



Framing a boundless horizon : a sense of place and the rural adult learner
by Edrienne Lucinda Kittredge

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Montana State University

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Abstract:

In a world of increasing linear specialization that is morphising with light speed ala Alan Toffler'S Future Shock, it has become increasingly important to understand how personal landscapes exert their pull and how that influence is connected to learning. Freire's views on the development of critical awareness and the use of slides to help the learner more objectively perceive the surrounding environment were used as an overlayment, along with art theories of perspective and space, to describe the process of learning in rural adult learners, who have developed a way of learning that works for them but which with alarming speed is threatened. The purposes of this study were to describe (a) how rural adult learners perceive their landscapes and (b) how their landscapes through distances and untrammled space have been an active force in their learning.

Utilizing a descriptive design to collect qualitative data related to the learning patterns of rural Montana, 40 adults at 22 ranches in five of the least populous counties (less than one person per square mile) of Montana were interviewed on their land. The study examined how rural adult learners have developed a sense of place and how that has affected their way of learning in self-direction, the development of a more holistic view to learning, and of the formation of networks. The findings revealed learners who could best be described as the Responsive Learner, that individual who moves learning past reflection and into action through response. This individual is characterized by framing reality, being a contextual learner, seeing learning as problem solving, being a metaphorical thinker, and viewing reality in holistic systems.

Through this study, it can be concluded that amongst the individuals interviewed, rootedness (sense of place) plays a role in learning by providing a frame of reality; that learning involves systems thinking and a holistic approach, as opposed to a linear approach; that learning is an individual experience that grows out of, takes on meaning from, and is fed by one's context; that even in the most remote area, the individual learner is at the center of a web of different networks each of which supply the learner with information and support; and that these networks are not just in the present. Recommendations from this study center on self-analysis for the rural adult educator in the area of learner empowerment.

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
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This thesis has been read by each member of the graduate committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

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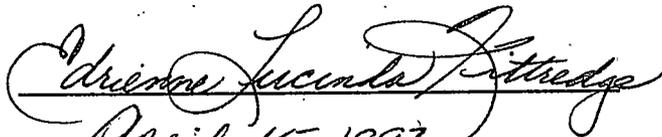
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*To those who gave us seed to hold and sow
Debts past and present
Too many to name or know
Frank Adams*

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ABSTRACT

In a world of increasing linear specialization that is morphising with light speed ala Alan Toffler's *Future Shock*, it has become increasingly important to understand how personal landscapes exert their pull and how that influence is connected to learning. Freire's views on the development of critical awareness and the use of slides to help the learner more objectively perceive the surrounding environment were used as an overlayment, along with art theories of perspective and space, to describe the process of learning in rural adult learners, who have developed a way of learning that works for them but which with alarming speed is threatened. The purposes of this study were to describe (a) how rural adult learners perceive their landscapes and (b) how their landscapes through distances and untrammled space have been an active force in their learning.

Utilizing a descriptive design to collect qualitative data related to the learning patterns of rural Montana, 40 adults at 22 ranches in five of the least populous counties (less than one person per square mile) of Montana were interviewed on their land. The study examined how rural adult learners have developed a sense of place and how that has affected their way of learning in self-direction, the development of a more holistic view to learning, and of the formation of networks. The findings revealed learners who could best be described as the Responsive Learner, that individual who moves learning past reflection and into action through response. This individual is characterized by framing reality, being a contextual learner, seeing learning as problem solving, being a metaphorical thinker, and viewing reality in holistic systems.

Through this study, it can be concluded that amongst the individuals interviewed, rootedness (sense of place) plays a role in learning by providing a frame of reality; that learning involves systems thinking and a holistic approach, as opposed to a linear approach; that learning is an individual experience that grows out of, takes on meaning from, and is fed by one's context; that even in the most remote area, the individual learner is at the center of a web of different networks each of which supply the learner with information and support; and that these networks are not just in the present. Recommendations from this study center on self-analysis for the rural adult educator in the area of learner empowerment.

CHAPTER 1

FRAMING THE LEGACY

*"We give our children guns and computer games,"
Wendy said. "They gave their children the land."*

Bruce Chatwin, The Songlines

Influence of the Land

Shaping responses and reactions, the land pervades human existence. It brings out in human beings the best and the worst, standing amazingly tolerant of short-sighted mistakes. Perhaps most of all, as it exerts its ties that none can forget, it becomes in the process much more than an inanimate mass upon which human beings act out their plays.

Some may try to negate the bond by paving large expanses of land for suburban sprawl, by blasting huge four-lane highways through its interior, or by following farming practices that physically separate the farmer from the feel of the earth (Berry, 1977, p. 48). Others try to sever past ties to the earth by espousing a doctrine of futurism, of progress, and of never looking back. However, whether holding to the tenets of "progress" or bowing to the Existentialistic pressure to live only in the here and now, Americans still search for something which has not yet been completely identified.

If not looking to fill some void, why then do Americans build with increasing fervor 20-acre "ranchettes" along river banks? Why do the wealthy retire to the country and the impoverished middle class run away to it, trying to escape some vague sense of foreboding? Why do Indian artifacts carry increased marketability, serving as reminders of a people with closer ties to the earth? Why has "heritage tourism" become the politically correct buzz word in tourist promotion, and why has the popularity of the "country look" spread so widely in interior decoration? Why has "Carhart," once worn only by "hicks" and recently endorsed when worn by Paul Newman in the movie "Nobody's Fool," become the leisure clothing label of the moment for an urban upwardly mobile class?

Whether it be the result of such inventions as the automobile or the telephone or of the spread of interstate highways, the population has become increasingly rootless--more restless than the paleo-people labeled nomads. In a world marked by an ever-increasing proliferation of best-selling self-help books, such as The Road Less Travelled (Peck, 1978), individuals seem to be looking for a lost sense of self and a sense of place, becoming in the process an even more amorphous mass of Mr. Kurtz-like (Conrad, 1963) beings.

A type of societal angst seems to have filled the void created by the loss of place and self. Like those schizoid 19th century individuals called Victorians, many people

today stand at the turn of a century questioning who they are and where they are. It is almost as if the road maps used in the past have been destroyed, and the road ahead is taking a sharp bend. Few, if any, markers remain as guideposts. While in the past decades of this century this condition affected only those individuals in the transitional stages of their lives, it now seems to affect all--from Generation X, defined by MTV in 1995 as those individuals between ages 21 and 36, through the Baby Boomer. K. Ross Toole (1976) references this feeling when he says:

What is involved is a loss of memory, a loss of continuity, a loss of roots, a loss of tradition, a loss of parenthood, a loss of experience, a loss of maturity, a loss of rudder--and a loss of direction. (p. 237)

Somewhere and somehow in the search for guideposts or markers, education seems to have been identified as a possible source for a solution to the dilemma at hand. However, turning to education not only places weightier expectations on it but also attaches many more complicated end products to the process. As a result, the experts and critics alike assert that the process must yield more and more measurable products, becoming more cost effective and efficient or in the jargon "lean and mean." This is a highly paradoxical goal for what is supposed to be a nurturing process. When looking at education, science, not art, is used to explore and explain learning, which is more of a holistic and artistic process that is at once both mythic and mystic.

