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SELF-NARRATIVE AND THE PLAY OF ADHD AND CREATIVITY

by

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Abstract

Guided by Hans Georg Gadamer's principles of hermeneutic enquiry, this dissertation interprets the self-narrative of a creative artist who has ADHD, and who has integrated her experience of ADHD and creativity into a successful life. The dissertation considers the correlation between Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and creativity proposed and debated in contemporary research literature. An argument is made that conceiving ADHD as a disability sets in place social expectations that contribute to the perception of dysfunctional behaviours that have come to be identified with ADHD and mask recognition of constructive abilities such as creativity. At the same time caution is expressed that generalizations about the connection between ADHD and creativity may construct equally unfair expectations for individuals who experience ADHD.

While ADHD is the focal topic of the research, the aim of the research is also to evaluate an interpretive approach to self-narrative as a method of studying the manner in which ADHD functions in relation to learning and living. As the research originated with questions about pedagogical responses to learners with ADHD the dissertation considers implications for educational practice.

Among the conclusions is a discussion of the three "C" s, context, control and (ac)commodation that are significant in the narrator's account, and a questioning of assumptions regarding reflective thinking and time.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Richard Hirabayashi and of Miss Samantha Joanne Woo who, each in their own way, were inspirational in the completion of this work.

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Chapter One. Introduction

Prelude

"There's no use trying," said Alice, "one can't believe impossible things." "I dare say you haven't had any practice," said the Queen, "When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast." Lewis Carroll. Alice in Wonderland

In 1974, as a green university graduate, I applied for a position as a child care worker in a residential treatment centre for emotionally disturbed children, not a role for which my political science training had prepared me. As part of the hiring interview I accompanied two senior workers and their charge, a virtually silent, tow-haired boy whose time was consumed on hands and knees examining every hole in the treatment centre grounds. This youngster excitedly proclaimed each newly discovered fence post hole or cavity under a tree to be a "rabbit hole", and he would reach into these as far as he could with curious fingers.

A novice in a care profession, I was literally in a Alice-in-Wonderland situation. Knowing that I was expected to make a connection with this young man, I fell to my knees, and then onto my stomach, and followed him in his exploration of "rabbit holes". He seemed to think that this was a perfectly natural thing for me to do, and I felt an unexpected sense of having entered his world.

As a husband, artist, teacher, educational administrator, and now educational researcher, I have been on the alert for these “rabbit holes”, looking for seemingly impossible ways of interpreting reality. I have indulged my curiosity exploring these singular ways of picturing the world with their creators. Discovering their intended meaning has never seemed as rewarding as what has emerged in the process of sharing the dialogue which gives context and meaning to these stories, an affirmation of a common humanity. I have grown to recognize my own “rabbit-holes”, my habits of language, and idiosyncratic responses to experience, as playful but serious narratives that are my way of making sense of the world, making an impossibly complex world possible. Negotiating meaning in the stories of others and having others understand our own stories represents the difficult and intensely pleasurable process of learning who we are or at least who we can be.

Starting points

Insight, I believe, refers to that depth of understanding that comes by setting experiences, yours and mine, familiar and exotic, new and old, side by side, learning by letting them speak to one another (Bateson, 1994, p.14).

This dissertation concerns itself with the way in which we creatively represent ourselves, to ourselves and others, through the narratives we construct. These self- narratives express the meanings with which we reconstruct our experiences, past, present and future, in relation to the limitations and possibilities of the world in which we live.

My particular field of interest emerged from my experience as a post-secondary instructor of visual art and cultural studies. I have often been struck by the significant numbers of students in my classes who have Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or ADHD-like symptoms, and the challenges all concerned encounter in reconciling traditional pedagogy with these students' approaches to learning, which is often labelled as inconsistent or uncommitted, or worse, simply inadequate. While such students may exhibit difficulty meeting normal classroom expectations, particularly those that are organized around time, they also have unpredictable peaks of achievement and insight that challenge the teacher's ability to recognize and value these students' potential.

Before beginning this research, I was sensitive to the contradictions between institutional education founded on canons of knowledge acquisition and the dynamic process of learning that occurs in the dialogue between student, teacher and others in the flux of the classroom. Education premised upon knowledge acquisition is causally structured, outcome based, a practice that has become increasingly prevalent in the late twentieth century, for reasons poignantly described by Henry A. Giroux as "the ethically limp discourses of privatization, national standards, and global competitiveness" (Olssen, 1999, p. viii).

...teaching can never be reduced to the transmission of information but is the attempt to bring the student into a conversation precisely where the conversation is uncertain, indeterminate – where the teacher cannot answer the question – where the question remains a question (Gallagher, 1992, p.35).

My intent in this research is not to critique the “institution” of education which is beset by many practical difficulties and challenges, but rather to bring to light ways in which, in pedagogical practice, a question can remain a question. Keeping the classroom open to ways of learning and teaching that are tied to the specific experiences of the learners emphasizes inclusivity and process rather than outcome based expectations that have developed around institutional education. This approach to education is represented in learning centred pedagogical theories such as those of John Dewey and currently Stephen Brookfield, which articulate processes of experiential, situated, learner centred education (Brookfield, 1987). These ways of thinking about education can be applied to all learners but appear to have particular relevance for individuals such as those who have ADHD whose learning process falls outside the framework of conventional expectations.

Study of the learning exchange that takes place between student and teacher in the presence of ADHD, and indeed in the presence of other learning differences contributes to this pedagogical discourse as well as to particular understandings of ADHD. The context of ADHD we are most familiar with is that provided by the discourse of medical science, in which ADHD is cast as a pathology. It is my contention that ADHD has not been adequately dealt with as an aspect of shared, everyday experience, rooted in traditions of meaning that may include but are not exhausted by the reasoning of neuroscience, psychology and behavioural science. How we respond to ADHD is contingent upon what Martin Heidegger refers to as the ‘fore-structures’ of meaning that underwrite life’s experience and which must be recollected and re-examined in order to make sense of how we then expect to act (Heidegger, 1962, p.192).

The principles of hermeneutic investigation, particularly as found in the writings of Hans-Georg Gadamer, have a natural affinity for the complexities of meaning with which I am concerned. How we arrive at our understandings, how we learn, how we practice what we know and how what we know changes are the epistemological concerns of this study, which tie my investigation to a notion of education captured by Gadamer's use of the term 'Bildung'; not just the search for the universe of meaning outside oneself but "the return to oneself". (Gadamer, 1999, p.14). In this sense, hermeneutic interpretation and educational process share an interest in the process of how things come to be understood.

Reproduction, authority, and conversation; objectivity, distortion and transformation: these are issues that both hermeneutics and education must deal with (Gallagher, 1992, p.24).

Curiously, rather than examine cases of students who have ADHD, my research journey has brought me to consider the experience of a mature artist and art instructor, Katharine, who has been diagnosed as having ADHD.

Katharine's "embeddedness" in the experiences of learning, teaching, and ADHD provide a rich ground to examine the collisions and disruptions of meaning that provide an opportunity for reinterpretation to occur.

Why should I be the one to conduct this study? In my practice as a photographer and video artist, both time-based disciplines, I have been fascinated by individuals' stories, the way in which people define themselves through these self-narratives, the way in which they connect

the meaning of their lives in time and space. From my work with “emotionally disturbed” children in my early career to my developing commitment to mediation and peace strategies in teaching and administration, my journey has been one of increased sensitivity to the possibilities of difference, of the rich differences and possibilities of others’ lives and their significance for my own sense of self. My teaching philosophy and practice is dialogic and “problem posing” (Freire, 1993). While acknowledging post structuralist and feminist discourses which perceive critical pedagogy as not adequately accounting for power differentials between teacher and student (Luke & Gore, 1992), I continue to embrace the essential process of dialogue. Power differences must be negotiated in the learning dialogue itself.

Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students (Freire, 1993, p.53).

As I have developed these attitudes toward educational practice I have become open to the research question that presented itself to me. The reason that I began this study was because it called upon me. “Understanding begins...when something addresses us” (Gadamer, 1999, p.299). In my search to find ways of negotiating the contradictions of ADHD and standardized curriculum, research into the correlation of ADHD and creativity caught my attention and in the mode of hermeneutic inquiry I found myself drawn in to an expanding web of ideas and research. ADHD and creativity were simply the starting point.

The confluence of ADHD and creativity is an emergent topic in ADHD research literature, and flows through Katharine's self-narrative. Parallels have been drawn between cognitive and behavioural descriptions of ADHD and of creative activity (Weiss, 1997). Some investigators sought to redirect focus from ADHD as a pathology or mental disorder to the natural creative potentials and abilities that individuals with ADHD exhibit (Hartmann, 1997). Alternately, some have argued that the accompanying conceptual abnormalities and behavioural limitations associated with ADHD make the correspondence of ADHD and creativity unlikely (Barkley, 1997).

While I was attracted by interpretations that attempted, for instance, to reframe the negative behaviours of ADHD such as impulsivity and lack of attention as positive risk taking and broad based information gathering, I was doubtful of the value of making an argument founded upon the same behavioural reasoning that these revisionist theories critiqued. On both sides of the debate it has been the capability of these individuals to learn that is being questioned. Rather than measure abilities against a preconceived definition, it seemed more interesting to me to examine the ways in which an ADHD individual had learned to live her life and to try to make sense of this as a life process.

The interpretations of ADHD and creativity woven together in my writing are Katharine's, my own, and those of medical practitioners and educators who seek a reasoned explanation of ADHD. Among these overlapping and often conflicting discourses a tension exists between what can be thought and practiced within what Foucault describes as regimes of knowledge and the ways in which an individual constructs her own identity, motivated by "care for oneself" (Foucault, 1988, p.18). In my concentration upon self-narrative as the site of research

I am conscious of Foucault's notion of a contingent, reflective subjectivity that is continuously recreating itself based on experience (Hutton, 1984). Consequently it is not facts or beliefs that I am interested in exposing but the process by which Katharine constructs herself in her story.

My intention then has not been to better define ADHD as phenomena, nor to critique scientific methods of knowing ADHD, nor to know Katharine better as a person but rather to lay out the relationships between various interpretations of ADHD as they play themselves out in Katharine's story. The next step is to consider the implications of her self-narrative for our choices in responding to ADHD. Specifically what effect may "setting this experience next to our own" have on the way we as teachers respond ethically and effectively to students who have ADHD? Furthermore what are the implications for the life choices of the person with ADHD?

The research question

What can the study of a self-narrative account of ADHD tell us that will affect the boundaries and possibilities within which we respond to ADHD?

My thesis is that potent interpretations of ADHD are to be found in self-narrative accounts, but that recognition of their value has been obscured by the discipline of dominant neurological, cognitive and behavioural discourses, which assume comparative normalcy as their starting point. By interpreting an individual account as it reveals a process of making meaning and coping with life, my intention is to model alternative strategies of how this

experience may be seen, and to provoke openness on the part of researchers, educators, parents and those who have the experience, to the rich differences and potentials played out in individual journeys.

Paul Ricoeur, Jean-Paul Sartre, Anthony Paul Kerby, Max van Manen and Hans-Georg Gadamer discuss narrative discourse as an essential process by which we make sense of experience and communicate our selves to others. Narrative understanding "is the most adequate approach to the human domain" (Kerby, 1991, p.87). Whether as scientific explanation, historical documentation, or personal account, narrative configures the way in which we understand others and act in the world (Ricoeur, 1984a). Telling our own stories is a representational act of framing that adds continuity and cohesion to our lives, for ourselves and for others.

Narrative expression is not merely communication of information but is a constitutive and synthetic activity. (Kerby, 1991, p.91)

Thus narrating ourselves is not simply a historicizing of the past but a shaping of ways in which we respond to life's possibilities and challenges.

ADHD and creativity are phenomena which both have been linked in popular perception and psychological research to a sense of time that differs from conventional temporal experience. If this is true then to interpret an ADHD individual's story may require recognition of an unfamiliar form of narrative construction: in essence an ordering of life in time that diverges from conventional expectations of linearity, causality, hierarchal order.

How may these divergences in thinking change the “meaningful order” of the narrator’s story and life and how can this be acknowledged? How may we best understand meaning in the expression of someone whose patterns of thought and behaviour are conceived differently than our own?

The contingency of understanding

Understanding is not employed upon the things that are eternal and unchangeable, nor upon anything that is brought into being. It is limited to things which admit of doubt and deliberation (Aristotle, 1966, p 185).

Is understanding the ability to project our consciousness into the surrounding world (or individual) so completely that we know it as it knows itself? As Aristotle suggests, this would obviate any need for understanding. The derivation of the word understand, is the old English meaning of to stand, signifying “to be close to”. Proximity is inherent in understanding and this suggests that understanding is not the same as its object but occupies its own place and time.

I reiterate that my intention is not to understand Katharine herself. “By understanding the other, by claiming to know him, one robs his claims of their legitimacy” (Gadamer, 1999, p.360). Rather I want to come close to what Katharine experiences through dialogue, and to try to make sense for myself of the shapes and patterns that emerge in her narrative.

Understanding is directed toward something, it is not an object to be possessed and any insight gained is self-reflexive.

Human life is an unceasing process of becoming conscious; of oneself, of oneself in relation to others, of things-in-the-world that can be perceived, and of things that can only be imagined. Relating to the world is unavoidable. This is true of both living and non-living entities but the distinction of the sentient being is participating consciously in the unfolding of events.

To live is the task of becoming conscious, an inexorable process of learning. To become conscious is to become physically, intellectually and emotionally aware of one's own distinct characteristics in relationship to the surrounding world. An event of understanding shapes this consciousness into a sensible form, a conception that communicates meaning, that can be revisited or shared, although it will always need to be recontextualized and renegotiated. It can be thought of as a narrating that links and organizes experience in a manner that gives identity and definition. This is the process of producing knowledge, of learning.

Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other (Freire, 1993, p.53).

Understanding is a dynamic process that is shaped by the peculiarities and patterns of conscious experience. It is not something we possess so much as something we arrive at, only to move on again. The paths that we follow in creating our understandings are shaped by

existing languages and knowledges that we have encountered in the becoming of our consciousness.

ADHD, disorder, and an ecological perspective

Explanations of ADHD contain within them the particular knowledge and experience of the interpreter. To know ADHD as a disorder is to organize understanding in a manner that prescribes and assumes a particular order, and directs attention away from other potential orders and complexities. The conventional approaches to ADHD, whether neurological, medical, behavioural are to account for the causes and symptoms of the disorder and seek to re-order or restore the experience of ADHD closer to the non-ADHD norm. And there is no doubt that in relation to the larger human organization of society ADHD presents significant problems and challenges for those who must deal with it.

While ADHD research has directed itself to definition, diagnosis and treatment and the significance of attentional characteristics, hyperactive and impulsive behaviour, the fact that it has been labelled as a disorder has implications that go largely unquestioned.

Disorder connotes tension, an incompatibility within an order defined by an ideological and cultural norm. A disordered system is chaotic, dysfunctional, and perhaps even a threat to a “properly” working order. Embedded in the traditions of western humanistic thinking, from Platonic rationality to Cartesian *cognito sum* and Darwinian evolution, rational order is valued above disorder as the inherent, organizational destiny of humankind. In our modern age rational order has come to be equated with efficiency, the ability to control and moderate a

cost efficient occupation of the material world. Charles Taylor refers to this as the “primacy of instrumental reason”, an economic argument that rests upon the agency of the self, a perspective that “flattens and narrows our lives” (Taylor, 1991, p.4-5). While instrumental reason, as John Ralston Saul writes in his discussion of ethics, aims at creating certainty, which I would argue is axiomatic of order, the reality of everyday life is that we rarely understand the complexities of the choices we make, at least in an abstract, reasoned way (Saul, 2001, p. 52). We know through our experience and sensitivity to our context, this is our common sense, and it is upon this that our judgements are based. Common sense is a dynamic process of knowing that requires discourse and inclusion of others. It is within a necessary condition of uncertainty that this kind of existential knowledge is negotiated. Order and certainty follow experience, they do not precede it.

Gadamer discusses this concept of making sense as the “sensus communis”, tracing it to Greek classical philosophy and particularly to Roman interpretation of these ideas (Gadamer, 1999). In this form what we know with others is an ethical truth reflected in qualities of wisdom, tolerance, moral good. This is the wisdom of experience, of life practice. It goes beyond Kant’s subjective self and at the same time, while not denying the legitimate benefits of scientific truth, treats such abstract reasoning as a form of knowing that contributes to the “sensus communis”. Perhaps common sense which in its abstractness implies a Platonic form, is better thought of as a sense of what is commonly experienced.

To apply the label of disorder is to isolate ADHD not only from the concept of order but in some way to make it “other”, to oppose it to a sense of what is commonly experienced. It is a

point of view that diminishes the importance of interconnected and common bases of meaning.

Fritjof Capra in his book The Web of Life discusses a radical paradigm shift in contemporary scientific and cultural discourse, away from a Cartesian and Newtonian mechanistic science of relational parts in which order is defined according to a presumption of function (Capra, 1997). The shift is to an ecologically oriented philosophy of interrelated and interdependent systems in which order, and function, is defined by the dynamic patterns of those relationships. Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy, Einstein's time-space continuum, Quantum physics, chaos and complexity theories are acknowledgements that the Newtonian concept of a predictable, mechanistic world is no longer a satisfactory explanation of reality. Artists and writers such as Pablo Picasso and Jorge Luis Borges provide us with the cultural equivalents of this disruption of the Newtonian paradigm. In the post-Newtonian view, phenomena are not identifiable as autonomous parts, each with their own function to perform, but as functions of the changing organization and system of relationships of an infinitely expanding whole.

In the mechanistic paradigm, the perceptual world consists of discrete phenomena, objects and systems that overlap and interact in characteristically linear, causal and reversible patterns. Their meaning precedes their participation in the world. The benefit of this way of thinking is the possibility of clarity. "Things-in-the-world" can be defined and understood as themselves. They can be analyzed and compared with each other. They can be easily abstracted, approximated, combined, reconstructed and predicted. They are ordered.

The conceptual foundation of this mechanistic paradigm is an essential world that is derived from Platonic Idealism. Explanation requires this stability so that what is abstracted can be put back in the same place and time. It is assumed that the more refined and precise the approximations of our perceptions of the world become the closer we come to a complete understanding of the world, its components and the way in which they fit together. Presumably in this paradigm, the gap between perception and reality will disappear as we see more accurately.

In the logic of a stable building block world of components and connections, phenomena can be isolated and catalogued. This requires that objecthood and the boundaries of its relationships are defined, by someone's judgement, according to a particular understanding, and so identity becomes an approximation, an abstraction, comparable perhaps to a "snapshot". The point at which identification occurs is contingent upon perceptual judgement and the language in which it is represented.

This "snapshot" analogy suggests a separation of identity from time, that is, life process, in which change occurs on a constant and not always predictable basis. The price of clarity is that the "snapshot" is always an artefact of what was seen and was see-able at the given moment. This image may contain the quality of indefinable truth that Barthes refers to in photographs as the *punctum*, however, that time is always past (Barthes, 1981).

Disorder in this discourse may be thought of as a system that is not performing its predicted function in comparison to other orders, rather than as a integral part of an ecology of dynamic

systems, whose function may be neither linear nor causally predictable . How can we know what order is unless we prescribe the function and outcome that must be achieved?

In contemporary theories such as quantum physics, and cultural thinking organized under labels of postmodernism and poststructuralism (Foucault, 1970; Lyotard, 1984), the identity of individual phenomena are seen as depending upon a dynamic process of inextricable relationships.

It is difficult to know what something is, until we can observe what it does in relation to its world, to which we as observers belong as well. In his discussion of ethnomethodology as a research tool, Patrick Baert points to the necessity of understanding order through reflection and reproduction, a diachronic process:

Instead of stressing merely the interrelatedness of different parts of a system, ethnomethodology has been innovative in revealing that, as a skilful accomplishment, order is produced in and through time (Baert, 1992, p.41).

Disorder takes on a new meaning in a dynamic system or ecologically conceived paradigm. A component of a system cannot be described as disordered by itself - but only as an aspect of a process of interrelated systems and organizations. What appears disordered in comparison to what we define as ordered may be a necessary development in an as yet to be recognized pattern of order.

The diagnosis of ADHD in twentieth century research, as it is reflected in revisions of the American Psychological Association's (APA) publication, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), rests upon the coincidence of behavioural histories, age of occurrence, referrals from professionals (2000). The DSM symptomatology acknowledges that ADHD is a developmental and experientially varied phenomenon. However, debates particularly in the school system over false diagnoses, over-medication, pedagogical responses to giftedness and ADHD, suggest that the application of the DSM understanding of ADHD must rely upon particular circumstances, specific cases, which suggests that the definition of disorder also relies upon interpretations of particular and distinct cases.

