias which overlooks women's contributions to the field. Historically, women's participation in early adult education programs have not been as well recorded as men's experiences (Butterwick, 1998). Burstow (1994) notes that the majority of leaders in adult education organizations, departmental heads, and full-time faculty in adult education have generally been white, middle-class males. As a consequence, women's experiences in adult education have tended to be marginalized or overlooked. Burstow argues that "as men primarily attend to what men say and do, women's contribution is thereby rendered invisible and the field's history is distorted" (1994, p. 3). Women's concerns are overlooked or sidelined as being of little importance. Burstow notes that many of the historical accounts in adult education have overlooked the contributions of women, and "educational movements by women, like the feminist movement, are not counted as adult education" (1994, p. 4). Men are presented as the "actors" in history, while women are "nameless, passive bystanders" (Stalker, p. 1996).

Women have also been underrepresented in scholarly journal writing, which Burstow argues "has historically been a male activity" (1994, p. 4). Even today, Hayes (1992) has

noted that women are underrepresented in scholarly writing. Another problem is that when women do publish, their work is often overlooked (as can be seen by the lack of citations for feminist research) and is rarely incorporated into mainstream discussions.

Hayes (1992) research on journal article publications, in which she compared American and British articles, indicates that the adult education field does not adequately address gender issues or concerns. She found that "only 39 of the 234 articles not identified as research reports included some mention of women in particular or gender issues" (1992, p. 132). She writes that:

> For the most part, attention to women, gender, or feminist thought consisted of only a few isolated comments rather than recurring references or a noticeable impact on conceptualization. Those authors that identified `special needs' of women did not necessarily move beyond stereotypes of female and male characteristics. The extremely limited number of references to any feminist scholarship provides strong evidence of the lack of integration of feminist thought in these adult education publications. Particulary troublesome were the lack of references to adult education literature on women and gender, though such literature is admittedly limited (1992, p. 136).

The consequences of this is that women's experiences and perspectives continue to be marginalized within the adult education field.

The lack of representation of women's experiences, and marginalized status of feminist perspectives has led to a

continuing problem with masculine bias in adult education curriculum. Blundel argues that "at present, what the traditional adult education curriculum is offering to women is either a reinforcement of their time-honoured domestic role, or selective admission to a system of knowledge which is defined, transmitted and controlled by men" (1991, p. 200). The content of adult education programs has not been significantly influenced by feminist contributions.

In order to successfully address gendered differences in experience, we need to provide an environment in which women's experiences and perspectives are validated. Martinez Aleman (1997) argues that "women's presence in higher education, and in particular, their presence alongside men, has been about the development of their cultures in an enterprise specifically designed for men, not one for and about women (1997, p. 120-121). Educators need to assess how to incorporate feminist pedagogical strategies within their teaching practice, so that women's experiences and insights will no longer be marginalized. Hayes and Smith argue that "a better understanding of past and present perspectives on women and gender is important as a foundation for future scholarship" (1994, p. 201).

Women's activities in adult education have often been linked with their domestic roles. Blundel writes that "the

`little home-maker' approach to women's education has by no means been eradicated" from adult education programs (1992, p. 200). There are still many courses which focus on traditional women's pursuits, such as cooking and beauty culture.

Although many women still take courses linked with traditional domestic activities, Cox and Pascal argue that "domestic crafts show little sign of becoming a major aspect of mainstream education" (1994, p. 161). The majority of women returning to adult education programs, particularly degree or certificate types of programs, cite vocational reasons as their main reason for continuing their education (Cox & Pascall, 1993; Clayton & Smith, 1987). The decision to return to formal education programs is often linked with a desire to obtain greater independence by using education as a starting point towards the paid marketplace (Campbell, 1993; Mendelsohn, 1989). Women often use education to "escape from the ascribed forms of evaluation which traditionally ruled the careers of mother and housewife" (Cox and Pascall, 1994, p. 161). Since women's work within the homeplace has traditionally been devalued and overlooked, it is not surprising that many women seek to establish an identity separate from these roles.

Linden West (1995) explores the difficulties of ascertaining the motivation for adults continuing in higher

education. West notes that most motivational studies are in questionnaire format, with closed-ended types of responses that do not provide a means for exploring the often complicated and multi-faceted reasons why people choose to continue with their education. West writes:

> Not surprisingly, if asked to make a choice between vocational or personal motives, most people will tend to give vocational justifications for their actions rather than anything more 'personal'. This may of course be tautological: students themselves mirroring, in their responses, the rationalisations for educational participation most dominant in the wider culture. Such 'findings' are then used to reinforce the ideologically driven notion that higher education should serve primarily vocational and instrumentalist ends" (1995, p. 135).

West used life narratives to unravel the reasons why adults are motivated to return to school, and found that there were often many different factors that contributed to the decision.

While students often cite vocational aspirations, their underlying motives may be linked with issues such as childhood traumas, current problems in relationships and lack of self-esteem. In discussing one of the women who was interviewed, West writes:

> When asked for her reasons for wanting to enter higher education, she talked, conventionally, about the importance of a career and the fact of having more time now that her children had begun school. Yet when Kathy considered, in later interviews, what being a solicitor meant to her, these career ambitions became entangled in a story of powerlessness and inner vulnerability across her entire life. She talked of her childhood, parents, and their fragile marriage" (1995, p. 138)

A complete picture of individual motivation is only attained by examining the different aspects of each students life. While a person may claim that work is the most important factor, West's (1995) research indicates that the answer is not usually that uncomplicated. As I argue in the following chapter, connections to the homeplace often are important factors to consider in understanding women's learning experiences.

The strongest difference in gendered experiences seems to be felt by women who enter into marriages or other living arrangements with males and then have children, for it is this combination of work, domestic, childcare, and schooling responsibilities that seems to present the greatest challenges for many mature women students (Rosalind Edwards, 1993). In lifelong learning, women face different life experiences than men, which tend to become more apparent in the adult years. During early schoolhood and even through early adulthood, women may experience some discrimination in schooling situations (Manicom, 1992), yet it is in the adult years that differences in experience seem to be most pronounced. Cox and Pascall write:

> Schoolgirls may happily compete with and out-perform schoolboys as long as schooling is an enclosed experience unrelated to adult life in general, but in the higher reaches of education

> subject choice and career ambitions may always be modified by knowledge and growing understanding of the gendered world that lies beyond the school (1994, p. 161).

When I teach undergraduate courses and talk to young women, I sometimes hear them express disbelief that sexism or gender differences will in any way shape their own lives. I recall my own experiences in high school and undergraduate courses where I was unconscious of any gendered differences in experience. Once I married, started my Master's degree, and had our first child, however, major shifts happened in my life which were based on different expectations related to gender roles. There were financial concerns, housework and childcare responsibilities, and issues over leisure time, all of which had to be discussed, negotiated and renegotiated over the years as I had more children and continued with work and schooling.

It became apparent to me, from both my teaching and my own life experience, that lifelong learning is often shaped and influenced to a large extent by gendered differences in relationship to the homeplace. The dominant discourse in lifelong learning tends to focus on vocational aspects, and ignores the ties to home life. The significance of learning in the homeplace has not been adequately explored. The significance of gendered differences in experience in lifelong learning are often connected to experiences with the

homeplace, and this needs to be examined more closely in order to adequately address the importance of women's experiences in adult education.

Conclusion

There are numerous problems with the narrow economic agenda which is currently defined by the dominant discourse in lifelong learning. This approach is insufficiently theoretically grounded to examine the social consequences of many of the bureaucratic/economic decisions which are being made today that are determining the agenda for lifelong learning. The dominant discourse poses its position unproblematically, as if by attending to the needs of the economy (usually as determined by policy makers and industrial leaders) then everything else will fall in place.

For instance, Min Sun Pak (1997) discusses the traditional historical attitude towards education in Korea, in which education was valued of and for itself. He expresses a concern that if the only focus is on the marketplace, then non-vocational factors may be overlooked. However, his discussion is somewhat superficial, in that he then suggests that provided the vocational aspects of lifelong learning are attended to, people will have job security and opportunities, so that "will sow the seeds for the rebirth of learning for

the sake of learning" (1997, p. 297). How it will do this is never specified.

I argue that it is naive to presume that so long as a corporate agenda is dictating the course of the lifelong learning, that other, more important human aspects will become a focus of adult education. The work of Beck (1994) who discusses the concept of a "risk society" has been influential in determining the critical discourses surrounding lifelong learning. As Dyke notes "a key characteristic of late modernity is that of manufactured risk" (1997, p. 2). Education is an essential aspect of living within a "risk society" as it enables one to transform "information into knowledge that can be acted upon" (Dyke, 1997, p. 2).

The concept of a learning society has been critiqued and challenged, as to whether it is conceivable in today's society (Hughes & Tight, 1995). Strain and Field (1997) argue against Hughes and Tight's (1995) critique of the concept of the learning society. While they admit that there are many problems to be faced in attempting to attend to discrepancies in power and competing agendas that may interfere with the broader concept of a learning society, they are unwilling to relinquish the hope that this concept brings. They write:

> The project may indeed come to be subverted, hi-jacked by corporatist, instrumentalist, universalist interests embodied in national governments and globalized financial

> institutions...[but] there is 'out there' a real society in which knowledge and other resources are unequally distributed, to a degree that is not only inimical to the fulfilment of individual capabilities and freedoms but, arguably, detrimental to the collective survival and development of human society (1997, p. 153-154).

Strain and Field acknowledge the marketplace orientation in adult education and state that "the influence of consumer culture over education and training is pervasive" (1997, p. 151). Their analysis of Hughes and Tight's critique does not suggest that these problems should be overlooked, but rather that there is a need for a broader conception of lifelong learning. They point to Ranson's (1994) discussion of a learning society "which will cultivate the necessary critical understandings and caring practices among both individuals and collectives" which is needed to deal with an increasingly diverse and complex world (1997, p. 152).

I continue in the next chapter by addressing how understanding connections between lifelong learning and the homeplace can provide insights into the gendered differences in adult education. I argue that by developing a more critical and encompassing approach that takes into account women's experiences and perspectives we will be better able to approach the problems and challenges of reinterpreting the concept of lifelong learning as we head into the next century.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HOMEPLACE

The concept of "homeplace" is not a static, unchanging concept. It is a concept that is located in both tangible and nontangible realms. Its meaning is different for each person, depending upon his/her unique life circumstances. Feminist discourses have revealed that gendered differences in experience are often centred around women's experiences of mothering and their domestic labour within the homeplace. I argue that to develop a counter discourse that focuses on a more life affirming approach to education, we need to examine these gendered differences in experiences and connections to the homeplace.

I argue that women are often caught between the contradictory tensions of masculine values of autonomy and feminine values of connection. At the same time as women utilize education to establish independence and attain public recognition, they are often pulled towards their responsibilities and commitments to others within the homeplace. This often leads to conflict in women's lives as they attempt to balance competing needs and interests. The tensions women experience are often intensified by the lack of recognition for gendered differences in experience and outlook

within academia, so that connections to the homeplace are generally overlooked or devalued.

Not only is the workplace and the nature of education changing, but so are other institutions, such as family (Jones et. al., 1995; Eshleman et. al, 1995). Within a globalised society, people are searching for a sense of identity (Jansen et al, 1996). Traditional roles are being challenged, ethnic differences are accentuated, and the complexity of everyday life creates constant unease and anxiety (Richard Edwards, 1997).Our understanding of labour and productivity need to be reassessed to recognize the value and the importance of sustainable and life affirming forms of labour (Hart, 1992).

The homeplace is an important component of what Habermas (1981) has termed the "lifeworld". As the definition of what is family is perceived to be shifting over time (Grumet, 1988), so the notion of what I mean by "homeplace" can also be viewed as a fluctuating, evolving concept.

I use the homeplace as a conceptual construct to focus attention on the significance of identity construction, family life and relationships, and domestic labour responsibilities. I argue that as adult educators we need to develop a greater sensitivity and awareness of the significance of the homeplace as a key area in adult education, particularly in respect to how it influences the lives of adult women learners.

Harding (1993) has argued from a standpoint feminist epistemological viewpoint that the position of the researcher influences the types of questions which are asked, and how the research is conducted. As a critical feminist researcher interested in exploring the significance of the homeplace on lifelong learning experiences, my position influences the development of the different focal points in my analysis. Like most feminists (Fagan, 1991; Eichler, 1984; Hart, 1992), I believe that it is important to make power issues explicit, rather than implicit. Within the homeplace identity, relationships, and the allocation of labour may be individually negotiated, but in order to fully understand these issues, one must examine the influence of the larger culture and society (Luxton et. al, 1990).

By examining some of the discourses surrounding identity, relationships and domestic labour, I develop insights into the significance of the homeplace on personal experience in learning. I argue that these points have an important influence on affective attitudes and practical circumstances which women in adult education find themselves facing.

Gender

Gender is an important component in defining each individual's sense of identity. Women's educational

experiences have often been shaped by beliefs relating to biological limitations which their gender is perceived to have, and by the way domestic and childcare responsibilities have been allocated by gender (Tilly, 1987; Peterson, 1989, Rosenburg, 1990a). In society, the umbilical cord works two ways. Not only does it make the infant in utero dependent upon its mother, but it has served to place women in a situation of vulnerability and dependency. Gender is an important factor in determining the freedom that a person has to participate in the larger society (Morgan, C. 1996).

In the past, research in the social sciences has often overlooked the significance of differences in gender impacting on life experiences (Morgan, D. , 1981; Eichler, 1984). As feminist perspectives have been introduced within sociological, educational, and historical disciplines, areas of research which were overlooked and undertheorized by male academics have been given greater recognition. Issues such as household labour (Oakley, 1974; Armstrong & Armstrong, 1994), family relationships (Peterson, 1989), domestic violence (Tierney, 1982; Johnson, 1996), and motherwork (Hart, 1995; Waltzer, 1996) are now recognized as legitimate areas for academic study and research. The importance of developing feminist theory (Smith, 1987) and feminist pedagogy (Lewis, 1993) has begun to be addressed.

Within adult education, while there is some recognition that gendered differences in life experiences affect learning, the majority of the theorists and practitioners who have written extensively in the field are men (Hayes & Smith, 1994). Although they are sometimes sympathetic and supportive of feminist issues, the main focus of their work is usually not on exploring gendered differences in adult education. There is a need for further feminist research within the area of adult education (Miles, 1989; Burstow, 1994).

Since feminist perspectives involve examining how women's experiences differ from that of men's, I believe that greater insight into the gendered differences in experiences in lifelong learning can be understood by examining the influence of the homeplace on the lives of women learners. I start with the homeplace because that is where the main differences for male and females roles are initially ascribed and continually reinforced within our society.

Gender is an important factor in the development of identity formation. Feminists align themselves at different ends of the spectrum in defining the ways in which gender is biologically/socially constructed and how this affects women's experiences (Miles, 1996). Gender is a complex variable, intersected with other factors, such as race, class, ability, and sexual orientation (Hekman, 1990). Within a globalized

context there are cultural implications of differences in gendered experience.

Visible minorities have sometimes challenged feminist groups as being skewed towards a white, middle class perspective, and fails to adequately account for differences in experience determined by other factors. For example, Patricia Collins argues that in order to understand the concept of motherhood, we have to recognize that "Motherhood occurs in specific historical contexts framed by interlocking structures of race, class, and gender" (1994, p. 56). Women,(and particularly women whose circumstances are complicated by other factors which may place them at a disadvantage, such as being a member of a visible minority), soon discover that gender is an important variable which affects their educational experiences at all different stages in their lives (Bannerji, H, Carty, L., Delhi, K., Heald, S. & McKenna, K., 1991; Stalker, J. & Prentice, S., 1998).

Angela Miles (1996) argues that despite their diverse situations and circumstances, women can come together to develop an "integrative feminism" that is based on mutual respect for diversity, and a willingness to actively commit to social change. She writes that:

> The alternative value core of integrative feminisms in all their variety is the holistic, egalitarian, life-centred rejection of dominant androcentric, dualistic, hierarchical, profit-centered ideology

and social structures (1996, p. xi).

This is a perspective that challenges the underlying values of the dominant discourse currently defining the direction of lifelong learning. It argues that the belief systems in our society must be changed to reflect a more compassionate, connected, and respectful way of managing our relationships with others, and sustaining the world in which we all live.

Feminists have noted that men are associated with culture, rationality and science, while women are inextricably linked with nature through their biological reproductive capacities (Hekman, 1990). Just as men have attempted to dominate the natural world through the use of scientific, technical rationality, they also strive to control women through a system of patriarchy in "which men appropriate all superior social roles and keep women in subordinate and exploited positions" (Elliot & Mandell, 1995, p. 14).

Cultural feminists and ecofeminists suggest that the male psyche is one which is characterized by violence and aggression. For example, Russell (1987) argues that the "nuclear mentality" is in fact "a perverted outgrowth of this culture's notion of masculinity" (1987, p. 10). Hart also takes up this argument that a masculine perspective glorifies the notion of destruction, in which the ultimate expression of freedom is the power to kill (1992, p. 116). She suggests that

the male orientation towards dominating nature translates into a need to subordinate other human beings, arguing that "the triumph over necessity always takes the form of mastery: over slaves, over women, over nature" (1992, p. 120).

Within this context, the productive work that women do in the homeplace, as mothers and subsistence producers, is treated as less important than the work that men do. Hart (1992) argues that under the current masculine orientation of our society, the notion of "production" is defined as the accumulation of capital towards profit. Hart (1995) presents the radical argument that women's "motherwork" and subsistence labour should be given greater value in our society. If this were to happen, then work oriented towards life, rather than profit, would no longer be at the bottom of the hierarchy (1992, p. 121).

Both radical and conservative approaches to feminism have focussed upon the importance of the role of women as mothers and caregivers. Hekman (1990) discusses how in the second wave of feminism there have been some conservative, pro-family feminists who focus on the value of the traditional role of woman as mothers. She writes that

> Like the nineteenth-century suffragists, the conservative pro-family feminists argue for the moral superiority of women and identify that superiority as rooted in woman's role as childbearer and childrearer (1990, p. 138).

Traditionally women have often drawn upon their position as mothers to validate their right to campaign for societal changes, drawing upon a sense of moral righteousness linked with their mothering roles (Morgan, C., 1996).

Critics of a radical feminist position argue that there are inherent dangers in an essentialist position, that suggests men and women are essentially, inherently different, as it would lead to the conclusion that men and women are incapable of changing their biological natures. An essentialist position can be used to support a conservative as well as a more radical viewpoint that men and women are intrinsically different, thus creating a "trap" which "represents an analytic dead end as well as a political danger" (Elliot & Mandell, 1995, p. 17). An awareness of these charges has led many feminists to resist assuming the "essentialist" label. Although their work presents arguments that focus on the differences between males and females, they are careful to qualify their position as being non-essentialist, suggesting that socialization and experience, not just biology, are responsible for differences between men and women (Gilligan, 1982; Ruddick, 1994).

Some feminists argue that gender can be perceived completely as a social construct, with no real basis in biology. Judith Butler states that gender is socially

constructed and that women's identities are often caught up in a sense of "compulsory heterosexuality" (1990, p. 18). She suggests that the basis for inequality has developed by creating a binary opposition between gender, which places women in an inferior position of power. Butler states that, "the heterosexualization of desire requires and institutes the production of discrete and asymmetrical oppositions between "feminine" and "masculine", where these are understood as expressive attributes of "male" and "female" (1990, p. 17). If we were to deconstruct the whole notion of gender identity, then women would no longer be constricted by their gendered identities and roles. Butler argues:

> If identities were no longer understood as a set of practices derived from the alleged interests that belong to a set of ready-made subjects, a new configuration of politics would surely emerge from the ruins of the old (1990, p. 149).

In order to achieve equality, society's perception of gender would have to be reworked, to recognize that there really is no difference between males and females. Therefore, the roles and responsibilities which have traditionally been allocated to different genders would have to be reorganized, and women would no longer be subjected to an inferior position within society.

While I believe it is doubtful that gender differences will be totally eradicated in the future, I do believe there

is a possibility for change to continue so that traditional gender roles may be reworked. I believe that feminist discourses can provide insights to inform masculine frameworks of thought, to rupture previously accepted notions of how society must be structured, and to provide alternative visions for education in the future. One way in which we can gain broader insights is to examine the homeplace as an important site of living and learning.

THE HOMEPLACE

A person defines her homeplace based upon personal lived experience and her family and cultural background. The homeplace may be seen as fitting into a larger socio-cultural context than just an individual residence, so that the community, neighbours, and cultural setting are also important aspects to understand with regards to the notion of "homeplace". bell hooks (1990) talks about the "homeplace" as a site of resistance, located within her black community. It was a centre for family relationships, made possible by the black women who worked so hard to maintain the sense of faith and solidarity that provided a shelter against the oppressive racism and poverty that was so much a part of their family's lives. hooks writes:

> Historically, African-American people believed that the construction of a homeplace, however fragile

> and tenuous (the slave hut, the wooden shack), had a radical political dimension. Despite the brutal reality of racial apartheid, of domination, one's homeplace was the one site where one could freely confront the issue of humanization, where one could resist. Black women resisted by making homes where all black people could strive to be subjects, not objects, where we could be affirmed in our minds and hearts despite poverty, hardship, and deprivation, where we could restore to ourselves the dignity denied us on the outside in the public world (1990, p. 42).

Each homeplace provides a different sense of family background. hooks talks about her grandmother making crazy quilts, who at the same time imparted a sense of family history and cultural identity to her. She writes, "Baba would show her quilts and tell their stories, giving the history (the concept behind the quilt) and the relation of chosen fabrics to individual lives" (1990, p. 120).

The homeplace is often linked with a specific geographic location. For example, to many Newfoundlanders, the land itself, the solid rock, rugged beauty, and harsh climate, all constitute a part of the sense of "homeplace" that many Newfoundlanders feel. The folklore, the sense of community, and constant theme of survival underlie much of the rubric of everyday life. In many cases, the concept of "homeplace" goes beyond an individual's family or household.

Most people experience more than one homeplace, so one person may have a childhood homeplace where she grew up and was socialized, which may or may not be carried over into

adulthood (ie. parents may still be residing in the childhood homeplace). Adult homeplaces may also vary over time. For instance, it may consist of a husband and two children at one stage, and no husband at a later stage. There might be a geographical distance between one's homeplace and current site of residence. For example, a woman who is commuting to school may feel that her real homeplace is back at the house where her husband and children reside rather than in the apartment where she is currently staying.

Since life is constantly changing, a person's sense of a particular "homeplace" may diminish or be strengthened over time. The childhood homeplace may become a memory rather than a physical site. People who live alone or in many different places may develop a sense of homeplace that is linked more with family relationships than any particular community, or they may have friendships which supplant traditional family ties.

Homeplace may evoke a spiritual sense of connectedness with whatever is important in a person's life. For instance, the homeplace may evoke memories of the past, connections with people who are no longer alive. The homeplace may be linked with a time of spiritual awakening, of a realization of one's connection to nature, or of one's sense of the past and personal history.

The homeplace may also be a silent weight of fear or repression. Not all homeplaces are supportive or life-affirming. Some people are scarred by memories of their homeplace experiences, years after the events have happened. Sometimes we unconsciously replicate the negative aspects of our childhood homeplaces in our adult lives - repeating to our children words that we swore we would never use, using the same destructive methods of communication we were taught in the past.

The homeplace shapes and influences each of us all throughout our lives. It affects our sense of identity, provides a centre for personal relationships, and for most women, it is place of essential and continuous labour.

IDENTITY

One way in which a person's sense of identity is developed is through connections and experiences within the homplace. The homeplace plays an important role in shaping individual identity. Attitudes towards education, assessments of personal capabilities, and decisions about life paths are often influenced and shaped by influences from the homeplace (Baxter-Magolda, 1992).

Many of the current discourses around identity and adult education focus on how the individual may construct an

identity (Jansen & Wildemeersch, 1996; Richard Edwards, 1997). These discussions focus on the autonomy of the individual in identity construction, rather than on the importance of the sense of connection with others or with the homeplace. Masculine frameworks of understanding often stress the importance of individual, autonomous decisions, while feminist literature often focuses on the importance women place on maintaining connections (Gilligan, 1982).

Jansen and Wildemeersch (1996) discuss the problem of viewing identity development as an individualized construct, noting the importance of larger social and cultural institutions. Referring to Giddens (1991) discussion of how individuals must chart their own lifestyles, they state that this means that

> Identity development becomes a lifelong learning project, in which the subject reflexively integrates new experiences into a picture or story about the self that must continually be construed and adjusted (1996, p. 327).

They argue that in the past the state had a role in establishing cultural goals. In this era of globalization, however, the state is losing its control and "its authority as a normative frame of reference for the well-being and identification of its citizens" (1996, p. 329).

Richard Edwards (1997) argues that as our society is increasingly globalized there are two tensions that exist

simultaneously, one towards similarity, the other towards uniqueness. "Greater integration of the global market simultaneously produces homogeneity and heterogeneity" (1997, p. 14). In a fragmented and rapidly changing world, people search for a means to establish their own identity. Ethnic enclaves assert their own uniqueness against the homogenizing influence of Western culture. Individuals seek to fabricate their own sense of identity.

In lifelong learning, women often enter into education with conflicting goals of wanting to attain a sense of independence and develop a sense of identity that is not dependent upon relationships with others ie. as a wife or mother. For many women, the opportunity to continue their education is perceived as a step towards developing an independent sense of identity.

Cox and Pascall (1994) assess in retrospect the experiences of a number of mature women students who returned to school a number of years ago in a follow-up to an earlier study which they had conducted. They argue that education is linked with evaluation of self.

> The relationship between formal education and individual's sense of status and authority represents the outer manifestation, whilst the sense of self-fulfilment relates to the way education alters some quality which is felt to be private. For men, the public aspect has perhaps, mostly been sufficient in itself to provide the sense of self-fulfilment, but the increasing impact

> education has on women is not so clear, except that it now clearly rivals other sources of identity, particularly the role of housewife (1994, p. 160).

They argue that this is not to imply that the role of housewife has never been evaluated. In fact, there was often rather rigorous demands as to what constituted a good housewife. However, the value or status of this position is not an elevated one in our society (Oakley, 1974). One student was quoted as saying, "I just know that I'm an individual now, I have a life apart from my family and husband, I'm worthy in my own eyes" (Cox & Pascall, 1994).

Education serves an important function in allowing women to develop an autonomous feeling of identity, and to regain status within the larger society. Yet at the same time, women often describe a sense of ambivalence in feeling that they want to grow and pursue their own interests, yet they still wish to stay the same, and keep connected to their families and to their lives outside of school (Cox and Pascall, 1994; Rosalind Edwards, 1993). Women often rely heavily upon the support of female friends (Martinez Aleman, 1997). They will continue to foster close ties and maintain their relationships with family members (Redding & Dowling, 1992). One of the difficulties for women is that the importance of these ties is not validated or recognized in the academic sphere. Educators may recognize the importance of establishing an autonomous

sense of identity, but do not place as much value on the connected sense of identity that links women (and men) to the homeplace.

Academia has developed as a masculine, public sphere that is removed from the private domain of the home (Stalker, J, & Prentice, S., 1998). Women's unwillingness and incapability to completely abstract themselves from the private sphere places them in a contradictory position within academia.

Aisenberg and Harrington (1988) discuss how many women feel uncomfortable and apprehensive about informing faculty that they are pregnant. Their perception is that a pregnancy is not welcomed in the academy. It is a visible intrusion of the "private" lives of women, brought into the "public" world of the university. A friend of mine who was quite visibly pregnant with her fourth child during her Ph.D. was amazed at how no one in her classes, students or faculty, commented or even seemed to notice that she was expecting a baby. The physical embodiment of pregnancy is one way in which women's lives are markedly difference from male experience. A pregnant woman cannot neatly demarcate the difference between public and private, homeplace and academia. Her identity as "mother" is visibly present, at the same time as she assumes the role of "teacher" or "student". Pregnancy is an event that becomes a central experience in the lives of many women. The identity

of "mother" is an important aspect of self. To overlook, dismiss, or negatively evaluate this experience is to perpetuate an androcentric perspective within academia that shuts women out.

First Learning Site

The homeplace is also the first site for individual learning experiences. This is where individuals are initially situated within a larger societal context. It is a place where values, beliefs, morals, and goals are often discussed and negotiated. These are all important characteristics of the homeplace as a part of the lifeworld (Welton, 1993).

The learning that takes place in the homeplace can either foster or hinder the confidence a woman has in her abilities. For women who face abusive or dysfunctional family experiences, this first learning site can serve to silence and cripple them, having long lasting and profound effects upon their learning capabilities. The book, *Women's Way's of Knowing,* (Belenky et al., 1986) compiled information on a number of women learners. The accounts of the women who were interviewed indicated clear differences between women who had been brought up in abusive, difficult home situations, in contrast to the experiences of women who had been encouraged by supportive family members to grow and develop. Childhood

experiences in the homeplace determine to a large extent what adult learning experiences will be like, at least initially. Women who came from dysfunctional or abusive backgrounds struggled to even find a basic voice to speak with, while women who have been nourished and encouraged have the power and freedom to develop more sophisticated and complex patterns of thought.

hooks (1990) describes the importance of developing a strong sense of personal identity within the homeplace to give her the strength to function in a predominantly white male academic environment, which she often found was hostile and oppressive. Baxter-Magolda (1992) also found in her research on gender related patterns of intellectual development, that childhood experiences had a strong influence on developing attitudes and cognitive approaches and abilities into adulthood for both male and female students.

