The experience of older learners in adult education with a focus on the developmental task of life review: a study using in-depth interviews.

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THE EXPERIENCE OF OLDER LEARNERS IN ADULT EDUCATION
WITH A FOCUS ON THE DEVELOPMENTAL TASK OF LIFE REVIEW:
A STUDY USING IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

A Dissertation Presented

By

Mary Alice Wolf

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 1982

School of Education
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ABSTRACT

The Experience of Older Learners in Adult Education
With a Focus on the Developmental Task of Life Review: A Study Using In-Depth Interviews

June 1982

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This explorative study sought to examine the educational experiences of older adults (from 60 to 80) who were participating in adult education programs. The study used a phenomenological model; three in-depth interviews explored the motivation, experience and meaning of late life participation in educational programs. Informed by psychosocial developmental theory, the study emphasized the task of life review within the last stage of adult development.

The study found that in a small sample of ethnically diverse older adults personal motivation, experience, and meaning of adult education exhibited themes related to continuing early life constructs such as social class identity, family goals and early educational experiences. Hence, motivations for formal learning at this point in
life were related to individual personal constructs; in several participants these included the phenomenon of life review. Many of the older adults returned to school to complete life goals which had not been satisfied at younger ages, others wanted to "compete" with younger versions of themselves, to prove that they were still capable of learning, to make clearer their own personal histories, or to find contributory outlets. Individual motivational themes were reflected in the participants' experience of adult education and in the personal and historical meanings they made of it. The study presents in detail the stories of six participants and attempts to tie together their motivation, experience and meaning within the larger population and within a psychosocial developmental framework. Implications for education are explored.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Others should be thanked, too. Judithe Speidel guided much of my doctoral program and gave me time and friendship; Sylvia Forman and Barbara Turner were very helpful in providing background for the study. In addition, Sally Wittenburg of the Springfield DOVES, Ray Morrow of the Adult Education Department of Springfield were generous in helping me find the study population. Finally, I am grateful to the twelve participants of the study who took time to sit with a stranger to talk about their feelings, their hopes, and to review their histories. They shared their lives and their wisdom; their stories are at the center of this study.
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For man is a creature without any fixed age, who has the faculty of becoming, in a few seconds, many years younger, and who, surrounded by the walls of the time through which he has lived, floats within them but as though in a basin the surface level of which is constantly changing, so as to bring him into the range now of one epoch, now of another.

Marcel Proust
Remembrance of Things Past
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION: NEED FOR THE STUDY

The American population grows older. Between the years 1970 and 1980 the number of adults over 60 increased by 18% while the increase in total population was only 5%. There are an estimated 20 million Americans currently over the age of 60 and the number is expected to double in the next 20 years. Concurrently, public education of adults has increased steadily since the enactment of Title II-B of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and the Older Americans Act of 1965. As Grace Hewell of the U.S. Office of Education writes, "These legislative developments are benchmarks of national concern for the full participation of older adults" in educational experiences (1980, p. 1). The U.S. Department of Education estimates that the number of older adults attending public adult education programs tripled from 1975 to 1979; Marian Marshall of the State Department of Education of California has announced that over 200 new classes have been designed for the elderly in California alone. And the numbers of older adults--those over 60--who participate in nonformal educational experiences can only be assumed; in a sample of older adults who were participating in adult education classes in Springfield, Massachusetts,
about half were simultaneously engaged in a second, more informal, learning experience.

Educational programs for older adults have proliferated, with research lagging behind practice. While innovative programs—and those less innovative, to be sure—have developed along the lines of traditional liberal arts curricula, leisure-time arts and crafts activities, physical education experiences, and Adult Basic Education (ABE), scant empirical data have so far been made available on the learning that did or did not occur in the classes, the impact that the courses had on the lives of the older adults who pursued them, or the nature of the motivation that drew the learners to attend. Pedagogical theory exercised in the development of many of the learning experiences and literature reflecting the psychosocial context within which older adults learn are sorely lacking (Cross, 1981).

At the same time, the field of gerontology has been developing, and studies of old people—the unfolding of their lives—have proliferated since the 1960's (Butler, 1963, 1977; Neugarten, 1968, 1974; Oliver, Eckerman and Machalek, 1980). Before that time, personality research on older adults was based on "volunteers, psychiatric patients or on groups of institutionalized people" (Neugarten and others, 1964, p. xviii). In 1963,
Robert Butler wrote of the need to assemble empirical data on normative characteristics, both physical and psychological, of healthy older people living in communities and making use of community resources:

The dominant theme had been upon decline. Little appeared to be known about healthy and socially autonomous aging. We knew that certain cultural stereotypes affected the contemporary picture of the aged and the process of aging. (p. 721)

Myths of what old people could and could not do permeate social and popular thinking. Achenbaum (1978), tracing the historical roots of ageism in this country, rings a somber note. Quoting a Louis Harris study of 1975, he writes:

Most people still subscribe to images of old people that prevailed earlier in the country. Regardless of their income, education, sex, race, or age, Americans generally do not consider the aged very active, alert, efficient, or contented. There is, moreover, a tremendous discrepancy between what old age is expected to be like and the actual experiences elderly Americans say they have. (p. 163)

Furthermore, younger cohorts internalize stereotypes of decline in old age and anticipate rejection by the greater society. Such internalization creates a self-fulfilling prophecy: we become what we expect we will become. "Social development," writes Kohlberg, "is in essence, the restructuring of: (1) the concept of self, (2) in its relationship to concepts of other people, (3) conceived as being in a common social world with social standards" (1969, p. 346). What we think will happen to us, including
the way we will be treated as we age, and the way we will perceive of ourselves as old people, is believed to be determined by middle age (Gutmann, 1975; Neugarten, 1977).

Old people are categorized as senile, rigid in thought and manner, old fashioned in morality and skills. Ageism allows the younger generations to see older people as different from themselves. Thus they subtly cease to identify with their elders as human beings. (Butler, 1977, p. 16)

Finally, research done with older learners indicates a high rate of self-deprecating behavior and attitudes based on popular myth and what may be internalized ageism (Elias, Elias and Elias, 1977; Fleece, 1974; Mason, 1974). Older adults may feel that they learn less effectively than younger cohorts and may choose less challenging tasks and learning environments based on these assumptions (Estes, 1979; Jacobs, 1979; McMahon, 1979; Marshall, 1980). Often, when asked to describe "a good classroom" or school experience, older people will answer "a great lecture." They reflect educational models of the early 1900's, inculcated at the time of their early education, that a good student is silent and absorbs what the authoritarian teacher says when, in fact, their processing of the lecture content may be of a most personal (schema-building) nature. Teachers are often imbued with supernatural importance. Examination of adult learning may, in part, remind adult educators that they are not supernatural beings. Having "good" and passive students before
them, many adult educators do not explore the rich and textured lives and minds in their classes. The learners, therefore, often do not have the opportunity to free themselves of past notions about education and current societal taboos about aging in order to come to grips with their own competencies as capable learners and thinkers.

Adult educators need to examine the effect of biological, psychological and sociological factors on the older adult and look at the personal and experiential dynamic of learning in late life. We need to take stock, to build theory and to develop program based on empirical evidence; and we need to integrate findings from the rapidly developing and overlapping disciplines of gerontology, education and sociology to examine late life learning. One way to approach this synthesis is to examine the experience of the adult learners themselves: How they choose and participate in "educative" experiences which are, after all, voluntary at this time of their lives. This study attempts to explore these questions within a psychosocial framework. It is a small step toward understanding the older learner and his or her participation in adult education; it attempts to fill the gap in adult education research which, as Cyril Houle wrote,
deals with single actions of individuals, not with their whole patterns of educational effort. It describes not what they do, and not what they think about what they do, or why they do it. (1961, p. 8)

Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study begins with the conceptual framework of psychosocial developmental theory as it relates to older adults. Gerontologists, psychologists and sociologists agree that developmental tasks remain to be accomplished in late life; they stress the importance of attempting and completing such tasks as culmination of a lifetime's work (Butler, 1963, 1977; Erickson, 1963; Levinson, 1978). The challenge of age-related tasks and the acceptance of the intra-psychic growth that accompanies them mark the cornerstone of psychosocial theory:

The ability to transpose oneself, to take on another attitude toward life is a character trait which is almost a necessity for success in life. For the psychology of development it is important that the individual both in personal and in practical fields not only satisfies his needs but that he also at some time accepts certainties and tasks, and works for them. (Frenkel-Brunswik, 1968, p. 84)

The "work" of late life, the "task," may take the form of a review of one's life as Robert Butler suggested in 1963. This is a mental pulling together of life's experiences into an integrated sense of meaning and personal history. The task, facilitated by memory and marked by integration and sometimes resolution of past conflict,
affords the individual a sense of life history and, perhaps, completion before death. In the ideal, says Erikson, "death loses its sting."

Life review is described as the retrospective naming and sometimes mental reliving of events in one's own lifespan. In the aged it takes the form of reminiscence, especially the refocusing on past conflicts and issues left unresolved. It is often a painful process; but in the ideal there is an acceptance of one's own world, "an experience which conveys some world order and spiritual sense, no matter how dearly paid for" (Erikson, 1963, p. 268). It is within this developmental psychosocial framework that the following study investigates the experience of older adult learning.

The Design of the Study

The study seeks to examine the subjective context within which older adults--from 60 to 80--approach learning experiences in adult and continuing education. To do this it examines the individuals' motivation for classroom participation, their perceptions of the actual experience, and the personal meaning that they make of it. The role that life review plays throughout is explored.

The reflective nature of the subjective data requires an extended period for collection so that participants
have the opportunity to mull over their responses. Any categorization of individual experiences comes from within the data themselves, from the structure of the interviews and the psychosocial framework of the study. No outside tool or scale is used. Descriptive analysis is presented through anecdotes and excerpts from the data; the frame of reference for each individual's presentation of the process of learning comes from that separate individual rather than a "sample" effect. Participants speak for themselves, and interpretation of both the rendering of those experiences and the experiences themselves is made throughout by the investigator. Focus is on the motivation, experience and personal meaning of adult education participation and on the role that life review does or does not play in those constructs.

The population was composed of adult learners who were participating in an educational program in a small northeastern city. In-depth interviews of approximately one and a half hours were conducted with each participant on three occasions, approximately one week apart. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed for data analysis. Anecdotes and personal statements were selected and analyzed to describe themes of motivation, experience and personal meaning for the older adults as
they participated in classes. The design of the study is discussed more fully in Chapter III.

Limitations

Inherent in the study is the limiting factor of the investigator-participant relationship. The same potential for relationship that makes the interview a powerful research tool prohibits exact replicability of the study. If the interviewer is the "instrument" in qualitative methodology, there can be no truly "objective" reading of the data. Furthermore, the participant will often feel good or special because of the attention brought on by the interview. This can be reflected in the information envisioned as "reality" that day. However, the three long and separate interviews in this study attempt to offset this occurrence. "People, it would seem," write Bogdan and Taylor, "attempt to present themselves well before strangers. And as new faces become familiar ones, everyone's behavior changes" (1975, p. 89). Furthermore, this phenomenon is weighed and taken into account in the discussion of the interviews and participant-interviewer dynamic: the participant says what he or she chooses to say to the interviewer for whatever personal need he or she may have and that "version of reality"--what Alfred Schutz (1967) calls the "subjective reality"--is
significant (Bogdan and Taylor, 1967; Johnson, 1975). The opportunity for participants to personalize their own experiences rather than fit into prestructured categories is, concomitantly, the very strength of the study. Furthermore, the ability to tap subjective data is greatly enhanced through the interpersonal response that occurs during such in-depth interviewing.

A further limitation is the lack of standard parameters for identification of life review in participants. Many people are unaware that they are in life review until it is pointed out to them by an observer (Butler, 1967). Telling anecdotes from the past, for example, may not necessarily be "life review." However, in examination of the transcripts and sometimes during the interviews themselves, instances of life review occurred: reminiscent modes in discourse and behavior, the evaluation and weighing of events from early life, particularly in the repeated retellings of anecdotes which have obviously been reorganized throughout the interview sessions.

Definition of Terms

Older Adult: Used in this study, the term refers to people over the age of 60. The sample looked at in this investigation is from 60 to 80 years of age. The specific sample is discussed in Chapter III.
Adult Education: Used here it refers to experiences and courses that occur regularly within the framework of a public school system. Often these are called "Continuing Education" courses when referring to college level content courses. Typically a person registers, pays, attends regular sessions and terminates at a pre-determined time. The courses taken by the participants in this study include: psychology, writing, electrical engineering, GED: high school equivalency, Special Education, music, Western Civilization, sociology.

Life Review: The task believed most prevalent in older adults according to current psychosocial developmental theory. It is a period of taking stock; "It is characterized by the progressive return to consciousness of past experiences, in particular the resurgence of unresolved conflicts which can now be surveyed and reintegrated" (Butler, 1975, p. 412).

Integrity: It is the last and optimal state in Erik Erikson's epigenetic hierarchy: "Integrity is the acceptance of one's one and only life cycle as something that had to be, and that, by necessity, permitted of no substitution" (Erikson, 1963, p. 268).
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter focuses on the literatures that contribute to the study: readings in adult education and adult developmental psychology. The methodological background and literature review is discussed in Chapter III.

I. DIRECTIONS FROM ADULT EDUCATION

Several sources from the field of adult education have contributed to this study. First, research into late life learning has confirmed that capacity to learn does not diminish with age. Data from studies on I.Q. measurements indicate that verbal skills are maintained or increased throughout the aging process, while skills on subtests measuring spatial relations and mathematic ability do diminish, especially in timed tests (Baltes & Schaie, 1977; Butler, 1963, 1977; Elias, Elias & Elias, 1977; Hulicka, 1967; Lorge, 1947; Winn & Elias, 1975; Thorndike, 1928; and others). Older adults maintain cognitive ability, particularly when it is exercised throughout the lifespan.

The older adult, particularly the retired adult, has been observed as an occasional course-taker since the early literature of Thorndike (1928) and Houle (1961)

Yet, the nature of the adult's interaction within the classroom is a relatively new area of concern. In his theory of adult education, Malcom Knowles (1975; 1977) differentiates between pedagogy (from the Greek "paid," meaning child, and "agogos," meaning "leading") and andragogy (from the Greek "andr" which means man); he suggests that a new vocabulary will create a new technology--the teaching of adults. He stresses the adult learner's ability to self-diagnose his or her own learning needs, participate in planning learning activities to fulfill those needs, and evaluate the success of the activities. Nonetheless, follow-up studies on implementation of Knowles' suggested "technology" are needed. Specific research on the interaction of older adults will also be forthcoming as the Elderhostel programs, Travelling Teachers, National Endowment for the Humanities
aging project and other curricula are developed and offered to older people.

One element— that of experience— is repeatedly mentioned as significant in the older adult's classroom life. It is asserted that the older person, by virtue of having lived longer, has greater and fuller resources on which to base new learning (Harrington, 1977; Huberman, 1974; Knowles, 1975, 1977; Knox, 1977; Mason, 1974; McClusky, 1978; Moody, 1978; and others). Nevertheless, it was not possible to find one piece of empirical evidence to support the fact that the older adult makes use of his or her lifetime of experience within the classroom setting. In a pilot study at an Elderhostel in the summer of 1979, older learners did not appear to follow any one version of schema-building in new learning. Many were interested in relating new information to their own past lives, but still others wished to explore areas in which they had no opportunity to rely on part or personal content.

The National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Council on the Aging (1980) have developed an exploratory curriculum currently being taught and evaluated in senior citizen centers throughout the United States. Its goal is to approach all content learning of history and literature from the personal and social experience of older adults. It is not the first time that
classroom attention has been directed toward experiential and discussion modes (Cleugh, 1962), but it may generate the first empirical data providing concrete measurements on the use of non-lecture formats in the teaching of older people. For, despite evidence vouching for the flexibility of older people (Butler, 1975; Haan, 1976; Lorge, 1952) late life learners tend to prefer lecture format classrooms. Baltes and Schaie (1977) observe:

It seems fair to assume that the older people were exposed to shorter periods of formal education. Furthermore, their education probably relied more heavily on principles of memorization and less heavily on those of problem-solving. (p. 68)

It is probable that discussion modes of classroom interaction may be gradually introduced to older learners and, concurrently, that learners might be encouraged to see their own strengths as adults who have experienced, who have lived through social and historical changes. Personal schema building (i.e., learning about the Depression through oral history) may be the most effective strategy for educating older adults (Kuhn, 1977; Wilson, 1979; Worthy, 1980). "In any event," writes Harry Moody, "experience is the unavoidable condition of learning for the older person, and so, as teachers, we ignore it at our peril" (1978, p. 31).
Further theory and research are needed to better understand and assess the older adult's interaction with learning situations and personal schema-building. McClusky (1980) suggests, for example, that after coping needs are met, three levels of educability are evident in older adults tapping the individual's need to be expressive, to be contributive and to influence. Cross (1981) suggests that what is needed is "a deeper understanding of the learner in the context of the learning environment" (p. xii). Furthermore, research on the impact of personal developmental growth on late life learning may contribute to adult educators' understanding of the special kinds of learning of which this population is capable. For this deeper understanding of the older learner we might turn to the literature of psychosocial development.

II. A REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTAL LITERATURE

The Master said:

At 15 I set my heart upon learning.
At 30 I had planted my feet firm upon the ground.
At 40 I no longer suffered from perplexities.
At 50 I knew what were the biddings of heaven.
At 60 I heard them with docile ear.
At 70 I could follow the dictates of my own heart; for what I desired no longer overstepped the boundaries of right.

Confucius

Theorists have tried for centuries to understand the inner life of human beings in relation to the body and the
world outside; theories of age-related behavior—prescriptive and descriptive—are not new to the twentieth century. The Talmud, The Bible, The Koran and local folk mythologies all generalize and articulate the inner structure of the human who ages and develops new abilities to meet each challenge of life. In "The Sayings of the Fathers" of The Talmud, for example, age 40 is "for understanding; 50 for giving counsel; 60 for becoming an elder (wisdom, old age); 70 for white hair; 80 for Gevurah (new, special strength of age); 90 for being bent under the weight of the years; 100 for being as if already dead and passed away from the world" (in Levinson, 1978, p. 325).

Research on adaptive behavior of older people has tended to stress the physical changes and developments—more typically referred to as decline—of late life rather than the intellectual or emotional dimensions (Balint, 1957; Birren, 1959, 1963; Bühler & Massarik, 1968; and others). Other empirical studies in the social sciences have delineated age-related behaviors by weaving together factors of social environment, biological development and inner life (Clark & Anderson, 1967; Estes, 1979; Maas & Kuypers, 1975; Neugarten, 1964, 1974). A further direction in research has been a clinical approach: collections of life stories laid out and analyzed comparatively so that a woman of 30 might be said to reflect
the "norm" within a specific distribution of personal interests and activities. One might say, for example, "A woman of 30 in thus and such culture is concerned with the following internal issues and demonstrates this by expressing the following outward signs." The hallmark of such studies is that of Else Frenkel-Brunswik (1936, in Neugarten, 1968) whose clinical paradigm marked the "inner aging" characteristics of a sample through longitudinal observation, interview and autobiographical data.

Several aspects of Frenkel-Brunswik's study are of interest to this project: the reliance on self-reporting by the subjects, the life-long view which permits the researcher to gain some understanding of early and mid-life in the inquiry into late life, and the differentiation of activities or "dimensions" in which the subjects engaged at various points in their lives. Especially germane to the theoretical framework of this research is Frenkel-Brunswik's long view of life; the tracing of an entire life-span, and analysis into "phases" provide a ladder or grid upon which to generalize about external activities and to hypothesize about the motivation behind continued learning in late life. Hers were the underpinnings upon which later developmentalists based their work including Erikson (1963), Levinson (1978), Lowenthal, Thurnher &

Late Life: Decline or Growth

However, the use of biological paradigms (inner growth paralleled by physical growth) based on reproductive capacity and growth focuses on decline in late life and the "culmination period" of middle life. The underlying assumption, that participation in quantities of activities marks the peak of life and the lack of activities marks one's aging, was the basis for Cumming and Henry's (1961) "disengagement theory." Failure to participate in activities (regardless of their quality and nature) was interpreted as the mutual withdrawal of the aged and society. "Activity theory," on the other hand, maintained that the aged do better--"age successfully"--when kept active and are enticed to participate in all aspects of life that involved them at mid-life (Havighurst, 1966; Huberman, 1974; Neugarten, 1968).

A third view, "interactional" or "socio-environmental," struck a midpoint between activity and disengagement theories and measured adaptation in old age as a modified course (Gubrium, 1973). In this model of the aging process disengagement may take the form of more thoughtful participation in the activities that one selects in older
adulthood. "This last period contains experiences of a retrospective nature and considerations about the future, that is about oncoming death and one's past life. The balance-sheet of life is drawn up, so to speak" (Frenkel-Brunswik, 1936, p. 84). Within the framework of this model the developmental view yields a perspective on the inner life and the relationship between that life and the experience of adult education for adults over 60.

Task Theory

Frenkel-Brunswik's further contribution to the study of growth and development in adulthood is task theory, a system whereby each age is challenged by a developmental task.

In the first half of life, our subjective experience is determined primarily by our needs, in the sense of the expansion of the individual. On the contrary, in the second half of life, the individual regards as more important certain tasks which he has set for himself, or which have been set for him by society, or which have come from some code of values such as religion or science. (1936, p. 82)

Erik Erikson's (1963) epigenetic model deepens the implications of task theory for late life development. Viewing each time of life as a challenge for growth, Erikson's life cycle theory posits a developmental process in which tasks must be completed at various stages. The completion of these age-related tasks permits the individual to enjoy the particular beauty and security of
each psychosocial stage and to go on to the next. The stages are cyclical and predictable; periods of crisis, stagnation and growth alternate and occur in sequential patterns. The last stage—"ego integrity vs. despair"—concerns the older adult's acceptance of his or her life; it is the ripening of the fruit of the seven stages of the lifespan (Erikson, p. 269).

In the developmental task mode, late adulthood is a settling stage with an emphasis on the integration of one's life within the history and community one has known. Erikson describes the older adult who has achieved the final stage:

The possessor of integrity is ready to defend the dignity of his own life style against all physical and economic threats, for he knows that an individual life is the accidental coincidence of but one life cycle with but one cycle of history, and that for him all human integrity stands or falls with the one style of integrity of which he partakes. (1963, p. 269)

**Life Review**

It is possible that life review is the means by which Erickson's final task of development is accomplished. Or rather, it is possible that life review is a psychological phenomenon that enables the individual to rework earlier stages, to "settle accounts," and to achieve "integrity" (Neugarten, 1964, 1977). A centering outside of society and within the self has been a generally accepted activity
of late life (Butler, 1975, 1977; Gould, 1978; Havighurst, 1966, 1975; Levinson, 1978). But "life review," a process by which one remembers events and feelings of past experience, has only recently been the focus of gerontological interest.¹

While the function of reminiscence is a newly perceived "normative adaptive task of late life," grandparents and great-grandparents have always known about reminiscence and the clarity and specificity its scenes:

"I should like to ask you," says Sydney Carton to the seventy-seven-year-old Jarvis Lorry in *A Tale of Two Cities*, "does your childhood seem far off? Do the days when you sat upon your mother's knee seem days of very long ago?"

Responding to his softened manner, Mr. Lorry answers: "Twenty years back, yes; at this time of my life, no. For as I draw closer and closer to the end, I travel in a circle nearer and nearer to the beginning. It seems to be one of the kind of smoothings and preparings of the way. My heart is touched now by many remembrances that had long fallen asleep, of my pretty young mother (and I so old!), and by many associations of the days when what we call the World was not so real with me, and my faults were not confirmed in me." (Blythe, 1979, p. 75)

Why life review occurs and how it proceeds, when the onset begins and what kinds of current experiences trigger it are questions now answered only with theory and hypothesis. Balint (1957) described late life concerns as

¹Robert Butler wrote in 1963 that life review had previously been interpreted as a symptom of psychological dysfunction.
"Torschlusspanick," which Butler (1963a) translates literally as "the panic at the closing of the gate."

Butler (1963, 1963a), Lieberman and Falk (1971) and others suspect life review occurs as individuals become confronted with death. Forty-five-year-old Ivan Ilych reviews his life in the Tolstoy story, "The Death of Ivan Ilych":

Ivan Ilych had lived only in memories of the past. Pictures of his past rose before him one after another. They always began with what was nearest in time and then went back to what was most remote—to his childhood—and rested there. (pp. 149-50)

Later, having truly accepted his oncoming death, Ivan begins to evaluate his achievements and to recognize the paucity of his own emotional growth. He asks, "What if my whole life has really been wrong?" (p. 152).

The value of life review is said not to be merely the evocation of memories, but the integration and clarification of one's life work. "Old age," writes Butler (1977), "is a period in which unique developmental work can be accomplished" (p. 13).

The life review is characterized by a progressive return to consciousness of past experience, in particular the resurgence of unresolved conflicts which can now be surveyed and integrated. The old are not only taking stock of themselves as they review their lives; they are trying to think and feel through what they will do with the time that is left and with whatever material and emotional legacies they may have to give to others. (p. 18)
If looking to one's death causes life review to accelerate, questions remain about when it commences. Lieberman and Falk (1971), in attempting to quantify and analyze reminiscence data, found, among other things, that persons "who were close to death showed less involvement in reminiscence activity" (p. 139). McMahon and Rhudick (1967) found a high degree of reminiscence in a population of Spanish American War veterans who were being treated in a hospital setting; in a follow-up study they noticed a correlation between mental and physical health and reminiscence; that most reminiscent of the sample lived the longest. In a population studied by Tobin and Etigson (1968), life review was in evidence well before crises or stress connected with acceptance of death, perhaps as a psychological preparation for the tying together of one's personal story--autobiographical schema--and as a last chance to resolve earlier conflict (also Butler, 1963a; Erikson, 1978; Frenkel-Brunswik, 1968). Butler found it a "universal occurrence" in healthy older people; Frenkel-Brunswik (1968) suggested 63.8 as a normative age for "the fifth phase of life," and Levinson (1978) wrote that the stage of "inferiority" commences at 60 to 65 years of age. It was assumed for this study that life review was likely to be present in older adults after age 60.
Operational Definition of Life Review

Empirical data on how life review is reflected in everyday behavior is slight; anecdotes and common sense definition fill the void. C.G. Jung (1971) offered the following example of the late life reflective spirit from a pious churchwarden "intolerant in matters of morality and religion":

Suddenly, sitting up in bed in the middle of the night, he said to his wife: "Now at last I've got it! I'm just a plain rascal." Nor did this realization remain without results. He spent his declining years in riotous living and squandered a goodly part of his fortune. (p. 13)

Of course, not all life review processes result in such extreme outward behavior. Of the older man at this stage, Levinson (1978) says, "He continues to be actively engaged with the voices and realities of the external world, but he seeks a new balance in which the self has greater primacy" (p. 36). Reflection may precede action (Gutmann, 1975).

In Ingmar Bergman's movie "Wild Strawberries," Isak, an old doctor, reviews his life by visiting the site of childhood memories and through his dreams some of which portray him as dead. Although he has been a success in the medical world, he recognizes suddenly that he has been a failure as a husband and as a human being.

In a dream sequence, Isak is examined by a former professor:
Examiner: What is a doctor's first duty?

Isak: A doctor's first duty is to . . . I've forgotten.

Examiner: A doctor's first duty is to ask forgiveness. You have been accused of guilt.

Isak: I've been accused of guilt?

Examiner: I'll make a note you don't understand the charge . . . Your wife has made a charge of neglect.

Isak: But my wife has been dead for years.

Isak is told that his wife died of loneliness. "Loneliness?" he asks, "Oh is there no mercy?" Through recurrence of such symbolic dream experiences, Isak reviews mistakes, realizes the lack of emotional commitment in his life, and, by "reliving" times of his youth and middle age (Erikson would say these were points at which developmental tasks were not completed), achieves an awareness of his own mortality. Later he says of the experience, "I discovered an extraordinary logic." In capsulated form Isak's experience is the compelling and organized paradigm of the psychological phenomenon of life review: the coming-to-terms with the past. The consolidation of one's story is the result; "an experience which conveys some world order and spiritual sense no matter how dearly paid for" (Erikson, 1963, p. 268).
Finally, Myerhoff (1979) observed the eagerness of elderly participants in an ethnographic study to share early remembrances. She writes,

Personal continuity is something not automatically given by experience. It must be achieved. The sense of being the same person over time, despite great change, and sharp disruption in social and cultural experience does not happen easily or inevitably. For this personal coherence, this sense of psychological integration to take place, the individual must be capable of finding and reliving familiar parts of his/her past history. And often, the most important, charged pieces of personal history come up from the remote past, from the numinous events and experiences of early childhood. (p. 108)

Returning to the past through life review may be the means to Erikson's last stage of development, ego integrity. The literature indicates that life review is an on-going integral part of the inner life of older people.

The goal of the present study was to examine in-depth the motivation, experience, and meaning of participation in education by older adults. The literature of adult education indicates a greater need for understanding the world of the learner, the interaction of the learner within the educational experience, and the long-held assumptions about learning and personal history that the learner brings to the classroom.

Concurrently, the literature on psychosocial development provides a framework for examining and interpreting more fully the subjective experience of the
older person. It is within this framework that the present study examines the educational participation of older adults who are in the final stage of the theoretical "epigenetic" life cycle.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the major methodological and epistemological roots of the research, the rationale for a phenomenological approach to an investigation of life review and participation in adult education programs by people in their later life, and the structure of the study.

I. THE NATURE OF SUBJECTIVE INQUIRY

The study sought to explore the experience of adult education for older people. Subsumed under this major inquiry were questions about how motivational factors, personal symbolism and life review contribute to the adult education experience. The data are the reported experiences of older learners taking part in an educational program and, consequently, a methodology was needed that makes the personal meaning and subjective feelings accessible to the investigator. The following section describes the rationale for the choice of a qualitative method of obtaining this information.

Cole (1976), Johnson (1975), Pelot (1970) and others stress the importance of matching research design to the nature of the problem under investigation. While
quantitative analysis of positivistic investigations has contributed much in the way of descriptive data and assessment of the older adult's cognitive capabilities, it is limited in its ability to examine subjective dimensions. Research paradigms based on the natural sciences assume that contrived experiments or questionnaires will reveal static "facts" about people and their attitudes, that personal and social behavior can be objectified into "hard data." Such positivistic research, synthesizing fleeting sentiments into these "real data," neither reconstructs nor measures the constantly shifting, changing and becoming nature of the human being. Human "subjects" become "objects," their feelings and behaviors frozen into objective facts, often by the investigatory instruments themselves. Critics of the physical science paradigm point out that in objectivation and quantification there is a lack of concern for "the human being as a dynamic thinking and feeling element in the behavioral process" (Gordon, 1978, p. 8). They further emphasize that the very nature of subjective data is that they are neither static nor necessarily repetitive for groups or within individuals themselves (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Coles, 1971; Gurwitsch, 1966; Polanyi, 1959; Schutz, 1967, 1970).
This inquiry had three requirements which made a qualitative methodology appropriate. First, the nature of the information sought was highly subjective and a research paradigm was needed to reflect that quality in the data obtained as well as in the process by which that information would be interpreted. As only the learner can know what is occurring in and around an educational experience, any empirical investigation must seek that knowledge, what Berger and Luckman (1967) call "subjective consciousness." Second, as each individual's story is unique—representing a matrix of life attitudes and perceptions—a method was needed that would not prestructure individual reporting of the experience but would permit exploration into separate and personal worlds. And, third, facts about one's life and the meaning that is made of an experience can be altered from moment to moment and day to day, depending on mood, environment, circumstances and focus of life review.