However, a conventional understanding of ADHD as a disorder measures individual differences in neurological, behavioural and psychological functioning in comparison with other populations defined as the normal order. Assumptions about ADHD, normal and abnormal are therefore made. The predictable and logical response of physicians, educators, and families to ADHD is to analyse and remediate the disorder because it conflicts with expected norms of behaviour. This may take place through a modification of the symptoms of ADHD, or through an accommodative change to the surrounding order that allows the phenomenon to be safely contained. In both cases the objective is to minimize the effect of the condition. The need to control the disorder and allow the individual to function in a world ordered in a particular way guides the response. What other reasonable response could there be? Those individuals who have learned to resolve their ADHD to their contexts may never be labelled as ADHD because they function acceptably. The point is that ADHD is seen as a disorder in relation to the expectations of the context in which the individual functions.

If the expectations of the disorder could be suspended, an alternate approach to understanding ADHD might rely on ecological principles, observing evolving patterns in the experience of ADHD, being open to unanticipated possibilities that might explain ADHD as a different type of order, and therefore having its own worth.

This way of thinking is exemplified by physicist Allan Snyder's research into the phenomenon of autistic savants (Fox, 2002). Snyder is Director of the Center for the Mind in Sydney, Australia. Apart from difficulties in normal, social experience, autistic savants often demonstrate remarkable abilities in activities such as computation, music and art. Snyder set aside the accepted view that brain abnormalities limit the attentional ability of autistic individual to compulsive, narrowly defined behaviours. He argued that autism involves an alternative functioning of conceptual abilities, specifically the cognitive management that filters and abstracts the overwhelming barrage of sensory perceptions encountered by human consciousness. This interpretation shifts focus from an assumption of a state of sensory isolation to a recognition of an unexpected process of making sense of an extensive range of perceptions.

A few autistic individuals, the savants, exhibit extraordinary abilities manipulating the unfiltered data, achieving results at a speed and complexity unattainable by a "normal" individual. Snyder was inspired by Oliver Sacks's study in his book The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and other Clinical Tales, of Nadia, a three year old autistic child who was able to draw a naturalistic image of a horse and rider from memory, while being developmentally too young to comprehend the nature and physiognomy of a horse. Snyder comes to the conclusion that these apparently abnormal abilities may be inherent in all human beings,

accessible when the governance of “normal” conceptual functions are suspended. Autism from this perspective is not simply a dysfunctional version of normal human functioning, but provides an example of unrecognized potentialities within the range of human ability.

The value of this research to my study is not Snyder’s conclusion. More important is Snyder’s discursive treatment of autism as a variant organizational system that revealed unexpected possibilities precisely because it is part of a greater human ecological system. Approaching autism as a disordered system that needs to be fixed obscures this insight .

Rudge and Morse in their discursive analysis of schizophrenia cited two recovered schizophrenics who perceived themselves not as being cured but as having learned to live successfully with the condition (Morse & Rudge, 2001, p. 71). In this same study, S. Estroff argued how, as in the case of schizophrenia, the successful taking control of a mental illness involves integrating it into self-identity; “I am schizophrenic”, not I have schizophrenia (Morse & Rudge, 2001, p. 72).

Can something significant be understood about ADHD by first examining it as a constructive process of human organization, a living process, instead of presuming it to be a disorder? Katharine experiences ADHD and she is also a creative artist, mother, and an instructor of visual art. These key practices are the forces that shape her sense of self, which Katharine considers to be creative, successful, ordered, in its own right. Katharine’s self-narrative “makes sense” of her pattern as she speaks and experiences her world. It is this particular experience of self-identification that I have set out to interpret, in terms that make sense to me.

Format of the thesis

The writing that follows is divided into three sections: the research outline and justification, Chapters Two and Three, a reflective discussion of changes made to the research in Chapter Four, the interpretive discussion of the interviews in Chapters Five through Seven, an anecdotal reflection in Chapter Eight, and an the assessment of the work in Chapter Nine.

In Chapter Two, I examine the confluence of ideas in research literature related to ADHD, time and creativity. Chapter Three provides an explanation of my research decisions: the design of the study, the focus of the research, my choice of co-researcher. It elucidates the methodological perspective that I have used, laying out my interpretation of phenomenological methods, narrative interpretation, and principles of interpretive and hermeneutic enquiry, and the appropriateness of these conceptual approaches to this study. Finally, it considers validity of the research, and how this will be evaluated in the conclusion.

Chapter Four provides a commentary on Katharine's response to reading a first draft of the interpretation of the interviews. As a result of our subsequent discussion I made significant changes to my approach and this chapter provides an explanation of why and how those changes were made.

The living research, as far as it can be distinguished from the rest of this study, is found in Chapters Five to Seven. Here, I re-present my discussions with Katharine, organizing significant interpretive clusters, or "emplotments", according to when and how they entered

into our discussion, and the emphasis placed upon them by Katharine. Revisiting the transcripts and audio visual recordings I identified three main narrative threads and a number of sub-narrative themes that help to organize my writing, not based on the frequency of their occurrence, but on how we dwelt and returned to them.

The narrative in Chapter Five is that of “Working Space and Time”. Issues related to this topic formed my original interest in the research and this inevitably shaped the direction of our discussions. Katharine’s account introduced concepts of time and space that are essential to her own story and that are new to my understanding. Included are sub-plots of “Being Present”, “Being in the Body” and “Constructing the Moment”.

I have organized the second discussion in Chapter Six under the title of “Educator”. This addresses Katharine’s professional teaching, her role as a mother, as well as her strong desire to promote understanding of ADHD. Three sub-plots that emerge repeatedly are Katharine’s self-identification as “Self-knowledge and being a Wise Woman”, “Cultural Translator”, “Advocate”.

The third cluster in Chapter Seven arises from questions Katharine asks about her own identity. I have designated this as “Working from the Outside”, because it tells of Katharine’s effort to locate herself in the world and in relation to others. While this heading speaks of alienation, the narrative is more about the nature of conducting personal relationships, and of dealing with institutions. The discussion reflects the gap Katharine recognizes between herself and others in her life and considers the strategies with which Katharine has learned to cope successfully.

Chapter Eight is an anecdotal reflection on the challenges involved in communication affected by ADHD.

In the ninth and final chapter, the limitations and achievements of the study are evaluated. The validity and significance of the interpretations are weighed and consideration is given to how these observations might be fruitfully applied to other situations.

Chapter Two. Review of the Literature

Narrative discourse

The practice of teaching is an interpretive and hermeneutic process that aims to provoke conceptual development through the recognition of teachable moments, “by finding the right questions to ask” (Gadamer, 1999, p. 301). This process requires that the teacher recognize the stages and immanent points of change in the learner’s conceptual development. The teacher can achieve this insight only by attending to the learner’s expression or story, and by keeping their presuppositions about the learner’s state of readiness open to unfamiliar forms of narrative expression, such as those associated with ADHD, that resist “normal” methods of understanding.

A good story always has a high degree of rational intelligibility, though it is not the rationality of a scientific exposition that plots linear and necessary connections between phenomena (Kerby, 1991, p.61).

To teach requires locating ourselves within the narratives of our students in order to perceive how they have come to understand, as well as being able to see deeper and implicit meanings beneath the surface of their stories. This pedagogical goal involves a fusion of horizons, a negotiation of the language and narrative organization a teacher uses to apprehend and express meaning, and the story a student constructs to make sense of their experience (Gadamer, 1999, pp. 370, 388). Narratives both offer and demand interpretation. Teaching is in this way a hermeneutic activity.

The hermeneutic tradition recognizes the limitations of human ability to know the world; knowledge is a continuous act of interpretative reconstruction that happens within a social and historical context(Kerby, 1991, p. 9). Understanding is not an assumption of another's meaning but a transformation of that person's interpretation of their experience into a narrative intelligible to the recipient of the telling. "Understanding occurs in interpreting" (Gadamer, 1999, p.389).

Ricoeur refers to narrative process as emplotment, that, "'grasps together" and integrates into one whole and complete story multiple and scattered events, thereby schematizing the intelligible signification attached to the narrative taken as a whole" (Ricoeur, 1984a, p. x). In its reconfiguring process narrative may have a metaphoric and poetic character that represents experience of reality in a way that extends beyond the conventional power of propositional language to reconstruct(Kerby, 1991, p.89). Interpretation depends for narrative truth upon the discursive exchange of the story-teller and the audience and is a function of the adequacy or "fit" of the narrative into the interpretive schema of the audience.

Kerby emphasizes that the narrator is "a subject-in-process, a subject still finding or refiguring itself", whose narrative speaks of desires and motives as well as perceptions and is therefore engaged in a creative act of constructing self-identity within himself and necessarily, in a shared world of language and narratives, towards others(Kerby, 1991, p.85).

An investigator may also, therefore, be thought of as a subject-in-process, as he interprets and creatively “re-narrativizes” his research to speak his meaning adequately to his intended audience. “Narrative truth is thus more a matter of facilitating understanding and integration than of generating strict historical verisimilitude...” (Kerby, 1991, p.90). Communication of a mutually intelligible, coherent order is the goal of narrative interpretation rather than uncovering a pre-existent truth.

At the heart of narrative's correspondence to a shared world is temporality, a commonly assumed sense of time and the unfolding of events, that may be thought of as an intuitive and subjective dimension bounding lived experience (van Manen, 1998, p.104).

While you live, nothing happens. The scenery changes, people come in and go out, that's all. There are no beginnings. Days add on to days without rhyme or reason, an interminable and momentous addition...But when you tell about a life, everything changes; only it's a change nobody notices: the proof is that people talk about true stories. As if there could be true stories; events take place in one direction, and we tell about them in the opposite direction.

I wanted the moments of my life to follow each other and order themselves like those of a life remembered. I might as well try to catch time by the tail (Sartre, 1965, p.59).

In this passage from *Nausea*, Sartre alludes to a pre-narrative level of existence in which life simply is. There is no meaning beyond the fundamental consciousness of being. The structure

of time or events, and consequently meaning only materializes when it is observed and narrated in a social context. Sartre points to the transformation of phenomenological experience into meanings that are then understood to be truth. And this is done with such conviction that, as Sartre implies, there is not even any recognition of the impossibility of retrieving the truth of pre-narrative existence.

The negotiation of understanding and credibility of narrative explanation depends on an acceptance of a narrative's resemblance to the pre-narrative organization of events in the world, that is, the shared experience of the structure of one thing after another, rather than the accuracy of representation (Sartre, 1965, pp. 56-59). Paul Kerby, noting the universality of linguistic meaning, reframes pre-narrative as quasi-narrative, arguing that even this unarticulated consciousness is preceded by language (Kerby, 1991, p.8).

The truth of our narratives does not reside in their correspondence to the prior meaning of pre-narrative experience; rather, the narrative is the meaning of pre-narrative experience. The adequacy of the narrative cannot, therefore be measured against the meaning of pre-narrative experience, but, properly speaking, only against interpretations of that experience (Kerby, 1991, p.83).

Ricoeur describes narrative discourse to be in a hermeneutic relationship with time, "...time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal existence" (Ricoeur, 1984b, p.3).

It becomes necessary to interrogate the nature of time itself, whether the abstract technological time that measures outcomes, or the experiential time that is behaviour.

Narrative truth is thus a matter of adequacy and fit to what is otherwise given, and this is so not only for psychoanalysis but also for historiography and any form of recollection that seeks to unfold a past history that aims at more than a chronology (Kerby, 1991, p.91).

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder

Temporality and narrative interpretation are keys in understanding descriptions of ADHD. In his book, ADHD and the nature of self-control, Russell Barkley draws research from neuropsychology, cognitive and behavioural sciences into a unifying theory. He concludes that, "...time is the ultimate yet nearly invisible disability afflicting those with ADHD" (Barkley, 1997, p.337).

The brain's executive functions, chief of which Barkley theorizes as a sense of time, exert control over behavioural inhibition. This inhibitory function contributes to the ability to appropriately utilize working memory, which Barkley describes as a covert sensing to the self, in order to avoid impulsive responses, to interrupt ongoing responses, to operate in a way that is disrupted in ADHD "internalized speech and rule-governed behaviour and self control of affect and motivation, and goal directed creativity and persistence" (Barkley, 1997, p.335).

Barkley argues that the purpose of the executive functions of the pre-frontal cortex is self-organization. Working memory recalls images of past events that can then be manipulated as a template governing hindsight and forethought (Barkley, 1997, p.164). This reconstitution of memory is a form of self-directed speech that describes sequence, ordering, duration, and the direction of events in time, enabling the cross-temporal organization of behaviour that connects past, present and future (Barkley, 1997, pp.169-171). The chief function of this organization is analogous to rehearsal, essentially a narrative projection, in order to make sense of what has been and to respond to future events.

Barkley points to the reciprocity between self-directed and public forms of speech, in my argument both forms of narrative, describing spoken language as a form of "...public behaviour that comes to inform, influence, and even regulate the behaviour of others, (and) through the process of internalization it then becomes turned on the self" (Barkley, 1997,).

According to Barkley, the inability of the ADHD individual to recall events as a normally structured sequence of time, matching "normal" past, present, future, temporal organization of the external world, detracts from their ability (self-control) to reconstitute memories in such a way that can guide their public presentation in a manner that matches societal expectations (Barkley, 1997, p.205).

Barkley does argue that ADHD "merely represents the more extreme end of the distribution or continuum of a human trait", however, he concludes that compassion, accommodation, and acceptance are necessary attitudes towards those with ADHD, and compares ADHD to the suffering of diabetes, similarly in need of symptomatic relief (Barkley, 1997, pp. 347, 349).

Other investigators of ADHD, questioning the labelling of deficit and disorder that is central to Barkley's account, argue that ADHD represents a normal human state. ADHD is either misunderstood because of the social context in which it is manifested, or is undervalued because its negative behavioural characteristics obscure positive attributes (Hartmann, 1997; Weiss, 1997).

I refer to the arguments of Barkley, Lynn Weiss, and Thom Hartmann because they are representative of the breadth of methodological approaches to ADHD, Barkley coming from a scientific neurological framework, Weiss presenting a pragmatic, self-help analysis, and Hartmann offering a deconstructive theorising of ADHD from a historical point of view.

Time is a common element of these interpretations, which link ADHD with characteristics such as short, intense attention spans, being very focused on interesting tasks and very bored by uninteresting activities. ADHD is also associated with a distorted time sense that is neither linear nor consistent, but is part of an "all at once", or "now ", consciousness. This divergent time sense has also been associated with aspects of creative behaviour (Hartmann, 1997; Weiss, 1997).

For Lynn Weiss, "taking the scenic route" (my term), which involves covert information gathering and processing, is a characteristic ADHD way of forming a global picture that contributes to creative conceptualization, even though it may be interpreted as lack of focus or inattention to the task at hand (Weiss, 1997, p.66). Weiss lists common behavioural characteristics attributed to ADHD and creativity: aware and perceptive, imaginative and

original, independent, risk-taking, energetic, curious, humorous, attracted to novelty, tolerant of disorder, artistic, open-minded, intuitive, spontaneous (Weiss, 1997).

Thom Hartmann speculates that ADHD behaviour can be accounted for historically as a "natural adaptive trait", being linked to "Hunter" behaviour, the restless, scanning, risk-taking behaviour necessary to survival in the past (Hartmann, 1997). Hartmann identifies risk-taking, intrinsic motivation, independent belief, tolerance for ambiguity, willingness to overcome obstacles, insight skills, ability to redefine problems as creative skills that are often shared by his ADHD/Hunter type (Hartmann, 1997, pp.73-75). Whiteman and Novotni note that "...ADDers tend to be very creative people. Their minds are filled with exciting images, bold metaphors, new ways of doing things" (Whiteman & Novotni, 1995, p.123).

While Barkley views ADHD as a disorder, in which stimulant treatment such as Ritalin may bring the individual into a more normal relationship with time, Hartmann relates the experience of those who, having used the same treatment, find that their organizational (time based) abilities increase, but "their creativity (spontaneity) seems to dry up" (Barkley, 1997, p.339; Hartmann, 1997) (Hartmann, 1997, p.77). Whiteman and Novotni cite clients who "stop taking their medication when they need to be creative. They need to let their minds fly free for a while" (Whiteman & Novotni, 1995, p.123). A significant tension between Barkley's interpretation and these alternative views, lays in a differing concept of freedom. Barkley implies that the ADHD individual's freedom from the restraints of ordered time proceeds from a lack of self-regulation and therefore can be considered a disorder (Barkley, 1997, p.204). The revisionist authors seem to consider freedom a matter of individual control that allows creative potential to be realized in the face of social discipline.

The creativity of everyday life

The proposed link between ADHD and creativity is a fulcrum in this research. While ADHD and creative behaviours both encounter particular forms of resistance due to their challenge to behavioural norms, positive social value is generally attributed to creativity, particularly measured by its product. How then can ADHD behaviour that involves a creative process be understood as disordered? Is the creativity associated with ADHD the same concept as other understandings of creativity?

William James stands at the beginning of the modern psychoanalytic exploration of creativity presenting a notion of complex ideation, foreshadowing contemporary discussions associating divergent thinking and creativity (Albert & Runco, 1999).

Creativity is strongly linked to human sense of time as a gestational process and in the timing and timeliness of its outcome. Sternberg and Lubart define creativity as productive activity that is "... novel (i.e., original, unexpected) and appropriate (i.e., useful, adaptive concerning task constraints)" (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999, p.3). They develop an investment theory of creativity in which the creative individual "buys low and sells high" in the realm of ideas, attending to concepts that are not currently appreciated or accepted, then bringing them forth, in a timely way, when their value to society has increased (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999, p.10).

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi proposes a confluence of factors within a 48-cell grid of characteristics of culture, institutions, groups and individual that contribute to his concept of

creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). He identifies personality traits such as intelligence, diligence, independence that combine with cognitive ability, knowledge, favourable circumstances and environment, and social acceptance, that, with the right timing converge and result in a "flow" of creativity.

Csikszentmihalyi refers to creative time in terms of patterned behaviours or rhythms, citing, "...personalizing patterns of action helps to free the mind from the expectations that make demands on attention and allows intense concentration on matters that count" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p.144). The important aspect of this relationship of creative activity and time is that the individual has control and is "...master of one's own time" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p.145).

Teresa Amabile speaks of time as an extrinsic pressure that can stifle creative motivation, defining time sufficiency as an environmental stimulant, which allows time "...to think creatively about a problem to explore different perspectives..." (Amabile, 1996, pp.14-15, 232).

These explanations lead toward metaphors of creative behaviour such as "marching to the beat of a different drum" or "being ahead of one's time", which connote this thinking and acting as different, or other, and in Enlightenment thinking this is often related to the discourse of the "genius". However, creativity is fundamental to learning and is therefore essential to human existence, in the same way as rationality. Gallagher notes that "In all human behaviours, not just intellectual ones, human existence is involved in an interpretive relation with meaning"(Gallagher, 1992, pp. 42-43). Moreover, "Interpretation involves creativity and not

just reproduction...”(Gallagher, 1992, p.10). Creativity then might be better conceived as an everyday aspect of Heidegger’s ‘Dasein’ or being-in-the-world than as an extraordinary and exclusive attribute.

If the assumption that “making sense” is inherent to human life is correct, then creativity may be considered a common property of the human condition, if not always manifested in the same way.

Creativity is not so much the exercising of freedom as it is the exercising of possibilities inherent in signifying networks (Kerby, 1991, p.113).

We exercise our creative abilities in the process of getting on with life, the habitus, or structure of everyday events that happen to us in becoming aware of our relationship to our world(Kerby, 1991, p.38).

Viewed in this way, structure alone, and not the superficial exploits of some supposed ego, is a force for creativity (Kerby, 1991, p.64)

While we may distinguish between levels of creativity, according to some theorized or pragmatic criteria, we are familiar with its everyday nature, and so can talk together about it even if we differ in the particularities of our experiences.

Gadamer maintains that this translation and communication process is possible because the “universality of human linguisticity” is unlimited and carries

everything understandable within it, including the entire procedure of science and its methodology.(Gallagher, 1992, p.16)

Another way of considering everyday experience with regard to creativity may be found in John Ralston Saul's argument that creativity and imagination depend on the perception of alternatives (Saul, 2001). Creative alternatives, that is, what we do not have access to through the certainty of reason are brought to view through our relationships with others. In other words everyday creativity depends upon what is uncertain and can only be realized by being open to others and alternative explanations.