The importance of the home as a first learning site is often not addressed within a higher education context. Unlike grade school, adult educators rarely have contact with the parents or families of their students. Interaction between instructors and students is usually limited. Connections between the homeplace and education are generally overlooked or treated as irrelevant.

Educators may fail to reflect upon how the homeplace

shapes students' attitudes and expectations of schooling. They may misinterpret student behaviour as a result. Johnson-Baily and Cevero's (1996) study of black female reentry students in the United States found that within some homeplaces, women are taught by their mothers to use silence as a source of power and as a form of resistance. The women reported that they often used silence as a coping strategy when faced with racist attitudes in academic situations. A potential problem that I can see arising with this is that educators who are unaware of their students' backgrounds (and insensitive enough to create an inhospitable and racist environment to begin with) may misconstrue this silence as lack of comprehension, unwillingness to participate, or lack of preparation on the part of the students.

At the same time, as the performance of mature women students may be affected by their own experiences in the homeplace, the importance of the home as a first learning site also affects the situation of women who are currently raising their own children. Women are socialized to believe that they are ultimately responsible for their children's behaviour. In order to be a good mother, they must provide adequate supports in the home so that their children will do well in school. They are expected to commit a great deal of time and effort towards enriching this first learning site for their children,

and are judged negatively if they fail to do so (Griffith & Smith, 1991; Schickendanz, 1995). Outside commitments such as schooling or work do not serve to mitigate this socially assigned responsibility. This work, and the rigorous demands which it makes upon women, tends to be overlooked or dismissed within academia.

Greedy Institutions

Rosalind Edwards draws upon Louis Coser's concept of greedy institutions to explain the dilemma that many mature women students find themselves caught up in. Families are "greedy institutions" which demand complete allegiance and commitment from the woman. She writes that the "mandate of constant loyalty to greedy institutions [means] that any non-compliance, even mentally, could evoke the sense of guilt" (1993, p. 63). Coser argues that many women fulfil the requirements set by greedy institutions towards their families, even when they have outside commitments, such as paid work.

Mature women students are faced with the dilemma of satisfying two "greedy institutions", as universities and colleges often demand a similar sort of commitment in terms of time and energy, as families do. Edwards (1993) notes that many of the women she interviewed in her study were conscious

that they were not able to meet the same time commitments as conventional students were able to give to their schoolwork. Often domestic or childcare responsibilities meant that they were not able to take time to participate in informal learning situations such as going to a pub to have a beer and talk with the professor or other students. Thus, they often felt that they missed out on the "whole experience" of being a student (1993, p. 63).

Rosalind Edwards argues that the difficulties women face in combining their home life with further schooling, are often linked with this competition which situates the woman in the middle of two demanding "greedy institutions". She writes that:

> Women are under pressure to achieve success in each of the two greedy spheres by showing the neither suffers because of their participation in the other. They must show that their educational work is not affected by their family commitments, and that their family lives are not suffering because of their studies (1993, p. 63).

The women Edwards interviewed often felt guilty when they spent time on their studies, because they believed that their time should be devoted to their family. Yet at the same time, the women were often highly motivated and anxious to do well in their studies. This created a sense of conflict and ambivelence, clearly summed up in this excerpt from one of her interviews:

> I just think that I'd like to have been able to do both, you know, at the same time. Devote my whole life to college and somehow have this other person looking after my child the whole time. I felt I did feel very torn (1993, p. 66).

These same sorts of dilemmas and feelings of anxiety and guilt were revealed by women interviewed by Mendelsohn (1987) and Campbell (1993).

Identity Transformation

Mezirow's (1975) study of women returning to higher education uses the concept of perspective transformation to discuss how women's outlook towards previously accepted types of behavior, such as the traditional allocation of gender role tasks, may be challenged by returning to school. When a woman undergoes a perspective transformation, her meaning frames change, and she brings these changes back into the homeplace. Her understanding of what is "meant" by being a wife and mother may be altered. This can be beneficial, when women come to realize that they are not limited to traditionally assigned gender roles, and that they can do other things besides being a wife and/or mother. Yet at the same time, it is problematic if women absorb the marketplace values of the dominant discourse that serve to undermine the importance of caring labour. While education serves an important function in allowing women to develop an autonomous feeling of identity,

at the same time, it can serve as a negative reinforcement of women's commitment to her connected sense of identity with the homeplace.

I recall meeting an older female professor at an academic conference who told me with a sigh that she had "wasted" the first twenty years of her life at home with her husband and children. In retrospect, she felt that she should have been out working, to set a good example for young women to go on in academia.

I asked her if she had felt she was wasting her time when she was at home, and she said "no". I asked her if her husband and children had appreciated her labour, if she had enjoyed those years at home, and if she had a good relationship with her family at the present time. She said "yes" to all three questions. So then I asked her how she could dismiss those twenty years as a "waste of time". I pointed out that she did what she felt was important for a period of her life, her family appreciated it, and she had felt that those years were meaningful at the time. It was only once she entered into the academic world that had she reassessed her earlier beliefs, and decided that the years would have been better spent pursuing academic work. I could see that she was both gratified and troubled by my response. She had become so used to dismissing those years spent at home

as time of no importance, that it was disquieting to once again be challenged to assess their worth.

We do women a disservice when we dismiss the value of the work that women do, and the importance of the relationships that they sustain, when they commit time and energy within the homeplace. Caring labour is continually devalued within our society. A person who works as a corporate executive and makes a great deal of profit (but possibly exploits both other people's labour and the environment) is accorded far more respect than a woman who would choose to take a couple of years to nurse her dying mother in the comfort of her own home.

Timothy Diamond (1986) did a participant-observation study in a nursing home, where he was continually met with surprise because it was so unexpected that a male would work in a traditionally female environment. The physical, nurturing, caring forms of labour in our society are almost always assumed by women. It is a reflection of masculinist values that it is accorded so little worth.

It is also a reflection of masculine perceptions to assume that transformative learning experiences for women would occur when they enter into the public sphere of the university, but not consider the type of transformative learning which may go on within homeplace. One of the most

significant and transformative learning experiences for many women, is "the complex and multi-dimensional process of motherhood" (Bassin et. al., 1994: 9). Women will often change their primary roles in life in order to adapt to the responsibilities of motherhood (Matthews & Beaujot, 1997). Their value systems may undergo a profound shift. Their sense of identity alters, as women are now connected in a very strong way to the lives of their children.

The importance of these types of learning experiences have been consistently undervalued by male educators. For instance, Burstow (1994) critique Tough's (1979) perspective on the learning experiences of mothers, which he ranks at the bottom of the scale, allocating 331 hours to this experience, in contrast to the 1491 hours he averages out for professors. Burstow argues that "those myriad women who view the general task of raising a child as the primary learning experience of their lives are either not represented in this survey or have been influenced by the researcher's questions to distort their learning experience" (1994, p. 8).

Hart argues that "in a world that thrives on divisions, separations, or fragmentations", we need to develop a more holistic approach to education which validates the experience of mothering (1997, p. 133). We need to bridge the gap between the homeplace and education, to acknowledge the

significance of learning experiences in different sites. Hart advocates this approach as "a process involving personal, social and cultural transformations to gain a life-affirming perspective to guide our educational orientation, and the we we think, feel, and act as educators" (1997, p. 133).

Identity and Education

Women's experiences have often been overlooked or marginalized in education, and this serves to erase a sense of women's collective identity and shared interests. Martinez Aleman notes the experiences of women in universities is often one of alienation and discomfort. She argues that the marginalization of women's experience in universities can "be viewed as collections of gendered behaviours which play out in an oppositional environment" (1997, p. 121).

The lack of attention given to studying women's experiences is reflected in the androcentric perspective which dominates most contemporary social theory (Alcoff & Potter, 1993). Smith (1990) has written extensively about the way in which women have historically been excluded from the creation of academic discourses. Stalker notes the androcentric trend in adult education research, pointing out that "if women's issues and concerns become invisible then that base of knowledge, moral sanction, and action is erased from the

literature" (1996, p. 103). Deletion occurs both through language and history, reinforced through both male ideology and masculine control of institution power (Stalker, 1996). Women's issues continue to be either erased or marginalized within the field of adult education.

Blundell (1992) discusses Gramsci's notion of hegemony, and how it acts to oppress people by having them internalize the beliefs of the oppressors. She argues that:

> The belief that the reproduction of existing social relations depends on the acceptance of the dominant system of beliefs and values by groups of oppressed peoples is clearly relevant where women are concerned: their willingness to assume their subordinate social role stems not just from their initiation into `feminine' pursuits, but also from their acceptance of men's culture as a universally recognized and therefore `natural' identity (1992, p. 211).

Women's position in education becomes rather tenuous under these circumstances. Their unique interests, beliefs, and experiences are not validated.

Often what happens is that a dualistic asessessment of male/female experience posits the male experience as the norm, while women's experiences are perceived as being separate, distinct, and of lesser value (Stalker, 1996). The assessment of women's participation in adult education programs has often often linked with discussions pertaining to their domestic and caregiving roles. However, the way in which these are portrayed is significant. For instance, Hayes and Smith (1994)

found that numerous articles in adult education fostered an approach which looked at women as being somehow deficient and therefore in need of remedial assistance through educative efforts and programs. Hayes and Smith noted that:

> Interrupted schooling and aborted attempts to complete career training were again linked to women's homemaking and motherhood roles. Childhood socialization and general societal expectations that women should conform to a passive, dependent role were noted by a few authors as the cause of women's deficiencies; however, their focus remained on the need for individual remediation (1994, p. 210).

Instead of viewing these issues as structural factors which is linked with gendered differences in roles and experience, there is masculine bias here in interpreting women's interrupted participation and different affective attributes as indications of personal deficiencies which individuals need to rectify.

Academic institutions are set up in ways that do not serve to accommodate the rhythm of women's lives. If a woman chooses to pursue an academic career, she generally faces a conflict between the time when she is expected to give the greatest commitment to her studies, and her own biological time clock. Vezina (1998) noted that many female graduate students put off having children because they feel it would be too demanding to manage both academic and home responsibilities. Courses or programs that are set up in a way

that they conflict with childcare responsibilities are usually more problematic for women than for men. For instance, the residency requirement in most Ph.D. programs requires full-time attendance for two years. If a woman were to continue through school with few interruptions, this would coincide with the woman being in her late twenties or early thirties, which are prime childbearing years. If the woman takes too many years off between degrees, she will have difficulty obtaining academic references and may have to repeat coursework in order to be accepted into a program. It is not surprising that women's participation in higher education drops off over time, so that while women comprise the majority of undergraduate students (56.1%), they are only awarded one-third of the doctorates (Stalker & Prentice, 1998, p. 16). The identity of "mother" and "graduate student" seem to be incompatible within the academic sphere.

It is wrong that women are penalized more heavily than men because of their mothering roles. It is also wrong to continue to view this situation as individual problems that must be negotiated by each person rather than recognizing the structural disparities that exist in men and women's experiences.

The importance of valuing the experience which adult learners bring to the classroom is usually recognized by adult

educators (Draper, 1989, Knowles, 1980). However, if we are to acknowledge the richness of female experience, then the importance of living and learning within the homeplace must be acknowledged as well.

Madeleine Grumet (1988) intertwines accounts of her experience as a parent with her analysis of teaching. She argues that:

> Women must remember and articulate the experience of child nurture so that we can bring what we know from the complex, sustained, and exciting labour of child care into the intellectual structures of the disciplines and the methods of pedagogy (1988, p. 99-100).

By drawing upon the learning experiences of being a mother, she is suggesting that women can bring a unique form of knowledge and insight into the development of their academic work.

In order to give women a voice in adult education, women's experiences should be validated in all aspects of their lives, including the homeplace. The value of women's work in the homeplace needs to be acknowledge by restructuring our educational institutions so that they are more flexible to accommodate the pattern of women's lives. Pedagogical strategies and curriculum content need to be assessed, to consider how women's identities are represented. Angela Miles argues that "adult educators also will have to join feminists in working toward the very transformation of knowledge through

the incorporation of the female point of view and experience" (1989, p. 11).

RELATIONSHIPS

The importance of family life for women learners becomes readily apparent in research studies where women have discussed their experiences in returning to formal schooling (Mendelsohn, 1989; Campbell, 1993; Pascal & Cox, 1993). Adult women learners must contend with both societal changes on the structure of family life, and the individual circumstances of their own family lives. Relationships with family members can lead to a sense of contention as women renegotiate their relationships within the family, and in some cases, it may even lead to marital breakdown or domestic violence. The decision to return to schooling may also have positive effects on family relationships, if other family members take pride in the woman's success and accomplishments.

These types of experiences have an effect on the overall learning experiences of women returning to education, yet they are rarely explored or discussed. The knowledge that women bring to education from their experiences in family relationships as wives, partners, and mothers is also undertheorized and generally overlooked. Ignoring the significance of this type of learning serves to devalue its

importance in the lives of women learners, thus perpetuating a gendered bias in adult education.

Family

Family is defined by each individual according to her own unique circumstances. There is no single definition or consensus as to what constitutes a family (Ward, 1994). Some of the different types of families that exist today include blended families, single parent families, extended families, and lesbian/gay families. The way that people define the boundaries of their families is determined both by societal and cultural expectations, and individual experiences and commitments. Family relationships are often a central component of the homeplace.

While the structural-functional perspective situates the family as a fundamental institution within the larger society (Parsons et. al., 1956; Spencer, 1996), some radical feminists would abolish the heterosexual family, along with the notion of gender identity (Butler, 1990; Stanley & Wise, 1993).

The classical structural-functionalist perspective (Parsons et al., 1956), examines family life by examining the different "functions" of the family. Parsons (1956) argued that nuclear family was ideal for the modern industrial society because of its mobility and complementary gender

roles. The traditional gender roles were defined as providing complementary functions. The male was the instrumental leader, responsible for all the major decisions and providing financial supports to the rest of the family. The woman was the expressive leader, who tended to the emotional needs and relationships within the family. This was portrayed as a mutually reciprocal and "natural" relationship. Hale notes Parsons argument that:

> The specialization of sex roles, with women concentrating upon the internal affairs of the family while men concentrate upon occupational roles, best serves to minimize confusion of values across the two spheres (Hale, 1994, p. 343).

Feminists have critiqued the functionalist perspective of family life as being more functional for male than female family members. As one of the early feminist writers, Betty Frieden noted:

> True equality between men and women would not be "functional"; the status quo can only be maintained if the wife and mother is exclusively a homemaker or, at most, has a "job" rather than a "career" which might give her status equal to that of her husband. Thus Parsons find sexual segregation "functional" in terms of keeping the social structure as it is, which seems to be the functionalist's primary concern (1974, p. 122).

Lewis articulates the position of many feminists when she writes that "while reproduction and lactation have provided a functional basis for the identification of a domestic sphere, it does not necessarily follow that women should also raise

children and take responsibility for managing home and family life (Lewis, J., 1986, p. 3).

Although the functionalist perspective on family life has been extensively critiqued, many women still maintain primary responsibility for childcare and housework (Luxton, 1990). Marxist-Feminists have critiqued the exploitation of women's unpaid labour, noting how this has benefitted capitalism. By focusing on the economic structure of the family, inequalities in power and in labour distribution within individual families can be seen as a reflection of women's status in the larger society (Lewis, J. 1986).

Stresses often occur when women take on an extra burden outside of managing their household tasks. In her interviews with women in Flin Flon who started working outside of the home, Luxton found that men were often annoyed and resentful if their wives were not as able to attend to their needs as extensively as they did when they were home full-time. As Luxton notes, men "lose some of their privileges and services when wives go out to work for wages" (1980, p. 191). In these situations, men may resist the wife's decision to work, because they perceive it will reduce the amount of labour time the wife can devote to her husband's needs and desires. Similar sorts of stresses and conflict often arise when women decide to return to school, as it diverts their attention away

from the family (Campbell, 1993; Mendelsohn, 1989).

In today's society, as more women are involved in paid labour, and more men are becoming actively involved in parenting, both the functions and characteristics of family life are changing (Ward, 1994). In the past, while women have been more involved in the emotional nurturing and support systems of maintaining the family, men assumed responsibily for providing economic support (Matthews & Beaujot, 1997). With the rise in divorce and single parent families, and increasing number of dual income families, relationships are now changing. Luxton (1990) notes that many women are now in the paid workforce, regardless of whether or not they believe that this should be part of a woman's role or responsibility.

Many women are seeking education as a means of being able to financially provide their children. The increasing divorce rate has created a climate of uncertainty for women, who now realize that there are no guaratees that a marriage will last, or that a man will continue to provide them with financial support (Campbell, 1993). Thus they are assuming responsibilities which were held by men in the past. Tian (1996) notes that after a divorce women are in a particularly stressful situation, as their income levels are usually lower than that of men, and their financial situation after divorce is often precarious. She argues that "divorce dramatizes the

dilemma of the expanded role of women; women are increasingly expected to be both wage earner and care taker without adequate support and fair compensation for her contribution to the family and society" (1996, p. 4).

Some academics have challenged the importance of the heterosexual family. Stanley & Wise view the family with indifference, as merely another institution within the larger social structure, "without any of the semi-mystic connotations that this term often has" (1993, p. 88). They dismiss the importance of the traditional heterosexual family as being an ongoing aspect of our society.

While I believe that the structure of family life is changing quite rapidly, I do not think that it will ever completely disappear as an institution from our society. Historical precedent and international research indicate that family life is a cultural universal, although the boundaries and definitions of roles and responsibilities may vary considerably over time and place (Gubrium et. al., 1990). In a world which is increasingly fragmented, it is not surprising that family life is also being restructured in different patterns. Despite the shifting nature of family relationships, however, they continue to remain of central importance in determining women's experiences.

POWER

Gender inequalities in power affect both relationships within the classroom, and outside of the classroom. Educators need to be aware of how difficulties created by relationships in the homeplace may shape women's educational experiences.

Within relationships in the homeplace, there are sometimes gendered imbalances in power which are problematic. Many women choose to return to school because they believe that an education will provide them with more options and greater personal power. Education is valued as a means to better work opportunities and greater freedom to make different life choices. Women who continue with their education report experiencing increased self-esteem, the development of open-mindedness, and improved personal confidence (Mendelsohn, 1989; Campbell, 1993). Madeleine Grumet talks about her twenty-six year marriage as she writes a feminist text, saying "In our homes and in our families, many of us have learned to make a private peace in this battle of the sexes" (1988, p. xix). But for many women, this conflict is not easily resolved, as the decision to return to school may lead to conflict and disruption in the homeplace. Many women find that their relationship with their partner either changes substantially or falls apart (Campbell, 1993; Mendelsohn, 1989).

Adult educators often discuss the resistance of learners within the classroom to new concepts and ideas (Brookfield, 1990; Cranton, 1992), but an issue that is rarely addressed amongst educators is the resistance to learning which their female students may encounter in the homeplace. Conflict may arise over how domestic labour and childcare will be redistributed as a woman begins to assert herself (Mendelsohn, 1989). Long established patterns of behaviour may be challenged as women demand relief from their duties to have time for themselves to do their schoolwork (Fagan, 1996). Some women discover that the decision to return to school may lead to serious problems if their husband/partner or children resist these changes. Campbell records one woman's experience, where the woman she interviewed said:

> As long as I was talking about being a student, it was great. It was accepted. It was encouraged. I felt very positive about making that move from being with the children full-time in my home to going to university. When it actually started to happen in practice, though, a whole different scenario took place. Our relationship started to deteriorate very quickly with incidents like my books being thrown in the garbage, being told a lot of times that I was stupid, that I was never going to be able to do this (1993, p. 37).

Domestic violence is a means of subverting a woman's sense of power (Johnson, 1996). Some male partners may be threatened by the earning power and assertiveness women attain from continuing their education. They may resort to coercive means

to reassert their own status, and diminish that of their partner's.

I once had a student who was academically the brightest in the class I was teaching at the time. She was single mother of three children, living with the alcoholic father of her youngest child. One day he picked up a paper that she had spent a couple of weeks preparing, and told her, "This is what I think of your schoolwork." Then he lit a match, and she watched as her work was reduced to a pile of ashes. A couple of weeks later, despite concerted efforts from a number of people who encouraged her to stay, she dropped out the program. It is hard to understand the twisted misuse of power which exists within relationships such as this one, but it is only too well documented that many women are in relationships where they are subjected to abuse such as this (Johnson, 1996; Tierney, 1982). Marital disruption and break-ups seem to be a quite common experience for women who choose to return to schooling (Mendelsohn, 1989; Campbell, 1993, Cox et. al, 1994, Tian, 1996).

Connections

Despite the tendency for many marriages to break up during the process of a woman's return to schooling, the decision to return to school may also be a positive one in

terms of enhancing relationships with family members. A number of women recounted the support which they received from their children and spouses (Cox et. al., 1994; Campbell, 1993). One husband who was interviewed in Mendelsohn's (1989) study, stated:

> I think Ellen would have been dissatisfied with the life of a doctor's wife. Her return to school was the best thing that she ever did for herself, and it was extremely important in our lives. Over the years her identity as Ellen the teacher, then the beloved teacher, then the extraordinary teacher - I don't think I flatter her - has given her a role quite different from that of Mrs. Charles So-and-So (1989, p. 79).

Some families shared in the woman's sense of pride in her academic accomplishments. A number of women also mentioned that they felt they were setting a good example for their children in pursuing their studies (Mendelsohn, 1989; Campbell, 1993).

Redding and Dowling (1992) discuss how the decision for a woman to return to school is one which affects the whole family, and therefore must somehow be negotiated to balance the needs of the family with the demands of the university. They discuss the "rites of passage" women pass through, including rituals such as tucking their children in after they return from night classes, setting aside one evening a week just for a spouse or all family members, bringing husbands or children to campus to introduce them to the other side of

their lives.

The relationships established within the homeplace are important in how they overlap in all phases of woman's life. I cannot think of my Master's degree without recalling the many ways it was interspersed with my first experiences in childbirth and parenting. I can remember going to class and wedging myself into the narrow seats with attached desks when I was pregnant, wondering as the weeks went by if I was eventually going to get stuck. I had to bow out of helping with an academic conference when it conflicted with my due date, and then nursed my daughter while reading academic texts and writing papers. I could not neatly separate the birth of my daughter with being a student. Going back to school, for women who have partners and/or children, is never an isolated experience. It is always interconnected with the relationships that exist within the homeplace. Mezirow's (1991) concept of a transformative learning experience focuses attention upon the learner, but it may be useful to expand the concept to look at how changes in learning affect others who are connected with the learner as well.

Feminist writers often reflect upon the influence of their mothers on their own learning experiences (Bateson, 1989; Grumet, 1988; hooks, 1988). As lifelong learners, women often must deal with conflict in addressing the demands of the

different roles which they assume. For many women, their identity as a mother is central to their sense of being. The good mother is one who is there for her children, emotionally supportive, and a continuous guiding influence (Bassin et. al., 1994). In order to do this, women have to make time for their children, be actively involved in their upbringing and supportive of their daily activities. Taris and Semin (1977) discuss how important it is for mothers to maintain close, interactive relationships with their children if they wish to be successful in passing on their values.

Bateson (1989) argues that the capacity of women to successfully consolidate different aspects of their lives as they work to juggle multiple demands upon their time and cope with diverse responsibilities should be perceived as a strength by educators, rather than as a weakness.

If we are to value the richness of female experience, then the importance of living and learning within the homeplace must be acknowledge, recognized, and articulated. Within a relational context, learning can be understood as a form of connection. Baxter-Magolda argues that educators need to value learning as a relational activity, stating that "The task for educators, then, is one of reconnection - of students to their teachers, of lived experience to knowledge, of in-class life with out-of-class intellectual life" (1992, p. 223-

224). Grumet (1988) also suggests that women should connect their lived experience as mothers with formal learning processes. By studying, analyzing, and validating the importance of the connections between the homeplace and adult education, adult educators can offer a more supportive understanding of the challenges that women learners face, and the insights that they can contribute as they continue their education.

LABOUR

Bateson makes an interesting observation that we all "live in two different economies, one an economy of finite resources, the other an economy of flexible and expanding resources" (1989, p. 169). This means that the same activities can both absorb and generate energy. While childcare is stifling, frustrating, monotonous, and draining, it is simultaneously creative, enjoyable, challenging, and stimulating. While balancing the demands of schooling with domestic/work responsibilities can be a tiresome burden, it can also serve to provide both a sense of being grounded and focussed (Rosalind Edwards, 1993). In the first economy, it is a zero-sum relationship, where if you take away an hour to do one activity, then you have lost that time to do something else. In the second economy, one activity can provide the

impetus and energy to commit to another project.

At the same time, mothering and domestic labour are hard work (Rosenberg, 1990). Even when women work full time outside of the home, they often work a second shift when they get home (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1994). Men's contribution to domestic labour has not matched the increasing work load women experience when they start employment outside of the home (Luxton, 1990).

For women who choose to return to school, combining academic and domestic responsibilities is a challenging task. Many women find that they are pressured to meet the institutional demands of commitment towards their studies, while at the same time they are not expected to allow their attention to be diverted from their family's needs. As Rosalind Edwards (1993) described, they find themselves caught between two "greedy institutions" struggling to meet the demands of both home and school.

There may be gendered differences in perception of the homeplace. The male may view his home as a place to relax in, while a woman may see it as a place of continuous labour and responsibility (Rosenberg, 1990). Men usually have more leisure time than women, and women continue to bear primary responsibility for childcare and domestic labour (Tilly et. al. 1987; Gill & Hibbins, 1996).

The public/private debate over the nature of work in the homeplace focuses attention on the gendered dimension of work within the homeplace. It is women who are usually given the role of caregiver in our society (Bateson, 1989). In the same way, the work that women do in the homeplace is rarely given attention or value in the academic sphere. Even studying housework is considered to be a "low status" site of research within academia (Oakley, 1974).

Feminist-Marxists have drawn upon the Marxist critique of capitalism to focus on the ways in which women are exploited. The gendered division of labour has served to maintain women's lower status within the economy by assigning them the responsibility for unpaid labour, so that they must be dependent upon the wages of their male partners. Luxton has argued that "women's work in the home is hidden and yet central to the economy of industrial capitalism" (1980, p. 206). She notes that much of the "invisible" labour which women do in the homeplace often supports the capitalist system, from keeping the house quiet and supervising children so that their husbands who have shift work can sleep during the day, to preparing meals, doing the laundry, and raising the children, which reproduces labour for the next generation.

Feminist-Marxist research illuminates the ways that industry and capitalism have infiltrated the homeplace so that

it is not the "haven" which is often romantically depicted in the media. For instance, Rosenberg (1990b) discusses how housewives occupy a hazardous occupation, which has many hidden stresses and dangers. She also critiques the notion of how the housewife is represented as the "consumer", thus rendering her productive labour invisible.

Feminist-Marxist research frames the problems that exist within the homeplace as having a social context. Luxton noted that most of the respondents in her research "considered the changes in their domestic division of labour were specific to their individual households. They perceived these changes not as part of a large-scale transformation in the patterns of work and family life, but a personal struggle" (1990, p. 53-54). This perception created greater tensions within the families, and she argues that the gendered division of household labour needs to receive greater societal attention.

Women returning to school are often overburdened by the competing demands of schoolwork and domestic work. Many women women also have paid employment competing for their time and energy as well. As Mattthews and Beaujot have noted, "women have gained new roles without experiencing much reduction of their traditional chores" (1997, p. 417). One woman interviewed in Mendelsohn's study, stated that when she returned to school:

> My family, my husband in particular, expected everything to run beautifully at home and the meals to be the same. That was a problem. The children still expect you to go to their games and help out as you always have, even though you're studying for an exam (1989, p. 52).

Women in these situations face tremendous pressure as they attempt to juggle competing demands. Too often, these problems are dealt with as individual issues, without examining the structural influences which have led to the development of the inegalitarian expectations of labour. These need to be examined and made visible, so that women are not struggling to face these conflicts in isolation.

Financial Independence

Sociologists have noted that "traditionally, the social ranking of females depended on their ties to men" (Spencer, p. 203). Oakley (1974) points out that the family has often been used as the unit of stratification, and that women and children have traditionally been allocated the same social status as the male head of the family. Within the context of the homeplace, women are allocated their status in the larger society. They have been taught from an early age that rather than being individually determined, their status is often contingent upon their relationship to men in the homeplace. Thus, from childhood, many women come to understand that they are dependent upon males for their financial and social

status.

As more women participate in the labour force, and divorce and single parenthood becomes more commonplace in society, women are less dependent upon men for their social status and financial support (Tian, 1996). As women's earning power increases, they may find marriage less attractive. Research by Ambert (1990) found that women were more likely to consider divorce if they are employed, and their likelihood to divorce increases with every thousand dollars earned, and higher income earning women are far less likely to consider remarriage than lower income women. Once the financial dependency upon men diminishes, women are less likely to commit themselves to marriage relationships.

Financial independence seems to be a key factor for many women in determining their sense of autonomy. As long as men have financial control, they also have the potential to exert control over women in other ways.

