CHAPTER 1

METHODOLOGY

TOPIC AND CONTEXT

The purpose of the research was to:
1) Ascertain whether playing music in class could be a benefit to students when working on reading and writing tasks in a classroom environment. There was a further aim to identify if there were preferred types of music across the many cultures to be found in the English as a Second Language learning environment.

2) For the groups of adult migrant learners, in addition to the regular playing of music in class, a series of sessions would be included during a ten week course in which students would be given the opportunity to draw. This would be followed by a writing task commensurate with the learner’s stage and phase within the learning framework. The student’s would be offered the opportunity to share work with each other if this was judged appropriate at the time, and if the learners wished to participate in this way. The intention was for collaborating teachers to gauge whether this was a useful activity to include in the language class, and to establish guidelines on timing and class levels. The context for this part of the research was that there were significant numbers of students who had been refugees and who were experiencing problems with concentration and motivation, and in my personal view, in being able to trust in their new environment because of the disintegration of their previous lifestyle, usually within a short time. As example, both Cambodian and Bosnian students have emphasised to me the particular difficulty of accepting that a city could dissolve in chaos, and stay that way, within a space of a day or two. A specific focus was to be for beginner students and students who were illiterate or semi-literate in their first language.

3) Additional to the class groups there was a young adult and a number of children who were experiencing difficulties in reading, writing and/or communicating personal responses through speech. The young adult and the mothers of the children had asked me to work with them and I did so on an individual basis. The collaboration with the mothers and children involved the children drawing, labelling and talking about their drawing or painting. If necessary the mother would write any words the child could not write, as indeed the teachers would do for the adult learners who asked for help in particular instances.

The people in this group explored with me factors in their environment which could have been inhibiting their progress. The research with the young adults was similar, with an emphasis on ways to improve concentration and confidence in the participants.

4) As a form of control I worked with peers and colleagues on a number of ongoing occasions, having painting, drawing and discussion sessions, evaluating types of music and reflecting on our experiences. I also had discussions with other learners with whom I worked in TAFE and Community class settings. These people were all able to communicate adequately and therefore their comments were valuable. As detailed later, the collaborating AMES teachers always
participated either in the class with their students or, when possible, we had a painting session prior to their beginning the work in their classes.

Details of the groups and individuals are in Table 1 following.
Table 1: The Learning Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Participants in the Research Process</th>
<th>No. of Learners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1989</strong></td>
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| Site A | Teacher M  
High school students  
Years 7-12                                                                                       | 30+             |
|        | Music played while students carried out creative writing activity.                                     |                 |
|        | Teacher C played music Intermediate Science Writing task.                                             | 20+             |
|        | Teacher S Year 12 Physics  
Music played during writing task.                                                                        | 15+             |
| Site B | Adult migrant students  
Teacher M  
Played music during all writing activities  
   some drawing sessions  
music and movement sessions.                                                                 | 20              |
|        | Teacher S/M  
Specific sessions, music played, crayon drawing  
Discussion, writing.                                                                             | 15/20           |
|        | Music played in the Individual Learning Centre.  
Up to 20 students at a time.                                                                         |                 |
| **1990** |                                                                                                      |                 |
| Site C | Teacher C  
Sessions with music, movement, crayon drawing (illiterate beginners)                              | 16              |
|        | Teacher S/M  
Sessions with music, drawing.                                                                           | 21              |
|        | Higher level English, discussion.  
Selection of descriptive words and verbs for their drawings.                                           |                 |
| Site D | Teacher M  
15/17  
Students low to intermediate English.  
Music, drawing sessions, discussion.  
Selection of descriptive words for drawing.                                                            | 17              |
Music played in reading and writing centre. Students at a range of English levels but with literacy problems.

**Site E**  
Workshop, peer group. Played music, drawing, voluntary comment.

**Site F**  
Teacher T  

Teacher M  
Played music in all class writing activities. Low Intermediate English.

**Site G**  
Teacher J played classical music in all writing activities over the year. Intermediate English.  
Teacher B, played music, Intermediate English.

Teacher M, music, movement, drawing sessions. Beginners.

**Site E**  
Peer presentation  
Music, creative movement, drawing.  
Written evaluation, verbal feedback.

**1992**  
**Site H**  
Teacher M  
Music, drawing, painting. A series of sessions, upper primary students.

Teacher G played the radio in class during written activities.

**Site D**  
Teacher M music played in all written activities. Students feedback.

**1993**  
**Site D**  
Teacher M  

**1994**  
Music, drawing sessions, discussion, writing. Intermediate English.

+ Denotes School Students.
Individual Participants

1 mother of 3, 1 child a participant, Joel, 6 years old, said to be deficient in all language skills. He attended a special school and had previously worked with a speech therapist. This service was not available to him during the year I worked with him.

1 mother, living in a country area. Joey, 7 was said to be hyperactive and had learning problems, especially in reading and writing. **

His sister, Meg, 9 was not achieving to her year level. She was co-operative but her teacher thought she had low self esteem. There were two older children in the family whose school work was appropriate to their year level. **

A young adult, 18 years, who had had head injuries from being hit by a car as a child. He had completed Year 12 and was attending a TAFE course. He is given the name of George in this report. **

The ideas regarding diet and relationships to allergies, hyper-active behaviours and concentration problems were discussed with numbers of parents of other school children. There was ongoing feedback as to the childrens’ progress, but in an informal way, which added a divergent element to the research.

** All names used to describe participants are fictitious.
METHODOLOGY

The method of inquiry, praxis and feedback and re-formulation was based in Action Research because I believe that this best suited the client’s needs. The most important aspects of the research was that the clients should improve their skills in English and improve their confidence and self esteem where needed. The research was not carried out for the benefit of myself or any university authorities, hence the consent and participation of the students and teachers or parents was always intrinsic to its continuation.

The method used was simple as it was important that the client group understood the purpose of their activities. As it is difficult to explain abstracts to people when they are learning a new language, or are still developing their vocabulary, as with the children, I believe that simplicity was a key to the success of the project. I therefore formulated a construct based on Reason (1988), Reason and Heron (1986), and Reason and Rowan (1981) and which I believed would facilitate positive outcomes for my work and for those who would be co-operating with me.

The ideas for my research began with using music as an enhancement to the learning environment. I had read the work of Lozanov (in Ostrander and Schroeder) (1987) where certain movements in Baroque Classical music were used to assist adults to learn. I, and some other teachers had tried this in class but with high school students. There was some positive response but some students found it irritating, so in this study I selected from a range of music which would hopefully have a more general appeal. The type of music used with each group was evaluated as successful or otherwise after each session by the teacher and by the participants, further details being described later in this chapter.

SPIRALS OF RESEARCH, COLLABORATION, DIVERGENCE AND CONVERGENCE.

The initial outline of the sessions was then to play music and invite participants to draw or paint. Where other teachers were collaborating we discussed the plan beforehand. Some teachers were comfortable to carry out the plan alone with their class, others requested me to be present. Therefore, each session with students was regarded as a cycle of inquiry and after, the students’ work was examined by the teacher and myself. This occurred sometimes with the students present, at other times outside of class, with the drawings being returned to the students afterwards, depending on the level of difficulty for me to meet with the teacher and depending on our respective timetables and the distance I needed to travel. During our post-session discussion we evaluated the students responses and any amendments for the next session. Changes were minor, involving the type of music, the length of time between sessions and the level of difficulty of any writing task associated with the drawing.

Students who were beginners and/or low literacy in their first language were given up to three sessions in a term of ten weeks, whilst students who had a higher level of English and whose literacy was commensurate with their oracy level were offered one session towards the end of their course, or one in the early weeks of the course and another towards the end. It was more appropriate to offer the drawing session to students who were in a class with a community
language focus, but one teacher found that drawing was very useful for a post-beginner's class of people semi-literate in L1 when she was trying to draw out their employment goals. A number of students did indeed have goals in mind but had such a poor vocabulary in English that they could not express it. From the one class some examples were that of students who wanted to be a bricklayer and who drew a trowel and bricks. Another student drew a man carrying tools and preparing to do mechanical repairs on a car, with an added simple verbal description as to why he had chosen this as an occupational goal. Another student drew a couple of elephants and wrote a simple text stating that he wanted to look after elephants! This revelation was quite important because it was an unrealistic goal for that student in Australia and the teacher was able to work with the student to redirect his ambition to a goal that was more achievable for him in the Australian context.

During the years of this research the language learning environment changed considerably, due to community and government pressures. There were also some years when the new migrants in the Centres in which we were working were less likely to be recent refugees, although many still came from camps. The biggest changes in the learning context were the introduction of an Australian Certificate in Spoken and Written English which formalised required outcomes and a strict limitation on the number hours available in which students could learn English, the new limit being 510 hours with specific requirements on time allowed for registration and completion of study. Along with this there was an introduction of programs entitled English for Work which offered further tuition in English, after the 510 hours, only to serious job seekers or, in some cases, offered a first opportunity to learn English to people who had never been in an English class because, although they had lived here for years, they had obtained unskilled employment (often due to a dire need to repay money loaned by relatives for fares) and during an economic downturn they had lost their jobs and were unable to find further employment. These classes could be rewarding to teach especially when students gained employment or entry into a further job training program which they would otherwise not have been able to access because their English level was inadequate. However, they were also very challenging because of the great range of oral/aural and literacy levels of students in the classes. Initially I was very reluctant to introduce drawing into these classes but again, with the low literacy students it was very helpful as described above. In this changed situation the requirements demanded by the funding body, based outside the educational framework became part of the research because there was a need to always refer to the specific competencies for the given level of the Certificate in Spoken and Written English (CSWE). Tender specifications could vary with different courses and the fact that the courses were initially granted to A.M.E.S. but later were offered to a successful tenderer, also changed the learning environment.