A parallel rethinking of the pathological nature of ADHD may be attempted. In my casual conversations with friends and colleagues about ADHD almost all profess to experience of some aspect of the symptoms of ADHD. Even though ADHD is labelled as a disorder and therefore "other", many people share experiences of the component symptoms of the phenomenon. Therefore we share in our language the experience that make ADHD familiar. How we respond together by sharing our experience of ADHD, whether we "have" it or not, presents creative possibilities for defining how ADHD fits into the fabric of everyday life.

To comprehend creativity and its relationship to the temporal nature of ADHD thinking and acting means crossing the boundary of "otherness", first by recognizing that while both of these phenomena may initially be seen as alien to everyday experience they are in fact held in common. The very fact that we share language and experience allows us to engage in meaningful conversation about creativity and ADHD whether we claim these attributes for ourselves or not.

What I am proposing is that the living experience of both creativity and ADHD are more common and at the same time more contingent than specialized knowledges can admit. So for instance while there may be behavioural coincidences between these phenomena I would argue that the fact that some individuals with ADHD are deemed creative while others are not might suggest that ADHD “creativity” has to be understood in relation to ADHD itself. To be human is to be creative, to have ADHD is to be creative in a particular way. To assume that an individual with ADHD who is drawn to creative activities possesses creative abilities as these have been defined in relation for instance to artists or inventors as a “type” is to impose a set of expectations that those with ADHD may or may not be able to meet. So what is identified as ADHD creativity should be understood as an aspect of a particular experience of dealing with the world that sets its own framework around what creativity might mean.

The purported correlation of ADHD and creativity may be related not to some essential identity in the nature of these phenomena so much as to coincidences in their being lived or played out. This evokes Heidegger’s Being-in-the-world, Dasein, in which meanings collide.

Ultimately, although the discourse surrounding ADHD and creativity has been the foundation on which my research was built, the relation of these phenomena is less important than the question of how we can go about understanding other’s experiences without diminishing their possibilities through our application of limiting concepts.

Chapter Three. Methodology

An interpretive approach

Reflection does not withdraw from the world towards the unity of consciousness as the world's basis; it steps back to watch the forms of transcendence fly up like sparks from a fire; it slackens the intentional threads which attach us to the world and thus brings them to our notice; it alone is consciousness of the world because it reveals that world as strange and paradoxical (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. xiii).

Merleau-Ponty considers the paradox of perception and subjectivity, reasoning that for an object in the world to be perceived the observer must bring his own experience to that perception, and that as the body, the site of perception is of the same world as the object and has already defined that world in the language of the observer, the object of perception will always be familiar. The object “exists only in so far as someone can perceive it” which Merleau-Ponty describes as its immanence, and yet there is always more to the object of perception which recedes into the real world beyond perception, which Merleau-Ponty names transcendence (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.16). What can be known therefore is inseparable from the self which cannot position itself as an observer outside what is being observed because it is only within the body, the site of observation, that the object becomes apparent. So it is the play of object and observer which yields meaning, one that is bounded by what is already known, but one that never exhausts the possibilities of meaning.

The methodological approach that I am following is neither quantitative nor qualitative because both, in the enlightenment tradition require the observer to stand outside what is observed. Instead I would describe my approach as interpretive in intent, phenomenologically bound, and hermeneutic in procedure. I rely on a form of narrative analysis, in which the process of constructing meaning is revealed in the choices of structure and words, as well as in the relationship of ideas.

In the hermeneutic tradition of Gadamer, which acknowledges the limitations of human ability to know the world, knowledge results from a continuous play of the perception of events that are made within a social and historical context (Kerby, 1991, p.9). Gadamer's historically effected or situated consciousness is inseparable from what we come to know. What we do to act upon and add to our understanding (Habermas in his critique of Gadamer's emphasis upon historical consciousness refers to this as emancipatory self-reflection) is conditioned by our fore-knowledge (Wallulis, 1990, p.10). In this sense, how we act can be described as a situational response, or what Gadamer discusses as *phronesis*, that draws upon both pre-knowledge and common sense on the part of the interpreter; however, what is to be learned is not laid out or pre-determined by abstract meta-narratives or knowledges but happens in situ, and can only be understood as it is applied, on a case by case basis.

In questioning the possibilities of understanding, Gadamer notes that understanding is often thought of as "a special case of applying something universal to a particular situation". He draws upon Aristotle's discussion of natural law to argue that understanding is equally a case of relating the particular back to the universal: that in applying the universal to the particular in order to make sense, we are also examining the universal (moral law) to see how this tradition

of understanding might learn from life as it happens (*epieikeia*, or correction of the law) (Gadamer, 1999, p.318).

The law is always deficient, not because it is imperfect in itself but because human reality is necessarily imperfect in comparison to the ordered world of law, and hence allows of no simple application of the law (Gadamer, 1999, Ibid).

Shaun Gallagher in his discussion of post-modern hermeneutics and *phronesis* notes:

Phronesis is not a super-discourse or a set of universal rules, but a sub-discourse that can only have a place within and between every language-game and conversation, and can only operate differently according to local situations (Gallagher, 1993, p.8).

Phronesis, a learning by doing, finds a correspondence within a post-modern distrust of metanarratives and a revolutionary shift in reason (Capra, 1997). Gallagher points to Lyotard's 1984 discussion in *The Postmodern Condition*, in which "postmodern knowledge concerns itself with incommensurabilities, undecidables, conditions of incomplete information, fracta, discontinuities, and paradoxes" rather than to the singular and consensual explanations of Enlightenment science (Gallagher, 1993, p.2).

Phronesis is an appealing concept to call upon in this study as so much of this discussion of creative practice and ADHD has to do with discontinuities and interruptions that characterise ways of thinking, acting and narrating.

The purposefulness of narrative.

Meaning is bound up in the nature of the language we use to tell our stories. Language is conventional and as linguistic philosophers such as Pierce, Saussure, Wittgenstein and Barthes have theorized, we accept the ways of speaking and the traditional meanings embedded in the signs with which we communicate. This is where our social history resides. At the same time a purely semiotic focus on language as the site of meaning presents a danger of determinism. In line with the preceding discussion of phronesis this can only be avoided by taking account of the "experiencing subjects" (Kerby, 1991, p.11). We wrest words as close as possible to what we are trying to say about our own experience. Our language shifts and must be constantly renegotiated but can never be wholly adequate to express or to understand. Hermeneutic enquiry rests upon a dynamic process of exchange between traditional embedded meanings and situational interpretation.

A narrative position accepts the embeddedness of moral practices in a variety of traditions that in turn support a rich variety of belief and dispositions (Kerby, 1991, p.61).

Narratives are purposeful. I tell a story because it communicates not just what I perceived to have happened but how I want it to be understood and how I want it to shape what is to

come. The motive or interests that lay behind this purposefulness is my desire to imagine my life, to establish continuity and consistency in my understanding of who I am and how I communicate this to others (Kerby, 1991).

...however one feels about it, the making and sustaining of our identity, in the absence of a heroic effort to break out of ordinary existence, remains dialogical throughout our lives (Taylor, 1991, p.35).

Narratives are the building blocks of identity. In de Certeau's terminology, narratives account for the occasions that occur within the duration of lived experience (de Certeau, 1984). In trying to make sense of the whole of our lives we select occasions to narrate from the myriad of events that make up our lives. Kerby refers to the eventful nature of our lives as already having a “quasi-narrative” character, that acts as a template for our storytelling (Kerby, 1991, p.42). But narrativizing adds a dimension of self-reflective intention.

Paul Ricoeur draws our attention to the difference between the paradigmatic “story” that accounts for the eventfulness of experience, and “emplotment”, which, organizes the story in a syntagmatic manner that mediates time and perception and communicates a meaningful explanation even through the ‘kind’ of story it is, whether comedy, tragedy or other archetypal form (Ricoeur, 1984a, pp.56, 166). It is in this symbolic transformation of the story that deep significations of narrative lies.

Ultimately, we seek life's meaning, but as we are still in the process of living and becoming, we can only interpret and relate narratives of our experience towards a broader life story, as we

would like it to be (Kerby, 1991, p. 53). How we tell our stories, and how we would like them to be perceived, is influenced by the stories we have been told already, and this includes the moral and mythical beliefs that guide our lives. We select occasions to narrate and relate them in such a way as to epitomize the meaning we wish to place in our lives (Clark, 1994).

By being attentive to these choices, the words and structures used in the telling of the stories, the selections, the elaboration, the consistencies and contradictions, it should be possible to perceive how the deeper, pervasive meanings and belief structures of the narrator's experience came to be.

(Narrative analysis') goal is to turn our attention elsewhere, to the taken-for-granted cultural processes embedded in the everyday practices of storytelling (Chase, 1996, p.55).

Narrative analysis is related to Foucault's articulation of discourse analysis, insofar as self-narrative is a nexus of social narratives, a self-constructive interpretation of material experience (Olssen, 1999). The intent of self-narrative is to present the narrator's interpretation of truth as it serves the interests of the narrator. This in turn enters into a narrative co-authored by the interests of the narrator and her audience. Foucault was concerned with the process of knowledge and in his later writings, how ethical decisions are made (Foucault, 1988). Analysis of self-narrative in this research describes the complexities of the process in which social and subjective discourses intersect, a process that generates the rules and limitations of social intercourse and differentiation.

Narrative and dialogic interviewing

Founding itself upon love, humility, and faith, dialogue becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence (Freire, 1993, p.72).

Narrating the self is a rhetorical dialogue, intended to persuade oneself or others. At the same time an interpreter's aim is to reconstruct the story in a way that corresponds with and illuminates his own ideological frame, not least if it is tied to his identity as an investigator. In interpreting Katharine's story, I do not just reorganize or focus, I develop an argument that goes beyond her intentions. I interpret the unifying impulse of Katharine's storytelling as a way of responding to a question I have posed (Grele, 1994). As an investigator, I can choose to clarify issues that in normal conversation for Katharine are cloudy or misunderstood. I may also deliberately exaggerate problematic issues in order to hold them up to scrutiny (Ochberg, 1996). The purpose is not to misrepresent or to question the veracity of the Katharine's story but to work with her story in order to resolve my own concerns.

In the back and forth of dialogue, the beliefs and values of both participants are brought forward, opening the possibility of fresh understandings. Dialogic interviewing can be seen as a "quintessential ethical project" because the interplay provides opportunity for the participants to learn about themselves and the other in a way that is fundamental to human life and learning (Miller, 1996). For Foucault, the ethical structure of human relations is actually worked out in the process of exchange (Foucault, 1970).

This suggests that meaning is not preserved but is transformed in the exchange. Interpretation reads a text or meaning out of the context of the interpreter, so that...

the author's meaning or the original reader's understanding in fact represent only an empty space that is filled from time to time in understanding (Gadamer, 1999, p.395).

Both narrator and interpreter are responsible for this transformation, however interpretation is neither the reproduction nor perversion of an original meaning but its re-signifying through the particular voice of the interpreter, to give it power for a particular purpose.

To interpret means precisely to bring one's own preconceptions into play so that the text's meaning can really be made to speak for us (Gadamer, 1999, p.397).

Dialogue keeps original meaning in play to be interpreted and re-interpreted by both interviewer and interviewee. I have been guided by methodological principles developed by Eva McMahan related to interactive oral history interviewing (Grele, 1994). McMahan aims at creating an interview situation which resembles Gadamer's philosophic notion of a "hermeneutic conversation" in which interviewer and interviewee engage in a reciprocal dialogue that expands the horizons of meaning of both participants (Grele, 1994). Both engage in interpreting. Reflecting upon this dialogue requires awareness of the historic, cultural, and linguistic boundaries that are placed upon the expression of the respondent, as well as the ideological bias brought to the recounting by the interviewer. The object of the study is not

only the obvious or intended meaning contained in the conversation, but the meanings (deep structure) that lay behind its expression (Grele, 1994), which, in the case of self-narrative speak to the construction of identity.

The reciprocity of the dialogue in this approach needs to be emphasized. The most recent interpretation may lay in the hands of the investigator. However, this is a situation in which each participant, in a way that couldn't have happened in isolation, wrestles with the generation of new meaning which claims its place in a subsequent re-figuration.

Validity and narrative

The knowledge I seek in this work does not lend itself to conventional scientific verification. Understanding of meaning in a life cannot be achieved by the application of investigative methods that are derived from generalized principles. Truth in narrative is not measured by the proximity of the account to some kind of pre-narrative factualness, even if this were knowable. The validity of narrative analysis lays more in its effectiveness in standing close to what it means to understand oneself as being human with other humans. It attends to what Kerby refers to as the “ongoing need for narrating experience in order to exist as a meaningful human subject and the function of narrative in generating a continuity of identity, of self.” (Kerby, 1991, p.87).

The integrity, or truthfulness, of a narrator's story has less to do with whether the facts of the account are fictional or real, than with the reasons they are expressed and understood in the way they are. Fictive reports may, therefore, be as telling as anything factual insofar as they

make sense of a life. This understanding of truth as it belongs to a life can not be limited to some “naturalistic” pre-reflective condition, because a life is also what it is conceived to be, which opens it to all the vagaries and inconsistencies of the human imagination.

In selecting clusters of meaning from the interviews I have asked what is remarkable in Katharine’s story, what could not be lost and still maintain the coherence of meaning that she expresses (van Manen, 1998). For Katharine, having ADHD and being a creative artist are the essential ways she defines her self, while being an educator and advocate for her children and students are enactments of these core self-concepts. Like many adults who are being treated for ADHD, Katharine no longer has access to early schooling records or personal accounts that are considered elements in a diagnosis of ADHD according to the Diagnostic Manual of the American Psychological Association, guidelines that developed from what until recently was a belief that ADHD was a childhood disease (Barkley, 1997). Nevertheless, she experiences the adult symptoms of ADHD, her doctors treat her for ADHD, her children are diagnosed with ADHD and it is a reality in her life. What is the severity of her ADHD or how the diagnosis can be verified are less significant than the fact that Katharine holds this truth to be central to her life.

The integrity of this study is dependent upon adherence to its philosophic grounds, rigour in observation, consistent treatment of the information and its retelling, and the reflective nature of the writing. Meaningfulness depends upon a commitment to the human truth of the narrator’s account and creating the conditions in which an open dialogue can be generated. Validity of my account rests upon my ability to synthesize narrative elements without perverting or capriciously misrepresenting the original meaning, to select without being

reductive, to elaborate without fabricating, while at the same time employing a richness of language and concept that effectively describes and wonders at its subject.

A note on narrative and forms of language

Narrative in this study takes the form of oral and written language. There are significant differences for interpretation between the oral process of the narrative interview, the research documents that have been studied, and the written text of this dissertation that reflects my interpretation. One of the defining characteristics of oral narrative is its immediacy and evanescence. In conversation, there is not the same opportunity as in writing to go back, to edit, to rephrase before an audience has apprehended meaning. Fewer facts may be available to recall at any given time. In this way the thinking that corresponds with oral expression is much more apparent and allows a different understanding than the interpretation of a written text which is propositional in nature. Oral narrative tends to be additive, placing one interpretation upon another in a manner that accumulates meaning, as opposed to the more reductive and analytic possibilities of writing. Most important is that orality is a creative and embodied practice (Ong, 1982).

Writing has a particular history of practice that distinguishes it from oral or visual traditions (van Manen, 1998). For van Manen, writing allows the writer to step back, to abstract from the lived world, only to step back into the world, engaging in it with subjective meaning.

Interpreting Katharine's words, I must interrogate my own writing to judge its adequacy in speaking her story. My goal is not simply elucidating what Katharine says but discovering how richly and convincingly I can convey my(our) experience of her story to my readers. "Thus interpretation must find the right language if it really wants to make the text speak" (Gadamer, 1999, p.397).

In the process of interpreting the texts that follow, the texts being the research literature and the interviews themselves, I have attempted to retain a flavour of the back and forth, discursive character of oral tradition, which leaves doors to re-thinking open. I have selected the themes and statements that resonate together, that form a coherent and meaningful narrative themselves. In doing so I have not been concerned entirely with the exhaustive or discrete nature of the categories that have become my chapter and section headings. Instead, I have discussed the significance of elements of Katharine's narrative through different filters, so, for instance, the issue of personal boundaries is both relevant to the chapter exploring how she perceives time and space, and to the chapter on Katharine's role as an educator, in which her own learning of boundaries is a basis for her ability to teach. This approach better reflects the complexity and multi-layeredness of Katharine's story.

Selection of a co-researcher

This study is about the process of self-narrative as it opens up the phenomenon of ADHD and so rather than compare the experiences of a number of respondents, only one individual, Katharine, was interviewed. The initial criteria for participation was having the experience of ADHD and occupying a creative profession or role.

Fortunately, this individual, Katharine, was already present in my life. A colleague as a visual artist and art college instructor, a friend and mentor, Katharine has discussed her experience of ADHD openly with me. ADHD is central to her life and that identity is confirmed when she refers to herself as being rather than having ADHD. Our casual conversations and Katharine's interest in my studies helped me to formulate the direction of my research even before I requested her participation.

Katharine has been enthusiastically outspoken about the challenges facing her and her children who also experience ADHD and about the implications for a pedagogy that can account for these issues. As a mature and experienced individual, she has had and continues to have, a rich life from which to formulate her story, and she is aware of the importance of telling that story. As she assured me upon accepting my invitation, she aims to write her own book on the subject and hoped that this project would add to her research.

My role I think I've now defined as just learning more and more and more and trying to articulate it in many different ways. (Katharine)

As the majority of ADHD research to date has been with children and adolescents, it was even more valuable to approach the topic from the point of view of someone who had found ways of successfully coming to terms with her situation.

The process of the interview

...because they (Greeks) did not conceive understanding as a methodic activity of the subject, but as something that the thing itself does and which thought “suffers” (Gadamer, 1999, p 474).

The interviews were arranged to encourage an informal and loosely structured dialogue, most often taking place at our homes, and once at Katharine’s British Columbia lake property where she spends time in the summer. Casual conversations in social or work circumstances added to the ongoing conversation. There were no formal problems to be solved, rather a desire to “suffer” what might be gleaned from these discussions. Usually, I would introduce a subject or question, often picked up from a reflection upon the previous interview, or sometimes related to a recent event. More often than not our discussion would stray, hopping from one thread to another but ultimately returning to what interested us both.

Dogs and cats, Katharine’s children, phones punctuated our talks. Katharine would take smoke breaks and often I would fiddle with the audio and video recording equipment which was in plain view. Interruptions provided time for reflection and sometimes fruitful repetition of the preceding conversation. Tea and often home baked goodies usually graced the table, which allowed Katharine “something to do with my hands”.

Our familiarity might be considered a disadvantage in a study in which truth lays with the interviewee. But in this case Katharine became a co-researcher and our friendship eased the

discussion to levels of intensity that might not have otherwise been possible. Trust and respect were given mutually.

It is difficult to give a complete feeling for the tone and ambiance of the interviews, and the complexities of the conversation. However, some general comments may be helpful. Katharine exhibited enormous patience throughout the process as I juggled technology, the direction to the conversations, and my nervousness, which gradually gave way to confidence as I began to sense the continuity in our exchange. Katharine relied on me to set the agenda, but she was no shrinking violet! Katharine's participation corresponded with her story, from the emotional intensity she experienced to the physical and mental restlessness she displayed. She was clear when she felt that the interviews had reached an end after almost six months. Katharine's tone and body language were frequently assertive, she always tried to teach, and more often than not in the interviews I felt that I was her student. In hindsight I believe that this was an advantage because it forced me to listen, to let go of assumptions that I might have used to shore up my own authority as researcher.

In the end I have tried to tell my story well, to use language to persuade the reader of its human validity. To do this I have not employed a scientific form of data selection but have used my own judgement based on careful listening and reflection. The documentation of our conversations is not a re-iteration of the event but represents my re-engagement in the transcripts. I have constructed a new exchange, a montage of Katharine's statements and my own responses as I write.

This corresponds with my understanding of the spiralling dialectic of hermeneutic inquiry, in which each new experience of understanding contributes to the continuance of the conversation, ultimately the point of philosophic investigation.

Chapter Four. The Circle

Originally this chapter was to appear at a later point in the dissertation, as a reflection on process of interpretation of the interviews. However, when I asked Katharine to read an early draft she expressed strong concerns about the way in which I had represented her voice. This was a significant stage in the project and tested the strength of our trust relationship as Katharine summoned the courage to offer constructive criticism and I struggled to balance my research objectives with a personal fear of having missed the point.