Women's educational aspirations have sometimes been thwarted by a lack of support from their fathers, who were unwilling to assist in financing their education. In addition, their fathers did not provide any encouragement or emotional or practical supports to allow women to continue with their schooling. Education for their daughters was not perceived to be as important as that of their sons (Lewis,

1993). One of the women Pascal and Cox interviewed, said that her father discouraged her from continuing with her formal schooling because "Girls are going to married and education is wasted. Education is for boys because they're bread-winners" (1993, p. 31).

Despite some improvements in recent decades, women are still in a minority position in society. They continue to earn less money than men, and are more likely to be victims of poverty. Men still outnumber women in positions of power and authority in society, government, and industry (Nelson & Fleras, 1995).

The realization that financial independence also provides personal independence is a critical issue for many mature women students. Many women returning to school are motivated by the desire to be able to financially support themselves and their children, even if they are in marriages where the spouse has a good income and where the relationships are currently stable (Campbell, 1993; Mendelsohn, 1989). As Tian (1996) notes, the increasing divorce rate has created a climate of uncertainty for women. Obtaining an education is one way for women to feel more secure about their ability to compete in the paid workforce. One woman who was interviewed by Campbell explained why she had decided to return to university.

> I'm going to be financially independent, myself and my children. I'm going to have a job in three to

> four years. I'm going to have my own place instead of renting (Campbell, 1993, p. 7).

Academia

Mature women students continue to function at a disadvantage to their male counterparts. Blundell is critical of the liberal feminist position, which encourages women to participate in more programs, and achieve the same level of academic success as males. She argues that women will not achieve equality with men simply by reaching the same level of educational qualifications. The reason for this is that

> Ultimately, the functional model of education can never work for women. It can never work because in accordance with the `rational' economic criteria under which it operates women are always going to be less `useful' than men on account of their need to take time out for child-rearing - the return on the investment in their education will always be lower than the return on the investment in men's education" (Blundell, 1992, p. 204).

As long as women's caring and nurturing forms of labour are devalued within our society, they will never attain equal respect or attain equal status with men. Even if men become more actively involved in life sustaining work such as parenting, as long as women are the ones who physically go through pregnancy and give birth, they will continue to experience differences in life patterns from men. If male experience is taken to be normative, then women will never "measure up".

Mary Catherine Bateson (1989) discusses how women's lives are almost always complex and multi-faceted, involving weaving together many tasks and projects, as women deal with domestic, employment, parenting, and volunteer responsibilities. This is contrasted against male experience, that has often prized a singular focus and commitment on one's work (which is only possible if the man has no family responsibilities or a wife who assumes them all). She challenges, "what if we were to recognize the capacity for distraction, the divided will, as representing the higher wisdom?" (1989, p. 166). Bateson is arguing that in an increasingly complex world, narrow, linear patterns of thinking may not be as suited to dealing with problems and issues that arise. Rather than a singular focus, the diversity of women's perspectives may offer valuable insights. She suggests that "perhaps we can discern in women honouring multiple commitments a new level of productivity and new possibilities of learning" (1989, p. 166).

Conclusion

Adult educators can learn a great deal about gendered differences in experience if they examine connections to the homeplace. By shifting our perspective, from concentrating primarily on ties between lifelong learning and the workplace, to lifelong learning and the homeplace, new insights and pedagogical possibilities may be addressed. This may enhance

the opportunities for a more equitable and positive experience for women in adult education.

CHAPTER THREE

A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

In order to understand why the dominant discourse in lifelong learning is oriented towards the marketplace, while the homeplace continues to be overlooked and devalued as an important educational site, I believe that it is necessary to develop a theoretical analysis which examines the underlying structural factors that have led to these developments. To do this I begin by drawing upon a critical theoretical orientation, focussing particularly on the work of Jurgen Habermas, and combine this with a feminist analysis to study the connections between lifelong learning and the homeplace.

To develop an understanding of the issues of power, and the underlying value structures within our society, we need to develop a conceptual framework which bridges the gap between experiential and abstract theoretical analysis, while recognizing the value of each. From a critical standpoint, I argue that the homeplace is an important part of the "lifeworld" which needs to be recognized, examined, and theorized, if adult educators are to challenge the technical-rational influence of the dominant discourse in lifelong learning. The market-driven concerns of the dominant discourse in lifelong learning, which are indicative of the

pervasive influence of the "system", have led to the homeplace being overlooked and undertheorized. Drawing upon Habermas's (1987) theory of communicative action, I argue that the devaluation of women, children and the homeplace in education is a reflection of the underlying values of our society that have been influenced by the objectified, instrumentalized influence of the system. The orientation towards the marketplace which permeates the dominant discourse of lifelong learning stifles democratic potential for social justice and critical discourse that challenges existing power inequalities. This influence systematically ignores and suppresses the values of the lifeworld, and creates a gendered imbalance of opportunities in adult education. Critical theory may provide an avenue to reinforce other emancipatory types of learning that serve to reinforce the values of the lifeworld.

The coupling of Habermas's theory of communicative action with feminist, experiential perspectives is a somewhat daunting prospect, particularly when one considers the extent to which Habermas's work has been critiqued by feminist theorists (Fleming, 1997; Hekman, 1990; Fraser, 1995). Meehan (1995) suggests that despite the fact that Habermas has provided a limited discussion of gender, his work can still be useful to feminist scholarship, "as it offers a framework for analyzing the structure of modern life, its potential for both

emancipatory forms of life and forms of life issuing in political repression, market manipulation, and domination" (1995, p. 1).

Habermas's concepts of system and lifeworld and communicative action have influenced the work of numerous adult educators (Welton, 1995; Collins, 1991; Hart, 1993; Mezirow, 1991). Recently, a number of feminists (Benhabib, 1986; Love, 1991; Fleming, 1997; Cohen, 1992; Fraser, 1995) have worked to develop feminist critiques and analyses of Habermas's work. By examining these various perspectives I argue that Habermas's concepts of the system/lifeworld, and his theory of communicative action, can provide useful insights into the connections between lifelong learning and the homeplace. By drawing upon a feminist perspective we can enhance the theoretical richness of Habermas's work.

As feminists have often noted (Smith, 1987; Burstow, 1994) women's perspectives have not been adequately addressed and developed within the academic sphere. By using feminist experiential perspectives, it is possible to discern the masculine biases in critical theory that have led to women's concerns being insufficiently addressed with regards to gendered experiences in lifelong learning. I agree with feminists who argue that much of Habermas's work indicates a gender-blindness which is problematic (Fraser, 1995; Fleming,

1997; Meehan, 1995). Despite this, I argue that his theory of communicative action has the potential to help provide a framework for discussion of lifelong learning and the homeplace. Like Cohen (1995), I would prefer to "revise rather than jettison" his theoretical approach, and like Chambers (1995), I am intrigued by his notion of discourse ethics and the idea that through communicative action we can "cooperatively construct common understandings and work through our differences" (1995, p. 176). Despite the reservations some feminist have over Habermas's concepts of the System-Lifeworld (Fraser, 1995; Fleming, 1997) I believe that this framework can be used to focus on the significance of the homeplace as an important site of living and learning within the realm of the lifeworld.

Role of Theory in Adult Education

A number of adult educators have commented upon the difficulty of developing theory in adult education because of the diversity of the field, which incorporates a broad range of both formal and informal learning experiences, which are carried out in a wide range settings and circumstances (Merriam & Cafferella, 1991; Welton, 1993 ; Brookfield, 1996). The diversity in practice, and in the development of theoretical perspectives, indicates that there is no one

single theoretical paradigm which serves to integrate all aspects of adult education. This plurality of perspectives is unlikely to change as adult education continues to develop in complex and multifaceted ways. However, there is a danger that the field will become increasingly fragmented, and adult educators will experience difficulty in finding a focus and sense of direction to guide their teaching practices.

For these reasons, many adult educators are committed towards developing what Cranton terms "a theory of practice" (1992, p. 208). While some educators, such as Cranton, perceive this to be a personal guiding philosophy to enhance the individual's teaching capacities, others believe in working towards a shared social understanding, such as developing a critical teaching pedagogy (Freire, 1974).

Some educators prefer to focus on developing informal or "practical" theories which evolve out of their own experiences and teaching practices (Usher & Edwards, 1989). Thomas (1997) dismisses the notion of formal theory, arguing that it is merely "a process of legitimizing mental activity" which goes on within the university in order "to buttress existing forms of what is permitted to count as rational" (1997, p. 101).

Brookfield (1992) poses three arguments to support the development of formal theory in adult education. He notes that despite the difficulties in developing a universalistic,

grand theory, this goal still has a great appeal to many educators. Habermas's (1987) framework is without doubt one of the most ambitious theories of the modern era, drawing upon a wide range of European scholarly tradition, including phenomenological, psychological, and sociological theorists. Therefore, it is not surprising that an increasing number of adult educators have drawn upon Habermas's theoretical work in recent years to develop their own ideas (Connelly, 1996).

Brookfield (1992) argues that formal theory has an important contribution to make in helping to convert specific, informal hunches into well framed theories of practice" (1992, p. 80). In addition, formal theory leads to "a conversation across and among researchers and theorists engaged in formal theorizing in very diverse contexts" (1992, p. 81). Formal theory provides a common framework for understanding which can be shared by educators when discussing differing experiences. It gives us a means to share and develop new schematas of knowledge. It enables educators to develop a critical perspective which draws upon global influences as well as situationally specific knowledge to better understand the educational challenges which need to be addressed.

Critical theory, particularly the theory of communicative action developed by Jurgen Habermas, provides adult educators with both a means of critiquing the dominant discourse of

instrumental rationalization in education, and offers an alternative perspective for adult education that promotes the development of community and democracy.

Reason and Rationality

Habermas belongs to the second generation of critical theorists (Bronner & Kellner, 1989). The early critical thinkers constituted what is known as the Frankfurt School, a German academic institute which developed in the early part of the century. The term "critical theory" was first used in 1937, after most of the members of the Institute were forced to flee from the Nazi regime to the United States after Hitler came into power. Bronner & Kellner note that the "concept was initially a type of code which, while differentiating its adherents from prevailing forms of orthodoxy, also tended to veil their radical commitments in an environment that was hostile to anything remotely associated with Marxism" (1989, p. 1). Critical theory developed as a cross disciplinary approach that was both theoretical and political in its intent.

The early critical theorists were interested in studying how modern society had evolved from the time of the Enlightenment, at the end of the eighteenth century. The development of Enlightenment thought, which "sets itself

against "magical" thinking", challenged traditional ways of looking at the world, and in the process, decoupled culture from nature (Fleming, 1997, p. 17). According to Hearn, "The Enlightenment project sought to eliminate custom, superstition, backwardness and the social practices and institutions that nurtured them" (1985, p. 8). The time of the Enlightenment was characterized by a hopeful vision of humanity's capacity to grow in a positive manner. There was a belief in "progress", the idea "that society has changed and will continue to change in a desirable manner" (Hearn, 1985, p. 13). People came to believe that society is capable of moving forward and improving over time, rather than remaining static and going through continuous cycles of growth and degeneration.

The rise of the industrial revolution was characterized by a corresponding development in the wide spread usage of scientific approaches to knowledge. Technical rational reasoning was privileged. According to Hearn,"the social progress promised by the Enlightenment project required that reason be transformed into an instrument of production"(1985, p. 14). The use of scientific reason and technology was glorified by social 'scientists' such as Comte and St. Simon, who saw the use of positivism as a way of establishing a new progressive social order. These early sociologists believed

that society was guided by social 'laws' which were similar to the laws of nature. Once sociologists were able to determine what these laws were, they could use this information to predict and control how people would behave. Comte believed that positivism "provides information useful for expanding our certainty about, and in turn, our control over the course to be taken by the reconstruction of society" (Hearn, 1985, p. 42).

In their dispirited text, *Dialectic of the Enlightenment*, Horheimer and Adorno (1972) focus on the darker side of the Enlightenment, arguing that in modern society, reason has been eclipsed by this instrumentalized orientation. According to Hearn, "Industrial capitalist society falsifies the promise of the Enlightenment project in its effort to fulfil it. This is the 'dialectic of enlightment'" (1985, p. 14).

The initial euphoria over the possibilities made feasible by technological developments dimmed as the early critical theorists recognized the problems associated with the narrowly constructed, "one-dimensional" thought identified by Marcuse (1964), in which there is an acceptance of the status quo, and a failure to recognize human potentiality as a form of resistance to the repressive changes brought about through modernity.

While the work of these early critical theorists was

important in exposing the dark underside of modernity, Habermas was unwilling "to accept the brooding pessimism of his mentors" (Welton, 1993, p. 82). The early critical theorists had reached a dead end, where "Critical theory became resignative; it could at most unmask the unreason at the heart of what passed for reason, without offering any positive account of its own" (McCarthy, 1985, p. 176).

Fleming (1997) writes that Habermas challenged Horkheimer and Adorno's standpoint by arguing that they wouldn't be capable of posing their criticisms of the narrowness of technical-rational thought if they weren't capable of a different kind of reasoning. She notes that "in Habermas's view, they cannot describe the dialectic of enlightenment without making use of the critical capacity that according to them, has been lost in the unbounded spread of instrumental reason" (1997, p. 18). Rejecting their emphasis on the aesthetic value of art as an alternative focus for society, Habermas suggests instead that their initial conception of rationality was too limited. As White states, a "central problem of Habermas's thought has been how to demonstrate that an exclusively instrumental or strategic understanding of rationality is somehow inadequate" (1988, p. 25). By focussing on language and action, Habermas wants to show that linguistic interaction has "a sense of rationality which is not reducible

to strategic or contextual dimensions" (1988, p. 28).

Habermas believed that one of the failings of the early critical theorists was that their work was historically situated. He notes that "At that time critical theory was still based on the Marxist philosophy of history, that is, on the conviction that the forces of production were developing an objectively explosive power" (1989, p. 295). Marx (1973) had predicted that capitalism would be overthrown by the dissatisfied proletariat (working class). When this failed to occur, the early critical theorists were left with a bleak analysis of the negative repercussions of modernization, that seemingly had no further recourse.

Habermas argues that with his theory of communicative action, he has attempted to "free historical materialism from its philisophical ballast" (1989, p. 296). The theory he proposes is both universalistic and ahistorical in nature. Through communicative action, society can work to complete the project of modernity, in a way that leads to the fullest development of human potentiality.

In his earlier work, Habermas (1975) argued that there are in fact three approaches to knowledge; technical, practical, and emancipatory. Despite some controversy over his concept of knowledge-constitutive interests, Welton (1993) has suggested that these categories can provide insights into

different approaches within education. The technical approach focuses on the knowledge needed to understand and manipulate the environment, while the practical approach examines how people construct and exchange meaning. Emancipatory knowledge "derives from humankind's desire to achieve emancipation from domination" (Welton, 1993, p. 83). In modern theoretical research, technical approaches to knowledge are most evident in the positivist approach to rationality, the practical approach is most closely related to the hermeneutical or humanistic sciences, while emancipatory knowledge is the basis for the development of critical theoretical analyses.

System/Lifeworld

Habermas expands upon the phenomenological concept of the lifeworld, originating from the work of Schutz and Husserl, "which conceives of society as a social construction of the everyday world that issues from the interpretive construction of acting subjects" (Habermas, 1981, p. 79). In the phenomenological tradition, the lifeworld is the beginning of the basis of study of society. By examining the lifeworld we can start to make sense of everyday actions, to understand societal beliefs, and individual attitudes. It is in this sphere of the taken-for-granted, everyday acceptance of how the world should be, that the underlying values and premises

of the society are revealed. This is done by "bracketing" out (distancing ourselves) from the "natural attitude" (the underlying premises we hold about our world) in order to gain insights and question our underlying assumptions of how the world is constituted.

McCarthy argues that Habermas finds the phenomenological conceptualization of the lifeworld inadequate as "not only culture but also institutional orders and personality structures should be seen as basic components of the lifeworld" (1981, p. xxiv). As Benhabib (1986) writes, Habermas believes that within the phenomenological perspective, "the "cultural abridgement" of the lifeworld neglects both the structural conditions of the formation of group identities [solidarity] and the development of *individual competencies* [personality]" (1986, p. 238).

Habermas's conceptualization of the lifeworld draws not only upon the phenomenological focus on cultural reproduction, but also on Durkheim's emphasis on social integration, and Mead's work on socialization (Fleming, 1997). Habermas expands upon the original phenomenological concept to include a discussion of the importance of social interaction and identity formation.

The lifeworld, according to Habermas, is a communicatively shaped sphere of everyday interaction, where

through our families, communities, and education system, we develop a shared sense of meaning. Love writes that "Lifeworlds consist of the unproblematic background convictions that individuals presuppose in order to communicate" (1991, p. 111). As Welton states, "It is in the lifeworld that we come to understand our ethical obligations to family, friends, and society" (1993, p. 87). The lifeworld is reproduced over time, and can be seen as "the domain of cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization" (Benhabib, 1986, p. 239).

Habermas's conception of the "system" derives from the structural-functionalist analysis of society (Parsons, 1968). The system is perceived as the larger structural forces of the economy and state administration, which uses the media of money and power to replace language and permeate, control, and regulate the lifeworld (Habermas, 1981, p. 342). As Welton describes it, "Systems are defined as organizations of purely strategic actions; that is people in command positions in systems use forms of reason that represses human norms or values" (Welton, 1993, p. 87). Although there have always been connections between the lifeworld and the system, the ever increasing strength of technical-rationality, a means/ends type of power relationship, is threatening the integrity of lifeworld to retain its emancipatory potential as a dialogic

sphere which has the capacity to shape human values.

The lifeworld is threatened, as Habermas (1987) phrases it, with being "colonized" by the "system". As Giddens notes,

> the colonization of the life-world has destroyed traditional bases of communicative action, without replacing them with the forms of postconventional rationality that are required to couple the life-world to the range of activities controlled by expanding economic and political steering mechanisms" (1985, p. 110).

This disjunction between the lifeworld and the system threatens to "pathologize" the lifeworld (Habermas, 1987). The effects of the colonization of the lifeworld are twofold. First, individuals within our society may experience a sense of anomie (a loss of a sense of meaning or regulation) in their daily lives, as previously accepted traditions for making sense of the world are ruptured and not replaced. Secondly, there is a "legitimation crisis" which affects the potential stability of the political and economic order in society (Giddens, 1985).

There are many implications of this for both our society as a whole, and for adult educators. Welton neatly summarizes the dilemma:

> Family and daily work life are pressed into the service of the imperatives of an instrumental rationality. Human beings as childrearers, partners, workers, clients, citizens, and consumers struggle against the process of being turned into objects of corporate and state management. Systemic imperatives, then, threaten to disempower men and women who have the capacity to be

empowered, reflective actors (1993, p. 89).

The influence of instrumental rationality affects our capacity to be thoughtful, reflexive learners. It is evident in the trend towards professionalism and the market oriented perspective of adult education (Collins, 1991). This trend also threatens to limit the emancipatory potential of education (Hart, 1993).

Critical theory is a means of challenging this orientation in education. As Welton writes:

> Critical theory is a theory of history and society driven by a passionate commitment to understand how ideological systems and societal structures hinder and impede the fullest development of humankind's collective potential to be self-reflective and self-determining historical actors (1995, p. 14).

Unlike the early critical theorists, who focussed primarily on the darker side of modernity, Habermas posits a theory which is modestly hopeful. Habermas does not naively believe that all problems can be easily resolved through discourse. Growing up in the shadow of Nazi Germany, Habermas has been well acquainted with the negative underside of a modern society, in which technical knowledge was used to develop weapons of mass destruction, while an efficient bureaucratic government legitimated and coordinated mass genocide. Despite this, he has striven to develop a theoretical framework which elucidates an emancipatory perspective, and demonstrates a way for educators to focus on human potentiality.

Communicative Action

Closely linked with Habermas's discussion of the system and lifeworld is his theory of communicative action. Benhabib states that Habermas presents "the concept of the lifeworld as the correlate of the concept of communicative action" (1986, p. 237). According to Benhabib, Habermas argues that communicative action "can carry out the three functions of social integration, cultural reproduction, and socialization" (1986, p. 237). These are all functions that can be understood in relationship to the homeplace, as the homeplace is a centre for family relationships, it is linked with the larger community, and it is within the homeplace that children are socialized.

Drawing upon Durkheim's and Weber's work, Habermas discusses how within civilized societies, there are worldviews which serve to legitimate the political leadership, or established system. He writes that: "They offer a potential for grounding that can be used to justify a political order or the institutional framework of a society in general" (1987, p. 56). These worldviews are broadly encompassing, and provide a basis for societal consensus of what is acceptable behaviour, beliefs, and goals within the context of that society. "Thus they lend support to the moral authority of validity of basic norms" (1987, p. 56).

The dominant discourse in lifelong learning reflects a worldview that gives priority to marketplace values and concerns. This leads to a "natural" linkage between the paid workplace and education. Since competition is an intrinsic feature of the capitalist system, it is not surprising that this is carried over into educational discourses. Education becomes commodified, and is used as a means for obtaining a competitive edge.

Habermas then explores how this normative consensus within a society is achieved. He argues that

> What is of primary interest in analyzing the interaction between normative consensus, worldview, and institutional system, however, is that the connection is established through channels of linguistic communication (1987, p. 56).

It is by examining these "channels of linguistic communication" that Habermas believes we can learn a great deal about how society is organized, and also how it can be changed. By exploring the literature in lifelong education, I am able to uncover the pervasive influence of the marketplace, revealed by language that codes students as "consumers" and assesses education according to "quality controls" (Hill, F. 1997).

McCarthy discusses Habermas's use of the term "reconstructive sciences" to explain how knowledge is reconstructed from "pretheoretical" types of knowledge. It is

through the use of language that we can begin to make sense of how we have legitimated certain norms and values, and certain procedures for action. According to McCarthy,

> The underlying idea is that acting and speaking subjects know how to achieve, accomplish, perform, and produce a variety of things without explicitly adverting to, or being able to give an explicit account of the concepts, rules, criteria, and schemata on which their performances are based (1979, p. 276).

We need to make explicit the underlying assumptions that guide human behaviour. The way to do this is through a form of communicative rationality, or discourse, in which people can suspend their apriori assumptions and engage in meaningful and open discussions.

Through communicative action, maternal discourses can challenge the existing worldview that affirms profit over life (Hart, 1995). Feminist and critical thinkers can work to develop an alternative discourse for lifelong learning, that privileges democratic and life-affirming perspectives.

McCarthy states that Habermas's work to develop a theory of communicative action "is a new approach to a familiar task: to articulate and ground an expanded conception of rationality" (1979, p. 272). Habermas argues against the assessment of the early critical theorists, that rationality in modern day contexts is always reduced to a technical orientation. He suggests we need to examine a broader

conceptualization of rationality, which is linked with our communicative capacities as human beings. White writes that:

> The central problem of Habermas's thought has been how to demonstrate that an exclusively instrumental or strategic understanding of rationality is somehow inadequate and that therefore the historical process of increasing Weberian rationalization of the world represents a threat to the full potential of human beings to bring reason to bear on the problems of their social and political existence (1988, p. 25).

As I will explore in greater depth in the next couple of chapters, feminist discourses also challenge narrow conceptions of rationality. Our perception of reason and rationality needs to be broadened, to encompass different ways of learning and understanding.

Bernstein argues that the main reason Habermas has focussed on linguistics is "that it no longer entraps us in the *monological* perspective of the philosophy of the subject. Communicative action is intrinsically *dialogical*" (1985, p. 18). By focussing on communicative possibilities, Habermas opens up a new perspective on how we can learn about ourselves and our society. In posing alternative perspectives and worldviews, feminist and critical theorists may broaden the discourses surrounding the concept of lifelong learning.

Habermas draws upon a number of different theorists in his work. He argues we need to move beyond Mead's initial analysis of the development of the functions of language, to

distinguish "between language as a medium for reaching understanding and language as a medium for coordinating action and socializing individuals" (1987, p. 23). Moving from this point, Habermas develops his own framework which provides an analysis of the nature of language as a form of communicative action.

According to Welton, "communicative action is based on the idea that human communication involves validity claims, and that an ideal speech situation is presupposed every time we use language" (1993, p. 84). Habermas developed the notion of "ideal speech" as a model along the lines of Weber's concept of an "ideal type" construct. It does not exist in reality, but can used as a model of comparison. Ideal speech is a goal that people can strive towards in developing their communicative capacities. Concerns have been raised about this concept, questioning whether the power differentials can ever be eradicated in speech (Fleming, 1997). However, this model has served to focus on what Habermas presumes to be important elements of speech directed towards communicative understanding.

Validity claims are reasons why we should accept or believe what the speaker is saying. Habermas (1987) argues that people enter into discourse where they challenge one another's competing validity claims. The four types of

validity claims are comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness (referring to a sense of sincerity), and normative rightness. As Bernstein points out, "These are not always thematic but they are implicit in every speech act" (1985, p. 18).

Habermas argues that the reasons for accepting or rejecting another's validity claims must be dealt with at a level of integrity. He writes that

> under the presuppositions of communicative action oriented to reaching understanding, validity claims cannot be rejected or accepted without reason, there is in alter's response to ego a basic *moment of insight,* and this takes the response out of the sphere of mere caprice, sheer conditioning, or adjustment - at least that is how participants themselves see it" (1987, p. 26-27).

Habermas is presuming that in most speech situations we have certain expectations regarding the other person's speech. In order to attain a level of understanding, we presuppose the willingness of the other person to commit to trying to tell the truth as accurately as possible from his or her perspective.

In using a communicative action approach, Bernstein states that "to resolve a breakdown in communication, we can move to a level of *discourse* and argumentation where we explicitly seek to warrant the validity claims that have been called into question" (1985, p. 19). As White notes,

> Only if a speaker is able to convince his hearers that his claims are rational and thus worthy of recognition can there develop a "rationally

> motivated agreement" or consensus on how to coordinate future actions (1988, p. 28).

Ideally, the "forceless force" of the best argument will prevail (Habermas, 1987). The future direction for adult education may be redefined as educators address the various issues raised in the debates surrounding lifelong learning.

Communicative action is also important for the socialization and development of each individual. Habermas argues that "Communicative action provides the medium for the reproduction of lifeworlds" (1981, p. 337). In order to achieve communicative competency, individuals must become autonomous individuals, capable of reflection. Referring to Mead's discussion of the "I" and the "Me", as aspects of the self that develop as individuals are socialized, Habermas states that:

> Communicative action turns out to be a switching station for energies of social solidarity, but this time we viewed the switch point not under the aspect of coordination but of socialization, in order to discover how the collective consciousness is communicated, via illocutionary forces, not to institutions but to individuals" (1987, p. 60).

According to Mead's theory of socialization, the "I" is the unsocialized, instinctive part of self, while the "Me" is socialized and responsive to the reactions of others. As individuals mature, they develop an understanding of how others would view them. Individuals learn to assess their own behaviour and modify their actions accordingly in response to

the perceived judgement of the average person or "generalized other". Communicative action is an integral part of the socialization process. Habermas has also been strongly influenced by Kohlberg's work, and argues that a people who reach higher levels of moral development will be better able to develop communicative competence (Habermas, 1987).

Habermas draws upon Piaget and Chomsky to discuss his notion of communicative competence. Individuals who reach the level of formal operations, the highest level of cognitive competency according to Piaget, are able to think in abstract ways. In this way, individuals develop "cognitive competence". Habermas also draws upon Chomsky's work in linguistics, to discuss the notion of speech competence. This involves the mastery of linguistic rules (such as grammar), and universal or formal pragmatic rules (which produce well formed utterances) in order to best attain the capacity for shared linguistic comprehension. Finally, he discusses "interactive competence" which is the mastery of rules for taking part in increasingly complex forms of interaction (White, 1988, p. 29).

Through communicative action, the lifeworld is reproduced from generation to generation. As Benhabib notes, "Communicative action serves the transmission of cultural knowledge, of action coordination and identity formation

(1986, p. 239). When there is a breakdown within the lifeworld, "pathologies" can appear. Within "the sphere of culture reproduction, the consequence is a loss of meaning; in the sphere of social integration, anomie emerges; and as regards personality, we are faced with psycho-pathologies" (Benhabib, 1986, p. 249).

Since the homeplace is the centre for childhood socialization, we need to understand and affirm the work that takes place there, to understand how we can better prepare our children to develop communicative competencies. We also need to assess the importance of "motherwork" (Hart, 1997) and "maternal thinking" (Ruddick, 1994) to rethink our approach to lifelong learning.

Use of Critical Theory in Adult Education

As Connelly notes, current adult education theory within the Western world is "increasingly influenced by the writings of Jurgen Habermas" (1996, p. 241). A number of adult educators have drawn upon a critical theoretical background to inform their educational perspective (Mezirow, 1985; Welton, 1995; Collins, 1991; Hart, 1993). Welton argues that

> In a world where both symbolic and material reproductive forces are radically unstable - the lifeworld is increasingly stripped of its life-orienting potential and economic restructuring is wreaking havoc throughout all societal domains - "adult education" will always be called to serve

two masters (system or lifeworld) (1995, p. 131).
The values of the system can be seen in the market oriented shift in lifelong learning which is geared towards the commodification of education for greater financial profit. The lifeworld is the realm of community, intersubjective interaction between people, and a site where communicative action allows for the full freedom of human learning. When the system overrides the lifeworld, power and profit dominate over more humanistic concerns. Welton argues "the economic system (steered by money) and the state-administrative apparatus (steered by power) turn back upon contexts of communicative action and set their own imperatives against the marginalized lifeworld (1995, p. 143). This erosion of the lifeworld has tremendous costs for humanity, as adult education loses its critical grounding and emancipatory potential (1995, p. 144).