Wendell Berry (1977), a confirmed believer that American culture is inextricably tied to agriculture, observes that although assailed and somewhat compromised over the last 100 years, those tied to the land have the greatest opportunity to retain their view of themselves, their world, and their place in that world (p. 21). If unaffected by urban agribusiness and agri-agencies, these rural people's ties to and their dependence on the earth provide them with challenges for learning and living that the urban dweller will never have had.

Montana and Its Space

Montana's rural population is a prime example of the type of group to which Berry is referring. Because of the geographic reality, Montana's people have been relatively untouched by large urban centers. As a land of 147,138 square miles, it is larger than many European countries. Montana's population in 1990 was about 800,000 people or one-half the population of metropolitan Seattle (Malone, Roeder, & Lang, 1991, p. 3).

Not only is the population sparse, but the land is demanding. A semi-arid high plains desert, Montana's soil is as fragile as its precipitation is low. With its topsoil less than one inch deep in places and its annual moisture sometimes less than 12 inches a year, it is a land that taxes its inhabitants and further tests them with

temperatures ranging 180 degrees from 110 degrees Fahrenheit to nearly 70 degrees below zero (p. 5).

Misunderstanding of the region has pervaded its white settlement history. As early as the explorations of the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery in the early 1800s, the value of the area has been debated. There were those who saw it as a promised land, an Eden to which Americans could return (Allen, 1975). Then there were those like Stephen H. Long, who labeled the area in 1820 as "The Great American Desert" (Toole, 1976, p. 23). Later, people like Walter Prescott Webb in 1931 would "explain that certain abiding characteristics of the plains made the area unique, and man either adapted to these characteristics or perished or left the plains alone" (p. 24).

Beginning with the Homestead Act of 1862 and into the first part of the 1900s, the federal government fed the misconceptions by basing its great land giveaway on the Midwestern concept that 160 acres of land made a viable farming unit which was capable of supporting a family (p. 25). The eventual result was the mass of human calamities in 1919 when nearly two million Montana acres went out of production; 11,000 farms (about 20% of the state's total) were abandoned, and half of Montana's farmers lost their land (Malone et al., 1991, p. 283). In the face of such trouble, historians like Toole (1976) maintain that:

It is and always has been, man's misunderstanding of what the plains were, or were not, that has resulted in periodic tragedies. . . . Those who have and who do understand them [the plains] have

adapted to them. It has never been the plains that adapted to man. (p. 23)

Examples of this flexibility described by Toole and the more holistic thinking mandated by it are the Montana ranchers, who during the 1920s "led Great Plains ranchers to move increasingly to a calf crop basis'" (Malone et al., 1991, p. 317). Montana's ranchers had learned through events like the disastrous winter of 1897 that they had to put up hay for winter feeding. Historians also have noted:

The homestead movement had severely damaged much of the best range land, and it had broken up ownership patterns and driven up land prices. Ranchers concluded that leasing range land, from either public or private owners, usually made more sense than buying it at a high cost. Again, Montanans, compelled by hardship, pioneered new techniques. (p. 317)

Montana, then, because of its environs and because of its demands, provides a "relationship with some kind of real national heritage--and yes, it is rooted in land, space--and in something that this presumably inhospitable place has not yet lost" (Toole, 1976, p. 234). Furthermore, Toole sees Montana's "long range wealth, though long considered a curse, was in fact, its blessing: space and elbow room--quality space. It has maintained a direct link with the American past in that abiding sense" (p. 235).

Learning and the Environment

Such a relationship with the land is reminiscent of the Existentialistic concern with the freedom of the individual and the individual's empowerment to make choices and assume

the responsibility for them. "Existentialists stress awareness, consciousness, perception, the total meaning-structure of the individual, his vision of life and death, his word choices, and other aspects of his relating to life" (Elias & Merriam, 1980, p. 111). Such awareness then would define learning as a process rather than an end product (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 124).

Gestalt psychologists, in their advocacy of "looking at the whole rather than its parts, at patterns rather than isolated events" (p. 128), echo a view that connects learning with a broad view of the environs. To such theorists, learning is related to the surroundings in a way that is more than simply a passive exchange of stimuli in and response out, but instead is "the reorganization of experiences in order to make sense of stimuli from the environment" (p. 129).

Although Bandura's theory that "one can learn from observation . . . without having to imitate what was observed" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 135) deals more with learning in a social context, it also can be used to look broadly at the interaction between a person and the environment. "This is a reciprocal concept in that people influence their environment, which in turn influences the way they behave" (p. 135).

Another view of learning and its relationship to the learner's context can be found in the humanistic educator, Malcolm Knowles, and his concept of andragogy. He states

that "the adult defines him or herself in terms of the accumulation of a unique set of life experiences" (Elias & Merriam, 1980, p. 132). In a rural population, it would seem quite clear that a large proportion of their experiences would be related to the land that they work.

The learner's relationship to the environment is further explored by Mezirow, who speaks to reflective thought, emancipatory learning, and perspective transformation, of which perspective transformation is unique to adults (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 264). Mezirow says, "Perspective transformation is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our presuppositions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 14).

Learning in Montana

Because of their physical and cultural isolation, rural Montana adults are often viewed by mainstream urban educators at best as a potential market in the increasingly competitive battle for students and at worst as a reticent and reluctant pool of potential learners. Such assumptions about the effects of isolation may be understandable since, according to the 1990 census, 16% of the counties in Montana have fewer than one person per square mile (Duncan, 1993, p. 300); this would be the equivalent to all five boroughs of New York City having a total population of 300 people (p. 8). Jordan, Montana, for example, serves such a

scattered population that until several years ago its high school was one of the few public boarding schools in the U.S. (Malone et al., 1991, p. 348).

On closer examination, however, there is a deeper reality. In the fall season of 1995, the Senior Citizen Center in Circle, Montana, a town of 981 people, offered eight adult classes with such subjects as an introduction to computers, writing personal histories, and floral arranging while the Extension Service had sponsored a three-day workshop in range management and marketing and one day of workshops in everything from estate planning to drying weeds. The Eastern Montana Museums group, an informal association of volunteer-run museums, offered a day-long conference about local history museums; one church was offering a series of life-skills classes including interior decoration; and a women's social circle was meeting once a month to exchange ideas and approaches to improving their families' lives.