I needed to reflect not just on the method of my writing but also on my guiding assumptions. An explanation of this reflective process provides a guide to the way in which the following chapters can be read.

My research has been concerned with the difficulties of bridging the gaps in ADHD and non-ADHD ways of knowing. During the interviews I had found myself identifying with Katharine's story as an empathic insider, taking for granted too easily that my writing could mirror her thoughts.

However, as I have argued in the opening chapters, bridging the gap of understanding can be considered not as the elimination of the gap but more as an acknowledgement of distinct ways of being and a process of negotiating the differences. I had to remind myself that I did not and would never see through Katharine's eyes, and that I had to maintain a critical awareness of my own voice.

Katharine endorsed the introductory chapters of my draft, but as she put it had “bottomed out” on my treatment of the interviews. In part this was because of the way in which I had abstracted her comments from the larger text. This process eliminated contextual details within her stories, which were crucial to the way in which Katharine made sense of her experience but seemed unnecessary to my argument. While I isolated direct quotes from the interviews to construct a thematic framework, Katharine pointed out that the meaning of these selected quotations varied according to the point in our conversation in which they occurred, a consideration that I had not addressed.

Another concern was that the quotes I used in building my argument were raw, including sub vocalizations, hesitations, the natural disjuncture of orality. I was committed to providing an accurate representation of Katharine’s story and considered that quoting the transcripts exactly would ensure that Katharine’s voice was seen as unmediated. Truthfulness however is a tricky concept. I came to recognize that the juxtaposition of Katharine’s spontaneous, unreflective speech with authoritative written texts, might diminish the weight of her statements.

Katharine also drew attention to the fact that I had chosen not to include quotations from my own participation in the interviews. I had considered my questions and clarifications to be insubstantive, more like prompts that encouraged and at times guided Katharine’s narrative. I felt that my ideas were better expressed in a reconsideration of the interviews. However, Katharine recognized that this created a hierarchy between herself as a subject of scrutiny and myself as authoritative voice. This differed from the way she had felt about our exchange at the time of the interviews.

The problem appeared to be that in trying to understand self-narrative as a symbolic process I had used an objective, analytic approach that did not capture the subtle play of oral dialogue. Abstract clarity came at the expense of representativeness in articulating Katharine's story (Chase, 1996 p.51). In other words the more I tried to present Katharine literally the less I was able to represent her convincingly, and the less Katharine saw herself in my writing.

Initially my impulse was to go further in the same direction of making Katharine's the dominant voice and providing more specific context. I would do this by extending the quotes to include bracketing details and I would be careful to distinguish between similar quotations according to where and when they occurred. However, the major shift in my writing took an entirely different direction. I began to reduce the number of Katharine's direct quotations and self-consciously emphasised my own synthesis of Katharine's ideas.

In reading my reworking of the text Katharine expressed excitement and support for what I had done. She said that the writing now felt right although she could not say precisely why, and that the troublesome contextual and hierarchal issues were not apparent. The decisions that I made were largely intuitive and I still cannot fully understand why they were successful, however the experience underscored the hierarchal relations that are inherently risked by authority of writing.

Chapter Five. Working in Space and Time

Nothing is really present, past, or future. Nothing is really earlier or later than anything else or temporally simultaneous with it. Nothing really changes. And nothing is really in time. Whenever we perceive anything in time-which is the only way in which, in our present experience, we do perceive things - we are perceiving it more or less as it really is not. (McTaggart, 1993, p.34)

The relationship of time and space is enigmatic at best. Post-enlightenment philosophy and science articulated by such thinkers as Merleau-Ponty and Einstein meet in discounting time as a dimension distinguishable from physical space. From such perspectives, time like other systematizations of knowledge such as astronomy or biology, is a conceptual tool that interprets the relationships of spatial events. However, the organizational structure of contemporary western society, focused upon the processes of production and consumption, relying upon the linear, predictive pattern of temporal relations, has made the social dimension of clock-time a virtual reality (Mead, 1959).

This culture of time shapes the way in which everyday experience, including that of ADHD is interpreted and described. The suggestion that people who experience ADHD lack the ability to work in time effectively, presumes a definition of time that is measured and directional. My conversation with Katharine has had to account for differences between her experience of time-space and my own perhaps more conventional spatial-temporal perspective.

The first cluster of ideas in this chapter is discussed under the heading of “Being Present”. The cultural theme of “being in the moment” and how this might be interpreted has been a thread from our first to last conversation.

In “Being in the Body”, Katharine emphasises her body as the site of knowledge and experience. In Katharine’s holistic view, memory, motivation and learning are equally, if not more, connected to her physical being than to her intellect. Expression in her art work represents the integration of kinaesthetic and mental creativity in physical work.

A third focus is the strategies that Katharine has consciously employed to succeed personally and professionally. This section considers the relation of ADHD and self-control as theorized by Dr. Russell Barkley to Katharine’s experience. Katharine talks about process-orientation as a key self-guiding principle. She also matches her activities to contexts in which they are most likely to succeed. Katharine has learned to manipulate her situation in a way that optimizes her abilities. Balancing internal and external structures that shape her actions comprises a process of “Constructing the Moment”.

Being present

In our first interview, my intention was to start with discussion of Katharine’s childhood. This would provide a necessary historical context for our discussion. When I asked Katharine whether this seems a good place to start, she paused, and leaning back in her chair replied “probably”. I sensed a hesitation at my step by step approach which assumed a linear process. This reluctant response to my framing of time and memory was underscored when Katharine told me how hard it was to go to family reunions because others recalled dates and people in a

matter of fact way, while for Katharine to recall memories of her childhood was to engage a complex of emotional and physical reactions, rather than to simply construct a chronological outline "...what my memory is deals with my body's reaction, not putting it in the context of time".

Katharine's difficulty with the concept of sequential time was apparent in other recollections. Katharine remembered her confusion when her parents took her away from her activities, often creative projects, assuring her that she could return to them later.

To them it seemed that every day was...some sort of progression, but for me it wasn't. Every day was a whole new world and...a different emotional reality.

Katharine said this with a tone of frustration and even wonder that others could have such a different conception of experience. Her perspective struck me as the way a child free from the internal and external regulations of adulthood might view life. However, Katharine's reference to this anecdote on a number of occasions during the course of the interviews led me to think of it as an "epitomizing" narrative, or self-reinforcing myth of self that helps to explain her ADHD identity (Clark, 1994).

This and similar recurring anecdotes related to time strike me as both consistent and insistent self-descriptions being performed not only for me but for Katharine herself, as a way of reaffirming her narrative; "an event of being that occurs in presentation" (Gadamer, 1999, p.116). If every day was a new day then this "performance" through narrative acts as an important act of self affirmation.

I found Katharine's notion of being in the present particularly intriguing. The popular meaning of "being in the moment" is to focus, protecting current experience from the intrusion of what has been and what might be. To be in the moment in everyday parlance is to seize the day, to exclude extraneous experience while being open to what is now. Memories and anticipations, the origins of hope and doubt, detract from the moment.

This description corresponds with Barkley's theory of the way in which normal mental (executive) functions control distraction and timeliness of behavioural responses. Barkley's interpretation is that ADHD is an inability to effectively order memories and anticipation in the present; "impairment in the ability to organize behaviour relative to time..." (Barkley, 1997, p. 336).

Katharine suggests that for her, being in the moment is always being present, a state of consciousness in which multiple dimensions of temporal experiences, past, present and future are on hand. This simultaneity differs from a sequential, rational process of making sense. How can this be understood? Barkley likens the cognitive process of memory to being in a library in which each book represents an experience to be selected and pulled from the shelf as needed, whereas to me it appeared that Katharine was describing a desktop that was scattered deep with her experiences, all within reach at any moment, and not in a predictable order.

In a related story, one doctor's suggestion to an ADHD patient's mother was to imagine herself in a room with seven doors from which she could choose one to open and pass through. However when a child with ADHD is in that room, all the doors would be open. In

this metaphor the doctor emphasised the confusion the child faced in choosing a path when bombarded by what blew through the doors. This assumes a reactive response. However, in my discussions with Katharine I perceived an alternate significance: that having all the doors open keeps many possible meanings in play, and that the quality of Katharine's own choices might revolve around openness to possibilities rather than a reductive or analytic process. In her later reading of this text Katharine enthusiastically identified herself with this active interpretation.

Katharine explained how having a holistic sense of life is prerequisite to her making sense of the parts. Katharine's grandfather who she describes as a mentor and who encouraged her learning, introduced Katharine to the concept of the Mobius strip, a flat surface manipulated in a circle to have one continuous surface, which has become a powerful symbol within Katharine's life. She recently made a Mobius strip for her son (who also has ADHD) for his birthday. She still makes them as a way of clearing her thoughts, and of explaining her way of thinking to others.

I still show my students that it's just amazing that you can run your pencil along a surface and it can go over to the other side and cover both because it gets rid of that two dimensional planar kind of approach that we have... it is somehow closer to the way I view world, the way I view space, the way I view time. If I was to use a symbol for myself it would be the Mobius strip.

The significance of Katharine's Mobius strip is the ecological integrity that characterizes her perception of the world. While "time and space are very different", time is inseparable from

experiential space. Time, and all her experiences are in some way always available to her, where she is now, but not necessarily in a predictable sequence. Paradoxically, perhaps this lack of fixed temporal ordering of experience suggests why every next moment is radically new. Like the surface of the Mobius strip time and space are at once distinct and identical.

No tomorrow

In the same conversation we joked about the way in which “being in the moment” has become a personal goal for so many individuals caught up in a hectic world. Katharine is bemused that people take up yoga to attain this state. “To be here, be now, and looking at Buddhist philosophy... it's just incomprehensible that you wouldn't be here, be now”.

Katharine has knowledge of Eastern philosophies in part because of her research as an artist. I asked how her concept of the “now” was influenced by Buddhist teachings as opposed to her ADHD. While she confirmed her affinity with these culturally distinct ways of thinking she assured me that as someone with ADHD she had experienced reality in this way throughout her life.

I think first and foremost I am an ADHD person. Because many of these things that I am describing caused real problems when I was younger. They were there.

Being in the now also seems to mean being highly empathic to various situations and spaces. When as a youngster she saw images of the revolt in Hungary she “...was just blown away by what I saw in the news and that became real for me”. To her conservative family's concern, Katharine canvassed her neighbourhood collecting relief money to send through the Church.

She talked of feeling an "...innate human connection that does not have the distancing of the intellectual...that is ...a direct heart reaction...from the body, from the heart of my own experiences". Her stories invariably involved passion and action.

The blurring of emotional and intellectual boundaries repeated in Katharine's self-narrative again corresponds with Barkley's argument that problematic decision making by those with ADHD results from not being able to experience time in a sequential or causal manner (Barkley, 1997). Katharine confirmed this description.

The problem is that you are so in time... that you don't have time for reflection, and impulse control needs that even if it is just this much, it's time for reflection for thought before action. It's just ADHD, it's a direct link. Thought-action.

The problem is being so in time! Not out of touch with time. Impulsiveness and risk-taking behaviour that might be considered to be the result of a lack of mental reflection is inherent to this thinking by acting. When I explained Lynn Weiss' notion that there is a link between ADHD children and creative children because among other things they are both risk takers (Weiss, 1997), Katharine observed of people with ADHD, "It's not because they have the courage to take the risk, they don't even have the ability to assess... Because that takes a time lag".

This added to my scepticism of links between ADHD and creativity based on cognitive and behavioural similarities. Katharine's statement implied that at least in terms of risk-taking the connection may be co-incidental, reflecting distinctive cognitive and behavioural processes.

The inability to reflect as part of a decision making process has been connected to other ADHD qualities, a lack of continuity and transference - of motivation and interest (Shaw, 1992). This, as Katharine explained about her early life, was something for which she had to develop compensatory strategies. "At that point I didn't have the skills or the personal knowledge to know how to instruct my creative process so that it could go over a duration of time".

Katharine's self-understanding is organized in relation to a specific context, site or event. When that context changes, the perception must be reassembled, "...because I found that I do retrieval of experience based on whatever is happening". My impression is that memory for Katharine has a strong pattern of associative recall, which responds directly to a particular situation and is not just a tool of conscious deliberation.

Katharine's observations reminded me of an anecdote of a youth appearing in family court who would answer a repeated question differently each time it was asked by lawyers and judge, jumping from past events to the present. His evidence was considered to be erratic and unreliable...it didn't make sense. But the social worker who told me the story recognized that each response the boy made could be seen as true in light of the child's own experience although the answers could not be understood by the other listeners as a coherent narrative or one that corresponded with the chronological perspective expected by the members of the

court. In this example, a problem with timeliness, the ability to give the answer at the expected moment, or the making of erratic connections of events in time, are easily confused with an inability on the part of the child to refer to his experience in a rational manner or even a lack of desire to tell the truth. If nothing else the child's perplexing response indicates that a conventional sense of sequential time is inoperative. As Katharine remarked about herself, "... part of the problem is that sometimes the past or the future are more real than the present". I will refer to this anecdote on future occasions because it points out the significance of context (which I link to the expectations placed by the social and physical environment upon the child) in shaping the perception of the problem by others and the generation of solutions by the child.

Multiplicities of time

Barkley qualifies his observation of individuals with ADHD having limited access to memory as being an inability to have timely access to memory. How does Katharine engage in memory and anticipation, and does her past and future play a different role in her sense of the present than for more sequential thinkers? What becomes clear is that Katharine's past and future are very necessary and ever present to her, "and it's not retrospect and looking back on it intellectually, it's being there". Katharine's tone suggested that this is a mixed blessing but it is her reality. The difficulty, which again can be linked to Barkley's theory of ADHD and diminished executive control, is that Katharine cannot predict or control when this shifting time sense will occur.

...I never know what's going to kick it off. And it transports me back. Or in the future too... I've gone through it already. But it's not something that I can regulate or recall at will.

Katharine recognizes the problem that her temporal dislocation causes for others.

...because even when I'm in the moment, my moment can be past, present or future at any time. And I have to remember in this society that my moment has to be in this tense.

Katharine spoke of specific locations and events, as in one account of a temporal “relocation” she experienced.

...I was back there. Literally back there. And went through all of the feelings. (I) knew what I was wearing, remembered my wallet being stolen, trying to breastfeed my son, all of the emotions, all of the physical sensations, everything. It was '74.

Traumatic events can act as a trigger. After hearing of the September 11 World Trade Tower destruction, Katharine returned in her consciousness to her Minnesota childhood. Making people aware of where she was mentally required creative explanations that her colleagues could accept.

The only way that I could explain it to them was saying that I was particularly emotionally fragile. Not to say that I was back to a ten, eleven year old kid in Duluth, Minnesota.

This disparity in temporal organization has resulted in significant gaps of understanding. Katharine told of the time she was living in a cabin she had built on Vancouver Island, which lacked electricity and plumbing or a phone. Her stepfather was concerned about this isolation.

...he said 'what if your grandmother dies'? My immediate thought was: how does my having a phone keep my grandmother alive? What he was referring to (was) when your grandmother dies how do I contact you?

Katharine's awareness of these communication gaps, and her desire to help others to understand the nature of these misunderstandings, has led her to become a "cultural translator", first for herself and then for others who have similar experiences of ADHD. At the heart of this process is making clear the critical nature of immediate context to her way of understanding "...when my head does a tilt, when it doesn't make sense, I know that my context is different...". To understand the meanings of others when they do not correspond with her own awareness, Katharine aggressively seeks out additional contextual information by asking questions and doing background research. "That's one of the processes I have to go through continuously in navigating my life in this world". Clearly this is a process inherent to all critical thinking, however the implication is that this is even more significant in the case of Katharine's ADHD coping strategies.

As Katharine stresses, she has had to develop this skill over time and simple yet profound failures of communication still present themselves. Once as she was sitting in a restaurant looking at a map she was approached by a helpful local who asked whether she was lost. Her response was "No, I'm not lost, I'm here!"

I struggled to relate my own more chronologically structured thinking with Katharine's experience, and at one point suggested that an appropriate metaphor for her consciousness would be the simultaneity of a painting's layers, from the gesso and under painting to the final varnish, which together form the present picture. But Katharine disagreed. "I have trouble with painting because it's two dimensional. And my reality is three".

The layering of a painting for Katharine is hierarchical and has a pre-formed order and as she patiently repeated to me, Katharine thinks of time and space as...

A big mish-mash... where there's no top no bottom, it is all interlacements, it's all interconnected. It creates a whole unity.

Weaving is Katharine's professional work, and as a life metaphor brings together various threads in three linked dimensions of space and at the same time preserves the distinct paths and intricacies of the process.

Holistic perception

An ecological or holistic perspective is consistent with Katharine's fluid temporal boundaries and her non-hierarchal organization of experience. One consequence is a disjunctive

organization of her interpersonal communication. For instance, Katharine explained that as it takes more time to achieve the big picture, her responses lag behind normal expectations ... “it takes a lot longer to get what most people consider the basics. Because that picture has to come together...almost on an intuitive level”.

The child of the courtroom example was assumed incapable of making sense. Yet if making sense is an intrinsic process of life, what was perceived to be an inability might better be understood as this child's particular process even though it did not correspond with the expectations of those interpreting that process. Going back to the same events and repetitions of significant issues might not make sense in a normal organisational framework, but they may still express a sensible meaning.

Whether the resulting pattern is familiar or not, the universal human faculty and desire to make sense is a fundamental assumption. Whatever the specific differences of her cognitive process, Katharine constructs the story of her life, “ that's how most of my experiences are, they're very unfocused it feels good to be able to get them focused, to see them that way and go okay and get on to the next.”

Being in the body

Katharine's decision making relies upon the wisdom of her body's experience, which she often refers to as intuition. “The way I define knowledge is a full integration into your whole body, your whole being...”

Memory within the body

Katharine points out that bodily learning is an accumulative process in which clarity occurs in response to concrete demands placed upon her by situations. “I know I learn through body experience, kinaesthetically ...And through time the pieces come together.”

The nature of this attentional experience corresponds with psychological research by Geraldine Shaw indicating that both creative individuals and people who have ADHD gather and retrieve information in tacit or non-conscious ways (Shaw, 1992). According to Shaw, both “types” seek high-risk, high sensation situations because this allows them to use their scattered (non-linear) information-gathering styles to best advantage, which results in the accumulation of a diverse knowledge base. This can provide a range of alternatives for decision making that permits unanticipated or original choices to be made, the basis of what Shaw considers to be creativity. However, Shaw makes the point that an individual with ADHD will be discouraged by boring or stressful situations. Shaw also argues that high intelligence, which helps development of effective coping mechanisms is a necessary correlate for creativity in ADHD individuals.

Katharine has acknowledged that she has a well-above normal IQ and that this characteristic has helped her to develop self-aware and successful strategies for managing the effects of ADHD, a bolster to her self-esteem. Nevertheless, Katharine stresses the importance of learning by doing: “...having an “in the now” experience which was a positive not this intellectual, rational, based on reflection...you need the experience...”

Katharine assesses her response to new situations by her current physical and emotional state, her internal context. Aligning her capabilities to a particular situation is key, rather than adjusting her behaviour according to abstractly reasoned timelines. "...what my memory is deals with my body's reaction, not putting it in the context of time..."

Katharine's ability to respond on a feeling level to the world is often expressed through her love of nature and particularly of spending time at her country property. She has a much closer affinity and comfort level with the ecological organization of nature than to the abstract connections created by social organisation.

Nature allows me to calm down enough and be in touch. I don't have all the external things like language and signs and stoplights and stop signs, and time and calendars...to have to negotiate. Which takes an enormous amount of energy...

The full engagement of her body in her weaving similarly has allowed Katharine to attain the sense of belonging that she feels when she is in nature, an experience that she has also felt when living in aboriginal communities, where such a relationship with nature is a common sensibility. Sensible patterns are created by her own movement and the logic of the action of the loom rather than by arbitrary conventions. "...the rhythm of the weaving and the fact that it's a full body process...I'm moving. I'm using my hands. I'm using my feet".

Intuition

Katharine describes her intuitive sense as sensitivity to familiar situations and feelings though not in a necessarily obvious pattern. In her weaving, Katharine's measure of rightness allows her to be confident of her actions without recourse to templates. Katharine illustrated this with the example of the design of her weaving. Rather than depending on thread counts she is much more attuned to thread and shuttle location "... and getting a sense of rhythm again...I'm going into an almost mantra, and almost a meditative kind of thing. It's very intuitive... ...and I will know intuitively if there's something amiss but not know the reason why".