The effects of mass media and culture can be seen in how "the newly inflated roles of consumer and client channel the influence of the system to the lifeworld" (1995, p. 147). Instead of being communicatively mediated and handed down through the traditional forums of family and community, values are taught to us through a constant barrage of media and advertising. In a fractured workplace which has a growing periphery of marginalized employees, and within a political

system where the notion of democracy has been narrowly construed as the individual right to vote, the traditional roles of worker and citizen have been disempowered. Thus the potential for emancipatory types of learning and the expansion of a critical pedagogy is weakened by the influence of the marketplace in adult education.

Mezirow (1991) draws upon critical theory to support his theory of transformative learning, a learning theory which centres on the notion of meaning. He defines his work as:

> Transformation theory seeks to elucidate universal conditions and rules that are implicit in linguistic competence of human development. Specifically, it seeks to explain the way adult learning is structured and to determine by what processes the frames of reference through which we view and interpret our experience (meaning perspectives) are changed or transformed (1991, p. xii-xiii).

Mezirow argues that meaning structures will change when adults are challenged by disorienting dilemmas that force them to examine new alternative approaches. Two different paths may lead to perspective transformation - one is a radical, sudden shift, while the other is gradual and cumulative (Mezirow, 1994). Either approach can lead to significant learning experiences for adult learners.

To develop his theory, Mezirow draws from psychology, critical theory, constructivism and deconstructivism. Mezirow (1985) also draws upon Habermas's theory of communicative

action, focussing upon Habermas's distinction between instrumental and communicative learning, and his notion of ideal speech situations. Mezirow argues that he is conscious of social influences, as it is through the influence of other people that each person develops his/her meaning schemes, but his work has been criticized for having too narrow a focus on the individual learner. Tennant (1993) believes that Mezirow underestimates the power of social forces to shape lives, and he needs to include a social and historical critique when theorising for perspective transformation. Collard and Law (1989) argue that Mezirow is influenced by existentialism, which tends to emphasize the individual in a way which is difficult to reconcile with a theory of social change. Plumb (1995) suggests that Mezirow offers "a fascinating *psychological* theory of adult learning", rather than a social theory of learning, as it doesn't examine the inequalities in power in a society.

Despite these criticisms of the limitations of his theory, it was Mezirow who first helped to achieve widespread recognition of the value of Habermas's theory of communicative action within the field of adult education (Connelly, 1996). Drawing upon Habermas's notion of ideal speech situations, Mezirow (1985) lists the conditions under which people can interact with one another to become aware of the differences

in perception, to evaluate superior meaning schemes, and allow transformative learning to take place. His work has been influential in explaining the importance of dialogue in adult education contexts, and exploring the ways in education can lead to change or transformation within individual's lives.

It is interesting that Mezirow first developed his ideas for transformation theory while working on a research study which focussed on the experiences of mature women students returning to education, noting (as was discussed in Chapter Three) that this may often lead to transformative learning experiences (Mezirow, 1975).

Drawing upon Habermas's work relating to ideal speech, Mezirow focuses on the importance of discourse in altering schematas. Dialogue is the means by which individuals become aware of other ways of making sense of the world, and this can lead to perspective transformation. He writes:

> For example, in consciousness raising, women come to recognize that what they thought was their personal problem is in fact a widely shared problem of sex stereotyping (1991, p. 209).

By engaging in dialogue, women reassessed their knowledge of the world, and were able to recognize that what they had once viewed as "private" concerns, were in fact matters worthy of "public" debate. By examining women's experiences in the homeplace, insights into broader social concerns may be raised.

Michael Collins has drawn extensively upon the work of Jurgen Habermas to develop a critique of the influence of professionalism and marketplace rationality within the adult education field. He argues that developing an understanding of theory, such as "the wide-ranging theory of communicative action which endeavours to provide reasons for genuinely democratic action, is integral to the role of a reflective practitioner" (1991, p. 51). Collins (1991) critiques "cult of efficiency" which emerges from the influence of technical rationality in adult education. He argues that under the current guise of androgogy, self-directed learning becomes commodified, and the educator is transformed into a facilitator. He writes:

> In *facilitating* the pedagogical process through contractual terms, adult educator as facilitator or broker treats the student, albeit with respect, as the consumer. The felt (consumer) needs of the learner as client (customer) are systematically addressed and, with the nature of the exchange relationship thus defined, commodification of the educational encounter is substantially achieved (1995, p. 82-83).

This leads to objectification of the educational experience, diminishing the intersubjective nature of communication which Habermas envisions. By moving in this direction, Collins warns that "Unwittingly, adult educators who uncritically embrace technicist ideology are contributing to coercive effects, even where these are not immediately apparent, that

obstruct emancipatory learning endeavours (1991, p. 13). If educators allow curriculum to become narrowly focussed to meet the 'needs' of industry, then they limit the potential for emancipatory education. Collins is concerned that within the context of lifelong learning, if the need to constantly upgrade skills becomes mandatory, then this may erode the traditionally voluntary nature of education.

Like Collins, Welton (1995) provides a compelling argument to challenge the technical rational influence in adult education, questioning the dominant paradigm in lifelong learning where "liberal democratic countries have now adopted the rhetoric of "lifelong learning" and speak of the need for massive "job training" (1995, p. 132). He argues that "if the lifeworld were to become radically instrumentalized" then the consequence would be that "critical adult education would lose its grounding" (1995, p. 144). The need to sustain the vitality of the lifeworld is essential for critical adult education to flourish. Welton (1997) advocates the development of a "civil society" as a means of reinforcing and expanding the influence of the lifeworld.

Although her more recent work will be dealt with in the next chapter on feminist theory, Mechthild Hart has also drawn upon the work of Jurgen Habermas to critique the influence of technical-rationality within adult education. Hart (1992)

discusses how Habermas's distinctions between instrumental and communicative rationality reveal insights within the adult learning context. Instrumental rationality involves using the correct means to achieve a desired end result, and strategic rationality is an informed decision making process consistent with values, such as is seen in adult education programs where the objective is to find the best 'fit' between the program and the client. In both cases, rationality is characterized by objectivity. Hart states that "in contrast to purposive-rational action, communicative action is characterized by a relationship of complementary and mutuality among the participants" (1992, p.142). Norms are guided by the intersubjective structure of interaction, and the moral/practical knowledge, such as is seen in social institutions, is determined by the value and belief systems of that particular society in that particular time frame.

Drawing upon Habermas's concept of ideal communication, Hart argues that consensual decision-making requires the absence of any kind of coercion. When people critique the validity of their social norms, the aim is to dissolve external and internal power structures, so that one has the opportunity to frame questions in an open context. Hart argues that "To contain the power of critique by censoring the most important questions result in binding critique to a

strategic context of action" (1992, p. 147). This frames the types of questions which may or may not be asked. For instance, students in a business class may be asked to determine the best way to make a profit when marketing a certain item. If they are not allowed to discuss any of the underlying issues, such as who should profit, what is an acceptable amount of profit, or if it is right to make a profit in all circumstances, then the underlying value structures will never be addressed.

Each of these theorists have made valuable contributions to our understanding of the adult education field, and provide valuable insights into the problems of the dominant discourse in lifelong learning. They also demonstrate the need to "defend" the lifeworld (Welton, 1995), of which the homeplace is an integral part, in order to provide continuing opportunities for critical and emanicipatory learning experiences.

Feminist Critique of Critical Theory

Critical theory has been challenged for failing to address concerns raised by postmodernism (Peitrykowski, 1996) and gendered differences in experience (Hekman, 1990). It has been dismissed by some feminists, who challenge the emancipatory claims of a critical pedagogy, which they argue

fails to attend to power imbalances created by differences in race and gender (Ellsworth, 1989; Lewis, 1993).

In this next section I examine the recent work of a number of feminists (Love, 1991; Fleming, 1997; Fraser, 1995) who have engaged Habermas's work in an attempt to determine its usefulness for feminist research. At first glance, Habermas's theoretical framework seems incompatible with a feminist perspective, as it is framed in a modernist, European tradition of thought which many feminists have rejected. As Cohen (1995) notes, "the relationship between feminism and the critical theory of Jurgen Habermas is characterized by ambivalence" (1995, p. 57). Despite this, Love (1991) suggests that Habermas's concept of ideal speech could be used to develop a discourse ethics for feminist theorists, and Meehan argues that feminists may find Habermas's theory useful because it "offers a framework for analyzing the structure of modern life, its potential for both emancipatory forms of life and forms of life issuing in political repression, market manipulation, and domination" (1995, p. 1). Cohen argues that

> even Habermas's most determined feminist critics are unwilling to dispense with the key categories of his thought: they make use of the concepts of communicative action, public space, democratic legitimacy, dialogic ethics, discourse, and critical social theory (1995, p. 57).

The criticisms levelled at Habermas's theory indicate that

they do not believe his work adequately accounts for women's experiences and their understanding of the world. While some feminists are willing to engage Habermas's work, they are often critical of his lack of recognition for women's concerns. Couture (1995) has criticized Habermas for being gender-blind in his analysis. Habermas's conception of universality is also perceived to be problematic because it entails abstraction and detachment of reason from all influences of the body. For feminists, "the problem is that this denial of embodiment regularly translates into a denial of the relevance of the female body to social issues (1995, p. 269).

In "What's Critical About Critical Theory?", which is perhaps the best known feminist critique of Habermas's work, Nancy Fraser (1995) takes up Habermas's critical theory of communicative action, and attempts to develop an inquiry of feminist issues, by trying to "reconstruct how various matters of concern to feminists would appear from his perspective had they been thematized" (1995, p. 22). Fraser challenges Habermas's conceptualization of the lifeworld/system dichotomy, as she argues that it contains a gender blindness which is problematic. While I agree with some of her points regarding Habermas's failure to thematize gender, I argue that Cohen and Arato present a convincing argument that suggests it would be better to modify Habermas's conception of the

system/lifeworld rather than to dismiss it.

According to Fraser, Habermas draws a distinction between the symbolic and material reproduction of societies. In a capitalist society, paid labour would fall into the category of material reproduction, while the socialization of the young would fall into the category of unpaid labour, or symbolic reproduction.

Fraser challenges this division between the system and the lifeworld, arguing that most activities are actually dual-aspect activities, involving both symbolic and material reproduction. Raising children involves physical care as well as emotional nurturing and socialization, and is important for developing the next generation of labourers. Therefore, socializing children is a dual-aspect activity, because it involves both symbolic and material reproduction.

The same argument can be made for the production of food, which under Habermas's theoretical framework, would be considered to be a form of material rather than symbolic reproduction. Fraser argues that food production could be perceived as a dual-aspect activity in that it meets the requisites for both a material reproduction with regards to fulfilling a physical need, and is also a symbolic form of reproduction, since the production of food also creates "symbolically mediated social meanings" (1995, p. 24). She

gives the example of how different cultures, and religions have regulations regarding food preparation. There are social implications in offering food to guests, value judgements which gives priority to who gets the best food within a household, decisions over who will prepare the food. All of these have social implications and meanings, so therefore the production of food also can be perceived as a symbolic form of reproduction.

Fraser finds it problematic to use a "natural kinds" of classification to assign unpaid labour, such as childrearing to women, and other kinds of work to material reproduction, when she argues that both are in fact merely single aspects of dual-aspect labour. The main concern Fraser has with this division in classification is that it could be used as an ideological construct which justifies the subordination of women to men by confining them to a "separate sphere" (1995, p. 24).

According to Fraser, Habermas argues that in the modern society, the official economy and the state have assumed responsibility for material reproduction and are system-integrated. The responsibility for symbolic reproduction is the realm of the socially integrated domains, the nuclear family and the public sphere, which is the modern lifeworld (1995, p. 27).

Although Habermas asserts that he understands this distinction between the two realms are developed by a pragmatic-contextual interpretation, rather than a "natural kinds" of explanation, Fraser argues that this is still problematic because "Habermas's categorical divide between system and lifeworld institutions faithfully mirrors the institutional separation in male-dominated, capitalist societies of family and official economy, household and paid workplace" (1995, p. 27). This shifts the focus away from the household as a site of labour, albeit unpaid labour, and ignores women's lower pay and status in the workforce. By not distinguishing differences in gender roles in these areas, Habermas's theory "fails to focalize the fact that in both spheres women are subordinated to men" (1995, p. 28).

Fraser argues that Habermas draws a distinction between "socially-integrated action contexts" and "system-integrated action contexts". In socially integrated situations, people use communication to arrive at an intersubjective consensus of norms, values, and beliefs. In system-integrated contexts, action is guided by individual self-interest, influenced by the "media" of money and power. Fraser says, "Habermas considers the capitalist economic system to be the paradigm case of a system-integrated action context" (1995, p. 25).

Fraser (1995) argues that there are two possible inter-

pretations of Habermas's position here, one in which there is polarity between the two action contexts, and one in which it is more a difference of degree. While Habermas states that it is a difference of degree, Fraser argues that Habermas's analysis leads to a sharp delineation between the two spheres. She perceives this to be problematic, because it does not sufficiently take into account the extent to which system influences family life. She writes:

> Feminists have shown through empirical analyses of contemporary familial decision making, handling of finances, and wife-battering that families are thoroughly permeated with, in Habermas's terms, the media of money and power (1995, p. 28).

Fraser argues that Habermas focusses on bureaucracy as the locus of power, and does not explore other types, such as patriarchal power, which influence communication and understanding within the context of the family (1995, p. 29).

Fraser is also concerned that Habermas's analysis suggests that childrearing could only be pathologically incorporated into the system. She perceives that this distinction of private and public is a key characteristic of women's subordinate role in society. Therefore, even a socialist restructuring of society which would address the inequalities caused by capitalism, would not have a beneficial effect for women because it would fail to address the inequalities of the current separation between system and lifeworld,

family and workplace (1995, p. 30). Her argument is that since daycare has not been proven to be detrimental to children, she does not agree with Habermas's position that to incorporate childcare under the system would create pathological difficulties, anymore than it would to allocate other types of work to the system.

Fraser believes that it is important to thematize the gender subtext of male/female roles within capitalism. Even when women work outside of the home, their role is often within a service/subordinate capacity. It is men who are assigned the worker role in our society, as can be seen by the historical argument for the "family wage", and the perception of women's work as "supplemental earners" (1995, p. 33). Women are assigned the role of consumer within the modern capitalist society, which overlooks the value of their productive labour within the home. At the same time, the failure to discuss the importance of childrearing, a task which is consistently allocated to women, is an indication of androcentrism (1995, p. 34).

The citizen role conceived of by Habermas, Fraser argues, is a male role, not a gender-neutral position. She says, "there is a conceptual dissonance between femininity and the dialogical capacities central to Habermas's conception of citizenship" (1995, p. 35). Men have more power to have their

voices heard than women, and women's speech has often been distorted. There is also an association with the soldiering aspect of citizenship, which places men as the defenders. She argues that

> The citizen role in male-dominated classical capitalism is a masculine role. It links the state and the public sphere, as Habermas claims. But it also links these to the official economy and the family. And in every case the links are forged in the medium of masculine gender identity rather than, as Habermas has it, in the medium of a gender-neutral power. Or, if the medium of exchange here is power, then the power in question is masculine power. It is power as the expression of masculinity (1995, p. 35).

Fraser argues that because Habermas has overlooked the importance of gender and the influence of the childrearing role on the lives of men and women, he has failed to understand many of the connections which exist between the state and family, polity and public spheres; connections which delineate different roles for men and women. (1995, p. 36).

By reexamining these issues from a gender-sensitive perspective, Fraser argues that it becomes clear that male domination is intrinsic to the modern capitalist structure, because of the separation of the domestic and waged labour. In order to comprehend fully the roles of worker and citizen, one has to address the implicit gender contexts of these roles (1995, p. 37).

Cohen and Arato (1992) overview Fraser's critique of

Habermas's work and provide a thorough and comprehensive response to her analysis. While Cohen and Arato agree that Habermas's theory has not paid as much attention to gender as it should, they still believe that "The claim that the system/lifeworld distinction and the colonization thesis are antithetical to such concerns is unconvincing" (1992, p. 534). They argue that most of Fraser's concerns can be dealt with through a revised interpretation rather than reformulating Habermas's theoretical model.

First, Cohen and Arato address Fraser's argument that the system/lifeworld dichotomy does not acknowledge that families can also be perceived as economic sites of labour, and that childrearing is a form of production which creates the next generation of labour.

Cohen and Arato argue against Fraser's position that there is no meaningful way to distinguish between system/lifeworld. When Fraser suggests childcare could be taken care of by the system because day care is a functional way of providing child care, they argue that she "misses the real thrust of the distinction between system and social integration and is itself unconvincing" (1992, p. 535). They argue that there is a fundamental difference between processes and institutions, in which "meaning, norms, and identities cannot be maintained, reinterpreted, or created through

functional substitutes for the coordinating accomplishments of communicative interaction" (1992, p. 536). The socialization of children could not be fully taken over by the system, for even when children are in day care, their families are still the most important socialization agents of early childhood. Within the family values, priorities, discipline, and goals, are communicatively determined. Although families perform economic services they are not "formally organized or media steered" (1992, p. 536). While many tasks may be taken over by the system, this is not necessarily the best means for managing all forms of labour. They state that they "do not agree with the notion that all creative, productive, or reproductive activities should necessarily take the form of wage labour" (1992, p. 537).

Cohen and Arato agree with Fraser's point that Habermas should not limit his discussion of power to focusing solely upon bureaucratic power, but should broaden it to include patriarchal power. According to Cohen and Arato, while male dominance can be perceived as one area in which traditionalism has been upheld, "based on a conventional normative "consensus" frozen and perpetuated by relations of power and inequality that led to all sorts of pathologies in the lifeworld" (1992, p. 539), they also acknowledge that the pervasiveness of male dominance cannot be fully explained by

this argument. Fraser states that the implication that male dominance is merely a result of modernity not having sufficiently evolved or developed, overlooks the reality that "patriarchy is intrinsic to rather than an accidental byproduct of capitalism" (1992, p. 533). Cohen and Arato agree that it is misleading to restrict the usage of power to bureaucratic settings, suggesting that there is a need to also look at social settings to understand different types of power. They argue that gender relations are coded so that divisions are perceived to be "natural", stating that "gender norms and identities are based ultimately on the intersubjective recognition of cognitive and normative validity claims" (1992, p. 542). The meanings and norms are then transmitted and reinforced through the socialization process.

Fraser acknowledges the value of the way Habermas has expanded the public/private distinction to include family, public sphere, economy, and state, but argues that the roles of worker, consumer, client, and citizen should not be presented in gender-neutral terms. She also notes that the important role of childrearer has been neglected. Cohen and Arato also acknowledge that Habermas has not considered the gendered roles of worker or citizen. They argue that gender can be seen to link the public and private domains.

> Viewing gender as a generalized form of communication, a power code distinct from but reinforced by the media of money and power generated in the subsystems, gives us a rich theoretical framework for articulating the public/private distinction in gender term (1992, p. 542)

Fraser argues that the colonization thesis doesn't fully grasp the depth of the feminist challenge to welfare state capitalism. The connections between the lifeworld and the system are multidirectional. "Patriarchal norms continue to structure the state-regulated capitalist economy and the state administration, as indicated by the continued segmentation of the labour force and the structure of social welfare systems"(1992, p. 534) Cohen and Arato acknowledge that patriarchal gender norms have led to more women than men being clients of the welfare system. Lifeworld norms are not always that influence and determine the direction of the system are not always fair and equitable. They write:

> The colonization thesis highlights the problems associated with the opposite direction of interchange: the penetration by the media of money and power (and formal organization) into the communicative infrastructure of everyday life. This tends to reify and deplete nonrenewable cultural resources that are needed to maintain and create personal and collective identities. This includes the resources that are needed to create nonpatriarchal norms in the lifeworld and to develop the solitary associations and active participation that would help them assert their influence on the subsystems" (1992, p. 544-545).

For instance, there are still vertical relations between

judge/social worker and client. This serves to reinforce old relations of power rather than opening up communicative possibilities (1992, p. 546-547). While some programs empower clients by enabling them to act collectively, others bring the influence of administration into areas that should not be formally organized, thus threatening the communicative infrastructure.

Cohen and Arato argue that in a feminist critique to change the welfare state, there should be three objectives. First, there should be juridification to empower citizens rather than deploy administration. Second, it is necessary to dissolve male dominance in private & public institutions. Finally, there should be structural economic and political reforms, which will lead to democratized, egalitarian ideals of civil society (1992, p. 548).

Although I do not agree with Fraser's rejection of Habermas's use of the lifeworld/system as conceptual categories, I can understand Fraser's concern that the system/lifeworld dichotomy may be seen to reinforce the private/public divide which is often perceived as being problematic by feminists. Feminists are leery of perpetuating the division between public and private. As Nicholson notes "in the modern period in the West, female devaluation and gender in general appear strongly linked to the separation of

public and private" (1986, p. 90).

There are a number of reasons for these concerns, which are clearly articulated by Weintraub (1996) in his discussion of the public/private debate within feminist discourses. The public/private are conceptual categories, which have been used in different ways by different theoretical approaches. Weintraub outlines three main ways that feminists have used the private/public distinction. First of all, theory often overlooks or devalues the private domestic sphere. Feminist academics stress the importance of acknowledging the value of the labour which is conducted within the home with regards to domestic labour and childcare (Luxton, 1990; Hart, 1995). Domestic and childcare responsibilities have often been marginalized and not recognized as real work.

The second argument focuses on the way men and women are assigned different roles in the public/private spheres, that relegates women to positions of inferiority. The paid workplace has been considered the male realm, where the work that is most valued in our society is conducted. The homeplace has been idealized as a sanctuary from the world of work. Labour is still conducted in the home, but it is invisible, unrecognized, and unrewarded labour, performed primarily by women. Women are regarded as consumers rather than producers, which diminishes their perceived worth in society (Rosenburg,

1990). Couture point out that Habermas's analysis fails to note gendered differences in experience such as this.

> As a consequence, Habermas fails to connect the capitalist workplace with the male-headed family or the public speaker with the capacity of men to protect their women. The point is not that being a consumer is necessarily connected with being female. It is rather that, under existing social conditions, the consumer role is primarily associated with women, and that this is a function of an objectionable history of subordinating women's activities to wage-earning partners (1995, p. 265).

Feminists have noted that one of the main consequences of the development of modernity has been that women's work in the homeplace has been segregated from that of men, and is often perceived to be inferior. To overlook this reality, is to miss one of the most essential issues of justice which has been taken up in this century.

Finally, the private sphere hides many of the problems women have faced in the domestic realm, such as abuse, which in the past was kept hidden from the public eye (Weintraub: 28-29). Honi Fern Haber writes that feminists "are no longer willing to accept the public/private split. They demand that the private be politicized. Only then will women's voices be effective" (1994, p. 129-130)

Habermas (1996) responds to this last concern by arguing that it is possible to deal with issues such as spousal abuse, which arise in the private sphere, but only after they have

been articulated within the public sphere. So it is possible to pass laws and change policies to deal with spousal abuse once a public consensus has arisen that this is a problem which needs to be addressed through policy changes. He is suggesting that if people want to make social changes then they have to go the public route, garner enough support, and be vocal enough that others will listen, and then changes can be made. What I find problematic with this argument is that it fails to address power imbalances in obtaining a public voice.

For example, wife abuse was not recognized as social problem until the 1970's. Prior to that time, it was considered a personal, private matter. It is not coincidental that recognition of domestic violence coincided with the development of the feminist movement, as it was the joint efforts of many women's groups that advocated for changes which resulted in new laws, funding for shelters, and media coverage of the issues. The initial activists were often women who became aware of the problems of abuse through their work as nurses and social workers, and saw that there were no services available to help these women. The significant point here, however, is that domestic violence was not a new problem, but one that has a long history. However, until women were working in paid professions which received recognition from the larger society, and feminist

consciousness raising led to women coming together to name their problems, this issue was not addressed (Tierney, 1982). Women who were abused were shamed or coerced into silence, and other women who were primarily relegated to the private sphere, did not have the opportunities to vocalize their concerns.

Benhabib has also pointed out the difficulty of Habermas's assertion that everyone should be free to enter into discourse in the public sphere, noting that "there are voices that are mute in this discussion" (1996, p. 175). Feminists are very aware of the gendered imbalances in power which often serve to silence women. These same power imbalances have implications within the educational sphere and within the homeplace, where women are sometimes coerced into silence.

Women who are not in the public sphere do not have as many opportunities to express their concerns, and even when they do, because of the low status attributed to domestic labour and childcare, their concerns are often devalued and overlooked. Rosenberg's (1990b) study illustrates this point. When a group of homemakers challenged a multinational company that was dumping toxic waste in their community, their concerns were brushed off by government officials, as the rantings of "hysterical housewifes" (1990b, p. 129).

Weintraub argues that the public/private distinction creates "a sense of binary opposition that is used to subsume a wide range of other important distinctions and that attempts (more or less successfully) to dichotomize the social universe in a comprehensive and sharply demarcated way" (1997, p. 1). He suggests that instead, we should change the way we view the public/private distinction to recognize that "it comprises, not a single paired opposition, but a complex family of them, neither mutually reducible nor wholly unrelated." (1997, p. 2)

Weintraub indicates the complexity of relationships which often have multiple connections and points of overlap. This make it impossible to clearly demarcate the differences which a binary opposition seems to suggest. In this way, the lifeworld and system can be perceived as being interconnected through multiple pathways. The significant difference between the two is that the lifeworld is a communicatively shaped space where values are determined, while the system is a regulatory organization that is designed to efficiently manage production. They are qualitatively different in terms of their functions.

So while Fraser points out rightly that childcare and food production both have symbolic and material reproductive aspects, the meaning and values of these activities are determined within the context of the lifeworld. Although

Habermas's model reflects traditional divides in our society, he is arguing that we need to reaffirm and strengthen the lifeworld. One way to do this is to examine the different realms of the lifeworld, and explore their meanings for our society.

Like Cohen and Arato, I disagree with Fraser's idea that the system can take over childcare. There is a lot more that goes into adequately socializing children than merely producing the next generation of labourers. You are also creating the next generation of citizens and parents. This is one area in which lifeworld values are essential. As Luxton points out:

> This aspect of domestic labour is most clearly embedded in the interpersonal relations of the family. Consequently, it is the most difficult to recognize as work despite its demanding and arduous character. This work can never be taken over entirely by either industry or the state for it is this part of domestic labour that is the central labour - the production of human beings, of life itself (1980, p. 203).

Contrary to Fraser's argument, then, the raising of children could never be successfully overtaken by the system. In fact, it would further pathologize the lifeworld to attempt to allocate these responsibilities away from the lifeworld. However, I agree that insufficient attention has been paid the private realm of the homeplace and the labour which is conducted within there.

Hart (1995) has raised the fundamental issue that we often overlook the importance of subsistance labour, such as "motherwork" in place of work which generates profit. She argues that we should reappraise the value of the types of labour which are rewarded in our society. As Fleming (1997) notes, Habermas has acknowledged the importance of the family in reproducing the lifeworld. However, his current framework does not recognize the role of nurturer.

Weintraub (1997) notes that the private world of civil society is perceived as a public role by females, and is one in which women have been less visible. He states that "the separation between private and public is thus reestablished as a division *within* civil society itself, within the world of men" (1997, p. 31). The division between public and private from a male perspective often looks at the difference between the "private" realms of civil society as being separate from the "public" realms of government and commerce. Weintraub argues:

> Breaking the taken-for-granted identification between "civil society" and the "private" side of the public/private dichotomy - indeed recognizing that law and ideology in modern societies contain a "double separation of the private and public", not a single dichotomy - is therefore a key requirement for a feminist rethinking of a wide range of social and political theory" (1997, p. 31).

The dichotomy therefore, can be seen as twofold in this situation. It divides the world of men, and divides the world

of men and women, according to the nature of each group's gendered experiences of the world. This indicates an area for further study, where we need to examine further the nature of women's public spaces.

Landes (1995) is critical of Habermas's assessment of the exclusion of women's participation in the bourgeois public sphere. Habermas perceived this to be simply a reflection of the limitations of the existing society. She argues that in taking this approach:

> Habermas overlooks the strong association of women's discourse and their interests with "particularity," and conversely the alignment of masculine speech with truth, objectivity, and reason. Thus, he misses the masquerade through which the (male) particular was able to posture behind the veil of the universal (1995, p. 98).

This is one of the problems posed by androcentricity, when masculine experience is taken as representative of all people, while the feminine experience is overlooked or marginalized. To fully understand the gendered nature of women's experiences, we must examine how their participation in society differs from that of men.

Fraser raises a valuable point, also acknowledged by Cohen and Arato's, namely, that we need to examine different bases or "codes" of power. The gendered differences in power cannot be adequately accounted for by the argument that it is an indication of arrested development from an earlier,

traditional stage in our society's evolution. Gender inequalities are pervasive in all aspects of life. There are problems with devaluing women within the lifeworld, and I would argue that this inequality is reinforced through capitalist system imperatives which focus on financial profit. Both the economy and politics tend to work towards short term goals. I would argue that we need to develop communicative action within the lifeworld to incorporate long-term vision and planning within the system.