However, that is only the list for organized learning activities. It does not include the housewife who in addition to being the ranch cook, gardener, nurse, baker, butter maker, canner, and laundress had become a self-educated authority on the chemistry of food and was beginning her investigation of candle making. It does not include the 92-year-old grandmother who because of her extensive reading could hold her own in any political debate. Likewise, it does not include the rancher who,

although raised with traditional dry-land wheat farming, had planted peas "as an experiment" and was watching with great interest his neighbor's activity selling burdock root to health food stores (on-site visit to Circle, MT, by author, September and October, 1995). This panorama of learning choices in one small town in rural Montana points to the fact that both formal and informal learning is not isolated to the traditional classroom, but instead it is occurring on a regular basis in the rural, more remote areas of Montana.

Self-Directed Learning in Montana's Rural Adults

Given the circumstances of their existence, Montana's learners in order to reach their potential have assumed the responsibility for the direction of their learning. They are examples of educator Malcolm Knowles' (1980) concept of andragogy, which affirms that adult learners best reach their potentials by utilizing their experiences as resources for learning. Knowles further "advocates an emphasis upon experiential, participatory learning" (Elias & Merriam, 1980, p. 132). Both Knowles and Freire (1970) not only stress the need to analyze one's own experiences, but they both also speak to the power of learners themselves since they see the learner as best suited to determine what the individual needs. Such a view is proof of the deep respect for the learner, or as has been observed of both Horton and Freire, "They respect the inherent wisdom of their clientele and its ability to assume the responsibility for learning"

(Conti, 1977, p. 43). Furthermore, the examples from Circle, occurring over the course of just one season and in just one small town in one rural Montana county, echo the findings of Tough (1971) who speaks to adult learning projects and "deliberate learning" as a factor which motivates individuals to undertake at least one or two major learning efforts a year (p. 1).

Rural adult learners in Montana not only are involved actively in their learning; but also in order to accomplish their goals they must be very self-directed and resourceful, assuming the responsibility to seek out the information they need. Forced by distances that only in the 1960s were spanned with reliable telephone service (e.g., within 25 miles of Great Falls, Montana, a town of nearly 60,000, telephone service was not in place universally until the late 1950s), residents of many rural areas in eastern Montana have learned to develop their own learning experiences. In some places, faced with no reliable electricity and amenities such as indoor plumbing until relatively recently, these same people have learned to be resourceful--resourceful enough to be able to boast a literacy rate "far above the national average, even with the large foreign-born element in its historical population base" (Malone et al., 1991, p. 358).

These individuals stand as shining examples of the beliefs of educators such as Knowles, Freire, and Horton, all of whom stress the need to analyze one's own experience

in order to determine how and what is needed to learn. They have formed "a circle of learners" (Horton, 1990a, p. 10), creating in the process "little islands of decency" (p. 9).

Framing for Learning

These rural adult learners have been not only self-directed in their learning, but also through their learning in an environment untrammelled by man-made intrusions they reflect Paulo Freire's (1994) theories regarding the development of critical awareness:

People, as beings "in a situation," find themselves rooted in temporal-spatial conditions which mark them and which they also mark. They will tend to reflect their own "situationality" to the extent that they are challenged by it to act upon it. Human beings are because they are in a situation. (p. 90)

As part of his "conscientization process," Freire sees the need for the learner to be able to pull back and objectively view reality. Freire's use of pictures and slides as part of "the development of the awakening critical awareness" are excellent examples of how a learner can attain an objective viewpoint (Meierhenry, 1983).

Freire and his colleagues found that slides or pictures that are carefully selected and properly presented are the only means available to help individuals see their environmental surroundings in a new and detached manner. Therefore, slides and pictures are essential to the process of conscientization--the development of critical awareness of one's environment. (p. 6)

In using such a slide, the student is able to "frame" a reality. The frame can be made much smaller, cropping or blocking out much of the picture and simply focusing on one

small part of one object in the view, or the frame can be enlarged to include a whole vista. The frame then acts as a border, defining both what is within and without the boundary of the slide.

The artist uses a similar device to help solve perspective problems that occur in the translation of the three dimensional physical world to the two-dimensional world of canvas or paper (Mendelowitz, 1976, p. 46). Furthermore, the negative space, that space between the frame and the object, helps the artist to delineate the shape of the object (p. 54) while the horizon line, which in an urban setting may be obscured by "obstacles such as hills, houses, walls or foliage" (Goldstein, 1977, p. 113), also helps in the interpretation of the image.

How individuals perceive space is part of this idea of framing. Adults who are trained in a culture that values analytical, linear thinking tend to focus on the objects in space and not on the space itself. "Beginning students generally lavish all their attention on the objects, persons, or forms in their drawings, and then sort of fill in the backgrounds'" (Edwards, 1989, p. 99). However, art theorists such as Edwards believe that the negative space is not only important but also that the more holistic thinkers who use the right brain do not seem to mind spaces; "to the right brain, spaces, objects, the known and unknown, the nameable and unnameable are all the same" (p. 101).

Untrammelled vistas and space then may not only provide the rural viewer with a clearer and surer sense of where the horizon line is, but they also may help in the development of a more holistic way of seeing and thinking. For example, in looking at the setting sun on the horizon, the positive space, commonly considered the land or its features, shares obvious value with what could be called the negative space or sky. Through exposure to such experiences where the frame of reference is so boundless, the rural viewer has opportunities to draw individual boundaries and to become used to that choice.

Statement of the Problem

Toffler (1971) in his book Future Shock describes the changes occurring in the modern world, referencing Nobel prizewinner Sir George Thomson's view that "the nearest parallel with today is not the Industrial Revolution but rather the invention of agriculture in the neolithic age" (p. 17). Toffler's comments have become even more pressing in the 1990s:

We must analyze the processes of acceleration and confront the concept of transience. If acceleration is a new social force, transience is its psychological counterpart, and without an understanding of the role it plays in contemporary human behavior, all our theories of personality, all our psychology, must remain pre-modern.
(p. 17)

In such a changing world, Toffler sees as particularly pressing the need "to distinguish in education between data' and skills'" (p. 411). With this, Toffler echoes

Freire's (1994) disdain of "the banking concept of education" (p. 52).