I was in fact asking: What is your world like as you perceive it now. And, given that world, how do you enter into and understand this particular experience of adult education?" The "experience" was defined as the educational endeavor in which the interviewee was participating at the time and, concurrently, the act of viewing it and reflecting on it in the context of his or her whole life.
That is, details and analysis of life-long experience with education, family, social relationships and self-assessment composed a picture of each participant's mindset—the world of that individual, his or her "story"—as he or she experienced the educational contact and recalled the past. Motivation, the actual experience and making of personal meaning are the most subjective of data and most appropriately tapped by qualitative research methodology. For, as Bogdan and Taylor (1975) write,

Finally, qualitative methods enable us to explore concepts whose essence is lost in other research approaches. Such concepts as beauty, pain, faith, suffering, frustration, hope, and love can be studied as they are defined and experienced by real people in their everyday lives. (p. 5)

Explorative Paradigms

Research paradigms based on anthropological and sociological ethnographies have effectively touched the world of older people in communities and as individuals. Particularly significant recent studies of the lives and feelings of older people involving the use of life review are those of Blythe (1979), Curtin (1972), Holzberg (1979) and Myerhoff (1979). Further research into subjective areas, sometimes using eclectic methodologies which combine case history, personal documents and what seem to be stream of consciousness monologues by participants have shaped the path toward explorative paradigms to understand
This is how Robert Coles describes the rationale for his invented methodology:

First, the words of others, their ideas and feelings, their statements, their assertions, their exclamations; second, my own effort to put in words what I have observed and considered important, whether inspiring, troubling, confusing, or merely worth quiet interest and reflection; and finally, some discussion and analysis. . . of the sharpness of vision and the coherence of mind I have seen and heard others demonstrate. All three elements work together to convey not only what is (itself rather a daunting task) but how men and women and children, who are, deal with the things of this world, the "reality" of "environment" . . . (1971, p. 25)

The framework within which both the investigator and the subject must operate is the subject's understanding of his or her own environment and each learner's personal environment and mindset, is different. Hence, a somewhat exploratory model was needed. Furthermore, participants needed time for consideration and reflection, for life review and "taking stock."

Within the field of adult education there is precedent for explorative paradigms and qualitative research. When Houle (1961) first surveyed personal dimensions motivating participants in adult learning programs, he, too, chose subjective inquiry and recommended it to subsequent researchers:
If we are ever to understand the total phenomenon of continuing education, we must begin by understanding the nature, the beliefs, and the actions of those who take part to the highest degree. (p. 10)

Darkenwald (1980) more recently extended the challenge that adult education researchers "make more effective use of the full range of social-science research strategies available to them and to continue to borrow relevant findings from the social sciences" (p. 76).

A Phenomenological Model: A Means for Reflection

Research and information gathering reflect a larger view of human beings and a belief about what can be learned from a study of their lives. This research sought to learn how psychosocial development interrelated with late life learning and why and how learners make use of adult education programs. It assumed that each person's experience contributes in deep and complex ways to learning and that to reach that subjective experience it was necessary to understand the individual worlds of the learners. It sought to do this without making objects of human beings but rather including them in the research process to the greatest degree. Hence, not only would the investigator reflect on the meanings of classroom experience in the lives of the subjects, but the subjects themselves would need to do so. Such reflection, interpreted in the psychosocial framework of developmental
theory, constitutes the study. Paolo Freire described the nature of such social reflection:

Authentic reflection considers neither abstract man nor the world without men, but men in their relations with the world. In these relations consciousness and the world are simultaneous: consciousness neither precedes the world nor follows it. (1968, 69)

Phenomenology is a system of study of people based on the philosophy that everyday occurrences and actions constitute their "worlds." These worlds are social and, for the researcher to enter them, direct contact must take place in which the individuals articulate the "subjective meaning" of events, objects or actions to the researcher. (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Gurwitsch, 1966; Schutz, 1967)

The emphasis on the individual's articulation of his or her own experience rather than on a comparative or "scientifically factual" analysis by an outside tool which may isolate a piece of information about an individual from that environment (questionnaire, Likert scale, codified classifications and other techniques which freeze shades of responses into "hard data") directed the investigator's choice of a phenomenological approach. Furthermore, in this model, the data, unfolded in life story format to another person in a face-to-face interaction, consist not only of the facts of the subject's life but the meaning that the facts have for him or her (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Schutz, 1967).
In the phenomenological model, the emphasis is on the participant's act of focusing on events or feelings. For this study, such an act of reflection is intertwined with the act of life review and the objectivication of one's experience of learning in late life. "The object we shall be studying, therefore," wrote Alfred Schutz, "is the human being who is looking at the world from within the natural attitude." (1967, p. 98) These moments of reflection are shared with the interviewer; the subject describes his or her own world, thereby creating a moment of self-discovery into which the interviewer is incorporated and which may not have occurred without that interaction. The interviewer is a feature of that reflection, of that process of life review. She may provoke it; certainly she influences it. The means for the systemization of the knowledge is the shared language:

As I objectivate, my own being by means of language, my own being becomes massively and continuously available to myself at the same time that it is so available to him here, [the interviewer] and I can spontaneously respond to it. (Berger and Luckman, 1967, p. 38)

In such moments of self-awareness, or, as Freire says, "background awarenesses," there is entree into the world of the participant: It is this entree that the study sought to achieve and which necessitates the use of the phenomenological model.
II. THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The previous section discussed the rationale for the use of qualitative methodology and a phenomenological model. The following section describes the structure of the study, the choice of sample population, the interview agenda, and system for analysis of the data. It details the concrete experience of the instrumentation of the methodology.

The Interview

Three interviews, each approximately one and a half hours long were conducted with each participant. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. The schedule was as follows:

--Interview 1 focused on the background (personal, educational) of the learners, the motivation for pursuing adult education experiences at this time and their perceptions of the mindset they bring to the learning situation. Basically, the questions were: "Why are you here? How did you come to participate in adult learning at this time?"

--Interview 2 focused on the experience of the learning, the classroom environment, the integration of experience within the classroom and outside the classroom, a description and assessment of the
experience. It asked: "What is it like for you to take this course (these courses)?"

---Interview 3 focused on the integration of the classroom experience and the new information learned and their relationship to the participant's life, the motivation as seen now for going to school, the process of absorption within and around the school experience. It asked: "What does this experience mean to you? How do you make sense of it?"

The Population

Twelve men and women aged 60 to 80 were selected according to the following criteria:

1. They were currently engaged in or had recently been engaged in a learning activity through an adult or continuing education program. The content of the activity or course was of an academic or enrichment nature rather than a leisure-time endeavor such as bridge, swimming or crafts.
2. They lived in a northeastern industrial city, population 168,000, which is a multicultural community.
3. The individual members would represent a range of educational levels. (The study's focus was on adult education participation; it was hoped that a
population of public school adults would not represent only college educated people.)

4. The individual members would contribute to the ethnic diversity of the sample population.

It was assumed that a small sample—12 individuals—although not a representative sample in the statistical sense, would enable the researcher to hear a wide range of stories so that individual differences and similarities would be effectively demonstrated.

Names were suggested to me by organizations dealing with the elderly: The Golden Age Club, Devoted Older Volunteers in Service, The Urban League, The Jewish Community Center, The Grey Panthers and several churches as well as individuals within the community who might happen to know of someone over 60 taking a course. In addition, I searched through registration material for the past three sessions of the Bureau of Adult and Community Education of the Public Schools and I contacted teachers of adult education and continuing education at the nearby community and four-year colleges. Furthermore, I asked each participant to supply names of acquaintances who would be appropriate subjects for the study.

Table I (Appendix) shows participants' names (all names have been changed), sex, educational levels,
ethnicity, work life and current educational endeavors. In the course of the interviews, it became apparent that several of the participants were also involved in other learning experiences of a nonformal nature. Some were independently educating themselves on topics such as the history of Ireland, small engine repair or unionism. Others were attending groups such as writing workshops and "issues" discussions. These experiences broadened the original definition of "adult education" and were discussed in the interview sessions as well.

**Initial Contact with the Participants**

I approached each potential participant first by telephone. At that time, I gave, as an introduction, the name of the person who had recommended the individual and described the content and nature of the study. I found that use of name as a "reference" was crucial in gaining access to the population. Often my first statements were met with suspicion; on one occasion I had to declare several times that I was not selling anything. Another difficulty occurred when the potential participant would try to begin the interview on the telephone or, as in the case of two participants, a spouse would give his or her comments on education before the situation was clarified.
Of the initial list of potential interviewees (about 20), only one refused to be interviewed because she was "too busy." (She did, nonetheless, give me a lengthy and detailed account of her life on the telephone.) Others were inappropriate because they were no longer participating in adult education programs or did not represent an educational level or ethnic identity that would contribute to the diversity of the sample. (I found, for example, that a number of older adults who were participating in the public adult education program were college educated white women who would have been over-represented in the study population.)

Initial appointments were made to further discuss the project with the participants. All of the people selected were eager to talk or to "help" me from the start. Several, however, declared that there was simply nothing to say: they took the course and it was interesting. One participant declared several times, "I'll tell you, there's nothing to it. I just do my thing."

The study was described to the interviewees; it was defined as an investigation into the learning of older people. A copy of the dissertation proposal was made available but only one person glanced at its cover. Most of the individuals seemed ready to be interviewed.
One problematic feature of the initial encounters, however, was the university-required "Written Consent Form" (in Appendix) which contains the following statement:

It is thus stated that no medical treatment and/or compensation will be required by you from the University of Massachusetts should any physical injury result from participating in these interviews.

It is estimated that some of the early rapport achieved in the introductory stage was lost when several of the participants questioned what "physical injury" might be involved. They appeared suspicious or more formal, whereas previously they had been relaxed and eager to talk about themselves. Perhaps they thought that I, as interviewer, had some secret ulterior motive or unpleasant surprise in store. I explained that the clause originally may have existed for participants in biological research and that for our situation it simply meant that, should anything happen to them in the course of the interview sessions or in transportation to and from the interviews (i.e., an accident), the university would not be held responsible. As far as the content of the interviews was concerned, I stressed that the participants could withdraw at any time. The contract further states: "You are also free, of course, to withdraw from the process of interviewing at any time, even during an interview."
After we both signed the form, I initiated the interviews. The tape recorder was located in full view of the participant and some historical data was collected. There seemed to be no problem in reestablishing rapport with the participants.

Sites and Appointments

The choice of site was usually the home of the participant which was more convenient for these older people and a comfortable familiar setting. (Lofland, 1971, suggests that participants' homes and workplaces provide important information about their lives; this research certainly bears that out.) Three participants, however, were interviewed at my home. One, Madeline, said she needed to get away from her husband so that she could talk openly but did ask me to come to her home for a second interview. The other two (Sophie and Wuschko) did not say why they preferred my home and were not pressed to explain. Another participant, Carlotta, asked me to come on two occasions to her Foster Grandparent location where a lounge was available.

The Process

The success or failure of the interview process involved a willingness on my part to listen and to be flexible about the direction of the discourse. Such
listening required a period of adjustment within each session during which tone and rapport was developed. Some participants came to the sessions with prepared agendas; they had synthesized some of their thinking—perhaps during the preceding week, perhaps only in the moments before my arrival—and these synthesized life reviews did not always match the rubric of interview schedule. A compromise was usually struck between the spinning out of these "stories," philosophies and commentaries and the intended direction of the study (although several strong-willed participants did complete their own interview agendas).

After each session I reviewed the field notes and listened to most of the tape recording so as to benefit from any directions that the participants may have introduced but not followed through with in the sessions. This proved to be a very valuable step in preparing for the second and third sessions and for improving my skill at interviewing. On many occasions I had made on-the-spot decisions to terminate lines of discourse which I might have probed more fruitfully. It was apparent in analyzing the tapes that I talked too much. Furthermore, I had to learn to tolerate silences in the interview sessions and to assume that they were reflective stages in the participant's discourse. These observances based
on immediate feedback were invaluable in improving the interviews.

Furthermore, in a later stage of analysis--unfortunately too late for purposes of correction in the interviews--I discovered that the elliptical asides which so misdirected the focus of the interviews were extremely rich examples of personal assessments, anecdotes and life review. In transcript form they were sometimes found to be transitions or what Berger and Luckmann (1967) call "zones of intimacy" in which everyday reality must be put aside or shared so as to arrive at a mutually comfortable ground for reflective interchange by the interviewer and interviewee. Once these "zones" had been passed through, the level of discourse and the degree of participant-researcher rapport reached deeper levels of intimacy.

Assumptions about the subjective symbols of the individuals (i.e. "education," parent pressure, social class and sex role expectations) became shared symbols. It is possible that people expect to say certain things about themselves--to talk in paragraphs--and need the open-ended opportunity to do so; certainly the older people in the sample appeared to deliver their stories as they saw fit.

In situations where the references were not clear or where I thought a special significance had been unexplored, I asked for anecdotes. I asked: "Can you tell me a story
about that experience? What kind of family was it--did you eat supper together every night? Describe a day in your life, your class last night, etc." These questions were used to direct the participants to recall details of what Schutz calls the "ordinary social life"; they were effective when the conversation became too general or less particular.

At the beginning of each session I asked the participants, "Do you want to add anything to our discussion of last week?" Often a more elaborate--even conflicting--version of autobiographical data would be offered. This was especially apparent in the third interview sessions where participants may have wished to "set the record straight" and presented an on-the-spot dilemma for me in the first instances. It is unclear why this phenomenon occurred and whether I should ask for clarification; at the time I thought that some reflective process was the cause and that life review is made up of constantly changing versions of the same instances in personal histories. As the participant's view rather than a "factual" corollary which better suits a researcher's schema, I did not challenge the instances at the time.

Subsequent understanding of the phenomenon confirmed what was initially an intuitive reaction as consistent with the methodological ideal. That is, that recognition
of one's act of reflection is valid datum. Furthermore, the role that emotions and mood play in reflection and recall must be acknowledged as part of the experience. McMahon and Rhudick write of life review:

an essential function of remembrance is to secure one's past in a form appropriate and necessary for oneself. The emotional condition in the present, and hopes, fears, and expectations directed toward the future, determine the form in which the events of the past are revived or are prevented from being revived (repression). Anything which lacks this relation to the present is forgotten because it is personally meaningless. Events which are forgotten under certain circumstances presumably can have an unexpected revival when a personal situation or phase of life favors it. (1967, p. 70)

The following example demonstrates this phenomenon and the conflict that developed when an autobiographical "fact" is changed and developed; it further characterizes the nature of the rapport which occurs in the social interaction between interviewer and participant.

Carlotta, 68, was particularly eager to be interviewed, spun a tale of her life story. Leaning back comfortably, lighting a cigarette, inhaling, exhaling slowly, she would stop and consider before answering questions or continuing her discourse. Each event had an unwinding delivery: a lengthy introduction, "the juicy details," some suspense, a quickening and resolution of the plot, and a denouement. The artistry of her delivery and the paced doling out of content about her life were fully evident only after the
interviews had been completed and the transcripts were studied. Many details ("facts") went through transformations in the three versions of her life story. For example,

In interview #1: "My father passed away when I was four years old. We were a very close, very close family. And me being the baby girl, naturally, they wanted the best for me."

In interview #2: "I couldn't understand at the time . . . well, I was considered an illegitimate child. And at that time to have a baby out there made it very hard for the child. This is where my life was hard. Because a lot of my friends and relatives that I used to go out with were always treated better than I was treated."

In interview #3: "My mother was up and going all the time. She didn't like nothing in the house. That's why I fell on my aunt. My mother had us and she dropped us here."

What so puzzled me at the time of the interviews--how to organize the data collection--was more fully understood during data analysis. What I had to learn was not to seek precise (positivistic) facts but to remember the principle of qualitative methodology, to learn "the specific meaning which the actor 'attaches' to his experience" (Schutz, 1967, p. 216). What was easier to consider in retrospect was the sharing and reflective attitude that Carlotta attached to her life review. This was the most difficult area for me to implement in the first interviews; it is a technique of evaluating ad hoc
hypotheses in order to shape the interview or to allow the "reflective Acts of attention" (Schutz, 1967, p. 98) full sway.

Analysis of the Data

The data were collected on tape cassettes and transcribed. Each interview session (one and one-half hour) yielded approximately 30 pages of double-spaced typed copy and three to five pages of field notes. Approximately 1200 pages of transcript material comprise the study findings.

I modeled a system for inductive analysis, for the organization and codification of interrelating categories as they emerged from the examination of interview transcripts and field notes on methods suggested by Bogdan and Taylor (1975), Glaser and Straus (1967), Johnson (1975) and Webb and others (1966). First, each individual's story was treated as a self-defined entity. I read it and noted emerging categories of experiences as they occurred (i.e. sex role expectations early teacher influence, parent themes). These were sorted according to general topics, instances of redundancy, contradiction and specificity— that is, what the theme was and how precise the participant was in returning to that topic. Specific themes were listed. On a second copy of the transcript
passages which appeared to be important were excerpted, coded with interview number, person and page, and collected in categorical or thematic groupings. Therefore, two analytical processes occurred simultaneously for each participant: an analysis of how that individual was developing themes of particular interest to him or her (a contextual analysis) and how those themes could be broadly named so as to be identified in other participants' stories (a comparative analysis).

After several readings of the transcripts like categories which had emerged in the individuals were pooled with the larger population and broader, more general themes that had emerged. After another reading the data was systematically sorted again. Themes were coded according to color markings. Often categories overlapped with or were included in other categories. For example, a segment of discourse in which a person talked about a favorite teacher would be marked as "education" but also as "life review" if the data was especially reminiscent.

The coding system that developed was as follows: anecdotes, statements and details about the participants' current educational experiences, statements about what it is to be over 60 in this culture, volunteerism or the need to contribute, personal interactions with the interviewer,
personal style in telling the story, and incidents of life review. Other categories were also noted. For example, Sophie spoke at length about her parents' prejudice against higher education and her feelings about the limiting effect of that prejudice on her own life. Henry talked for what amounted to many pages about his experiences in a chemical factory; and Thorgud spoke about a recent crime in his neighborhood. All of these instances appeared to be elliptical at first reading. However, within the context of the subjects' current educational motivation and their experience of learning at this time of their lives, it became clearer that these personal concerns were pivotal keys in understanding those individuals.

Occasionally the concerns of one participant were reiterated in another's story so that two, three or four individuals would independently bring up and deal with similar themes. And, in the larger analysis (a cohort analysis), common themes emerged to describe the socio-cultural and historical times through which these people had lived. Some of these categories were as follows: how the participants' families lived in the first third of the 20th century, what kinds of ideals were inculcated at home and school, what educational opportunities were available and pursued, what achievements were remembered
about early school and vocational training, how the Depression and World War II affected their lives, how family roles and work life developed, and what impact retirement has had on the individuals. These reflected what Johnson (1975) calls "the meaningful stuff of our common existence in the social world" (p. 84).

I collated the stories to reflect the individual participants' concerns--what was important to them, what they spent the most time talking about, what they seemed to invest the most energy in refining. I then restructured each participant's story to match the framework of the study, a kind of small history pieced together from the data to describe how the adult education experience had been motivated, experienced and made meaning of based on the descriptive and interpreted samples of the data. Often these stories were chronological and that order was maintained but enriched by details found throughout the interviews.

Presentation of the Data

The presentation and interpretation of the data comprise Chapters IV through VI. The rationale for the order of presentation is an adherence to the structural framework of the investigation, to the unfolding of the participants' reflections of their experience of adult
education: motivation, experience and making meaning. I chose individual stories for presentation based on how characteristic they were in explicating categories that had emerged and converged in the stories of all the participants. Pertinent examples from the remaining participants' stories are occasionally incorporated to further illustrate the continuum of personal experiences within the entire sample. (It was not possible to include all 12 participants' experiences and the ways in which their lives and educational endeavors came together; choosing to omit the individual participants' words was the most difficult task in compiling the following three chapters.)

My interpretation of the data was informed by the psychosocial theory discussed in Chapter II and shaped by the direction which the data themselves took. That is, while each participant told a different story—the story of his or her life, motivational roots for pursuing late life learning, experience in the classroom and the meaning of that experience—various portions were more elaborate or richer than other portions both within the larger group and within the individual stories. Furthermore, not all of the participants addressed all of the themes. Therefore, the selection of personal stories to be presented in the following chapters was based on the degree to which individual participants' examples and
experiences would best illuminate general themes within their own or others' experiences and still present a diverse picture of the population.

Reporting of the data and presentation of their interpretation proved to be the most problematic area of the project. On the one hand the integrity of each participant's "subjective reality" needed to be insured and, at the same time, commonalities and divergent aspects of the expressed themes were the goal of the inquiry. It was necessary to recall, again, that in qualitative methodology facts are not the goal. Shades of experience and personal meaning constitute a picture of the phenomenon of participation in adult learning and that picture is from the inside of the divergent mindsets of the study population.

The framework for the presentation of the data in the study is as follows: an introduction to the lives of several participants and discussion of the motivations that have prompted them to currently pursue adult learning experiences (Chapter IV), discussion of those experiences (Chapter V), and of the meaning that those experiences have for them at this time (Chapter VI). Aspects of the role that life review plays in adult learning are incorporated into each of the chapters.
CHAPTER IV

MOTIVATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN CLASSES
BY THE STUDY POPULATION

Participants were asked to discuss their educational experiences in the following sequence: 1) What made you seek learning activities ("formal" learning activities) at this time in your life? 2) What is the actual experience like for you? and 3) What does the experience mean to you? The relationship with life review was explored. This section discusses the first area: the motivational aspects of the participants' current interest in adult education.

Introduction

The following stories include motivational themes that are to some degree common to all the study participants. These themes were discovered by the participants themselves and by me in later content analysis. They are presented here as much as possible in the words of the individuals and interrupted occasionally by analytic and descriptive comments. These personal and historical themes and educational histories point out lifelong motives that led to current educational activities and to the mental sets with which these older adults entered the learning environment. In some cases life review appeared to be a major personal theme.
While at first glance the only common factor in these stories is participation in an adult education program in one particular semester, common patterns of social force and human experience emerge which illuminate a larger shared reality. The themes of social class, thwarted educational dreams, sex roles and historical pressures tie the individual participants whose lives are diverse and original into a broad and interconnected pattern of human experience.

The first story is that of Wuschko whose reverence for education, though extreme, was mirrored to some degree by the majority of the sample population. His perspective--so individual to his life story--exemplified the Eriksonian conflict in late life, "integrity vs. despair," and a search for continuity in life akin to Butler's (1963) paradigm of life review.

Wuschko K.

"Study is a kind of happiness pursuit in the spiritual domain."

Wuschko K. is a 67-year-old Polish immigrant who is attending continuing education classes. In Poland, Wuschko attended elementary and some secondary school or vocational training in agricultural methods. As education beyond the elementary level had to be paid for by the student's family and Wuschko's family did not have much money,
"education" was a dream and not a practical choice.

The high school has to be paid already at the beginning of grade school in Poland, or there could be no more. So, if people with small means like my father—well, especially, I thought of attending perhaps higher school. But then the Depression came and the product that my father produced on the farm fell down badly so there was no talk of going to any higher than what I got. (WK I, 6)

The village life, on the other hand, provided a means for "educational" experiences: theater, religious classes, reading; the memories of the community life are vivid for Wuschko 55 years later:

It was more or less a rural life. There wasn't a great deal of entertainment. Only what people wished to make for themselves. There were movie theaters not far—in a neighboring town—perhaps about five miles away. (It was a larger town of about 10,000 people.) We had a church and we participated in these activities. We used to organize our own shows, theaters, and we presented to the town where I lived and all the neighboring towns; sometimes we were invited, the group, to present shows. We had a lot of rivers and lakes; we used to go swim and boat; we used to ride bicycles. (We didn't have cars.) Well, it was a peaceful life as a boy.

There was a great deal of inclination to do away with illiteracy, because during the Russian occupation they tried to make the people [the Poles] illiterate. . . . (WK I, 7)

There was illiteracy among all the people. [In 1918 Poland became an independent nation and there was a movement to educate the population in their own language.] The schools were important to everyone. But Poland was poor; it was not so easy to open the schools on every level. First of all they tried to at least to remove illiteracy so they organized grade schools: grade schools in every town and
village and hamlet. We had them. High schools: they were more in the cities and larger towns. Where I lived, my town or village, there was none. (WK I, 7)

Poverty or economic instability was a fact of life for most of the study population. Of the 12 participants, eight recalled severe economic straits in early life and for all of them this made the difference between continuing in school or not.

After elementary school Wuschko did manage to attend an agricultural training school in another village about 25 miles from his home. It was the Depression, however, and it soon became clear to the family that he would not be able to make a living on the family farm:

When the Depression came, I abandoned the thoughts completely about being a farmer. That was in 1932, '33. I learned a trade; I learned carpentry. (WK I, 8)

Life in the pre-World War II years of Poland was good for Wuschko and its idyllic nature dominates his memory of that stage of his life:

I think of the social life. Dances, gatherings. I was dating occasionally. I didn't become serious. I didn't marry before the war broke out. Youths in Poland, especially men, didn't rush so to get married so much before 25 . . . (WK I, 11)

Sometimes I think. Yes, I do think there was a lot of pleasure in this simplicity, in living conditions as it was. For example, comparing the material side: It's a great deal better living in the United States than it used to be in Poland. It is hard to talk--I mean in Poland--of the clothing, automobiles, and this. It's a heaven on earth. But we were
pleased because more or less the whole community lived the same way. There was not many rich or poor. It's about average, the way we lived, it was average. For example, there were large estates in the vicinity, but we had nothing to do with them. Whether they existed or not, nobody paid a hoot. Well, in the city, if we wanted some, for example, sometimes we decided to go up to the theater so we went to the city of course.

It was a great pleasure to see the show because where we lived, except what we concocted ourselves, there were no shows. Movies, well, we didn't need to go very far to the movie theater so it was much easier. And then in the last few years before the war even we had traveling libraries and traveling movies that came to every nook and hamlet. So this was even facilitated even more and we got acquainted with the new films and new events in this realm. (WK I, 12)

I read books. I didn't attach a great deal to novels. Writers--classical writers--I was interested right along. This was like self-learning on my own. It was mostly in free time which I could discuss with a friend what I read and what he read. It was a circle most widening and later a couple more joined and like to in discussion. Sometimes we recited poems. (WK I, 15)

"Career planning" was unknown to the study participants all of whom were born in the early 1900's of working class families (Jenny was the exception). One went to school as long as possible and then took a job or an apprenticeship that led to a job--that was how their careers took shape. (Only one participant--Thorgud--described making a conscious decision as a young man to go into a business career and was lucky enough to pursue it; he was a grocer.) Wuschko did as the others of the study
population did, he found what opportunity he could and he stayed close to his family's home.

He described the years of apprenticeship and work with fondness. He worked as a carpenter until, at age 26, he joined the Polish army. After serving briefly, he was captured in 1939 by the Germans and interned at Buchenwald; after five years at Buchenwald, he was accused of participating in the Polish underground and transferred to Dachau Concentration Camp. Liberated by American troops in 1947 (weighing 75 pounds and dying of typhoid), Wuschko never returned to Poland and his little "hamlet."

When asked to explain his current motivation for participation in learning activities at age 67, Wuschko recalled his war-time experiences. One purpose, he says, is to understand the evil he knew:

They tried to kill mind and body. This was purpose. They put us in groups and we were going to quarries and we were moving stones from one end of the pit to the other end of the pit and back again. For no reason. And this is demoralizing, destroying spirit. Sometimes we had no gloves, well, after a while it takes skin off your fingers from the stone. Try to wrap in something. Those who did this job for a long time, they didn't survive. (WK III, 5)

Darker images permeate Wuschko's discussion of his post-1939 memories. Recall of this period is marked by horror and despair; and, as he unfolded the story of his internment and the subsequent years, Wuschko became philosophical:
One has to be very, very ingrained in moral ethics not to commit crime in the situation like concentration camp. I mean against your fellow citizens. If you have a chance not to take his piece of cracker, his bowl of soup. You have to be very, very strong moral ethics, moral upbringing. All again, many have weaknesses, that even in a situation like this for example, they trade their last slice of bread for a smoke of cigarette. And you cannot accept. Because that means... (pause)... Many people gave up. Oh yes. Oh yes. It change sure. It’s a different outlook after such an experience. You measure all events and happenings in different light. And one tends to be cynical very often. Cynical about many things, about what is good, what is sin, life. (WK. III, 9)

There was fever at any time—day or night: that it could be the life could be snuffed like not from a fly or a bug. That you, that one cannot control one’s own destiny. Destiny was controlled by the Germans (WK III, 9)

In the concentration camp and afterward, Wuschko learned to read and speak both German and English:

I started when I was prisoner of war in Germany. And I had another friend and we were meeting. He was also made to work in Germany and he supplied us with material; he brought us text books, German-English text books. That’s where I began. It started with Charles Dickens story, The Christmas Carol. (WK III, 4)

Wuschko spent some time in an Italian hospital and five years in England waiting to come to the United States ("this great country"). The years since have been difficult; he has worked as a carpenter and as a janitor. He says he never lost his dream of pursuing an education.
Now semi-retired, he has begun to work toward a college degree. He says it will be a symbol of personal achievement. Moreover, learning is "a great privilege":

I would like to move my intellect to a higher plane. I would like to understand life itself better—why people act as they do; what motivates some people to do so much evil to do so much evil to others just to achieve their ends. There are some other objectives... to grasp the meaning of life and its beauty; to be able to walk in the company of philosophers, poets and saints just for a little while... (WK I, 16)

Wuschko is a hard worker, spending about four hours a day in study. He took a high school equivalency class and is now studying Social Problems and Economics. Last semester he took World History and Sociology: this is a core curriculum which will one day lead to a B.A. degree. (This will take 10 years at Wuschko's current pace.) Wuschko's only expenses are a $25.00 registration fee and books; he is taking advantage of senior citizen status which makes available classroom space on a "seat-available" basis. (All but one of the study participants enrolled under this provision.)

For Wuschko, education is a powerful and enjoyable pastime despite the prescribed curriculum which has locked him into courses that do not always interest him deeply.

He says, for example:

Economics. It really has not much to do with my life experience. The subject is very interesting, very
vital, for example, to students who do pursue Economics. (WK III, 3)

I think I like literature and that's next subject I'm going to take. English Composition. I like literature. I have read very little American but some novelists--some parts--I was very impressed. In Poland I was a literature lover. We are somewhat--people--we are dreamers. We are somewhat away from reality. (WK II, 11)

On the other hand, he concurrently seeks to challenge his own capabilities as never before. He says:

Sometimes I think that I am not . . . I don't have the training to pursue thought for longer period like, for example, like some intellectuals do for the same thought. I break off. (WK III, 12)

He really wants to take courses that deal in philosophical and moral content; he is engaged in a journey of personal historical discovery. In contrast, Isadore in the next motivational biography is pushing himself to achieve in technological and quantitative areas. He says he does not wish to think about his own life and his past; rather, it is the pattern of learning that Isadore seeks to recapture, the pattern of his youth.

Isadore C.

"If I don't study I'm missing something."

Isadore C. is a 67-year-old retiree who maintains a full-time schedule of classes and volunteer work. He is currently taking three noncredit courses at a local community college: Electronics, Computers and Beginning
Piano and attends a weekly "seminar" at a local community center where current issues such as nuclear energy are researched and discussed. He is also involved in setting up and taking workshops in business practices within the health field and teaches swimming to handicapped children on Fridays. He attended an Elderhostel last summer as a "vacation" with his wife, who is a social worker, and frequently accompanies her to nutrition and gerontological workshops.