This near-sighted, profit oriented focus of the system can be seen in the vocational trend in education. It is manifested in the disregard for the environment, and lack of respect for different cultures. We see this in the pervasive materialism of our society, which suggests the "good" life can be commodified. As long as the system focuses primarily on production for short-term gains, other perspectives will be devalued.

The values of the system are market driven and gives predominance to the work world rather than the homeplace or community. The professionalization of the university reflects the professionalization of the workplace. People who are "professionals" put their work first. This technical-rational orientation devalues the connections that people have within the community and diminishes the level of respect for home and

family. Fraser points out that Habermas fails to address the inequality of women in all spheres, including the workplace. As, Hart (1995, p. 113) claims, men and women "have" families in different ways. The lower level of power and "success" in women's paid employment is directly linked with domestic and childcare responsibilities. Women are led to take part-time, marginalized, lower paying jobs in order to accommodate their other responsibilities. This indicates the important of focussing on the social definition of responsibilities within the homeplace, how power is negotiated and bestowed in these situations, and conflict which may arise as a consequence.

Fraser notes that the clients of the welfare system are predominantly women. Harman (1992) argues that women who are homeless often find themselves in this situation because they have been socialized to believe in female dependency, which is reinforced through the existing social service system. Ward (1994) also argues that our social service system is based upon a traditional, functionalist perspective of family life which reinforces traditional gender roles.

Fleming (1997) also argues that Habermas's colonization thesis "is based on the view that the increase in system complexity in democratic welfare states leads to excessive judicialization of the lifeworld, as ever more areas of life become subject to economic and state administered imperatives"

(1997, p. 145). The problem with this critique is that women and children are often protected by the "basic rights" which the legal judicialization of the family intervenes on behalf of. How can we be assured that these rights will be protected, if we remove these safeguards?

Fleming is also concerned about Habermas's division of labour which excludes the "female" labour of socialization (1997, p. 145). Fleming notes that while Habermas is supportive of the feminist goals of equality, "he is solidly committed to the four social roles of employee, consumer, client, and citizen, and he does not see that taking feminism seriously would involve not only addressing the status of the nurturer role, but opening up discussion of the gendered pattern of all social roles" (1997, p. 146).

Fleming argues that "For all Habermas's concerns about universalism, his theory turns out to be not universalistic enough" (1997, p. 151). This is because Habermas grounds his work in the modern theorists - Durkheim, Weber, Marx and Mead, and this has given his work a particularistic skew that he is unaware of. He portrays the family in an idealistic sense, immune from criticism, failing to recognize the gendered imbalances in power which have created many problems within the family.

We do need to attend to the fact that there are gendered

differences in experience, which in the past have been glossed over by Habermas. Habermas's role of citizen and notion of civil society, has been critiqued as being more reflective of male experience (Landes, 1995; Fleming, 1995). In another essay, Cohen also argues that

> The most significant flaw of Habermas's work is his failure to consider the gendered character of roles of worker and citizen that emerged along with the differentiation of the market economy and the modern state from the lifeworld (1995, p. 71).

Landes points out that Habermas acknowledged that "the oppositional bourgeois public sphere only partially achieved its stated goals of equality and participation" (1995, p. 97). She argues that Habermas idealized the notion of equality being achieved through a discourse in that validity claims were based upon reason rather than social stature. However, he failed to address adequately the inequalities which limited the participants in the discourse initially.

In addition, she argues that "because the public sphere and the conditions for publicity presupposed a distinction between public and private matters, it was ill equipped to consider in a public fashion the political dimensions of relations in the intimate sphere" (1995, p. 97). As women's lives were centred around the private sphere, their issues were relegated as being "particularistic" rather than "universalistic". She writes,

> the virtues of universality and reason are offset by the role they play within a system of Western cultural representation that has eclipsed women's interests in the private domain and aligned femininity with particularity, interest, and partiality. In this context, the goals of generalizability and appeals to the common good may conceal rather than expose forms of domination (1995, p. 99).

It was not just chance or happenstance that women's issues were relegated to the periphery of societal concerns, and that issues of citizenship have tended to focus on male rather than female concerns.

The same tensions exist today in education, when women's issues are sidelined as being not of importance to the mainstream. Separating women's experiences from the homeplace serves to diminish the importance of these experiences. Issues such as pregnancy, childbirth, abortion, and housework become "women's issues" which are not a part of mainstream academic discussion (Oakley, 1974; Smith, 1991).

Within the dominant discourse of lifelong learning, policy-makers are wary of addressing any issues pertaining to the homeplace, as this is perceived as infringing upon the privacy and sanctity of homelife (Knapper & Cropley, 1991). I agree that we should respect the individuality of the homeplace, and I am not advocating that we should institutionalize all aspects of life. For example, I would not advocating forcing all parents to attend two weeks of

parenting seminars a year to update their skills. However, there are many linkages between the homeplace and lifelong learning, just as there are multiple connections between the lifeworld and system. We see this in a welfare system, where abusive husbands are taught anger management, women are taught mothering skills, and in public schools where children are taught sex education.

For adults continuing with their education, we can see the connections to the homeplace in how women begin to renegotiate their housework chores, reassess parenting duties, and reconceptualize relationships with partners in terms of differences in power and equality. We see it in the academic and business world where women are penalized by being the childbearers in our society, by having to work more hours than men do, and by being denied promotions because of their divided loyalties between the lifeworld and system. The work which they do in parenting and childrearing is undervalued, and the physical demands of going through pregnancy, giving birth, and nursing their children, are either ignored or treated detrimentally, such as when women are denied promotions or tenure because they take "time out" to have children. Women are in fact coopted into trying to "hide" the amount of work that this requires. If they draw attention to it, then it serves to reinforce inequalities under a masculine

framework of values. We need to look at the connections between lifelong learning and the homeplace, to better understand the relationship between the lifeworld and the system.

To do this, I believe that we can combine a feminist analysis with a reconceptualized version of Habermas's theory, which thematizes issues relating to gender. I believe it is important to look at the distortions in power which eminate from within the lifeworld to poison the system - where masculinist norms prevail. If we only examine detrimental influences as being exerted from the system towards the lifeworld (through Habermas's colonization thesis), we fail to see the systemic forms of gender discrimination emanate from within the context of the lifeworld, and we may be guilty of idealizing rather than analysing the importance of the homeplace. I think that this is one of the difficulties in using Habermas's theoretical framework. Simply it hasn't sufficiently examined the pathological relationships of power which begin in the lifeworld and are magnified within the system. To do this, we need to draw upon a feminist analysis.

While Fraser is quite critical of some of Habermas's ideas, she also argues that there are several reasons why feminists might be interested in a theory of discourse, arguing that such a theory is useful in four main respects.

She writes:

> First, it can help us understand how people's social identities are fashioned and altered over time. Second, it can help us understand how, under conditions of inequality, social groups in the sense of collective agents are formed and unformed. Third, a theory of discourse can illuminate how the cultural hegemony of dominant groups in society is secured and contested. Fourth, it can shed light on the prospects for emancipatory social change and political practice (1991, p. 99).

Braaton (1995) argues that Habermas's theory of communicative action can be useful as an underlying premise of feminist theory. She challenges the parameters which Habermas has traditionally outlined as the basis for his theory, suggesting that the "feminist ideals of solidarity and community can be constitutive ideals of a feminist rational discourse" (1995, p. 158). Braaton argues that:

> The consensual method of feminist practice shares with Habermas's ideal consensus the interest in overcoming relationships of dominance and submission, in sharing power, and opening discussion to all perspectives. However, the feminist practice of consensus, unlike Habermas's ideal discourse, only occasionally takes the rarefied form of theoretical-scientific or ethical-judicial discourse (the two forms of universal consensus-oriented discourse) (1995, p. 142).

I propose that discourse is a useful forum for theoretical interchange, between feminist and critical thinkers. By pursuing a discourse between different theoretical frames of thought, a richer, more complex understanding of the the gendered differences in lifelong learning may evolve.

Conclusion

We need to examine the homeplace as an important site of learning and realize that the connections between the lifeworld and system work two ways. We also need to examine women's contribution to the reproduction of the lifeworld as a nurturer, and examine how we can develop a counter discourse that takes a life-affirming perspective. Habermas's theory of communicative action and his concept of the system/lifeworld offers a number of insights that can help us to understand the current dominant discourse in lifelong learning, and promotes the idea of dialogue to develop new approaches to understanding and developing the field of adult education.

CHAPTER FOUR

FEMINIST AND MATERNAL DISCOURSES

The significance of the homeplace in lifelong learning becomes evident when we start to examine gendered differences in experience for adult women learners. While critical theory poses a useful framework for understanding some of the structural factors which have led to the current privileging of technical-rationality within our society, we need to draw upon feminist theory and epistemologies to gain an understanding of how the dominant discourse is a reflection of masculine values. By combining feminist perspectives with critical theory, I believe that a number of useful insights can be developed to explain the connections between lifelong learning and the homeplace.

Gendered differences in experience, both within the larger society and in the context of lifelong learning, are grounded in women's reproductive capacities and the responsibilities of childcare and domestic labour. As feminist critics pointed out in the previous chapter, Habermas's analysis would be better suited to giving a theoretical analysis of women's experiences if he were to thematize gender consistently throughout the development of his conceptual analysis, and look more thoroughly at the

gendered implications of this division of labour and responsibility. For Habermas's model of the system/lifeworld to be useful in explaining women's experiences, I argue that we need to examine the gendered distortions in power which exist within the lifeworld and are then extended outwards into the system. By focussing on the nature of motherwork (Hart, 1997) and maternal thinking (Ruddick, 1989), I examine how women have drawn upon their unique experiences to serve as defenders of many lifeworld values. These feminist maternal discourses challenge the dominant discourse in lifelong learning which narrowly defines productivity according to a profit oriented economic agenda. The philosophical beliefs embedded in the life affirming work centred around the homeplace may provide an important resource for fostering lifelong learning and constructive social change. If women's contributions to society are to be recognized, then the importance of reproductive and subsistence labour need to be addressed.

Women have had contradictory experiences of both empowerment and oppression within the realm of the lifeworld. The homeplace can be seen as an important site of resistance, where women have been the main defenders of the lifeworld as a place of community, spirituality, and family. Within the lifeworld women have also been dominated, abused, and

exploited. The common slogan, the "personal is political", arose from women examining their own private experiences of inequalities in power, and coming together to the larger society to demand changes from the system.

In a world threatened by destruction from overconsumption and environmental degradation, the development of civil society provides a forum for women and men, from various theoretical orientations and life experiences, to come together and draw upon Habermas's notion of communicative action to generate social change. By focussing on the area of lifelong learning and the homeplace, I provide an example of how these discourses may lead to a societal rethinking that can challenge existing premises and shape the foundations for a new epistemological base for learning in the 21st century.

The Challenge of Feminist Theory

In an increasingly industrialized society, technology and industry have reshaped the relationships between paid work and subsistence labour, eroding traditional links between the system and lifeworld so that they are increasingly "uncoupled". Habermas's (1987) theory provides a broadly encompassing framework to help overview the current dilemma of the pervasive effects of technical-rational rationality. The challenge of feminist theory is to question the validity of

critical theory to address women's concerns and perspectives, and to consider alternative viewpoints for the development of social change.

While Habermas has acknowledged the importance of the feminist movement, he has not "thematized" gender in his work. However, the question is whether it is sufficient to address feminist concerns *after* the whole theory has been constructed. This presupposes that there is no need to render any serious modifications to the body of work. While Habermas has a history of welcoming critical assessment of his work and responding to it, unless gender dimensions are conceptualized as a constant, underlying factor throughout the development of his work, Fleming (1997) raises the question of whether or not his theory of communicative action is as universalistic in its applications as he suggests.

Habermas's theoretical model of the system/lifeworld provides valuable insights into many of the problems that have been constructed under a masculine framework of a society that values competition and aggression over cooperation and connection. All cultures are male-dominated, although the practices and means of domination vary from site to site.

Carmen Luke (1992) criticizes the Frankfurt School for failing to recognize that its critique of Western society is also a critique of the underlying masculine values of modern

society. She states that while she is not taking an essentialist position, men's and women's experiences have been very different, and are bound up with women's capacity to reproduce life. Men who are "egocentric, boundary-dependent", throughout history have shown a tendency towards violence and destruction on a large scale, which has not been emulated by women. Luke suggests that

> women's reproductive consciousness and potential, their connectedness to the production of life, the ontological significance of their physiological and cultural relation to genetic times and species (re)production locates their experience of self and others in an embodied relation to and in continuum with life, not death (1992, p. 43).

This orientation towards life is a feminine rather than masculine attribute. The Frankfurt school's critique of instrumental rationality is a critique of values which have been privileged within a masculine, rather than a feminine discourse.

Like Fleming (1997), who argues that Habermas's universalistic discourse is not universal enough, Jennifer Gore (1992) presents the argument that the critical theory of the Frankfurt school

> is a critical theory of the social structures and relations of patriarchy. It fails, however, to recognize that its object of study *is* patriarchy by universalizing and naturalizing its masculinist understanding as applicable to humanity, to human nature, and to history. While the material, social and political activities of history can indeed be characterized by collective and individual power

> plays of domination and subjugation, they are located via any analysis in male rule, authority, authorship (1992, p. 44).

The system, which is portrayed by Habermas as a value-neutral means by which the codes of money and power are organized, does in fact have a masculine bias. This is a bias which begins within the realm of the lifeworld, where men are in a dominant position of power over women. It is encoded through other means of domination in the structural determinants of power which are as unevenly distributed within the system as they have been within the homeplace.

Feminists are often unwilling to accept a dualistic framework, such as Habermas has suggested in his system-lifeworld analysis, for fear that what is defined as "private" is often overlooked (Fraser, 1995). As I discussed in the previous chapter, Weintraub (1997) has pointed out that the dimensions of public/private are complicated and multi-faceted, with gendered differences in perception.

I believe that we need to explore the pathways between system and lifeworld, public and private. In this way we can see that the lifeworld may have both positive and negative affects on the construction of the system. For instance, Ursel (1994) notes that the legal and political systems in our society have been influenced by traditional masculine definitions of power to entrench a judicial system that often

fails to support women who are victims of domestic abuse. Yet at the same time, feminist advocacy has resulted in government funding for programs to provide greater support and awareness for issues dealing with domestic violence.

To understand the distortion of power which allows for male dominance in the homeplace, it is necessary to look not just at how the homeplace as a part of the lifeworld has been colonized by the system. It is also necessary to look at how the homeplace is in many instances a site of oppression and inegalitarian relationships for many women. The values of the system (ie. historical laws such as the "rule of thumb" that allowed a man to beat his wife with a stick provided it was no larger than the circumference of his thumb) are indicators not only of the pathologies in the larger system, but also of male violence and oppression within the homeplace that have been codified into law.

Feminist experiential research provides valuable insights into the everyday experiences of women that may challenge existing frameworks of knowledge. By moving from the abstract to the particular, from generalizations to specific situations, it is possible to discern the validity and usefulness of theories that have been put forth. When women's experiences follow different patterns than that of their male counterparts, the importance of gender as a central variable

of analysis becomes apparent. It then becomes necessary to look at developing theory to understand gendered differences in experience.

One of the difficulties in responding to feminist concerns, is that there is not a singular feminist "voice". Feminist theory is as diverse as the multiple discourses constructed by male theorists. Habermas (1996) notes that much discussion around feminist work is spent examining the implications of different policies and conflicting ideas of how these should be implemented.

Jennifer Gore (1992) has also discussed the perception that many male academics have that feminism is a women's domain. As a consequence, it is an area in which many men feel excluded from the discourses. Historically, women have often felt a need to establish a "safe space" where they can discuss issues without male input, in order to be able to speak freely. Men have not always been welcomed to participate in feminist discourses, and so long as the gendered imbalance in our society continues, it is likely that women will still seek forums that are exclusively feminine.

While acknowledging this poses a challenge, Gore argues that this does not mean that critical theory should be exempted from having to seriously engage feminist theoretical discourse. She writes that:

> A danger of this separation between men and women is the deepening of divisions and the possibility that certain strands of radical pedagogy will be unable and unwilling to engage with each other. In itself, this is not so unproblematic. But if, indeed, these discourses are primarily concerned with the improvement of schools and education for all people, then such separation will likely be counterproductive (1992, p. 48).

Feminist and critical pedagogies and epistemologies can work to inform one another. Gendered issues in education and in other fields will never be adequately addressed if the discourses are only conducted and contributed to by women. While women may require separate spaces to initially define and develop an understanding of many issues which are influenced by differences in gender, there should not be impermeable boundaries between feminist and other academic discourses.

Feminist theories serve an important purpose in focussing in on women's experiences and knowledge, and they need to be recognized as contributing to part of the larger spectrum of academic discourses, if emancipatory changes are to succeed. Ideally, all theories should "thematize" gender issues, as well as take into account other, traditionally marginalized perspectives and concerns. Feminist theory needs to be read and responded to by mainstream male theorists. Kenway and Modra dismiss critical theorists who

> seem to believe that gentle genuflections, alone, demonstrate their gender-sensitivity and make

> respectable their politics, while at the same time relieving them of the scholarly responsibility for a careful and proper engagement with the full range and complexity of feminist literature" (1992, p. 138).

Women have long been expected to read and engage with work formulated by male theorists. In order to begin to have a grasp of the complex ideas dealt with in Habermas's work, one must have at least some acquaintance with the European theoretical tradition that he draws upon. The majority of these theorists - Durkheim, Marx, Weber, Parsons, Piaget, Mead, and Kohlberg - are all white males. In order to engage in a respectful discourse, it is necessary for male theorists to address the issues raised by feminists with the same depth and commitment to developing an understanding of the issues as has traditionally been expected of their female colleagues reading male theorists.

Habermas (1996) has responded to some of the feminist critiques of his work. If he continues to extend his engagement with feminist theory to address women's concerns in more detail, it might serve to broaden feminist scholarly interest in his work and lead to the development of a more gender inclusive theoretical framework.

Integrative Feminism

Within all academic realms there are multiple discourses.

Lewis discusses the notion of discourses and argues that they have political implications. She states that "they are a way of negotiating our subject position within these relations of power" (1993, p. 113). Critical theorists readily acknowledge that education is not a neutral enterprise (Freire, 1974; Apple, 1990).

The exclusion of women from academic discourses is not a random anomaly. It is a form of systemic discrimination. Women have been overlooked in educational curriculum (Gaskell et al, 1995), left out of important studies in medical research (Roser, 1992), and ignored in developing sociological analysis (Morgan, D., 1981). In addition to this, the way in which research is conducted, the types of questions that are asked, and the way in which information is interpreted has also been shown by feminist researchers to often be subject to a masculine bias (Eichler, 1984; Walkerdine, 1990). Adult education has been criticized for failing to adequately document women's historical contributions to the field (Butterwick, 1998; Stalker, 1998), and failing to value women's experiences (Blundell, 1992; Stalker, 1996).

Feminists have taken a number of different approaches to developing theory and critiquing existing paradigms. Miles (1996) outlines the development of various feminist perspectives, and how it soon became apparent that the "add

women and stir" technique was insufficient to address women's issues. Jennifer Gore (1992) discusses the problems with the inadequacy of critical pedagogy simply "adding on" issues related to gender. Carmen Luke argues that "Repositioning women from the periphery to the center of social analysis is a central task for feminist theorists, regardless of diverse disciplinary perspectives and theoretical standpoints" (1992, p. 25).

Women's experience needs to become central to academic discourses. Women not only need to be included, but the overall perspectives need to be altered to provide a more encompassing worldview that takes into account differences in perspective which arise when you take women's experiences into account. When women's experiences are marginalized or subsumed under broader categories, or if the few incidents where women's lives fit into male categories are highlighted, then this is not a true reflection of women's lives. The discourses need to be broadened to incorporate the diversity of women's voices and experiences. In addition, other issues regarding diversity must be taken into consideration. To be a white, upper class, and heterosexual woman, provides a different outlook and status than if you are a woman from an ethnic minority, homosexual, and lower class. Patricia Collins (1991), Ng (1993) and hooks (1988) discuss the difference in

experience that women of colour have both in the larger society and with an academic context. Issues of identity and difference are often very complex, and multiple factors influence the development of individual identity and life experiences.

Despite issues of diversity, most feminists still recognize the importance of solidarity with other women. Honi Fern Haber discusses how changes can be initiated and empowerment becomes possible when people recognize that they are not just part of one community. Women who work in a profession can recognize that not only are they members of that field, but also part of the larger group of women. In the same way, identity can also be associated with being a member of other groups, such as an ethnic minority. Fern Haber gives the example of how women were able to make a significant difference in art history "when female art critics and historians switched their alliance from the community of male art historians and critics, whose canon is shaped from the standpoint of white privileged males" (1994, p. 121) to the larger community of women. From this position, women shared the knowledge which they had "from everyday encounters of being made into objects by the male gaze" (1994, p. 122). This altered their interpretation of artistic work, and challenged the underlying assumptions of how beauty was

determined. The development of an alliance and shared sense of identity with other women provided the impetus to redefine artwork from a feminist perspective. Feminist theorists and researchers can work together, developing a shared identity (which still recognizes and values difference) to develop new epistemological approaches that challenge the dominant ontological perspectives.

Angela Miles (1996) poses a convincing argument for an integrative feminism, which builds from the multiple experiences that divide women. Looking beyond the boundaries of Western society, she argues for a global form of feminism, that provides a sense of solidarity through women's collective experience. At the same time as integrative feminism works to consolidate and articulate shared concerns, integrative feminism also recognizes and values the diversity of beliefs and background experiences of the various participants. Miles writes:

> So global understanding broadens integrative feminists' concept of valued diversity from diverse women to diverse communities and opens the possibilities of organic solidarity between feminist and indigenous struggles. It enriches the dialectical redefinition of autonomy and community, unity and diversity, specificity and universality that is at the heart of integrative-feminist politics-politics that welcome differences even as they heal divisions (1996, p. 140).

Despite the differences that characterize different feminist theories, as well as the complexity of other variables such as

ethnicity, ability, and sexual orientation, feminists can recognize that they share a common political purpose in working towards affirming women's status in society.

Certainly, there are many different agendas put forth by different feminist groups. Women are not much closer than men at achieving a consensus in their viewpoints. However, women do share many similar concerns regarding safety, respect, and honouring women's contributions. I believe that it is fruitful to explore these issues, and consider both the diversity and the similarities to be able to assess the connections between lifelong learning and the homeplace.

Feminist Epistemologies

The development of feminist epistemologies offers alternative perspectives which focus attention on issues of power related to gender which challenge the traditional, predominantly androcentric perspectives which have dominated academia. In the past, women's outlooks were often posited as being inferior to that of males, and their experiences were either overlooked or subsumed within universalistic generalizations. Feminist epistemologies challenge the dualistic traditions of Enlightenment thinking, suggest alternative approaches for developing academic theory and research, and question the concept of "gender" itself and how

it affects our understanding of the world. Feminist epistemologies offer innovative approaches to rethinking the world, and serve to illuminate some of the oversights and shortcomings of androcentric research perspectives in lifelong learning which have failed to adequately address the nature of women's learning experiences and how this is related to their ties and commitments with the homeplace.

Stanley and Wise provide a concise definition of what is meant by the term epistemology and also clarify why feminists have worked to develop their own epistemological frameworks. They write:

> An 'epistemology' is a framework or theory for specifying the constitution and generation of knowledge about the social world; that is, it concerns how to understand the nature of 'reality'. A given epistemological framework specifies not only what 'knowledge' is and how to recognize it, but who are 'knowers' and by what means someone becomes one, and also the means by which competing knowledge-claims are adjudicated and some rejected in favour of another/others. The question of epistemology, then, is crucial, precisely *fundamental*, for feminism, for it is around the constitution of a feminist epistemology that feminism can most directly and far-reachingly challenge non-feminist frameworks and ways of working (1993, p. 188-189).

Epistemology is a foundation for knowledge and understanding of the world around us. Feminists have focussed on the need to develop their own epistemological theories because of the inadequacies of traditional theories to clearly account for or willingness of traditional theorists to include women's

experiences and perspectives.

The development of epistemological thought is explicitly linked with power. According to Alcoff and Potter:

> The history of feminist epistemology itself is the history of the clash between the feminist commitment to the struggles of women to have their understandings of the world legitimated and the commitment of traditional philosophy to various accounts of knowledge - positivist, postpositivist, and others - that have consistently undermined women's claims to know (1993, p. 2).

Feminist epistemologies challenge mainstream theories and research strategies by pointing out gender biases and omissions of women's contributions to knowledge, and by asserting alternative perspectives and approaches to developing an understanding of the world. They challenge the notion that the experience of men can be used to understand all human experience, and question whether male interpretations are always accurate when describing female experience.

The Influence of the Enlightenment

If we examine the influence of Enlightenment thinking on the development of academic discourses in lifelong learning, it becomes apparent that modernist perspectives in thought dominate these discourses. This can be seen in the positivist trend which attempted to model the social sciences after the natural sciences, in the underlying belief in "progress" which

is strongly linked with technological developments, and the emancipatory hope of Enlightenment thinkers (Hearn, 1985). With the development of postmodern discourses (Bloland, 1995), feminist theory (Miles, 1996), and non-Western scholarship (Asante, 1990) in recent years, the exclusionary vision of Enlightenment thinking has been challenged and forced to redefine itself.

A primary characteristic of Enlightenment thought was that it established a number of dualistic ways of thinking that continue to contribute to the androcentric perspectives in the scientific and social science communities today. As Hearn stated, the main metaphor for the Enlightenment "refers to the lightness of intellectual understanding which is forcefully contrasted to the darkness of ignorance and emotional confusion associated with the old order" (1985, p. 8). From this initial oppositional stance, of darkness contrasted against light, other binary oppositions which characterize Enlightenment thought also focus on a dualistic interpretation of the world. Hekman (1990) discusses the gendered nature of understanding which arose from these contrasting oppositional stances, where males tended to be associated with one side, and women with the other. Feminists have frequently criticized "dualistic epistemology as detrimental to the status of women. They have argued that it

implies hierarchy and defines women as inferior" (Hekman, 1990, p. 163). Feminist epistemology has called into question the logic, interpretations, and forms of research which have been informed by dualistic interpretations and analysis which consistently serve to undermine the status of women. Hekman writes that

> feminists assert that the dualisms at the root of Enlightenment thought are a product of the fundamental dualism between male and female. In each of the dualisms on which Enlightenment thought rests, rational/irrational, subject/object, and culture/nature, the male is associated with the first element, the female with the second. And in each case the male element is privileged over the female (1990, p. 5).

There is a long tradition of women being associated with nature, as a consequence of their biological capacities to give birth. O'Brien discusses the negative connotations that the male intellect has always attributed to the feminine act of procreation. This distinction in biological capacities is used to justify the "natural superiority" of the male as opposed to the female. This degrading concept of childbirth has been so pervasive in our society that many of the feminist authors in the first stage of feminism accepted the negative implications associated with women's reproductive capacities. O'Brien points out that even Simone de Beauvoir, author of *The Second Sex*, and a vocal feminist, "despite the power and integrity of her work, accepts without question the evaluation

of childbirth as an inferior animal activity and the biological curse of femininity" (1981, p. 104).

The significance of this negative conception of female reproductive capacities is that it has had the effect of relegating women to a secondary status for many centuries. As a result of women's ability to bear children, they are perceived as being more clearly tied to the "natural" world. Men, however, are able to pursue the higher intellectual and spiritual realms.

O'Brien claims that women are viewed as having a singularity which binds them to Nature, while men possess a duality that allows them to surpass female limitations to the "artificially created realms of civility, of politics, of philosophy, and above all, of freedom [that] has transcended the contingences of biological being" (1981, p. 102).

Mechthild Hart also makes the argument that

> Ultimately, the identification of sexuality, birth and life with nature, and the social stigmatization of the latter as something that has to be suppressed at all cost lies at the core of the devaluation of women's work (1992, p. 104).

The modernist discourse focuses on "harnessing", "mastering", and "controlling" nature. During the Enlightenment, the advent of science as an academic discipline was linked with the goal of controlling nature. Feminist thinkers have speculated whether it is this masculine orientation to achieve domination

over nature that is reflected in the male desire to control women as well (Hart, 1992; Walkerdine, 1990).

Women's biological nature has also been used to justify various discriminatory practices against women. Feminist epistemologies have shown that the dualistic approach of Enlightenment thought has been used to justify the superior status of men, and thus place women at a disadvantage. Once the study of "human nature" was developed, "the rational self was in this sense a profoundly masculine one from which the women was excluded, her powers not only inferior but also subservient" (Walkerdine, 1990, p. 67). Hekman notes that the "association of the masculine with rationality, the feminine with irrationality" has often been used to exclude women from the academic sphere (1990, p. 34). Walkerdine cites numerous attempts to "prove" that women were inferior to men to provide justification to exclude women from higher education and the professions, on the basis that "they were swayed by their emotions and not, therefore, invested with the capacity to make rational judgements" (1990, p. 68). As Walkerdine (1992) notes, "The emerging human sciences, building upon previous philosophical tenets, had deemed women's bodies unfit for reason, for intellectual activity. The possession of a womb was thought to render a woman unfit for deep thought, which might tax her reproductive power to

make her less amenable to raising children" (1992, p. 18).