Hence the learning cycles changed because of external elements and because of the differing needs of different student groups. New cycles varied slightly depending on the goals of the class, such as whether or not the class was work focussed, and the language level and background of the students, this was the convergent aspect. Divergence was introduced through the individual work with the children and their mothers and with George, all of whom were from an English-speaking background.

I believe that the whole research project reflects an empathy with and an awareness of the needs
of the learners and an effort to incorporate their perspectives within their learning situation. Whatever the goals imposed on a group of learners I suggest that words for feelings and emotions must be considered as almost as urgent as the traditional survival vocabulary taught to newly arrived migrants. Otherwise they remain locked inside their own thought fields, as I attempt to describe throughout this paper. Migrants who have experienced physical and emotional trauma often suffer from chronic health problems and these add to the stress and difficulty of settling in to a new country, sometimes after years of homelessness. If such people are enabled, in some small ways, to achieve an improved state of well-being there is a better chance of their bonding to the new culture. Neil (1992) (1) has spoken of concern that human beings must develop a sense of belongingness which can transform and hence renew a culture and Birch (1993) (2) writes of the “effects of regarding the human person ….. “as an isolated ego…..” “a substance…..” instead of a person in community who has internal relations with other persons.”

AUTHENTIC COLLABORATION/EMPOWERMENT

I cannot think of a more effective way of empowering a person than by assisting them to return to a state of balance whereby they can use their talents and skills and hence their personal power to assist themselves. I believe that this project fulfilled this goal because it relied on the cooperation especially of the students and children and also of the teachers and the childrens’ mothers. The participants were offered opportunities to assist them to communicate their feelings and emotions (not necessarily experiences, but these could be included), and to validate them by support enabling communication firstly through drawing or painting, and then to find the language to help them to formulate a bond with the new culture, and/or social and language milieu (as in the case of the non-migrant participants). It was hoped that the participants would grow closer to achieving a sense of wholeness, a further integration of their past with the present and the future. I believe this to be most important if the learner is to approach their learning with a minimum of encumbrances.

DEVIL’S ADVOCATE

This was partly the evaluation of whether or not the client could speak or read more effectively. Teachers could comment on changes to a student’s rate of progress and the students themselves were able to comment on how they felt. This was true also for the children. Another influence was whether or not the adult students were meeting the external requirements of the Certificate Competencies and later, the Tender specifications.

BALANCE, CHAOS, ACTIVE AND REFLECTIVE PROCESSES

The teachers took care to remain focussed on course goals and the use of drawing and music were always regarded as a means to an end, never an end in themselves. This was regarded as an essential element of balance in the project. Chaos had been anticipated due to the chaotic nature and unexpectedness of classes of migrants. It has never been my intention to elaborate on this aspect because it involves the confidentiality and privacy of the participants which have always been of paramount importance. However, in general terms it can be said that, as life for
a new migrant is full of changes and they are continually trying to re-establish a life pattern and re-integrate with their past and present experiences and relationships, then their participation in class can reflect this, even though they may be highly motivated to learn English. For the child participants the chaos, I believe, was more an internal process but was very real for them as they struggled to attain goals which they could observe their peers readily achieving. For George, life was always chaotic, for the same reasons as for the children but with the additional factors of his pain and disappointments in the social sphere. The chaotic feelings of the participants were sometimes a part of the sessions and discussions, but always a part of the reflective processes of the teachers and particularly for myself as I worked with the project for the longest period and maintained contacts with some of the people as their needs and wishes have manifested.

As explained, the changes in funding and course requirements did introduce a further element of chaos which I believe was enriching to the research. However, the ongoing changes, over several years, within the university, were less than helpful, affected me negatively, due to changes in definition as to the philosophical and conceptual framework of the course and hence to what other people thought should be outcomes. This chaotic process was painful, even destructive, to me on a personal level, and I have yet to perceive any positive aspects.

THE MUSIC

In my initial planning for the musical background I suggested the use of Baroque music slow movements or similar as this had been agreeable to groups of adult peers. However, after a few sessions with the migrants it was decided to use music with a slightly faster tempo because, although the participants were stressed, they were also tending to be less occupied than were the peer group participants who tended to be very busy and struggled to quieten themselves long enough to draw or paint and reflect on their experiences. It seemed that, for the migrants, the stress was that they were under active because their lack of English caused them to take longer to do most things and some felt very frustrated while others seemed grateful for the time their English classes gave them to express themselves. The music chosen for the migrant class groups therefore ranged from light classical, featuring such instruments as the piano, harp, flute, violin, classical guitar and pan pipes, to the music described as ‘new age’. We used mostly orchestral/instrumental, rarely vocals. If voices were included it was only to harmonise, not to include words. At times students requested that they bring along music from their country. This was very welcome during a socialising activity (usually) but, with the varying backgrounds and cultures of the participants it was found that music from a specific culture, e.g. Chinese or Indian, would irritate at least one person in the group whose musical ear had been shaped by a different harmony. The teachers remained alert to this and, over the cycle of inquiry it was decided that it was best to avoid culturally specific music as there was a sufficient choice available from the types of music described and which appeared to be in harmony with the range of participants and with the purpose of the sessions.

The recommendation I would make is that the music be played at a low volume, to include little or no vocalising and to avoid heavy brass or drum music if writing and drawing are the goals of the sessions. A second language teacher who had previously taught music in high schools told
me that some students became physically ill when he had taken them to a performance of a powerful pipe organ. He thought that maybe their age, early teens, was a factor, but could only volunteer the information as a fact without hypothesizing as to the reason. The teachers involved in this inquiry asked students to tell them if music was irritating or too loud, the only problem being that some students liked the music to be louder than others. The occasions when someone broke into humming were rare but created only smiles in the group, never annoyance. After students became accustomed to a musical background to written work, it was found that they would request music, or place a tape in the cassette player if the teacher did not do so on a particular occasion. Separate from my inquiry groups I noticed one teacher who liked ‘heavy’ classical music and played this at medium volume during writing activities. It was not appropriate for me to ask students their response to this but my research would indicate that this is not recommended. For the younger school children it was realised very early that what adults enjoy as ‘relaxing’ music had the opposite effect on them, and during their painting sessions music of a faster tempo was used, but again, with no vocals.

THE DRAWING PROCESS

With regard to the drawing, ideally I would have liked to use painting for all participants, especially the method of damp paper which I had found some time ago as being satisfying for a person not gifted in painting ability. However, in practice, this was impractical except in sessions in my home, or that of another teacher, or with the primary children where the environment provided the amenities needed. Therefore in all classes listing drawing crayons or textas were used with just a few people choosing to use pencil or pen.

Where paints were used George, Joel and teachers trialled an idea of using only the one colour for each painting. I developed the idea of creating a series of paintings over six or seven weeks with a later session where participants used any colours they chose. Although this idea was mine the participants were always free to choose to use a different colour paint in a second painting and this did happen twice. After each session participants were asked if they were happy using that single colour method and the important feedback was that they always wanted to come back next time. I have no doubt that they may have enjoyed having someone to talk to, and this was not a variable I could measure, but it is significant that they had sufficient knowledge of the project to carry on their work at home, if they had so chosen.

As described a majority of participants, those in class groups, used crayons for their drawing for practical reasons. The teachers were free to suggest a stimulus such as ‘a happy time in your life’ but students tended to draw whatever they wanted, regardless of the suggestion. In the initial sessions I had suggested drawing within a large circle, as in a mandala, and this seemed to please some people, who liked the suggestion of structure. However, as some people would ask why they had to use a circle, I suggested to teachers that we show them an example of a circle and let them choose their own format as the experience of drawing was more important for them than any specific format. Teacher C, whose students were beginners and illiterate in their first language, took to class some books with Australian themes of animals and plants to give inspiration to those who might need it. Her class seemed to benefit from the series of sessions which were spaced about every three weeks over a term. She found that they
expanded their vocabulary by asking the names of objects they wanted to draw, and, in many cases, wanted her to write the story of their drawing for them. I have used this method with school children in Year 7 whose writing was very weak and found it worked. Teacher C felt that it enabled her students to tell stories that were important to them, usually about memories of their homeland but sometimes about tensions within their living conditions in Australia. Teacher M whose students were mostly refugees, found that many students wanted to express their happiness and relief at finding refuge in Australia. This work was done at Mount Druitt, Cabramatta and the now closed Centre at Westbridge, Villawood in New South Wales where teacher M worked during the period. There were also sessions with different teachers at Parramatta and Blacktown Centres.

The topics students selected did show some cultural differences, especially in the perceived roles of women and men, but as this was not our focus, and as our students’ needs to learn literacy skills were the same across all backgrounds, I made no notes about this, particularly as I was concerned about misuse or misrepresentation of such data. Indeed, one of the pleasant findings for me, was the overall beauty and happiness of the drawings, despite the level of skill of the artist, considering the suffering that the majority of these people had so recently experienced, and their current anxiety about matters such as getting a job or concern at the welfare of family members left in their country. Some chose to relate folk lore from their first country and this was valuable as an opener for them all to share such stories. Others, often young men, chose to detail their dreams for the future, usually about finding the right girl and getting married. Interestingly, no young woman did this, but this may have been because they felt more reticent about revealing such personal dreams in class. Many people chose in one session to draw a scene of peaceful settings in their homeland and this was used as a basis to suggest all students draw on such pleasant memories when trying to practise relaxation. However, this was not suggested for students who had experienced recent trauma.