Isadore spoke very little about his earliest years. He was much more interested in discussing his years of college and graduate school--the period of his late teens and twenties which resembles his current life. He says he "rarely" thinks about his childhood or the distant past.

Isadore is the first son of three in an immigrant Jewish family. He was born in a large metropolitan city and grew up in a semi-rural neighboring community. His family life, he says, was disciplined; "but not an over-bearing type of discipline. It was a free association but the rules were firm and you didn't deviate too far."

His father was busy establishing a business and his mother was at home. He says, "In those days women didn't work. A woman's place was in the home . . .
being a mother and the maintenance of the goodies from
the house." (IC I, 3-4)

Isadore was encouraged to be a successful learner:
he was the first in the family to attend formal schooling:

As far as my family was concerned, they were always
interested in what I was achieving in school and
because they lacked the education, the formal educa-
tion, whatever information I came home from school
with I would partake with them and they were
interested, although they couldn't add to the learning,
but their interest was there all the time . . .

In other words, if I came home with some scientific
information I would try to demonstrate it in the
simplest understanding so they could understand what
I was doing. However, in the social aspects, they
were far more knowledgeable than I was because of
their life experiences and their interests in things
that happened when they were in Europe versus
information that I didn't have that they had.

In other words, it was an exchange of ideas both on a
social plane, political plane, economic plane.
Because the Depression years were the great economic
problems of discussing and trying to solve . . . or
talking about them, never solving them. (IC I, 4)

Isadore's earliest memories of school, however, seem
to be temporarily lost; most memories of his elementary
school years dealt with the development of his own learning
skills. He says:

I was a very poor reader and I didn't really learn
to read until . . . I didn't become an avid reader
until I was probably just around the threshold of
going to high school, which is about 13 or 14, 15.
Yeah, in other words, I didn't find the world of
books until I was about 13 or 14. (IC I, 3)

He also commented on the learning environments most suita-
ble to him:
I don't think I had any experiences where a teacher had motivated me into any direct way of learning, although I had many teachers I can still remember who, because of their kindness or their methods of teaching, I remember their names. But these are relatively few. One was a teacher in those days called a geography teacher and the other one was a history teacher and the other one was rather an interesting person who was the principal of the school and he was a sort of an inspiring man insofar as he was always friendly and kind and thoughtful, was always trying to direct you into an activity he felt was suitable to your personality. (IC I, 2)

At 15 Isadore's family moved back to the city and Isadore went to public high school on a part-time basis in "continuation school" which consisted of night classes except for one day a week when the student went to day school. Isadore worked as an errand boy for an importing company (in fact, he stayed with that company until 1950: 21 years). He continued in school while working full-time and entered the free municipal college. While his life was constantly augmented by the courses he was taking, he never saw an application of that "education" to his job. The two areas have always been separate for Isadore.

"Education" meant two things to the majority of the study population. It meant learning for vocational purposes--a practical course--or it meant what one called "a classical education." While many of the individuals managed to take a course or two or a series of training sessions related to their jobs, no one except Isadore (and William, briefly) had the "classical" type of learning
experience in early life. Most were well into middle age when they began to pursue liberal arts and science educations. Isadore's experience, then, was unique to the group. Here is how he describes his pattern of education in his youth:

There was very little connection between what I was doing and the schooling that I was getting. No, I think I had an interest in learning, not so much in getting the diploma. But let me tell you a funny story about the diploma (because I have no recollection of ever going to a commencement exercise either in high school or in college--in fact, I really don't think I even have my college diploma).

It was free. I was never guided into what courses I should take. In high school it was pre-programmed. In college I was a free agent because I went to College and it was free so that you had the opportunity to take the courses and then, in some way you could put the courses together and get your degrees. Fact is, I went to college so many years that I--and many other students in those days who were concerned about learning--since it was free, we would never matriculate. So they finally passed a ruling that they gave you I think two years and after that, if you didn't matriculate, you had to pay for your courses. So I had to put courses together at the end of my formal education so I would get my degrees. Fact is, I got my degrees: I got my bachelor's and my master's degree at the same time. (IC I, 6)

And:

[They were] very exciting times. Couldn't wait to go to school. Get into the political discussions. Eat on the run. Study on the run. Constantly moving from one course to the other. Sociology--which was relatively new then. The political science which was relatively new. Not really getting involved in ancient history but more concerned about American history. The tremendous cultural changes that were going on within the society that we only began to recognize last year, not this year. These kinds of
things: the black situation, the immigrant situation, the monetary situation. (IC I, 7)

Although Isadore was describing his life at age 20, he might have been describing himself at age 67. In the past four years Isadore has taken the following courses: Piano, Music, Electricity, Plant Agriculture, Psychology, Human Relations, Computers, and Business Administration. Clearly, he is fascinated by his own mental workings; he appears to monitor his experience of learning with an almost scientific observation and was most eager to discuss the cognitive aspects of his course-taking. On several occasions he turned the interview sessions into pedagogical debates, focusing on his learning in technical terms. He remarked:

If you're going to interview me just for the three courses I'm taking now that really doesn't give you the insight into how I feel about the learning because basically what I'm really studying are things that I've never had any knowledge in. (IC II, 3)

Education has been a continuing learning process for me. I've always made attempts to go to school either for educational purposes or else during a period when I was in business to attend seminars, to constantly increase the learning of whether it be accomplishments within the business or a financial aspect of business or any distribution problem. Most of the courses that I have taken in the past were basically business oriented courses and I have done that almost entirely during my life career in business. Many of the aspects in business have to do with dealing with people, so, therefore, I would devote a lot of my spare time in reading cultural aspects of learning so that I would be better able to deal on a human relationship. There were many problems during the business period where you had dealings with the unions so I would take courses that would give me
better understanding of how to deal with the union or how to deal with the people who were involved in the union.

After I retired, I decided I would start taking courses in subjects that I knew nothing about, that I've never had any learning experiences with. And, at this particular time--over the past four years--that is precisely what I've been doing. I've been studying areas where I have interests but very little knowledge. (IC I, 11)

Isadore is currently taking courses in piano, electricity and computers. To some extent, these "selfish" choices are elaborate hobbies taxing both his quantitative abilities and, in the case of piano, his physical dexterity. Here is what led him specifically to choose piano:

Well, I've always been interested in music. Funny, a couple years back I tried playing--taking a course playing--the recorder. I couldn't get my fists to move fast enough.

So, one of my great interests in music has always been to be able to read music like you read a book and I've never had that ability. So I've been searching with the do-it-yourself kind of library. I've been very unsuccessful. And I thought that if I would be able to learn how to play the piano, I'd be reading the notes and not having the piano. I would have to learn the sound of the fingering.

(Interviewer: Do you have a piano?)

No. But I would say that I have a good knowledge of music and sound and appreciation of music, understanding of music--emotionally and that stuff.

I had been wanting to take the course but it wasn't a top priority; it was just a priority. But this year it just fell into the good timing. It isn't that its a good timing, it's a time that I'm going to be comfortable with. I would have liked to have had another time but I can accommodate that now.
After all, I'm gone five days a week and one night. So, it's a little bit sort of hectic.

(Interviewer: What's your schedule?)

I leave the house at eight o'clock, no I leave at seven and I don't get back most of the time until five o'clock in the evening. (IC II, 14-15)

The life that Isadore has chosen to open his retirement years is strikingly like that of his youth. He also fears a loss of his quantitative and physical abilities and, for his own well-being, has temporarily chosen a hectic reengagement period.

At the moment he wants to experiment with new areas of learning and of testing himself and, unlike Wuschko, chooses not to reflect on his own historical or present self within the learning environment. Some motivation may come from the re-creation of a former, more youthful lifestyle—a transition from Isadore's more programmed work-life.

A strikingly different story is that of Paolo who is also pushing himself to achieve in quantitative arenas. While both Isadore and Paolo were born into struggling immigrant families and are members of minority groups (Isadore a Jew and Paolo a black Cape Verdian), their stories create a dramatic juxtaposition. In terms of motivation for and experience of the adult education, the two men represent the most diverse ends of a continuum of
stories within the study sample. And, while their lives seem worlds apart at first glance, Isadore and Paolo fall into comparable psychosocial developmental strata. Both are reworking some aspect of their pasts. Isadore has re-created a life like that of his early twenties and Paolo uses reminiscence to remind him of the adventure and success of his youth. Paolo's experience of education does not involve the kind of personal strengths he prefers to associate with himself in life review; it is far removed from Wuschko's discovery of self; and it offers no chance to re-create a more agile intellectual and social past as it does with Isadore.

Paolo A.

"It's just an empty piece of paper."

Paolo A. is a 69-year-old retired laborer of Cape Verdian descent who is studying for the General Education Diploma (GED), a high school equivalency certificate. He grew up in a large extended Portuguese-speaking family in a fishing community in the northeast. His mother spoke no English but "respected education"; his father was literate in both Portuguese and English, ran a supermarket, and was "smart on figures." Paolo says of his early life:

Well, you know what you are going to do. Your sister's in charge of you; you got to do what they
say. In them days we had more respect for our elders . . . There was plenty of help in the house. And we grew older; we learned also how to take care of the house, to cook, everything in the house. That's how we were always between us. (PA I, 3)

I was taught in the house—right from wrong . . . Way back from my great grandfather, those people always believed in it. Of course, my great grandmother and my grandfather, they were special people. Their love was something special . . . The family was all close. Together. One for all. (PA I, 15-16)

Paolo's school experiences were also warm and positive. His favorite teacher—a fourth grade teacher—was a nurturing figure:

I think she was very nice to us. And she would take us, cuddle us in her bosom, try to help us with our school work. And then they took one who was a little more intelligent in the class and put her in a room by herself. And I remember this other girl, Margaret, she use to be the one; they use to go into a room by herself. (Things like that you don't forget); somebody trying to help you with your school work.) And that use to be every day.

Yes, that was clear in my mind. Mrs. _____ would say, "Margaret, today you and Paolo is going into the class. I'm gonna take you to your room and you're gonna help him with his reading." And that was that. Instead of staying after school, you go in a classroom while your other classes are going. And we're in a room by ourselves

She was very nice . . . She was very special. (PA I, 12-14) Subsequent school years were more difficult for Paolo. He was unable to get much personal attention in high school:

There were teachers teaching us simple problems of equations. And if you didn't have anybody at home
that could help you with your arithmetic, your mathematics, it was kind of hard, you know. One sister could teach but she had left home and worked out of town. The one that could teach me was the one that wasn't home. (PA I, 14)

According to Paolo, despite some difficulty in high school, he earned a diploma in 1928. However, he says that the high school subsequently burnt down and all record of his matriculation with it. He is now unable to prove that he graduated from high school and, before enrolling in a small engine repair class that interests him at a local community college, he must either produce the record of graduation or take and pass the GED (General Education Diploma) examination. He says:

You see, without a diploma you can't get into a lot of places. They ask for a high school diploma. I might have the experience, but that piece of paper is important. That's all it is--"a piece of paper" stating that you graduated from high school. And without that you cannot attend college or anything like that. You got to have that first. (PA III, 15)

At the same time that Paolo struggles to gain a diploma he deplores the lack of meaning that the "piece of paper" will have for him ultimately. He says:

Everything I've learned I did by myself . . . I know the knowledge is there. That nobody can take away from me . . . I ain't got no paper all over the wall. It's just a piece of paper stating you have completed such and such . . . (PA III, 16)

He tells the following story to illustrate his point:

This fellow was transferred from another department to our department. He came with a letter stating that
he could drive any truck the city had. He showed the paper to the deputy driver. He had a license (he didn't have a Class Two license but he had a license). So they sent him out to the back truck. Got in the back them trucks that got all different kinds of shifts. You go forward or reverse. He got into the truck.

Now he didn't know every time you shift the truck it would stall. It wouldn't go. So he got out of the truck and he went back in the office. And he said, "The truck ain't no good. It don't want to run, it just keeps stalling." Now that's the guy with a "piece of paper" that suppose to have experience!

So they called me. "You go down and check that truck and see what's wrong with the truck." I didn't find anything wrong. "There's nothing wrong with the truck," I say. (So, if there's nothing wrong, it's got to be the man. It can't be the truck.)

Well, here you go again. He sat on the driver's side, I sat on the passenger side. Now I see why he wasn't going anywhere. Now the truck is loaded with 36 pounds of sand--30,000 pounds of sand. He wasn't putting the truck in the right gear to move the truck. Every time he shift the truck and put on the gas, it would stall. I said, "You know, there is nothing wrong with the truck. You're not putting it in the proper gear to move it. You have a load on this truck. You have to start on a very low speed and work it on to your next speed."

He didn't know that. He had never driven a truck. But he had a "piece of paper" that stated that he did! Now that shows you the difference that a "piece of paper" can mean.

That "piece of paper"? It doesn't mean anything. (PA III, 17)

(Several of the participants were vociferous about the value they placed on "experience" over "book learning."

William, Lillian and Gertrude all rose to the top of their job structures with only a high school education and many
years of seniority and taking responsibility. They spoke with pride of lesser colleagues with "fancy degrees": Carlotta and Jenny were scornful of present supervisors who had college educations but lacked "common sense." Yet all of the study participants were now engaged in educational activities.)

Paolo expects to receive less fulfillment from his study than either Isadore or Wuschko. For, unlike Wuschko and Isadore who dreamed of and planned for course-taking after retirement, Paolo feels obligated to complete a course of study that is both tedious and repetitious for him and will gain little more than "a piece of paper." Yet he does want to have his degree and intends to pursue the GED until he gets it. He is determined to have the community college course in small engine repair and he will persist until he is admitted.

The individuals so far discussed represent a spectrum of motivational constructs. The next three stories continue to explore motivation and themes that have been seen in the first stories recur and recombine in individual ways. In Madeline's story, for example, some of Wuschko's reverence for education and personal symbolism is recalled as well as the need to make sense of personal history (the life review with an educational setting). And, like
Isadore, the social importance of continued learning and the schedule of having somewhere to go to—having destinations that are chosen—have made Madeline's late life a pleasure; both see late life as times of activity and schedules.

Madeline H.

"My life was never what it should have been because I couldn't get to college."

Madeline H. is age 74 and has been attending a poetry class in the basement of a local library. "I love words," she says, "I love words. Well, it's one of the biggest parts of your life, a word" (MH I, 7). Yet, despite the number of good friends she's had, she never had anybody to share books or poetry with until she started to take classes at the age of 51; she always felt alone. Furthermore, she has only recently had the self-confidence to go to an adult education class to alleviate that loneliness.

"Education" and the meaning that is has had for Madeline throughout the 35 years she felt deprived—and angry because of the deprivation—is inextricably tied into the notion that one's class is determined by one's educational level. She has always been proud of her "class" and felt outraged that the loss of a college education should lower her in the eyes of others. Born and raised in New England, Madeline came from a close and
literate family which was "not educated in the formal sense." They supported her in her desire for further education but had no money to give her. Madeline shows extreme pride in her parents. She says:

My mother came from old time Connecticut Yankee people--old time Yankee people down in N_____. My mother and my grandmother both went only to the fourth grade. But they were self educated from then on. They spoke the "King's English"; and they read. I have pages that my grandmother wrote interpreting passages in the Bible. (MH I, 1)

My father came over from Germany. Well, when he came over he didn't know a word. He came over at 16. He was 28 when he got married. So, you see, in those 12 years he learned English. And (everybody laughs) he said he went to live with an English teacher, but what he meant was--they were living in New York--that he boarded at a house where there was an English teacher and she taught him his English and his English was perfect. It was beautiful . . . But my mother's family in N____ go way, way back.

And he had only very few German relatives. Most of them were the Yankee side of the family. But my father loved reading and writing. When I moved away he used to cut poems out of the newspaper and send them to me, and little descriptions of nature and so forth. You know, it was that kind of home. (MH I, 3-4)

Madeline spoke at great length about her family and life in the early 1900's. Throughout the interviews she referred to their special qualities and the effects of having "background." McMahon and Rhudick (1967) note that "an essential function of remembrance is to secure one's past in a form appropriate and necessary for oneself . . . The mind never photographs; it paints
pictures" (p. 70). Madeline sees herself as typical of the "best" of American culture and through her current educational and volunteer activities hopes to present a legacy to other--often less privileged--individuals. She is extremely proud of her heritage:

I don't know why my folks left N_____, frankly. Although we moved into A______ which was a beautiful small college town at that time. And my dad had come from a small village in Germany, right in the mountains. He didn't care much about cities. And A______ was perfect . . . it was country living. My dad said that on the money he made, we would have to live in the poor section, and he thought it was better to live in the right section. And he thought it was better to live in the country. And he was right, absolutely right. And I've been grateful about it ever since, because we roamed the woods, and paddled in the brooks and everything with my brothers. And we never had anything to worry about in those days. You know, the world was pretty safe, not as it is today . . . It couldn't have been a better childhood.

And:

In a way I often think about my parents and us. We were classless! You wouldn't put us anywhere. We didn't have any money but we weren't poor. My father probably made an average pay but there were six children. And they spent it differently, my folks did. They did not live like the people who also made that little bit of money. They bought books and music and talked about travel and so forth.

And we were brought up with very strict table manners and this sort of thing. And we weren't allowed (my sister and I get a kick out of it now), we weren't allowed to say "Shut up." Not even to the dog. You didn't do it. It gets to be a habit, my mother told me. And if somebody asked us something, we didn't hear right, we weren't allowed to say "What?" We had to say, "What is it?" You know, almost Victorian.
My Victorian grandmother lived with us, of course, and that was part of it. But when I went to Europe to visit my German relatives, I felt very much at home with them: very very strict discipline and I can see where my father came from. And of course, my mother came from the same background; very very strict. And my Yankee relative family in N were average middle class. (MH III, 19)

My father was a butcher--wholesale mostly, sometimes in retail stores, too, but he was always a meat man, a butcher. And he seemed very happy. It didn't bother him at all. But my dad could always do a lot of things with his hands, too. He could take a car apart and put it back together. He was a very well balanced man, I thought. And he always had beautiful magazines in the house--expensive ones--anything you wanted to read, that was a reasonable expenditure. (You didn't bother much about clothes. I didn't have much in our class in those days.)

But we had music in our house. They bought the first Victrola in 1913, when Sears Roebuck put out a Silvertone, I remember. So from 1913 on we had music and records. They bought, of course, Caruso and German records. "Silent Night, Holy Night" by Madame Schumann-Heink. And we grew up with dignity because of this. And good reading material! I know that when I was 12 years old I had a library card; sometimes we used to walk a mile up there. My mother would give me a nickel to ride one way and I would walk up and spend the nickel on an ice cream cone and walk back again. (And I measured it in the car not too long ago and it's a mile and a quarter.) And I'd walk both ways to the library . . . (MH I, 9-10)

Madeline's education in New England was "the best education in the United States." "I was always a very happy person in school; I was just born into a schoolroom."

A special influence on Madeline--and her role model--was a junior high school English teacher:

This is a wonderful thing! And why I had in my mind to be an English teacher. She was the most--it is hard to describe her--she was a beautiful woman. She
wore fancy jewelry and I wanted to be exactly like her. Now that was junior high, and, frankly, I forgot what kind of English you got in junior high—whether you got grammar or reading or what. I just remember that Mrs. ______ was such a marvelous woman! But she was the one who made up my mind! I never had the problem that so many young people have (and for a long time it was incomprehensible to me how you—I believe that everyone is born with an aptitude for something). Now, since the time I was 12 years old it never entered my head that I would teach anything else but English and Latin. That is all I wanted to do. (MH I, 6)

You know, if your English is not very good and you're with people who are educated, they can tell right away. When I was teaching adult education, I used to tell them that when a stranger sees you the first impression is what you look like, your size and your clothes and so forth. (But these days you can tell little from the clothing; everybody wears blue jeans and sweaters and pants. There's not much distinction on the clothing as much as there used to be.) But, I said, the minute you open your mouth you almost always put yourself in your geographical location and pretty much your background too. I try to tell them how important their speech is. It can close a door faster than you can believe. And very politely closed, too. You'll never know why. (MH I, 7)

Madeline was unable to go to college for economic reasons (unlike Sophie whose parents thought a college education was overstepping oneself). She says:

In 1924 I left school and went to work . . . My mother took it for granted [that I would go to college] . . . My parents would have been on Cloud Nine if they had been able to send me. (MH I, 14)

Of course we were the Depression people and when the Depression hit there was no hope. That lasted for 10 years. And by that time I had thrown in the sponge in hoping to get into school again and I just got married and life went on (very happily) but back in my mind, you know, my life was never what it should
have been. You see, I couldn't get to college. What choice did I have here? I had Smith and Mount Holyoke in those days and that was practically it. And those were colleges for rich girls. And there was no hope. (And I wouldn't have gone as somebody who couldn't meet the competition; I was not going to go as some poor little waif.) (MH I, 7)

All the participants, of course, lived through the Depression which coincided with the time that they might have gone on in school. Only three of the twelve participants were given the opportunity to go to college. (These were William, Jenny and Isadore. Both William and Jenny left before the end of their first year and Isadore continued in a free night school for six years.) Several (Wuschko, Carlotta, Lillian and Thorgud) had some brief vocational training and Sophie's parents offered to send her to hairdressing school but she flatly refused. Economic circumstances robbed many of these individuals of opportunities that greater numbers of young people have today. In fact, the generation now in their 60's and 70's had no outside aid in paying for college: there were no scholarships, no federal aid or loan programs, no community colleges. Madeline says:

That was it. It was the Depression and I got a job at W____ in the office and I stayed there for five years . . . My boss warned me (this was after the stock crash) that things would not be good for a few years . . . (MH I, 14)

The pay was from $12.00 to $14.00 a week . . . I was working in the Five and Ten all day Saturday for something like $3.00. (MH I, 15-16)
Once the decision was made that college was not an option for her, Madeline did what each of the women in the sample did: she worked, enjoyed the few years of unmarried youth that remained, and married.

I was laid off because by that time 1932-1933, everybody was being laid off. I went home. I was out of work for two years and in 1934 (now the Depression had been on for years). Andrew. I was going to marry Andrew at that time. (He was taking his degree; he went to school for five years at night.) He got his degree in 1934 in the spring and we decided we might as well get married in the fall because the Depression obviously was going to last forever. (He was working four days a week and making $28.00!) (MH I, 16)

Later Madeline added:

You know, I think if I had had money I never would have married. (MH I, 19)

The economic and social impact of the Depression dictated the roles that many of the study participants played throughout their lives. Once they were married, for example, the women became dependent on their husbands: jobs were scarce and, when available, went to married men who had families, then to unmarried men, then to unmarried women, in that order of priority. Married women were expected to remain out of the job pool:

Well, I put up with this for three or four months and I told my husband I wanted to go out and get some temporary work. He laughed and he said, "Go ahead." Because it was the Depression and married women weren't allowed to work. Nobody would hire them. Oh no, because if anybody is going to work the man better have it to bring the money home. (MH I, 19)
Madeline, however, wanted more than the life of a "wife." She resented—on and off throughout her marriage—the dependent role she had chosen during her 20's and she never gave up her love of learning. She assumed that the opportunity for her education had passed. At age 50, however, Madeline made two important decisions: she left her husband. She says, "And he was sure by the time I was 50 I wouldn't leave anybody, you know--nobody does!"

(MH II, 26) But, she adds, "I wanted to go to college. I wanted to find out who I was."

That's the only reason I left. I knew I had to have an education. I could not go on any longer without it and I could not get it staying where I was--far as I knew I couldn't. (MH II, 27)

The following year Madeline returned to her husband. (They had divorced but were remarried.) And she enrolled in a community college. She found the experience to be fulfilling and describes a release of a part of herself she had not explored: "All my life I had to make believe I was having a wonderful time . . . I always felt different from the others."

The inner satisfaction . . . In a way you are never alone again once you get educated, seems to me. Because you live up in your mind, you know. And somehow you know where to go or what do do. (MH III, 13)

You see, I was developing as I probably should have been in my 20's and 30's . . . Oh, I changed into a completely different person in my 50's. So, by the time I was 60 I was that new person . . . (MH I, 9)
And:

Getting my college degree made an entirely different person out of me . . . It changed me completely. I hate to think of the person I was before, in a way. Because, maybe I was unhappy without an education. Everything is wonderful. (MH III, 1)

Since enrolling in college and receiving a B.A., Madeline has attained her life-time goal of becoming an English teacher and has continued to develop her interest in literature. The course she is currently taking is writing. It is, she says, an opportunity to share her inside self with others. And the class is a much needed outing--she still enjoys her time away from her husband--in the company of people who are more like herself. She says:

When I joined and I met wonderful people. And they took me in as an equal. That's pretty . . . you know. It never would have done. It never would have happened before, not in the same way because I was a different kind of person, probably did not have the self confidence that I have now. And I didn't realize that it showed but it does. (MH III, 13)

We meet in the library once a month, downstairs. I had written things before but I never had the self-confidence. (MH I, 2)

It was advertised. There was a little notice in the paper when they first started. I think I appeared in the second week . . . They were delighted to see people . . . I feel it's a privilege. (MH II, 2)

For Madeline--so long denied a chance to achieve an education "and be what I should have been"--adult education participation is a part of an especially gratifying late
life. Her interest in writing and in literature can be traced back to her role model, her junior high school English teacher who had "class." And further, her motivation is related to the wish to pass some legacy on to others, to accumulate a life story, to shape it into a framework she can respect, and to pass it on in some way. That is the function of life review (Butler, 1963, 1977; McMahon & Rhudick, 1967).

The following story—Lillian's—reflects some similar themes of economic and sex role pressures. But, while Madeline revels in her life review, Lillian denies that she is retrospective. Like Isadore, her world is a whirl of activities.

Lillian R.

"I'm a person who idolizes learning . . . That's the history of my family."

Lillian R. is 65 and she is taking Psychology for Everyday Life. It is part of a busy schedule in which she has only one day off for shopping and errands. And this schedule, in turn, is part of a retirement plan put into action when she recently moved to a small northeastern city after having lived her entire life in the midwest. Her schedule is indicative of a new retiree from the workforce (which she is) and strikingly like that of the
traditional man who chooses to spend time out of the home rather than in it (Isadore, Henry, Wuschko exemplify this pattern).

Lillian was born in 1915; her parents were recently immigrated Russian Jews who spoke Yiddish in the home. Her father, an orthodox rabbi was assigned a congregation in a small city in the northwest. "He went where is calling was." (LR I, 1) Her admiration for her father was a strong component of her life story:

Well, my father was a scholar. He was dubbed the most learned man in the area. You know, in the Jewish religion there are certain ceremonies and certain abilities which must be performed on certain occasions. For instance: a boy is born, there must be a circumcision. My father was qualified for that. A Jewish wedding must have a certain canopy and certain prayers. Anything in the Jewish religion which was not available in a city like New York, my father could perform. Consequently, he was on call for the entire northwest, because there were so few Jews. When there was a death there had to be a Jewish funeral; a birth had to be a Jewish birth; and a wedding had to be a Jewish wedding. Jewish holidays were celebrated in certain ways—as you know that on Passover we eat only matzo for a whole week. You know, on the Day of Atonement, everything had to be in that fashion. Well, here was one Jew 500 miles or a thousand miles from another. (LR I, 3)

And:

My father: He knew everything. He was a highly qualified man and strictly scholarly. (LR I, 4)

When I visualize my father here's the way I see him. [Demonstrates] On a chair, on his knees. (I'll show you how I visualize him.) Like this, you know, with a big book in front of him. The Jewish Bible is about half as big as this table. They weren't just Bibles, they were Jewish Torah—they were books of
endless commentary on every statement that is stated in the Old Testament. And I visualize him like this with a great big book in front of him on the dining room table. That's my impression of him to this day.

And here's what the sad part of it was: He had no companions with whom to communicate . . . There were no learned people; he was the most learned person in the whole area. There was no one he could talk to. (LR I, 9)

Lillian identified particularly with her father; about her mother and the place of women in her culture she was realistic. She often juxtaposed an anecdote about her mother's role with one illustrating her own choice of business leadership:

My mother was not learned. You must understand that even in Russia women did not have the advantages men had. As a matter of fact they didn't want . . . women were to raise children and run a house. It was the men as a matter of fact--we had what is called "community." It was called a minyan: ten men. There are certain rites which cannot be performed without a minyan. So, they must have ten men. If they have nine men and one woman, it's not a minyan. They have to have ten men. You know what I mean, the women were disenfranchised, I'll call it. Well, my mother was one of them.

She was one of the proudest people of her area because she had married a man of learning. Money wasn't important: to marry a millionaire didn't make the headlines. The greatest accomplishment for a girl to perform--that a girl could be lucky enough--the first thing was a man of learning. The first thing a father would ask a prospective son-in-law: What Yeshiva (that's the name of a Jewish school) did you or your grandfather (and go back generations) go to? What school did you go to (and not the secular but the Hebrew school) and can you "daven"--that means can you pray in Hebrew. He was given the
fifth degree, because his daughter had to marry a man of learning. Nothing else! A shoemaker, a tailor or a plumber had no social status. Learning only! (LR I, 4)

Now, however, my mother happened to have a mind for business, which was very common there because a lot of women who had scholarly husbands made the living and they were proud to. That was the happiest thing in the world because it made it possible for their husbands to become more learned. If he is elevated, she is elevated. (LR I, 5)

She was a very good business woman . . . She was a foreigner; she couldn't take a job that would require English schooling. So she had a grocery store; she had a butcher shop; she had a rooming house. And she did everything herself. It supported us. (You had to have a commercial wife to be a scholar.) (LR I 9)

Lillian described in detail and with much zest the upbringing she and her brothers and sister enjoyed. In their community, and in their intimate family existence, Lillian and her siblings enjoyed a rich and precious heritage, despite their actual poverty.

Our family was very close . . . We lived in one room . . . until we arrived at the situation where we could find rooms behind a grocery store. (LR I, 5, 6)

(Interviewer: Were they strict parents?)

They were strict with regard to Yiddish dictates. But they didn't have to--this is the queerest thing in the world. Our parents never told us we couldn't do anything that was anti-Yiddish, anti-Hebrew or anti-according-to-the-Bible. Never told us. But we never did anything. We just knew it. For instance, Friday night when we gathered we knew we could not have a date on Friday night. We knew we all had to be home on Friday night. Our parents never told us we had to. We didn't know any
different; that's the way we grew up. We didn't think there was any other way to live. We were just born into it. (LR I, 5)

Many times Lillian would speak of her life in the most accepting way. "That's just the way it was" was a favored tag ending to a memory. She did not like questions about her feelings or evaluations of the past. Clearly, she is a woman who chooses to focus on the here and now.

Although she was an excellent student, Lillian, like most of her cohort, was unable to go to college after high school. This has been a lifelong source of disappointment to her and her story echoes Madeline's and Wuschko's (and that of most of the sample):

I'm a person who idolizes education, that's all. That's the history of my family. My father was a rabbi and a teacher. And I've always been a book girl, a reader. Even when I was a youngster, if they couldn't find me, they knew I was in the library. I just gravitated toward that. (LR II, 1)

When I was in school I took academic subjects that would have prepared me for college because in those days you took Latin and you took geometry. You didn't get tap dancing and finger printing like you do now. I graduated valedictorian in my class. We had a 500 class and I graduated at the top of my class. There was no means of my going on. I would have had to leave home which was completely impossible. (LR I, 2)

I had one teacher--he was a man. His name was Mr. ______. Isn't it funny how I would remember that? It so happened that he was so impressed with me (and he was a chemistry teacher) and it seemed I was the only one in his class that actually understood chemistry. I was a freshman. He called my parents
to come to the school, he wanted to talk to them. Nothing came of it. (LR I, 7)

Those were very lean years . . . very lean years. And you couldn't get scholarships. It was unheard of. I was very active in the city civicly. The most prominent lawyer in F____ happened to be a Mr. L____ who was a Jew. He approached my mother and said, "Mrs. Z____, you've got to send Lillian to law school." Nothing ever happened. No school in town. No scholarships. No nothing. (LR I, 7)

It is interesting, again, to note the recurrence of a theme heard in others' stories: that a teacher "discovered" the student and told the parents that the child should be sent on to school.