In her article on the four phases of academe, Gillet (1998) discusses a book by Dr. Edward Clarke from Harvard, written in 1873 entitled *Sex in Education or A Fair Chance for the Girls*. In this book, he took the idea from classical physics that the amount of energy is finite to present the rather convoluted argument that

> because women's delicate bodies only have a fixed amount of energy, rigorous study would divert that energy towards the brain away from the essential female reproductive organs. Higher education for women would thus result in an excess of brain energy, thereby inducing madness. Conversely, lack of energy in the reproductive organs would produced deformed offspring or, worse yet, a generation of barren women, leading ultimately to the demise of the race (1998, p. 37-38).

By linking women's reproductive capacities with their intellectual reasoning abilities, men were able to use women's biological nature as a "natural" explanation to provide support for discriminatory and repressive policies.

Even today, feminists challenge the notion of abstract reasoning and reflection being privileged within academic discourse. Quite often, feminist theory has developed because women have realized that women's experiences are inadequately explained by abstract theoretical discourses. There are a number of well known examples of feminist research that challenge male academic tradition. Gilligan's (1982) research critiqued Kohlberg's theory regarding moral development,

arguing that women have different priorities which emphasize an ethics of care that is not recognized in Kohlberg's analysis. Female academics such as Harding (1986) have challenged masculine interpretations of science. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) suggest that women have different "ways of knowing" or patterns of learning than men.

As a consequence, some feminists are leery of, or unwilling to accept, the value of abstract reasoning or even the notion of reflection. Michelson (1996) challenges the privileging of "reflection" over experience, arguing that "the distinction between experience and reflection imposes both a hierarchy and a chronology of increasing detachment. Experience is immediate but messy; it comes with all the human frailty still attached - subjectivity, interestedness, bias, materiality" (1996, p. 439). In contrast to experience, reflection is a step or two removed from the immediate, everyday context. She writes:

> Reflection is thus both ordered and ordering; it bestows meaning where there was none or else greater clarity when there was lesser. Through reflection, we are always getting better. Through reflection, we partake of the dream of reason, the Western tale of progress through rationality (1996, p. 439).

Michelson is critical of the way in which reason often leads to detachment. Impartial logic is perceived to be superior to lived, embodied experience. Emotions and sensate experiences

are discounted and devalued. This is particularly problematic for women, who are socialized within our culture to be attuned to emotive responses, and who may wish to draw upon sensory perceptions [as an example, I think of the physical experience of giving birth] to better understand their experience. Michelson also refers to Patricia Collins (1991) work that examines how afrocentric knowledge also privileges "knowledge claims that are rooted in personal testimony and constructed through dialogue with others" (1996, p. 450).

While critics such as Michelson bring up some valuable insights about the narrow way in which abstract forms of reasoning and the notion of reflection have been construed, I do not believe that experience and reflection, or experience and theory, should exclude each other. I see experiential discourses as being fundamentally important to our work in adult education, as they have an immediacy and provide insights in a way that abstract theoretical discourse cannot match.

Hear these women's voices:

"My husband was openly supportive," Shirley explained, "but in some respects I'd feel sabotaged. He'd say, "Let's go away for three or four days." Terrific! When would you like to go? "Oh, at the end of the week." I can't, I have school. "Oh, you can skip a class" (Mendelsohn, 1989, p. 45).

"In time, my spirits were more and more depressed. I began to dream of entering the professor's office with a loaded gun. There I would demand that he listen, that he experience the fear, the humiliation. In my dreams I could hear his

pleading voice begging me not to shoot, to remain calm. As soon as I put the gun down he would become his old self again. Ultimately in the dream the only answer was to shoot, to shoot to kill. When this dream became so consistently a part of my waking fantasies, I knew that it was time for me to take a break from graduate school" (hooks, 1988, p. 58).

Mary: "A prof said to me, "You've got the ability to go to graduate school." That was the first time somebody fed my ego since before I was married. I walked out of there and I was in the stars" (Campbell, 1993, p. 24).

(Susan) "I used to say that I wanted to fulfil my potential - that was one of my stock phrases - and I feel that's what I'm doing. I'm just learning the way how to do that. It isn't a hobby, or an escape from boredom - it is me finding myself. I'm a totally different person than I was two years ago" (Cox & Pascall, 1994, p. 163).

(Janice) "I'd feel guilty if I had to take time off to take them to the hospital or doctor's appointment, because I had to ask for time off from the poly. And thinking well, I'm not quite one of the other students 'cos I can't totally give all my attention to it. and then I'd feel guilty about the kids because I'd think well, really I'd prefer to be over there studying and I've got to take them somewhere. And then I'd feel guilty for feeling like that. It's just one big mess, isn't it?" (Rosalind Edwards, 1993, p. 70).

(Irene) "You'll be there [at the polytechnic] talking politics or something in the paper, you discuss that, but when you come home, you know, you have to switch that off, and nobody want to know about what Marx said or what Weber said. Who the hell is Marx or Weber to them, you know! They want, "Where is my dinner" or "I fell today at school and somebody not talking to me"...and then when you are at college you can't talk about it [home] 'cos nobody want to hear all about four kids and their - you know, what Sonia [my daughter] did such a wonderful thing yesterday! Nobody wants to hear that, so you have to stop yourself from saying it" (Rosalind Edwards, 1993, p. 81).

These excerpts from various studies, recording in the first person what women had to say about their experiences, reveal numerous insights that would be diminished if they were

subsumed into a larger, more abstract analysis. We can learn from what these women have said by reflecting upon their words and drawing upon theory to provide a broader analysis that combines theoretical insights with the particularity of individual experience. Experience needs to be linked with other discourses so that we can recognize that many of the issues raised in the above quotes are indicative of societal concerns, rather than just individual incidents. At the same time, not only feminists, but some critical theorists have realized that theory risks "making the concrete individual into an abstraction" and this serves to "divorce the individual from larger social movements which might give meaning to 'individual' wants, needs, and visions of justice" (Apple, 1990, p. 9).

Listening to women's accounts of their lives in their own voices is a common strategy employed by feminist researchers. The experiential nature of this type of research is essential because so often women's voices have not been included. DeVault (1990) discusses the challenges of interviewing women because the types of categories and even the basic forms of language that have been used in standard research are often inadequate. She argues that hearing what women have to say involves more than simply encouraging them to speak, because "most members of a society learn to interpret their

experiences in terms of dominant languages and meanings; thus, women themselves (researchers included) often have trouble seeing and talking clearly about their experiences" (1990, p. 100-101). bell hooks also talks about language being a "place of struggle" (1990, p. 146). She discusses the difficulty of finding words to articulate her experience, and the need to use the "oppressor's language" in order to attend graduate shcool, write her dissertation, and find employment. Kelly notes that "more often we talk about or for our women students" (1988, p. 20), rather than let them speak for themselves.

Magda Lewis argues that when women's accounts of their lived experience are denied as being valid research, it is a way to maintain an imbalance in power that feminist research often threatens to upset. She argues:

> It is precisely the denial of the legitimacy of such expression that forms the locus of phallocentric power. Pushed into the private, the politics of the personal is made invisible. Personal institutional dilemmas become private burdens unspeakable except to make their speaker inadequate. By trivializing our experience as mundanely personal and hence insignificant, we live out oppressions and subordination with eyes cast to the ground limiting the horizons of our own visions (1993, p. 5).

Women's experiences need to be made visible and validated as an essential part of academic research.

CHALLENGES TO OBJECTIVISM

Objectivism is one of the underlying tenets of traditional epistemological approaches, and it is an intrinsic part of the positivistic stance in both the sciences and social sciences. Lorraine Code argues that "the dominant epistemologies of modernity with their Enlightenment legacy and later infusion with positivist-empiricist principles have defined themselves around ideals of pure objectivity and value-neutrality" (1993, p. 16). This argument suggests that the individual's locatedness within society does not impact on the development of knowledge, and that through the exercise of reason, it is possible to "transcend particularity and contigency" (1993, p. 16). It implies a universal conception of humanity, not divided by differences in perception as a consequence of race, gender, age, or ability.

The notion of objectivity has been contested frequently by feminist and non-Western scholars, who argue that there are biases associated with factors such as gender (Eichler, 1984), race and culture (Asante, 1990), and sexual orientation (Stanley & Wise, 1993).

According to Berstein, objectivism maintains "the claim that there is a world of objective reality that exists independently of us and that has a determinate nature or essence that we can know" (1983, p. 9). Since reality is "out

there", just waiting to be discovered, the position of the researcher should not in any way influence what is discovered.

In discovering the "laws" of science, human beings would gain a sense of certainty to help chart their way into the future. Albert Einstein idealistically summarized the contribution of science to society, arguing that:

> It stands to the everlasting credit of science that by acting on the human mind it has overcome man's insecurity before himself and before nature. In creating elementary mathematics the Greeks for the first time wrought a system of thought whose conclusions no one could escape. The scientists of the Renaissance then devised the combination of such precision in the formulatin of natural laws and such certainty in checking them by experience that as a result there was no longer room for basic differences of opinion in natural science. Since that time each generation has built up the heritage of knowledge and understanding, without the slightest danger of a crisis that might jeopardize the whole structure.
>
> The general public may follow the details of scientific research to only a modest degree; but it can register at least one great and important gain: confidence that human thought is dependable and natural law universal (in Hjorth et al., 177).

The overconfident assumptions of the immutable status of science seem as naive today as the old nuclear disaster drills where as schoolchildren we were taught to climb under our desks in the event of an atomic bomb being dropped outside. As it turns out, neither the unwavering faith in science, nor the outdated strategies for dealing with nuclear disaster are validated today.

FEMINIST RESEARCH STRATEGIES

Feminist researchers question whether it is possible or desirable to develop a framework of knowledge in which the researcher is distant and uninvolved with the people who are being researched. The ethical implications of developing knowledge in order to control behaviour has been challenged, and the problems of power in research work has been interrogated. Feminist and qualitative researchers question whether it is possible to generalize information about society into law-like abstractions. Lorraine Code argues that "by virtue of their detachment, these ideals erase the possibility of analysing the interplay between emotion and reason and obscure connections between knowledge and power. They lend support to the conviction that cognitive products are as neutral -as politically innocent - as the processes that allegedly produce them" (1993, p. 16).

Feminist and qualitative researchers have reevaluated the way people involved in research have been treated, challenging the underlying ethical assumptions of a positivist standpoint. Research is not something to be carried out "on" other people where they are treated as objects rather than subjects. Knowledge which arises from research provides a certain amount of power, that can be used to empower participants, or devalue them (Kirby & McKenna, 1989).

Feminist researchers note that gender biases in research have been used to assert women's inferiority. Walkerdine's research give an example of this, in which she contests that "constantly and continually, girls have to be proved to fail or to be inferior at mathematics, despite the extreme ambiguity of the evidence" (1990, p. 61). She argues that this "truth", based upon supposedly "objective" research, has been constructed to prove ideas about reason and gender that place females in an inferior position. She provides an alternative analysis for the interpretation of test results in which she argues that males who use innovative approaches to solve mathematical equations are subtly rewarded by teachers, while this same tactic is discouraged in females, who are instead encouraged to focus on passive, rote types of learning. This accounts for the superior performance of males in areas that are deemed to require higher conceptualization skills. Feminist epistemologies provide the theoretical rationale for establishing different approaches in research than those that were considered acceptable in a positivist framework.

Standpoint Epistemologies and Universality

Standpoint epistemologies provide one way to challenge androcentric assumptions in academia. Harding explains:

> Knowledge claims are always socially situated, and the failure by dominant groups critically and systematically to interrogate their advantaged social situation and the effect of such advantages on their beliefs leaves their social situation a scientifically and epistemologically disadvantaged one for generating knowledge (1993, p. 55).

One argument for the development of standpoint epistemologies is that "insufficient care and rigour in following existing methods and norms is the cause of sexist and androcentric results in research" (Harding, 1993, p. 52). This is demonstrated by research which follows "objective" criteria, and yet fails to adequately address women's concerns. A second argument is that the standpoint of marginalized groups positions them so that they are able to observe and recognize serious issues that are problematic and need to be investigated. Standpoint epistemologies privilege marginality over mainstream perspectives as a way of critiquing and analyzing the dominant perspectives.

Habermas's work takes a universalistic perspective that is critiqued by Fleming (1997) as being insufficiently universalitic as he fails to recognize the limitations of his own standpoint and the fact that he has been influenced by his own background as a white, male theorist, steeped in a European tradition of thought. Fleming's argument has some merit, in that Habermas's theoretical development has undoubtedly been shaped by his own personal life

circumstances. It is interesting to speculate what shape his theory would have taken in its evolution if Habermas was a woman writing during the turbulent sixties and seventies, rather than a man. There is no doubt that the development of feminism would have been more central to his work. However, recognizing the situated circumstances of a theorist does not mean that the merit of the work is always limited to narrow applications. Some concepts and ideas are universalistic enough that people from all different circumstances and situations take these up in their own work and find they are useful.

I believe that Habermas's concept of system and lifeworld helps provide insights into how our society is structured, and would be strengthened by including a feminist standpoint in developing this model. I also believe that Habermas's theory of communicative action, and his discussion of discourse ethics provide interesting and innovative ways for educators to consider developing their teaching practice. Grumet points out that the word "epistemology" derives from the Greek word "episteme". Unlike gnosis, which means "immediate knowledge of spiritual truth, epistemology refers to knowledge that is intersubjective, developed through social relations and negotiations" (1988, p. 9). Therefore, epistemology refers to knowledge that evolves through

discourse amongst different perspectives. In this next section I would like to examine how drawing upon different discourses may lead to a form of communicative action, as Habermas has envisioned. I believe that maternal discourses provide a framework to challenge the dominant discourse in lifelong learning and provide a means of understanding the connections between lifelong learning and the homeplace.

Maternal Discourses

The first wave of feminism concentrated primarily on asserting women's equality with men. Differences between men and women were challenged in order to assert women's capabilities and to reject the detrimental comparisons that women have often been assigned under dualistic gender appraisals.

In the second wave of feminism, one of the different themes that emerged was the recognition that women's experiences may lead to qualitatively different understandings of the world, that can serve to provide ideas and insights for developing a better society. "Maternal discourses" centre around women's mothering role. Instead of asserting equality based upon similarity, these discourses focus on different roles and experiences based upon the gendered division of labour involved in the experience of childrearing.

Madeleine Grumet argues that the relationship between mother and child, bound together both physically and emotionally, is symbiotic.

> So long as it is women and not test tubes who bear children, conception, pregnancy, parturition and lactation constitute an initial relations of women to their children that is symbiotic, one in which subject and object are mutually constituting (1988, p. 10).

Contrasted to this is the notion of paternity, which Grumet defines as "uncertain and inferential". She argues that paternity is always mediated through the mother. Masculine epistemologies have been developed "compensations for the inferential nature of paternity" (1988, p. 17). Men are removed and abstracted from the physical immediacy that involves the "natural" processes of pregnancy, birth, and breastfeeding.

Standpoint epistemologists have shown that differences in life experience between men and women have influenced the development of feminist theory, which is often more immediate and experiential, rather than removed and abstract. Harding refers to Dorothy Smith who argues that women's work often involves the physical caring work which "frees men in the ruling groups to immerse themselves in the world of abstract concepts" (1993, p. 55). This means that their perspective of the world is influenced by the circumstances of their lives, where they are given time and space to work without

interruption or constant demands to attend to the physical caring of others. Bateson (1989) also notes that a characteristic of women's lives is that they have to meet multiple demands upon their time, which results from attempting to combine domestic/childcare responsibilities with other kinds of work. This affects the way in which they perceive the world, how they utilize their academic training, and how they approach their work. As a consequence of this difference in experience, Harding argues that in standpoint epistemology, "the grounds for knowledge are fully saturated with history and social life rather than abstracted from it" (1993, p. 57).

Ruddick argues that raising children also leads to different kinds of reflection than is often used in a masculine framework. The various life events that mark a child's upbringing, and everyday incidents lead one to reflect on profound questions of meaning. Mothers question the purpose of their actions, the reasons for their decisions, the end result of their labours. She writes, "this simultaneous, or at least rapidly shifting, double focus on small and great, near and eternal, characteristically marks their maternal vision" (1989, p. 78).

This does not mean that women are incapable of abstract thinking such as men have traditionally been engaged in.

Rather, it means that women are taught within an academic tradition to respect abstract ways of knowing, yet in their own lives they have learned to value more immediate experience, and recognize the insights that this can lead to. Women may be able to more readily "shift gears" between the abstract and the concrete, the tangible and intangible qualities of understanding and experience.

Women often have a sense of double vision in developing an understanding of both masculine and feminist perspectives (Benhabib, 1995). Female academics often spend years learning from an objective, male oriented curriculum that often does not reflect a women's viewpoint. They come to understand the masculine point of view, even though it may be represented as a universal perspective.

Within educational discourses, we need to broaden our understanding of reason to include feminist as well as male perspectives. The maternal discourses reveal that "mothering" is an educative experience, with profoundly political implications that can challenge us to rethink how we understand and act within the world.

There are three main aspects of what Ruddick terms, "maternal thinking". These are the responsibilities to "protect, nurture, and train" (1989, p. 23). Ruddick argues that the practice of mothering requires mothers to think, that

"it is one kind of disciplined reflection among many" (1989, p.24). According to Ruddick, "Reason" does not need to be removed from the way in which women think, but our conception of it needs to be widened and reformulated. She writes:

> I did not doubt, and I do not doubt now, that as destructive as Western ideals of Reason may be, the capacity to reason is a human good. I know what a pleasure it is to learn, experiment, imagine, discover, design, and invent. There is real strength in steady judgement, self-reflectiveness, clear speech, and attentive listening. These are activities of reason and they are human blessings. I have never been persuaded that there is anything precious, or specifically bourgeois, or merely Western, or exclusively masculine about the human needs and pleasures of reason (1989, p. 8-9).

Ruddick argues that mothering involves a form of reasoning which has often not been considered in discussions of the evolution of reasoning. She argues that reasoning evolves from practice, from the everyday acceptance of different practices. The practice of mothering involves recognizing and responding to the vulnerability of children. Ruddick argues that both men and women can "mother", although women are the only ones who give birth.

The notion of civil society is a means through which Habermas (1996) suggests that people may initiate change. We need to examine the actions of women, and they would contribute to the development of a civil society, influenced as they are by their experiences in mothering.

Ruddick argues that "No one is surprised when mothers

petition for traffic cops at school crossings or drive drug dealers off the block. If children are threatened, mothers join together, in all varieties of causes, to protect the neighbourhoods they have made" (1989, p. 80). Women will often work across their differences towards a common goal, to provide safety for their children and loved ones. This kind of work may be manifested in group causes, such as the Madres and Abuelos movement in Latin America, where mothers have drawn public attention through political protest as they have claimed the right to know the fate and punish the abductors/torturers of their children and grandchildren who have disappeared under military rule (Bethke Elshtain, 1994). Mothers may also become actively involved in ecological issues, such as the women who banded together in Ontario to challenge a company that was dumping toxic waste in an unprotected landfill, leading to a higher than normal percentage of birth defects in the area (Rosenberg, 1990b). Ruddick argues that maternal thinking can be used to inform peace movements. She argues that "if the world itself seems under siege, and if that siege holds any community and all children hostage, the effort of world protection may come to seem a "natural" extension of maternal work" (1989, p. 81).

Within the adult education field, Mechthild Hart (1993) has outlined a radical proposal which challenges the dominant,

market-oriented discourse, and also takes up the gauntlet with critical theorists who have also focussed more on the paid workplace. Mechthild Hart (1992) presents a detailed critical analysis of the way in which production for profit has been established over production for life. Hart focuses on the importance of subsistence production, in her recent works examining the nature of "motherwork" (1995; 1997). Miles in her comparative analysis of first and "two-thirds" world feminism, argues that "The problematic "mindset" here is one that reflects, legitimizes, and fuels the competitive production of commodities and profits, while it renders invisible and devalues life producing and sustaining activity" (1996, p. 134).

Mechthild Hart (1992) is critical of the intent of modernity which has as its goal "freedom from labour". Albert Einstein reflected this modernist belief when he argued that "The greatest practical benefit which all these inventions confer on man I see in the fact that they liberate him from the excessive muscular drudgery that was once indispensable for the preservation of bare existence" (in Hjorth , p. 176). This "freedom" from labour allows individuals time to think of matters beyond meeting basic survival needs. However, in this process, the importance of life-sustaining work has been devalued. Hart argues that the idea "that technology will

eventually "free" us from the ties that bind us to nature" devalues human labour and subsistence forms of production (1992, p. 8).

Hart questions the assumption that we "owe" it to business to provide them with a trained workforce, and that we should have a surplus of trained workers ready so that it is possible to keep the wages down and competition and unemployment rates high. She argues that "a narrow, instrumental view of work translates into a view of education which places 'immediate relevance' and efficiency above concerns for overall human development and well-being" (1992, p. 89).

Hart challenges the "Western, Eurocentric, and masculinist framework which is rooted in fundamental conceptual dualisms" (1995, p. 101). Instead, she posits an alternative vision where work and education centre around the responsibilities and commitment involved in "motherwork". She argues that the binary, dualistic type of thinking which opposes work and family is problematic and that we need to look at a way of restructuring work so that it would be more compatible with raising children. She argues that

> By looking at motherwork as a central focus for any educational thoughts and actions concerning work, we are dealing with several fundamental consequences for rethinking work and education. Above all, we cannot avoid making connections that are usually *not* made by educators, and develop a

> framework for thinking and acting that overcomes the conventional discourse of concealment and silencing, which, in the last analysis, is a discourse on power (1995, p. 120).

To do this, Hart suggests that we need to use gender as a central analytical category. Women's experience is related to her biological capacity and societal determination of responsibility for bearing and rearing children. "Thus, women bring a realm of experience into the "world of work" which threatens to disrupt the entire masculinist construction of work and jobs, cemented by a rigid social division between work and family" (1995, p. 107).

Hart presents an argument that we need to develop work that is oriented to sustaining life, rather than focussing on profit. She argues that "Subsistence producers are the ones whose labour and production is directly oriented towards life - its creation, sustenance and improvement" (1992, p. 95). Capitalism and the modernist notions of technological "advancement" are means of depleting the planet of its natural resources, so that a few may profit with unnecessary consumer goods, while real, meaningful work is ignored and devalued. The majority of people are exploited under the current work conditions.

Using motherwork as an analogy of what an ideal educative situation would look like, Hart argues that we should develop "a holistic mindset and a holistic practical approach" in

order to develop "a life-affirming perspective to guide our educational orientation and the way we think, feel, and act as educators" (1997, p. 133).

Rethinking Reason

Habermas's theory of communicative action takes a similar approach to feminism in that it is critical of a narrow conception of reason that is geared towards technical-rational purposes. At the same time, however, his theoretical work is very abstract and seemingly removed from the everyday. Simone Chambers (1995) assessed the validity of Habermas's theory of discourse ethics to develop a consensual mode of communication at a conference for feminist peace activists. Chambers was enthusiastic about the ideals Habermas's theory is premised upon, but she argued that it was difficult to actually implement in practice. While there are always challenges in applying theory in everyday situations, I believe that it is important for educators to continue to engage with theory to inform their work.

In order to assess the validity of Habermas's theories for feminist thought, feminists would need to engage more thoroughly with Habermas's work, and Habermas would need to address feminist concerns not as separate issues of importance, but consistently throughout the development of his

framework. If, as Habermas claims, his theory is not tied to historical locatedness, but is universalistic in its applications, then it needs to be sufficiently flexible to address the shifting position of women's role within society. It has to be equally capable of explaining women's experience as men's. Whether or not his theory does have that capacity, I believe is a matter for further discourse between feminists and Habermas.

The issues that are raised by feminist maternal discourse require, I believe, a very deep sort of reflection, as they challenge some of the basic underlying values and assumptions that we have often been taught to accept as "natural". In this way, we can draw upon Habermas's concept of the "lifeworld", to see the ways in which our attitudes and beliefs are shaped and fostered, to evolve into a taken-for-granted acceptance of how the world should be. To fully understand the implications of this for lifelong learning, feminist epistemologies can be used to offer insights into gendered differences in adult learning experiences.

Within the discourses surrounding lifelong learning, attention has often not been paid to the specific circumstances of women's lives which are often largely influenced by their roles and responsibilities in the homeplace. Discourses in lifelong learning have often tended

to focus on connections between education and the paid workplace (Knapper & Cropley, 1985). To focus attention on the homeplace as a significant site of learning which has been overlooked in the discourses of lifelong learning, involves more than inserting one forgotten topic. Rather, it involves a shift in perspectives, to challenge the values that have determined what will be included in the discourses and what will be left out.

If maternal discourses were to garner broader support within the academic field, it is possible that the underlying value structures of the dominant discourse in lifelong learning may be challenged and opened to a broader, more life-affirming perspective. As Miles argues, "Life-centred feminist visions are thus grounded in alternative values whose very enunciation requires the re-definition of key concepts such as work, value, wealth, development and humanity" (1998, p. 256).

If we explore the connections between lifelong learning and the homeplace in greater depth, we see that raising our children is not just a woman's concern, but a universal concern. Former NAC president Judy Rebick argues that men who come to support feminist causes "say that most transforming experience for them was parenting" (1998, p. 69). She argues that the inequality between men and women in sharing parenting

and domestic responsibilities is the biggest deterrent to full equality between men and women in our society. Rebick argues that "if men had equal responsibility for children, child care would be fully funded, parental and family leave would be a part of every labour code and we would have a shorter work weed to ensure that all workers would have time for their children" (1998, p. 69). If men become more involved as stakeholders in raising the next generation, then the prioritizing of issues would change. To instigate these changes would lead to a societal transformation as profound as the broad spread entry of women into academia and the paid labour force.

Initiating these kinds of changes will not be easy. The pervasive influence of the marketplace is reworking the very language that educators use to talk about their students, who are now viewed as "clients" and "customers". Limited resources and an atmosphere of globalized competition threaten to undermine more cooperative educative ventures. Since the early Faure report, women have gained greater recognition and positions of power within the UNESCO organizations and their issues are now given greater attention (Delors, 1996). Despite this, however, a Western, masculine, profit-oriented perspective remains the dominant discourse within lifelong learning.

The challenges of these issues in developing a pedagogical practice in adult education will be explored in greater depth in the final chapter. Feminist epistemologies serve an important purpose in focussing attention on women's experiences and how these have been excluded or subsumed under universalistic generalizations within the discourses of lifelong learning. By combining feminist and critical theoretical perspectives, it is possible to understand the political dimensions of knowledge production. These insights provide valuable guidance in developing an analysis of the gendered differences in adult learning experiences within the discourses of lifelong learning, and how these have been shaped by commitments and relationships to the homeplace.

CONCLUSION

PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES FOR CRITICAL FEMINISM

By drawing upon Habermas's theory of communicative action and feminist theory, it is possible to work towards developing a critical feminist pedagogy that is sensitive to gendered differences in experience within the context of lifelong learning. In challenging the dominant discourse in lifelong learning, I question the perception of students as "clients" or "customers", and argue that we need to develop a more life-affirming educative focus, that takes into account experiences within the homeplace. Creating an academic environment that is more hospitable to women involves making numerous changes in our current practices. There is a need to address inequalities in treatment as a form of systemic bias rather than individual "problems". The language of academia needs to redefine the notions of "commitment" and "production" to be more inclusive of women's experiences. Barriers that constrain the majority of women to the lower levels of academic ranks need to be challenged.

Within our classroom teaching practice, differences in women's experience and differences in women's ways of learning need to be explored. Connections between lifelong learning and the homeplace should be investigated. Developing a

critical feminist pedagogy should be a focus for adult educators as they work towards developing a more inclusive teaching practice. The homeplace needs to be seen as an important site of living and learning which can inform our pedagogical practices.

The Personal is Political

The "personal is political" has served as a catch-phrase of the feminist movement and as a challenge to the personal/private dichotomies that have often resulted in women's issues and concerns being overlooked. Miles argues that in acknowledging the personal is political, "Feminists realized that the sphere of the personal and private life was not just subject to the intrusion of power relations from outside but was political in *itself* - structured to institutionalize male power over women" (1996, p. 3).

In this way we can see that connections between the lifeworld and system, homeplace and lifelong learning must be explored. Knapper and Cropley (1985) express a reluctance to include the homeplace in academic discourses of lifelong learning, for fear that it would be too intrusive on the private sphere. While it is certainly true that adult educators need to respect individual privacy and freedoms, this does not mean that connections between lifelong learning

and the homeplace should be ignored. Feminist theorists have shown that it is a myth that the homeplace is somehow isolated, protected, and segregated from the forces of the larger society (Rosenberg, 1990b). By keeping the homeplace out of discussion, what happens is that discrepancies in power, issues that are important to women, and the whole matter of childrearing become invisible. It perpetuates the marginalization of women, and excludes the possibility for a maternal discourse in adult education.