Sometimes students were encouraged to write about their lives, before they came to Australia as writing about the personal and familiar is easier for many than writing about objective information, for Intermediate students, and those who are at a low level of English. However, I felt concern at encouraging people to write about their traumatic experiences as refugees when they may not be experiencing a need to do that at that time. Therefore, I requested that topics be left as open as possible, and we found that students who wanted to tell a teacher about their trauma would find a way of doing this anyway. For example, some students would hand in a recount of their escape from their country, and the horrors of their journey, when they had been asked to write about an excursion. In this situation the teacher wrote an appropriate caring response and the next time the student wrote on the topic. I believe that some young refugee students did this with each different teacher, in a way they wanted to introduce themselves and say who they really were and, I am sure, they were asking for acceptance and love, as so many had no family here. It can be understood from the foregoing that, although the drawing sessions were limited in time and scope, they appeared to be valuable in hastening the communication process in English for the students, and teacher M who worked with the most students and used both music and drawing and music alone with different groups, noted that there seemed to be benefits from the drawing sessions which spread through the whole course for those students.
In the next chapter there is a discussion on some of the personal factors influencing the learners as well as trends and attitudes in the community which also have a bearing on the learning environments.

Adult student's drawing
"Breaking through the barriers".
CHAPTER 2

At first people refuse to believe that a strange new thing can done, then they begin to hope it can’t be done, then they see it can be done, then it is done and all the world wonders why it was not done centuries before.

Frances Hodgson Burnett
The Secret Garden

MOTIVATION, OBSTACLES AND FACILITATORS

An intention of this inquiry was to explore factors which may be significant in the language learning process, both for first and second language learners. The process emphasised the significance of the affective domain, through which the individual’s progress and the atmosphere of the learning environment interact in an ongoing way. The learning of a language is linked to the experience of interacting with the culture and networks of interest related to for example, employment, education and social activities.

Speakers of a given language have access to the associated culture and in history, there are many instances of a language being forbidden to be taught or spoken because the ruling group feared that it would keep a conquered culture alive. Patterns of thought and thinking are influenced by internal language and external language in an ongoing way. This paper proposes that thought patterns are among the forces which engender electro-magnetic fields and these vibrate at different rates. Through them we make contact with the thoughts and feelings of others. For the purpose of this paper thought energy fields will be termed eterics and it is suggested that they offer a view of reality which explains the otherwise inexplicable vulnerabilities, experiences and responses which we as humans sometimes ‘know’ and other times just act upon without being able to identify why. The interaction of the will with these ongoing multi-dimensional processes is the nucleus of an eteric, and it is suggested that an eteric will evolve through ongoing spirals of development, through chaotic phases to either devolution or change. An eteric has a more complex network than a thought field in that the will is significant at both the individual and group levels, although it is likely that this can be a negative influence in some situations. An eteric can also develop as a result of watching a film or stage production, a television program, especially if on an ongoing basis, or reading a book and reflecting on the content through one’s intellectual, emotional and will processes. A simple example is the way an actor from a popular television serial comes to be perceived as being the character he plays and may be approached by strangers as though he IS that character, the people concerned having linked so completely into the characters in the story that they are unable to differentiate between fiction and reality. Sharing a language can be a significant step to sharing an eteric (though not essential). This thesis proposes that it is important that those who make their home in Australia be able to express themselves as adequately as possible in the language of this country, including having proficiency in literacy. Some of the reasons for this will be addressed later.

FACTORS AFFECTING LEARNING

There are a number of factors which can have an impact upon the learning. From my research
it has been found that motivation and potential to learn a second language can apparently be influenced by factors such as the culture of the first language and the general tendency within that culture toward taciturnity or loquacity, including possible differences in speech patterns between the genders. Ellis (1985) (1) writes that “there can be little doubt that motivation is a powerful factor” in second language acquisition. “Its effects are to be seen on the rate and success” rather than on the route of acquisition.” The teacher must consider these factors, as well as individual differences, when planning class activities.

The other dimension which cannot be overlooked is that some people learning English in Australia live in crowded conditions and do not have the financial means to provide themselves with entertainment or other stimuli which can provide topics of conversation and new ideas which in turn can create new interactions. These interactions with the ideas of others provide opportunities for the interchange of language and if they do not occur with a sufficient frequency then language skills may devolve, certainly in a second language which is being insufficiently practised, with its related thought patterns, and probably language skills in general, in the same way that can be recognised in any system which runs out of energy. Language learning and mastery is part of the patterns of many living systems and a language group in itself can be argued to be a system (an etheric in the terms of this paper) and needs to be open to ongoing influences to keep it viable.

Migrants who have returned to their first country after a prolonged absence (including some teachers) have said that if a person leaves his homeland and continues speaking his native language in another language environment, it is likely that the language that he uses will remain more static than would be the case for users living in the homeland as they will be evolving with their use of the language within their culture. The migrant user of a first language may experience a frustration or an inability to express new experiences and concepts which he does not have a means of expressing through his first language (L1). Such a person may tend to hold on to the language forms and customs current when they left their country.

Discussions with former refugees who have entered the High School system in Australia suggest that children who leave the country at a vulnerable age (say up to 6 or 7) who have not learnt to read and write, may experience a general language deficit especially if their parents do not speak the new language at home and particularly if their culture does not emphasise speaking and listening to children as being a value.

Language learners who are particularly vulnerable are refugees who have usually had to leave their country in an unplanned way involving fear and suffering, possibly also experiencing incarceration in a camp for varying periods. Other vulnerable groups are women with small children who are often isolated from opportunities to join interest groups which provide an interaction with other people, especially English speakers. Older people sometimes have this problem and both these groups greatly value the home tutor schemes which are available. However, it is likely that all would benefit from wider experience of community accents and there is a problem for many migrants after they finish their formal English classes in that they say that they lack opportunities to practice. This is a sensitive area because it involves the language spoken at home with family members and friends. Different families vary in their
willingness to use the English language in the home.

NEW ARRIVALS

For all new settlers experiences in the language learning centres are very important as they offer their first real opportunity to join a new community. Ways in which they can make further links are extra conversations with staff and students, through attending talks by guest speakers (hence involving listening to speakers using different registers of language) and through group activities in class, including hearing their own name being pronounced by others with different accents. Others find that they can improve their English through conversations with neighbours, depending on the opportunities to converse with English speakers in their area. Class excursions can also be very valuable.

For on arrival or lower level students there is a challenge for the teacher to help them to feel involved from the beginning so that they will be motivated to learn and have the satisfaction of being able to recognise a range of vocabulary as soon as possible. This encourages them to respond to language stimuli outside the learning environment, such as in the media, in shops, and by listening to people using English.

Discussions with teaching colleagues suggest that the higher the level of a person's vocabulary the more easily can s/he learn new words and concepts, broaden their horizons, and maintain a language capacity which will be transferable to any situation, including a workplace. During the last few years funding sources for English language classes for migrants who are unemployed have emphasised the need for skills in reading and writing and the use of language in job training, job seeking and in the workplace. Hopefully this will encourage learners to use the new language, but students generally indicate a strong interest in learning language for social interaction and for describing their life experiences, while for some, developing English literacy skills is much more of a challenge.

OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

There are also factors which particularly influence non-English speaking background school students one being that they may not be speaking the language of the education system at home and, especially over holiday periods, may lose some of their proficiency but this has been observed by teachers to improve once they have returned to school. Another variable can be the level of proficiency of parents in reading and writing in their first language. This can be a significant factor for children and other language learners whether they be of an English-speaking background or otherwise. It can be a negative factor or a positive one in that illiterate or semi-literate parents often place a very high value on education for their children. One father explained that it was very important his children should study at university because he and his wife "have no name", meaning that he felt they had no standing in the community.

An initial matter of concern of this inquiry was the difficulty for students who did not have ready access to dictionaries, especially bi-lingual dictionaries in their early learning phases. In a major centre where some of the initial inquiry was carried out there was only one Khmer-
English dictionary with a large number of students who spoke that language and were either waiting for classes or on very low intensity classes where they had spare time to use the study centre. I asked for another dictionary to be bought but was told that an exception could not be made for that group. At the time (1991) a Khmer-English dictionary was quoted to me as costing $120. It was available only at a bookstore in the city, not very close to a railway station and therefore inaccessible to the people who needed it. I believe these people were caught in a very difficult and unjust situation because they could not obtain the key which would help them open the door to their previous language world. Although there would have been a bi-lingual class for very beginning learners, the learners I am speaking of were at a point where they were trying to expand their vocabulary by looking up words which they heard or read either in class or elsewhere. The learning centres often have a range of practical bi-lingual material which is helpful but the problem is that no matter how much is prepared, there will always be people who speak a language other than that available. It can take considerable time to prepare the material and, depending on the numbers of potential users, the priorities of using staff time must be weighed against the potential benefits.