Lillian wove a theme of regret throughout the interviews: regret not only for herself but for her brother who, because times were hard, had to settle for being a pharmacist instead of a doctor. In fact, her regret for her brother often overshadowed her own. She said, for example,

He wanted to be a doctor. And to this day he wanted to be a doctor. And he would have been a superb doctor because he's got the bedside manner and he's handsome and he's brilliant and when you talk to him now you don't think you're talking to a pharmacist. You think you're talking to a physician. (LR I, 7)

The regret, however, did not appear to be bitterness. She pointed out in many ways that her life had just taken a logical course:

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1 The year was 1933.
... Just the typical life of an immigrant family of bright people. That's all. I think it's repeated many times. (LR I, 10)

I could have gone to Normal School (that's before your time). But a friend of mine went to Normal School. She was offered a job of $95.00 a month going to a small town. It's all farms. Getting $95.00 a month and paying board and room at a farm! So I thought to myself, "That's not for me."

I had never seen a typewriter, knew nothing about typing or shorthand. I went to a local business college for three months. I graduated in June and I went June, July and August. In September I took a stenographic job with a firm who had been unable to hold any girl at any time.

(Interviewer: Because?)

Because I knew my stuff! (LR I, 3)

The first thing I did was give my mother her $75.00 that she invested in my education. And from then I just went on. (LR I, 9)

Lillian did find the opportunity to develop both her legal capabilities and her business acumen. She became a secretary and eventually was to be the assistant to a prominent lawyer in a large urban law firm. She says, with obvious pride:

I am going to tell you something very interesting. In S____ we had a lawyer, well he's considered the most prominent lawyer. There's always somebody whose name is big, you know, if you want anything done you go to so and so. And I was working for this lawyer in his corps--well, he drafted me to work for him. I worked for him 13 years and I was paid a man's salary.

I left out the most important part. He was totally blind. That's the crux of it. So I did everything. I could have been a paralegal but was doing so well and I loved my job and this man idolized me because I
was his eyes, I was his hands. He knew that his
documents were not misspelled; he knew they were
properly punctuated; he knew the paragraphing was
right. You know what I mean: where do you find all
that? And this man was totally blind, stone blind.

He drafted me. Do you know what I said to him when
he asked me to work for him? (He not only drafted me,
he took me away from another attorney who was in his
office. This is what he really did and this man had
to advertise for somebody.) He says, Lillian, I'm
going to take you away from Mr. So-and-So. And I
said to him, "What took so so long?" But Mr. E____
was--God, you know he was the most prominent man in
the area. Even in B_____ they used to come, come to
Mr. E______.

I wanted to work for him; I went into that firm be-
cause I wanted to work for him. I wanted to work
because I knew I could give him what he needed. And
it came to the point where he would say, "Lillian, we
need a will for Mr. A. and he has so many children,
he has so much money he wants to give so and so."
He'd give me all the high points. And that's all he
had to do. Or if he was suing somebody he would tell
me who was the defendant and who was the person who
initiated it. He'd tell me what was involved.
(Remember now he was blind; I was taking all this
down in shorthand.) And I would compose the deposition
and see it was served and I knew the whole procedure
that would follow and he would tell me to do it. But
it was under his signature. He signed everything I
did, even his checks.

And do you know, when I left he hired a man to take
my place! (LR I, 8)

The years of responsibility and the mentorship of the
man she worked for were recalled with enthusiasm and pride.
Lillian then had her own business which flourished. At
the same time, she provided for two young sons and saw
that they had "the finest Jewish education in the most
talked about Talmud Torah." Now in retirement, Lillian's
life pattern is more typical of post-retirement men than
women of her age, probably because of her many years in the workforce (Lowenthal, Thurnher & Chiriboga, 1977; Newgarten, 1964; Neugarten and Gutmann, 1968). She defined herself by her work role rather than her family role. (In addition, Lillian did not wish to discuss her two marriages in the interviews.)

The element of missed opportunities was strong in Lillian's life review as it was for Sophie and Madeline. But Lillian says she doesn't dwell on it. "I just go on with my duties. It doesn't matter. I don't moon over things," she says (LR III, 3). And though she had not been afforded the chance to be all she might have been because of a lack of further education, she is proud of her life. She says she "avoids" thinking about the past:

'I think it's even foolish to think about it because it's irretrievable. You just do the best with what you've got at hand. My brother is a pharmacist. He was a born doctor, bedside manner and all. There was no way to achieve it. I was interested in law. And I told you, even the lawyer in town noticed it. But there was no way to achieve it. (LR III, 3)

It is probably that Lillian's memories are sometimes so painful that she prefers to avoid life review. And, like Isadore, she keeps a hectic schedule. She says the psychology class is "just a great lecture" and that is why she chose it this semester. She claims she does not seek an affective involvement in the course content. She is not, like Wuschko and Madeline, seeking to learn about
her life; nor is the class content totally divorced from her world as it is with Paolo. However, the following interaction with the interviewer suggests that Lillian is not wholly disinterested in personalization of the classroom material:

Last year I had this class in psychology. This year I thought I would change and go into contemporary literature but I was called saying they did not have enough registrations. So, I told them to put me back in last year's class. That is why I'm in.

(Interviewer: Can you explain to me why you took the class?)

I am interested in psychology just as much as I'm interested in any subject. I think everybody is interested in it, and I think people even apply it without knowing it.

(Interviewer: How?)

To their--they have their own problems. And they may apply some of the tenets of psychology without being psychologists. (LR I, i)

It is apparent that Lillian, for now, does not want to unlock some of the past. She says:

As a matter of fact, do you know that I have an album of pictures and I never open the cover of them, because when I look at pictures that bring up sad memories, and . . . I don't want to look. I don't look at them. (LR III, 2)

One final story--Jenny's--completes a group of profiles of the study participants. The stories have focused on early and current motivational themes and on the ways in which participants talked about their pasts. Wuschko and Madeline illustrated the wish for one aspect of self
fulfillment through adult education (a most personal use of learning) and Isadore and Lillian another (perhaps a more removed intellectual involvement) and Paolo a still more removed, separate relationship. The other members of the study population represent combinations of these "categories." Jenny's story is still a further dimension. She is not reminiscent, not looking to fill her time or engage on an abstract level. Yet she is not removed from her subject matter. Furthermore, she was not deprived of a chance to go to school. She is a widow--a transitional woman--embarking on a new life and career. Her expectations of adult education are vocational and practical.

Jenny M.

"I want to tell you I don't consider myself elderly."

Jenny M. is a 61-year-old black woman who has been widowed for five years. She is experiencing new beginnings. Like Lillian, she moved to a small northeastern city from her home in another state; it is the same city she had lived in as a young woman. She has a job which began as a quasi-volunteer experience (there was a small stipend) but may become a new career. She does not care to think about the past and of all the participants spent the least amount of time in recollection and life review.
Jenny was born in N____ City in 1919 and moved to S____ when she was "at a pretty young age." She says, "My father had established a law practice here and stayed here. I can't figure out why." Jenny's parents--the only such parents in the study--were both professionals: her father a lawyer and her mother a teacher before marrying and taking on the housewife's role. She describes her early life as pleasant and--unlike most of the study population--never experienced any economic deprivation.

My father was a little old fashioned. But not bad. (In most families there are arguments.) But you see my mother was one religion and my father was another. When we grew up as long as we went to church they were happy. I was the only one that took my father's religion; the rest went with my mother.

My mother was a wonderful person. Not easy going. (I had my licks like everybody else.) And she was more or less like a club woman; she was always traveling. In a lot of clubs and things. (JM I, 4)

Her home, however, was very strict:

In the first place my father was not born here in the United States. He was born in R____, West Indies ... And I find that foreign parents--he was an American--have a tendency to lead their children's lifes. And I bucked it. (JM I, 2)

Many of Jenny's life decisions seemed to come from that tendency to "buck it" and she says of herself:

Can I tell you something? I am the worst person in the world for someone to say "no" to. Honest to goodness! And my daughter--I only have one child--she'll tell anybody, "Don't ever tell my mother not to do something. That's when she's going to do it." She knows it; it's a known fact. And I don't know where I get that stubbornness from! (JM I, 8)
Jenny's school life, too, was pleasant:

I went to all the schools here. I graduated from S______ High. (It was nothing like it is today.) . . . The only teacher I remember was my first grade teacher (first grade and kindergarten). Because we went to the same church. We all lived in the same neighborhood and I always remember my mother was a kindergarten teacher before she married, and I always remember her saying she would be my foundation, the first grade teacher. And actually--funny thing about it, she's still living, Miss H______--a darn good teacher. My brother and sister had her; I think my daughter had her. (JM I, 2)

When I went to school the teachers were dedicated. We had to stay after school. Nowadays the teachers leave the same time the pupils leave. I don't know, they're not dedicated as they used to be; they are only out for the money, I do believe. (JM II, 4)

Only one thing I did: I went to commercial high school first. (I was advised by the guidance counselor in junior high school and of course my mother and father went along with the guidance counselor) which I did not like. I did not like the school, I did not like the teachers . . . They thought I should have more or less a commercial course. I never liked that stuff. And they wanted to mix the commercial with college prep--which was very stupid. I mean, as I look back on it, if I had a child going to school, I would never do that to a child . . . I would have said, "If you want a commercial course, take a commercial course. If you don't take a general course." But they tried to mix it up and I just didn't like it.

So I changed and went to another high school and really enjoyed it. (JM I, 2)

Jenny felt some pressure to go on to school, particularly from her father. However, she didn't like to follow his advice and has always been rather satisfied with herself. Here is what she says:
I didn't care about going to college, I really didn't. And the funny thing about it, I never regretted that decision. Like some girls say, "If I only had the chance you did! Why didn't you do it?" (JM I, 3)

I did not like that type of study. My father, I think, was trying to get me to go to college but I didn't want to go to college. He had me all set to go to C_____ Normal School . . . I bucked it at the last minute. I didn't want to do it . . . I didn't know what I wanted to be. At first I thought I would be a physical ed teacher because I loved sports and then I changed my mind. I wanted to be a dietician. I didn't know what I wanted to be. Finally my father was disgusted with me. (JM I, 2)

The only one who took after as far as the education part (of the family) was my sister. But, as I say, I have no regrets.

(Interviewer: Did your father ever say you might like to be a lawyer?)

Jenny: My sister told me he said that. I don't think I would have. Ha, I mean, I don't think I could have done it anyhow. Not me. I admit I have the intelligence of a lawyer, but it's just not for me.

I tell you, we have two different distinctive children. My sister is what I call (and I call it to her face) an "educated fool." Now, she's so stiff and she's seven years younger than I am. And to see us you would never think we were sisters. We're two different distinctive people. I'm out-going, you know, and she kind of holds back. (JM I, 4-5)

And my sister went to college and she graduated at 20. She got her master's at 21 and then she started teaching. She ended up as a principal. (JM I, 4)

Jenny admits that her independence and desire to do things her own way has not always been successful. She recalled the following anecdote about her first job as her father's secretary:
I didn't like office work. And I worked for him . . . and we went along pretty good, and then, one day a friend and I went out for lunch and we took the regular hour. But it took two hours. And we came back and my father says to me, "You might as well keep your coat on." And I said, "Why?" He said, "One hour is the lunch hour. Even though I am your father, I am also your employer. When you're here, you're working for me and I am not your father. Just keep your coat on and go home and don't come back."

I have never forgotten that. When my father fired me! I have never been fired from a job since. I thought, because he was my father that he . . . that I could get away with it!

I know it was a tough decision for my father but, don't you know, I have thanked him many a day for it. Because he said, "Don't take advantage," and fired me! And to be fired! And my mother said, "What did you do?" And I said, "I took two hours for lunch." And she said, "Don't you realize your father has other things to do besides wait for you?"

I said, "He could have locked the door." (You know, I was arguing.)

Now that has really stayed with me and I have never forgotten it. That's one thing I'll never forget. And I was so embarrassed! (I am the type person you can't embarrass.) And the kids would say, "What's the matter? You didn't go to work today." No, no no. It took me a long time before I could get to tell them I was too ashamed. My own father told me to go home--his own flesh and blood! He said, "Would you do this to someone else?" And I said, "No. Because they're not my father."

He said, "When you're here I'm not your father. I'm your employer." (JM I, 2-8)

In one further act of rebellion Jenny chose to marry a man her father disapproved of:

Ha, ha. I went with him--it was a disaster. But it was one those things that my father thought I was marrying beneath me. But he was very good to him before he said he wanted to marry me. But, when he
said he wanted to marry me, my father put his foot down. Here I was, 22 years old and my father disowned me for awhile, he really did. But, as I say, it happens to the best. But it took about two or three months and he got over it. But I think if he had said to me, "Now I will give you the biggest wedding in the world" . . . I wouldn't have married him. (JM I, 8)

Jenny and her husband did not enjoy the wealthy life she had been raised in but they stayed married for 30 years, raised a daughter, and formed a tight second generation family with her daughter's children and husband.

Jenny worked hard, primarily as a dry cleaner, and had no interest in studying during those years. She says:

I'll tell you what I did. I lucked upon a job of which I never thought of working in. It was a dry cleaners. And I was taught the trade. A friend of mine was a silk finisher--that means pleating and all that stuff. And I took a fancy to that and she taught me something, some of it. And, oh I worked all the time. (JM I, 10)

Did she ever take courses?

No. Never. Didn't have time. When you are out there in this mean world trying to make a dollar! (JM I, 11)

When her husband died five years ago she was at a loss about what to do. After some time she returned to the city where she had been raised, moved into a building made up of federally subsidized apartments for the elderly, and began a series of experiments in living as an older person. Soon, however, she rebelled again:
By living here, I've been here since the building opened, which will be five years in May, and I haven't come into contact with a heck of a lot of elderly women that do things. They feel that once they have reached the social security stage, that all they're supposed to do is sit down and do nothing. You didn't notice the ladies in the back there? Three o'clock to five o'clock they're sitting downstairs. Once in a while they do R.S.V.P. -- you know, for the retired senior citizens -- but, I'm telling you, one time I was down there one afternoon and they were talking about their pains and their aches, and their pills and what the doctor says and other people. I felt like I was sick when I came upstairs. They've all worked but I guess they feel that they should take it easy. But what they're doing is deteriorating. (JM I, 1)

I've just been fussing about after a woman turns 50 and she's widowed there's nothing for her to do. Sitting around and feeling worry for herself. I broke myself of that right quick. I volunteered I'd do a thousand hours at the hospital volunteering. I had to do something because I'm not a person to sit around. And that started me off. (JM I, 12)

Now she is somewhat over-extended, but her own account:

We have our food sales and bake sale and I'm chairman of that. We have a bazaar coming up. Last year I had to cut it down because I would be too tired. I do too much. I don't know when to say no. (JM I, 12)

She is also very busy with church activities and has accepted a kind of para-ecclesiastical role in the services. She is on the board of directors of the Urban League.

I've volunteered up to the hospital to five a thousand hours. Until it got too hard on me. I mean, my heart breaks when I see these things that happen in the hospital. I had to stop. (JM I, 1)

However, her real passion -- and the new vocational direction that her life is taking -- is related to her Foster Grandparent assignment in a day-care center for severely
retarded toddlers. She began by donating several hours a week and has increased her time and her small salary. Moreover, she was chosen to work in a special summer program that operated out of her day-care location. That job paid well. She showed me a pamphlet listing the services of the center and proudly pointed out her name on the list of staff. She exclaimed:

It's a wonderful thing! And only it's too bad that they didn't start this 10 or 15 years ago. Oh, it's a wonderful feeling! Actually don't have enough people . . . Now I'm going to tell you that my daughter was so proud of me she didn't know what to do. I was kind of proud of myself. This summer--I mean, as a Foster Grandparent you get $80.00 every two weeks. To me, that's chicken feed but I enjoy it because I go places and stuff. That's money I don't have to worry about. This summer R asked me to work as a teacher's aide at the summer school. I got $150.00 a week! I got $5.00 an hour for 30 hours a week.

Listen, would you believe it? I haven't been in it a year . . .

I'm doing it again this summer. She hired me back. So my daughter couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe it myself until I got my first paycheck. (JM I, 12)

Suddenly things are different for Jenny. She no longer sees herself as one of the elderly in her building. Recently she told several of the women that she was taking an adult education course. Here is how she described her cohorts and the separation she needs to feel from them:
I don't know but we were talking about it. "Why should I go back to school, I've worked hard all my life?" They said, "We're going to sit down and enjoy life." That's all they think about is "sitting down" but they're not doing anything constructive with it. There's a once a week or perhaps twice a week they have a knitting class and also the Volunteers. Some of them don't go out from one week to the next. We have a gorgeous yard out there in the summer time; they have everything for them.

And I've noticed it too since I've been on the Advisory Board with this Foster Grandparent that the women who are from the B County and the H County which is more or less the suburbs, they have more things going for them even though they are older than these women here. I mean, they just like life. . . .

They just drive me up a wall sometimes!

I was so glad when this Foster Grandparent thing came along because I used to go to my daughter's or any place just to get away from here because they make you feel--you feel as if you're as old as they are! (JM I, 1)

The courses Jenny signed up for include a workshop on nutrition and retardation and a course on child development at a local community college. She said that the need for practical strategies for working with retarded toddlers led her to register for the courses. Her experience of disappointment and subsequent withdrawal is discussed in the next chapter.

Summary

What Jenny represents as an older person returning to school (largely a vocational choice) is quite different from most of the study population. Her needs are for
specific content that she can apply to a future vocation rather than to fulfill some former dream of "education." However, others saw their adult education experiences as professional or work-related as well as emotionally fulfilling. Henry, a retired laborer, was engaged in learning about Workman's Compensation Law; Sophie was attending workshops on issues in competency testing, a kind of extension of her career as an English teacher and her identity as a "professional" after many years of waiting for an education; and Carlotta was participating in training for literacy tutoring as a means of beginning a new job-life. These specific content areas were chosen because of a combination of motivating factors, of course, that reached back to early family and social experiences but which developed into late-life career interests. Although most did not see themselves as earning money in their new careers (as Jenny obviously does), they were actively recommitting themselves toward something other than leisure-time involvement.

The other participants have been somewhat represented by the six whose stories were detailed in this chapter. They combine variations of the motivations so far seen. Thorgud, for example, is interested in the intellectual stimulation of community college courses in sociology and western civilization, and further hopes to understand
the factors that shaped his personal history (like Wuschko). Furthermore, the increase in crime in his neighborhood has led him to seek understanding of current problems as well. William, on his way to a Ph.D. program after beginning college at 56, wishes both to challenge himself intellectually (like Isadore) and to prove that he can do it if he chooses. For William chose what he calls the "macho" side of his personality during his youth—a kind of reverse of the sexual stereotype that limited several women. He also seeks the validation that Sophie and Madeline seek—that a college degree says they are "someone."

Finally, Gertrude's story had many elements found in Madeline's and Lillian's stories: a bright girl, ready to go on to college was denied the chance because of economic circumstances. However, unlike Madeline, Gertrude says she goes only for the social life now and a continuation of the nurturing role she has carried out all her life. Obviously, it is not possible to categorize individuals' motivations in one or two like-examples, but a spectrum of motivating factors both present-oriented and going back many years is represented in this presentation of the data. Similar constructs were apparent in data-analysis although the particular details are different for each individual.
The following chapter discusses the actual experience of classroom participation for these six representative individuals.
CHAPTER V
THE EXPERIENCE OF ADULT EDUCATION
BY THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS

This chapter focuses on and reconstructs the participants' current educational experiences: how participants describe their interactions within the class, how they feel about the educational process, and how they deal with the content of the courses.

Introduction

The sample of participants proved to be "ideal" students. They attended all classes— even in inclement weather— and did all of the assignments. Only one student did not finish out of the course that she had registered for and that was Jenny who found her special education workshop "didn't make sense" and was "boring." All of the individuals attended classes under no-fee arrangements for senior citizens. (Again, Jenny was the exception.)

All of the men felt themselves to be somewhat less capable than their younger selves: none of the women expressed this concern. The men claimed that they did not integrate themselves socially into the intergenerational classes; many of the women did so and one (Gertrude) became the confidante of many of the young
people. Individual and group similarities emerge in the following descriptive excerpts from the data which discuss day-to-day classroom behaviors of the adult education experience.

Wuschko

Wuschko attends the evening division of a small private college in his neighborhood. He pays only a registration fee and attends two classes—Social Problems and Economics. The previous semester he took Sociology and World History. He says that he does all of the homework (despite some difficulty with his eyes after prolonged reading) and attends all of the lectures and discussion groups (despite some trouble hearing what is going on). He fears that he is experiencing a loss of memory for details although he believes his concentration is better now than in his youth.

The following interchange illustrates some of the elements present in Wuschko's experience of the classroom—the combination of courtesy and humility that was found in most other participants and a sense of isolation which is unique to Wuschko. It also illustrates the tensions that exist when an older person feels relegated, for one reason or another, to play out certain roles
within the classroom environment while another level of thinking—a more private schematizing—takes place.

**Interviewer:** What did it feel like to be in school for the first time in many years?

**Wuschko:** Well, somewhat apprehensive. Somewhat apprehensive.

**Interviewer:** Do you still feel that way?

**Wuschko:** Yes, especially in larger classes when many more young people than—oh, hardly any old. Somewhat, I try not to disturb because they have a purpose, I really don't. Too, for example, certain questions they may ask teacher but I forgot, I let them ask.

Something (indicating his hearing aid) I would rather listen attentively and I do my best. In smaller classes, now in Social Problems, there's only five of us. Well, there's a free discussion—although four of them (two of them young people and one woman somewhat younger than I, probably 55)—so this is. I'm more free in this class.

Larger class, well, there are always some students that are outgoing and monopolize the teacher. And, it seems that the same few, they ask over and over and over and, I believe, in the end the professor gets so used to that, only looks at them and talks to them, with them. This very often happens after several classes that they monopolize and they are the main attraction in the class.

**Interviewer:** How does that make you feel?

**Wuschko:** Well, I just disregard. I just on a couple of occasions I raised my hand but I believe the professor wasn't used to me asking questions, so just disregarded, and answered questions of his young people.

I don't feel hurt, sometimes uneasy. But I mean, but later on I just abandoned raising hands. I just rather listen.

**Interviewer:** Are they intelligent questions?
Wuschko: Well, some of them pertaining to the subject. Sometimes intelligent, sometimes trivial. But they asking them.

Interviewer: You feel . . . ?

Wuschko: Intrusion. Intruder somewhat into the class among many young people. I am intruder when I am alone or maybe two persons older.

Interviewer: If you had paid the full price would you still feel that way?

Wuschko: No.

Interviewer: So, it's partly because you're there. . .

Wuschko: [Interrupting, an unusual occurrence] No! I wouldn't. Because many, sometimes it's pertinent question to the subject and I have to forgo asking.

Interviewer: Because you didn't pay for the course?

Wuschko: Well, not only that--not only because I didn't pay for the course--but also because I'm not going to accomplish a great deal, even if eventually I got degree.

Interviewer: Because the teacher doesn't know that you didn't pay. Only the registrar knows.

Wuschko: I believe they do know, judging by age, by my age. I think they do know. I'm sure they do know. (WK II, 2-3)

Feeling old in an intergenerational classroom is an issue that came up repeatedly in the interviews. Many participants--Madeline, Gertrude, Sophie, for example--declared that while they felt "old" and therefore different at first, they gradually forgot their age and interacted on equal terms with the younger classmates. And, although all of the participants declared that they did not feel
"old" inside, that they were not "older learners," only "learners," the issue of their age was always foremost in their discussions of classroom interactions. They do, of course, look different and are perceived of as being different by the general society.¹

Wuschko finds that he makes comparisons between his early life and contemporary America:

Mostly I try to compare differences between what in circumstances in community I used to live in and in present. Well, there's an overwhelming amount of problems in United States that perhaps no other country would have. Perhaps because of racial problems and ethnic problems. (WK II, 4)

The periods of history and the analysis of social issues coincided with Wuschko's focus in his own stage of reminiscence or life review. Moreover, in discussions within the classroom, Wuschko describes himself as constantly making judgements, personalizing content, and sifting others' comments through his own experience. For example:

¹A fictional experience of this situation occurs in May Sarton's novel, *As We Are Now* when the main character thinks: "Old age is really a disguise that no one but the old themselves see through. I feel exactly as I always did, as young inside as when I was 21, but the outward shell conceals the real me--sometimes even from itself--and betrays that person deep down inside" (p. 80). The search for continuity of one's life despite outer change is another aspect of the life review (Butler, 1963, 1977; Myerhoff, 1979; Moody, 1978).
Social Problems:

In the cities—any large city—is almost demolished. It's, I believe, not the fault of the minorities. I believe it's more fault of the government. Of the way we live, the way we conduct our policy at fault. For example, the concentration of people in cities when there is no work. It seems that it should not be permitted. . . This is something that government shouldn't permit, should create new cities or something or industry where they could be employed. It's again being idle—this destroys moral part of the human being. Idleness is damaging severely. It breaks morals, it breaks kindness. It breaks a man all over, completely. Idleness is a very dangerous thing for any person . . . (WK II, 4)

Moral discussion—so natural to Wuschko in his current state of mind—is not the system used in classroom discussion. It is not, he observes, the stance of most 20-year-olds while it is the key to his own learning of new content. Problems, he says, "are put in a more intensive light, intensified" for him (WK II, 5). Of some of his younger classmates who lack this level of personal involvement, Wuschko says:

They didn't really participate on severity or intensity of social problems. . . And this one young student, I believe he's just beginner, freshman, well, he's not interested. He's taking sociology course I guess to make points. (WK II, 5)

Furthermore, Wuschko finds that he is drawing comparisons between pre-World War II Polish life and American life:

Well, I was acquainted with the problems but I didn't realize the intensity until I started to take these courses. I didn't realize the intensity of problems. . . I try to draw conclusions. (WK I, 10)
Life was different. It was very close. The relationship was very close between parents and children. And also brothers and sisters, too. There were some quarrels. I don't say that there weren't. . . I think that there would be in any society under any circumstances—especially quarrels between husbands and wives. But I don't think it ever was anything to compare, for example, to the United States. For example, you read about this unusual life: between husband and wife and wife beating. I never heard anything like it. This is something uncommon. This is something degrading, you know.

(Interviewer: Do you make a lot of comparisons like this?)

Especially now as last winter I took a sociology course and this time I took social problems. There is a tremendous difference. It is a great approach to life and the incidence of crime that happens here. . . and the racial hatred which was non-existent. (WK I, 9-10)

In a discussion of racial injustice in which several minority students spoke impassionately, Wuschko was moved to talk about his own experiences in the German concentration camp. It was an emotional time for him and the first time that he had publicly talked about his own life:

Social problems! Racism is what it was, plain racism! Because when Hitler declared war on Poland, he said, "This is not a war of conquest, it is not a war to take a part of the country which is supposed to be ours. It is a war of extermination: man, woman and child." Well, this is extreme racism . . . (WK III, 7)

So I spoke to two classes. Well, I think that many young people were very much impressed. . . (one person) said "I didn't realize intensity of hatred that people had." (WK II 7)
In another realm, where quantitative thinking is required, Wuschko feels himself less capable. He says of his performance:

My learning? Well, if I am to pass judgement, my score in the classes? I wasn't outstanding.

(WK II, 9)

For one thing, he doesn't hear the teacher very well. (It is a large lecture class and Wuschko, to some extent, relies on lip-reading as a strategy to offset his poor hearing).

It's lady teacher. I have problem, for example, in Social Problems this year. I have a problem hearing her. She has very low voice and sometimes I have hearing aid but sometimes I don't grasp everything clearly. . . But when classes are conducted by men I don't have problem, yet, hearing.

(WK II, 9)

Another issue is the sheer volume of reading in an area where personal history and experience does not provide a schematic framework. Although Wuschko has managed to stay with the class, he has not scored well on the exams (quantitative). He feels that no matter how much careful and concentrated study he devotes to the course, he will never excel as he might have in his youth. His dogged stick-to-it-ness is typical of all the older learners in the sample, however. He says:

I do read all assignments; sometimes I come back for reference. But, I mean I read first thoroughly all, chapter after chapter (whatever they are assigned). And then make notes and then I may come back for
certain things that I may have overlooked. . . Sometimes I may read a chapter ahead.

Well, I don't think it is that difficult but there are many, many parts to remember. I would say (and I don't know) I maybe not notice actually when I was 25 or 30. I believe that my mind is somewhat duller. I do think so because especially, for example, dates. I used to read several dates and keep in my memory for a long time but not now. The dates, especially, they escape. Or some statistics. (WK III, 3)

And:

In regard to the studying itself I am well aware that I cannot compete with young people. I am somewhat handicapped—my hearing is failing me and my keenness is grasping things is not as good as that of young people. Even to recollect something during exam I need more time. (WK I, 17)

Wuschko recognizes his tendency to personalize much of the new content he encounters and observes:

I draw on my life experience. Sometimes, yes. Perhaps not in every subject. (For example, Economics: it really has not much to do with my life experience.) . . But I may be able to concentrate better. And I have some experience, life experience that I, for example, I read so many things. For example Sociology, Social Problems that I read through, I believe this is somehow ingrained in me. (WK III, 3)

And, as with most of the older people in the study, Wuschko prefers the lecture format which he describes as pleasurable:

Myself, I think I learn better by listening attentively. I may have sometimes questions pertaining to the subject we're talking about. (Maybe once in the evening.) But more I enjoy listening to the lecture. (WK II, 11)
Despite his poor record in Economics, Wuschko will persist in finishing the course: it is part of a curriculum he is determined to have. He says, however, smilingly:

I look at Economics. I took it. Perhaps it is required, perhaps it. . . but I did. I really don't put my heart in it. It is not the subject I would love to study. (WK II, 11)

Wuschko's experience is complex. He does not feel totally comfortable in his classes because of his age; he feels he must curtail his own discussion so as to allow the younger students to "get what they come for." At the same time he finds that he is having a most personal—sometimes emotional—response to the content in class. He integrates his life review into what he is learning and he engages in judgmental retrospection and moralizing (classic signs of "integrity"—Erikson, 1963). Wuschko also tries to challenge his quantitative abilities and to train himself to be "a keener student."

In contrast, Isadore in the following story cares nothing for affective involvement in his learning experience at this time and concentrates on quantitative learning.

Isadore

Isadore's experience of adult education represents both a sampling of new material that he has always wanted to learn and an up-dating of past interest in technological areas. He observes of himself:
I would say that the basic thing that I'm doing is I'm getting into areas that I had either no experience or summation of old experiences and bringing them up to date. (IC II, 3)

Currently, Isadore's courses are in piano (beginning level, electricity and computers. His discussion of the individual classes tell the story of a man who is learning how he does and doesn't learn as he grapples with the course content.

Piano is brand new. I've never had piano lessons. The electricity is also a relatively new area but it's also a review area. Computers I have working knowledge of. You know, what they can do and how they can do it and I don't understand the mechanics of it. In other words, I'm getting into a production area, how it works or what makes it work. (IC II, 5)

What are the courses like for Isadore?