This alertness to what does not fit in a particular context is an aspect of her intuition that guides her problem solving and learning. "...you see something that does not make sense within the broad context, there's a little paradigm shift, a little slippage, (I) want to know what's causing that...(it) interests me".

In regard to her negotiation of the normal "linear-sequential" world, Katharine explained to me the importance of meticulous research to determine the structures and rules that give order, or in other words context, to any given situation. For instance, during one of our discussions Katharine was preparing for a board meeting at the College, and she talked about institutional process. Having participated in meetings with Katharine, I was aware of how focused she can be upon the relationship between detail and context. This hyper focused attention to detail connecting a given issue to policies and procedural histories can sometimes be met with impatience by her colleagues. Katharine explained that her focus upon the rules

and history of the organization is a deliberate mechanism. It is only by knowing the overall organizational context of the issue that Katharine can sense what is working and what is awry.

Then I have to go revisit the written structures. And I can find out why. It's just like in my weaving. It's intuitive. I feel a mistake before I am aware of it.

Knowing by doing

Intuition, action and the importance of kinaesthetic memory strike me as being fundamental to Katharine's approach to learning. "The best way of explaining it to you is that you have to go on the premise that action has to take place".

Sense and understanding come in the course of action rather than reflection. This dynamic process of knowing, in the Aristotelian sense of *phronesis*, is about neither cleverness nor technique in achieving a preconceived objective but is contingent upon the choices and responses to experience itself. (Gallagher, 1993)

From Katharine's descriptions of her activities I hypothesized that rhythm and repetition are key elements of the kinaesthetic pattern that structure the way she learns and communicates. Hyperactive as a child, her parents expected her to calm down as she matured. Katharine questions this assumption because she perceives that physical action is integral to her process of working through life's challenges, "...to have some sort of reflection. ... it has to be done with action".

Rhythmic and repeated activity are the patterns of this behaviour that comb the non-linear threads of consciousness described in Katharine's concepts of time and space. Katharine stated that being involved in "any kind of simple and repetitive action... gives then the time for thought". As she stressed the brain is as an aspect of the physical body, a manifestation of consciousness indivisible from the functioning of the body.

... it's not just the body that has to be kinaesthetic. If the body and the mind are doing simple repetitive action, then that can almost go on remote control, where it allows you to fulfill the needs of the brain, and there's enough room left to do the other.

The distinction and privileging of the intellect is an epistemological bias that acts as a barrier to acknowledging and valuing ADHD and other forms of consciousness which rely upon kinaesthetic learning. For instance, Katharine explained that neither she nor her children were able to learn best in the quiet ordered environment normally assumed to be best due to freedom from external or internal distractions. On the contrary "...if I'm going to study for a test and try memorization...it's marching around the room and using rhythm, putting it into song..."

I also found interesting Katharine's implication that conscious reasoning taken by itself might raise barriers to what can be learned, a situation remedied by keeping the mind and body in motion, "...and so there's all of this stimulus coming in and the body is kept active, the mind is kept active, and ... the information can sneak in around the corner".

Being open to learning in this way implies a relinquishing of control over what is learned, and loss of control can imply vulnerability. So it is interesting that in this regard Katharine stressed the importance of “a repetitive, simple kind of procedure, where you're not at risk, that's a biggy”. Self-esteem, a key concern in ADHD, depends on emotional boundaries against lack of tolerance and critique by others.

As a child of an economically privileged family, Katharine had the advantage of personalized schooling, which to some degree accommodated her need to learn independently and outside the classroom structure. This has not always been true of her children's experience in school. Katharine described the situation of one of her daughters for whom,

...auditory is very important. And, she's so bothered by external noises in class that she can't focus on what the teacher is saying. If she has earphones in and a tape-player playing with songs that she knows, then that covers all the peripheral sounds and she can actually gear in on what the teacher is saying.

Katharine's weaving practice has allowed her to have an autonomous work space and process, the product of which has been acknowledged by others as worthwhile. Katharine described her weaving as a way of manifesting her experience, a physical process of making order of events. It is not simply a manifestation of what is conceived or planned but a realization of a set of intuited relationships. “It's important for me to take that ...indefinable sense of whatever and make a tangible thing that represents it...brings it into focus...”

When her mother died, Katharine wrestled meaning from the tragic event through the making of a work, "...it made a tangible, aesthetic sense out of that experience. And then when it was done I could lay it to rest. Now that might be deemed art therapy, but that's sort of the thing that I'm doing to all of my experiences ..."

Constructing the moment

Central to a definition of creativity is the relation of outcome to process. Can creative behaviour be recognized unless there is a result or a product that can be accepted as such. As we sat on a log beside the lake at Katharine's summer property, I outlined Teresa Amabile's notion of a consensual definition of creativity, that requires an outcome that can be acknowledged by peers (Amabile, 1996). Katharine vehemently challenged this perspective. To be creative for Katharine had to do with the personal journey. I had opened this discussion because I wanted to clarify how Katharine's process orientation bore upon psychological findings questioning the relationship of creativity and ADHD.

Both Barkley and Shaw have suggested that the effect of ADHD on cognitive process is to diminish motivated and sustained interest (Barkley, 1997; Shaw, 1992). Consequently individuals with ADHD who display creative abilities have difficulty with task completion, which if creative product is assumed to be a necessary component of the definition of creativity, would contradict their creative abilities (Amabile, 1996; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

Katharine agreed that individuals with ADHD have trouble completing projects, however she attributed this to a problem of "timeliness", or expectations imposed upon task completion that do not acknowledge the non-sequential ADHD process. She pointed out that she had to

learn to construct the appropriate moments in which she could complete her creative tasks, “...it has to do with time and that sense of being in the moment ...and my ability to construct a moment allows me to finish projects. Because before I learned to do that I could never finish projects”.

The perception of the deficits of ADHD which include inability to set goals and complete tasks (Shaw & Conway, 1990), is founded upon assumptions about timely and orderly connections between process and outcome. Yet in Katharine’s perspective, opportunities have opened to her because of her non-linear, process focused perspective. “Goals separate you from process...and from that holistic view...”

In Katharine’s explanation, process itself becomes the goal. Successful outcome is predictable when based upon performance of the right process, in the right context. This suggested an element of existential faith or trust perhaps providing a stability that allows Katharine to choose and manipulate her context, and to bring together the necessary components for success. She perceives herself as being open to influences she cannot predict. This attitude is nowhere more evident than in her art practice. It also appears to guide her pedagogy, in which she values the journey of learning over the acquisition of prescribed knowledge, “...what's the right answer? Who cares? It really doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. It's the questions and the path that matters”.

Process, beginnings and ends

...I have now gotten away from defining the end product ... I have a very general concept of where I want to go. But I don't know exactly where it's going to end up.

An inability to set goals could also be thought of as an inability to control outcome. "Errors" in outcome oriented logic interfere with repeatability and predictability. Katharine spoke of mistakes as simply part of a process that demand choices from her. How she responds to these variations shapes the outcome in a consistent manner.

...it's... the ADHD process, because you don't have that time for reflection, which means you don't have an intellectual idea of ... progression ..., you're just in the moment, so you're getting rid of that end product in a way.

Katharine repeated a motto that offers a powerful analogue of her world view. "If you don't follow directions you can't make mistakes". Katharine saw her lack of control over events and external structures as normal, not so much a negative than as an opening of possibilities. "It's totally a conversation so therefore I can't define where it's going to end". The notion of a mistake is meaningless except as a decision that creates new possibilities. People have asked her "...how could you possibly design this?" and she replies that she has no choice, "... I have to go into this flow ... if I'm in dialogue there's no such thing as a mistake".

The nature of creativity and artistic process corresponds directly with this outlook and so goals or outcomes becomes the frame within which choices are made but a frame which is directly dependent upon the process of creation.

...as an artist you want to be able to make choices from as wide a possibility as possible. If I do (have) a goal and sometimes I have to, I see the goal as the starting point, not the end.

Weaving is a slow and complex process and implicit in a weaving is the long history of its construction. However Katharine does not want the meaning of the work to be measured by the time or labour involved. On the contrary for her the weaving reflects her own temporal experience and she wants the viewer to share the simultaneity of time that makes sense for her.

And so, like that big west coast forest(piece) I wove that weighed two thousand pounds and took a year to weave...I wanted it to have the essence of a Haiku poem or a watercolour. I wanted it to have that sense of moment that I had.

When viewers commented on the challengingly time intensive nature of her work Katharine responded that, "if I had that kind of thought process that was related to time, I wouldn't do it either".

I was conscious of Katharine's desire to communicate her sense of the world to others when she recounted building a stone stairway from her trailer site on her lake property to the beach below.

... I wanted to give (the stairs) a sense of the beach and the driftwood and the way the rocks are piled up... I didn't want them to really be seen. I wanted

them to almost disappear... and then somehow have the same kind of rhythms and space, and sense of organization that most people would think was very disorganized...

Katharine's perspective on complex, time-intensive projects appeared at odds with explanations of the deficits of ADHD process by Barkley and Shaw, in particular the inability of those with ADHD to engage in long term outcome based creative activity. However, if as in Katharine's explanation, the creative process itself could be understood as the outcome, and attentional abilities were not defined by contiguous time frames or contexts, then the disparity between ADHD and creative ability might be reconsidered.

Order as an aspect of process, because its purpose is contingent upon the experience itself, is not the same as the order related outcomes which can be more easily defined. This was another point that Katharine strongly identified with in her reading. Katharine spoke of this in her day-to-day activities as well as her artwork.

...when I wash floors I make patterns. I have to...in order to do mundane things I have to make something out of them...people have commented that there are easier ways to do a lot of the stuff I do. And my response is it isn't a matter of time efficiency; it's a matter of having it interesting.

Efficiency in terms of time is an aspect of an instrumental, outcome paradigm in which the quality of the experience is not considered. Time in terms of efficiency is different than "interesting time". In this, as in so many other instances, Katharine took the "scenic route",

not through a lack of focus, but as a means of focusing. In later discussion Katharine thought that it was important to clarify this point. She explained her perspective that time is about creative problem solving “in the moment” and that physical activity complements her mental activity because it is in itself creative. So patterned behaviour like floor washing or other repetitive tasks are not simply spin-offs of problem solving, but directly reinforce the creative process. “I learn more about myself even in mundane activities”. This is a form of reflection that is as emotionally based as it is rational.

The lack of predictability in this approach depends upon being able to suspend a need for completion and a trust that the right moments will occur to allow completion. As Katharine explains, she has “... a belief based on experience that within a year (for instance) I will have enough varieties of my “nowness”, and its ... emotional and physical necessity, that I will get to the end product. But it's not necessarily linear. This is why I work on four or five things at once”.

Simultaneous tasks provide choices of temporal and spatial contexts that suit her abilities in the moment.

I know from my emotional and physical state what I should undertake. And I don't worry necessarily about external timelines. I can't. And so the whole idea is that I am always doing something, and if I'm always doing something and we change all of the time hopefully an activity will be completed.

Katharine's experience and self-confidence, which she has had to struggle to develop over a lifetime, allow her to take on tasks that she feels ready for, not simply what is next on the list, "...that allows me to do the part of the process that I'm best suited to at that moment".

Efficiency, the direct line route, has been an obstacle which she has learned to overcome. But she has become efficient in her own terms. As Katharine recalls about negotiating the linear process of reading. "(It was a)...big change, giving myself permission not to be efficient ...I don't start at the beginning and go to the end...it doesn't interest me".

Creating space

I do put music on. But I use the music not necessarily to get rid of external sound but to define a space in time that can be now, no matter where I'm at.

Rhythm, pattern, repetition are essential elements in the process of weaving, and are recurring elements in Katharine's story. She understands these physical actions as linking what might normally be thought of as temporal experience within a present consciousness, that is, space. Playing music, weaving, washing floors in patterns are all ways in which Katharine is able to let her experiential knowledge that in a temporally structured world might be called memory, come into play. Repeating a particular piece of music provides a link connecting events in a discontinuous activity, assisting focus and motivation.

I'm sure it is because that meditative process, that full body, that rhythm, it puts me into a meditative state. If I just think about weaving I get really, really confused.

This ordering is holistic in nature, rather than being a sequential structuring of thoughts, and provides the intuitive assurance that the outcome of the process will arrive, which Katharine once referred to as faith. However, later Katharine noted that faith was the wrong term because it had connotations of a conventional belief in something unfounded. Instead she thought of this “knowing” as implicit, a kind of cellular, pre-language knowledge which she referred to as “semiotic” a concept derived from her reading of Julia Kristeva’s work . The important distinction I made from her comment was that this “knowing” was not pre-cognitive, rather cognition flowed from the body rather than the brain.

Reflection as an operation of memory recall, which Katharine has stated she is unable to do, is supplanted by this implicit process of remembering by doing.

But in doing that, in making an order out of all of this, it calms me down; my whole body is being used. And then that allows my mind to um, that's the closest I get to reflective...when I'm weaving. Because then I have that security of creating a whole structure.

The commonly accepted beneficial effects of yogic meditation, the chanting of mantras, the centrality of the structure of music to human emotional well-being, suggest a role for physical rhythm and pattern in ordering the mind and body.

I have long been curious about the coincidence of repetitive physical behaviour that occurs in numerous medical conditions, from the whirling behaviour associated with Turette's syndrome to the rocking that accompanies autism. Can these be self-regulating behaviours designed to bring harmony?

Katharine told me in our last interview that she had undergone EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprogramming) as part of her therapeutic treatment. The combination in EMDR of repetitive eye or hand movement with the recollection of memory as a means of healing trauma originated in the treatment of Vietnam War veterans. While its efficacy is controversial, the treatment has gained significant acceptance among psychotherapists (Shapiro & Silk-Forrest, 1996). Katharine found EMDR to be a highly effective treatment, which reemphasizes the strong connection between physical activity and her state of mind.

While washing floors in patterns may be about making the activity interesting, repetitive action also creates a body/mind space within which a process of cognition can occur. Katharine talked about building the stairs on her lake property.

And I can start working on the stairs and it's hard on the kids cause I can start working and I lose myself completely in it. And the only way I am aware that time has passed is that all of a sudden I'll be really hot and the sun will be beating down. And I know that hours have passed and it seems like a minute. Because I get so involved in almost creating the problem and then solving it which leads to another problem which leads to solving it and there's this flow

and this rhythm happening. Where I am not aware of any of the external(world). But I am, totally aware of the external but it's not in terms of time sequence and it's not in terms of predetermination. It's, it's like a meditation for me.

Rhythm or pattern of action gives continuity to the process. Time as a sequential measure that links one moment to the next disappears.

The music Katharine plays when she is weaving provides a similar meditative state. "I have to be in a time that is separate that is its own space, its own reality, so I use music to do that". To link yesterday to a new experiential space today, Katharine replays the same music that she listened at earlier stages of the process, "And takes me to that now". Katharine said that at first this was more a matter of the "...beat, the evenness of the weave because I'm not a machine", but, more importantly it allowed "...a certain flow... I began to realize that I could use it to create a space in time."

The type of music Katharine employs to create space is significant, having pronounced rhythm and definite allusions to the rhythms of nature, rather than rational patterns, "Gregorian chants, some of Keith Jared's early piano, very mood, very flowing". Maori and Tibetan music, and even Appalachian music, "... it's of the earth ...", also provide the structure and energy she seeks.

The sequential operations of weaving that allow the warp to be strung and weft to be shuttled can be described by numerical sequence, like a set of instructions, but for Katharine

calculations are better described by body rhythm than counting “...so when I'm making my warp I'm dealing with that rhythm”.

This pattern does not appear to act like a metronome setting the pace for a musician but more as an infusion of energy, a particular cast of light, that allows Katharine to move among states of awareness, to link experiences in a consistent manner.

...so I use music to create a space in time that is divorced from my experiences, because I'm growing, I'm changing. ...so when I go into my studio then I'll listen to the music, I'll look at the piece, and it takes me to that moment... and then I can work.

Manipulating the moment

... people who are taking Ritalin can focus and can do a lot ...but they lose that creativity that comes with a mind that is just allowed to go. ...as an artist the Ritalin was not an option because I lost a lot of that creativity. ...it's been a life experience to learn how to find other ways of creating that ability to focus without losing the ability that came with the ADHD. I wanted my cake and eat it too. Why should I have to choose?

Katharine's use of music to create a space in time is a strategy that acknowledges the necessity of having a structure within which to live. As she said, “I gain freedom through structure”. Structure is represented by Katharine as the relationship among contexts that characterize the

moment; “the context becomes extremely important”. Context can be an external condition, but can also be Katharine’s physical or emotional state. Katharine’s strategy has been to control these contexts, “because context allows you to live within a framework which is not naturally occurring for you”.

As Katharine emphasised later this ability was crucial to her situation, it was her survival technique. In her weaving it allowed a “disciplined spontaneity” by isolating a time space “disconnected from the ups and downs, inconsistencies and growth of everyday life”. The distractions were not just negative phenomena but also reflected the changes she underwent in her learning experience. These changes also have had to be held at bay if she was to return to the particular space of her work. Otherwise her mind would be drawn off in a myriad of different directions (times and locations) which she would not be able to compartmentalize effectively.

Being able to choose contexts within which to operate has allowed Katharine to determine what she can accomplish successfully. She knows that at some point the appropriate context for performance of an activity would present itself because she sees herself as an evolving being, “what I do is match my task to the best fit for where I am at”.

Making herself perform a task in the “wrong” context was a form of self-discipline that did not result in success, “... there are certain activities I cannot undertake in certain states....instead of forcing myself into that external structure of discipline and organization it's more (about) becoming sensitive to where I'm at”.

Consequently, Katharine finds herself completing some tasks quickly while others wait to the last minute.

Time, timing and timeliness then become important concepts in understanding such goal directed behaviour and in determining it, thereby making time in a way the central executive...They provide means for greater prediction and control over one's own behaviour in relation to the environment and hence more effective control of behaviour by it (Barkley 1997, p. 208).

This apparent lack of consistency in timing of tasks are arguably less about lack of control as Barkley might see it than about positive self awareness. Sensitivity to her self, awareness of her capabilities, opening herself up to possibilities have given her control over her contexts. I had been talking about my research with a high school teacher who thought that she might have ADHD. She described how she was driven to paint walls the night before making a major decision about her career. When I recalled this to Katharine she understood completely.

...washing floors, washing walls is a great mind sort. That's what I call it, is freeing up. ... if I have to do something which is going to require a very linear, intellectual kind of decision, I will make sure that I am doing a mindless repetitive action.

Labour intensive activity is a calming tactic that frees her mind from distractions and affects her emotional state smoothing the peaks and valleys that could interfere with her

concentration “...that calms me down, that gives me a continuum that gives me a venue to use my energy... in a way that is better than taking Ritalin”.

Having control over time is a matter of allowing herself to be in the moment but also defining which moment she is in, which she calls disciplined spontaneity. In her day-to-day life Katharine sets in place routines that she can rely on. Her choice of teaching as a career allows a pattern of behaviour that complements her responsibilities as a parent of school age children. When she needs to structure her time she does not count on remembering to check her watch but sets a timer or plays a music tape of a given length.

Maintaining these behavioural strategies might be seen as distracting in itself. When I commented that individuals who have ADHD have difficulty focusing on tasks, Katharine responded passionately that .

...one of the realities of an ADHD is that when you find a process that is a match with your needs, and I say needs, because it's like breathing, your attention span can go on forever and ever and ever. It's not an inability to focus; it's an inability to focus on stuff that doesn't interest you.

Katharine connects these ways of distinguishing contexts, defined by her emotional response or engagement with a particular situation, to her own art practice and particularly computer based design and loom technology where binary logic and multitasking are inherent.

I'd been thinking in binaries since before school because of my grandmother weaving. So it was natural, another language, another way of looking at the world that worked for me.

Katharine learned to negotiate situations characterized by simultaneity and multiplicity through her weaving projects. Placing boundaries upon the number of projects she could work with at a given time was a challenge because new designs would continuously occur to her and she would get further behind "...and so I learned to sort of jot down my ideas and then it was okay...then I didn't have to do all of them".

Moving between works was not a matter of going from one project to the next but applying herself to particular activities that might bridge different projects. "That's why I like process pieces (where it is the pattern of making activity that is stressed) so much because there's so many different processes involved that I can be working on several different pieces and at different levels".

Down the rabbit hole

I had set out to explore the differences in Katharine's envisioning of time and space that were already suggested by research literature and anecdotal evidence, and it is not surprising that these were evident. The striking part of Katharine's self-narrative was that while her experiences might have been expected to revolve around a reaction to a bounded present and a lack of access to temporal complexity instead they reflected her negotiation of a multi-dimensional sense of time and space.