A personal bi-lingual dictionary is highly valued by those learners who have one and fortunately in recent years a range of reasonably priced bi-lingual dictionaries has become available in the languages which were formerly so expensive. I had the satisfaction of observing the change in a Khmer speaking student when he began to use a bi-lingual dictionary obtained as part of a work training program. He began to make much better progress, participated more in class and laughed more often. It seemed that the world of the English speaker was finally being opened up to him. He belonged to one of the language speaking groups which do not share the same alphabet as the English language and, naturally, it is more difficult and takes a longer time for such people to learn to read and write English.

Another factor found to be relevant was that students had purchased dictionaries in a transit country which were not always very useful because of archaic usage or confusing definitions. Other people who had found work soon after arriving in Australia many years ago, but who had become unemployed in the last few years, had simply not known that they could obtain a bi-lingual dictionary. I have found that it is very difficult to buy these outside the Sydney city area, even now, although as noted, the good news is that students are offered a book allowance when studying in English language programs with a work focus, as of this year (1994). As with all such opportunities some students use the resources offered with more alacrity than others who have to be reminded to bring a dictionary to class.

Another issue which has emerged is that many older students find the small print in dictionaries very difficult to read. Sometimes they seem to need glasses as they hold the printed word at a distance when reading, but they may not be able to afford glasses or may not want to wear them. For families on a limited income (which applies to the great majority of language learners involved in this inquiry) expenditure on language learning material is unwelcome and one effect noted is that women will have less opportunity to own or use personal resources such as dictionaries because they will be taken by male family members if both are learning English. Women with young children are often unable to attend classes because of limited child care facilities or of finding that there is not a child care place available at the time a class is offered.
At the present time the application of eligibility for English language classes means that people have to register for a class within three months of arrival in Australia and begin the class within twelve months, while completion of the learning must be within three years. This may mean that numbers of people are missing out according to comments made by former students whose relatives or friends have migrated since the new guidelines have been enforced.

Information about language classes is provided on arrival but, in practice, it means that some people miss out on classes. For longer term residents or those who have completed their 510 hours but are not employed it is possible to learn English through training programs after registering as a job seeker. Many women do not wish to do this for family reasons, especially as the classes are intensive and are often programmed at times which makes it difficult for women with young children. In practice class timing may also be a discouraging factor to men with school age children as it is very common for fathers to collect children from school for reasons of safety or distance. It is important to note that there is no offer of child care for women with pre-school children in the English for Work programs. Some women who are very keen, and able to, pay for children to stay in outside child care centres. It should be understood that such an arrangement would need to be agreed to by her husband even though the woman would in such a situation be earning money as a registered job seeker. Teachers have commented on numbers of women students who had problems with child care. Some had spouses or relatives at home who would not help them because they did not approve of the woman leaving the home every day to learn English, or because in some cultures men will not accept the role of child carer on anything but the most casual or emergency basis. In other families the wife seems to resent her husband coming out every day to class. Students have discussed such difficulties privately with their teacher or friends but no further details can be given, except to say that the women involved seemed fearful of being left behind or had difficulty in managing their lives without the presence of their husband. It is likely that they would benefit from counselling and some opportunity to learn English in a low intensity mode.

Another matter which is not of widespread significance but is an issue for some literacy students is that if a person has been engaged in heavy manual labour for years his (or her) hands may have lost some of the potential to complete fine motor skills such as those needed to use a pen to write. Such learners benefit by using a thicker pen or by obtaining a hand grip which fits over a regular pen. Such details may seem trivial but for the persons concerned they make the difference between coping or feeling and appearing to be unequal to the task before them. Such people need help to use available resources in their learning situation. This is not necessarily going to cost the community any more money, as money is spent advertising resources which are available. It is more a matter of perceiving needs from the learner’s perspective rather than from that of the linguist or the administrator. The perspective of some linguists that motivation of learners is significant has been borne out by the feedback from this study and some discussion of theory follows.

The linguists, Dulay, Krashen and Burt (1982) (2), have written of factors which they consider to be difficult to prove objectively but which they claim can be inferred to be influences on the learner. They include factors which consider motivation of the language learned. They have listed three factors within the individual as being relevant influences and call these the Filter and
the Organiser (both subconscious) and, on the conscious level the Monitor is said to be operative. Each of these is discussed below.

The Filter includes the motivation of the learner, which can be subdivided into integrative, instrumental and social-group identification motivation. Integrative communication relates to a desire to achieve proficiency in a new language in order to become part of the fabric of a community which speaks the language and in which the learners feel an interest and affinity. It appears to have a clear relationship with the attainment of oral-aural skills in English learners. Instrumental motivation springs from the practical benefits the learner will gain from proficiency in the language, such as employment opportunities and it could be a helpful predictor of overall English proficiency.

The social group identification motive is operative when an individual identifies with a social group and wishes to speak the same language and hence, to belong to that group. It could be said that this has a corollary with native speakers adopting different registers in order to be seen as ‘belonging’ to a different social class from their family or origins. The opposite effect is also evident in that an individual who does not identify with the group will be unmotivated to learn the language of the group. The element which differentiates social group identification from integrative motivation is that the individuals concerned would want to be fully assimilated into the new community. It implies integrative motivation but the reverse is not true.

Another factor covered by the ‘Filter’ concept is the emotional state of the learner, including elements such as relaxing surroundings and levels of anxiety about the task. In one centre as an example, the teacher in charge of the study centre was very interested in the idea of using music as a background to the environment saying, after a time, that both she and the students in the centre found the music to be beneficial. As with class work it helped to reduce the effect of any intrusive external sounds. The music was of the light classical variety with no vocalising and the music was played at a low volume.

Dulay et al (1982) have suggested that the Organiser is the subconscious cognitive dimension which influences the way a second-language learner forms internal constructs of the new language. Its existence seems to be verified, they say, because learners from different language backgrounds follow similar developmental linguistic steps, even though these language forms have been absent form their environment. Learners tend to use systematic traditional constructions which are reflected in errors they make and the order in which they acquire structures. However, it seems likely that those learning a language which has similarities (such as the alphabet) with their first language make faster progress than those coming from a very dissimilar language system.

The Monitor comes into operation when the learner consciously processes language such as in self-correction during a conversation or in editing test items. The extent of the use of the Monitor is influenced by several factors including the learner’s age, the focus of the task, the personality of the learner and the extent of formal instruction s/he has received. Learners do not always apply all the formal linguistic knowledge they have gained. This depends on the task at hand. It is also recognised that the learners can accurately use language without necessarily
knowing the rules involved (as with native speakers) and both adults and children learning English as their first language will often self-correct when prompted or queried on usage. Implicit learning has been shown to be more efficient when complex linguistic rules are involved and conscious grammar learning is limited to lower level rules (Reber 1976) (3). Hence this is the background for the focus on deductive learning experiences which will enhance subconscious learning and provide practice. However, it needs to be added that there is a point when learners appreciate some rules of grammar being included in their instruction and this also includes rules for spelling, but this may vary with the educational background of the learners in their first language.

Another perspective on the learning environment and its significance is to be found in Halliday and Hasan (1985) (4) they refer to the work of Malinowsk (1923) which discusses a "context of situations... a total environment." This includes the verbal environment in which thoughts are expressed either verbally or in writing, or through other means such as art, even including clothing and similar personal adornment. I consider it relevant that Malinowski (1923) is described as working with people from an island background who "lived mainly by fishing and gardening" because SOME of the adult migrant students we were working with had a similar background, and thus had little or no experience of a classroom and many other aspects of life in a large city. Halliday and Hansan (1985) then discuss Firth’s (1950) development of Malinowski’s theory (5). Firth’s descriptive framework included the ‘context’ as encompassing:

* ‘the participants in the (learning) situation’ in their ‘statususes’ and ‘roles’.
* ‘the action of the participants’ both verbal and non-verbal.
* ‘the surrounding objects and events in so far as they have bearing in what is going on’ and including
* ‘the effects of the verbal action’

Halliday and Hasan (1985) (6) then describe their development of this early work as they perceive it applying to a text used in the classroom. I believe their terminology is also significant when considering the personal contexts for the learners in a classroom. Halliday and Hasan (1985) list the following as being their interpretation of the context of situation:

* ‘The field of Discourse’ refers to what is happening..... the nature of the social action.....what (it is) that the participants are engaged in’
* ‘The Tenor of Discourse’ relates to who is taking part’, and ‘their statuses and roles’ and
* ‘The Mode of Discourse’ refers to what part the language is playing.’

I consider that the drawing processes described in this study enabled the participating students to make links with their inner and outer worlds, a process that is very much needed by most of the students in A.M.E.S. classes because of their status as recently arrived migrants, or, as in the case of numbers of the students in this study, their status as longer term residents who, for varying reasons, had not learned English but had lived here within a limited context of their first language speakers, thus limiting themselves in both interactions and even the freedom to travel around the city in which they were living. I and the other teachers who were interested in this project feel that a significant component of our work has been motivation of the learners, although this depends very much on the backgrounds and life situations of the individual
learners.

It is an ongoing issue that information needs to be disseminated to people of non-English speaking backgrounds from government, education, health, financial and other bodies such as local councils. Many standard pamphlets are available in a variety of community languages from such bodies however, some information is still disseminated in forms which are unhelpful to non-English speaking background or otherwise language-deprived students. For example, sometimes pamphlets giving instructions are printed in small print and use relatively complex language. Schools often emphasise the giving of information to students through spoken word either from class teachers or at a general assemblies. This is to encourage students to develop listening skills which, on the whole, need to be developed. However the content of the message may not be received if the medium is faulty, if the speaker uses too complex or too colloquial language or even if too much information is given at one session. It is important to use material as meaningful to the learner as possible, otherwise the thought processes for all language may continue to be in the first language and will consequently be shaped by the structures the user associates with that language. Kaplan (1972) (7) has pointed out that “every language offers to its speakers a ready-made interpretation of the world.....a metaphysical word picture (and that) sequences of thought and grammar are related in a given language.”