However, Toffler's call to analyze acceleration and transience is like trying to saddle a galloping horse. Not only is it difficult to fully understand the ramifications of the rapidly shifting concepts, but it is impossible to slow the frame long enough to capture a clear picture for study. Rural Montana, isolated by geography and somewhat insulated from accelerated change, offers an endangered view of individuals who because of tradition are tied to a physical landscape, who because of distances nurture social networks, who because of their work must be less linear and more holistic, who because of untrammelled space have a limitless framework in view, and who because of circumstances exert choices in their learning. These individuals' ways of seeing and pursuing learning are imperiled by a world filled with the rapidly changing life ways and landscapes of Toffler's predictions.

In this rapidly changing world, the effect of surroundings has become of increasing interest. Those who study, create, and build man-made environments have grown increasingly aware of how the results of their work impact the people in their structures and that "the environment is not treated as something around or outside human activity; it is integral to the activity" (Moore & Golledge, 1976, p. 143). Preservationists, both historic and environmental, drum on the idea of the importance to society of saving

natural and man-made landmarks because "every place is imbued with emotional tone for the people there" (p. 200). Artists, whether Monet or Turner, have interpreted the raw power of their landscapes with the European landscape paintings pointing to a "radically new way of seeing nature" (p. 268) that was not necessarily representative of an outer reality but rather is an expression of an inner perception. Both writers and philosophers have long referenced the physical and emotional power of the natural world whether it be Rousseau's "noble savage" (1952), Thoreau's Walden Pond (1964), Jack London's Yukon (1960), or John McFee's Pine Barrens (1986).

Educators, too, look at how the surroundings impact the learner, generally agreeing that two major forces shape the learner--genetics and environment. However, there is ongoing discussion over the degree to which nature or nurture is at work. Linking learning to everyday settings has been examined by educators stating that "context is not just an important element in thinking about human learning but is perhaps central to our understanding of adult cognition" (Wilson, 1993, p. 72) and by those who seek further understanding of the tacit dimension of adult learning which "is gained through observation and experience, most of which is acquired in the everyday world" (Sisco, 1994, p. 182).

In a world of increasing linear specialization that is morphising with light speed ala Toffler, it is important to

understand how personal landscapes exert their pull and how that influence is connected to learning. How does a sense of place, which is formed by an unencumbered horizon line, actively shape those in its grasp by affecting not only how they see their world but also how they learn in that world?

Freire, with his views on the development of critical awareness and the use of slides to help the learner more objectively perceive the surrounding environment, may hold keys to the answers. This is especially so if his concepts along with art theories of perspective and space are used as an overlayment for description of the process of learning in rural learners. At issue is rural adult learners' sense of critical awareness and their sense of place, for if their rural vista, which has formed how they see and learn, is altered overnight, what then happens to their way of learning?

Statement of Purpose

The purposes of this study were to describe (a) how rural adult learners perceive their landscapes and (b) how their landscapes through distances and untrammelled space have been an active force in their learning. Living close to the land, these individuals have developed a way of learning that works for their situation but which with alarming speed is threatened. The study examined how rural adult learners have developed a sense of place and how that

has affected their way of learning in such issues as self-direction, the development of a more holistic view to learning, and the formation of networks.

This study which looks at the impact of a sense of place on the adult learner also serves as a reminder of the impact of increasing shrinkage of space and the rapidly accelerating loss of personal landscapes. These two phenomena stand to continue to impact education at large, for cut loose from roots and traditional ways of living, individuals will increasingly need to be empowered to take control of their own learning. This study in its descriptions of rural learning provides further information about the power of the individual learner and the role that learning plays in cementing a sense of connectedness.

Limitations

This study was limited to a selected number of individuals involved in ranching in the least populous counties of rural eastern Montana. As individuals who have generational ties to the land, their responses are reflective of a lifeway that is relatively outside of mainstream urban America and not necessarily in sync with corporate agribusiness (Berry, 1977). However, that reality in itself provides an opportunity to describe an alternative paradigm for learning.

Moreover, their views do not necessarily represent all the farmers and ranchers in the counties selected. The

individuals interviewed would themselves be reluctant to universalize their situations, pointing out that their responses reflect only the perceived realities of their "islands" and as such are not necessarily applicable to other situations. However, such a perception can be embraced through the naturalistic inquiry approach of this study with its mandate for a description of learning in a rural landscape.

Assumptions

Since the focus of this study was limited to those individuals who have generational ties to the land and who make their living off of the land, it was assumed that in some way the land has been an active force in their lives and that they were aware, to some degree, of the relationship they held with their land. Their perspectives of themselves and their world, however, may not run parallel with current, mainstream thought or perceptions. For example, driven by a growing awareness of the importance of the earth, there are an increasing number of references to farmers and ranchers as users and abusers. This study has been conducted under the assumption that because of their economic dependence on the land over generations, these rural adult learners have had to become attuned to the land and its needs.

Definitions

Critical Awareness: A cognitive process, the development of critical awareness is "the emergence of consciousness" (Freire, 1994, p. 62). The development of this skill involves individuals reflecting about themselves and their relationship to the world. They "develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world" (p. 64), in the process becoming aware that their world is not static but constantly changing.

Environment: In a broad context, environment includes all of the external factors, objects or region, that encompass anything, thus creating a setting. Environment is the sum total of conditions or influences under which any living thing is developed or modified. An environment is also "a form of art that encompasses the spectator instead of confronting him with a fixed image or object" (Oxford English Dictionary, 1994). A broader definition of environment then reflects its Middle English roots of *circuit* or *compass*, for it is a view of the world in which all the parts are integrated.

Framing: Both in art and in this study, a frame is seen as that which bounds the whole. This boundary gives shape to and provides a focus for thoughts or actions. Framing then is the process through which perceptions are focused and shaped.

Holistic Thinking: The antithesis of the sequential process used by the more mechanistic or mathematical approach

in explaining the universe. Holistic thinking is the perceptual skill of seeing and understanding the world not as separate parts but as an integrated whole. Rooted in the Greek word *holos* or *whole*, the term involves "an understanding of reality in terms of integrated wholes whose properties cannot be reduced to those of smaller units" (Capra, 1982, p. 38). It also is the "simultaneous processing of an array of information" (Edwards, 1989, p. 244). Such an integrated view is reached through the use of all the senses and what Edwards has called "global skills" (such as walking or drawing) and their attendant "perceptual skills" (p. xii).

Horizon Line: From a Greek word meaning "the bounding circle," the horizon is the part of the earth's surface that is visible from a given point. Although in the strictest sense of perspective, the horizon line is the horizontal plane that intersects an imagined vertical line, the horizon is usually meant as the boundary line at which the earth and sky appear to meet. Because few if any irregularities or obstructions are present on the open sea or on a great plain, the perceived horizon and the imagined line coincide in those environments. The horizon line is equivalent to the observer's eye-level and is described as being "parallel with the ground-plane and 360 degrees around him" (Goldstein, 1977, p. 113). As such, the horizon is dependent on

where the viewer is--both physically and mentally.