Piano (Beginning level):
It's been an interest of all my life to be able to read music like you read a book. . . (It's) just moving along very, very rapidly. I think I finally developed a scheme of learning that will enable me to be able to read music without actually playing it . . . What I'm doing now is basically hitting the notes so now I know, I'm beginning to learn what the scales mean and what the values of the sounds are. And I can now, hopefully, I would hope, to be able to pick up music and then just hear the sounds by reading the notes. That's always been a goal of mine. (IC, 3, 1)

Electricity:
The other day we had a discussion of the costing of electricity and, because of the explanation of the instructor, I rebuilt my greenhouse and probably saved--oh maybe--a hundred to a hundred and fifty dollars a year utilizing the exact same equipment
but placing it different ways to get maximum amount of light and using less electricity. Very practical. (IC, 3, 1)

This particular course is a course where you're relearning things that I have had in the past but never had it focused on a specific subject, namely the electricity. Oh, this course is basically--has a lot to do with physics, chemistry and mathematics. Now that I find that I have areas where I'm not learning as rapidly as I would like to have learned, I have to study more mathematics which would help me learn this particular course. (IC, I, 1)

It consists of chemistry and physics and mathematics, all of which subjects I have taken in the past but now I'm bringing myself up to date and I'm finding it difficult but I'm persuading it because I'm determined that I'm going to learn... (IC, II, 5)

Computers:
Well, I'm very weak in mathematics. I'm now weaker in mathematics than I thought I was because my experience hasn't been in scientific information. The computer course has a lot to do with logic, and I'm now at a point where I don't know whether I'm going to spend more time with the electricity which is a much more difficult subject because there is so much more learning than the computer which is basically ideal as a do-it-yourself course. I can always go back to the computer because there are many aspects of the computer that I would be interested in learning. But the computer is more a logic course whereas the electricity is more a knowledge course. Later on, I suspect that I will be able to use much of my electricity in computer work, although I don't intend to be a mechanic. (IC, III, 2)

Isadore enjoys theorizing about how he learns and what pedagogical systems work best for him. On tests and learning, he says:
Testing to me is the reverse of the learning. It's what I did not know, see. So if I failed a question or something like that, that would be the thing that I would go back to study, not the ones I knew. And then I don't guess on tests. If I don't know, I don't answer it. However, if I do answer it and came out with the wrong answer, I'd want to know why I came out with the wrong answer. (IC II, 14)

And, on the classroom environment, he was specific about how he operates:

I find that as an elder statesman in the class I'm far more open to make the teacher understand that there are areas that I got lost in and I welcome whatever help they give me and they are usually very cooperative. (Just the same way that I would be if I was the teacher. I would want the students to be constantly asking me so that I could, not demonstrate how bright I am, but rather how they grasp what the subject matter is.) (IC II, 5)

They are relatively small classes. The only large class is the computer class. There's probably about 40 students. The others are probably... the music class is probably the smallest--maybe 10 and the electricity class maybe 20 at the most... I have very little interaction with the majority of the students. You know, they're very close in age.

The computer course is both lecture and there'll be some lab. The electricity course definitely is lab and lecture and the piano is just working, it's simply lab. There's no homework in the music class. There's problems in the electrical class which you have to do. The lab work isn't anything that I'm the least bit interested in although I participate. And the computer class as I say so far has been lecture. There is some homework. (IC II, 5)

Isadore reads the textbooks, underlining as he goes along. He says he never "gets it" on the first reading but "constantly" reviews "because some parts of it are beyond
my comprehension; it's very challenging." He brings his
book to class and the teacher usually asks questions:

He's always asking you questions but he's asking you
questions on work that's advanced so that the
questions I come up with usually are the questions of
four days later because I haven't grasped the subject
matter of that particular day. . . Most of the work
that he does in the classroom has to do with
mathematics so if we're solving a problem, while I
may have understood the text of the reading because
it's so simplified, I might have lost the meaning of
the formula. The course is really in electrical
engineering rather than what the course is called. . .
So now I'm doing it as a challenge. . . (IC II, 6)

Isadore feels that he has lost some ability to
memorize and schematize. The problem is of special
interest as research in learning capacity of older adults
is on-going. Some loss of ability to process quantitative
operations may indeed occur in older people who have not
been used to such tasks; there is some evidence, however,
that comparison of WAIS scores of earlier years with those
of later years shows older adults maintain quantitative
ability (Cross, 1981; Elias, Elias & Elias, 1977). On
the other hand, in timed testing older people do show
decline. Fleece (1974) and others have discussed the role
that fear of decline may play in causing older people to
lose self-confidence and to perform less well in situations
that measure their intelligence, and Baltes and Schaie
(1977) maintain that there "is no strong age-related
change in cognitive flexibility" (p. 68). All 12
participants in the study declared that they had trouble learning now when compared to when they were younger and 10 of these cited memory as the crucial element in the decline. Isadore says:

I'm having trouble memorizing formulas... I don't know. I don't know. There are times, for example, as I've gotten older, there are certain things that I don't recall as rapidly as before. It's all there. I know it's there. And sometimes I get very frustrated as they happen as you meet somebody and their name just doesn't come back to you. You know everything about the person, yet the name doesn't come back.

For example, I remember taking a test last year that I just finished studying (I'm trying to remember what the course was)--oh, it was Abnormal Psychology. Just had read every one of the questions that were asked and for the life of me I just couldn't recall what the specific answers were. This was a test on specific answers. Just a complete blank. (IC II, 6)

Were this phenomenon to occur with a young person--and surely many young students have had the experience of totally forgetting what they studied during an examination--there would be concern but perhaps not with the same sense of failing that Isadore and others note in themselves.

In physical agility, too, there is some fear of loss:

With the piano I'm also beginning to realize there are physical limitations. For example, while I have now learned to read the notes, I'm going back to an old desire of being able to read music as you read a book; hear the sounds. However, I don't have the physical agility to move my fingers fast enough, to really read. I know that while I can read the slower notes, I will not be able to do the 16th with my fingers because they just don't react fast enough. I know where the notes are; I can move my fingers; but I know that while I can read the
the music now, my fingers aren't moving fast enough. So there is going to be a physical disability there as happens, you know, when we get older. (IC II, 12)

When I suggested that perhaps it was too soon in the semester (only a few weeks) to know what deprivement he was experiencing and that my child was at a similar level of dexterity in playing the piano, Isadore answered by referring to the age-integrated classroom. The other members were ahead of him and the class was conducted at their level:

Well, I've already discovered that I won't be able to do it because her teaching method is to have the group play together and because they have maybe more skills and maybe they are far more advanced. The moving of the fingers has to do with my own personal thing; it has nothing to do with what I'm reading in the notes because while they're playing I know where they are and I know where I am. (IC II, 13)

Isadore then reflected on his goals—especially on the issue of staying in a class where you can not keep up, feel frustrated and move little support ("My friends think I'm crazy," he said.) What is in it for himself and what sense does he make of the process? He answered in the following anecdote:

I did take a course in what--now that I recall it—in harmony. Far more advanced music than I brought to the class and there the learning process was extremely difficult for me because I couldn't keep up with the learning as fast. No! I was in a class where I was the low man on the totem pole in the learning. In other words, I didn't bring enough learning to that particular class to get all the things out of it so I had to accept only what I was able to learn by myself with the questions that
I had to ask and also the kind of teacher who— you know: "What are you doing in this class?" (But he had told me in advance that I would fail.)

Well, the thing is, he persuaded me not to take the course but I was determined to take it because I said, "Well, no, my learning process is such that I can keep up with the class or catch up to them." But he was right. He just was, you know. He was very kind and he let me stay in the class and he helped as much as he... you know, he helped me as much as I would ask him the right kind of questions and he would not belittle me in class which he did to other students.

But his technique was good. I have no fault to find with that. It was me: I didn't come with that kind of experience. (IC II, 13)

Isadore is currently using continuing education classes to find out what he can and can't learn. He is testing himself, sampling classes and content areas that stimulate and, to some degree, intimidate him. There is sport in this for this 67-year-old man; pushing himself is another of his many hobbies. Another participant, William, was also proving himself through his learning experience. A city clerk who retired at 55, William wants to "show academe" that they are "not so smart." He has finished B.A. and M.A. degrees in English and is considering doing a Ph.D. He claims his experience is strictly in "earning A's." He, too, is not reminiscent, but is playing out a battle of 45 years ago; he is maintaining his young manhood now by putting himself thorough these difficult intellectual hurdles. And he is succeeding.
Repeating tasks of an earlier stage is, developmentally, another path to Erikson's stage of integrity (also, Frenkel-Brunswik, 1936).

In contrast, Paolo's struggle with his version of mental stretching is a less happy endeavor. Unlike Isadore (and William) Paolo's level of frustration has been taxed.

**Paolo**

Paolo's classroom experience is a striking example of wasted effort and tedium. He had originally wanted to take a course at a local community college in small engine repair which is both a hobby and a modest business for him. However, because he needed proof of high school graduation, he was shifted over to the day adult education program to prepare for the GED (General Education Diploma), the high school equivalency examination.

Upon registering at the learning center, Paolo was sent to the ABE (Adult Basic Education) room to learn to read.² Coincidentally or perhaps metaphorically, this

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²I asked Paolo what things he could read and he went to his "library in the workshop" and came back with several advanced manuals on engine repair. He demonstrated his ability to read the text of the manuals (primarily instructions for assembly, etc.) and showed how he used the pictures to help him decode the print. He also said that he reads Portuguese.
room is located in the basement of the learning center. Paolo says:

They had a classroom in the basement. They don't ever see sunshine and seems like they cut down on heat there. (Why, you got your coat on and you're freezing and the classrooms they had upstairs—that was too warm.) (PA II, 8)

Perhaps because Paolo's early school experiences had taught him that teachers know what's best for you, or perhaps because at age 68 he doubted his own ability to judge scholastic levels, Paolo did not object to placement in the ABE program at first. And he stayed there for some months learning "to read" by using elementary school materials or phonetic workbooks prepared especially for illiterate adults. New methods using the life of the learner and based on pedagogy of Paolo Freire (1968, 1970) were never tried. The following exchange describes Paolo's experience:

Interviewer: Did you ever do any autobiographical talking?

Paolo: No. Talking?

Interviewer: About your life?

Paolo: No, no, we don't. We never had that there. I don't think they had that much time for that.

Interviewer: Do they ever do any reading and then you talk about the stories?

Paolo: Well, yes, you do read; tell about the story. Like a story we were reading about Jack and Brown: What Mr. Brown did, who was at fault, why did the dog run away and all that.
Interviewer: Nothing about your life?

Paolo: Oh, no! Our life was not never involved there. I mean, we didn't exist.

Interviewer: Only Jack and his dog.

Paolo: Only Jack and the dog and Mr. Brown. . .

[Laughs.] That's what I'm saying. They give me them books to read. You know what I told her? I said, "You know _____, you're a lovely teacher. I like you. But this stuff I had so many years ago. When I read this story about this dog, this dog running away and the mule and all that," I said, "that was a long time ago and that was when I was in the fourth grade."

I said, "I don't like the method. You should---a person should go where they left off and start studying from there. Whatever they remember, you start from there and work up, not go from where they're trying to forget." (PA II, 15-16)

After some time Paolo managed to get into actual GED classes where, for a time, he accepted the pedagogical model.

I signed up. It was in April of last year. No, no, I signed up in September. We went in; they gave me a test to evaluate what grade would I be suited for. I got my test back a week later. Then they put me in the eighth grade there. They said, "Well, you're getting some very good marks." So they start me with arithmetic and we had multiplication, division, addition, and we went into percentage, decimals, farenheit. . . and part of geometry. And then we went into the beginning of equations [Algebra].

So, it seemed to me like we wasn't advancing too much because as a new group came in, we'd go all the way back and start all over again. It went on like that for maybe a year. It just didn't seem fair to me that every time a new group comes in, we just gotta keep going over and over again the same thing, that those new groups should be put separate than the ones that have started previously. So this way this
doesn't seem to me like I'm getting ahead. Seems like I'm wasting time coming here. They say, "Well, that's how we operate."

I couldn't see any way I was getting ahead. I just stayed in that one stage. . . . Everytime a new group comes in, seemed like we just keep reviewing the same thing over and over again. (PA II, 1)

Mezirow, Darkenwald and Knox (1975) describe the revolving-door cycle of the adult education classrooms (ABE and GED). Because the classes are usually voluntary and because many learners find them uninspired and merely a repeat performance of a pedagogical time-machine from which they emerged years ago—rote blackboard work, in-seat ditto marking and impersonal texts—many eager adults who wish to improve themselves stop going after a few sessions. New eager learners appear and the cycle is renewed. For a student like Paolo, who stays in the class, there is a never-ending process of repetition, re-introduction of materials seen a class or two go with no sense of advancement.

Furthermore, there were no cohesive peer-groups (or comparable-level groups) with which Paolo could work. Each class was divided and rescheduled several times. At the same time, teachers were reassigned so that the strong teacher-student relationship need of older adults could never be developed for Paolo. He expressed his dissatisfaction:
We started together. Some of them--I even knew more than they did. They [the teachers] said, "Well, we had to divide them because we had too many. You're with another teacher." And he said he had to divide it because there was too much of a group. Well, why keep taking new ones everyday? Why not keep the same ones and send the new group to somebody else?

I told them, "When the new group coming in, I should think that the new group should start altogether with another teacher. And, since we are a little advanced . . ." I said, "This system stinks," that's what I told them. I told them all my homework I make, I bring, nobody corrects it. I don't know if they're [the answers] right or wrong. (The only way I know whether they're right or wrong either my wife or my kids correct my papers.) (PA II, 5)

[He mimicks the teachers.] "Bring it to school; bring it tomorrow if you want them to correct it. Bring it tomorrow." Everything was taught piece by piece and then first thing you read you don't understand. you ask them to explain you, they'll tell you, "I'll explain it to you later." Later never came. (PA II, 7)

Here is how Paolo describes his day at the learning center:

Paolo: Well, they're supposed to begin at 9 o'clock. You get there at 9 o'clock; you'd have to wait until they open up the school. Then you'd have lessons from there all the way till about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. When those teachers would go to lunch, you'd be in the classroom, you don't have no teacher, you'd be studying by yourself.

Interviewer: Did they give a placement test that put people in the next group, ever?

Paolo: No, no, we didn't have a test like that. I know there was a man came in from the state and the test we had was those with multiple choice where you'd have "1, 2, 3, 4" and you'd have to paint in the block, you know. (Never heard the result of that. They were very slow on that.) And then when I had to take another test to see if I could go into a higher grade, they lost the folder and everything and
and when I went and asked them about it, they said, "Paolo, I gave it to you; I gave it to her."

I said, "Anytime you can't keep records . . . I don't think it's supposed to be operating like that. There's a lot of people come here with an expectation that, you know, you're going to learn something." (PA II, 3)

Interviewer: Paolo, when they gave you work to do and then went to lunch, did they correct it when they came back?

Paolo: No. And I'll tell you another thing, too: when you want to find out if it's right or wrong, they send you to a teacher that didn't even know equations. We corrected a few. Those that were right, he corrected wrong. (PA II, 4)

Paolo showed me some of his work. It consisted primarily of dittos from workbooks most of which had not been reviewed or marked by any teacher or peer. A system for reviewing what had been presented in lecture form did not seem to exist:

Interviewer: [Looking at a sample ditto which Paolo had completed on pronouns,] You did it right. But nobody corrected this?

Paolo: No. I got a lot of papers that have never been corrected.

Interviewer: Do they show the answers and everybody corrects their own?

Paolo: No, no. They don't show you no answers. (PA II, 10)

They had people doing the problems, you know, but when they do something on the board and go and they explain it fast, you don't get it right off the bat. You gotta ask them to explain it to you step by step so you can get it if you're gonna learn something.
And they go over it fast and then they say, "We're going to continue this tomorrow," and then when tomorrow comes, they don't continue that. They start with something else. (PA II, 8)

Finally, Paolo stopped going; he has not received his GED certificate and he is still ineligible for the course at the community college in small engine repair. Recently he realized that he would have to go back if he wanted "that piece of paper."

I met one of the teachers one day at K-Mart. "Hey, we miss you." (I wasn't going there for a good time.) "Our system's changed," he said. I talked to him, "Which way?" I said. "I wasn't going there to be at a standstill. I had experience. The people there was people that was not experienced." [He was referring to younger groups of students who were coming in and finishing the exams before him.] (PA II 2,3)

He said, "Only thing is, you wanna get advanced too fast." (PA II, 12)

A major question at this point for Paolo is: What is "too fast"? At 69, does Paolo have an indeterminate amount of time and energy to invest in struggling for a "piece of paper"? Paolo must use public transportation to attend the learning center and, despite his agility and good health, it is a major task to travel downtown, spend a day in class, travel home (two buses are necessary) and keep house for a wife and three adopted teenage children. A striking contrast is Madeline's joy and self-actualization as she attends her adult education group.
Madeline

Madeline had attended a poetry group until a few weeks before the interviews started. It had met once a week for three and one-half years in the basement of a local library. There was no fee and the teachers were city employees. Each week the class members would present their poetry, discuss it, and the rest of the group would critique it. Other poets sometimes came to the class or class members would read from the works of successful poets. For a time the group was joined by a more avant-garde faction of the local arts community (which had a saxophonist to accompany the poetry readings and an occasional modern dancer). Finally a schism occurred and, with Madeline's leadership, the original group returned to its own format. The class then disbanded: "it just faded, closed out" (MH I, 2). Here is Madeline's experience:

It was started by two teachers. It went on for over three years and in the first year I went in there it ranged from 10 to 20 in the evening. And I thought it was very good. I am not an organizer of any kind and I loved these young teachers for taking the time. (MH I, 2)

Why was it so good?

"Well, in the first place, it was a good mixture of older and young ones, I thought. (Interviewer: "You liked that?) Oh yes! Because young people speak so much more from inspiration, imagination and hope, I think. Where the older people speak from experience. And older people--like myself--too,
we picked up a lot of ideas from other sources, other writers. You know, you form your opinions from things you read and hear—that's experience, of course—so the things we're apt to write are a result of things we've already done.

Whereas young people might write about things they hope to do; their things reflect their youth, of course, which is good, wonderful, because there is apt to be, they're apt to have their kind of rhythm, also. It's more youthful where our's might be more contemplated. I think we get more satisfaction out of our's, maybe. (MH II, 1)

How did it operate and who were the people who joined?

There was a notice put in the "Community Events--Things To Do This Week" or whatever would be in the newspaper. "'Poets' would be meeting at the library on Thursday night at seven o'clock."

And some people would look in and some would come once and no more. And, as in all things, some meetings were better than others. Some meetings something wonderful would pop up. James ______.

(Have you heard of James ______? Everybody in town knows him; he's quite a politician and a leader in the community, I guess.) Now he came to our group. I liked the man immensely and he was writing very well and very personal things which I was surprised by, really. He wrote about the loss of a friend which is very personal. The friend didn't die, he turned his back on him and this hurt him very much. And he had a hard time getting over it, really. (This has never happened to me though I met a woman like this too, once. But anyway, James ______ came maybe three times and we loved having him there. And he was very sincere. And then, all of a sudden, he didn't come anymore; he had other things to do. (MH II, 14)

And there was one—I can't remember—there was one woman who used to be a teacher and one who was a teacher now at college level, I think. And very intelligent. And very expressive. But religious poetry turns me off. (I think maybe it's because I grew up as a Yankee in Congregational New England, you know. I shrugged a lot of it as I grew older, as I got into the world.) (MH II, 2-3)
There was this one lady here, she lives in S_____. She wrote lovely poetry about home, family and God and so forth. There's another gal who published in the religious newspaper every week and she finally got a letter from Prime Minister Begin. She wrote to him when something happened. (I don't know.) She wrote to him; she showed it to me. She was so happy.

And it wasn't that they talked about their own religion but they talked an awful lot about God. Things like that--divine or maybe implied something like this. This is not my . . . to me life is right here and people are people. (MH II, 3)

About the technical level within the group:

Of course we're not professionals, you know; no one was in our class. We had one young lady coming in one evening--probably in her 30's--and she was a serious person and she had been published but she didn't want to tell us where and she didn't come after the first meeting. Because the two teachers who were running the course asked her, you know, who she was and were interested in her. And she said, "No," she thought it was almost a teaching affair (whereas it wasn't, it was just sham.) And she wasn't going to learn anything from it because she was way beyond that and she was very frank about that. We appreciated it.

But we realized then too that we are more or less trying to help each other. But this is one reason why we folded: We were sharing but we weren't improving.

We had one remarkable man in there who had been a union organizer for . . . I can't remember what group now. And this man had come from New York City and was entirely self-educated. I think he must have left school from the age of 14 or something. And, he said--I don't know--when he was about 18 he discovered the New York Public Library and he lived in it for years and he just fell in love with words. He used to write long things like epic poetry with many references to the mythological gods and goddesses and heroes and so forth. And he loved this. And I think it was way over the heads of--you know, few of us were interested. But he had a marvelous way
with words! But it was too technical. I don't know—it didn't appeal to most of us. But he was a fascinating man and he would argue with anybody about anything.

He had traveled a lot; he had been in the Navy, in the Marines. And he had traveled a lot. But this man! I wish I could talk and get with him, get in touch with him again. He lives in somewhere. . . (MH II, 1-2)

She described the interaction in the classroom as respectful, kind (in critizing each other's work) and strong in comradeship. For Madeline, it was a community she had always wanted to belong to and she felt herself accepted. In the course of her week at home she had no such companionship of ideas and wasn't able to share her poetry; the class provided this outlet.

It drifted from week to week. We would start; we sat around the table (because normally there would be 10 of us or so), this big long table downstairs near the library. And we'd start. Each one of us would read something that we had written since the last time we had seen each other, or something we were working on. And somebody would say, "I don't like this." "Well, how do you think it should go?" And we would all throw in our suggestions and sometimes it would change. (MH II, 3)

It's fascinating to get into poetry classes and find out that to honest to goodness poets' every word means something. (MH II, 11)

Some of them wrote, they wrote little bits of poetry that were real humorous which I can't do. And we would love it. At Christmas time we each write a Christmas poem for the rest of the class.

(Interviewer: Was that an assignment?)

We would agree that we were going to do the following month. We would agree that we could come
in the following month for something on a certain subject.

I eventually... we wrote our own poetry. I like some of the things I wrote. Well, I had things written before but I never had the self-confidence enough to send anything out for publication. I sent some autobiographical things out and had them rejected. (Once with a very nice letter from somebody in Reader's Digest.)

Anyway, we read each others' and I was surprised at the range. Some of it was—well, if you could rhyme four lines, if you could make a stanza—it was almost like school stuff and some of it was really very good. Some of the philosophy behind it appealed to me more than the metric system or the rhythms or whatever, because I think you can call it blank verse or sloppy poetry (I don't know), I think if you write what you feel it comes out with a certain rhythm anyway.

It's been a great joy to me. It's fun, especially for holidays or in the spring when you feel good. You can't help but try and write something. And some of the things you write (even if it looks like prose) runs along like poetry. (MH I, 2)

Here is how Madeline describes a poem that she developed and presented to the class:

It was a beautiful spring. I felt about 25 years old. It was lovely. So I walked down to the store which was maybe a mile away. Beautiful. The leaves were coming out and I passed a teenage girl that looked so sad I could have cried for her. And I wondered what in the world made her sad. I thought, "What if she had just gone to the doctor and found out she was pregnant and she isn't married?" (You know, there was so much of this going on.) And I thought, I felt so sorry for her because I'd never been one who wished I was back in that young age group at all. I would never go back before 40, really. It's true. Fifty is even better.
And so I went home and I wrote a poem about it and I worked on it for a little bit and I liked it.

And on the way there was a pizza parlor and I saw something: The man was in the window flipping his pizza. And I said something about the flipping pizza man which just went with the spring, you know, and about the little girl and then across the street there was a little boy coming home from nursery school carrying his rug. (They take their little naps on the little rug they carry.)

And then there's one other thing I forgot--all this was part of the springtime and here was this sad little girl and very attractive, walking with her head down. So I wrote a poem about it and I typed it up and gave everybody a copy of it.

Everyone took one home. And I think, apparently, I didn't put the feeling across that I meant to. They thought it was all right but they weren't very enthusiastic about it. Somehow, you know, it's easier to communicate a sense of loss than a sense of happiness, it is. It's strange, you'd think it would be the other way. (MH II, 3-4).

Finally, after some two and a half years of regular meetings and a core of participants who had worked together, the group attracted the attention of the new city Office of Cultural Affairs. A visitor came from the office:

He came in to listen one night. And, of course, when anybody came and sat in the back of the room, after it was over we went over and said "hello" to him and asked if they wanted to sign up. And he did and he told us he was from [the city Office of Cultural Affairs]. And they had heard about this group and so forth. Then he sort of started one of his own. (First he came with us for two or three nights but then he started one of his own.)

And also he mixed in music. He had somebody come and play the saxophone. We had this Mr. _____ and he came and read poetry. He was going, at that
time to University of M_____; he had just gotten out of jail; he was quite a character. (But he had been in for pot you know.) He was a grandfather but you wouldn't know it. He looked young and he was real hippy. I didn't like having him there a bit.

He came to our group and then we started to go to their's. They put their's--they met the same place on another night. I went and read for them one night. I read Emily Dickinson. One night somebody didn't show up--some woman who was going to read poetry--and they asked me if I would read Emily Dickinson. I was delighted. And there must have been 20 to 25 people there that night. Because they had the saxophonist. Then one night they had a girl come in and do interpretive dancing. And she was dressed in leotards and they had a blue spotlight in the works. Now this is all being paid for by the Office of Cultural Affairs.

And eventually M____ (I liked M____, we became pretty good freinds) would call me up on the phone and talk. And he called me one time and said, "You know you could get a thousand for your group. Why don't you apply down at the office?"

I said, "What for?" (This is why these things, you know, annoy me.)

He said, "Well. . ."

I said, "What would we need money for?"

He said, "You could get a speaker from the university or somewhere. You know, they charge money"

But I wouldn't play this ballgame. This was not for us; we were not into this. I went to M____'s meetings and I knew they were on the payroll. The boy who played the saxophone, the girl who danced and this Mr.____ who came dressed like a real hippy and always wore a cap. (And he read poems by--who's the man who used all the four letter words and so forth?) Well, Mr.____ really went for this. He likes. . . He's a hero of the hippy group. Can't think of his name. . .
Yes, yes. Well, that was what they were reading. And they then picked up some short ones by them that I thought were pretty good. They were trying to compare them with Walt Whitman. (I don't think they can touch Walt Whitman--although I might be awful narrow-minded about that.) I read Ginsberg and so forth; but he had to get all the books of the modern ones--and some if it is good. But it's that throw-away generation; it's that throw-away time that is not for me. I don't know—the flower children and the drug culture and all that—to me it is so sad. It's not part of my life.

But, anyway, Mr. ______ would come in and read this with great dramatic, you know, performances and so forth. M____ would be the M.C. of the program. And, eventually (of course), the money finally ran out for that, too. Because it shouldn't have been paid for. It should have been voluntary: let somebody pay a dollar a night if you wanted to make some money. (MH II, 12)

Interviewer: On the nights Mr. ______ and so forth were there, did the group participate with their own poetry?

Madeline: Oh, no! They ran it. It was different. Our group by that time was fading out.

Interviewer: Because of this, do you think?

Madeline: No, because we weren't getting anywhere, I really believe. Ms. R____ (the teacher) thought we weren't getting anywhere. And she argued with the other teacher that we should get someone in there who knew more than we do. And I agreed with her and the other one said, "No, let's not make it professional or anything. Let's do it alone." . . .

And I think, really, the ones who really had something to develop weren't interested anymore. And I think the boy from U____ would have come back; I would have come back; maybe there were four of us who would have gone back.
But I was the leader for the last year and I didn't want to lead again. I wanted someone else to do it—I just wanted to be a participant—and nobody else wanted to. So it just faded out like that. And I was unhappy to see it go.

Of course I enjoyed the people. Maybe I enjoyed the people more than the poetry, I don't know. (MH II, 13)

It was friendly, modern, sort of: the feeling of today. There was much freedom there and expressed in a thought and family ties and so forth. It was just the antithesis of that hippy business. Maybe because it's—most of them were local people and (I don't know)—to me they represent average America, really. And maybe out of something like that you would get just average poetry. Maybe you have to be a little bit different from the group to write anything different from the group.

By the time spring—June—came around and everyone was going on vacation and going their separate ways and so forth... Many of them—some of them—maybe wouldn't be around in the fall, anyway. I don't know where the student from U would be. So it naturally died a natural death. (MH II, 15)

The interview excerpts above trace Madeline's growth through her adult education experience—and she was 70 when this growth began. She began her poetry workshop with trepidation and low self confidence. She had always felt herself unequal to others who had gone to college and adult education classes were new to her. Gradually, she learned her own strengths: she wrote and publicly shared her poetry; she learned to criticize others' work; she felt herself an equal among people she was interested in; and she found herself a leader when another group
tried to merge with her own. Her roles within the group changed, as did Madeline.

Madeline's description of the poetry workshop is presented in detail because it illustrates some of the dynamics of an adult education group: the group and natural death of a participatory unit which serves to meet the needs of the individual members. While the writers were cohesive to a point, they found they wanted a little more formal structure. more of a "school" atmosphere. They wanted to improve and thought they might do so with an instructor; pedagogical models which lack grading systems are new to most adults.

Another participant, Henry, also attended a participatory group of which he was a co-organizer. His experience was somewhat more structured and in keeping with "school" atmosphere. The group studied legal aspects of Workman's Compensation, hired two teachers who drove in from a larger city, supplied a text and gave a final examination. The fee for the course was $85.00 per participant but much of the funding came from bake sales and other sources. The format was teacher-lecture with participants taking notes but, because of the personal interest of the individuals involved--many of whom had been involved in work-related accidents--much interaction took place. After eight weeks (the planned length of time to
cover the material), the organizers felt that another two weeks were needed, that the course content had been difficult and that participatory interaction had taken much of the time that had been planned for lecture, and the course was extended another two weeks. At the end of the course the members took an exam, held a sort of graduation banquet and began to plan for the next level course to deal with the same issues of disability insurance.

In Henry's situation, personal reminiscences and experiences were encouraged by the participants if they pertained to the subject at hand--Workman's Compensation; in Madeline's group all personal commentary and recollection was encouraged. It usually had to do with the literature under discussion. In the following profile, Lillian chose to study psychology in the most impersonal and nonreflective way.

Lillian

Lillian's class in Psychology for Everyday Living was a regularly meeting adult education class. It met on Tuesday evenings at a public junior high school and Lillian, as a senior citizen, paid no fee. As she does not drive and the junior high school building is at the edge of the city, Lillian depended on her friend, Helen.
to provide transportation and to attend the same class.

She said

We chose Contemporary Literature but that never came to life because we didn't get enough signatures. It's listed on a mimeograph machine and Helen said, "I'm going to take Contemporary Literature." I said, "Fine, put me down too."

Well, then we got a call a couple of weeks later that the class was never organized. So I said, "Put me back in the psychology class where I was last year and call Helen, I'm sure she wants to do the same thing. That was it." (LR II, 2-3)

One aspect of Lillian's experience was the passive role she seemed to take. That is, she did not engage in the direct choosing of the course she ended up in (although the subject was interesting to her) and she was unable to determine whether or not she could attend. One interview began with a discussion of her problem getting to the class:

Interviewer: You went to class last night?