There is one other aspect which is sensitive but which needs to be acknowledged. In the process of attempting to reach all members of the community information material needed to be simple and as brief as possible, focussing on the purpose of the material and the target audience. However, this does mean that the complex language structures, descriptive words and often the subtleties of language available to those with high proficiency will be denied them and the language level of a community can deteriorate. As this is not a reasonable approach to be imposed it has to be said that those who work hard at developing their language skills, whether they be native speakers or second or third language learners will have many more avenues of experience and advantages open to them at all levels and will therefore be able to participate more fully in the community whether it be within an employment, social or cultural or leisure activities network. The more a new speaker of English is able to access the new language to express personal interests or to understand facets of the new culture which are personally significant, the more likely they are to be motivated to expand their language skills. Shohany (1993) (8) points out that “in real life, language is unpredictable and strongly dependent on the context in which it arises.”

The field which is of great concern to many migrants because it facilitates entry into employment is the education system and that is why migrants are being encouraged to enter into training programs, albeit at the level they are able to participate. Thus, while the classroom learning environment is important, it can be understood that individual learners will bring attitudes to this environment which may be very significant for them but not readily discernible to others outside their personal circles, be they in Australia or elsewhere.

Adult speakers of a language have an internal linguistic knowledge which determines their understanding and production of recognisable structures in the use of that language. It can be difficult to have a concept if one has no word for it and so, sometimes the instructor must find
ways of portraying the meaning of a concept before teaching the word. It is also relevant to consider the accompaniments of spoken language, such as gesture, facial expression and intake of breath which are indicative of the meanings intended and received by the language users. I suggest that language structures and vocabulary shape concept development, whether the learner be a child or an adult, native speaker or second or even third language learner. It seems likely that somewhere along the way the individual will adopt one language as the basic thinking language and will enter into the etheric of that language at least for deeply personal thought processes. In this way language structures do shape the attitudes and possibly also the behaviour of those using them and vice versa. Hence the factors influencing language learning for any individual can be very complex and the situation of individuals needs to be considered when assessing their learning capacity, as distinct from their current level of proficiency or knowledge. Whether or not residents of a country should be required to learn a language, encouraged to keep developing the skills or in other ways enter into the community is not the focus of this paper. However, it is appropriate to say that language is probably the single most important factor enabling a person to become a member of a community if the person is to function autonomously. This is not to be taken as saying that a person should not also remain a member of his/her first speech community, but it does seem that there comes a point in the learning where the individual must make a decision (possibly almost always at the subconscious level) whether or not to fully enter into the speech community of the new language and part of the basis for this decision will come from their immediate circle of contacts, their personal etherics.

Some people who have made Australia their home say there is a sense of great excitement on arrival even if tinged with sadness at having left their country of birth. There are also feelings of appreciation at the sense of freedom they find in their new country. The initial period after arrival is important because it can set a pattern for the way new residents will form links with the new lifestyle. If they are not able to be occupied or to interact they can lose momentum and feel that they do not belong. In this sense the will of the individual to learn the language and the will of those in the new language culture to facilitate the learning are key factors.

On the other hand some hand some teachers said that Australian society has come to lack a sense of cohesion, at a stage in the ongoing process of introducing ongoing numbers of people from many different cultures and language backgrounds and at the same time respecting the rights of all residents to obtain their own cultural identity. There is an ongoing challenge in maintaining a balance between building a sense of what it means to be an Australian whilst at the same time enabling people to retain their own cultural links thus enriching the wider community in ongoing spirals. Participating in activities such as arts and crafts, sports, outdoor interests such as gardening, as well as an interest in matters of global concern relating to the environment, transcend barriers of language and culture. Opportunities to be part of such endeavours are available to all, often at no or little cost. As participating in sensory experiences such as viewing an art exhibition or listening to a musical performance enables native English speakers to enter into the cultural world of someone who does not speak their language. So also visits to Art Galleries, Museums and similar places facilitate discussion and writing activities for migrant students because they introduce the students to aspects of the culture, its history, and the society.
On the following pages is a personal account of the refugee experience, chosen because of its clarity and because it is representative of the story of many. In the next chapter there is a discussion as to some of the ways cultural influences from the learning environment, longer established Australian customs, and the traditional of waves of new settlers may interact, in the process supporting language activities.

THE LIFE OF REFUGEE

I was born and grown up in a family in which all people loved each other.

In 1989 I escaped from Vietnam to the Philippines for a lot of reasons. This was the first time I was away from my family but there was no other way.

In May 1989 I escaped with 76 people by boat, that was a dangerous escape which I have never forgotten. There was not enough water. Three then four days passed but we didn’t see where land was. Just the large mass of water and the waves around us, day by day. The disappointment on us instead of hope, we didn’t know where we were going.

On the fifth day we saw a lot of ships we signalled with whatever we could, and someone prayed, but the more we saw ships the more we were disappointed because there was no one paying attention on us. On the fifth day, later in the afternoon, we saw a ship which was not far from us. We could see the flag and people on it and we tried to do whatever we could with thinking that they would rescue us, but they didn’t do as we thought. The sun rose and set yet again someone became exhausted and sea-sick.

Do you know what happened to us on the sixth day? In the morning of the sixth day a light storm came and dread began coming to us, the winds and the waves made the boat bob up and down and our boat went thought that our life should be sunk deep in this sea.

Everyone cried and prayed until at noon we fortunately saw a few fishing boats of the Philippines who rescued us and gave us water and food. They led us to Subic Bay that was a base of the American Army in the Philippines. We stayed there two days before being transferred to a transit centre in Manilla. After a three week stay there we were transferred to Palawar on which is a refugee camp. The happiness didn’t disappear on everyone’s face for a while then unluckily things happened to us again, because we came after the cut-off day, so we must be interviewed by the Philippines Government officials. If we passed the interview we would be given Refugee status (abbreviation, RS). If not we would be classed as an economic refugee.

The life of the refugee camp was difficult. We had to share together food, water.......even a place to sleep.
Have you ever imagined 20 and more people in a house (length 6 or 7 metres and wide 3 metres) with a coconut leaf roof? Everyone always lived in a worried, waiting situation because we didn’t know what would happen later. After a long time of waiting for the result, there were
a few passing the interviews and some who didn’t. And the repatriation program was spoken about from the loudspeaker of the communication section. Some who were lucky passing the interview were transferred to another camp which is called ‘Batian’ and then waited for the delegation of the country to which they wanted to go to.

And what would happen to the other one who was denied? There were a lot of people who had left behind them, their relatives, properties and position, and even their life, to look for the ‘freedom’ but what were they receiving now? ‘Freedom?’ No! ‘Properties?’ No! Everything? No! There were also some who were broken hearted and cried out with tears when they saw their children or relatives who were dying from thirst and hunger and put them down in the sea, and also there were some who were victims of sea pirates, but on the contrary they are still in detention, all of the countries in the world have almost forgotten them and what will happen to them later?

When they farewelled their friends who were lucky and went to another place, the ‘best wish’ of the denied one and ‘words of consolation’ of the leaving one, and the drops of tears on someone’s face will be remembered. There were no words to describe the happiness of the leaving one and the feeling of the denied one.

After one-and-a-half years waiting for the result the day which the refugee people were waiting for with a worried, anxious feeling came to me in December 1990, that was an afternoon when I heard the loudspeaker read the list in which I heard my name. I came to receive the ‘decision’ and when I opened it, I couldn’t believe my eyes, it was a positive decision that means ‘passing’ there were about 25 people in my boat who ‘passed’. After that I was transferred to Batain camp also and I stayed there 1 year more before coming here. I am luckier than everyone who is still staying in a refugee camp without a future and do not know what is going to happen to them.....?

I think that no one can understand the feeling of the denied people if they are not in the rejected people’s position.

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As this young man has said, he was not as unfortunate as many, some of whom have lived in camps in terrible conditions for more than 9 years, so they have told me. Some also endured boat journeys of three weeks, saw babies born and people die on the boats, and were robbed and physically attacked (some killed) by pirates. Such experiences and their memories forge the links of a etheric, even if the people never meet.
A view of the energy field of a pair of hands through the Kirlian photographic technique.
CHAPTER 3

Man cannot live without ideal aims which relate his endeavour and his suffering and his joy to something more lasting and more unitary than the sum of individual activities..... without such an aim he falls into cynicism or despair, by which the will to live is indefinitely nullified.

Charles Hartshorne

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, CULTURAL INFLUENCES AND PERSONAL EXPRESSION: INTERACTIVE SPIRALS

In this chapter there will be some consideration of the ways drawing was used to facilitate the development of language communication in adults and children. Some of the sessions were with colleagues as a preparation for using the method in class time. Some sessions with adults were at their request and were not for language learning but to assist them express for themselves something which was important to them. There is also an account of ways in which some migrants have used their traditional arts to record their perceptions and memories of the migration experience, especially of the refugee experience. This was not within a class situation but during a public exhibition of their work.