This explains why astronomers, archaeologists, artists, and soil scientists alike use the term in their work.

Isolated: This word is generally applied by a dominant culture to those individuals living apart from what the mainstream mentality deems to be necessary or normal. As such, isolated is viewed as standing alone, being separated or set apart from other things or persons. It is seen as solitariness, being unconnected to other things or persons, or being separated from normal social interaction.

Land: Although land could be said to be the solid, exposed portion of the earth's surface, in this study land refers to a tract of ground or soil owned by a person and having an agricultural use. In a broader sense it could also refer to territory that is rural as opposed to urban.

Learning: The word *learning* has its roots in an Indo-European word that carries the underlying idea of gaining experience from following a path. The roots of the word not only hold a strong relationship between "teach" and "learn," but they also imply that learning is an action of acquiring, generated from within the individual learner and not always observable. Learning is not a product of human activity, nor is it "banking" (Freire, 1970, p. 66) information for later withdrawal on demand. Instead, it is a process that is part of

the human condition. Its presence is a proof of humanity, for the ability to think and reason delineates what is human and unique from the rest of the animal kingdom. Learning is a pervasive state of being, rather than merely "a process by which behavior changes as a result of experiences" (Maples & Webster, 1980, p. 1), for not all changes in behavior are evidence that learning has occurred, nor for that matter does learning need to occur in a formal setting. Because learning often involves a "self-directed inquiry" (Knowles, 1980, p. 55), "even miseducative experiences may be regarded as learning experiences" (Jarvis, 1987, p. 16). Learning's transformative nature should also not be overlooked, for learning is "the process of making a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience, which guides subsequent understanding, appreciation, and action" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 1).

Linear Thinking: This mode of thought involves the step-by-step, logical sequencing of deductive reasoning. To be understood, concepts or problems are divided into the smallest components for analysis before being reassembled in a logical order to form a complete picture. This way of thinking is grounded in Cartesian philosophy that is analytic and "mathematical in its essential nature" (Capra, 1982, p. 58) and Newtonian mechanics which is based on a view of the

world as a machine that is governed by a definite, logical, and even predictable cause and effect (p. 66).

Negative Space: A key component in art composition is negative space or the empty area around the objects or persons central to a picture. Mainstream society lavishes its attention on the positive shapes, teaching its children to draw the shape and then "fill in the background" (Edwards, 1989, p. 99) instead of concentrating on the negative spaces and letting the forms take care of themselves. An example of the phenomenon of negative space can be found in a Bugs Bunny cartoon. The rascally rabbit "runs down a hallway and smashes through a closed door, leaving a Bugs Bunny-shaped hole in the door. What is left of the door is the negative space, and the inner edge of that shape is the edge of the negative space and also is the outline of the positive form" (p. 103).

Network: Resembling a piece of work having the form or construction of a net, a social network is best described as an interconnected group of people. This group of people is not only connected by shared interests, but they also are intertwined with "a web of social relations that provides security and support, and in which primary, consistent face-to-face interaction takes place" (Fingeret, 1983, p. 135).

Perspective Transformation: Adult learning is more than just adding information to what is already known. New

learning can change existing knowledge into a new perspective. This learning process, which Mezirow (1990) believes is unique to adults, is equated with "emancipatory learning" because it involves the search for self-knowledge and increased interest in the insights that come through self-reflection. Social action may develop through this process, but if it does, it is the learner's choice, not the educator's.

Personal Landscape: Seen from a particular point of view, a landscape is a view of natural scenery with distinguishing characteristics and features. A personal landscape, which is uniquely different with each individual, is formed out of perceptions from a person's past and present. Such a landscape is made up by those features that have ingrained themselves into the subconscious, forming and shaping the individual's view of both how the world is and how it should be. A craggy mountain, a shadowed riverbank, a Victorian home, a battered brass thimble, or a dog-eared family Bible can all serve as parts of this view that provides security to the individual and forms subconsciously the basis for decisions about how the individual deals with both the present and the future.

Positive Space: In art, the objects or persons being drawn or painted in a picture are labeled positive shapes (Edwards, 1989, p. 98) with the space they take up being termed the positive space. It is this area on

which mainstream society focuses its attention at the expense of the negative space that surrounds it and by forgetting that both spaces are necessary to make up the whole.

Ranch: Although often caught in the mystique of trail drives and a Zane Gray West, a ranch in Montana's reality is difficult to quantify. The term includes both the piece of deeded ground (usually no less than one or two sections, 640 to 1280 acres) and/or the operation that is devoted to raising cattle, sheep, horses, or crops such as hay or wheat. As economic times and the weather cycles dictate, the size of the viable Montana ranch changes.

Rancher: Although popular mythology has made the term cowboy and rancher almost synonymous, in this study a rancher is a person who owns and runs a ranching operation. The term is not gender specific because many of Montana's ranches are owned by women, a situation grounded in a historic tradition. For example, nearly 40% of the original land patent holders in Cascade County were female (Cascade County Historical Society, 1988.)

Rural: Often defined as the antithesis to city or urban, rural in this study refers not just to having characteristics of the country, but also more specifically to being economically and psychologically tied to agriculture. Because it is a relative term, it

is difficult to quantify rural in terms of population numbers. Unlike the term frontier, which has been defined as fewer than two people per square mile (Duncan, 1993, p. 5), what may be deemed rural in one area becomes suburban or even urban in another.

Self-Directed Learning: Taking responsibility for and then learning on one's own outside of a formal school setting has been labeled self-directed learning. It is "a form of study in which people take the primary initiative, with or without the help of others, for planning, conducting, and evaluating their own learning activities" (Knowles, 1975).

Sense of Place: A phrase coined by Eudora Welty, a sense of place is the intuitive knowledge of oneself and one's relationship to a particular part of the material environment in a definite situation. It carries the connotation of being in situ, of fitting, of being at home, and of existing in harmony. A sense of place can be viewed as the knowledge by which "people everywhere define themselves through the places where they are born and grow up" (Ferris, 1996, p. 44).

Westering: Humans have always had a fascination with the west, that part of the earth that lies toward the setting sun. "The West was a place of romance and mystery, where hopes and dreams and ambitions could come true and life would somehow be better" (Allen, 1975, xxv). The Greeks sent their heroes to the west

and located their Elysian Fields in the west, and medieval European maps were filled with images of legends in the west. It was where Arthur found Avalon and where Columbus found the New World. Early American pioneers were also susceptible to the urge to move west to greener ground, pushing first across the Alleghenies, then the Great Plains, and the Rockies. This looking to the west for new beginnings still occurs in the migrations to Montana and even to some extent in the push to find new physical frontiers to explore, like outer space. This movement to the west, this attraction ever to the new, is called westering.