Control of time is a key issue in Barkley's paradigm, which identifies the executive mental functions of the cerebral cortex as the manager of behaviour through time (Barkley, 1997, p. 210). This internal control is difficult for individuals with ADHD, a view with which Katharine fully concurred. However in her successful management of ADHD, Katharine has created a self-conscious strategy of controlling and manipulating her physical, emotional environment, her context as she calls it, that allows her to replicate successful experiences. Her orientation is external and relies on structures that she cannot directly control, except by selecting one or another by placing herself in the right place at the right time.

In a significant later discussion, Katharine stated that her ability to create an isolated space in time, a safety zone, to which she can return in order to perform continuous tasks is also dangerous to herself as an individual. While seen as a coping mechanism rather than as an escape device, when she was first learning how to construct these spaces she was conscious of the risk of disappearing, disassociating from the world permanently. Initially she would remain in these states too long and felt that "she was lucky enough to survive it" and associated the experience with a state of madness. Her success was in being able to strike a balance between this self constructed time and the time of the world around her.

Rather than giving credit solely to her intellectual abilities, even though she is very intelligent, she aligns herself with her body and its experience. She trusts in her implicit knowledge of a holistic world and she does not, cannot, structure her life around pre-defined goals and outcomes. Her narrative identity is strongly about process, adherence to ways and means, negotiating, interpreting.

Katharine's story is akin to that of an explorer continuously charting new territory having the stars as a guide. While this is my metaphor it may capture some of the self-determination and loneliness that was evident to me in Katharine's self-narrative. It may also touch upon the assertive, confident authority with which Katharine speaks, surely a necessity in successfully traversing new territories.

Chapter Six. The Educator

Most ADHD people are good story tellers - Because they do have to translate culturally all the time, even if they are not aware of it (Katharine).

Giving labels to people's behaviours is risky if these labels become determinants of our understanding. However to do away with labelling is to deny the impulse to make sense using terms that carry meanings rooted in our experience. This is part of story telling and is itself a process of translation. When I refer to Katharine in the next chapters using terms such as educator, wise woman, outsider I am speaking less about the way in which Katharine described herself than about how I can articulate what I have seen in her story. At the same time these designations do have connections with Katharine's stated hopes, desires and practices. While I do not assume that Katharine would present herself using the terms I have chosen I believe she would be comfortable being known as an educator, a mother, a cultural translator, an advocate and would not deny the experience of being an outsider.

Katharine is a committed educator in all aspects of her life. Teaching requires the wisdom that is openness to unanticipated experience; wisdom also requires self-knowledge. Katharine's wisdom is indivisible from her learning to live with ADHD. Katharine's self-narrative constructed a coherent image of that learning from her childhood, in which she described her differences as a bewildering imposition, to a mature sense of identity that allowed her to re-evaluate and "take control" of who she is.

Her self-education involved developing her identity as a woman and her desire to attain a state of wisdom. This wisdom appeared to me to be associated with the concept of a “wise woman” which I associated in the cultural sense with traditional societies, having a strong overtone of gender and community yet distinct from the individualistic and paternalistic connotation given to wisdom in Western culture. Katharine’s account resonated with Buddhist philosophic traditions of enlightenment and aboriginal metaphors of life journey, ways of thinking with which she has identified herself.

While Katharine voices a strong sense of belonging in her artistic community, her account places her “ADHD” way of coping in conflict with accepted norms, requiring a continual process of negotiating and interpretation, cultural translation as she calls it, to moderate her own perceptions and to educate others in comprehending her ways. Katharine’s role as an educator in all aspects of life is evident in the mediatory role she claims for herself between “outsider” cultures, which includes that of ADHD, and mainstream Canadian culture.

Katharine struggled to facilitate her own children’s negotiation of ADHD. She involved herself in the struggles of aboriginal students or any individuals who face learning difficulties.

A third aspect of her educative role, advocacy complements her role as cultural translator is being an advocate. Katharine presents herself as an activist, engaging social conventions and institutions, notably legal, medical and educational, challenging their assumptions and processes and advocating for change.

Self knowing and being a Wise Woman

I mean I am constantly amazed that when I go into other societies, especially indigenous, I am automatically put as a Wise Woman, as spiritually evolved.

But it is because I am "be here, be now".

I have become well acquainted in my own teaching experience of the stereotype of "Indian time" and the dismal non-completion rates of aboriginal students in educational institutions which is often dismissively attributed to poor time-management or motivation. It is impossible not to speculate about parallels between these culturally bounded experiences and ADHD. Katharine's identification with the ways of aboriginal cultures frequently arose in our conversation and she spoke of her feeling of validation within these contexts, particularly of her ADHD behaviours. "...I think that I have... a much closer affinity (with aboriginal culture) because of being ADD"

While Katharine did not apply the label of Wise Woman to herself, she recognized the correspondence between her world-view born of ADHD and the world views valued by her aboriginal acquaintances. "Wise Woman" conjures the wisdom of the elder of experience. It suggests a valuing of learning and teaching. It also implies specialized knowledge or sensitivity, the ability to draw on resources inaccessible to others, a notion that is suggestive of Katharine's concept of tacit or implicit knowing.

Establishing horizons

Learning to construct boundaries around her experience has been a theme in Katharine's story, particularly in her childhood in which she stated she was "way, way, way too open to the world". She recognized the process of developmental learning and maturation has given her more control of her life.

Even at an early age Katharine related passionately to her world; she also felt exposed, vulnerable to being swept away by the tide of events. She acknowledged that at this time in her life there was no filter, or hierarchal structure as she conceived it, to modulate the deluge of stimulation she encountered.

As a child Katharine was unable to insulate her activities from other influences so that they could be resumed later with the same motivation and understanding. The ability to bridge temporal gaps was a strategy that she learned through experience.

Trust and tacit knowledge

Katharine relies on a tacit knowing of herself and of the world that allows her to trust to the process rather than focus on outcome and goals. In particular this allows her to set activities aside and to emerge from the time-space she created for that activity knowing that she will, in fact, return. "I will eventually get back to it. And that's that faith".

As previously discussed, Katharine's use of the word faith does not have to do with a belief in the metaphysical nor a reliance on Fate. On the contrary, it grew from concrete experience, a physical familiarity with the patterns of life, a tacit knowledge. Katharine recognises her own

porous sensitivity to the world, and her reliance on a form of reasoning that extends beyond intellect (Best, 1992).

As a weaver Katharine collects objects and fibres from the landscape or situations that inspire her work in order to transform them into an expression of her experience. These artefacts are resonant with physical memory which is integrated into the work. "... when I'm working with these threads they're not just threads, they contain that whole experience..."

At her property in the lake country of interior British Columbia, freed from the overwhelming stimuli of the city, Katharine feels intensely attuned to patterns of nature, where for instance she is "...able to forecast weather ... because my body is reacting to the barometric pressure....". This is a radical sense of being related in the world.

Katharine knows when the time is right. When she recognizes that her emotions, her physical body and her mind, and the context that surrounds her are convergent, she will be able to focus on the task. This is a confidence in her place in a meaningful pattern of life. "As long as I can pair where I'm at with what I'm doing, I will do it very well".

Katharine's heightened sensitivity to knowledge is unaccounted for by a rational intellectual paradigm and has expressed itself in unexpected forms. For instance, Katharine related that when she was weaving, she had engaged in conversation with a past mentor who was not bodily present. This encounter with a world beyond normal conscious perception was difficult for me to understand. When I asked Katharine whether she believed the person was actually there and she said no, not physically, but she was there. Katharine also spoke of a kind of

prescience, for instance, when her mother died in Minnesota while Katharine was in Victoria.

Katharine knew that her mother had died before she was informed. She explained this as a knowing of “a present in another space in time.”

And I was so sure of it that I didn't even question it. I called the Emergency Room at the hospital and asked for my father. He had just arrived. And he was just floored. "How did you know to call me here?"

Katharine's confidence in her ability to tap this unconventional knowledge correlates to her scepticism about the limitations of objective knowledge. She has a sensitivity to the world around her that lies beyond normal positivist explanations. I was reminded of Snyder's research on autism, in which the result of an inability to filter stimuli was not the chaos that a rational assumption would predict but rather the creation of alternative ways of processing stimuli that leads to the creation of knowledge inaccessible to others (Fox, 2002). What limits my ability to experience as Katharine does?

Katharine had always believed in past lives because "...it never made any sense to me that you could learn the lessons you were going to learn in life in one lifetime". That was too linear a concept for her to accept. Katharine has experienced rejection because of these extraordinary sensitivities and perspectives. This hostility was difficult for her to comprehend when, for instance, at school she predicted the pollution of the Great Lakes. However as she matured she realized that "people get really scared by it, threatened by it, so I've learned not to just blurt out what pops into my head". Katharine made it clear that this sensitivity is a burden as well as

an ability, and that it is not something she can switch off or on. Controlling her impulsiveness to share her tacit knowledge is an ongoing task.

Transformation

While Katharine's extended perception may be seen as a facet of her wisdom, to be a Wise Woman in its symbolic sense is also to possess transformative, creative power. As an artist, Katharine's ability to transform is tied to her sensitivity to the material realm. Her weaving practice embodies this power because weaving is transformative in its nature. In Western culture, weaving is also a woman's practice, and is rooted in the Greek myth of the Fates, the wise women whose spinning provided the strands from which the story of life was woven.

You start with these fibres that are not strong. You draw them into a strand
and that is alchemy. It's brought up in a lot of fairytale, women; straw into gold.
And then when you make all these disparate kind of things hold together. That
is another transformation.

Katharine's research of traditional Salish weaving techniques brought her into contact with aboriginal communities. Weaving is integral to the Wise Woman identity as well as being the substance of her art. "In most indigenous societies, the weavers are the wise people, the spiritual people".

Transformation and the cultural themes that tie weaving, alchemic notions, wisdom together also identifies Katharine with a community of mature women who gathered at her summer British Columbia residence. They refer to themselves as crones, and like her, they have been engaged in searching for life's meaning, sharing their experience as creative women. In her

most recent series of weavings, Katharine has been designing and creating ceremonial cloaks that convey her understanding of the character of women significant in her life.

Cultural translator

... our language and thought process is against most people who are ADHD...

I'm always in a constant battle to translate.

Being an educator is, like the Philosopher in Plato's Cave, being able to experience a truth beyond the immediate horizon, and also feeling a responsibility to share that insight with others by translating it in terms that they can understand. With social responsibility comes sacrifice. Katharine learned to translate for herself as a mechanism of self-defence when her childhood frustration with not fitting in resulted in suicide attempts. Perhaps as teaching is the best way of learning, Katharine has committed herself to helping others translate, and this has become part of a reinforcing self-image. "It's a way of maintaining myself. Not a standing back from. It's a way of keeping myself intact".

Translator as chameleon

Katharine recognized that she needed to find a way to adapt to the culture around her while maintaining her sense of self. This was evident in the therapeutic treatment, particularly behavioural modification, that she experienced as a child. "(The way) I survived well meaning therapy that I saw as a personal attack was to approach it through (a process of) cultural translation". She knew that the behavioural treatment was in fact "attacking the basis of who I

am” , trying to change her core being and that she had to be able to identify the treatment as not being supportive in order to “maintain myself, my integral self”.

A cultural translator travels nomadically between horizons. This practice is hard on personal relationships as Katharine has acknowledged. When I asked Katharine if she would speak directly about personal relationships, she deferred, saying that she had not worked this part of her life out yet. Being “between”, as I have described it has led Katharine to change her expectations of relationships. “I always wanted to belong and I thought that being in an intimate relationship would justify that belonging or be part of it”. Recognizing that this kind of relationship cannot work “at this point”, Katharine has now redefined herself as a kind of transient identity that allows her to “function within different structures... like a chameleon.” There is a bitter sweet quality to this account but what struck me was the courage and self-awareness that Katharine displayed in making sense of these choices.

Social relations are perhaps the greatest challenge associated with ADHD. One quiet evening playing cards with Katharine’s daughters at their summer retreat, I was given some insight into the difficulties children with ADHD, dealing with poor self-esteem and frequent rejection, may face in developing close relationships. The daughters joked about how they had first met some of their friends, a process which frequently began by punching the new acquaintance in the nose. At first I thought they were trying to shock me but I realized that this was a real experience and later, I speculated that this behaviour betrayed their vulnerability to rejection. They had set up a situation which would test the commitment of the potential new friend and at the same time provide a reason for why the relationship would not succeed. The children also talked about being drawn to people who thought or acted like they did. Given Katharine’s

stated difficulty with relationships, these accounts seemed to underline the confusion and challenges attached to making human connections, to making the translation consistently.

Self and behaviour

The most illuminating episode in our sessions occurred after a discussion of what it has meant to Katharine to live in the moment, and for her assertion that every moment is a new moment.

The implication of this aspect of Katharine's worldview to a stable sense of self, if self is always in a state of re-establishment, is that her identity must be extremely vulnerable to external perspectives that take as their base an expectation of continuity. In such a state the self would be extremely vulnerable to criticism or judgement. Creating defined boundaries around her space-time experiences is Katharine's way of protecting herself from these discontinuities.

Katharine has mentioned undergoing behaviour modification therapy during her childhood, and I am somewhat familiar with the principles from my own early experience as a childcare worker. Separating self (motivation) from operant behaviour is a strategy in behaviour modification therapy (Martin & Pear, 1999). Self, in this paradigm, is held apart temporarily, so that behaviour may be altered without negatively influencing affective or self-esteem issues. Skill in negotiating the relationship between self and behaviour presumably develops with experience and growing self-confidence, corresponding with Barkley's description of affective self-management (Barkley, 1997). But what if behaviour is not separable from a sense of self in the mind of the individual, because, as in Katharine's story, her sense of self requires a continual process of reconstruction and reconnection with her context, which leaves little

room for reflective judgement? In other words what she does in each situation re-establishes her sense of self. Modification of her actions is seen literally as a change of her self.

When I explained these thoughts to Katharine the impact was profound. She had a strong physical reaction, shaking slightly, speaking haltingly. As she later recalled it was as if a light had come on and she was seeing a pattern in her life that she had never clearly understood. In particular, it was a revelation to her even now that self and behaviour could ever be considered to be divisible or that this assumption had been part of the philosophy of her own treatment.

(myself) So if somebody is punished or reprimanded or somehow held accountable for their behaviour, then it is the self that is also criticized and attacked?

(Katharine) Totally! Totally! Completely. It undermines everything. So there goes your self esteem. It's just very emotional...the response that I got when you said that. First of all how can there be a separation? Early on when I was sent for help, it was very painful, because they kept on wanting to change me fundamentally. And one doesn't want to change fundamentally.

When she was in her late teens, to protect herself against this attack upon her self, Katharine developed the coping mechanism which is an aspect of her process of cultural translation. "That's when I started looking at ways of changing my context... starting to manipulate the context instead of me". This was her own behaviour modification plan consciously oriented toward "self-survival and not self-destruction".

Katharine's strategy uses her sensitivity to her external environment to recognize the "rightness" of the situation for the performance of a given task. As discussed in the previous chapter Katharine positions herself where she can respond using the abilities that suit the situation. When that is not possible, instead of modifying her essential character to meet the situation, she shields herself by learning to imitate appropriate behaviour. She becomes what she referred to as a "chameleon" consciously trying to fit in by disguising her true self. "I started watching how other people reacted. And then have learned to react that way".

The frustrations of her childhood development were mitigated by her privileged family situation, which provided the wealth and influence for her to attend private schools which permitted her greater freedom of action, however, it was only as she reached adulthood that she gained some independent control over her response to specific situations.

Controlling her own living and working environment provides some of the flexibility Katharine requires to control her context. Being a respected artist among supportive colleagues helps to provide these conditions, as does the time spent at her summer property.

Translator as mother

Katharine emphasised that practice of these forms of cultural translation requires maturation and hard work. She has constantly tried to find ways of sharing these skills with her daughters even while recognizing their need for their own experiential learning process.

The children's paternal grandmother passed away the day before one of our meetings. As Katharine had been with her own mother, the children were aware that their grandmother had died before Katharine's family was contacted with the news. One daughter reacted by withdrawing in tearful anger with a response "Now I won't be able to talk to her" because it responded to the immediate loss obliquely, focusing on future implications, a response that Katharine described as being typical ADHD. The loss of her grandmother also represented a disruption of a future plan which involved learning and travel that now was unimaginable. "That was part of her being and that was smashed". Katharine supported her daughter's angry self-directed reaction but also let her know that "you are going to have to do some cultural translation".

Katharine explained to me that the deep emotional intensity her daughter felt was not just the loss of her grandmother or a potential experience; but the loss of a part of her identity that lay in the future but was still very present in her daughter's sense of herself.

Katharine's strategy towards her daughter was one of unconditional acceptance of her behaviour presuming that it was not destructive to herself or others. Adjustment to the loss had to be acted out.

First and foremost you support the immediate reaction because then you're supporting the self. Then when that is not being attacked they can hear and begin to... learn.

Non- ADHD individuals might address conflicts between self-image and experience in a measured way, accommodating and resolving as they go along, building on each step, relying on established self image; while those who have ADHD must attempt to heal the breach in their sense of self before being able to re-engage the world. In this situation Katharine provides support, not solutions. “(I can show) her how she could access information in a much more positive way”.

The strong withdrawal Katharine’s daughter experienced might be interpreted as a shying away from reality, but remembering Katharine’s experience, the reaction might be better understood as a form of cocooning, creating a space in which emotional processing could be done safely, shielded from extreme openness that Katharine experienced in her childhood. Only after some self-healing had occurred could Katharine intervene to guide her daughter to appropriate social behaviour. “... you are going to have to get outside of yourself enough to consider your father and what he is going through and be able to support him”.

Katharine noted that sequence of normal social responses we take for granted is not naturally available in the ADHD context, she had to define the “specific actions and reactions that are the norm and are socially acceptable”. Having taken the first step of validation, Katharine then had to “explain the simplest, most basic things about the other world, because there's no way that they understand it!”

This difficulty in making the translation, not just once but in every similar situation, because every situation is a new one, might easily be misperceived as a cognitive or even a moral deficit, and this reflects the way ADHD has been understood historically. The correlation of ADHD

and behavioural difficulties is evident, but Katharine's story suggests that the difficulty is not a cognitive or moral lack, but rather an alternative pattern of processing experience.

The way in which individuals who have ADHD explain themselves or behave may appear to be irrational, lacking normal logical and causal relationships. Katharine emphasised that individuals with ADHD desire, and learn, to communicate themselves to others but that they must also protect their self-image. "And believe me they want to understand, and ... they learn that they can negotiate and translate and still maintain self".

Having ADHD and being a mother and guide to children who have ADHD was a special challenge. Katharine had difficulty maintaining her own boundaries while trying to provide a safe environment for her daughters and has had to make tough choices in maintaining her own integrity.

What I was doing before was absorbing (her daughter's) experience into my being and that was totally destructive because there was no separation. Because she was needing so much I would just absorb. I'm not doing that any more...

Aboriginal connections

In Katharine's experience with aboriginal cultures she has not had to make the same mental or emotional compensations that she faces in her own social environment. As aboriginal cultures accepted the concept of non-linear time "being able to be in the past or future was accepted", and as Katharine also lives with this sense of time, " (this) actually made me one of them - inclusive, instead of the exclusive reaction of people in our western time based culture".

Katharine had to explain this experience to me several times as I thought I knew what she was saying and then found that I was off base. A helpful anecdote concerned the time that Katharine's Maori friend Eddie had given her a pair of his mother's earrings, long, graceful, vertical pieces. When Katharine put them on she remarked that they made her want to stand up straight. The response to this from the Maori family was a sense that a connection had been made with Eddie's mother who was always on about her children's posture. These kind of intuitive links, expressions of what Katharine calls body feelings, or cellular knowledge, were second nature to the Maori and Katharine did not have to edit or suppress her intuitive ways of knowing that in her culture "freaked people out".

When she spent time with the Maoris in New Zealand, "it was the first time in my life that I didn't have to translate, and the sense of freedom and validity that that gave me was incredible, just incredible".

Katharine described this freedom as a relaxation of her defences against criticism or misunderstanding. It was not simply that she was being accommodated, but she was being understood, an empathic sharing she was hard pressed to find within her normal setting. In western culture, Katharine's tacit information gathering ability and hyper-sensitivity conflict with communications framed by polite convention., "...a lot of times when I'm talking to people it seems that they are lying because what I am getting from them in terms of my body experience is not what I'm hearing and that causes great confusion to me".