A recent example of this can be seen in the Longworth and Davies (1996) book *Lifelong Learning,* which has as its heading on the cover page "The pivotal book on lifelong learning chosen for delegates to the theme conference of the European Year of Lifelong Learning". The male authors, working on what appears to be an all male council to develop discussion on the concept of lifelong learning, are gender sensitive enough to include "men and women" rather than just "men" in their discussion (although they do make numerous references to "mankind"). However, their discussion fails to address women's concerns in the labour force. They note the trend towards increasing "outsourcing" of employment, and the development of a core labour force, but fail to acknowledge the gendered division of this. They discuss frequently the importance of children being adequately socialized to develop

a philosophy of lifelong learning, but use "parents" in general, rather than discussing how the main responsibility for socialization is often by women. They do not discuss the challenges which frequent interruptions in the workforce to accommodate childcare of or spousal career shifts create for women (Cook & Beaujot, 1996). The authors subscribe to the dominant discourse in continually referring to students as "customers", mentioning that universities are sometimes leery of the market mode, but failing to explain why there might be any justification for this. They discuss the importance of helping people in the South, and addressing environmental concerns, but do not discuss how this will this be done. Throughout the book the importance of developing linkages with business and industry, and the importance of global competitiveness are stressed. They do acknowledge other types of learning outside of the workplace, but the main emphasis is on profit and competition.

When educators are able to write what they obviously deem to be a comprehensive book on lifelong learning, and yet throughout it are able to ignore, overlook, or subsume women's experiences, we get a corrupted version of what lifelong learning should look like. Academic discourses need to be broadened to incorporate the specificity of women's experience.

By looking at the connections between lifelong learning and the homeplace, we also come to see the systemic barriers and forms of discrimination that women face in academic environments. Women in academia face many different problems, including concerns for their personal safety (Johnston, 1998), child care problems (Hornosty, 1998), and discrimination in hiring and promotion (Caplan, 1994; Dagg, 1988).

When these issues are privatized as individual problems, institutions are able to politically manoeuvre the power constraints so that women are unlikely to mobilize for broader changes or actions. Instead, they direct their energies towards their private battles, being forced to work uphill to challenge existing rules and structures so that they will be granted an individual exception rather than working towards collective improvements.

Women who have to fight the "system" find that they have to expend a great deal of energy and persuasion just to obtain what should be their right. What often happens is that the administration or faculty may concede an "exception", as though it is dispensing a particular privilege, or being exceedingly understanding - but the underlying, systemic forms of discrimination are not altered. I can remember going through extraordinary measures to convince the administration at one university to allow me to participate in a Ph.D.

program on a part-time basis (see Gouthro & Grace, under review). I thought it was ridiculous that I should have to stoop to political intrigue simply to be allowed to attend school part-time since I had three preschoolers. Eventually the administration did agree to my request, but the overall policy was not changed.

Neilsen gives a similar example of her experiences in graduate school when her family moved and she wanted to go with them, but still continue with her academic studies.

> I wanted to be home, and I did not want to jeopardize my academic career. But because I knew that research and writing would remain at the centre of my life, I fought fiercely for the right to combine work and family. My letters, meetings, and presentations were eventually able to allay the institution's fear that I would become "ABD (all but dissertation), lost in the land of maternity, spilled milk, and swimming lessons for toddlers (1996, p. 55).

The problem with treating these issues as individual concerns is that the power structure remains entrenched and the hierarchy of privilege stays intact. The way that this happens is that while a woman may feel the system should be changed, she is usually reluctant to press beyond her individual circumstance, for fear of retribution - being labelled as a troublemaker, having the special "exception" rescinded, or perhaps she simply does not have the energy to fight it any further. In subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) ways the woman is reminded that the power to decide comes from

above, and if you push too hard, you may lose. By keeping women's issues at an individual rather than collective level, there are fragmented rather than concerted efforts to initiate changes.

This is the problem with the homeplace being perceived only as a private place. In negotiating connections between the system and lifeworld, between academia and homeplace, if issues are treated as private matters, then they do not become issues of public debate. If problems are to dealt with as personal issues, when they are in fact representative of systemic forms of prejudice and discrimination, then the potential for collective action is undermined.

Truly, as Habermas (1996) argues, marginalized groups such as feminists can work together to foster public awareness and support. However, it is important the difficulties of being a marginalized group be addressed. As feminist theorists have pointed out, power is an important factor in shaping the pattern of different discourses (Code, 1993). Feminists actively articulate the need to be conscious of discrepancies in the gendered imbalances of power within the larger society and academia (Caplan, 1994; Bannerji et al., 1991).

It would be naive to think that the decision to maintain rigid boundaries between private and public, lifeworld and

system, is a neutral or impartial judgement. As Neilsen has written:

> Incidents over the last few years have taught me, among other things, that the androcentric values of the academy resist notions that "the personal is political": that the so-called democratic and progressive work we talk about is often not what we live as colleagues, and that as member of the academic guild who is still wet behind the ears, I am expected, above all, to uphold the fraternal values of solidarity, even in the face of stark evidence that the Emperor, no matter how bad my vision might be, is still naked (1996, p. 147).

Production

Hart (1995) provides a powerful argument that within academia we should value the notion of production for life, rather than for profit. Women who spend time at home with their children, or who combine academic work with childrearing, only have their academic work counted as productive.

I can recall a male colleague of mine telling me that he was quite pleased when a male faculty member was giving him a reference, and the faculty member said that my colleague was "the most productive graduate student" he had ever come across. This student is indeed a very hard worker, and during his doctorate he published a number of academic articles. There is no doubt that he deserves acknowledgement for the amount of work he had produced over and above the expectations of the program.

What jarred me, however, was the realization of the academic definition of "production". I realized that in the same time frame I did an average of twelve loads of laundry and packed fifteen lunches a week. I volunteered in the school kitchen, drove twenty thousand kilometres to various afterschool activities, sewed on innumerable scout badges, and spent most of my evenings reviewing spelling lists and reading bedtime stories. I cheered children on from the bleachers in hockey rinks, basketball courts, and baseball fields. I mopped floors and cleaned bathrooms, made jello for sick children, and gingerbread houses for Christmas. In between I did a Ph.D. and taught at two different universities. However, I didn't publish any academic articles, so perhaps within the academic sphere, I would not be considered "productive".

It struck me as ironic that at the same time as I was studying about women's experiences in education, reading about the importance of validating women's lives and women's work, that in my own academic career I could be set back by this narrow definition of "production".

I believe that this narrow definition is linked with the dominant discourse in lifelong learning which is circumscribed by the marketplace model. Moving from a commodity-based to an information-based mode of production, the "system" rewards the

generation of new ideas as a form of production. The academic model in its current state is well suited to this paradigm, as it has always valued research work and the generation of new forms of knowledge. The commodification of knowledge is perceived as a profitable venture or enterprise. The person who is able to "produce" the most information that is acceptable in the "marketplace" of journals, books, (and sometimes today even talk shows) is the academic who will be viewed as productive. These types of publication are ranked in terms of a hierarchy, with refereed journal articles garnering the most status. When books are published, the status of the publisher is also considered in ranking its importance. Then there is the issue of citations - the person whose work is cited most frequently also gains greater recognition. Higher stakes are involved with academics who are able to entice major corporations to invest in universities and in their own work through research development grants (Downey, 1996).

The "reproductive" work that women do in the homeplace is devalued within the academic realm, just as it is devalued within the marketplace. It is perceived as something that "takes away" the focus from academic work, and is therefore a negative rather than positive attribute.

Women are less successful overall in publishing than men

(Hayes & Smith, 1994). Since they are at the lowest end of the academic ranks, they are often employed in marginalized positions such as part-time or term contracts, that do not provide as many opportunities for funding for research or attending conferences (Caplan, 1994; Jackson, D. F., 1990). Review boards for journals tend to have greater representation of males (Dagg & Thompson, 1988). Women are also often excluded from the informal networking that men become involved in that helps them to develop their research opportunities (Bagilhole, 1993). Hayes & Smith (1994) found that not only do women have less success with academic publishing, their work is cited less frequently than men's work.

This narrow focus on academic production of journal articles can be seen as a masculine form of hierarchial privileging. There is a popular (masculine) saying that "The person who dies with the most toys, wins." In academia it seems to me that it would be the one who dies with the most publications wins.

I am not arguing that academic publications are not important. They serve an important function in sharing and producing knowledge. To write this thesis I have drawn upon a wide array of academic writing to provide me with the research and theoretical analyses that I need to develop my own arguments. I have always had a personal love of writing,

and I hope to be involved in contributing to the academic discourses within adult education.

However, what I am arguing against is a narrow construction of "production" which only values or privileges academic writing over other forms of productivity. We need to develop our definition of productive labour to assess the importance of other types of work and attribute value to this.

In recent years, the importance of developing sound teaching practice has been given more attention within academia (Wright, 1995). Faculty who prefer to concentrate upon developing their teaching practice have argued that we should acknowledge a "scholarship of teaching" (Cunsulo et al., 1996). As many women faculty are primarily involved in teaching rather than publishing, this would be one way in which their work could be acknowledged.

Women who work in academia also tend to contribute more time than their male colleagues to non-recognized forms of work such as counselling female students, making presentations at schools about their field, and serving as role models and groundbreakers for other women to follow (Bagihole, 1993). I only teach part-time and I am rarely on campus, yet over the years I have had a number of students ask me to write a letter of reference for them to get into graduate or professional schools. When I suggest that they approach a full-time

faculty member instead (which is more likely to be a male) they say that I am the only faculty person who has taken the time to get to know them, so I am the only one that they can approach for this request. Crawford and MacLeod (1990) and Fassinger (1995) both note that female faculty are more likely to get to know their students by name than male faculty, so quite probably other women faculty find themselves in similar circumstances.

At one of the universities where I teach, there is a centre for students with disabilities. I tend to get quite a few students in my class from this centre, who are referred to my classes by other students because word gets around that I am willing to be more flexible than some other faculty members to accommodate their special needs (ie. write up a different type of exam for someone who is dyslexic). Female students often talk to me about planning for their future career because they are concerned about juggling family concerns with academic goals. Women generally feel more comfortable discussing personal issues such an unplanned pregnancy or a miscarriage with a female faculty member if she is sympathetic to other women. I know that women often approach me rather than a male colleague because they know that I am a woman in academia with young children. They perceive that the knowledge that I have gained through my own personal

experiences will help me to be more empathetic and understanding of their own life circumstances.

None of these extra demands on my time are covered in my teaching contracts. Students often don't realize that when they ask me to do these extra "helping" tasks that my agreement entails a voluntary contribution of my time and energy that is not recognized or reimbursed within my employment situation.

As long as the majority of students in adult education are women, and only a minority of the faculty members are women, what will happen is that these informal sorts of counselling sessions will be disproportionately carried out by the few women available. When women are at the bottom of the academic hierarchy, employed primarily as part-time or non-tenured faculty, they are put in a situation of volunteering their services. This becomes another form of unpaid labour that women are expected to contribute. This takes away from the time that women faculty have to focus on their academic research and writing. It also places an additional burden on women to do work such as this that is neither recognized nor renumerated.

Yet at the same time, I think that the qualities of care and connection are valuable and should be fostered amongst both male and female faculty members. I believe that the

insights that women in academia have gained from their own experiences in working between homeplace and academia are an important base of knowledge to draw upon to help advise female students in various circumstances. I would not advocate eliminated this helping and connecting role - rather, I would prefer to see it recognized, supported, and validated as an important part of the work which is done by women in education.

Commitment

The notion of "commitment" is another problematic term within the academic realm. According to the dominant discourse, "commitment" is defined by a singular focus on one's work. As adult education is becoming increasingly "professionalized", academics are expected to assume the same characteristics of a "professional". In the marketplace model, the "committed" worker is one who logs many hours of overtime without complaint. The executive is a "professional" who is expected to prioritize work over family. Allegiance to the organization is demonstrated through a willingness to be "flexible" and willing to take on whatever extra responsibilities are required in order to "get the job done".

Within this context, the "subsistence work" that women do to sustain life is overlooked and devalued. Children are

secondary citizens, not worthy of being the primary focus of adult lives. "Serious" careerists must always relegate family to the back burner.

The consequences of this are troubling. In order to succeed within academic institutions, some women will emulate their male peers (Dagg & Thompson, 1988; Bagilhole, 1993). There are female faculty in academia who are tough and unsympathetic to other women, taking the attitude that if they did what it takes to succeed, other women can too. They reject a feminist perspective in their work, arguing that they don't need that to succeed.

I have heard other women who have been successful in academia tell me how they felt that they had to make a choice between being available to their children, or committing a hundred percent to their studies, so they chose the latter option. One mother said, "My son basically grew up on his own - he had no choice, because I couldn't be around". A mother of two children, ages one and two, once said to me, "Between finishing my Ph.D. and teaching full-time, I've resigned myself to the fact that I won't see the kids for the next two years." Another time I watched a female graduate student receive a smiling nod of approval from her female supervisor when she said, "My daughter can walk the streets if she wants while I'm writing those exams. I just won't be able to do

anything except concentrate on my work then."

Why should participating in academia involve having to repudiate one's obligations as a parent? Why is it that these women, joking or serious, feel that they must establish their priorities by defining themselves as "committed" to their careers.

We need to explore what happens when the homeplace is displaced from the centre of importance, when raising children is secondary to moving up the career ladder. What kind of people do we breed in an academic milieu that gives primacy to corporate, capitalist values, and belittles the significance of the homeplace? How empathetic to women will faculty be if in their own lives they have made a decision to prioritize work over other forms of commitment?

Women in these situations sometimes end up "buying in" to a male dominated paradigm which privileges work over home, academic commitments over homeplace commitments. Bagilhole argues that a woman as an academic is sometimes seen as a "paradox" (1993, p. 446). Women feel that they have to assume masculine qualities in order to attain respect. One of the women she interviewed stated, "To become an academic I've had to take on a man's model. I've avoided women's groups and not wanted to be identified as a women's studies person or feminist" (1993, p. 443). According to Bagilhole, women

academics often feel caught between conflicting agendas. To associate themselves with other women may reinforce their "feminine" nature, thus weakening their position within the institution, and lessening the respect of their male colleagues. As a consequence:

> Women academics act in an ambivalent way. They respond to women students, but also show strong commitment to the male model of the profession. They have to rid themselves of all female characteristics, feelings and interests in order to survive" (1993, p. 443).

The acceptance of masculine values may mean that successful female academics will be unsympathetic to the concerns of female students regarding domestic or childcare issues. Bagilhole (1993) found that there were some female academics who were critical of women who attempting to combine raising children with an academic career, feeling that these women "burdened" others in the department who had to fill in for them. "Maternity leave was seen as positive discrimination. They felt that women with children should stay at home to look after them, and that to appoint a young woman was taking the risk that she might become pregnant" (1993, p. 442).

A woman friend of mine, who was a part-time university student, spent one entire term in a state of anxiety because the female professor had told the class that they would fail if they missed even one class. My friend had three

preschoolers and a husband in the military who was deployed overseas. When she had approached the professor to discuss her situation she was told that nursing a sick child wasn't an adequate reason for missing class. Similarly, Eunice Marie Fisher Lavell, a lower income single mother who went to university, tells this story:

> In early March of my third year at university, my son came down with measles. Although it was a mild case, he was contagious so his daycare couldn't take him. I phoned all my instructors and left messages that I would be missing two classes and why. I got copies of other people's lecture notes and kept up on readings at home.
>
> This arrangement was acceptable to all but one instructor, the teacher of an education course on developing children's reading skills. This particular person had spent considerable time in class pointing out parental contributions to school failure, particularly under the headings "cultural deprivation" and "single mothers". I remember the word "irresponsible" had often come up in lectures. In the hallway after my return to classes, the instructor stopped me to emphasize that in her class, attendance was mandatory. Somewhat taken aback, I explained once again my extenuating circumstances - a sick child, no daycare.
>
> "Well, what's more important to you," she asked, without a trace of self-consciousness, "your children or your career?"
>
> I looked at her dumbly. "You'd better get your priorities straight," she suggested, striding away from me (Fisher Lavell, 1998).

In the marketplace, the needs of business take priority over everything else. Life-affirming choices such as taking care of those who are sick, vulnerable, and dependent, are not validated. This example illustrates the kind of "pathologies" that emerge when system imperatives "colonize"

the lifeworld (Habermas, 1989).

Both female students and female faculty are often overextended trying to meet the various demands of both the homeplace and academia (Home, 1998; Rosalind Edwards, 1993). As one woman colleague said to me, "You just run around and put out one fire at a time." Neither work nor family can ever fully take precedence. Trapped in the middle, burnt at both edges, women suffer the stress of attending to these competing commitments. This is one of the main reasons many women do not pursue graduate degrees (Vezina, 1998) and women who do obtain higher degrees will often choose to "drop out" of academia (Tancred & Hook Czarnocki, 1998).

I wonder, why should I have to choose between being a serious academic and a loving mother who spends time with her children? There is no reason for there to be a contradiction between these two goals. Obviously, there will be times when conflicts arise. You may have a meeting scheduled and five minutes before you leave you get a phone call from the school telling you that your son just threw up and you are requested to please come and get him.

However, there are ways to balance paid work and domestic responsibilities, provided all the concessions are not expected to be made within the homeplace. If we allow system imperatives to define the agenda for lifelong learning, we

will have a marketplace orientation that devalues the subsistence work and caring tasks of being mother. If we widen our definition of lifelong learning to recognize the value of other types of learning, we can foster a communicative environment which allows discourse to redefine the parameters for adult education.

By doing this, the experiences that learners bring to education from the homeplace may be given its own value. Parenting is a tremendously important learning experience. The time spent raising children takes away from the time that could be spent doing other kinds of work, academic or otherwise. But it can enrich the individual's perspective and politically motivate their actions.

As a mother, I believe it is important to foster a democratic society where conflict is resolved through discourse rather than violence. I remember reading an article in the newspaper years ago, that the first Mother's Day (before it became another Hallmark event) was a day of protest by mothers who had lost their sons in war and who were striving towards peace. As a mother, I do not want to see my children ever involved in a war. I am interested in global peace.

As a mother I am concerned about environmental degradation. I don't want to see my children or my

grandchildren's quality of life diminish because our generation was too greedy and too irresponsible in managing the earth's resources.

As a mother, I am torn by the plight of children being raised in third world countries, who have so little hope, and such a poor quality of life compared to my own children.

As a mother I am worried about violence against women, and wish that I was raising my daughter in a world where I would not have to be so afraid to ever let her go anywhere independently.

These are but a few of the many issues that concern me as a mother. All of these relate to issues that I may also address as an adult educator. By drawing upon my experiences from the homeplace in mothering three children, I can also inform my commitment as an adult educator to foster democratic action and responsible citizenship.

Developing A Critical Perspective

Under the dominant discourse in lifelong learning, potential employers and government officials discuss the importance of students learning critical thinking "skills" to help them to adapt to a rapidly changing, globally competitive workplace. A critical perspective, however, takes into account broader issues than just task-oriented or problem-

solving skills. As Hart (1992) has shown, drawing upon Habermas's concept of communicative rationality, education is qualitatively different when communicative practice is used as a basis for understanding. Students who are taught to think critically will approach education differently than those who are taught through the "banking concept", where knowledge is simply deposited (Freire, 1974).

Although many educators do not make this distinction, I believe that there is a difference between critical thinking skills, and a critical perspective in education. I argue that universities should foster both, but quite often it is only the former that is given support by under the dominant discourse in lifelong learning.

Critical thinking skills are perceived to be important for problem solving and the ability to adapt to different circumstances. Knapper (1988) points out that most of the knowledge students will need to know in their work will be learned after students graduate and enter the work force. Lifelong learning "skills" provide students with the capability to continue to learn and adapt to the changing needs of their work. Brookfield argues that "being able to scrutinize the validity and accuracy of the assumptions upon which the workplace is based is crucial to survival" (1990, p. 21). Organizations and workplaces that are not able to adapt

successfully to a competitive global marketplace will not survive, so it is important that employees have the flexibility and necessary skills needed to deal with continuous change.

Most educators support the notion of "learning how to learn" rather than taking the "empty vessel" approach to teaching (Knapper, 1988: 23) Brookfield (1990) argues that the development of critical thinking should be an underlying rationale for college teaching.

Developing a critical perspective is different from simply developing critical thinking skills in that it entails assessing the moral or ethical implications of education and work. If educators focus solely on the development of cognitive skills, it may serve to limit the democratic potential for education. For instance, Kurfiss (1988) gives an example of students in a marketing class who did a case analysis on developing strategies for marketing birth control pills in a third world, primarily Catholic country. The instructor intervened when the students started to discuss the moral rather than the marketing implications of this topic, discouraging students from pursuing this as is was "not appropriate" (1988, p. 69). Kurfiss argues that

> when they avoid such deliberations, educators widen the chasm between "school learning" and "real life". They reduce the probability that students' knowledge will influence their personal and

> professional actions toward rational, socially responsible ends (1988, p. 70).

Under strategic forms of rationality, the students in this situation are taught not to consider the moral implications of their actions in the workplace context. They are not encouraged to bring their outside knowledge and experience to the discourse, unless it relates specifically to the narrowly constructed definition of the "task" or "problem" which they are expected to solve, thus limiting the power to develop a truly critical critique (Hart, 1992).

The ability to think critically is also important for fostering a democratic society (Brookfield, 1990). A democratic society involves the participation of the general population decision-making processes. It involves a commitment to ideals of justice and equality. Where people are now bombarded with information, a critical perspective is essential for individuals to participate in making informed decisions.

As Osborne writes:

> the values of the marketplace, which have become increasingly dominant in recent years, are often antagonistic to such democratic values as compassion, co-operation and equality (1994, p. 418).

Unless educators facilitate the development of broader perspectives, education loses much of its emancipatory potential. Osborne argues that the notion of citizenship is

dependent upon education. "Democracy, in short, has to be learned, and re-learned, and continually struggled for. Its existence can never be taken for granted" (1994, p. 418).

Michael Collins (1991) argues that adult educators need to develop a sense of vocation to their work, realizing the power and responsibility that is entailed in being an educator. He states that "A sense of vocation calls for a critical, self-reflective practice of adult education" (1991, p. 41). According to Collins, critical thinking skills, on their own, do not have the capacity to transform one's teaching practice. Instead,

> An understanding of significant theoretical analysis, such as those undertaken in the wide-ranging theory of communicative action which endeavours to provide reasons for genuinely democratic action, is integral to the role of a reflective-practitioner" (1991, p. 51).

Educators need to engage with theory in developing their pedagogical strategies and considering the focus of the educational endeavours. Ethical concerns cannot be addressed a side issue, but must be an integral part of everyday practice. Otherwise, he warns of the danger of professionalization, stating that:

> An uncoupling of the ethical dimension is an inevitable characteristic of modern professionalization, where technical rationality and individualism override a necessity for continuing reflection on practice (1991, p. 86).

Adult educators can utilize democratic principles both within

the institution and in the larger community. In fostering critical reflection, Collins argues that it is important for educators to feel a sense of agency in their work as they strive towards a more democratic and just society.

Faculty often expect that students arriving at university already possess the basic skills needed for critical thinking. Donald's (1988) study which looked at professor's expectations of their students' ability to think indicated that thirty percent of the faculty surveyed thought that their first year students should be able to think independently, and forty percent thought that they should be able to think abstractly.

In previous research, Donald (1985) refers to Piaget's work to note that only about fifty percent of first year university students possess critical thinking skills. This means that about half of the students starting their first year of university are still at the level of concrete operations. According to Piaget, at this stage in cognitive development people are only able to comprehend things which they have actually seen or experienced, and they have great difficulty in comprehending abstract ideas and concepts, which are a part of critical thinking.

It is at the level of formal operations, the final stage outlined by Piaget in levels of cognitive development, that students are able to use deductive and inductive logic. At

this stage they are also able to use conjuncture, consider implications, and can understand arguments from other people's perspectives, even if they do not consider them to be accurate. According to Donald (1985), these are all important aspects of critical thinking, and yet only half of all the students entering university possess these skills.

Donald's (1988) research focuses more on traditional, younger entry students, but her findings are interesting in that they raise a point of consideration for adult educators. While adults may be older and possess more life experience, no doubt many adults entering education programs are also operating at a level of concrete operations. Educators cannot presume that their students possess the necessary cognitive skills to engage in critical thinking and reflection. These are areas in learning which need to be fostered and developed through innovative pedagogical approaches.

It is important to be respectful of the knowledge and experience adult learners bring to the classroom, and also be aware of their capacity to grow as learners. Critical educators have often focussed upon challenging the "hidden curriculum", whereby students have not been fully informed of alternative viewpoints. In developing critical reflection, students are encouraged to reflect upon their previous assumptions, and realize the political dimensions of

education.

Apple argues that schools "teach a hidden curriculum that seems uniquely suited to maintain the dialogical hegemony of the most powerful classes in this society" (1990, p. 43). By hegemony, Apple is referring to a control of ideology and thought by the elite, that permeates society in such a way that people are generally unaware of its coercive effects. He argues that

> hegemony acts to 'saturate' our very consciousness, so that the educational, economic and social world we see and interact with, and the commonsense interpretations we put on it, becomes the world *tout court*, the only world" (1990, p. 5).

Critical educators, such as Michael Collins, argue that we need to encourage students to reflect upon their existing assumptions, and to "raise questions about the validity of knowledge claims and learning priorities associated with dominant culture world views" (1991, p. 111).

Bigelow (1989) gave an interesting example of how this may be done, when he challenged students in his high school class to reexamine their beliefs surrounding Christopher Colombus. Much to the indignation of his students, he "stole" a purse from one of his female students (whose cooperation he had secretly attained prior to commencing class). His students became increasingly incensed as he emptied the contents of the purse, pointing out all the objects that he

had acquired through his "discovery". When his students challenged him on the usage of the word "discover", he then drew the comparison between his actions to those of Christopher Colombus.

From there, he informed the students of a number of other repellent acts committed by Christopher Columbus, such as capturing indigenous people as slaves and requiring that all the native people provide him with a monthly quota of gold (even though there was very little gold in the region). Those who failed to fulfil his requirements were hunted down, and had their hands cut off so that they would bleed to death.

Students were then challenged to find out why they had never previously been given any knowledge of Colombus's more brutal actions. They went back to the history texts of their elementary years, and discovered that the "facts" were presented in a way that negative elements of the story were omitted. Colombus "did not get along" with the native people (but there was no explanation as to why he didn't). His willingness to give thanks to God, and his loyalty to the monarchy are indicators of the righteousness of his actions in "claiming" the land. From their investigations, students were then encouraged to reflect upon the issues and share their thoughts.

For many students, learning to develop critically

reflective capacities is difficult. Many of Bigelow's students felt a sense of betrayal, because they had not been taught the full story. Others expressed a sense of distrust - how did they know Bigelow wasn't lying to them as well? Addressing the political implications of education is never an easy task.

I have used Bigelow's article a few times to initially generate classroom discussion on the issue of knowledge production. From there we often move on to discussing the role of the educator, and the ethical implication involved in developing a critical pedagogy.

It is also a difficult, but important task, for critical educators to reflect upon their own assumptions, biases, beliefs, and prejudices. Peggy MacIntosh (1992) argues that it is often difficult for males and whites to acknowledge the unwritten privileges that they possess and carry around like a "backpack" Everyone prefers to think that whatever they achieve, it is based upon their own talents and hard work. It is uncomfortable to acknowledge that "privilege" bestows a certain favouritism that you might benefit from. Most academics would prefer to think that their work is judged solely on merit.

Ng (1993) argues that the appearance of neutrality draws upon the tradition of scientific objectivity, implying that

there are no internal biases or inherent differences in power relationships. As critical adult educators, we must always be conscious that our current situations have been shaped by social, historical, and political factors. In our academic discourses, we need to reflect upon the nature of privilege, to determine how it shapes our worldviews. In examining the issues of racism and sexism within academia, Ng states that we as educators "must constantly interrogate our own taken-for-granted ways of acting, thinking, and being in the world" (1993, p. 200). Just because we may not consciously choose to act in discriminatory or exclusive ways, does not mean that we may not be exercising in subtle ways our status and privilege in our dealings with and interpretations of others.

Diversity in Feminism

As I have noted, feminists have challenged critical educators for addressing class issues, while failing to attend to their own gendered imbalances in power (Ellsworth, 1992). However, within the feminist movement itself, tensions have arisen between groups who have felt disenfranchised by white, middle class feminists. Lesbian feminists have criticized their heterosexual counterparts. Black feminists have critiqued white feminists for failing to address racial structures of power. Women from the South have challenged the

dominance of feminists from the North (Miles, 1996).

Any explorations of "women's" roles becomes increasingly complex when you consider how gender is constructed in relationship to other variables such as ethnicity, ability, and sexuality. For instance, feminists have often discussed the "cult of true womanhood" that glorified women's domestic role as wife and mother. Patricia Collins (1991) challenges the way in which this concept excludes black experience, as most black women never experienced the sharp divide between public and private, home and work, that white women did. Historically, black women have often held a responsibility to be a primary income earner for their families. They had to fit in their own domestic chores and responsibilities in the time left over after first dealing with all the domestic and childcare responsibilities they attended to for white women. Even today, Hart (1997) challenges that in our culture we value the labour of white middle class married women who look after their children (an assumption that I sometimes question), but devalue the labour of poor black mothers who require financial assistance from government in order to survive.