CHAPTER 2

EXPLORING THE ROOTS

The voyage ceases to be a mere tour through space, you travel through time and thought as well.

Aldous Huxley

Introduction

When viewed on a road map, any journey appears to be purely a two-dimensional activity of connecting the different dotted locations on the paper. Each of the points can be researched in its own right, complete with its attractions and places of interest. However, it is the actual journey from one point to the next that not only brings the trip into the third dimension but also which through connecting the marked locations creates a new view by establishing relationships between the places.

A probing literature review can in a way be seen as a journey in metaphorical thinking for not only does it look at the current knowledge held of a particular area, but it also can be used to draw connections between disparate ideas and fields of inquiry which have not been connected closely before. "No problem in education exists in isolation from other areas of human behavior" (Merriam, 1988, p. 63). Therefore, to better understand the impact of their landscapes on rural adult learners, it is important to

examine the research and information available on several different subject areas: social contexts, the land and place, concepts of space, perspective, creation of a frame, the self-directed learner, critical awareness, and holistic thinking.

Social Contexts

"Learning, like oxygen, is something imbibed from the atmosphere about one" (Ardrey, 1970, p. 86). This is a statement that encompasses the view that since human beings are a social species, their environment to a large extent is made up of their fellow human beings. This idea echoes in the statement, "Learning, even self-directed learning, rarely occurs 'in splendid isolation from the world in which the learner lives; It is intimately related to that world and affected by it'" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 5).

Seen traditionally, learning occurs when students and a teacher are placed in a structured, formal setting within the boundaries of an institution's four walls. "The classroom context has come to be equated with learning whether those classrooms are in schools, in the workplace, or in a local community organization" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 22). This impression is furthered by statistics from the U.S. Department of Education, the American Society for Training and Development, and the U.S. Department of

Labor, all of which provide reports on adult participation in learning that occurs in formal settings (p. 22).

Although it has been observed that there is no single setting that has been identified with adult learning (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 153), Knowles (1980, p. 155) established four categories of learning settings for the adult learner. One category includes independent adult education organizations such as privately-owned for-profit schools, external degree agencies that may be adult education organizations in their own right or part of other school systems, and community-based agencies such as Highlander Research and Education Center. Another category is the one containing public schools, colleges, and universities. A third category is the one containing the quasi-educational organizations and includes agencies such as museums, service organizations, or occupational associations. A fourth and final group is called the "noneducational organizations," and it includes business and industry, government, unions, and correctional facilities (pp. 155-176).

In these formal learning contexts, people, structure, and culture have been identified as the primary factors affecting the learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 28). Learning in most of these traditional settings usually takes place under the guidance of a teacher or facilitator. Although there can be a wide range of degree, "this means that the instructor is usually responsible for planning,

implementing, and evaluating the learning that takes place" (p. 24).

What makes for a successful learning experience in these formal settings continues to be a matter for discussion. Knowles (1980) has pointed out that successful adult learning in such a context is characterized by several basic points: "(a) respect for personality; (b) participation in decision making; (c) freedom of expression and availability of information; and (d) mutuality of responsibility in defining goals, planning and conducting activities, and evaluating" (p. 67).

Other factors in the social environment may impact the success of a classroom. In a study of male and female perceptions of the classroom, it was found by researchers Beer and Darkenwald (1989) that women "did perceive more Affiliation and a greater degree of Involvement in the classroom than men" (p. 40). Ethnographers such as Ennis (1989) have asked how the social system may influence learning experiences in formal settings, examining data in the three areas of perceptions of personal efforts, perceptions of interactions, and descriptions of class sessions. Their findings underline the importance of "shared decision making, mutual trust, openness of the teacher, and relevance to the learners' own lives" (p. 76).

In rural settings, adult learning in a formal setting may have significant barriers. Although the rural adult learner's environment is different from the urban

counterpart, the rural learners "embark on their educational journey with the same hopes, expectations, and fears as urban residents. . . . Rural learners have a quest for knowledge, too" (McCannon, 1983, p. 17).

However, rural learners encounter difficulties in seeking traditional settings for learning. Underlining all the barriers to formal instruction is the lack of access to post secondary institutions due to geographic distances (McCannon, 1983, p. 19). Although studies such as those of Peterson and Hefferlin (1975) indicate that adults may desire further learning, there are fewer opportunities for formal learning in a rural context (p. 20). Moreover, the rural adult learner must deal with lack of prior educational attainment, lack of available counseling services, lack of family support, and lack of financial assistance (p. 21). It would seem that the rural adult learner must not only deal with situational (such as lack of money or time), institutional (organizational scheduling or policies), and dispositional (lack of confidence, feeling old) barriers (Cross, 1981), but also must deal with those circumstances alone.

Whether in a rural or urban environment, the social context, either formal or informal, impacts adult learning. This idea is unlined by three foundational principles necessary for understanding the impact of social forces on adult learning:

Seeing human beings as open and unfinished and thus able to be influenced by the environment;

accepting the complexity and diversity of the social environment organized by levels and classes; and understanding the symbolic nature of the social environment [such as age bias]. (Dannefer, 1984, p. 107)

Those espousing social learning as the prime orientation for adult learning go so far as to say, "People learn from observing other people" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 134), adding that such learning takes place in a social setting. In fact, Bandura (1986), who maintained that a person could learn from observation without having to imitate, modeled his theory on a triangle. His three-way interactive model had people, their behavior, and their environment as the three points of the pyramid. This idea of people learning in a social context holds within it then the concepts of modeling, mentoring, and social networks.

The importance of learning from a societal context is also examined by Jarvis (1987) who maintains, "Throughout life, people are moving from social situation to social situation; sometimes in conscious awareness but on other occasions in a taken-for-granted manner" (p. 64). To better understand the relationships, Jarvis created a hierarchy that included nonlearning responses, non-reflective learning, and reflective learning (p. 27). In this model, the learning process is not solely an internal one but is one that is interactive with a social environment.

Sociologists maintain that each person has a network of personal relationships that make up what could be called a personal community or a social network. The links in such a

network are what serve as the conduits for the transmittal of information. The highly connected network carries information more easily than a less-connected network (Duncan & Duncan, 1976, p. 252). In addition to information, a well-connected network can establish and maintain one's reputation, one's contributions to the group, as well as the reiteration of events that might be lost otherwise. On the other hand, in loosely connected networks, "One must act before a diverse group that is constantly changing and whose members do not know one another" (p. 252). Such a situation places demands of resources of time and money, and in the end, other ways are found to transmit information such as making and sending messages about one's self through the interior decoration of a home.