COLOUR: Visual Arts and Crafts

Many people find non-verbal modes of expression, such as craft or some form of painting to be very fulfilling, and in those cultures where the bulk of the population has traditionally been rural and where education may have been limited to a few years of primary school the people have often developed their skills in arts and crafts in the same way that people in other cultures are expected to develop their skills in reading and writing. These artistic and craft skills serve varied purposes in that they provide modes of self-expression and communication as well as providing practical decorations for the home, for gifts, for self-adornment or as a source of income.

If one considers the popularity of cartoonists in this society and their frequent focus on political and social issues it would be reasonable to say that drawing, along with painting, music and similar artistic endeavours are means of communication and can serve as a focus to attract those of a like mind and enable them to join in a common etheric to some extent. Through the centuries, groups within many countries have selected a particular piece of music being identified with products, organisations or sports, to name a few examples.

During 1991 the writer attended an exhibition of migrant women’s art and craft at Fairfield NSW. Artists from many different cultural backgrounds displayed their work and the range of media used was extensive. The standard of work was impressive and there was the additional
pleasure of being able to meet some of the artists, many of whom lived locally. Among the works displayed were a series of scenes through which a Lao artist (1) portrayed the rape of her country and its flora and the suffering of the people and the fauna. One scene depicted vegetation and a few animals. The next showed what may have been introduced animals such as those bred for husbandry. Another scene showed the people in the fields, interrupted in their work by soldiers. People were shown on the river in their makeshift individual ‘boats’ consisting of a single tyre, making the dangerous journey across a river to the dubious safety of the opposite bank where they were depicted as being met by more soldiers. The representation was poignant and could be said to also represent the experiences of many people from a number of countries now in Australia and others still in a refugee situation who have had to flee their homes because of violence. Other artists also displayed works in which they illustrated the daily life of the people on the farms and showed the intensive labour methods of threshing and storing the main crop, rice, as well as fine detail showing the growing of corn and other vegetables, and various scenes depicting farm animals. These details have been included because they illustrate the way art can be used as a way of expressing experiences and memories often too deep for verbal communication and reflect scenes which are in the memory of many migrants, especially those who have been refugees.

This exhibition also displayed another art form in displays of national costumes which were clearly highly labour intensive to make. A young Hmong woman pointed out that in the past women in her country had not usually continued their schooling beyond a minimum and it was part of their daily ritual to engage in some form of needlework. The exhibition was attended by Australians from migrant and non-migrant backgrounds but was not as widely patronised as it deserved. I believe it is an annual or biannual event and hope that this and other similar events become more appreciated.

Few would doubt that Australia’s ongoing policy of multi-culturalism has produced a richer and more colourful and out-going society, with many local festivals and exhibitions recognising the varied cultural backgrounds of the people in the area. It is also important that at the same time there has been, and needs to be continuing, an increased recognition of the unique beauty of our Aboriginal culture, and those who bear its legends and practise their arts are being given more of the respect which is their due.

As a means of cross cultural communication music and singing are a unifying medium and can create a group ethic of whether or not the audience are passive or participating, although there seems to be a closer unity when members of the audience feel able to join in. In small community centres increasing numbers of Australians are also learning varied methods of painting on various mediums, including on fabrics for wearing apparel and photography as an art form is well established. All of this is an important indicator of grass-roots cultural growth which is an expression of the heritage and ongoing life force of the people who are here now and are living their lives within the Australian culture. I believe that it is now crucial for Australian residents of all backgrounds to be able to experience some sense of identity with this land. Multiculturalism is a valued concept but it needs to incorporate an element which expresses a commonality of perception and identity for the people who live in Australia, perhaps expressing aspects of why they choose to live here, our values and a recognition of our
anthropological and ecological roots. A recent visit to the United States brought home to me the extent of this lack in Australia, and many people have now expressed to me their concern about the need to develop a sense of pride and identity in the concept ‘Australian’.

When asked, people said that colour in their living environment was important. Those who had lived for long periods in places which tended to be ‘gray’ said how much they appreciated the comparative green of Sydney and that they felt their health and moods were influenced. Birren (1965) and others, in conversation, agree that colour in clothing affects the way we are perceived by others. For example, in a boys’ school I noticed that women teachers tended to wear black or navy, with possibly white, particularly on days when they took the assembly. They did not state this as a conscious intention, but when the subject was brought to their attention they said that the darker colour and more tailored styles tended to engender a more amendable student response. I also noted that executive women in other education systems, and women in politics consistently chose more neutral colours when they were attending a meeting or a public function while on the other days this might not be the case. A man in a TAFE Diploma class told me that, in management training he had received through his company, he had been told that brown was a ‘loser’s colour for a man’. I have never read this anywhere else and have noticed that in 1994, brown has started to appear more frequently in women’s clothing stores at least in some areas. I do not know if this has any significance other than that somebody likes the colours! One can attend seminars to learn about choosing colours which it is claimed will ensure a positive and successful business image. Birren (1965) has also written of the use of colour in industry as for designating safety procedures warning signs, safety equipment and other important instructions. Excellent little booklets are available from Workcover detailing these in a simple and multi-lingual format.

Within a classroom situation posters are a helpful way of adding colour to the atmosphere. I have found that subjects such as flowers or some theme from nature are preferable to say, a travel poster with the name of the place. For adult migrants, there will always be someone who becomes nostalgic when they see it and, on a daily basis, this is not constructive. The situation could be different on infrequent occasions such as in a focused lesson in which nostalgic feelings are acknowledged, expressed and respected. I feel concern that anyone should be exposed to such memories by a daily environmental stimuli. Hence, Australian scenes are preferable.

The focus of the research undertaken was on the use and impact of drawing, music, and other factors not specifically related to curriculum, on facilitating the learning of English by adults, mostly migrants to Australia. The project built on, and included new work also with children who experienced problems with learning to read and write or in developing speech communication. The inquiry process has lasted more than five years with different groups of learners but I believe that the conscious idea for the study began when the writer was working with two groups of adult students, many of whom were recent arrivals from the war experience. Many such people find difficulty concentrating. Some who had been personally traumatised were able to attend special counsellors but most were not eligible for such support and, in an effort to assist them improve their written communication I asked if they would like to draw a picture and talk about it if they wished. The activity was well received and was effective in
facilitating the expression of their thoughts in English. One man, who was a very recent arrival in a class with people who had been in this country for longer periods, was very keen to work through a series of drawings about aspects of his life in his country and about the conflicting demands on his time and energy that he was experiencing in trying to settle his wife and family into this new life. In the course of his talk he said that he had woven a carpet before leaving his country as a means of calming his anxieties. He was a well-educated man and he said that his mother had taught him the craft. He caused laughter in the group when he described how he developed an aching back from bending over his project. On request from the whole group he brought in the carpet the next day to the admiration of staff and students in general. As a result of this exercise other teachers asked if I would support them in their introduction of a drawing exercise with their students. This extension to other classes was a natural progression as many teachers receive drawings from students most often when the student, adult or child, experiences some inability to express a thought or concept. More recently drawing was used by some of my students who were trying to convey their preferred work goals but lack an adequate English vocabulary, for example, a man drew a stack of bricks and a trowel and others chose scenes or equipment from their desired occupations or training options where they did not know the terminology, greatly facilitating the teacher’s documentation of their goals. This is very helpful in improving students’ morale as many say they feel powerless in their determination of their future lives.

As previously indicated in chapter 1 the inquiry process included some sessions with adults, some of whom were teachers who later used the drawing process with their classes. We worked in very small groups using slightly damp paper and painting with only one colour at a time, although several colours were available for a sequence of paintings if someone wanted to do this. Music was played during these sessions with the participants expressing satisfaction with their sense of well-being afterwards. On the first residential for this course (January, 1990) I offered a workshop and people from different years participated using crayons as a medium. People participated at a level of their choice and some gave feedback in the group while others did not. Two group members I had known for a long time produced drawings which depicted an extraordinary synchronicity, other people told me that they had really valued the experience and one told me much later that he had used his drawings as a stimulus for ongoing personal reflection and had later taken up drawing in a class. On another occasion in 1991 I presented a workshop with a smaller group of peers from different years and two staff members participating. This time we included some creative movement to music prior to the session of drawing with crayons and group members talked about their perception of the experience.

From their comments the teachers believed the process to have been empowering for their students as the students were free to progress to some other activity or conference with the teacher about labelling their drawing or writing a story about it. These drawing sessions were introduced about two or three times a term over a range of class levels and in different learning centres. They were not lengthy in time as the students progressed smoothly into other activities available for them. The drawing was found to be a useful activity for pre-writing although care was taken as to which groups were offered drawing, these being mostly people whose English levels were low and who were in their first or second course, the drawing experience proving
especially helpful for people illiterate in their first language. As noted there were a few occasions where drawing was viewed as being able to fill a communication need not otherwise readily available for a particular situation.

The teachers chose to keep the drawing sessions low key, and well integrated with other activities. An exception was made to this, however where a teacher was interested in offering her students the opportunity to be involved within a few days of their finishing their studies. As this was a teacher who had expressed interest very early in the inquiry a time was organised. I was present at two sessions with this teacher with the sessions being two years apart and both with exiting students. The impression was that there seemed to be a difference in their responses although each time the work was of a high standard visually, with the teacher participating and including her work for comment. The first group was in 1989 with a group who had reached the highest level offered in the region at the time, (although not the highest level of study available). Although concerned about their prospects of employment or further study this mixed group was overall, quite positive about their visions for the future although some did include symbols from a troubled past. The second existing group (in 1991) was predominantly women and revealed a greater concern about what opportunities would be available to them in the future for employment or training. They were encouraged to expand their vocabularies to describe their drawings (in writing) such as with verbs in combination with another word, after they had made any initial comment they wished. The feedback on the verbs was not individual but was written as a general summary on the board with no specific explanations. It was noted that they, and indeed all those who participated in a drawing session could not easily find a verb to describe a drawing, nouns fitting much more comfortably into their descriptive response.