Lillian: My girl called me and said, "Lillian, I can't go tonight, something has arisen." It was quarter to seven already and she was supposed to pick me up at quarter to seven and at twenty minutes of she said "Something has arisen, I can't tell you now. I'll tell you tomorrow. I can't make it tonight." I was all ready to go; I came home from school; I kick off my shoes; I take off my dress; I put on a cotton dress. And I was all ready, my coat was on and everything.

Interviewer: I guess that happens a lot.

Lillian: Well, this is the third time it's happened.

Interviewer: And you don't drive?
Lillian: I don't drive and I wouldn't go out at night even on the buses. (LR II, 2)

All of the other participants described their thinking in the classes—some more passionately than others. But even Isadore who chose not to personalize any of the content of his coursework took an active stance as a learner. The following two exchanges touch on Lillian's attitude as she attends her class:

**Interviewer:** Let's focus on this course.

**Lillian:** It's strictly a lecture course.

**Interviewer:** Do you do any reading in between?

**Lillian:** I do casual reading.

**Interviewer:** Do you apply some of the insight that you gain in the course to the reading that you're doing?

**Lillian:** Well, I couldn't apply it. Do you mean what I hear in the lectures? No. I just do my thing.

**Interviewer:** Which is?

**Lillian:** Just being me and doing it the way I would be doing it. (LR II, 2)

**Lillian:** I listen. I want to know what they're doing.

**Interviewer:** You're saying to me there are two kinds of listening. There's listening when you know what's going on and there's listening when you're going to absorb something?

**Lillian:** No, no no. I must come between them because I don't think of anything else. I think of where I am and what's going on . . . So I sit there like an inanimate object but I'm not thinking of
trivialities. I give them respect. I give them no evidence of the fact that I'm inattentive. (LR II, 4)

Lillian's experience--that she must behave as though she were in a formal environment was typical of most of the older learners in the sample. They also expressed a concern that the teacher be "respected." Again, the classroom of the early nineteen-hundreds was an authoritarian environment with a traditional lecture format. Lillian expressed admiration for the quality of those more structured classes. Here is how she describes her psychology class:

Interviewer: What was it like?

Lillian: It was pleasurable because I enjoy lectures.

Interviewer: Is he a good teacher?

Lillian: Personality oozes all over him. Oh, he's a charmer, and he can talk endlessly. No notes, no books, no nothing. I'm sure he can talk around the clock. Boy, I mean talk. I mean interesting. He'll talk and give you an example. But he's a charming person; and he is so knowledgeable. And expresses himself. You could learn English--good English--by listening to him. I'm a word girl and when I hear a word I think of a synonym. Well, he's unbeatable. I could sit for hours and listen to him.

Interviewer: Do other people in the class contribute or talk?

Lillian: Oh yes, we have a right to ask questions. Oh yes. But there isn't a lot of questioning.

Interviewer: Does he ask you about your life?

Lillian: Oh no. He doesn't ask us anything personal. It is strictly a lecture to whoever is in there. That's all. He's not only knowledgeable, he's
handsome. He's handsome and such good company. I just sit there . . . He's the live of that lecture! I think we go there just to look and hear him.

Interviewer: It's more for him . . .

Lillian: Oh, yes!

Interviewer: . . . than the content of the course?

Lillian: The subject is interesting. And he delivers it in a supreme fashion.

Interviewer: Can you give me an example or tell me a little story about one of the things that interested you in the class? What was he talking about that stimulated you in some way?

Lillian: Only one thing stimulated me. Ha, Ha, Ha. You're going to laugh and I'm not answering your question directly. But, in his speech (and like everybody does in this city), they pronounce idea (idear). After school I went up to him (everyone was going out). "It isn't idear, Mr. D______, it's ideah. But everybody I hear uses the word, it's city-wide: idear." He apologized. It bothered me because I come from another part of the country where idea is ideah, not idear. That was my only encounter with him. (LR II, 3)

And:

He didn't talk about child raising because we were senior citizens. But he did talk about teenagers because I do understand he does have contact with teenagers. He would use them as samples of what he was telling us. For instance, the changing world: how different he was brought up as opposed to the way children are brought up today. And the divergence in results. And he too is opposed to giving credit in school for tap dancing and finger painting. It should be Latin, geometry, calculus, a foreign language. We had to: it was mandatory when I went to high school. I had four years of Latin, two years of French. It was mandatory that you take two languages. These kids don't know anything about algebra. They don't know anything about geometry. (LR II, 3)
I agree with everything he said. You bet. I think he's wonderful. Ha ha. . . We are in perfect agreement. (LR II, 4)

Acceptance of a teacher's opinions and willingness to see your own views reflected in a larger and valued context (school) was a recurring theme of the older learners in the study. It is possible that the process of validation of one's experience, "the accidental coincidence of but one life cycle with but one cycle of history" (Erikson, 1963) is a strong component in the interaction within the classroom. While Lillian did not wish to probe her early past as Wuschko and Madeline did, it was apparent that some reminiscence was involved in her current thinking and behavior. The means by which this phenomenon occurs is complex and can only be implied by juxtaposition of the following kinds of interview data:

Everyone has memories. You can't avoid the sad ones, if they occurred. . . Just, if I have a period where I have nothing to do. Then I begin to think, and I don't want that. I don't want to think. (LR II, 2)

**Interviewer:** You're in your class and he's talking about sibling rivalry. Do you think about your own brothers and sisters?

**Lillian:** Certainly I do.

**Interviewer:** When he talks about it?

**Lillian:** I think of my immediate family; and I even think of my children.

**Interviewer:** What do you think?
Lillian: I think the truth. All kids aren't the same. My two brothers were diametrically different. One was destined to be a doctor, the other destined to be a salesman whose success was known from coast to coast. Those are my brothers.

Interviewer: Do you think, for example, of old arguments?

Lillian: We never argued. No, everything was laid out. I was living in a small town. I had to go to school. When I got out there was nothing; there was no school to go to . . . (Incidently, I made high school four years in three years. And I made seventh and eighth in one year). . . I think it's even foolish to think about it because it's irretrievable. You just do the best with what you've got at hand. My brother is a pharmacist; He was a born doctor--bedside manner and all. There was no way to achieve it. I was interested in law and I told you even the lawyer in town noticed it. But there was no way to achieve it. . . Incidentally, all my work has been with lawyers.

Interviewer: You don't fuss with the past?

Lillian: I try not to. Because it makes me think of what could have been and circumstances did not permit. . . No! I just go on with my duties. It doesn't matter. I don't moon over things. There's nothing to be gained.

Interviewer: You're taking a class. It's your nature to be active?

Lillian: That was even true in the primary grades. I remember in the fourth grade, we had a little two-person skit. We were studying Hiawatha and I was appointed Necomis. And I remember I got an Indian suit and the whole rigamajig but it was just Necomis in Hiawatha. (I forgot who was Hiawatha but I was Necomis, just the two of us.) This is in the fourth grade. On Columbus Day our school, our English class--this is all ten years and under--asked us to write a theme about why I like Columbus Day. Well, I wrote the theme along with everybody else but you know what my teacher did? She sent mine to the
newspaper and it was printed. I wish I had it today. But a ten year old kid never thinks of those things. (LR, III, 3-4)

Although she acknowledged that she was reminiscent, Lillian would stop herself from remembering. She said of this tension, "I never think about it. I just do my duties." Life review may be too sad for Lillian and she holds her bitter thoughts at bay. In Psychology for Everyday Living she chose to separate the topic from her own world. Hence, she corrected the teacher's pronunciation after a lecture on sibling rivalry and concentrated on the "outing" aspect of adult education rather than the experience of personalization.

The last of the participants' experiences to be discussed is that of Jenny. As her motivation was somewhat unusual—she was hoping for pragmatic support for a new career—it is a minority voice in this study. But it may reflect a larger number of older adults who are just starting out either in second careers or in new social roles. Some psychosocial theorists (notably Gutman, 1975) suggest that a reversal of social roles may occur in late life and others (Livson, 1976; Lowenthal, 1972) have found that many late life women are especially eager to explore new intellectual and vocational directions.
Jenny

Jenny had had two adult education experiences around the time of the interviews. The first, a workshop series, Nutrition and the Exceptional Child, was held at a local community college; it was designed especially for professionals who are in direct caretaking positions with mentally retarded children. The second experience was a course in child development and special education, also held at a local community college and meeting regularly throughout the semester. Jenny says:

Now my husband has been dead five years and my daughter out of a clear blue sky said to me, "Ma, why did you wait five years to think about going to school?"... But I just got so interested in this childhood, toddler Department of Mental Health thing and I felt as if that I would like to learn a little more about it. (JM I, 3)

Here is how Jenny describes her experience of the workshop:

Well the workshop there wasn't very much participating because it was just speakers. That was it in a nutshell.

It was nothing we could use in school but it was something we could use because after all we are working with the exceptional child which is something that she said on the sheet they sent us. We just paid the fee but left. (JM II, 1)

They were more or less talking about nutrition; it was boring the way it was given. The girls knew what they were talking about but they didn't present it... the way they presented it was boring. All of us—we all sneaked out before it was over.
And some of it didn't make sense to me and to especially our head teacher because she was kind of dozing like the rest of us. It was boring!

I think that—oh, I don't know—I think if they had used their own words it would have been more understandable. But the way they did it! They had the papers and they were reading it. When a person reads constantly for two hours! (One would get up for 45 minutes and another . . . you couldn't grasp anything.) And we all—I thought I was the only one that was bored but we all were. And gradually, we had a fire drill and we found a way and we didn't go back.

(We were figuring on how to leave, and we'd had our lunch, and then the fire drill--saved. "Saved"—that's just what we said. "We just won't go back." That's how we left; there were seven of us. And I don't know how many more left.)

Somehow Jenny's passion for working with retarded toddlers and the information to help her have not come together through formal learning. Here is how she describes the children she works with:

Oh, golly, there's so many different types: the children that we have are all different types of children. Down's syndrome, some are mixed with C.P. (Cerebral Palsy) and Down's syndrome. Each child is different. We have some children that really can't move, can't walk, will never do it. One lays constantly, can't move his hands. And yet he's in school! I think it's the most wonderful thing that the state of Massachusetts has made this law that all children--regardless--should go to school.

And I have seen. I just saw a little boy graduate last week from our place. He came into class last February (January-February). He was Puerto Rican; he wouldn't speak English. And he'd cry. His mother came in there: she couldn't leave the room. He'd scream bloody murder and everything. And then he came to summer school and she didn't come with him.
He used to cry if the bus was late. And he starts speaking English. And just as proud of what he was doing.

And I couldn't get over it myself, how he had changed! (JM II, 3)

When Jenny went to register for the semester course in child development and special education, she found that she knew who the teacher was—it was someone for whom she had little respect:

But when they gave me the resume on the course--I could teach the teacher!

And the funny thing about it, my supervisor told me that when and if I went into class I was to keep my mouth shut. Because one of the other girls did the course and she knew more than the teacher. The teachers were teaching by the book and I was going more by experience. And I said, "What the heck, I should get out of there." Because it was going to be boring. I read in the text books...Nothing! There's not a thing in those books that we do! (JM I, 3)

That's another thing. That's all right for the person that's never come in contact with the exceptional child. (The exceptional child they used to call retarded but switched it over to exceptional because they are exceptional: you have to do more for them than you do for another child.) (JM II, 2)

C. S______, she's the teacher of the course and she was that one who was telling me about this thing. And last year when we had practice teachers from the community college. And so when I went there in September or the last of August to sign up, and she wasn't there. But the chairman of the department or something, he gave a rundown on the resume as to what it was all about. And I kept asking him different questions and he said, "You know something about it." I said, "Yes." So he told me, he said, "I don't see why you're going to take the course." I said, "I'm not going to if what C.S_______ is
going to teach it right out of the book. She has had no experience." And I said, "To me the experience is much more than the book." (JM II, 2)

Jenny's experience with the children had touched her on an emotional level while the classroom treatment of child development made no sense to her. She says:

Experience is fascinating. And there's always something each day; there's always something new. Whereas a book is right there and the same thing you're studying the same darn book day in and day out. And no improvement. There's just a bunch of words which mean very little. Actually, you have to be there; it's different things than they have written in the book. They tell you about it but, I mean, a lot of it is contradictory. (JM II, 10)

And:

I had two kids. And one in particular--a little girl--and they told me they didn't think she'd ever walk because she didn't feel like walking. They had the best of care; she had the therapist and stuff. And I don't know by not being accustomed to all these things, I never went by what the therapists say because I believe that they'll do it if they want to do it. And I just kept going at this little girl and going after her. I thought a lot of things that I was doing with her. And everybody was telling me that it wasn't going to work. And, don't you know? I think it took me two months--that kid now walks.

Don't ask me what I did. We had a few little carts and things. It was like a--you see elderly people with walkers--but this was like a little wagon. And I conned her on. I really conned her. I mean, a couple of times she would fall down and I'd laugh with her so she wouldn't cry. But I think the thing that--I don't know I really can't put it in words--every kid that I ever had there that couldn't walk, I think I tried more with them than I do with anything. . . (JM II, 6)
When I suggested to Jenny that she might have been a valuable addition to the class, that she might have offered some practical insights into the text-based curriculum, she declared that C. S____ (the instructor) would not have accepted such advice.

And my supervisor told me that it was going to be rough going for me if I did get a class. I'd have to keep my mouth shut because I knew more than C. S____ by being on seven different type of children and been with them for one year, I would be telling her something.

(Interviewer: Maybe she'd like to learn it.)

No, she wouldn't. No, no, she wouldn't. (JM II, 2)

No, I couldn't. I wouldn't even try with her because I was watching her approach to the girl who was in the class and the things--the homework--the kid was doing! I never saw such asinine stuff in all my life! So I asked one of the other teachers what she'd done when she took up the course. (One of the other teachers graduated from H____. College.) And she said no, that was new to her. Like the posters and doing the . . . these kids don't know anything about. . . . You know, a young girl now is a teacher aide too, she just started. She tipped her hands, "Now, we're going to make a circle, let's make a circle." You don't tell them these things, they do it on their own. And we have tried to tell B____, "Don't pull them until they want to do it. That's when they really start raising Cain. You don't take a child and say, 'Come on, I want you to do this' if they don't feel like doing it. They'll have a fit."

(JM II, 9)

It all depends on their own condition. And the way the medication is working on them. (JM III, 1)

Well, you see, our children are retarded. (Excuse me, special ed.) Of course, now they call them exceptional children.
The books are all wrong. I mean as far as text books--I mean they should really advance them a little. The books are all wrong. What I read in them is ridiculous. And also we had a girl come in two weeks ago to practice-teach and she had a--I couldn't understand--I could see from the way she was taught, but she just picked out one particular child. See, we have seven in a class and each one of the seven are different children. Right now we have a Down's Syndrome child who has DP [Cerebral Palsy] too. I mean, this is it: then she picks up this one child who is mobilized and that is wrong. You really shouldn't pick out a child because she doted on that one child and even though they are supposed to be retarded, those kids know. And they are very sensitive, very very sensitive. (JM I, 3)

And, so, Jenny did what she so characteristically has done throughout her life, she "bucked" the system. She quit the class after two weeks and demanded a full refund from the Registrar.

So I just told them that I wasn't going to spend $145.003 for one night a week! It would have been easy; it would have been an easy course. And then, too, my daughter told me the same thing; she told me I would be wasting my money... Spending that money. I mean I didn't mind spending for something like that but why should I spend money for a course I've already practiced and excelled in? Any time, as I told you before, that I work on this stipend that I get for Foster Grandparents and I jump from that to $150.00 a week, why should I go and...? I learned in that short time to be hired and I'm hired again for this summer.

So I just gave it up; it was a bad job. (JM II, 2)

So I just gave it up, the thoughts of going back to school, I really did. And my daughter told me,

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3 Jenny did not know she was eligible to attend free-of-charge and was not so advised by the Registrar.
"Well, mother, make up your mind in January." I've made it up anyway, I'm not going back to school. I won't go because to me it's gonna be a waste of time. And I can really get in awful arguments over something and I can disagree with a person and you cannot change me. I think I'm kind of set in my ways, especially when I know I know what I'm talking about, you know. And some of them went to school and some of them have their master's and Ph.D.'s and all this but experience is the best teacher. (JM II, 2)

Her learning, however, was not stopped. She has begun to study on her own and has been making use of resource people that she comes in contact with and respects. She says:

R____ as I've said has a vast library and it's wonderful the books that she has and another thing, what I like about it, it's so plainly written. Not all these technological terms and stuff which you would have to have a dictionary beside you which does not make interesting reading. And it's very simplified, some of it. And then I read a diary that a Down's syndrome boy wrote, not very thick but it was very, very interesting. And it told, the preface was of how he did it. They never thought he'd be able to do anything like that but he typed it himself. So, I mean, it shows there is a chance. (JM III, 6)

I read a lot. And then we have a psychologist that is coming... and he's going to try to explain a lot of things to us, you know, after the staff meeting. (JM II, 5)

Jenny's two experiences then, negative as they were, did not curb her ambition to learn about the children she works with. For the time being, however, her learning will be confined to self-educative experiences.
Summary

One issue for the older people was the kind of apprehension expressed by Wuschko in the first profile, especially in the first classes after many years. Most echoed this theme to some extent—with the exception of Jenny. Feelings of inadequacy were mentioned frequently—particularly concerning the learning of new material. Others mentioned images connected with being "old" or "older learners," especially as they thought they were perceived by the other members of the class. Most of the study population felt that they were learning in two directions: they were learning how old people are viewed and they were learning what young people are like today.

As Gertrude said,

At first I felt sort of out of . . . not really out of place, but I just wondered how all those young students were going to accept an older person, you know. Because I was the only older one in the class. But I think they didn't even really recognize my age or anything. (She is 65.) I was just one of them and they included me in all the things they did. (GS II, 6)

Most found the intergenerational classroom especially stimulating (Wuschko is the exception). Although many of the older adults read at home, the social experience was important to them. Sophie (age 65) said:
I have felt many times closer and freer to express ideas, freer to expand on some of the ideas we've had. (Sh III, 12)

I so much wanted to be with a group. I need to know other kinds of thinking. Because I can read a number of things again, but there is a place for instruction, is there not? The instruction, the help in learning how to read to expand one's thinking. Maybe a genius can read and study all alone and get as much from that as is necessary. I am no genius, so therefore, while I have deep interest, the rubbing of minds, the listening, the hearing, the attitude, you know, of learning, is very important to me. (SH II, 18)

However, the no-fee status afforded the elders made several of the men uncomfortable within the classroom. Wuschko complained that he felt inhibited about talking in class because the "Registrar knows; the instructor knows." And Thorgud, as well as Isadore, believed that the students taking the courses for credit should have the attention of the teacher. Thorgud (age 79) was especially modest. He said:

I didn't always participate in the discussions. If I was asked something. I might say something. And there were times when I perhaps butted it. But I felt that the students that were going for credits should have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss things. (TJ II, 1)

It is possible that the lack of attention paid to Paolo was due to his age and nonpaying status? Another participant, William, age 62, claimed that he did not register under "Senior Citizen" but "No Fee: Veteran" and would continue to do so through his 60's!
Several individuals felt that they had achieved social status by continuing their educations (i.e., Madeline, Sophie, Carlotta, Wuschko) and one (Paolo), was sorely reminded of his low status. Personalization of new learning—reading about yourself in a novel, learning your life in a history class—was a strong experience for only about half of the individuals in the study. Several (Madeline, Henry, Isadore) were engaged in participatory learning groups in which they took active leadership, but most of the participants signed up for prescheduled courses through adult education centers. For all of the participants, the activity was chosen because it was pleasurable (again, Paolo is the exception). (Table II in the Appendix details the educational experiences of the study population.)

The continuum from Wuschko and his desire for a liberal arts education as a means of understanding his own history to Jenny who wished to gain specific vocational information is wide, representing the range of the entire study population. The other members—the six whose stories have not been included in the presentation of the data—are generally reflected in the examples presented.

The next chapter focuses on the meaning participants make of the experience of adult education.
CHAPTER VI

ADULT EDUCATION AND ITS MEANING IN THE LIVES OF THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS

This section discusses the meaning the participants made of their educational experiences, the ways in which they integrated the course-taking into their worlds, and an interpretation of the experience in psychosocial terms. The interrelationship of life review and participants in adult education is explored.

Introduction

Man is oblivious to the fact that it is he who constitutes the social world.

Alfred Schutz

"Making meaning" is directly related to the factors that motivated the older adults to turn to education at this time in their lives. Because of the structure of the study—the three interviews which focused on motivation, experience and meaning—the participants set their discussions in a life-long context. Rather than discussing the meaning in a present-oriented perspective, they talked in terms of past experiences and tied their interpretations of current educational experiences to their biographies. (Schutz, 1967, calls these "because-motives" as opposed to
the "in-order-to-motives" of present orientation.)

Historical factors were woven into such personal constructs; embedded in the interview data were participants' "visions of education" and beliefs about the meaning of education in their lives--gestalts of the socio-economic forces of their life-times which were now being acted upon. Such beliefs often reflected the socialization and family attitudes prevalent in the early 1900's. Most of the participants had at least one parent born outside of the United States and two were immigrants themselves; "education" was held in high regard by these people or seen as an upper class activity. Participants, then, were often found to be playing out preconceived roles about "the meaning of education" inculcated 50 or 60 years before. This was reflected both in their preference for specific educational activities, their reaction to and interactions within the classrooms (discussed in Chapter V), and the significance they found in the experiences. When they reflected on the way that learning now is integrated into their everyday worlds--whether as a means of fulfilling a social role or providing the deeper personal identity or meaning that some sought--they again referred back to their earliest family and educational roots, roots tied to symbols of hopes, achievements, and demands. Present day concerns were also
discussed; these were often related to the roles that the older adults play in our current culture.

The following excerpts from the interview data further illustrate both the concrete experience of adult education and the participants' self-understanding of it. Again, six individuals represent the population, their stories touch on many common themes.

**Wuschko**

For Wuschko, at age 67, the chance to achieve a formal education represents "the fulfillment of a lifelong dream" (WK I, 16). He says it is a selfish preoccupation:

I believe most of all it is the search for more knowledge. It seems I am very curious about many things and it seems my only reason. I don't intend to make any profit or contribute to anything, to the well-being of others at my age. It's more or less a selfish desire. Sometimes even I am at times almost ill at ease that perhaps I, when I attend classes--that I don't want to interfere with young people who are searching their future, perhaps future goal.

Well, sometimes young people they have questions pertaining to the future jobs or pertaining to what they study and they are, I believe, more entitled to know it than I am... They are paying fees and I think professors should give them more time than person who just seeks knowledge for self-satisfaction. (WK III, 1)

Nonetheless, Wuschko's commitment to following a curriculum that may eventually lead to a degree (although he takes only two courses at a time) is strong. Like Jude Fawley in **Jude the Obscure**, there is a pleasure for Wuschko in the **process** of learning, of being a student, and he is
determined to persist in the pursuit of an education. Others, too, were found to exemplify this pattern to some degree (i.e., Sophie, Madeline, Isadore, Carlotta, William).

There is another aspect of the meaning that learning has for Wuschko and that is the relationship between his own life story and study. He is trying "to gather pieces of information together to make a picture" and that picture is the story of his own life:

I learned that one cannot control one's own destiny. Destiny was controlled by the Germans . . . And certain things in our own society are not fully control of our destinies. Certain events could happen that was or something that we have to subordinate to the high orders. Well, the study, it's more to put together bits of information together to make a whole picture of it. So it would make sense. And a study also for its own sake. Or for the sake of its beauty in expressed words or its ideas. And, well, you could call it personal satisfaction. (WK III, 9)

As with Erikson's (1963) adult who achieves ego integrity over despair ("conveys some world order and spiritual sense, no matter how dearly paid for" p. 268), Wuschko is philosophical. He says, "You cannot carry hatred in your heart because most of the time destroys us, not the enemy we hate."

Finding meaning and continuity for his life is a prime objective for Wuschko at age 67. He focuses on the years between 1939 and 1946, and on his early youth. The openness--talking about his own life, particularly the war experiences--is new to him and it coincides with his
studying. Recently he made a presentation of his World War II experiences to his history class, the first such public revelation. He admits that he was surprised to find himself talking about his past:

Wuschko: Well, for many many years I didn't want to go back—whatever had to do with concentration camp. I didn't want to mention. I mention to my wife, of course, but to her family I never said anything. Until many, many years later. I didn't feel like dwelling on the subject.

Interviewer: But now you sometimes think of it more?

Wuschko: Oh yes! Oh yes! Sometimes I think, sometimes I dream about. Sometimes I wouldn't say "dream"—it's when I am waking sometimes I think that what was the difference between my waking in concentration camp and my waking now at home. I do think more. Sometimes I think about standing, sometimes waiting for something. A couple of minutes—but standing in that square for a couple of hours before they are counted. Everyone is there. Or, if he is dead or what happened.¹ (WK III, 8)

He marvels over his own mortality, the nature of happenstance and the fact that some individuals did not try to live; he wonders how he managed to survive. He says, for example:

They took a cigarette [instead of bread]! They were giving up. They are giving up. Well, there is for example a complete, I would say, abandon; some of them run under wired fence, electric fence. So this is the last stage. They couldn't cope any more, and they were torn up by the dogs or shot by the guards. But this was final stage. But some didn't do outside these things: they traded last piece of bread—or "You give me this, I will give you that. I have a smoke." It also meant almost death to me. Cause it was so little that even one ate everything; it was

¹It was common practice in the concentration camps for roll calls to be taken in all weather conditions. These could last for "3 or 4 hours, until they are counted up everyone dead or alive."
eventually one would die out of starvation.
(WK III, 10)

Wuschko's current life review is expressed in a need to understand and accept what has happened to him, to achieve a sense of what Lieberman and Falk (1971) call "a reflection of an historical self" (p. 133). Life review is a reprocessing of past horror but it is also nostalgia for simpler times and Wuschko says he thinks frequently about his early life in pre-war Poland. (Myerhoff, 1979, says the reflection must come from the "numinous past.")

Descriptions of life in the village were idealized; frequently Wuschko drew comparisons between pre-war Poland and current American lifestyles. Literacy was a priority, older people were respected ("A young man very often tipped his hat to an older person.") His father was a farmer, his mother a "helpmate," and life was dear:

The family was close. It was somehow that children most of the time lived with parents until they got married. And boys would often live with parents after they got married while the girls usually married and went away to live with the groom's families . . . extended families. (WK I, 8)

And:

My mother cooked dinner while we sat at almost the same time. Sometimes in the summertime the schedule varied somewhat from the winter schedule because in the wintertime we had some very, very long nights . . . And the days: the summertime days are longer.

The farm which my father cultivated was with horse drawn tools. We didn't have any machinery driven by gasoline.
It was different. It was very close. The relationship was very close between parents and children. And also brothers and sisters, too. (WK I, 9)

In fact, although the present is better in some ways for Wuschko, "heaven on earth," his nostalgia for his early past had created a symbol of juxtaposition—a simple world and one he can more easily identify with. Such a mindset has colored his experience of such classes as Sociology, Western Civilization, Social Problems, and History. "I compare," he says, "I compare the differences." And, "There was never anything to compare, for example to the United States... I never heard anything like it." Yet it must be remembered that this man has lived in the United States for 35 years and might find himself closer to current day American life.

Wuschko, in fact, recognized his tendency toward life review and reminiscence and commented:

There are some times when I think about the past and sometimes when I'm trying to live in the present. I don't dwell continuously in the past... But sometimes... mostly when I have free time or sometimes when I go to bed and I can't fall asleep immediately. So I think. (WK I, 12)

And:

O yes. I think about the past. Quite often. Especially, oh yes, especially in free time when I'm not occupied. Sometimes the thoughts go back to these far away places. (WK I, 10).

To some extent Wuschko is currently turning into himself to explore past memories and moral issues, much like
Erikson's older person who, as Levinson (1978) says, "listens to the inner world." It is what Neugarten (1968) would call "adaptive behavior" appropriate to his age; he may be seeking a framework in which to understand his unique historical biography and the pressures that have had impact on his life. He meets this need for life review at the same time that he fulfills a lifelong "dream for an education--a real pursuit of beauty." Of all the study participants, his story represents the most direct relationship between the theoretical psychosocial stage and participation in adult education. Reminiscence, learning, personalization of content and life review operate together. Although others balance similar needs and motivations for adult learning, Wuschko's current interest in life review within adult education is unique among the 12 participants of the study. In the following example, Isadore's life review seems to play no part in his experience of adult education; turning back for Isadore is turning back into a way of life that is modelled on his youth and earlier experiences of learning.

Isadore

Isadore is wrapped up in a busy lifestyle much like that of his 20's and the pace of continuing education participation serves as a focus in his daily life much like a preretirement schedule. He says he is not
interested in life review and spends no time in personal reminiscence (although, in the interview sessions, he spent considerable time remembering his college years at a free public institution). His life, moreover, is strikingly bare of time for reflection and next semester will be even fuller:

What my goals will be next term might be getting back into the more esoteric types of learning that I find that I am very weak in. For example, I know that I am very weak in mathematics. I'm now weaker in mathematics than I thought I was because my experience hasn't been in scientific information. (IC II 2)

I had weakness in higher math. Not so much in the computer course. The computer course has a lot to do with logic. And I'm now at a point where I don't know whether I'm going to spend more time with the electricity which is a much more difficult subject because there is so much more learning than the computer which is basically ideal as a do-it-yourself course. I can always go back to the computer because there are many aspects of the computer that I would be interested in learning. But the computer is more a logic course, whereas the electricity is more a knowledge course. In other words, you have to bring information there.

Later on I suspect that I will be able to use much of my electricity in computer work, although I don't intend to be a mechanic. (IC II, 2)

"Isadore," I asked, "what really are you going to accomplish?" Isadore answered with the following story:

Life is what you try to accomplish in a very short space--span of time. People who ask me now [chuckle] what am I doing when I go to school. I tell them, "I'm a scientist."

I don't think I mentioned this little story to you. When the children were growing up and I always was,
you know, interested in what they were doing, I'd say to them, "Well, what happened in school today?" And they always came back, "Nothing." So, after a period of time I said to them, "Well, don't ever say that whatever you did in school was 'nothing' because I'm going to tell you you're a scientist because that's why you're going to school. You're going to school to become a scientist."

So they say . . . they'd smirk and laugh. So I'd say, "Yes, you're a scientist because you're taking up time and space." [Laughter] So that became our family code: "What are you going to school for? To become a scientist because you take up time and space." That's a family joke.

But that's true. (IC III, 3)

One aspect of meaning for Isadore is implied in the metaphor he chooses to describe his "learning":

**Interviewer:** What's really learning?

**Isadore:** Storage of information . . . Everybody stores things. That's the one thing about the human brain. (I think I should mention that part of my philosophy to you.) The brain is so magnificent that it remembers everything, it sees everything and it stores everything. And our problem is we never learn to--how to--recall it, bring back all these bits of information. (IC III, 13)

It is his own ability to process to "recall, to bring back" information that Isadore is testing. Perhaps he does not believe himself as capable as he was when younger or perhaps it is a means by which he has always measured himself. He says:

I have some notebooks here that I took when I went to college and every once in a while I pick it up and look at it and it jogs my memory as how come I thought of those things then and have not thought of them, you know, in maybe 50 years or 40 years.
But it's there. And you know, the question is... the question most of the time is: why can't I recall them? And, as you get older you do find... you imagine that's a difficulty. It's just that there is so much information there that it takes that much longer to get it. Because lots of time I try to remember a person's name and it destroys me until I finally, you know, recall that or, for example, like last week one day we had an exam and for the life of me everything was a blank. Yet when we did the work, when we did the test after the test, everything was clear.