A social network can be pictured as a web-like grouping of inter-relationships with the individual at the center. At the edges of the structure are the people whose relationships are more neutral to the person at the center, those with whom the person might be seen, and those with whom only simple recognition is shared. Also at the edges of the network are those people who are either disliked or feared and with whom the relationships are at best characterized by avoidance. Closer to the center are the people the person knows and likes best, the "good buddies," and sometimes kinsmen. The individual at the center of the web may provide these people with services or receive

services from them. These people may be seen daily, are turned to for help, and acknowledged for who they are.

"They serve his need to be with others of his kind, and to be recognized as a discrete, distinctive personality, and he, in turn, serves them the same way. They are both his audience and his fellow actors" (Liebow, 1974, p. 96).

Relationships with other people are an important part of learning and so underline the idea of social networking advanced by Arlene Fingeret (1983). In her study of the networks formed by illiterate adults, she defines community as "a web of social relations that provides security and support, and in which primary, consistent face-to-face interaction takes place" (p. 135). Although these networks are dynamic forces, society generally views social networks as a closed system. Citing Barnes and Hendrickson (1965), Gans (1962), Jones (1981), and Young and Willmott (1957), she observes that:

Social networks are often viewed as conservative forces inhibiting mobility through bonds of obligation and tradition. Change, including new educational opportunities, is seen as a threat to social networks, and network members are often perceived as unsupportive. (Fingeret, 1983, p. 143)

In looking at the force of networks on adult learning, Fingeret cautioned, "It is necessary to recognize the co-existence of geographic neighborhood and social network" (p. 135). Her drawing of a relationship between social and geographic contexts echoes those social historians who have studied the effect of distance on community. It has been

shown that as communities are more sparsely populated, the residents become more open and accepting of each other (Duncan, 1993). Likewise, Fingeret examines how illiterates, or those who are separated not by physical distance but by a "distance of skills," develop and trade skills that insure their place in their community. They "maintain social networks that are characterized by reciprocity; each adult still maintains final personal authority over and responsibility for personal actions and attitudes" (Fingeret, 1983, p. 145).

Moreover, in her study, Fingeret mentions the idea of reciprocity in which the teacher becomes student and student becomes teacher. She "asked these adults if they would teach me about their lives, and, once they agree, many of them took this responsibility very seriously" (p. 134). So she found that the adults in her study created and worked within social networks that were "characterized by reciprocity" (p. 145).

It is this trading between peers that strengthens the links in the network. In her appraisal of the power of networks in the world of her study, Fingeret found that the people she studied "manifested a range of abilities to decode the social world and take action in that world" (p. 145). In illustrating the strong ties to place and community for those in her study, she cites Hunter and Harman (1979) who, she writes, "recognize that illiterate

adults cannot be divorced from their communities, which are a source of personal identity" (Fingeret, 1983, p. 143).

The importance of these kinds of ties and this type of cooperation for learning that is found in Fingeret's study of networks is also found in the developing area of community politics. Kemmis (1990) recalls how historically on the Great Plains, in such areas as those found in eastern Montana, different types of people, with different interests have had to build cooperating networks:

Life was still harsh enough that they had no choice. Avoiding people you did not like was not an option. Everyone was needed by everyone else in one capacity or another. . . . They learned, whether they liked it or not, a certain tolerance for another slant on the world, another way of going at things that needed doing. . . . In addition, they learned that they could count on one another. (p. 71)

This cooperation enforced by geographic reality is also hinted at by Wendell Berry (1990), who has even entitled one of his books What Are People For? Berry's approach adds an additional element, for he believes that the Morrill Act and subsequent land grant college acts spelled the end of American agriculture as culture (Berry, 1977, pp. 153-154).

In examining what local culture can accomplish, he states:

There must also be love of learning and of the cultural tradition and of excellence--and this love cannot exist, because it makes no sense, apart from the love of a place and a community. Without this love, education is only the importation into a local community of centrally prescribed "career preparation" designed to facilitate the export of young careerists. (Berry, 1990, p. 164)

Such an approach to the importance of local empowerment in learning resembles the underlying philosophy of Myles Horton (1990b), who was a staunch believer that democracy should be more than a political word; instead he saw it as the very fiber of a society. To achieve that end he felt that society had to allow people to make the decisions that would affect their lives (p. 174). At his school, Highlander, people from communities with similar problems were brought together and helped to develop their problem-solving abilities. When they returned to their own areas, "these learners became leaders in helping others become aware of their abilities" (Conti, 1977, p. 8). Highlander and Horton's philosophy of empowerment are based on the idea of peer learning, mutual cooperation, and helping people to learn to look to themselves and each other for solutions. "There is only one axiom that never changes at Highlander: 'Learn from the people; start their education where they are'" (Adams, 1975, p. 206).

Mentoring, which involves "interdependence in a relationship of mutual fulfillment" (Huang & Lynch, 1995, p. 10), is an idea that is akin to the concept of social networking and is an integral part of adult learning. The central point of mentoring is that in each teacher is a student and within each student there is the teacher. Mentors can be especially powerful for adult learners during transition periods (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 110). However, it is Daloz (1986) who sees the full potential of

mentors as guides and teachers in adult learning situations and who employs the metaphor of the journey to explain the power of a mentoring relationship. Using Jung's archetypal description of a mentor as a figure with "'insight, understanding, good advice, determination, planning'" (p. 17), Daloz describes the power of a mentor:

They lead us along the journey of our lives. We trust them because they have been there before. They embody our hopes, cast light on the way ahead, interpret arcane signs, warn us of lurking dangers, and point out unexpected delights along the way. (p. 17)

Mentors are seen as being from this world and so are living proof that trials can be overcome and that transitions are possible. Examples of mentoring are found in the relationships of the Old Man to Telemakhos in The Odyssey, Charlotte to Wilbur in Charlotte's Web, and the spider woman in Native American legend (p. 16).

The essence of a mentor's work is to provide a map, a type of view. "Mentors seem to do three fairly distinct types of things. They *support*, they *challenge*, and they provide *vision*" (p. 212). In supplying that framework, ideally then a mentor "provides an environment that supports adults while they continue to learn and develop themselves" (Otto, 1994, p. 16).

However, what takes the relationship beyond the two-dimensional dynamic of teacher-student is the concept of mutuality. "Mentoring relationships begin with the expectation that it will be mutually beneficial to the protege and the mentor" (p. 18). In other words, both the

parties benefit from the relationship, as indicated in the title of the book by Huang and Lynch (1991), The Tao of Giving and Receiving Wisdom. These two authors see mentoring as a dance in which the teacher becomes student and the student becomes the teacher. The essence of the dance between the two is "the wisdom of the empty space between both partners" (p. 5).