For the first session in 1989 the group and the teacher (who participated) chose to display their work and other teachers and classes were invited to view them in a small centre where most people knew each other to the same extent. In the 1991 session I was just a visitor to this much bigger centre and I suggested that the viewing should remain within the group who had participated and if they wanted to display their work after they had reflected then it might be made available to a wider group. However, the decision was made by the staff that they would also like to see the work but not with students’ names showing.

It is not unusual for teachers to use simple sketches to illustrate basic verbs such as for simple activities when working with beginning classes. Pictures are also considered valuable for providing a basis for the linking of more complex concepts involving the initiating of activities or actions and for students to draw their own concepts is just an extension of this. Students also liked to use drawings to clarify the names and intensity of colours and these offer a ready means of assisting them to make connections with their first language concepts. Most people are interested to know the names of colours they are wearing and it was noticed that, after sessions when colours were identified (whether or not drawing was involved) numbers of people started to wear a greater variety of colours and the teacher encouraged this. Such small responses seemed to be very important in facilitating the students’ sense of belonging and of being of significance in the group.

43
GEORGE

George is a native English speaker, said to have been a “very bright little boy” before he was hit by a car aged 11. He sustained a head injury which had impeded his educational progress although he had completed Year 12. He was 18 when I met him in a TAFE class where he was studying for a specific profession. He was said to be unable to record his responses in writing and needed an amanuensis for class written work, although George dispensed with her services in my subject after a week or two saying that he could cope. His social interactions with his own age group were, however, a problem and this hurt him.

When he needed extra explanations about his work I tried to speak with him outside class to reduce the attention from other students and at one time suggested to him that he might try drawing at home to develop his written communication. After some discussion with his mother he asked if I would work with him and we worked through a total of eight sessions which involved painting with one colour per painting on damp paper. Sometimes he wanted to talk about the painting but usually he wanted to talk about music he had brought along as an accompaniment. He was quite knowledgeable about popular music of the ‘folk’ variety and was interested in various artists. He also usually wanted to discuss any concerns with his TAFE work which almost always lapsed into some negative comments about other students with whom he had had disagreements. However, to my observation he was not blameless and he would admit this when challenged. Over time George’s behaviour in class improved, he was producing assignments, clearly did try to study for tests and was quite enthusiastic about the subject and most of his other subjects, eventually passing in some of them.

Unfortunately, as time went by, George began to over indulge in alcohol, particularly dangerous when combined with his medication, and he had many spells in hospital. His behaviour and tantrums at that time led to troubles with the police, and a diagnosis of schizophrenia, so he told me. He also complained that when his psychiatrist was overseas he was given a new medication that was either too strong or disagreed with him and that this made him very ill. I cannot verify this but I do know that he seemed exceedingly anxious and nervous when he telephoned me and that his speech, which had improved previously, had deteriorated greatly and remained indistinct for a long time which can create many problems such as being suspected of being drunk.

George began to live separately from his family and at first they seemed to give him a lot of support but, after a series of events they apparently disassociated themselves from him and he telephoned me to say that he was moving interstate. Since then he has resumed TAFE studies assuring me that he now has only one subject eluding him. He has a casual job and has gradually improved his budgeting and planning abilities to enable his life to run more smoothly. He has some friends although his personal relationships are still fraught with dissonance but he is learning to cope better with setbacks. He contacts me regularly, more often if he is anxious about something. We discuss world events and he is capable of making very perceptive comments on issues, sometimes with a wry humour.

I am aware that George’s wish to continue to communicate with me was originally as likely to
relate to his need to have someone to talk to, as to the efficacy of his painting experiences. However, I believe this summary of his story so far is important because it demonstrates that even a small intervention in a person’s life at a time when they are in need of support can have ongoing effects. George has made progress towards a greater awareness of himself as a person capable of showing concern for others instead of being focussed on himself. He befriends people he meets who he considers in need of help, and will buy a gift or send a greeting card. He is very much an individual whatever label someone may place upon him, but I believe the worst challenge he has had to face was the sense of loneliness at not being able to find friends who did not reject him for being ‘different’ other than people who have even greater problems than his own.

UNDER ACHIEVING CHILDREN

Apart from the adult migrant groups another category of participant in this research has been children with learning difficulties. These children were aged between 6 and 11. I worked in the research with individual children and their mothers who were interested in any possible benefits which might improve their children’s progress.

For the children who were involved in the research project their choices of colours were of great interest as they were all experiencing great learning difficulties and two were diagnosed as suffering from communication disorders. Through their children’s drawings the mothers found they had a further insight into the ways the children were perceiving colours and their world. It was noted that the children’s choice of colours changed over the period and the mothers also noted other individual factors which might have altered especially in terms of external behaviour. It was recognised that the fact that the child was being given the extra attention was in itself a variable.

These mothers had become interested in giving the extra time to working with their children and reflecting back on the process because, although the children were receiving some extra educational support the mothers did not perceive this as adequate. In one case the child had been receiving speech therapy but this was not available for some reason related to staff deployment for a period of a year and, in another case there were limited services in the country area where the family lived.

JOEL

Joel (the names of all learners mentioned are fictitious) had received speech therapy in the preceding year, although not during the year I worked with him. He was said to have a severe language deficit, his teacher saying that he could not hear the vowel sounds (although he had no identified hearing defect.) His mother said that he had been shown to have some food intolerances, a sensitivity he shared with some other family members and she was already very careful about the family diet. We discussed the desirability of supplements and I suggested she consult a naturopath. I felt that Joel (aged 6) might benefit from the sensory stimulus of massage. He seemed to be extremely sensitive to any changes in atmosphere and did not always sleep well and I believed that the massage, with a few drops of lavender oil in a carrier base, a
few times a week, might be beneficial. He was said to love this experience. The home program, additional to his school work, involved some drawing when he chose, and singing vowel sounds when he was practising his daily piano notes.

This child showed a marked improvement in every aspect of his life. His drawings, initially always in black, changed to lighter colours, with his eventually favouring pink, requesting that his mother buy him a pencil case and lunch box this colour. His school teacher considered that his recognition of sounds improved during the period but his mother said, that, during a few weeks (over a holiday period) when they had not practised using the piano notes, he seemed to slip back. The most noticeable and apparently lasting gain was that he was much more outgoing and started talking, to the point where he interrupted his parents if they were speaking to anyone else, in a way typical of younger children. It is obvious that the family, and especially the mother, invested a great deal of energy and thought in assisting this little boy to develop toward his potential. He was the youngest in the family and the mother gained considerable experience from bringing up her older children and from her determined search to find diagnosis and treatment for her son's problems. For a parent with younger siblings to carry out such an intensive program may not be possible, but we felt that this little boy did benefit as a person and he later was able to resume regular sessions with a speech therapist. Also suggested was that he be checked out for a postural problem which was treated and this added to his overall well-being.

**JOEY AND MEG**

There was a different emphasis when working with this family. These two, out of four children in the family, had considerable achievement delay in their school work, Joey also being said to be 'hyperactive' and having outbursts of anger. The family lived in a country area and the mother was very stressed. She felt that her children might have been affected by some sprays used in the area and also noted that there was a big wheat storage facility in the area. This mother was interested in learning about the principles of the Feingold (1974) (2) diet and it did seem that the hyperactive boy did improve greatly when he was restricted from ingesting certain foods. Joey and his mother were very early contacts and, as a response to my idea that different colours might modify a person's moods if worn next to the skin, the mother provided a small piece of crepe paper in a series of colours (one colour at a time over a week) and pinned to his inner clothing, on the basis that she would try anything! This was not the first trial of the idea as a number of interested adults had been experimenting and reported that there did seem to be some identifiable correlation with their moods. Some of these people had had a debilitating physical illness (such as Glandular Fever) and they used oranges and yellows, one woman telling me that she had a good response to all colours except the yellow, which made her feel sick. I thought green might be balancing and blue, aqua and purple tones were found by all to be calming. A number of adults particularly liked a peach colour. For Joey we started with a blue but, his teacher, his family and he himself agreed that he felt and behaved more calmly when he was wearing purple next to his skin. Because Joey was quite able to give verbal feedback, drawing was not the only indicator of his progress. In his case his mother reported that dietary changes were found to be very significant because he was 'hyperactive' after ingesting some foods, while comparatively calm when he avoided them. This mother also
several times referred to the fact that her children had been very distressed by some experience in the extended family so there were probably also emotional factors involved but, as the mother did not volunteer further detail, I felt it best to respect the family’s privacy. This mother was referred to me by a teacher who knew her and my contact was by STD telephone and post, offering the mother information and support on a regular basis on subjects she believed to be useful to her management of her children’s problems. Meg, the daughter, was thought by her teacher and her mother to have a very low self-esteem.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

I had interviews and follow-up sessions with a number of other mothers and children. Dietary intolerances (especially caffeine, including as in Coca-Cola drinks and additives such as colours) were common problems and many people thought that drinking milk (although not necessarily cheese and yoghurt) caused respiratory congestion. It was noticeable that almost ALL the children in the discussions suffered from asthma at least sometimes. I passed on the results of my reading which included the negative effects on paint fumes, cigarette smoke (including on clothes and furnishings) unsealed particle board, and chemical sprays (especially aerosols).