This may be closely related to the egocentric nature of western culture which privileges the "I" in relationship to the world. Katharine spoke of the connection she felt to the Maori sense of

self which is ecological in nature. As she explained a Maori will first identify himself not with his name, but with four preceding identifications; of the beaches on which his ancestors landed, the nearest land mass to his clan, the name of the community or church and then the family name. In this way the Maori explains his context before connecting himself. This contextual identification parallels Katharine's epistemological outlook.

Living in aboriginal communities, she perceived less distance between what was being said and what she was understanding; the process was transparent. Katharine was most aware of this difference when she returned to her own culture from an aboriginal context because it was then that she realized that she had not been "translating or editing or moderating".

Katharine particularly recognized the gulf between her way of understanding and the institutions and organizations of a world that operate in a predominantly linear sequential form. This was true in her own educational experience and in her dealings with her children's schools. She would have to study the bureaucratic structures of each organization to engage in their processes because "it doesn't come naturally".

As an experienced educator who is called upon to play administrative roles, Katharine must be able to investigate the details of the institutional operation, policies, procedures, and bylaws, information that may be taken for granted by others in the normal course of affairs. Katharine has "to have this given" to her in order to comprehend the task at hand.

Katharine speaks of institutions as puzzles to be interpreted and mastered. Her own challenges and successes increase her affinity with aboriginal people who also have difficulty

coping with the structures and systems of dominant culture. “It helps me to be able to translate culturally, between the bureaucrats and First Nations people”.

As a teacher

Katharine uses her ADHD derived qualities in the classroom, “...so when I am teaching I am present in the moment and I am interacting with my energy and their energy and where I'm at and where they're at”. She is in tune with her students as she is in tune with the earth. She told of returning from her summer property to the first classes of the Fall and being so intuitively connected with the students that she had to resist finishing their sentences, wary of frightening them with her apparent prescience.

Katharine spoke of pedagogical methods that build on her ADHD strategies in manipulating contexts, both her own and that of her students. For instance Katharine will give the same information repeatedly in different forms, aware that its absorption depends upon each student's developmental ‘location’. Katharine's non-linear teaching responds strongly to the moment and patterns itself upon class dynamic.

She manipulates the student's mental context by emphasising cross-disciplinary references and connections, for example connecting the binary nature of weaving to the operation of computers. Katharine's teaching philosophy is holistic. She understands that her students are learning principles and perspectives that are significant for their whole lives, beyond the practice of weaving.

Katharine paces and moves in the classroom, she engages the space in the classroom. When she does “lecture” from the front of the classroom she employs images and engages the

students in discussion. She warns students that she cannot stay in one place. Katharine employs concepts of time and space to deal with empirical explanations. Instead of referring to the numbers of the warp on the loom she will refer to the one closest or furthest away. Katharine told me that when a student has difficulty with her method she will find more linear ways to explain, because her commitment is to facilitate each student's learning. She is very open with her students about ADHD and how it shapes her teaching. She has students keep notebooks which they hand in at the end of class and which Katharine uses as a diagnostic for her pedagogy.

As an intermediary between her students and their achievement of knowledge, Katharine finds herself juggling her commitment to her students with her need to establish personal boundaries. As in her relationship with her daughter, Katharine realized that in her teaching she can be overwhelmed by this proximity, and has to work to make herself less vulnerable to demands on her emotional self. "Now I don't absorb as deeply and I find that I can be a better teacher".

Advocate

Katharine's drive to educate involves advocacy for herself and for others. I experienced a small example of what Katharine considers to be self-advocacy in the way she set firm time limits to our discussions. She explained that she has had to struggle to assert her needs, another skill that has developed with experience. When Katharine had to tell me that she was not comfortable with my initial draft she experienced considerable anguish and it took courage to tell me her reaction despite the level of trust that we shared.

Self-advocacy is aimed at more than being accepted. Katharine considers that the barriers she experienced at work or in social situations were often a result of a lack of appreciation of what she had to offer, and that this was detrimental not only to her but to everyone involved. Self-advocacy for Katharine is being socially responsible “I know that when I am at my best I can be a really, really good addition, and I’m the only one who knows what that takes”.

Katharine underscores the need to assertively educate others in their response to ADHD. This is particularly evident in her dealings with the public education system and its effect upon her daughters. The opacity of the bureaucracy, the system she has had to understand and negotiate has been the greatest barrier to supporting their education. While this may be true for all parents, Katharine’s difficulties with linear organizations makes this even more challenging.

Among the issues that her daughters have faced are the regimented classrooms that do not make allowances for their alternate learning styles, because these appear to fly in the face of conventional ideas about the learning process. Katharine points to the fact that one of her daughters learned much better, could understand her teacher and was less disruptive in class if she was allowed to listen to music tapes on headphones during class. Katharine’s explanation of this was that the music, with which her daughter was familiar, acted like white noise. This sensory stimuli blocked out the normal auditory distractions of the classroom allowing her daughter to control her focus, to pay attention to the teacher. Most schools do not accommodate this practice.

The conventional building block approach to learning has also proved challenging to her daughter's process of learning which, like Katharine's, requires a pre-conception of the whole in order to make sense of the parts. Jumping over intervening steps to discuss the bigger picture is perceived as being precocious or flawed.

...education that is presented in a sequential building from(one) surface to the next...doesn't mean anything to her. It just swims, she can't put it into focus because there's not that whole picture.

Katharine experienced rejection as a student when she came up with unconventional ideas about the world or challenged outdated text book information in a way that her teachers considered to be age-inappropriate and capricious. It angered her daughter as well when "she knows she has very valid information and people will not listen to her because of her age and her experience". For Katharine this challenging of convention is an important form of self-advocacy. Katharine used the word subversive on many occasions to describe the way she responds to institutions and it is closely tied to the notion of self-advocacy.

Katharine's advocacy with teachers has involved sharing her narrative, passing on her own experience and research. "...identifying learning styles and sort of the way that information can be presented and trying to talk to teachers in a way that you can let them in a little bit on your world".

In her own teaching Katharine has demonstrated that conventional expectations of students who have learning disabilities or handicaps should be overturned. She recalled visiting schools

to give weaving classes. “When I’ve gone into school systems, teachers are amazed because it is the most hyperactive, kinaesthetic kids who focus in when they weave.”

One teaching success of which Katharine is very proud involved a student suffering from cerebral palsy and learning disabilities, who was in a wheelchair and unable to communicate verbally. In fact she could only signal yes or no by tapping. In Katharine’s opinion the student was considered to be unintelligent largely because the questions she was asked were limited by normal expectations and relied on the student’s capacity to respond rather than her true intelligence. Despite the scepticism of vocational workers, Katharine decided to teach the student how to design weavings using a computer.

...they said there was no way she could do this but I taught her spatially the way I negotiate it without text... they kept on saying, that (the student) had limited intelligence...and that she could not comprehend conceptual things

This student’s ultimate success, creating her own complex works, was a vindication of Katharine’s advocacy for individuals whose abilities do not meet the norm of conventional expectations. It was, for Katharine, “...one of the most amazing moments in my teaching career, she was liberated, the first time...self-sufficient”. Katharine noted that the way in which individuals outside the norm are evaluated is often determined by the nature of the expectations rather than their abilities.

Another illustration of Katharine’s advocacy role has been her work on behalf of aboriginal students, which brings together her cultural experience and pedagogical beliefs. First Nation

students are drawn to Katharine “it's no accident that the majority of indigenous students, no matter what area they're in will find me”. Recognizing that the success rate of First Nations students is low, Katharine acknowledged that “the reasons that they don't make it is very similar to ADHD people”. Whether as their teacher or not she has acted as an academic advisor and advocate in difficult processes such as grade appeals.

Katharine has a belief in these students' potential for success and has worked to change the attitudes of the institution so that they are better understood. Katharine regards this as a position of moral leadership that is essential to her work. In curriculum review discussions, “I was the only person who brought up the indigenous population and our responsibility at an institution here in Calgary not just to have them, but what the moral (implications) of taking them on is.”

Katharine has treated her classroom as a site for developing new pedagogical methods highlighting a student centred learning approach. With her leadership, the Fibre department has developed a curricular structure distinctly different from other areas of the College, one which reflects Katharine's own pedagogical views, and the department has been having “an amazing success rate” with its students.

Down the rabbit hole again

My recapitulation of Katharine's self narrative as an educator emphasises her successes and downplays the defeats and reverses, as she has done herself. Building on strengths rather than focusing upon weaknesses is inherent in Katharine's educational and life perspective.

Just as Katharine considered herself to be ADHD rather than as someone experiencing a disorder, identity in Katharine's narrative is about being an educator, it is not a task that she performs. Teaching is the way Katharine has made sense of herself to others, while at the same time learning about herself. Creating the persona of an educator has allowed her to direct her own path, to "make sense", and to assure that her way of encountering the world is shared by others.

Katharine has learned to manage the vulnerability to misunderstanding that her "wide-openness" to the world, inherent in "being" ADHD, has created. This ability to cope and to turn her strategies towards successful outcomes became a tool that she shares with others to help them learn and that she uses to advocate changes in the social infrastructure to accommodate against individuals with ADHD.

For Katharine being a cultural translator and advocate is an ethical action. Katharine has turned the problem of how a person with ADHD can learn to behave normally on its head by taking responsibility for what she can teach others about being the best they can be.

Chapter Seven. Working from the Outside

Previous chapters have described how Katharine has constructed a successful career as a creative artist as a result of rather than despite ADHD. At the same time these accounts revealed some of the challenges that Katharine has had to face to be an equal participant in her world.

While Katharine has passionately advocated for social acceptance of her differences, there has been a constant irresolvable tension between belonging and being safe. Katharine's identification with "Others", whether First Nation's culture, women redefining their identity, or with those who have ADHD or similar learning difficulties, has been an aspect of a dialectic process. At times the desire to belong has required setting herself apart, in order to create a space in which she could perceive herself more clearly and to protect herself against alien ways of thinking.

Katharine's account of being accepted into the Salish community as a post-graduate researcher illustrated the paradoxical tensions between belonging and being outside. Katharine recognized that the reason the Salish community welcomed her was that her worldview echoed their own, "that's why they've been willing to share with me". An ironic consequence of this communion of perspective was that Katharine was unable to take the conventional role of objective observer, and as a result she realized she could not be a good researcher in the methodological way demanded of her by her project. As Katharine pointed out this paralleled my own difficulties as a researcher in attempting to get close to her story and still remain an objective

interpreter. This is another example of the coincidence of the wide open nature of her ADHD personality and the inclusivity inherent in hermeneutic inquiry.

As a learner

The passion in Katharine's voice when she relates her successful experiences has been complemented by a more biting tone criticizing the lack of respect she has received from the medical, educational, legal and governmental institutions with which she has had to negotiate. Although Katharine had no idea that she had ADHD when she was a child, she was aware that she did not fit easily into her family or into the classroom. She benefited in many ways from the private schools and specialized attention her parents were able to provide, but the discordance remained. Katharine was placed in institutions as a way of coping with her behaviour. Lacking her own constructive strategies at this time, she experienced frustration and anger that was self directed. "My nickname in high school was flathead cause I was always knocking myself up against brick walls".

The greatest problem for Katharine's self-esteem was coming to terms with being judged so negatively while she herself was unable to recognize the nature of the problem. Looking back on her experience Katharine attributed some of her difficulties to a lack of training or experience, on the part of her teachers who could not comprehend why a student of such demonstrably high IQ could have such a low self-esteem and inexplicably poor academic performance. The catch-22 of this situation was that Katharine was placed in remedial programs that she found boring and for which, as she said, she could care less. The consequent further loss of self-esteem was shattering. "I doubted myself a lot, and as I said, the first overdose I took was in Grade Three at school".

Apart from a few artist friends and acquaintances, Katharine has been able to point to few people in her life who truly empathized with her situation. Her grandfather was an exception with whom Katharine connected on an intellectual basis. Katharine's criticism of doctors, teachers and many other professionals has been that they have been unable to comprehend her way of making sense because they have simply not shared her experience. As in the case of her school history, "...the expectations were very off kilter because the expectations came from where the teacher was operating, not where I was operating".

In relation

With regard to intimate relationships Katharine said that she had "not figured that part of my life out yet". She recognized that her repeated difficulty in intimate relationships "has not been fair to myself or my children" and she came to terms with the fact that she needed to redefine objectives for herself. While Katharine has regretted a subsequent loss of closeness, she has substituted a commitment to being herself, to the intense immediacy of living. "I doubted myself sometimes and I wished I could be like some of my friends but then I realized that if I could then within a week I would be bored, totally bored".

This form of self-focusing does not represent a lack of caring about others. Katharine reflected in relation to her children's behaviour, it is just the opposite. "They are really far, far, far more sensitive, and far more aware, but on a more intuitive level. I know (my daughter's) innate nature is giving, loving and yet she seems the most self-absorbed person anyone can ever think of..."

Redefining her own sense of identity as one that is "quite separate in terms of real intimacy" sacrificed the sense of belonging that Katharine has always desired and thought of as the

justification of intimate relationships. “I’ve come to terms with the fact that that’s not available. At this point”.

Rational culture

Katharine has been articulate about the propositions of western science and culture that marginalize the ADHD population. In particular Katharine has pointed to the time based nature of western society and the sequential and non-contextual basis of language that is antithetical to ADHD thinking. She recognized that the course of western intellectual history is wrapped up in the rationalism of philosophers such as Locke and Descartes, which does not adequately account for the intuitive, the passionate, the non-linear structure of her world and which works against the strengths of ADHD.

Katharine expressed scoffing scepticism about the ability or willingness of society to change. “Society embraces people who challenge the very basis and core of thought process, of language structure, of history?” She proposes that doctors and researchers can never really understand ADHD unless they have had the experience themselves. She considers their reliance on secondary, non-experiential research to be a problem. In particular she berates the unwillingness of researchers to be open to the primary experiences of those who experience ADHD. She explained this as being inherent to conventional academic training in which “You’ve got to pay your dues (by doing secondary, theoretical research), you’ve got to show you can do it this way before you can do primary research.”

Katharine did not hide her frustration with the objectification that comes from the pathologizing or medicalizing of ADHD “... it's like we're aliens... ...it pisses me off to no end”.

Legal and other systems

Dealing with issues surrounding her children and divorce has meant that Katharine had to negotiate the court system, which epitomized for her the gulf between ADHD and “normal” ways of understanding, perhaps because the legal system carries causal and linear reasoning to an extreme.

Negotiating the legal system has been a continuing and unresolved challenge that requires a sequential process of accessing services and connecting information in a way that is unnatural to Katharine’s more non-linear and non-sequential pattern of learning. Finding appropriate resources and being able to coordinate processes such as legal appeals have not been supported by the legal institutions, “the system really discriminates against people like me”.

In more familiar systems, for instance when she has taken on administrative roles in her college workplace, Katharine has had more success, but it has not come easily. What is perceived as a talent for detail represents a necessary compensation for her ADHD approach. “Everyone keeps on saying that I am so good at legalistic bylaw but I'm not, and so I work at it really, really, really hard”. For Katharine to follow the mechanism of legal thinking, she has to perceive the history and origin of the details, which are assumed by others. Katharine noted that her insistence on making these kind of details transparent had often been interpreted as criticism. Responses to her approach were related to those given to those with learning

disabilities in which “You keep on asking the same things over and over and over again, and people will speak slower or louder”.

Katharine’s efforts to negotiate institutional systems and their processes is a delicate balancing act between her more natural intuitive self and the rational mechanisms of problem solving that she has learned to emulate. Committed engagement exacts a price and Katharine has had to be vigilant in maintaining her emotional integrity. “There are times when I have to remove myself from speaking because the passion becomes so overwhelming that I lose sense of any kind of order”.

Chapter Eight. What if all the doors were open?

What would happen if we treated ADHD, not as a pathological disorder measured against some pre-existing standard, but as a very particular experience operating within its own logical boundaries and temporal organization? In Barkley's argument, it is the deficits of temporal thinking, timeliness and sequential reasoning that define ADHD as a pathology (Barkley, 1977, pp. 240-244). For Katharine these ways of experiencing define her and her response to her world. Katharine's experience is constituted by notions of simultaneity, prescience, non-linear, non-sequential narrative which does not diminish the value of treating the symptoms of ADHD using the explanations of neuroscience and behavioural psychology, if we so choose. In a pragmatic world these approaches can have great benefits. However, concentrating on a cure does not help us to evaluate how we interact and respond to the colleague, friend, family member or student who has ADHD. This is a moral not a medical issue. What is it that can guide us in our ethical response to the ADHD individual's desire to live her life to its potential?

An anecdote revisited

Let me return to the anecdote of the boy in court, whose fragmented story was dismissed as being incoherent and possibly untruthful. I do this as a way of summarizing the dilemmas of interpreting the ADHD experience.

Lawyer: (to self) This kid's lying. The case should be thrown out.

Neuroscientist: Your Honour, as an expert witness I can assure you that this boy is unable to give adequate evidence because he is incapable of comprehending and responding directly to our questions concerning the sequence of events.

Doctor: Perhaps it would be helpful if he was given some Ritalin. This would calm him, allowing his brain to function properly, and help him to reflect and order events in an accurate manner rather than coming out with the first response that occurs to him.

Social Worker: (to self) Almost everything the boy says corresponds with events that have taken place except he repeatedly goes back to particular experiences even when the question is about something that occurred at another time or to other people. His responses are like parts of the whole story but he does not link them together. He gives the impression of someone who is afraid to deal with the issue, but my intuition tells me that he believes what he is saying.

Boy on the stand: (to self) Everything I say is true. I answer each person's question the best way I can because I want them to understand... but I can see they don't. They never believe my story. What's wrong with me?

Judge: (to self) Hmmm, the boy's testimony does not correspond with the case as it has been described by the witnesses. He has given a variety of answers to

the same question during his testimony and therefore appears unsure, evasive or just plain wilful. Moreover he has a history of anti-social behaviour. I cannot rely on what he is saying to be the truth and so I will have to count on what the other witnesses say to make a decision. Even if the boy is trying to be being truthful, the neuroscientist and doctor have convinced me that he suffers a medical disorder which precludes his giving an account that will support a legally convincing argument. What else can I do but act in his best interests based on legal principles and precedent?

Hermes: (for the defence) Wait, Your Honour, before you make your decision, can we assume that the child speaks truth from his perspective, that his statements are authentic expressions of his reality? I know that this Court is concerned with Truth and that the behaviour of this child does not match conventional measures of truth and falsehood demanded by the traditions of the law, particularly notions of consistency and verifiability. But is it possible that these expectations obscure your recognition of a truth that is represented in an unfamiliar rhetoric?

For instance, if the child's understanding of time is not linear but takes place in a simultaneous and non-hierarchally ordered present, then is it possible that there is another way of grasping what his truth is? Can we understand this boy's answers better by examining how his story makes sense to him? Perhaps the linkages he makes seem to be illogical and impulsive, but let us assume that behind the words there is some kind of meaningful order that we need to

understand if we are to near the Truth we seek? After all, based on our expectations of ADHD at this point we are about to discount his testimony as meaningless. What can we lose?

Your Honour, there are some witnesses in court who may support my views.

Judge: (Sigh) Proceed.

Aristotle: If we care about the principle of truth and act according to the moral precepts upon which the law is based, then once we see that there are other possible ways of interpreting the boy's behaviour, how can we ignore these avenues?

Ricoeur: It is evident that the child is unable to "emplot" his narrative in a coherent manner, but is it that he cannot grasp together the elements of his pre-narrative experience or that he is unable to put it into words for us? Perhaps it is our preconception of what a coherent order of events may be that is at stake, not the boy's lack of ability to recollect or emplot in a way that makes sense to him.

Foucault. I tend to agree. Is the trouble we are experiencing not more to do with the way we are restricting our own understanding by the assumptions we are investing into ADHD? A century ago ADHD was not conceived as a pathology and yet it existed in a range of behaviours that were designated as

mental and moral disorders. Perhaps we should be asking ourselves what our objectives in defining ADHD may be. Is it the disjuncture between normal educational expectations and the ADHD way of learning that defines ADHD as a deficit? Or is it the self-sustaining drive of technological and medical advances that position ADHD as something to be cured?

Kerby: I would argue that the boy's pre-narrative experience is organized in the same way as the story he is telling us, he is his story so there is no "other" story to discover. However let us not forget that this reproduction of his story is inherently creative and serves to legitimize his actions. (Kerby, 1991, p.61). So what are his interests?