With the intermix of people and their networks, the word *place* becomes more of a "place perspective" (Gerson & Gerson, 1976, p. 196). These sociologists point out that:

From the viewpoint of the sociologist, the usual sharp distinction between place and people is easily blurred; for the people at a place are important in giving that place the characteristics it exhibits, and each of these people maintains a perspective upon the place that shapes his conduct toward it. (p. 196)

The sociologist would also explain that the approach to place is social phenomena, not individual. In fact there are anthropologists who study the relationship between social networks and space usage, for example as it relates to housing patterns. They see both serving to link people and to transmit information (Duncan & Duncan, 1993, p. 251).

Such perspectives emphasize relationships and derive from a belief that a person's:

Experience with a place (and conversely, the experience of others at the place with him) is at least in part a function of his commitments (ideological, temporal, monetary, and sentimental) both to the given place and to other places with which it is implicitly or explicitly compared and contrasted. (Gerson & Gerson, 1976, p. 197)

In other words, in such a view, place becomes more than space, for the characteristics of any given place are a "series of contexts in which perception takes place" (p. 197).

The Land As Place

The interaction between physical landscapes and the humans tied to them lies at the core of how place is perceived. Psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists have investigated how human beings themselves, their actions, and their societal make-up shape the human psyche. Ardrey (1966) with his look at the instinctual forces that territory exerts on human life is but one of these. Such traits as aggression, family loyalty, responsibility, and even morality are tied in his view to humankind's dim evolutionary beginning bonds to a particular territory. There is also the growing acknowledgement of the effect of landscape on the human makeup and in the process the seeing of landscape as part of culture. Toole (1976) states:

It is, nevertheless, historically accurate to say that for the much greater part of the two-hundred year existence of our nation, the most compelling and influential condition of our values, our stability, and our national direction was our intimate relationship with and discovery of the meaning of the land. (p. 237)

The impact of place on the human being is a concept underlying the foundations of Australian Aboriginal culture. The people of this culture see space more like how the Western world understands the idea of the conscious mind.

The idea of *place* in the aboriginal world replaces the Western concept of organization because in the aboriginal world the spot where a person is born is significant for it will determine that person's identity and actions. The location of birth marks the spot of emergence from Mother Earth:

The land surrounding this place of birth becomes the nexus of the baby's identity. He inherits the stories of that place and the sacred responsibilities for the sites of importance in that area. He receives a set of rights and responsibilities in terms of what he can hunt and gather in that area and what he cannot. Anyone who comes to that area must confer with him, in order to cut a piece of wood for a spear or hunt a lizard. So this place determines this person's relationship to every other person who enters that place. (Lawlor, 1993, p. 16)

If an individual loses track of that point, the chances are increased that the way back will be lost with the end result being that the individual will never be able to find the way home to Mother, the Earth. The place becomes more than simply a geographic spot but also has a spiritual dimension, connected to the Dreaming (p. 17). This relationship to the landscape is described as a kind of paternity, just like in a human parental relationship (Chatwin, 1988, p. 60).

Thousands of miles away, the same voice echoes and reechoes. It is heard in the words of a writer who speaks of having to move away from "beloved places, from landscapes and towns that shaped me, yet I remain attached to those places by the threads of stories" (Sanders, 1993, p. 4). This idea of being tied to a place and having an identity

inextricably bound with that place is found in the writing of landscape architect, Ken Taylor (1996):

Ordinarily sacred places are those which reflect our relationships with places that have meaning because we or our ancestors have connections with them. Place making and all it means to us promotes a powerful feeling of belonging and strong sense of place. (p. 45)

This tie to the land was evidenced in the earlier westering history of America and even in the mythology that grew up with it. The West of myth was seen as a place of potential, of beginnings and of high adventure. In the area that often was referred to as "The Great American Desert," human relationships with the land were often described in hyperbole, such as, "The American frontier was Elizabethan in its quality--childlike, simple, and savage" (Hough, 1921, p. 4). Often the relationship became quite mythic, as shown in this description of the men and women who came West:

The people are at once godly and savage. They breed freely; they love their homes; they are ever ready for adventure; they are frugal abstemious, but violent and strong. They carry on still the half-religious blood feuds of the old Scotch Highlands or the North of Ireland, whence they came. They reverence good women. They care little for material accumulations. They believe in personal ease and personal independence. (p. 5)

The theme of the interrelationship between people and the land also is found in the earlier nature writings of men like Henry David Thoreau, who lived in the woods on the shore of Walden Pond and who saw living near to the land as a way of seeking deeper truths:

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to

teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartanlike as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms. (Thoreau, 1960, p. 66)

Although his focus was not so much the thrust of Thoreau's "living deliberately" and more toward developing a land ethic, Aldo Leopold, in the next century, would voice similar sentiments about the active role that the land plays in human life. Although writing primarily about wilderness and man's relationship to it, Leopold argued that unlike the Golden Rule which ties the individual to society and democracy which orients social organization towards the individual, there is no such formalized ethic for the relationship between man and the land. Leopold defined such an ethic as:

The individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. His instincts prompt him to compete for his place in the community, but his ethics prompt him also to co-operate (perhaps in order that there may be a place to compete for). (Leopold, 1984, p. 239)

Currently, the writings of agricultural authors like Wendell Berry and Wes Jackson carry the same theme of the inseparability of human and place. Jackson (1996), who believes, "One of our principal tasks as educators is to expand the imagination about our possibilities" (p. 96), describes the resettlement of the small, deserted Kansas

town of Matfield Green and in the process speaks to "consulting nature" (p. 98) and "becoming native" (p. 101).

Berry (1977), who sees the farmer as a nurturer not a technician or a businessman, also speaks of the human relationship to the land. "Neither nature nor people alone can produce human sustenance, but only the two together" (p. 9). However, in his view, urban-dominated politics and agribusiness not only have separated the farmer from the land but also have separated America from its cultural roots. This unnatural separation process affects every aspect not only of rural life but more generally of all American society:

The soil is the great connector of lives, the source and destination of all. It is the healer and restorer and resurrector, by which disease passes into health, age into youth, death into life. Without proper care for it we can have no community, because without proper care for it we can have no life. (p. 86)

The relationship between humans and their land is still seen today although somewhat distorted through the viewfinder of economic realities. American travel promoters of the 1980s and 1990s not only measure but they also have coined the phrase "heritage tourism" and "cultural tourism" to define the movement of people seeking to find and tour the places that have retained their individual histories and life ways. This movement includes people, places, events, and even objects, not to mention the symbolism and associations that may be connected. It has resulted in renewed attempts to preserve the historical integrity and