There are problems of recall I think because of all the information that's stored in your head you have difficulty recalling at certain times. In other words, you don't recall things as rapidly as you'd like to. For example, many times I'm fishing for words. As I explained to you I have to use four words instead of using one. And that's a learning defect. As I told you, I didn't start to read until I was 13. Now I've never been able to overcome that. (IC III, 14)

Facts are important to Isadore at this time of life and information storage defines learning for him. Even his choice of course reflects this phenomenon; he says, "The brain is just a great big computer."

At the same time, the simple pattern of learning new things, of challenging himself, is a way of life. He says:

Part of my life experience has always been to learn something new...

My whole life has been that way. I never get bored. Never. I don't have time. (IC I, 11)

When asked later whether he needs to learn in a social environment Isadore added that what he was doing was learning "content." He has always known how to take advantage of good opportunities (his college and graduate
school have been tuition-free) and did not choose to attend adult education classes for the social life."

Interviewer: If you didn't have these courses to go to what would you do every day?

Isadore: I would probably continue reading. At home. But, you know, the colleges are available so I would take advantage of it.

Interviewer: Well, for example, do you like the social interaction?

Isadore: Well, then I would have to find peers and, you know, these--create these kinds of discussions. I probably wouldn't be able to do the scientific things that I have been doing, but rather, the more cultural things that you can do by yourself. Museums, things of that sort. I'm still a museum person. I'm still a library person. So that learning would be a continuing thing for me no matter whether I had the school, whether I had the educational facilities here or not. (IC III, 3)

I would not have a friend who I consider stupid. He wouldn't be a friend. That's all. Just be somebody, a nonentity, you know. No. I think I require this kind of intellectual stimuli all the time. It doesn't really make any difference what it is. (IC III, 15)

The "meaning," then, for Isadore is a complex weaving of several important themes. He is, on the one hand, achieving a dream for his retirement (somewhat like that of Wuschko) in which the challenges and lifestyle of a much younger self are played out. Further, there is a basic attribute of his own personality--the need to be busy, to learn and to press for difficult technical recall. This is a compelling need, an extension of the work ethic established for him 50 years ago by his family and social
environment. When he realized how similar he was to the Isadore at age 20, he laughed:

Somebody called me last week, I think, and asked me if I was going to turn into a hedonist. And I said, "I think I ought to, because in this time in life, what else is there?" You know, like I always used to have a pet saying: that my father made a bad mistake because he never taught me to be a playboy. (IC II, 14)

A further element was brought out. Isadore was concerned about the use of his learning, what good might come of it besides his own mental gymnastics. His wish to contribute more rather than to continue to pursue "selfish" learnings was shared by all the other study participants.

It was repeated in each interview:

I don't think ... I haven't put any of this learning to use yet in any way and I don't think that I will put any of this to any practical use other than self praise, self desire, self ... (IC II, 12)

I've done my share in the world and this too is a problem that I'm facing myself. You know, how can I make the changes in our society as I have been viewing them? I mean, where can I make my contribution? How will I go about doing it? That's where I come into--there's where I come in with my retirement. (I use that as an excuse: I've done my share.) But that's wrong. So, I am re-evaluating my contribution. In other words, it's true that maybe I made a contribution in years gone by but I'm not doing it at this particular moment. I'm selfish. (IC III, 8)

I'm only doing the things that I want to do. I'm taking everything out of society, I'm not giving. I don't know whether that's good or bad yet. It's just I haven't been retired long enough. Therefore, I have to make these kinds of judgements. (IC III, 9)
In a psychosocial framework, it is possible that Isadore has been enjoying what Erikson (1963) calls the last stage of "generativity vs. stagnation" in which "individuals often begin to indulge themselves as if they were their own . . . one and only child" (p. 267). To reach the more mature stage, "integrity vs. despair," it is necessary to put aside youthful pursuits. Erickson (1967) writes:

It also means that you have to be able, in old age, to renounce some of the earlier things, because you can't be very wise if you still try to capture what you had or did not have as a youth. (Evans, p. 54)

For Isadore, the transition into old age is a chance to explore areas of his youth, to replay some of the roles he had before the demands of his work-life and family life. Adult education may be an avenue for this exploration.

Paolo's story again follows with its striking contrast in educational experience. However, the two men are not as divergent in psychosocial terms: both are redoing the task of an earlier time.

Paolo's experience of adult education has been an unsuccessful one. Nonetheless, he does not appear to feel "less" because of his inability to gain a GED certificate ("that piece of paper"). More central to his self-esteem is his homelife and job as homemaker and his beloved memories of his youth. The "meaning" that adult
education participation has for Paolo is intricately tied into his daily routine; and to understand this it is necessary to look at Paolo's life.

Paolo stays at home and cares for the cooking, shopping, and household chores while his wife, a nutritionist, works and attends training courses. She takes the family car. The couple has adopted three teenage children. In addition to his role as homemaker, Paolo has volunteered to teach a Portuguese junior high school student and runs a small appliance repair business out of a basement workshop. He also ice skates in winter at an indoor arena near his home. He talked about his life with pleasure and appeared to relish the opportunity to stay at home after 20 years working for the city as a laborer. Clearly, those years of work-life had not been a challenge to Paolo and he had not been happy. His truest happiness—"the dearest thing," he said--had been the years at sea, the years of his youth.

At eighteen, Paolo had joined the Merchant Marines:

I got on a tanker, then there was no union. They were hiring right off the dock. We were only getting 25 dollars a month then. I went as a mess boy . . .

(PA I, 17)

He stayed on the sea until his wife convinced him to leave in 1954. He says, "I had to leave the life of the sea and settle down here. I had to give it up--not because I wanted to." Here is how he recalled those years:
It was the sea. I used to like to travel from one port of the country to another. The dearest part about it is if you're off watch and you're up on deck when the ship is just coming in, you can see just the outline of the land you're going to, the country you're going to. And it's a ship that's approaching closer; it gets bigger and then you start seeing figures. The people look like ants. And then, as it gets closer and closer, then you start seeing the whole vision of the whole person. And the things you see after you get there in the strange land. How the peoples' culture is. I used to get out and go . . . I used to go off by myself and I used to get on with the people. Just enough to listen to their language and to see if I understand any of it, you know, to talk. (PA III, 7)

We went to the Amazon. The ship I was on use to go to the Amazon River. Along the Amazon they have a factory where they make redwood for furniture, for houses--shingles and things like that. And they also have rubber and they have alligator skins. You can have shoes made by the alligator fur skin. And all the experience of seeing those things and watching those Indians--naked Indians, riding the wave after the ship has gone by. The ship leaves off of a wave. And they ride that wave on a piece of board. And I'm telling you, I ain't seen so many people come out of one little bitty hut. I mean a hut that is made out of straw or some stuff anyways. And you see one, two, three and I had counted over 15 people coming out of that one little bitty hut. I wondered how in the thunder they all fit in there. Unless the hut is big inside.

Yeah. And then they all got their own, you know just like you see in the movies, a little hut here, a little hut there. And when the wave of the ship, you know, that wave use to come all the way inland and wash down their huts. There was an awful lot of pressure about that. Wash down their huts. So they got so they got after the ships, not to get too close to land because a lot of that water will go in and knock down their huts, see. But I think they built a wall to prevent that, in the Amazon. The Amazon is a long river; it goes for miles and miles. (PA III 7-8)
In lengthy discourse, which I did not interrupt, Paolo described the mystery and danger of life in the Merchant Marine's wartime excursions off the coast of France, the Middle East, ports in the Mediterranean, equatorial Africa and South America, the Galapagos Island. Clearly Paolo was carried away by the opportunity to recollect this most exotic period of his life. When asked if he thought a great deal about this time of late, he answered:

No, I don't think too much about it. Because I don't see when I'll ever ever get a chance to go back to sea . . . I remember the good times. I don't have no regrets, to tell you the truth. I really enjoyed my life, every bit of it. (PA III, 10-11)

And then, after a moment's reflection, Paolo added:

When I happen to talk to it, that's when it comes to me. But I don't talk about it. (PA III, 11)

It is apparent, from what Paolo said, that he had chosen the interviews as a setting in which to reminisce. One underlying theme of life review is the act of justification of one's life: justification to oneself, to others, and perhaps to the interviewer (what Lowenthal, 1975, calls "the dominant other"). Another theme is the separation that may occur--separation from the here and now of everyday life--which enables one to play back more grandiose notes from the past (Butler, 1967, 1977; Weisman, 1967). In a study of 150 veterans of the Spanish American War who were treated at an outpatient clinic in Boston,
McMahon and Rhudick (1967) found a high correlation between mental health and reminiscence of events of the remote past (when these men were heroes) as opposed to those memories of the immediate past.

Paolo's more recent work-life—until his retirement in 1977—had been decidedly less glamorous. He spent those years working for the city as a laborer and driving a truck. He says:

How in the goodness could I work on land when I dedicated my whole life on a ship? I had very little or nothing knowledge of working on land. All my jobs I did on a ship, I never thought . . . I couldn't hold a job . . . I was never no good on land. (PA I, 22)

He retired three years ago. Like Wuschko who directed all memory discussions and reminiscence to a specific period of his life, Paolo never talked about the middle 24 years—the years of work. Instead, he reviewed his early youth in F____ R____ and N____ stressing the closeness of his family, and the years of his youth in the Merchant Marines. He also spoke at great length about his current life: repairing small engines and housekeeping for his family.

To contrast with his peripatetic life as a young man in the Merchant Marines, Paolo described in detail his travels nowadays. He scouts the entire urban area and goes by public transportation to hunt bargains at far-flung supermarkets:
If I had a car I would go to Edwards. I got to take that bus to get all the way up to Edwards. I go to the Foodmart and to the A & P for dry goods and to the Union Market on Main Street for meat or to the Big Y if they're having a special. But Edwards has a lot of things I want . . .

Well, the Big Y does have specials. A & P has specials. But not on meat. Specials on other dry goods. Big Y has prime round roast at $1.79 a pound. They got their hamburger already ground—chuck hamburger for $1.89 a pound: but if they say "18% fat," I don't go by that. When they say "18% fat" they mean "25% fat."

It's not cheap, but that's the cheapest you're gonna get, because they're running $2.29, $2.09 a pound. That's how it's been running. Now, my wife expects me to buy meat every week. And I got to buy a variety—not a lot of meat—but sometime I get that combination pork package. They have two roasts, country ribs, pork chops, the center cut. Sometimes they wrap up, oh, eleven to thirteen pounds, which comes out to many $18.00 for a combination. (PA I, 24)

Paulo has two worlds: memories (pre-1954) which, when he cares to engage in them, give him the "career" and sense of accomplishment and status with which he can identify, and the role of homemaker which he clearly enjoys. He is not disengaged as Cumming and Henry (1961) would suggest but, rather, newly engaged in experiences which give him pleasure and fulfillment. Perhaps Paolo's situation is like that of Gutmann's (1975) older man who has been freed from the "parental imperative"—the culturally dictated economic and personal necessity to leave off "feminine" characteristics such as sensual and nurturing modes and go out into the workplace. When the "parental imperative" is over older men can again engage in such behaviors. Paolo's
adjustment to his current homebound role represents such a late-life re-engagement. Stage development theory, too, supports this expressive direction for older men (Erikson, 1963; Levinson, 1978; Lowenthal, Thurnher & Chiriboga, 1975; Neugarten, 1968). Paolo's story is representative of several of the older people in the study who have begun to develop careers or activities that would more stereotypically be attributed to the opposite sex.

As a homemaker, Paolo has found a niche which pleases him; as a former Merchant Marine, he revels in the grandiosity of his past; as a learner he has experienced frustration and some anger. However, he is able to face that disappointment and expects to continue working toward his degree. He says:

Of course, it's still a high school diploma. But a piece of paper isn't any good unless you got the knowledge (PA II, 1) . . . . . . But I tell you, if I had a GED I could enroll at S____ on small gasoline engines. (PA II, 24)

No loss of self-esteem occurs with academic failure. Paolo wants the degree, will try to get it only for it's worth in getting him into another course. But the degree will not change his life. Madeline, on the other hand, attaches a different meaning to her experience with education.

Madeline

For Madeline the experience of late life learning is directly related to her notion that "education" is a mark
of self esteem—a public mark. For the past 24 years (Madeline is 74) she has been remedying a flaw in her world. She spoke, for example of one occasion when she was in her mid-40's and drove past some mansions. "I felt so angry and bitter that they had such big mansions and I hadn't gone to college," she said. Going to school now "has changed me completely. I'm freeing myself from all those hangups" (MH III, 14). She told this story of her unhappiness some 40 years ago:

I was still young enough in my early 30's to be awfully resentful of the fact that I could have gone to college and I could be doing something that I really wanted to do. I was doing office work in B______ ______. And I didn't want to be a bitter, resentful person. I spent a lot of time in museums.

They had an art museum where, downstairs, they had a Buddha—the largest one that had been brought to the United States at that time. It had been brought over in pieces and put together and this was in a room where they had their oriental jade and their oriental collection. And this Buddha was in a crevice in the wall and up on a platform and he was immense. I could have crawled up on his lap, you know; it was that big.

Anyway, because of my habit of going around alone often, I discovered this place all by myself. (This was down in the basement there.) And on the days when I was awfully unhappy or wished I was somebody else or could do something else, I would go downstairs in that museum and sit in front of that Buddha for an hour all by myself. And I loved it. He sat there in the lowest position, you know, and his hands like this and that inscrutable smile on his face . . . .

I would calm myself and I would feel wonderful when I left that place where the Buddha was. And I never saw a soul down there and I never went there
with anybody else. But every once in a while I go
"Oh, I wonder if he's still there." (MH II, 18)

Later Madeline told the following story to illustrate
her love of poetry and the enjoyment she had in her poetry
class. Beyond the personal satisfaction of the college
degree (that public mark of esteem), Madeline has also
acquired a personal degree of confidence "a flourishing
self" that makes her feel part of a larger community. The
contrast with the above story is most striking:

Well, you recognize, you recognize the thought behind
the words if you have had a poetry course. You
recognize thought behind words that you didn't realize
were there before . . . It's an immense source of
satisfaction. And you learn to catch a rhythm in
speech too that you weren't aware of before. I
don't know. And words can mean so many things—
different things.

One of my favorite poets is the German poet, Rilke. . .
I have one of his books--poetry books--on my night-
stand. And, oh, he had such a feeling. He went to--
and it's not imaginary--he went to a museum one time
and saw a gorgeous piece of lace, handmade lace. It
was like his finest cut-work. And he thought about
the poor little thing that had made the lace. (Now,
if this is in Europe it might have been some servant
or somebody, you know. The lace makers pay maybe
50 cents a day or 50 cents a week or something.) And
he wondered about the little person who had made this
fine piece of lace.

He wrote a wonderful poem about a tiger in a case
that is so sad you could cry. (But I never would
have been aware of him, Rilke.) The stripes, you
know. The stripes on the cage and the stripes on the
tiger, and how his eyes are just kind of glazed. He
is not behind bars. In his mind he is still free.
Oh, it's fabulous!

. . . This is one of the wonderful things about
reading. You know that when other people have the
same feelings, the same resemblance and the same ambitions. And you belong to the human race. That's what it is. (MH III, 3)

For Madeline, the key to unlock her own cage had been the change in her at 50: she decided to get the education she had always wanted. Simultaneously, she made other changes in her personal life. But education was the symbolic key to her own self esteem. Here is her analysis of the experience:

Well, to put it in one sentence: Getting my college degree made an entirely different person out of me. (I think that you waste your time in college if it doesn't change you.) But it changed me completely. I hate to think of the person I was before, in a way. Because maybe I was unhappy without an education. With one the world is just a different place and it's wonderful. Everything is wonderful. I feel as though I can handle my problems so much more sanely. (MH III, 1)

The challenge of relating to students much younger jarred her at first but has led to her current love of inter-generational exchange--a contrast to Wuschko's stance with younger students:

This was one of the funny things, too. Often they [young people] would argue; they'd say, "horse and buggy," you know. I developed more self--I guess you'd call it self-confidence. I developed more self-confidence because of the fact that I wasn't afraid to speak up. Common sense told me: "This is the last chance you're going to have and you're old enough, you know. These young kids don't know much and they're standing up saying what they think. Why can't I?" And some of my ideas were absolutely wrong . . . (MH II, 7)

An autonomous learner may ask, "Why did Madeline have to go to a formal learning situation or join a poetry class
to be educated, to learn to appreciate poetry or to find personal meaning?" Indeed, that is a recurring feature of the individuals interviewed in this study. (In fact, three other participants also returned to school in late life to prove some earlier personal promise: William, Sophie and Carlotta.)

The social life—the reverberation of ideas that was described in Chapter V is of utmost importance to Madeline. And this exchange must be multi-generational. She says:

To me it might be pretty boring to be old and be always with old people your own age. And not contribute to anything or to the world in general anymore outside of your own family. (MH III, 15)

Once she had gained her B.A. degree at 56, Madeline became what she had always intended to be: an English teacher. She got a job as a last minute replacement and she found herself fulfilling the promise she made to herself in junior high school. Here is how she describes the feeling:

I felt I was with my own kind, you know. I don't mean that snobbishly, but I really was with educators and I'd always wanted to be with them. And the fact that many of them or some of them (they tell me)—they bicker, they hate each other, they go stab each other in the back—but all this would never bother me a bit. If I had been a teacher, that would be it: I would be a teacher. If somebody else got 50 dollars more I think it wouldn't have bothered me at all. That's not the important thing; it's not the important thing. (MH III, 8)
A further aspect of the meaning of late life learning for Madeline is her wish to work with young children. She feels—like the Eriksonian older adult—that she has some legacy to leave to another generation. She is interested in writing; and she wants to teach young writers. She also values her own experience—her upbringing, the aloneness that she learned to live with for so many years, and her courage to do something with her life when most people thought she should retire. Her is how she relates her poetry reading of Walt Whitman to her voluntary tutoring in the schools:

the essence of freedom! Walt Whitman is such an American! I had a little black boy write a paper for me and tell me what he was like inside. "And somedays I like to wear a cap and some days I won't wear a cap. And if I don't want to, I won't."

Well this was exactly what Walt Whitman said: "I wear my hat as I please, indoors and out." Well, this little black boy was saying the same thing. That's all right, you still know what the little boy was saying at 10; but if you know that Walt Whitman said it too, it gives you such satisfaction. (MH III, 2)

Well, it is such a privilege for me to be with a young person now and try and inspire in them this kind of love of words and understanding, even though these youngsters that I have now are ten or eleven years old. (MH III, 3)

Finally, the meaning for Madeline is tied into the value she has learned to set upon her own life experience. Her interview transcripts are redolent with language of life review and reminiscence, as well as references to
impending death. She has made an enormous effort to "put my house in order," as she says. She acknowledges her place in the greater social and historical framework of her time, within the community of the thinking to which she has always aspired and to the generations that she can influence. Robert Butler (1977) describes life review as the reworking of past conflicts "to do with the time that is left" and to determine "whatever material and emotional legacies" one wishes to leave. Madeline put it best herself in the following discussion:

There's an Adrienne Rich--a contemporary poet--and I didn't know a thing about her until I read an excerpt. I don't know if it was in the library book or pamphlet or how. Anyway, the end--this is about a person dying--and the end of it I think is wonderful. She said (these are the words): "Here is a drink of water. Sleep now. Nothing more is expected of you. I take your life into my living head." Now, see, this is the only way you live on; you live on in other people's heads, right?

I don't care whether you are going to heaven or some other world. In this world the only way you're going to live on is in somebody else's head. "Nothing more is expected of you. I take your life into my living head." Oh, I think that is absolutely perfect! (MH III, 5)

Lillian's historical experience was so like Madeline's--both bright young women who were denied the chance to go to college because of the impact of the Depression on their families. Yet, how different has been their involvement with adult education. Madeline says she "finds a piece of" herself in the stimulation and personalization of content;
Lillian, on the other hand, appears to do the reverse.

**Lillian**

Lillian is also embarking on a new life. She recently moved to the northeast from a large midwestern city where she had lived and worked most of her life. To make the move, she divested herself of nearly everything. She sold her home and all that was in it, bringing with her only some clothing and an odd memento or two (decorative items for the kitchen wall) and some photograph albums which she says she never opens. At age 65 she is ready to begin again in a place where she has no one except a married son. She has joined several organizations, volunteered to work with aged Jewish women, and dedicated two days a week to volunteering at a local elementary school. Adult education is one more element in her busy agenda of activities: it provides her with a social evening out at a lecture she finds stimulating. She says:

> If I don't have anything scheduled for the next day I'm very unhappy when I go to bed at night. When I go to bed on Monday, for instance, now Tuesday I go to the Center. That's fine, but I always want an assignment for the next day. Something I have to do, or should do or can do. I don't like to have a vacuum. That's annoying to me, I've got to have something to do. (LR II, 12)

My days are all committed. This is the only day usually, and this day will be full, too. This is the day I will do things I can't do Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. I've only got Wednesday open.
(Let me look at my calendar, sometimes things develop that take my Wednesdays, too.) (LR II, 10)

Lillian does not wish to be reminiscent at this time; she wards off unhappy memories as best she can:

Interviewer: Lillian, do you think about the past?

Lillian: I can't say that I don't. But I don't linger over it. Everybody has memories.

Interviewer: Do you focus on the happy memories or do you focus on the sad memories?

Lillian: Both. You can't avoid the sad ones, if they occurred.

Interviewer: What evokes one of these memories?

Lillian: Just if I have a period where I have nothing to do, period. I have done what I have to do and there's nothing else for me to do. Then I begin to think and I don't want that; I don't want to think . . . As a matter of fact, do you know that I have an album of pictures and I never open the cover of them because, when I look at pictures that bring up sad memories and I don't want to look, I don't look at them. (LR I, 10)

[Later, pointing to a photograph album she was showing the interviewer]
I don't look at that because when I see pictures of people in there who have deceased, it makes me unhappy. So I don't look. I've got albums but I never look at them. (LR III, 3)

Yet, there is much in her past that Lillian wants to share and she took the interview sessions as an opportunity to do so. Like Paolo—and, indeed every one of the participants—she opened the final interview session with an obviously planned reminiscence. Lillian had a photograph album and a scrapbook on the table as well as an assortment of mementoes. She was especially pleased with two ladies'
suits (on hangers) which she had arranged on the sofa. She said:

I have my two garments over here. Right? See that green one and the one underneath? I told you all about my laurels, and I've got you as a captive audience. Frankly, I have told nobody in S______, I told nobody of anything I've done. I just haven't told anybody . . . You're the only person to whom I've told up to this point. I have two things here of which I'm rather proud. [Holds up two women's suits.] You see that pin? That's the past president pin of Hadassah. I was president of the section called B & P. Business and Professional Line. This comes from B'nai B'rith women of which I'm also past president. We always used menorahs. One is gold and one is silver. No one has ever said anything, but I thought I'd tell you. (LR III, 1)

Lillian is proud of her work-life both as the assistant to a lawyer and as a businesswoman and was eager to spend time talking about her success. This kind of personal history was eagerly recalled.

She is also proud of her abilities. She feels comfortable in an intellectual setting even though her experience of course-taking is personally detached. She says:

I just do my thing, period. That's all. I just do my thing and it works . . . It'll be completely nontechnical, you know, and nonacademic. I just do my thing . . . .

I was always studious; I was that kind of girl; I was a book girl. I guess I took after my father. I used to read and read and read, even books that were way beyond my years. But I would read. (LR I, 7)

On the other hand, her educational history is a sad one. When she tried to talk about the meaning of education in
her own life, the disappointments intruded. Again, Lillian began by talking about her brother:

Born to be a doctor! Even when people buy drugs from him today he talks like a doctor. (LR III, 3)

I should have been a lawyer . . .

It's just so bad and I'm speaking for all, not only myself. I told you, I have a brother who's a pharmacist. He was born to be a physician. No opportunity. Small town. No university. Poor family. The only thing open to him was pharmacy. Which he took and became a top pharmacist. But if it had been this generation and the teacher noticed here was someone who had something, something would have happened. (Because there are kids who get scholarships. Just get scholarships, period. They don't have to show any zest for the subject.)

But 50 years ago it was different. No such thing. I do think of it. And people who know me have said the same thing: "You should have been so and so. You should have done so and so." The same thing with my brother. His customers say, "Jake, when we don't feel good we don't call a doctor. We call you." (He will prescribe for them.) (LR III, 7)

There was a lot of wasted talent. 'Cause I know my brother Jake would have been a famous physician.

(Interviewer: You would have been a physician too?)

I would have done well at anything I tackled. I had to do better than anybody else. (LR I, 10)

Well, I've always had a lot of confidence. I don't know why. I've always felt that I could--How does that song go? [Sings] "Anything you can do, I can do better." . . . I always felt that no matter what it was, if I undertook it, I was going to do it better than anybody in the class. That's my temperament. (LR II, 12)

Nonetheless, when asked to discuss the psychology class she is now taking, Lillian did not engage at a personal or affective level. She put the experience
outside herself and maintained the greatest distance from the subject matter. She said:

Marvelous teacher. Do you know Mr. M____? I admire him! First of all, he's physically attractive; he's a beautiful man and he has a wealth of information. He can talk around the clock without notes, just talk, and he knows what he's talking about. And I just love to listen to him; I love him. I think he's great. (Except one time, I told you, I criticized him: "What do you mean, idear? Spell it. I-D-E-A, that's ideah, not idear." But everybody says "idear" around here. I don't know what it is but I've never heard "idea," I only hear "idear." From the young and old. And I want to jump up and correct them but I don't dare.) (LR III, 6)

Lillian wants to keep busy. She is new to the area and feels she is starting over. Although she finds herself reviewing her life, she tries not to dwell in the past; to her that is a negative activity. Her model of a good old age is an active one and, like others (most notably Isadore), has arranged a hectic post-retirement schedule. Inasmuch as a course interests her (generally) and she can find transportation, Lillian will attend. For now, that is the meaning she makes of what she is doing. School--despite her unfortunate recollections--is in the realm of a social outing, a lecture. It permits her to get out of her apartment and to move in circles she has always admired; she needs to keep busy. So far she has not allowed the course content (psychology) to intrude into her most personal world. That world may contain sadness and bitterness which she surely does not want to confront at this time.
For several of the participants (Isadore, Lillian, Jenny, Paolo, William and Henry), adult education is a way of getting away from oneself and into the world. Despite the personal activities of reminiscence and life review, these people see the school environment as a place of business in which an interchange of time spent and work accomplished is patterned on work-life experience. Their affective involvement is not that of Wuschko, Madeline, Sophie and Carlotta (possibly Thorgud) who seek to learn about themselves through a course experience. The meaning made, then, is different and seemed to have little or no relationship with the task of life review. The meaning for them is to remain engaged in life, to meet and maintain social contact with people of all ages. For some, growing old demands that one refuse to sit home and "brood" and they see adult education classes as a means for extending themselves into the world.

Jenny's story is the extreme of such non-involvement. A transitional woman, Jenny expected adult education to be vocational. When she found that it was only indirectly connected to what she seeks to do in her career, Jenny terminated the course.

Jenny

The meaning of adult education participation was, for Jenny, a direct extension of her new job. She began last
year as a volunteer and Foster Grandparent in a daycare program for severely handicapped and retarded toddlers. She finds she has a flair for succeeding with children with whom others have failed and apparently her supervisors agree. She was asked to work for the summer as a paid staff member. Some of Jenny's success comes from a fiercely independent streak. She says she does "not listen to book-types . . . I am stubborn."

I'm supposed to put in 20 hours a week; I put in 30. And I mean I do 10 on my own. I don't like to start something I can't finish so I just work along with it. (JM II, 6)

I have broken every rule.

We're only supposed to work 20 hours but I work more than that. But it's none of their business. I've broken every law in the Foster Grandparents Program. I can't see this "You're not supposed to do this; you're not supposed to do that." And I don't go along with it but they don't know it. I have broken every rule. They were talking about it the other night, the other day, and my girlfriend kept hitting me. She said, "That's you. That's you." (JM III, 8)

After her husband's death and her retirement, Jenny declined to accept the lifestyle of the elderly women in her building. When she "discovered" the daycare program she says she "discovered a new life":

"Senior citizen?" Oh, I don't call myself that, believe me. I think it sounds so aged. I'm far from that! (JM II, 2)

I want to tell you I don't consider myself elderly. I don't because an elderly person is a person sitting down ready to die. That's my conception of an
elderly person . . . But it's just since I've been widowed that I've come to the conclusion that every minute counts . . . I've learned the hard way. Life is too short. (JM I, 13)

And the new job and life direction?

I just lucked upon it and you know . . .

Well, it came to me as a surprise that I would be very interested in it because after all these years of working I never thought I would ever--you know--feel like this. But if I have my life over again and I were 20 years younger I would go all the way through to a Ph.D. I really would because it's a fascinating thing and it's new and right now there aren't too many early childhood students. I would go all the way.

I just, ah, I don't know--I'm helping somebody. It gives me a wonderful feeling to know each day I go there and I come home I've seen some change in the child and I'd helped that child. It's a fulfillment--I mean, I can't put it into words. (JM III, 8)

The real learning that Jenny is doing has nothing to do with the adult education classes which she quit:

The girl--I guess she knew what she was talking about but she did not know how to present it. She would go--she would say a few words and say, "Okay, okay." (I think she needs to go to that Dale Carnegie School for public speaking.) And she called herself being "informal." But me, I was bored. And my girlfriend was there and she said,"Oh, God, she was awful!" (JM III, 7)

Rather, her job is a powerful and challenging learning experience. It has required her to change herself first, to become stronger and to learn to accept the severely retarded and deformed children she works with. She says:

I don't know. I really didn't believe this for a long time. I didn't believe I could cope with it. And my daughter told me, she said, "Ma, do you
think you can do it? This is a lot of heartbreak."
(JM II, 3)

And she didn't think I could cope with it. And every time mouth about it: "Are you all right? Did it bother you?" A couple of times I was very perturbed but I wouldn't give her the satisfaction.

So finally, the first month after that I coped with it. And to be it's like—anything. The kids? I mean you get to love them . . . (JM II, 4)

You can't dump your child like they used to do years ago. (Dump the children and forget about them. So embarrassed that they had a retarded child.) And it's rough.

. . . some mothers are pretty downhearted from the sights and looks of their kids. (JM II, 6)

We have a girl whose son, a boy, is Down's syndrome and C.P. And her boy is a student and she says this boy of her's--she doesn't know, she has an idea--will never walk as long as he's alive. But she gives him the best; and he gets the best. And we have mothers and parents doing their best plus parents that are giving these kids the best of love and care. Whereas these are poor people, the wealthy families are blunt: the kids out of the way because it's bothering, it's hindering the other two children that they had probably. (JM III, 2)

Jenny described watching a television special on severely retarded children with some of the retired women in her building. After the show the other women expressed disgust for the children's deformities and Jenny realized how much she herself had changed. She has become desensitized to the negative aspects of the children and is dedicated to teaching them. She says:

I didn't say anything and they said to me afterwards, "Do you mean to tell me that you got those kind of
kids around you? Don't they make you sick to your stomach?"

And it really took the breath out of me! Sick to my stomach? No! I said, "To be honest with you, it's the first time in my life I've ever seen these types of children and I never knew how they reacted or anything. To me it's an education because they are lovable . . . And if they like you they will try. (But God help you if they don't take a liking to you! They have a very funny disposition.)"