Obviously, we can never talk about women's experience in a singular form. "Women's experiences" are as vast and multi-faceted as male experience. Despite the internal challenges

of diversity issues, however, feminists are striving to work together to develop pedagogical practices that will address inequities in power and foster the development of a critical woman's perspective in education. As Kate Pritchard Hughes argues that, "One of the refreshing and unique aspects of feminism is its inclination to critique itself" (1995, p. 226).

Developing A Critical Feminist Pedagogy

In these last few decades, feminist educators have worked to develop policy and curriculum changes as well as new pedagogical approaches within the elementary and high school systems (Manicom, 1992; Gaskell, J., Mclaren, A., & Novogrodsky, 1989). One of the first issues to be addressed was the development of more inclusive textbooks and curriculum materials (Priegert Coulter, 1996). Initially, changes were implemented to give girls the opportunity to attain equal status with boys by learning to be more like them. Some feminists began to question these tactics, however, because of the underlying assumption that "girls must be changed. Men are the models of achievement, and compared to men, women don't measure up" (Gaskell, J., McLaren, A. & Novogrodsky, 1989: 16). More recently, the possibility of a more critical stance is developing that advocates an "antisexist" policy. This is

a pro-active stance that tackles issues of discrimination against women squarely by naming the problems associated with gender inequality. Rebecca Priegert Coulter describes this approach as "antisexist strategies that name inequitable power relations between men and women and take into account the whole social context and the intersections of race, class, and sexual orientation with gender" (1996, p. 441). In the case she cites with a policy development board in Ontario, it is uncertain whether these changes will be enacted in the near future.

We are still at the beginning stages of trying to articulate a critical feminist pedagogy within an adult learning context. According to Hayes (1992), feminism has yet to make much of an impact on the literature within the adult education field. In an extensive survey on the perspectives on women in major adult education journals, Hayes & Smith (1994) found only one article out of the 112 articles studied that took up an explicitly feminist critique in its analysis. They write

> Particularly troublesome is the focus on women's problems or deficiencies that pervades much of the literature, as well as the lack of attention to the significance of factors such as class, race, and culture in creating diversity among women's experiences (1994, p. 217).

In their analysis, Hayes and Smith identified five main categories through a process of content analysis. The first

was "women as adult learners", whereby the study focussed on learners who just happened to women, or who were studying a subject (ie. pregnancy) that was unique to women (1994, p. 209). The category of "women as deficient" noted that women often had less formal schooling because of interruptions linked with domestic responsibilities, such as childrearing,

> Typically these deficiencies were attributed to women's generalized experiences as homemakers; it was assumed that this experience included relatively little contact with the world outside the home and primary interaction with children (1994, p. 209).

The third category was "women coping with new social roles", that looked at the transition of women from home to paid workplace, and the challenges of this (ie. guilt experienced by women, institutional barriers). Within this perspective, articles also addressed lifespan changes and issues regarding how marital relationships were affected by women's return to schooling. The fourth category looked at "women as marginalized" that primarily focussed on "women's issues in non-Western nations or in an international context" (1994, p. 212). The last category studied the notion of "women as collaborative learners", suggesting an alternative to competitive means of learning.

It is curious that an academic field that draws primarily women students is still in the process of trying to begin to establish a feminist framework for analysis. There are a

number of possible reasons for this. Dagg and Thompson (1988) note the difficulty of feminists having their work accepted within mainstream academia, where articles are refereed primarily by male academics. They recall a conversation overheard at one conference, where an anthropologist noted that she never had trouble getting her books on Native women published.

> "I make sure I never use flag words like 'feminism' and 'patriarchy', of course," she said. "That would turn everyone off right away."
>
> "But how can you do a feminist analysis of your work, if you can't use such words?" another woman asked.
>
> A man then broke in. "Of course you have no trouble getting published. If I were a publisher, stories about Indian women wouldn't bother me. But books that threaten me and other men, feminist books, no way" (1988, p. 59).

Hayes (1992) points out that merely having women represented in academic publications does not mean that a feminist analysis has been made. In fact, stereotypes about women can be reinforced if gender is not taken into consideration in the development of the analytical framework. She argues that "Feminism has substantial implications for adult education theory and practice. Women comprise a significant proportion of educators and learners in the field; gender is a factor that shapes all human behaviour" (1992, p. 137). These are issues that need to be taken up in the development of a critical feminist perspective in adult education.

Some feminists have suggested that a feminist pedagogy requires a different approach from traditional pedagogical strategies. In their well known book, *Women's Ways of Knowing*, Belenky, Clincy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) argue that women have different perspective on learning than men. They argue that "women's self-concepts and ways of knowing are intertwined" (1986, p. 3). They note that "Relatively little attention has been given to modes of learning, knowing, and valuing that may be specific to, or at least common in, women" (1986, p. 6). Masculine conceptions of reason have often been privileged over women's intuitive and emotional kinds of learning. The technique used for this research study was intensive interviewing, that allowed women to speak their of their experiences in their own voices. Women from a variety of backgrounds, ages, and life circumstances were included in this study (1986, p. 15).

The researchers developed five main epistemological categories:

> silence: a position in which women experience themselves as mindless and voiceless and subject to the whims of external authority; received knowledge, a perspective from which women conceive of themselves as capable of receiving, even reproducing, knowledge from the all-knowing external authorities but not capable of creating knowledge on their own; subjective knowledge, a perspective from which truth and knowledge are conceived of as personal, private, and subjectively known or intuited; procedural knowledge, a position in which women are invested in learning and

> applying objective procedures for obtaining and communicating knowledge; and constructed knowledge, a position in which women view all knowledge as contextual, experience themselves as creators of knowledge, and value both subjective and objective strategies for knowing (1986, p. 15).

In their discussion of the different experiences women articulated in their perception of their abilities, it became clear that self esteem and a feeling of personal worth was central to women's learning experiences. Women who lacked confidence in themselves were often silenced or subdued into submission, while women who had confidence in their own ideas and abilities were able to participate much more actively in complex learning experiences.

Belenky et. al. (1986) concluded that women favour connected learning patterns, a claim supported by Baxter-Magolda's (1992) research. Martinez Aleman (1997) argues that female students prefer cooperative rather than argumentative patterns of classroom interaction. Litner, Rossiter, & Taylor (1992) argue for a more inclusive pedagogical approach that supports and encourages different participatory styles, recognizing that female students are often more tentative in public speech within the classroom. Johnson-Bailey and Cervero argue that the strongest deterrents for black women's "participation in any schooling process were their classroom and societal encounters with racism and gender subordination" (1996, p. 155).

Chilly Climate

Hall and Sandler (1982) sparked a great deal of controversy and research over their claims that the university classroom was a "chilly environment" for female students. Despite some contradictory findings (Heller, Puff, & Mills, 1985), it appears that women still do encounter often subtle discriminatory practices in the classroom that have a detrimental affect on their academic aspirations and levels of comfort in the academic environment (Crawford, M., & McLeod, M., 1990). A "chilly climate" constitutes a number of subtle messages that are sent to women that serves to make the university an inhospitable site. The types of behaviour outlined by Hall & Sandler include:

> faculty interrupting women more than men; subtly discriminate against women by making demeaning sexual allusions or using sexist humour; perceive women primarily as sexual beings; and view them as less capable and less serious than men. Other specific actions that male faculty may direct toward women students include: making less eye contact with women than men; assuming less attentive postures when talking with women than men; favouring women less than men in choosing student assistants; giving women less detailed instructions; crediting comments made by women students to men; calling women students by name less often than they do men; and asking women factual questions instead of the more demanding analytical questions directed to men (Heller et. al., 1985).

These types of behaviours reinforce perceptions amongst students that women are not as academically capable as their

male peers. They also serve to stifle women students willingness to participate in classroom discussions.

Men and women often have different ways of responding within the classroom setting. Litner, Rossiter and Taylor (1992) state that

> As teachers, we acknowledge and legitimize these differences. For example, men usually offer their thinking in class as fully formulated assertions; women tend to offer tentative thoughts and use class conversations to clarify them. As teachers, we legitimize both approaches, not just the dominant male academic one (1992, p. 297).

Martinez Aleman (1997) found that women were often likely to "try out" their ideas with their female friends, finding that in an informal discussion with other women, it was a more comfortable and supportive environment to develop their ideas.

Women are often uncomfortable speaking out in the classroom environment. One of the students Martinez Aleman interviewed stated:

> I've always wondered why I'm so timid in class, why I don't want to bring issues up. I keep my mouth shut just out of fear that I'll be shot down and because there's a lot of times when there are competitions in our classroom. The competition is there and sometimes I don't think that I would match up because I have a tendency to listen to the other people, to hear what they say, to listen to their views. In a classroom [listening] can be perceived as you're weak (1997, p. 143).

The female students talked about the importance of their friends listening without interruption when they spoke of their ideas outside of the classroom. Women friends "are

likely to ask probing questions meant to gain understanding rather than the argumentative upper hand" (1997, p. 144).

Polly Fassinger (1995) found that the way in which the professor set up the class was the most important determining factor in shaping the atmosphere within the classroom. She argues that providing opportunities for student interaction helps to develop a supportive environment that serves to build up student confidence.

In developing a critical feminist pedagogy that would stress the importance of discourse, it is important to examine the ways in which communication is sometimes hindered by gendered differences in perception. In order to attain full participation of female students, we need to create an academic environment that is inclusive and hospitable to all students. Maternal discourses offer some interesting insights into how we come to understand the world, and what values shape our society and educational discourses.

Maternal Discourses and Pedagogical Promise

Mothers are often placed in a very contradictory position in our society. On the one hand, mothers are expected to show a strong commitment to raising their children. As Waltzer (1996) found in her study on parental responses to their infants, mothers are socialized to "worry" more about their

children. Most parenting books are clearly written for mothers, with just a chapter or a few notes added on discussing the responsibilities of fathers. In our society, mothers are held primarily responsible for their children's academic capabilities and social development. When children get into trouble, fail to succeed, or experience difficulties in school, studies (Schickendanz, 1995; Lesar et al, 1997) often attribute the blame to failure on the part of the parents - most particularly the mother, for not fulfilling her duties (Griffith & Smith, 1991). Mothers are expected to teach their children moral beliefs and values (Taris & Seaman, 1997). In studying the long term effects of day care on children, research has tended to emphasize the problems of "maternal deprivation" as apparently paternal deprivation is not conceived of as a problem (Dagg & Thompson, 1988).

Yet at the same time, mothering is not often valued as an important type of learning. Many of the adult education studies on women, even those geared towards supporting and empowering women, present a viewpoint that women are in a sense "stunted" because of their commitment to the homeplace and their close involvement with their children's lives. This viewpoint is often shared by the women students themselves (Cox & Pascall, 1994), and reinforced within an academic realm that associates the concept of lifelong learning with the

workplace.

There is no doubt that women are sometimes stifled within the confines of the homeplace. As Fagan (1991) notes, it is very difficult for women to claim any time for themselves, to think and reflect, because of the demands upon their time from others. The societal perception of women's labour in the homeplace is so low that women who work only within the homeplace may come to accept this detrimental assessment of their role. In addition, the unequal distribution of power between men and women in many relationships places women at a disadvantage and contributes to their lack of self-worth (Rosenberg, 1990a).

Women who are full time homemakers may feel a sense of "double vision" as they compare what they know about their own lives and experience, and what they are taught to accept as the "truth" by society. Rosenberg (1990a) discusses how housewives are often portrayed as consumers rather than labourers. The hazardous, stressful aspects of domestic labour and child rearing are rarely given any public attention, and women who are homemakers receive little public support. Rosenberg points out many of the problematic aspects of being a housewife, centering on the fragmented, monotonous, and disempowering aspects of this work. While it is important to acknowledge these points, I think that we also need to

examine the reasons why many women feel that the work that they do in the home is meaningful and worthwhile.

I remember when I was at home full-time with my own preschoolers, I would meet with other mothers and we would often engage in animated conversations about the value of what we were doing. There was a need to affirm amongst ourselves that the work that we did every day, amidst the constant physical care and emotional demands, was indeed important. We knew the value of our work, but we also knew how little recognition it received in the larger society. Women often told stories of being asked what they were "doing", and as soon as they responded that they were at home with children full-time, the conversation would drop off. What else was there to say? Few people seemed to be interested in learning about what a mere "housewife" did.

At that time I couldn't clearly articulate what it was that was so valuable, (probably because I was suffering from chronic exhaustion) but I knew that this was an important learning experience, not only for my children, but also for myself. I knew that I was learning everyday to see the world in a different way. It was a hard job - much harder than any paid or academic work I have ever been involved in. But it was also very meaningful and rewarding.

Mothering is a very connected form of knowing. It is a

physically, emotionally, and cognitively shared kind of learning. Once I became a mother, I thought for the first time how significant it was that as human beings we have to learn language, and it takes a long time to master verbal forms of speech. So parents have to learn to communicate with their children through nonverbal means. For the first couple of years of life, this is the main form of communication. As a mother I learned to be attuned to my children's behaviour, to discern the difference in a cry that signalled pain or distress versus irritation or anger. One whiff of child passing by with a sagging diaper indicated one of the more unpleasant tasks of mothering needed to be attended to. The glazed look in a toddler's eyes was often an indication of fever or tiredness. In the same way, a child who was unusually cuddly or inactive signalled to me that something was amiss.

Anne Hill (1994) explores the ways in which we are often "surprised" by children" into new learning experiences by examining her own teaching and parenting experiences. When we learn from children it is often an unanticipated learning experience, a chance moment of insight, a sudden flash of comprehension. One poignant example she relates is of a young girl in her class, who despite being bright, capable, and articulate, still clung to her and wanted to know where she

was all the time.

> I could not understand until one morning she arrived late and we chatted together as she hung up her coat. I commented to her, "So, you spent some time with your dad on the weekend, and now you'll be spending some time with your mom." She replied, with her head tilting sideways, back and forth, "First with Mom, then with Dad, then with Mom, then with Dad." "Well," I said, "it's nice that you share each other." She looked at me directly, with one arm brought close to wrap herself around her waist, and replied, "It's like you're torn apart." I looked at her, in silence that held thought still for just the moment of a breath, the still sense of surprise. Through such a small space of stillness, meaning became visible. I could say no more than "Oh." It was just a breath. As she turned and walked away from me I followed her with my eyes. Now I understood. I saw her, in her fragmented space, with her arm around herself, trying to hold the pieces of her being together with the energy of her life (1994, p. 343).

The lessons we learn from children may occur in a swift moment of clarity, when comprehension suddenly dawns as you view the world from a very different perspective.

Hill also explores the notion of reflection. As was previously discussed, often the notion of reflection has been described as a sense of detachment, pulling back, and distancing oneself. But with children you are often pulled forward, drawn in, your attention demanded at that instant. In talking about her son, Hill says,

> He calls, "Mom! Mom! Mom! It seems to always mean "Mom, hear me; Mom, you have to see me; Mom, you have to come." Being close enough to hear means being close enough also to see, and to touch in the space that he is touching it. (1994, p. 346).

There is both a physical and mental connection between mother and child. A sense of reciprocity exists as the child demands that the mother learn his or her world, at the same time as the mother instructs about hers.

As mothers we see the world through our children's eyes. Our taken-for-granted acceptance of nature is challenged as we experience our children's sense of wonder at the world around them. I still recall the expression of amazement on my infant daughter's face the first time an autumn leaf drifted down and landed upon her while I was pushing her along in her stroller. I looked at that leaf with the knowledge that every year the leaves change, the seasons move on. I knew the scientific explanation for why this happened. I understood so much more than she did about that leaf. Yet in that moment, as I watched her expression and shared her sudden awe, I learned so much more.

As Ruddick (1989) has pointed out, mothering also involves conflict. In raising children, mothers must also learn to deal with anger, pain, and frustration. Often, mothers fail. They do not always meet their own expectations, or the ones imposed upon them by society. They must learn to deal with their own limitations. They encounter difficulties they cannot surmount. Some mothers must deal with abusive partners, indifferent government officials, and a lack of

resources. Some become indifferent, submersed in their own private pains, no more able to meet their own needs than those of their children.

Too often the learning experiences and the challenges of mothering are overlooked or devalued by educators. We encourage learners to bring their knowledge into the classroom, yet the only things of value that we may attribute to what women learn in being at home are "time management, family budgeting" and other practical skills that may be translated into some sort of useful marketplace knowledge (Kelly, 1988).

What we learn in raising children is not easily commodified. It often does not have much value in the existing marketplace. It is a different sense of understanding the world. Mothers often recognize that the values reflected in the system are not supportive of the lifeworld. There is a potential for a political "conscientization", of becoming aware of the discrepancies between the rhetorical propaganda of corporations that support family life at the same time as they follow practices that destroy it. Rosenberg (1990b) gives the example of Waste Management Inc., a multinational that was dumping toxic waste into an unlined landfill in Stoufville, Ontario. When negative publicity about the number of miscarriages and health

problems this practice was causing began to surface, the company started a contest in the *Ladies Home Journal* magazine on "Trash to Treasure", encouraging children to come up with environmental ideas, with a family trip to Disney World as the main prize (Rosenberg, 1990b, p. 131). These kinds of manipulative practices need to be examined, to challenge the harm that is done at a local level, while a company promotes its image and product at a global level.

Mothering teaches us a lot about communication. It involves learning how to be sensitive and attuned to the needs of another. Mothers of more than one child soon recognize how different and complex each individual personality is. It involves valuing, protecting, and nurturing life (Ruddick, 1994). Mothering entails being able to deal with complexity, to deal with multiple issues simultaneously (Bateson, 1989) It involves hard, subsistence forms of labour that affirm and sustain life (Hart, 1991) Yet all too often dismissed this labour is dismissed as mere "drudgery".

Mothering also involves those special moments of insight, when through the eyes of our children we recapture our sense of wonder at nature, our appreciation of beauty, and understand the fragility and strength of human life. We learn what it means to develop a sense of reciprocity with another human being. There is an intensity to mothering that is rarely

matched in other kinds of learning. We learn to support, to hold on, and then to let go. We see the way in which we are connected with others on this planet. We understand how our hopes and plans for our children are shared by many other mothers across the globe - and realize the inequities that exist and what struggles and heartbreak some mothers face.

By drawing connections between lifelong learning and the homeplace, we are entering a discourse fraught with emotionality and tensions. It is a discourse of both difference and commonalities, hope and despair. If we ask our students to reflect upon what they have learned in the homeplace, there are many factors to consider. Some will reflect upon their own childhood experiences, others will focus on their immediate everyday lives. In doing this we are breaking down the barriers between private and public, opening up new avenues for discourse.

To do this, however, leads to a pedagogy that empowers women rather than silencing them. By giving them the opportunity to speak of their experience, to validate their own lived and learned experiences, we create a chance for a new critical and feminist perspective to emerge. This perspective does not have to be exclusionary towards men - it can serve to also validate their experiences and encourage their participation. Crawford and MacLeod (1990) found that

males as well as females responded to faculty who created a warmer "climate" in their classroom. As gender roles continue to be reinterpreted, men are becoming more involved in parenting (Tuttle, 1994). Although throughout this paper I have discussed differences in masculine and feminine attributes, I believe that men are just as capable of having caring and life-affirming values. A critical feminist pedagogy may be beneficial in fostering the development of these kinds of attitudes in both men and women.

Litner, Rossiter, and Taylor (1992) give an example of how we can use a critical feminist approach to teaching that encourages discourse and affirms personal life experience. They discuss a case situation where a female student in a graduate social work course attended a presentation on disabled children and quietly slipped out of the class in tears. She was the mother of a disabled child, and was upset by what she felt was "a critical, blaming, and uninformed presentation on mothers with disabled children" (1992, p. 289).

> In discussing the issues, Kathy wavered between guilt, self-blame, and anger. She described the common expert orientation to mothers as one that allows about six months after the child's birth to grieve about the disability. At that point mothers are expected to have "resolved" their grief and to have "moved on". She rather shamefully told the teacher about her daughter's birth and her subsequent reactions. The climax of her story was the confession that she had never really resolved

> her grief, that it recurred, and that perhaps she had ruined her daughter's chance at normalcy by her inability to "get over it". Yet her story also contained hints of rage at the callous lack of fit between the expert orientation and her own experience (Litner et. al., 1992, p. 289).

These researchers suggest that we need to develop a more inclusive teaching practice whereby personal narrative is an acceptable part of classroom discussion. Providing supportive peer groups within the classroom, validating different communication styles, and taking time to get to know the students and provide them with regular qualitative feedback on their work, are all means of enhancing a supportive classroom environment.

Encouraging women to speak of their experiences, to draw upon their knowledge from the homeplace, is a way of affirming their capacity as knowers.

> In our view, uncritical acceptance of women's stories is an intervention that helps elicit experience for further critical analysis. By uncritical acceptance, we do not mean accepting a story as universal or without context. We mean accepting each student's right to her own version (Litner et. al., 1992, p. 293).

From this, students can engage in discourse to work towards an understanding of how different social meanings are constructed. These researchers argue that by providing a forum for discussion where students can draw upon their own experiences, it eradicates the sense of shame and fear that many students feel when they are being taught something that

does not reflect what they have learned from their own experiences. Instead of tearfully complaining in private to a sympathetic teacher, the student may be able to challenge what she feels to be an oppressive and inaccurate interpretation of her life circumstance in a public forum. Students should be encouraged to take up critical discourses, to look at how our gender roles have been socially constructed, and to examine their underlying belief systems. This can lead to broadening the learning experiences of all students.

Of course, I would argue that despite the importance of recognizing connections between the homeplace and public spheres, it is still a site of intimate relationships, and every detail of people's private lives does not need to be brought out for public discussion. Students would have to determine their own comfort level in exposing aspects of their private lives to others, and faculty are generally not trained to assume the role of therapeutic counsellors.

Exploring Educational Values

I am arguing that traditional, Western academic approaches to teaching have created a neat divide between the homeplace and lifelong learning. In doing this they also separate the emotional, spiritual, and physical aspects of

self from "purer" cognitive intellectualism. Women are caught trying to bridge this gaping chasm, generally unable by the virtue of their lives and experience to step over into the male intellectual realm, divorced from the everyday demands of the homeplace. This is an artificial divide, that does not benefit men or women.

When people become divorced from the everyday, immediate physical demands of the homeplace, they are able to view the world from an abstract plane. In the world of abstraction, underlying values seem to be forgotten. Giddens (1991) talks about the notion of money, and how it has become so abstracted in the modern economy. It is easy to talk about profit, when you don't have to look at the harsh realities of how that income was generated. Hart (1992) shows the brutal reality of women who are exploited by multinational companies. Yet everyday we buy goods manufactured elsewhere, not knowing what deplorable conditions they might have been produced under, without reflecting on the values of a system that is so exploitative of labour. We eat pineapple without wondering if a child went hungry today so that food could be produced for cash export to pay a foreign debt instead of using the land for local food. The huge size of a globalized economy makes it easy to lose sight of the personal costs that underwrite corporate profits and Western society's affluence.

We import the products and export the problems. However, as trade relations become increasingly globalized, we can no longer remain insulated behind the boundaries of our nation states, or protected by geographical distance. Pollution, global warming, and sophisticated weaponry pose threats to all of us. John McMullan (1992) provides a fascinating analysis of corporate crime, that he links with a corporate, masculinist framework of understanding. Drawing upon a feminist critique of a masculine perception of rationality, he discusses how the subject is always separated from the object. "The world outside, the other, is always object and something to be conquered" (1992, p. 76).

McMullan suggests that corporations utilize a form of reasoning in which "the ascendancy of male rationality embodied in bureaucratic reasoning has supplied powerful motives and excuses for corporate crime" (1992, p. 77). He writes:

> Rationality, so constructed, rejects the commonality between mind and nature and does not allow attunement, communion and familiarity between knower and known. It leads to an instrumental and abstract mode of problem solving in the public corporate world, which favours contestation, mastery, deceit, force and domination over nurturance and empathy (1992, p. 76).

This helps to explain the cold-blooded detachment with which a corporate executive could draw up a memo that calculates the costs of retooling a car [the infamous Pinto] to make it safe,

versus the amount that would have to be paid out by the company for each death and disability claim, and conclude that it is more economical [and therefore rational] to not recall the vehicles (1992, p. 10).

We need to broaden our conception of rationality, to examine differences in gendered perceptions, and develop life-affirming approaches to education. Communicative action is a key concept in this process, whereby women and men can come together to share their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Conclusions

Marketplace values are often determined by a detached, instrumental form of rationality. Both critical and feminist theorists have challenged this narrow construction of "reason". As adult educators, we can work to develop a discourse of lifelong learning that focuses on developing connections to the lifeworld, by emphasizing the importance of the homeplace. We can encourage our students to reflect upon the immediacy of their everyday lives to start to draw connections between theory and practice. We need to show support for experiences of women students, and work towards developing a more gender inclusive curriculum and environment in our educational institutions.

Lifelong learning has the potential to be a communicative, cooperative process. It can be a way to affirm democratic principles, to uphold life-affirming actions, and to support one another across diversity. To allow the dominant marketplace discourse to be the only discourse in lifelong learning would result in losing our focus in adult education as a means of improving the quality of life for all citizens.

Both feminist and critical theoretical perspectives can inform the development of pedagogical practices in adult education to develop a more inclusive and broad reaching understanding of lifelong learning. In particular, I argue that we need to examine connections between lifelong learning and the homeplace. In doing this, we will attain greater insights into the gendered nature of lifelong learning experiences. We will also be able to explore new alternative approaches to developing a philosophy of lifelong learning that fulfils its initial democratic promise that asserts education is a fundamental right and a means of hope for all people in our world.

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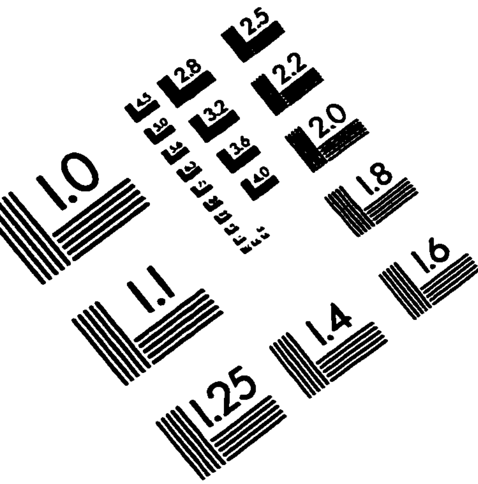
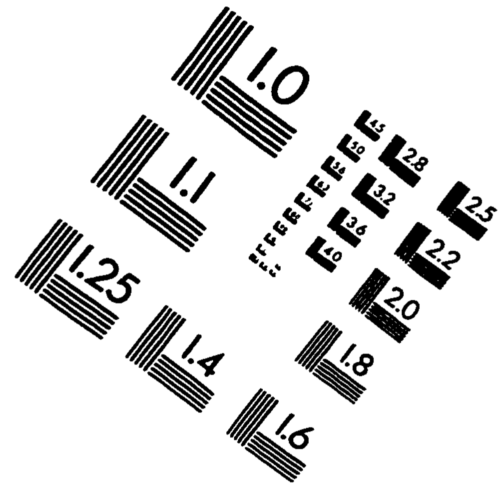
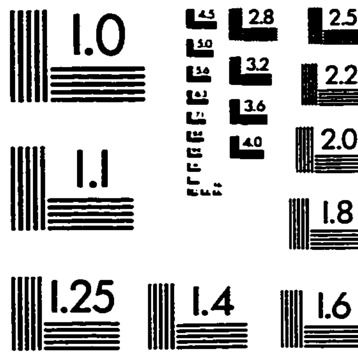
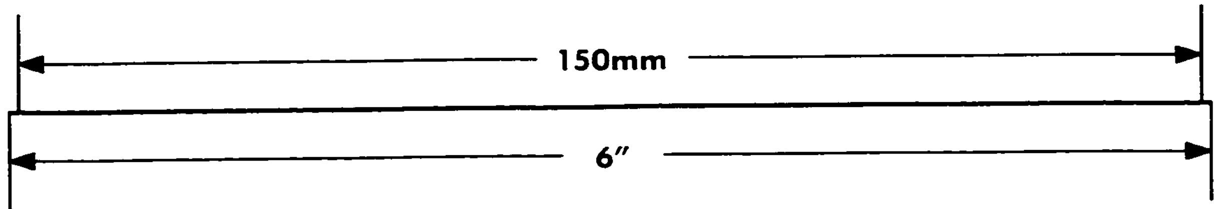

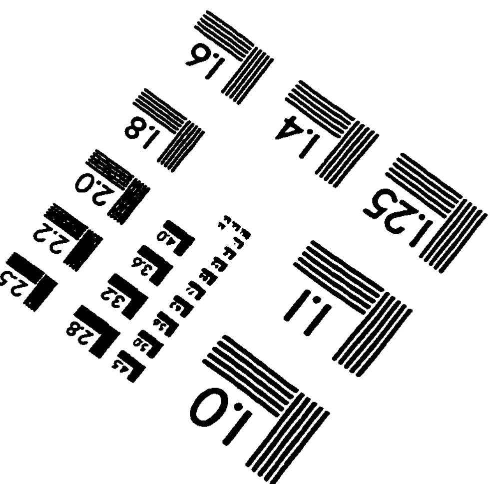

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