Heidegger: That's right... he is speaking of his possibilities, and in this he is being authentic in his Self, a moral stance, that brings him closer to his true Being. (Heidegger, 1962, p.167)

Kerby: Yes, yes, there may be more here than meets the eye; we can assume that "he seeks a narrative that synthesizes the various threads of the past into a coherent meaningful and plausible account. Such plausibility may depend on factors (e.g. future events) not at all present to the actors of the events being considered". (Kerby, 1991, p.97)

Foucault. To speak of a truth that the boy cannot grasp is to assume an essential meaning. We would be better off examining why he is giving the

answers that he does and how our expectations influence his responses. It is not enough to analyse the gaps in understanding between us but we must also account for the way in which we have power to shape these differences.

Kerby: And our rejection of what the boy is saying will affect how he now tells his own story.(Kerby, 1991, p.89)

Gadamer: Yes, we cannot forget that we are ourselves part of this conversation and bear responsibility for our own inability to make sense of his story. Are we asking the right questions? What are our presuppositions?

We should view this situation as a challenge. "Every experience worthy of the name thwarts expectation".(Gadamer, 1999, p.356). Perhaps we have to suspend our expectations of the truth and open ourselves to this boy's testimony. "To reach an understanding in a dialogue is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one's own point of view, but being transformed in a communion in which we do not remain what we were". (Gadamer, 1999, p. 379). Are we willing to risk what truth and coherence mean? Can we understand how this boy is using the same historically conditioned consciousness and language that we possess, yet in such a way that we are incapable of grasping it?

If the judge and lawyers could accept the social worker's perspective, that the fragments of the story were all based in events, and that therefore they are representative of the boy's reality, then what would the court have to do to make sense of that reality? The expectations placed upon the witness by the court process and the investigators would have to be suspended in order to perceive the truth of the boy's story. It would mean resisting the logic of what we know and accept as being reasonable.

In the courtroom scenario, more time might be taken to converse with the boy on his own terms by someone who is open to the possibility of his "truth". This might not be a lawyer or court official. It might happen outside the halls of legal institutions. Perhaps the social worker would risk her job to speak out in court, perhaps the judge would risk legal precedent and costs, or the lawyer risk doubt and suspend disbelief. Such choices, in court or in the classroom or in the home, may often be taken based on a sense of empathy or intuitive trust in the "other's" story. The repetitions, the apparently random connections, the seemingly capricious segues, could be examined for meaning.

It is important to reach beyond such benevolence in order to ask how ADHD works in a person's life; and to understand how we can connect the terms of this experience to the structure of our own lives, seeing ourselves in the margin of the other's story; otherwise we are well on our way to dismissing ADHD as a disorder to be fixed or accommodated. By "suffering" ADHD as an alternative organization of temporality we allow ourselves into this phenomenon and its complexity, as opposed to alienating it in its otherness or accommodating it from a position of privilege.

A key element in Katharine's narrative is the relationship of context and behaviour. The given context in the courtroom example is the coherence, unity, constancy of the expectations of the law, to which the witness' story, or behaviour, is expected to conform. Katharine explained how she has learned not to conform or fit her behaviour to a given context, instead developing a strategy of selecting and manipulating contexts that are appropriate to what she knows are her abilities. Being more flexible with the venue, perhaps an action as simple as allowing the boy in court to walk instead of being held on the stand, presenting the questions differently, encouraging the boy to arrive at his own questions; these are among the ways of changing emotional and mental context.

Perhaps we could consider the boy to be a seer rather than a witness in his relationship to truth. The concept of seer orients itself to affective truth rather than the achievement of empirical objectivity. We are familiar with seers and visionaries, perhaps not as comfortably as in other cultures, although we do have traditions that acknowledge alternate sensory abilities, which include creativity, intuition, prescience. Naming Katharine as Wise Woman, Educator, or outsider affords a more constructive approach to responding to her experience of ADHD than using the metaphor "disordered", and so perhaps the designation of those with ADHD as being special or gifted in some way would bring us better understanding overall.

What I am suggesting is an imaginative breakthrough in our ability to conceptualize challenging differences in others as positive and desirable experiences we can share. This would allow us to bring ADHD into our own horizons of experience. What makes this breakthrough elusive may be our fear of difference or inability to see the benefits to ourselves of embracing other possibilities. If we construct our stories as a way of making sense of a

complex world then opening our world views to alternate ways of perceiving the world is threatening. It is much safer to marginalize difference.

If we interpret ADHD as a pathology, or something outside the norm, then it is logical that our response must be extraordinary. From the perspective of ADHD as a human condition with which we all live even if we do not “have” it, ADHD behaviour may be better understood as a different way of operating within a common realm of experience. The appropriate response to ADHD could be more ordinary, merely an extension of the way we deal with anyone else in our everyday lives.

Chapter Nine. Conclusions

The objective of this research has been to provide a rich description resonant of Katherine's narrative and my encounter with it. The project will have been successful if the reader has felt the "oh, yes" of recognition that indicates that she is also part of the story, and if this in turn is the cause for reflection upon her own teaching practices. My conclusions consist of recognizing some order or pattern in the research material, evaluating the research process, and suggesting ways in which further research might occur.

Three "C"s

Of all the issues that Katharine and I have discussed, context has been the most significant. Difficulties and successes in bridging gaps of understanding have invariably revolved around the context in which meanings were made. Context in this definition is a state of mind that includes not only concepts of time and space but is also shaped by emotions and physical experience.

It has been Katharine's strategy to exercise control over her own context. This control has emphasised process rather than outcome as an life organizing structure. As she has repeated on numerous occasions, Katharine's strategy requires action, not reaction to life's challenges. Katharine's story has been one of assertively negotiating interpretation and context for herself and others.

The key to successful control of her context has been the choice of environments and activities, spaces in time, that have accommodated and optimized her abilities. This might be

thought of as an ecological method. Thus, her role as a creative artist has both benefited from and contributed to her ADHD strategies. Having artists as colleagues and friends, and developing communities of like-minded individuals, has given social dimension to this accommodation. Katharine disliked the patronizing connotation of the term accommodation as it refers to disabilities, however, accommodation as I am discussing it here is the reciprocity that occurs when others are open to the constructive possibilities of difference. It also refers to Katharine's ability to accommodate herself, to recognize and build upon her own distinct abilities.

Context, control and accommodation then are the three "C" s (in an ADHD kind of way) that form the unifying pattern that I have found at the heart of Katharine's self-narrative. There is a direct continuity between these outwardly directed behavioural strategies and the inwardly directed construction of self through self-narrative. Public and private "speech", cultural translation of the self and others are complementary processes of establishing self.

Achievements and limitations of the research

What is it that this study has accomplished? What more do we know about ADHD? One person's story is not enough to tell us anything new about the pathology of ADHD.

Experiments with the integration and segregation of ADHD, learning disabled, gifted, or otherwise "different" students in classrooms have been underway for some years, in effect changing contexts to accommodate various needs and abilities. Medical research and practical issues such as program funding and teacher training are continuing needs.

However this study has taken an experiential tack that deals with effective communication and moral issues. Its purpose has been to model and thereby hold up to scrutiny how we come to understand ADHD, and consequently how we come to make ethical choices in our encounters with ADHD, or any other unfamiliar behaviour.

How to institute curriculum restructuring or apply behavioural or medical solutions involve decisions that rely upon preceding ethical choices which demand not only knowledge and reason but also intuition and common sense (Saul, 2001). These can only come from the negotiation of understandings amongst ourselves and from reflective experience.

When all is said and done, this is a good story about ADHD, one that is satisfyingly familiar and yet has the drama of expectations and events. A good story can make us stop and reflect, be curious, and inspire us to test the horizons of our own understanding. The excited responses of Katharine and others (including myself) who have kindly read parts of this dissertation and been engaged, reassure me that a narrative approach to research can be both provocative and influential.

Validity in a self-narrative study

In conducting my research I have created what Richard Ochberg has described as a focal puzzle, in the way in which I have analysed and categorized Katharine's story (Ochberg, 1996, p.99). That is, I have brought into convergence aspects of Katharine's narrative that might normally be understood separately. I have approached them as if there is a mystery to be solved, or truths to be uncovered by viewing them together.

I have gone beyond the way in which Katharine would have described elements in her story and their significance, as was evident in Katharine's questioning response to my first draft, and I have altered the meaning of Katharine's explicit statements in the transcripts through a process of re-contextualization.

In the process I believe that my research has achieved four objectives that Ochberg associates with the interpretation of life stories: the first being to "show what a narrator gains by making sense of experience in a certain way" (op. cit., p.111). Katharine's story transforms the "deficiency" of ADHD into a positive characteristic of her identity that shapes and inspires her creative work, her teaching and her socially oriented advocacy. ADHD as a challenging life experience complements her other capabilities of ethics, reason and intuition, which enables her to assist others as a translator. This seems to contribute strongly to her self-esteem, an element easily damaged by absences of social understanding or negative interpretations of her ADHD .

Ochberg's second objective is "to connect a narrator to a particular community by telling the individual history within the imagery that that community favours". (Ibid). In part my job has been to examine my own understanding of ADHD and in my writing I have attempted to give voice to my experience in a way that can be appreciated by educators, parents and also by researchers of ADHD for whom the benefits of this hermeneutic approach might be in doubt. Equally important in this particular case is that our conversation that has occurred has contributed structure to Katharine's understanding of herself. It has helped to make sense of the overall experience of ADHD which she had difficulty putting into words, and this is one of the greatest benefits of her participation that she has identified.

A third objective in Ochberg's schema is to show the connection between an individual life and social practices (Ibid). Articulating Katharine's strategies of controlling context and making cultural translations demonstrates how she has been able to connect to her social environment. These strategies of self-management are exemplary of the possibilities of responding to the world.

As a final objective this research shows how Katharine "differs in the sort of sense (she) deems sensible" (op. cit., 112). That is, the dramatic emplotment of Katharine's self-narrative corresponds with the epitomizing threads and events of her life story. This is an impassioned, searching story that contains tragedy and transcendence, that challenges comfortable assumptions. While Katharine has a desire to be a social benefactor as well as a desire to receive social approbation, her story expresses a fierce independence and self-reliance. Being part of a distinct women's culture, being a mother, being an educator are aspects of this social imperative.

My research has been shaped by my desire, for a particular kind of academic achievement, which in part turns upon my gender conditioned goal orientation and the nature of my training in humanistic, rational disciplines, all of which have presented barriers to my understanding of Katharine's relational process and intuitive orientation. In stretching these horizons I have learned as much about myself as of Katharine.

I have, despite a careful choice of mitigating language, structured Katharine's narrative into thematic categories that imply a boundedness and fixity. This approach is misleading if the

categories are taken to be exhaustive, or if they objectify Katharine's story in such a way that they are taken as nominal data rather than as interpretation with an intention. This is the paradoxical consequence of working with symbolic language that seeks to communicate experience and fails to acknowledge that the interpretation itself changes historical and experiential context.

Regarding education

This research has been conducted with issues of teaching and learning in mind. I have discovered fruitful connections between the content and process of this research and learner centred educational philosophies, such as those articulated by Stephen Brookfield (Brookfield, 1987). Brookfield's concept of critical education stresses the importance of accounting for the learner's experience and context in order that the object of learning is integrated into the life of the learner. Brookfield's educational philosophy has clear parallels in Katharine's self-narrative, and it recommends itself as a constructive approach to accommodating various kinds of learning differences. A "delivery" model of education attempts to bring the learner to meet the expectations of the object of knowledge. The critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire has been perhaps the greatest inspiration in the twentieth century to move from what Freire called the "banking" concept of education, in which knowledge is given by the knowledgeable to those who are not, to a liberating and humanizing pedagogy that affirms and engages the learner himself (Freire, 1993).

Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of

persons as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation (Freire, 1993, p.65).

Education is a process of symbolic exchange which requires the transformation of information into the situated knowledge of the participants. We learn not through the raw appropriation of that with which we are presented, but through the application of our understanding of ourselves to this information, through activities such as imitation or rehearsal and through creating narratives, listening to and telling stories.

Educational policy in the early 21st century has been shaped by the legacy of what Charles Taylor refers to as instrumental reason – a tendency to want purposeful answers which has led toward increased specialization (Taylor, 1991) , even in art institutions. This move to disciplinary exclusivity results in a profound alienation of the learner and the teacher from the connective webs of possibility inherent in the greater context of their world.

This is a world that includes racial, cultural, gendered, learning, experiential differences. As teachers, we often find ourselves locked in disciplinary dungeons, or perhaps ivory towers, that are held together and measured by their own outcome based expectations, and we work extremely hard to enable our students to meet these various, sometimes contradictory standards. The differences that our students bring to the classroom are seen as problems or challenges to be overcome or sublimated or simply endured. If the student does not fit then he or she should move on to seek another academic niche. In other words we select the student for the discipline, we often do not take the risk of seeing what the learning situation and exchange can do for the discipline.

This tendency is reinforced by government funding policies, or should I say underfunding policies, which are tools of efficiency, the axiom of instrumental reason. They reduce the ability of institutions and instructors to engage in more reflective and discursive approaches to knowledge. This suggests to me that outcome based educational philosophy is conditioned by anxiety – a fear of uncertainty. The criteria of predictable and measurable curricula are echoed throughout the educational system from administrator to instructor.

Instrumental reason, founded upon the Cartesian conviction that truth is out there waiting to be discovered, produces a desire for certainty that is detrimental to our ability to imagine ourselves in others stories and our ability to imagine others in our own. Creativity and imagination have themselves been colonized by instrumental reason – dismissed as romantic or contained by Platonic, idealist boundaries imposed by disciplinary conceit.

I would argue in the manner of John Ralston Saul that learning is dependent upon the ability to imagine, to be creative, to be able to do things knowingly but not always reasonably (Saul, 2001). The physical body and senses are as important as the intellect in the learning process because knowledge must be applied to result in understanding. In other words, learning is a dynamic experiential process. There is not always time for reflection and that reflection, as I have observed in my research on ADHD does not happen in the same way for each person. To imagine is to anticipate what is not yet known. Imagination must therefore necessarily be inclusive; it strives to open itself up to the unexpected; it is about conversation; it embraces dissent and uncertainty.

Where does that leave us? Can we give new value to common sense – not the common sense dismissed by enlightenment philosophy, but the *sensus communis*, or receptivity to the Other discussed by Gadamer. This interpretation recognizes the context and traditions of experience that include but exceed the boundaries set by instrumental reason. As an instructor of art, I promote the free play of creativity and imagination in the classroom, however, my goal is often constrained by educational structures that place emphasis on consistency, predictability, repeatability and measurable performance. Not that these desires are unimportant, they are, but perhaps more as a way of communicating common ideals than as practical goals in themselves.

To have this conversation we need to bring everyone into the room and at the same time recognize our differences. This is a fundamentally ethical action.

Creativity as a foil

Creativity is integral to my discussion and deserves some final comments, even though it is not the primary focus of the research. Creativity as I have used the term is not a personality trait wielded in the realization of an essential self – this is the discourse of genius. Rather it is an inherent human practice tied to the learning response – it is what we all do.

The difficulty in understanding the relationship between ADHD and creativity lies in the abstraction that occurs when we define these phenomena in fixed ways. So for instance, to be measurable creativity has to meet an observable norm. As a result, an individual with ADHD who engages in novel or unexpected thinking may be perceived as uninhibited and risk-taking and consequently may be labelled as creative if the outcome is acknowledged as a creative

solution. But if individuals who continuously challenge the conventions of normal behaviour and engage in processes that resemble artistic creativity are not always able to achieve a creative product or outcome can this be called creativity?

Alternately, in concordance with Foucault's notion of self-constructivist technologies, we might consider our creativity to be manifested in our ability to move ourselves into an optimal fit with our environment (Foucault, 1988). This is a materialist and experientially grounded perspective and eschews the rational, idealist perspectives of Enlightenment philosophy. It also runs parallel to Katharine's narrative of a self that seeks not to rise to meet her given context but finds ways to manipulate her context of time and place in order to make room for her abilities. What Katharine's story teaches us is that creativity may be considered as a strategy of self-location, a matter of fit, rather than as an attribute that serves to alter reality according to whim.

Similarly, her story teaches us that ADHD has a meaning that goes beyond a medical explanation – it is not just a condition that inhabits or is inhabited, it is also an expression of identity, an element of the way in which a person locates herself in the world. As such ADHD cannot be separated from the life of the individual experiencing it, or the teacher, or the parent, or the doctor, and so can never be finally known, it must always be negotiated.

Therefore, is it arguable that creativity converges with ADHD not because these phenomena manifest the same behavioural and psychological traits, but rather because an ADHD way of coping with the world, while as normally creative as any other way of being, often shows us unexpected results that in novelty of process and outcome strike us as being notably creative.

Yet for the individual with ADHD, creative outcomes are not always achieved in part because of the way motivation and interest are shaped by ADHD. Creative outcomes may also be precluded by a myriad of factors such as co-morbid learning disabilities, educational histories, social and economic situations.

Katherine Nadeau in her study of adults with ADHD makes a point of distinguishing between personality styles measured by the Myers Briggs test and the behavioural attributes of ADHD (Nadeau, 1997). While these may coincide and so reinforce a particular kind of behaviour, they may also conflict. The point is that the cluster of characteristic behaviours that compose ADHD are aspects of a greater whole that comprise identity.

The linking of creativity and ADHD stumbles on the definition of creativity as outcome based, as articulated in Teresa Amabile's discussion (Amabile, 1996). Therefore, perhaps Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's grid of personal and contextual factors that result in the flow of creativity might be a more appropriate approach to thinking about its convergence with ADHD (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

The paradox of generalizing ADHD as inherently creative (Weiss, 1997), a way of positively reframing ADHD, is that when an ADHD individual fails to problem solve in a way that is considered creative, this is seen as a measure of her disability. The strategy creates expectations based on a definition of creativity that may in the end disadvantage individuals with the condition, as does an expectation of ADHD conceived as a disability.

Where does the line fall between creative risk-taking and impulsive decision making? Or between lateral thinking and non-linear, non-sequential reasoning? Creative ways of life that permit non-linear organization and expectations attract individuals with ADHD but this does not necessarily make these individuals more creative than others who do not share the diagnosis. While it is important to support the creative abilities of all learners, it would be risky to equate ADHD and creativity and by so doing impose unfair expectations. This would be as unjust as theorising that creativity is a behaviour of which an individual with ADHD is inherently incapable.

Where next?

At the heart of this study is time. Narrative is time. Much could be learned from a longitudinal study of the self-narrative of individuals who have ADHD as they develop from childhood to adulthood, considering the ways in which their self-narrative constructions change and interact in their lives. It would be enlightening to consider the self-narratives of diverse individuals at various developmental stages of life. My study has addressed the relationship of ADHD and artistic creativity, however other variables may suggest themselves. Self-esteem is a critical issue affecting people with ADHD. How and in what circumstances individuals are able (or unable) to construct themselves in order to feel successful could be examined in every field of endeavour. Practical studies might be made of educational situations in which teachers have been able to “listen” to the stories of their students who have ADHD and have adjusted their teaching accordingly. As I have suggested, learner centred pedagogical strategies may be the most appropriate in working with ADHD.

The difficulty of reflection and memory recall is central to the way in which the disability of ADHD has been defined (Barkley, 1997). Katharine's story suggests that kinaesthetic activity, body memory is a form of reflection itself. How active experience and critical reflection interconnect has ongoing significance for educational philosophy and pedagogical methods.

Katharine's strategy of changing contexts instead of herself is thought provoking. In "normal" understanding this might be interpreted as avoidance or lacking self-direction. And yet we all practice "choosing our moments". Because she is a mature individual who has built successful coping mechanisms, we might think that Katharine has the opportunity to use this strategy while children and others less privileged have not. On the other hand are we simply not recognizing that children with ADHD who are struggling with rigid structures at school may be in the process of developing successful, if unfamiliar (to us), strategies?

In the end this study tells us something obvious, that we need to really listen to others and support them in their lives. Equally it asks us to re-examine the assumptions we carry with us when we do that listening, to de-centre ourselves, to be open to the unexpected, in fact, to be creative in our dealings with others.

On a final note I am reminded of that homily that in order to understand art we may better ask what art does rather than what it is, even though it is the latter that usually guides art discourse. The same notion might be applied to ADHD. Perhaps we know what ADHD *is* already because it is part of our world. Exploring what ADHD does (as experienced by all of us) may humanize the ways in which we negotiate the gaps between ourselves and those who have ADHD, helping to optimize the possibilities of all our lives.

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