To me these Down's syndrome kids have a lot of things going for them. (JM II, 4)

They're lazy. They're lazy but sooner or later they get thinking on their own. Like we've had one that never walked. That same one now he's going to school in E____. And they tell me now he's walking around as big as anything. And don't you know he is one that could play the drums just like a regular drummer? They are gifted in one way. He held the drum sticks and this is how big. [Demonstrates.] (JM II, 5)

I took two months off this summer from the Foster Grandparents. (I took a leave of absence and I worked for the federal government, which I'm doing again this summer.) I would never as long as I live try to teach a normal child. There's no challenge to teach a normal child. With these kids--a couple of kids last year--I saw them when they took their first step. And helped them. It's a beautiful feeling!

But these children, I love them, I really do. (JM I, 3-4)

For Jenny, the experience of working, learning to care for and teach exceptional children is an education. She is growing now in new directions; she is having a second career at 61. However, her formal learning experiences—both the workshop and the community college course—were extraneous to her life. Perhaps, because of some early pressure from her father to achieve in school, Jenny has
never wanted to participate in an academic situation; and she doesn't like rules or categories that define what she knows instinctively. She has developed an ability to self-educate and will continue to learn in her new role. She does not look to education for self-esteem (as Madeline does) or as a setting to learn about herself and her past (as Wuschko does). And, because she is working now, she has no need of a busy schedule to offset her retirement (like Lillian), and she has resolved the need to contribute (that Isadore spoke of).

Jenny's time as a formal learner was wasted. However, she says she expects to find a course or lecture to augment her own discoveries--perhaps at a local university where a life-experience model exists. For now Jenny's "learning" is in her life direction where she finds meaning and personal fulfillment.

Summary

While meanings made of educational experience were as diverse as the study sample itself, several commonalities were noted. A long view of motivation and experience provided the understanding of personal and social forces that had shaped the paths of the learners. Long forgotten personal themes often came to light as participants discussed their current educational experiences. (Often they seemed surprised to hear themselves recall stories of early
life and youthful dreams gone astray.) The meaning they found was often expressive of continuous lifelong movements and sometime family pressures. However, all the participants saw themselves as engaged in something new—something that extended themselves into the world. While Wuschko wanted to reflect on his past life, he also wanted to hear new points of view, and while Lillian said she simply wanted an interesting lecture, she also liked the challenge of competition and the chance to show her teacher how bright she was. These are not characteristics of decay and obsolescence but rather of continuation and adaptation.

The older people were much like their younger selves. When they described what their early lives had been and what they were now doing in their 60's and 70's, it was remarkable to find a repeating pattern of activity. Often these patterns were expressed in the nature of the adult education experience. Henry W., for example, a 62-year-old retired laborer, told of being the only black child in his classes. His mother, he said, had to fight for his education when he was in the fourth grade:

My mother was a fighter. Yes, she was a fighter . . . The whole incident had a marked effect on me. It made me try harder, too. It made me even go harder. And I always, I was very similar to my father and my mother to do the best I could, you know, under the circumstances. (HW I, II, 13)
Now he is a union organizer and his adult education experience was directly related to his fight for workers' disability compensation.

Gertrude, a 65-year-old retired secretary recalled the nurturing experience of her family and tight community during the difficult years of the Depression. (She, like Sophie, Madeline and Lillian, had to forgo her chance for a college education.) She now goes to adult education classes "for something to do" or to accompany her husband. Here is how she experienced the Italian Renaissance class she took:

It brought back, you know, about listening to my grandparents talk and my parents and relatives and aunts and uncles . . . (GS II, 6)

Meaning is a diffuse social experience, in this case a chance to recall something from her girlhood.

And William, at age 62, seems to be playing out a hand that was dealt to him some 50 years earlier. He had been a talented student but, because of social pressure, came to feel that it was not masculine to excel in school. Consequently, he became a trouble-maker and a brilliant "case" to his guidance counselors. He admits, however, that if he "really wanted to do well, I would have been their best student." After an early retirement, William had dedicated himself to "showing academe" what he can do when he wants to. He has finished both bachelor's and
master's degrees and is contemplating doing a doctorate. He says:

Out of three classes I got three "A's." I wanted the grade. In a way, I think it may be to get even with academe, you know . . . I think that one of the reasons I like to show up the world of academe, they are not really as smart as they think they are, you know. I guess that's why I'm doing it. (WS I, 21)

The meanings made were close to the individual personality constructs of the participants (as Isadore says of himself, "Part of my life experience has been to learn something new.") Yet, the overall picture of these older adults as they reflected on adult education in their lives is that they were continuing in a lifetime direction. Old age has not given "meaning" to their learning, rather, "learning" and whatever education symbolizes for them have always been there and now, in their 60's and 70's, many of these participants are acting on those long-held values. Their past experiences and the tensions of their current lives create a particular frame of mind in which participation in adult education has meaning. Furthermore, these personal and individual motivational contexts determine the nature of the adult education experience within their worlds.
Life Review and the Adult Education Experience

Life review, or one's propensity to engage in life review, was a personal construct much like other constructs in the individual configurations of the study participants. Although many participants recognized the force of this phenomenon, only two or three said that it was operating directly in their motivation, experience or making meaning of education. Clearly, life review was reflected in the interview sessions (beyond the first interview which dealt with early life) and in the educational mindsets of the participants in a wide range of ways.

Sometimes, for example, life review was expressed as a motivating force in choice of educational experience as with Wuschko who said, "I want to put together the bits and pieces to make a picture of my life." Or, it was overt in Carlotta's motivation for learning to tutor:

Oh, well, doing this kind of work is rewarding to me because I've been looking back through the years and comparing the time when I was coming up with the time now that these girls are having.

Because I compare it a lot with what's happening to the girls today as what happened to me. And I always regard, (well, my mother died but I had this old maid aunt who really I regarded as my mother even when my mother lived. Because, as I said, my mother was a midwife and she was always gone: three o'clock, four o'clock at night, all the next day. She didn't have too much rearing to do with me. And my aunt was my mother's older sister, who reared her. She was really who I looked toward as my mother) and,
really, what she instilled in me was, "Ignorance mistakes, for keeps." (CP II, 5, 6)

Sometimes the interrelationship of learning experience and life review was expressed as a direct result of the classroom experience. Gertrude's story of the Italian class illustrates this as does Thorgud's music class:

If you hear a piece of music--it might be a popular piece of music or it might be serious music--your thoughts would wander back to the time you heard it before. Maybe back fifty years. It might put you in the mood that you perhaps were in at that time . . . (TJ III, 4)

Other individuals discovered meaning in a recollection of their past. Sophie, for example, found that she was bitter about her youth. She had been raised by Irish immigrants who believed that "going to college was looking beyond our status and wasn't even acceptable as an idea" (SH I, 2). She married a man who her parents approved of but, after many years (much like Madeline) Sophie managed to go to school. Now she reflects on the family pressures that she thinks have limited her life. She says:

I was the queer one in the family who was always interested in reading and interested in education . . . Of course it was a time of the Depression; there was a need for money to be brought home, but, it was more . . . my parents' attitude. (They came from Ireland, the north of Ireland. They grew up with the class consciousness: You stayed within your class, did not attempt to move out of it because that route led to unhappiness. And you didn't belong anywhere but in that particular niche). . . I wanted to go to college, to be a gym teacher. There was no money to go, but they offered me money to be a hairdresser. (SH II, 27)
Later Sophie said of herself:

It's not only the unhappy—perhaps disturbing—experiences in our lives which lead us to look back... then maybe disturbing experiences have led us to develop some potential capacities we've had all along that we would not have developed had we become happy (or, if not happy, contented).

If I had been contented completely, I probably wouldn't have gone to school, would I? What was that going to do for me or allow me to develop or sustain personally what I still needed? (SH III, 43)

She acknowledged that going to school now (she is 65) affords her a means of forgiving her parents for narrowing her vision when she was 15.

Reminiscence appeared to accompany difficult current situations. In Paolo's case, it affords him a more successful experience than that of his adult education experience. And Thorgud, a 79-year-old participant, appeared to validate McMahon and Rhudick's (1967) theory that life review is a means of coping with difficult times in the present, "a source of data for solving life problems" (Lieberman and Falk, 1971, p. 377). Thorgud had recently experienced a break-in in his home. He had taken a sociology course, he said, to better understand urban problems. In his discussion of the course and his own concern about the violence and crime in his own neighborhood, he told the following story:

I was manager of a store in Brooklyn. This was during the Depression. They took me into the back room—a couple of clerks and myself. Now this was
way back before they had supermarkets. They only had service stores in those days. So one gunman took us in the back room and held us there while the other one cleaned out the drawers. And I remember he asked me if I had any money in my pocket and I said, "Yes." He said, "Is it your own money?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Then keep it." So he didn't take it. If it was the company's money he would have taken it.

And:

I remember one A & P store was held up down there. And they wanted the manager to open the safe— they had a safe, you know, with a combination on it. Well, he was nervous, I suppose, and couldn't get the combination right. And he had his hand up on the safe. It was one of these safes on the floor; he had one hand up on the safe while he was fooling around with the combination. And one of the hold-up men got so annoyed that he took a cleaver and cut his fingers off... I do remember that it did happen that people got hurt. (TJ III, 13)

At other times, however, there seemed to be no connection between life review and participation in adult education or that life review was in conflict with the individual participant's educational experience. Isadore, for example, found "no time" for recollection; and Lillian said of her experience of Psychology for Everyday Life: "I don't moon over the past. I just go about my duties. It's just a lecture to me, that's all. Just a lecture" (LR II, 8).

On the other hand, life review did not restrict any participants in their sense of continuation and experience of the present. Several individuals appeared to be on the threshold of new directions even as they reminisced about
the past; when they focused on what education meant to them now they inevitably dipped into the past. Surely Erikson's (1963) stress on the forward-reaching nature of the older adult was corroboated in this population. And Butler's (1967) description of the nature of the older adult was confirmed:

The old are not only taking stock of themselves as they review their lives; they are trying to think and feel through what they will do with the time that is left and with whatever material and emotional legacies they may have to give to others. (p. 18)
CHAPTER VII

STUDY CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This chapter discusses the findings of the study, the contribution of theory to conclusions, implications for adult educators, and recommendations for further research.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR ADULT EDUCATORS

Using a theoretical framework of aging, I examined the current educational experiences of a group of older people (ages 60 to 80) and explored the meaning of education for the participants. Several theories informed the study findings: most central was the adult developmental theory of Erik Erikson and others, which provided for a more general understanding of the meaning of adult education in the participants' lives. This theory posits that adults develop in stages, that "tasks" must be completed at each stage, and that late life interests can be seen as indicators that people are working on such tasks--either tasks which were delayed through one cause or another, or supposed "current" tasks which may lead to ego integrity, late life maturity. Completion of such tasks indicates that one is adapting to late life in this culture. The theory
provided a framework for my making connections and seeing patterns between the individual participants and a greater understanding of what it means to age today. Such a framework places individual stories in a larger picture of older adulthood.

Isadore, for example, was found to be retreading earlier ground in his hectic course-taking. While he, at age 67, may have been reworking the intellectual challenges and lifestyle of his youth, he is also reassuring himself that he is not senile, that he is still capable of good thinking--senility being a common fear of aging in our culture. Henry, too, is involved in fighting a form of aging that he fears--a loss of physical health and agility. He is studying Workman's Compensation Law and its application in disability cases; he fears industrial poisoning of his own lungs. Simultaneously, he recalls his agility at sports in his youth.

Both men, while they come from different backgrounds and have had different life experiences, respond in similar patterns to the stresses of their sixties. These stresses include adjustment to retirement with its limited income and reduced status, separation from the working community and, hence, the mainstream culture, physical and
emotional loss. They as individuals deal with these stresses and reflect general cultural patterns. Both men have worked adult education into their lives as they grow from one stage to another and adapt to new roles. The theoretical framework provided the connection between these individuals' stories.

Another theory that informed the study determined methodology; the phenomenological model for data collection provided an extremely effective tool for hearing individual stories, for tapping the worlds of the study participants. Clearly, allowing people to piece together their own motivational histories and to examine their experiences is a powerful means of understanding their lives and learning why they act in certain ways—or why they think they act in certain ways.

The methodology was derived from the theories of Alfred Schutz. He differentiated between the "because of" motives—those lifelong constituent factors in our histories that continue even now to motivate us—and the "in order to" motives—the immediate purpose we hope to achieve when we act. This underlying distinction gave direction and depth to the study. For, although individuals were now acting in response to immediate needs (to get out, to keep busy in retirement, to have somewhere
to go at four o'clock), they were also acting on long-held assumptions about themselves.

These personal assumptions had social roots. Two examples illustrate this phenomenon. William, for example, had not wanted to follow up on his academic bent because it was "feminine" in his youth; now, at 62, he is freer to act on his interest in literature. However, he remains cynical. Carlotta is interested in working with delinquent girls but she is also interested in learning about her own early life when she felt insecure because of social stigma connected with her family.

The study participants were reflective. They mulled over their family and educational histories and their roles as older people trying to find ways of partaking of this our current and common culture. The act of reflection within the interview sessions was extraordinary and moving. Surely Schutz's theory that we objectivate our worlds through social interaction to gain new awareness was demonstrated here in the highly reflective and searching conversations between participant and interviewer. The implication of this social interaction in all forms of our continued development and self-understanding cannot be overestimated by educators at any level. This is not to say that we must always focus our
attentions inward in a classroom situation but, rather, that the social interaction in some learning is powerful. The study findings support Robert Butler's theory that a special kind of remembering occurs in late life—a life review—and that remembrances of early life come to us in charged packages of clear and specific personal recollections. It is possible, for example, to reach back 60 years or more and touch on a moment in a classroom or at a family dinner that still has power to move. As in the story of Isak in "Wild Strawberries," it may be possible to rework some of these memories so that old enemies can be forgiven (or reengaged in metaphorical combat) so as to live easier in old age and eventually to die with some old wounds healed. Within the interview sessions, it was apparent that individuals were recalling and re-recalling childhood scenes even when they denied elsewhere that this was happening (i.e., Lillian's story in Chapter VI). Often these scenes were reworded and reworked within the interview sessions.

Stories of early teachers replete with name, grades and specific comments were so minutely detailed as to make the intervening 60 years appear to fade. And, incorporated into those moments of the reflected past was the discovery of motivations rooted by the pressures of family and society and that now produce actions. Study
participants were found to be playing out dramas that had been written 60 years ago. The implication is very strong, therefore, for all educators to recognize the impact they make on children and adolescents. What happens in the classroom now may linger in the minds of students for 60 years or more.

And it is especially important for educators to know that the decision of people to participate in adult education in late life is the result of long-held personal symbols and motivational constructs developed decades before. Adult educators must be aware that a simple action, such as registering for a Tuesday night course, is touched with ritual and meaning from the past as well as concerns of the present. Going to school became a mark of accomplishment for Madeline and a means of finding relief from a difficult homelife. It is a re-creation of family and community for Gertrude and a place to keep active. Erikson says that we continue to rework significant tasks throughout our lives, that tasks left unresolved in younger stages can be reworked and successfully resolved.

What does this mean to the adult educator? Perhaps most strongly it points to the need to recognize the complexity of our learners. Perhaps we can ponder the possibility that there are very few actions which do not stem from deep repositories of family and social
influences. These influences form the major themes in our lives. What we can do is recognize that there are diverse expectations in any classroom (including our own expectations) which will interfere with, contribute to, and reverberate within each student's experience of that class. If we were to take on face value Lillian's experience of Psychology for Everyday Life (her correcting the teacher's pronunciation), without probing the motivational key (her disappointment of her own lack of education and her pride in her own abilities), then we would have failed to understand her true experience of the class.

Imagine for a moment that all 12 individuals appeared in one adult education class, each with his or her own configuration of needs and residual expectations for the form and content of "school." Multiply that group by two or three and you have a typical adult classroom. Clearly, then, no classroom can offer only one "curriculum" which is pushed out at people. Educators must know that there are keys to people's learning and to their growth and we must explore how these motivational keys can affect individual participants' opportunities for success in adult education programs.

At the same time we must explore what we can do to make older people comfortable in classrooms today. We must recognize the role that schools have always had in
shaping the definition of education; the social meaning of "school" is often an encapsulated timeless image that people will carry for 60 years and more. (Paolo remembered school as a place for personal and loving attention; he has been unable to adapt to a less personal environment.) Stepping back into a classroom for many of the older people carried with it expectations of how things are done. Many of the participants approached the adult education experience expecting to structure their learning according to the pedagogy of 1920. Many were pleased to find that nothing had changed! Others found that they were somewhat confused about how to participate in more "contemporary" (i.e., discussion) formats; and still others such as Madeline enjoyed "newer," more participatory membership gradually, as she became more and more comfortable with it. (Nonetheless, Madeline had her limits as her story of the merging of two writing groups showed.) Jenny found that the classroom was simply too structured and not participatory enough!

Finally, there is a place for the lecture. Many of the participants enjoy lectures and find them provocative. They also value the instructor's mastery of the material, especially if it is based on more than "book knowledge." An entire spectrum of individual expectations and preferences for ideal instructional strategies can be seen
in a small sample of participants. Therefore, there can be no one way of approaching older learners. An educator must be flexible; older learners, too, can be flexible. While older people may approach the classroom with specific expectations, these can be gradually widened by a sensitive teacher.

Several general findings for this study group are potentially representative of other older adults at this time and may be of use to adult educators in thinking about making program for this population. All of the study participants, for example, chose intergenerational classrooms. (Only one, Wuschko, said he would have preferred to be with older learners. Yet it is possible that he might have been more satisfied with a more sensitive instructor or in a higher calibre intergenerational class in which he felt himself to be an equal.)

The finding that all of the study participants chose intergenerational classes needs further consideration. At the moment no courses exist in the area where the study took place that are specifically designed for older learners other than crafts, square dancing and Bingo. It is not known whether the study participants would have participated in substantive classes had they existed. However, all of the individuals said they wanted to be with mixed ages. Madeline, age 74, observed, "It must be
a lonely thing to be with old people only." Surely these individuals wanted to blend into the general population, to hear what people of other ages think of current problems—sex, crime, materialism, morality, families, racism—and to remain *au courant*. This desire to be part of things is in keeping with Bernice Neugarten's activity theory. Disengagement does not necessarily occur in late life despite some turning inward such as heightened life review and a return to one's earliest memories.

The study participants sought to remain in the general community in other ways. All valued volunteerism and wished to contribute to the general society, to be useful to others. They wanted to be part of things and often saw the course-taking as the beginning of a contributory direction. Isadore said that when he was finished "indulging" himself in computer courses he would like to learn something about emotionally disturbed children so that he could better work with them.

The elders in this study did not wish to disengage but rather to reengage in activities and important aspects of everyday life. They talked of starting businesses, new careers, working for academic degrees, running for office—activities which are associated with younger or transitional phases of adulthood. The theories of Maslow (1954) and McClusky (1980) suggest that when urgent
physical and economic needs are met, older people will find contributory efforts to be the greatest source of self-actualization, the means to integrity. This group of study participants would appear to be going in that direction. Educators might think of ways to incorporate volunteerism and paid internships into course-work.

Social interaction, again, is important; adult education is a social event for older people. All of the study participants enjoyed the social aspects of school; for several it was their special climate for kinds of expression not possible in their daily worlds. Sophie talks about feeling close to the people in her class—closer sometimes to them than to her family and social friends because she shares ideas in class. Madeline needs an outlet where she can grow in ways that give her the strength to remain with a dependent husband. William's development of his literary self is a social secret, a private part of himself that he shares with only one friend.

What is the role of the adult educator in facilitating this experience? Again, we must recognize that the classroom is a social occasion as well as an intellectual one. As we organize courses by content and staff availability, we should also consider what hours and locations best suit older people and how these older
learners can be incorporated into the intergenerational classroom. We might allow some outlets for social exchange within the classroom--life history projects in which older and younger students interview each other, for example. Such occasions would provide a socially acceptable outlet for the older person's life review. Further, in this population the women sought to intermingle during the "breaks"; the men did not. Recognizing that older men are more shy or less able to integrate in intergenerational social exchanges, we should build opportunities for such exchange into the classroom fabric.

Another social problem exists when older people--especially men--do not pay for courses and hence, do not feel entitled to participate equally with younger tuition-paying students in the classroom. Wuschko, for example, expressed frustration because he couldn't ask as many questions as his younger and less astute colleagues; Thorgud remarked upon the difference between himself and the younger students: "They are here for a purpose, I'm not. They have to earn a living." For this generation who are used to working and paying their way, this is an issue.

All of the participants wished to attend courses on a tuition-free basis. How can adult education absorb
growing numbers of nonpaying participants at a time when cutbacks in educational funding imperil the existence of currently existing programs? (Adult education in Springfield, Massachusetts, is now run on a break-even, self-supporting basis. No city or state funds support its programs or seed its development of new programs.)

Adult educators must try not to mirror the cultural bias against older people, the belief that if one is not contributing to the general economic mainstream, one does not exist. This is true for other segments of the population as well. Unfortunately, it is reflected in our classrooms and in our perceptions of education as well as in our own students. We must believe that minds grow no matter what the age.

What came to me, the researcher, in the clearest voice was that old age is a time of ongoing growth and not of devastation. Even the oldest and most feeble of the sample, Thorgud, was engaged in lively endeavors; his mind was alert and active and, although he did read at home, he used adult education to better understand the changing and sometimes threatening world around him. As with the other participants, Thorgud wanted to keep his place in a vital community. Adult educators can respond to this need by designing programs that are timely and
that update historical and sociological issues that are on the minds of the olders, that combine problem-solving tasks into these content areas, and that lead older people into the mainstream of the culture. For, while older people may focus on their own life reviews, they continue to meet the challenges of life with vigor.

The aspect of the study that most moved me was my own admiration and surprise at the strengths of the study participants— their abilities to live fully through the sometimes painful and difficult times they had known and to continue to seek the fullest challenges and pleasures of life. I became aware of a shocking residual ageism that I had brought to my work despite an intellectual commitment to the competency and educational capabilities of older people. To express amazement that life goes on, that being alive and growing occurs throughout the life time and that dreams and ambitions remain to be acted upon well into the sixth, seventh and eighth decades may appear an inappropriate naivete for a middle-aged re-searcher with a background in adult development. Yet, no one wants to grow old and it is true that in our culture scant amount of preparation for aging has occurred to prepare us for our own acceptance of the inevitable. This is an admission that each of us must make if we are
to recognize the situation of another. Aging, though it moves us closer to death, is not death. To fear it is to ignore life for aging is a part—a continuation—of life; and, if Erikson's hypothesis is correct, it can be the culmination of life in the greatest emotional and intellectual sense.

Perhaps knowing more of older people will give us cultural models for our own lives. Certainly many of the stories in this study might serve as a text as gripping as any fiction in a literature or history class. And, it is to be remembered that the study participants were "ordinary" people whose stories tell of the heroics of living in everyday ways. One of the most difficult tasks of presenting the data was the selection of which participants' stories were to be included and how much could be contained in a dissertation, for 12 fine tales were related with a myriad of profound and articulate statements about how life is lived.

Gerontologists and adult educators would benefit from training in listening to older people much as anthropologists learn to listen to informants. First, they may find that they have to confront the ageism in themselves; then they may find that their "objects of study"—the people that they serve—are not members of an outside society but versions of themselves, models for
their present and future. Such an exercise would enrich our task of reeducating the general populace as well as the older adults who themselves need to be reminded of their own competencies. Finally, educators must also grapple with their own development and a task of their development may be to appreciate the generation of their parents.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There is still so much to discover about the world of the older adult in this country, what Rose (1968) calls "the subculture of the aging." A very small body of literature informed this investigation. Of the psychosocial literature, only one study was found which dealt specifically with older people who were not institutionalized or otherwise unhealthy, and this population were upper middle class whites (Maas & Kuypers, 1975). Most current research applying psychosocial theory to growth concludes at about age 50--partially because the researchers themselves are in middle age and partially because longitudinal studies launched in the 1920's and thereafter are following populations now only in late middle age (The Oakland Growth Study, Block, 1971; Gould, 1978; Levinson, 1978; Vaillant, 1977; and others).
Even Robert Butler (1980) wrote that he knew of no body of information to specifically guide the investigator to a study of life review in education.

This investigation was based on a phenomenological model which attempted to explore the subjective experience of older learners. The relationship with life review was of interest. It was found that descriptive parameters of life review had to be based on a rather small body of research (Boylin, Gordin & Nehrke, 1976; Butler, 1963, 1963a, 1967, 1975, 1977, 1980-81; Gerfo, 1980-81; Lieberman and Falk, 1971; Lowenthal, Tobin and Etigson, 1968; McMahon and Rhudick, 1967; Revere & Tobin, 1981; Weisman, 1967). These descriptive discussions made life review sound almost folkloric in its attributes. Surely further research into this fascinating phenomenon in older people and throughout the lifespan would be welcome.

Some categorization of the ways in which life review interrelates with the actual classroom experience would be interesting to classroom strategists. Curriculum heavily based on historical life experience such as that suggested by McClusky (1978), Moody (1978) and Worthy (1980) or life review workshops (i.e., those of Holzberg, 1979; Kuhn, 1977; Myerhoff, 1979) might be experimented with and evaluated.
Further studies into the mindsets of learners based on a phenomenological model which places emphasis on a long view of the motivational context for learning would be useful. Such methodology might be applied to other forms of adult learning needs. (Prystupa, 1980, for example, attempted to study teachers' job-related needs with such a model.) Certainly, more work on the learning of older adults using the methodology of this study and larger samples would augment the generalizations made here.

Learning about the lives of older people in what Knox (1977) calls the "societal context of aging" is essential if we are to have any understanding of how older people are responding to internalized stereotypes of how they should grow old. (Achenbaum, 1978, suggested this was the most crucial battleground to fight ageism.) New paradigms are needed which are less biological in nature and which will reverse the image of "decline" to one of continuance and growth.

Perhaps further ethnographic and phenomenological research will debunk such thinking. Thomas Cottle (1980) presents an example of this in the following excerpt from the monologue of an 83-year-old woman. She says:

I try to figure out what my life has been, who I am really. That's one of the reasons I read all this
psychology. So, even at my age, I haven't given up the idea that I ought to continue hunting for something valuable, and perhaps that something is my own secret self. (p. 98)

And so much remains to be understood about early social impact on late life behaviors and on later educational experiences. The power of motivational constructs cannot be underestimated in educational research. Studies of older people who do not choose formal late life learning environments would surely balance this investigation. For example, what kinds of early life socialization did these individuals experience? How do their school-related constructs differ? And what role, if any, does life review play in current activities? It is important that we understand the impact of education on both school-oriented individuals and those who do not currently seek adult education experiences. As the population grows—and Rebecca Butler (1980) suggested that "In the year 2000, 35 percent of the U.S. population will be looking to us"—adult educators must continue to learn about aging and to seek ways of enriching that period of growth. We, as educators, will touch the lives of many individuals of all ages and we need to know them well. Simone de Beauvoir (1973) reminds us of our own
fate if we do not direct our energies toward making a 
better world for the aged. She paraphrases a tale from 
Grimm:

A peasant makes his old father eat out of a small 
wooden trough, apart from the rest of the family; 
one day he finds his son fitting little boards 
together. "It's for you when you are old," says 
the child. Straight away the grandfather is given 
back his place at the family table. (p. 14)
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Appendix
Written Consent Form

School of Education, University of Massachusetts
Amherst, Massachusetts

Interview Agreement

Mary Alice Wolf, a doctoral candidate in education at the University of Massachusetts, is conducting research on learning in older adults. She is conducting tape-recorded interviews with men and women over 60 years old who are participating or have recently participated in an adult education program. The interviews are done in three sessions, each lasting approximately two hours; the interview tapes are maintained under lock and are available only to the researcher and her advisers. They will be destroyed at the conclusion of the research.

You are being asked to participate in the study as an interviewee and to share your perceptions of learning throughout your lifespan. Selections from the interviews may be used in reports of the research study and in writing for publication. Anonymity is assured.

Please feel free to ask any questions about the research. You are free to withdraw your consent to have specific excerpts used in printed material if you notify the researcher within 30 days after the final interview. You are also free, of course, to withdraw from the process of interviewing at any time, even during an interview.

It is thus stated that no medical treatment and/or compensation will be required by you from the University of Massachusetts should any physical injury result from participating in these interviews.

I, ____________________________, have read the above statement and agree to participate as an interviewee under the conditions stated above.

Signature ____________________________

Date ____________________________

Interviewer ____________________________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT</th>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>EDUCATIONAL LEVEL</th>
<th>ETHNICITY</th>
<th>WORK LIFE</th>
<th>CURRENT EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gertrude S.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>high school</td>
<td>Am/Italian</td>
<td>secretary</td>
<td>Language, Cultural History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorgud J.</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>high school &amp; 1 yr. vocational</td>
<td>Finnish*</td>
<td>grocer</td>
<td>Sociology, Music, Western Civilization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isadore C.</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>businessman</td>
<td>Piano, Electronics, Computers, Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlotta P.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>B.A. (after 60)</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>assistant nurse, housekeeper</td>
<td>B.A. &amp; Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeline H.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>B.A. (after 50)</td>
<td>Am/German/&quot;Yankee&quot;</td>
<td>secretary teacher after 55</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lillian R.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>high school</td>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>secretary businesswoman</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny H.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>high school &amp; 1 yr. college</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>dry cleaner operator</td>
<td>Childcare, Special Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wuschko K.</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>high school</td>
<td>Polish*</td>
<td>carpenter, janitor</td>
<td>Sociology, History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paolo A.</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>elementary &amp; 2 yrs. high sch</td>
<td>Black/Hispanic</td>
<td>laborer</td>
<td>G.E.D.: Engine Repair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry W.</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>high school</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>laborer</td>
<td>Pension Issues, Community Relations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant numbers are in order of interviews.
All participants were interviewed in their homes with occasional exceptions (#1, 6, 7, 10).

*Immigrants
All participants are retired from the positions held during "work life."
All have been engaged or are now engaged in volunteer activities (#6 and 9 are paid stipends)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT</th>
<th>MAJOR EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>WHERE THE COURSE OCCURS</th>
<th>TIME DURATION</th>
<th>COST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sophie H.</td>
<td>Competency Testing</td>
<td>S School Committee Workshop</td>
<td>12 sessions</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gertrude S.</td>
<td>Italian Renaissance, Spanish</td>
<td>UM undergraduate Adult Ed.</td>
<td>1 semester</td>
<td>registration only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. William S.</td>
<td>M.A. English</td>
<td>W State College</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>registration only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Thorgud J.</td>
<td>Sociology, Western Civilization, Music</td>
<td>S Technical Community College</td>
<td>2 semesters</td>
<td>registration only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Isadore C.</td>
<td>Piano (beginning), Electricity, Computers</td>
<td>S Technical Community College</td>
<td>1 semester</td>
<td>registration only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Carlotta P.</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>H Tutor Program</td>
<td>12 sessions</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Madeline H.</td>
<td>Poetry Workshop</td>
<td>Library Basement</td>
<td>3 years 1/wk</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Lillian R.</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>S Adult Ed.</td>
<td>1 semester</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Jenny W.</td>
<td>Child Development, Special Education</td>
<td>S Technical &amp; H Community Colleges</td>
<td>1 semester, 3 days</td>
<td>$145.00, $45.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Wuschko K.</td>
<td>Sociology, History</td>
<td>W N E College</td>
<td>1 semester</td>
<td>registration only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Paolo A.</td>
<td>GED (high school equivalency)</td>
<td>S Adult Ed.</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Henry W.</td>
<td>Workman's Compensation law</td>
<td>Union Headquarters</td>
<td>7 weeks</td>
<td>$35.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Jenny walked out of her class after two meetings and got her money back.

Most courses are free to senior citizens (over 62) or to veterans on a seat available basis.