I also felt concerned at the allergen causing items I saw in some primary school rooms: carpets which were rarely cleaned and if so, by old and inefficient vacuum cleaners, and dirty old cushions which were used at story times. In addition, many people said that exposure to cold was an asthma trigger and schoolrooms were not heated. In winter I have been in classrooms in which the temperature did not rise above 10 C. It is worth noting that I was told that pre-school centres are not heated. It can be very cold indeed when children are being dropped off by working parents in the very early mornings, and these children are too young to be aware they are cold or to complain. In one school, now rebuilt, conditions were very poor and had been so for years. In one room the ceiling was cracked open and some horrible substance was visible, I thought it might be asbestos. When it rained water leaked through and an unpleasant yellow liquid trickled down under which the teacher placed a bucket (this of course did raise a few wisecracks from the upper primary boys as they filed in!) Another factor which was a problem was leaking fluorescent tubes.

I have worked in schools and education centres of different types, some were kept clean, some were not and I consider that this can result in a big difference in staff and student health as well, of course, of morale. However, it needs to be said and is, I believe in harmony with the main focus of this thesis, that the people who work and study in an environment need to take responsibility for its upkeep insofar as that is in their power. It may be news to some that ordinary teachers often have very little influence on policies governing cleaning but they can encourage the learners, and children, especially primary aged, are more willing to join in. Secondary students are not always so amenable. The other matter which needs a reference is what is sold in school tuckshops and the placement of vending machines for Coca-Cola beverages which numbers of parents felt were harmful to their child’s well-being. I have been on staffs which made a decision, agreed to by the parents’ groups, of not to sell some items from the school canteen. This is an issue which seems to be more rather than less of a concern

47
because schools are trying to find money for so many extra items such as computers and musical instruments or sporting equipment.

I emphasise that when new schools or extensive renovations are planned, that it would be admirable if the planners took initiative and tried out different types of floorcoverings. Teachers do not favour a return to polished boards because of the noise factor but an increasing number of parents are removing carpets from at least part of their homes because of children’s asthma. A number of my adult students, who come from countries where homes are uncarpeted, have told me that in the hope of improving their child’s health, they are seeking new rental accommodation which has polished floors. I mentioned to them that they would also need to take care with children’s fluffy toys and items such as cushions. It is to be noted that these families had not experienced ‘allergy’ problems before coming to Australia and, while other factors would be of influence, the parents report that, the children’s health has improved since they removed all or a large portion of the carpet from the home.

As noted, children with learning difficulties eventually develop a negative perception of themselves and their achievements and/or a negative attitude to study. Numbers of parents have found that self-esteem improved when the child was able to experience some success in another field of endeavour. For some, music has been the answer, either learning an instrument or joining in a school choir. For others, successful participation in sport or some other physical activity is helpful. There may be a specific physical flow on in that the body is more co-ordinated and this facilitates school skills but in any case, the improvement in general attitude flows on to the child’s attitude in the classroom.

**VISUAL PERCEPTUAL PROBLEMS AND COLOUR**

For a number of students who exhibited specific symptoms it was suggested that they be tested for tinted glasses. Where the test was positive the response of the children was wonderful. In some cases there was an immediate improvement in their work in others this was slow, but the child described changes in his visual perception which were quite new for him. There is a problem in that the lenses said to be specific to this problem, called by Irin (1991) Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome, are relatively expensive and may be out of the reach of some families (although during the last few years the situation has improved with manufacture of the lenses being available in Australia, thus reducing delivery time and costs.) At least one family used the services of a regular optometrist who supplied a standard tinted lens and this 13 year old boy said his glasses were helpful. However, his long term attitude to schoolwork did not noticeably improve but there were other complicating factors, one being the reputation he had already established with other students.

I also know a number of adults who found the tinted lenses of use after they experienced problems using tinted computer screens or after having had an injury. If the problem is severe, one measure being the length of time the individual can read before experiencing distortion, and the family cannot afford the lenses, it is worth trying another aid, that is, plastic theatre gels which can be obtained in a wide range of colours and which cannot hurt the user as they can simply discard them if they do not achieve the desired improvement in visual perception. Since
1993 I have been told by a number of people that eye doctors and optometrists are more often suggesting sets of exercises, increasing gradually in difficulty, instead of prescribing glasses. There are books available describing the Bates' (1919) method of eye exercises but I do not know whether this would benefit the problem described as scotopic sensitivity.

However, I do know that over years of listening to students' comments on the different world they perceive when they wear their tinted glasses one could only be aware that the eyes are affected by lights of different spectrums and this led to my curiosity about vibrations within and without the body as, over a period, some people seemed to find that they needed lenses of a less intensive colour. I asked the question if this meant that they had in fact lacked that colour in their personal energy fields and had subsequently absorbed it through the wearing of tinted lenses. The other perspective is that they might have 'too much' of a colour vibration in their energy fields and that the wearing of a particular hue, opposite in the spectrum, helps to remedy the imbalance. I developed this perspective after listening and speaking with some young adults and older children who said that they were intolerant of yellow foods (this for some included margarines and butters) but who were later tested and supplied with purple lenses, this being at the opposite end of the spectrum. I feel that the reason some people experience such problems needs consideration as their bodily vibratory fields, as later discussed in more detail, are clearly not in harmony. It seems that this can develop from many causes, including pre-birth experiences and medications, food and chemical allergies and intolerances, and the wrong kind of lighting. Cool white fluorescent globes are known to be a problem for numbers of people while the Daylight globes are said to be more neutral. Chopra (1988) also believes that emotional experiences can equally cause a disharmony and this was supported by the comments of others. Nevertheless, the physical difficulty is in itself very real for some people and in the last few years I have certainly come to include medication administered in the birth process, ultra sounds pre-birth and possibly asthma medications. I am not suggesting that any of these are not necessary but, from discussions with mothers of children who have perceptual problems, I would say they must be considered.

One other factor which has been noted is that while coloured pens are very useful for differentiating sections of material written on the white board or overhead projectual sheet it is a matter for comment that numbers of students, both adults and children, experience difficulties in perceiving material written with red pen. Teachers need to check this out with class members because the individuals concerned do not know that they cannot see such components and will therefore omit sections or make other apparent errors. This perceptual problem does not seem to necessarily be formally diagnosed colour blindness.

**MUSIC, VIBRATION AND LIFE PROCESSES**

During this study and for some years beforehand the writer has used music to create a relaxed or energising atmosphere in learning environments ranging from senior secondary to primary writing groups as well as with the adult language learning groups. Another teacher has found music valuable in senior science classes during writing activities. The use of music is more accessible to teachers than are many other changes to the classroom, such as by changing colour, and it is helpful in creating a relaxed atmosphere which facilitates concentration and can

49
also assist in reducing annoying external noises.

Hal A. Lingerman (1983) (3) has written of the links between the vibrations of colours and those of music and has pointed out that every sound has a colour equivalent which can be seen clairvoyantly by some. For many more people who cannot see the colours produced by sound there is still a strong stimulus to the imagination, a fine example of this audio-visual relationship being in the Walt Disney classic Fantasia (1940), Lingerman points out that the vibrations produced by musical sounds can combine to form ‘Archetypes’ or patterns of meanings which “reside in a superphysical field of thought and meaning”. These archetypes would seem to bear a relationship to the patterns reflecting emotions conveyed by music described by Manfred Clynes in his work on Sentic (1970) (4) which, he says, is the basis of communication and the basic element of language. He says that the essentic form is the basis of the expressive act whether it be through gesture, touch, dance, song, music or tone of voice. Clynes concluded that essentic states, like colours, are a process resulting from a mix of basic elements varying with the communicator and the medium. A simple example would be that even a dog will know its owner’s emotional response to a behaviour, by the owner’s tone of voice, even though it may not understand the words used. Within all of us are the proto-essentic states which give rise to the essentic forms. The body must, in a way, however slight, respond to sound vibration by an alteration in shape or tension. As colours also have a vibration it is possible that they also can cause a similar response, although it might not be as identifiable.

**ADULT LEARNERS, CHILD LEARNERS AND MUSIC**

Whatever the background of the students in a class, it is helpful to create a classroom atmosphere which belongs to that group of people and, in the sense described above, music is helpful in contributing to this so that students might be expected to assume a particular mental set for the period of the class. This is very important because of the great variety in the learner’s backgrounds and hence learning styles. Music can help to break down communication barriers and also help adult learners who have difficulty in sitting for extended periods because they have previously led very physically active lives.

It is helpful to offer students short breaks where they can stretch and walk about for a brief period and lively music creates the right mood for this. When this interlude is over the teacher can replace the music with a more tranquil piece and indicate that it is time to resume work. This has worked very well for all groups. During these classroom relaxing periods students can practise their social skills in English and also learn a few stretching exercises which are useful for sedentary workers. All students who were given such opportunities seemed to really enjoy it and settled back to work appropriately.

On a few occasions adult learners did become involved in the music as in the following examples: one gentleman broke into an impromptu dance and tried to involve the teacher, much to the amusement of his wife who was also in the class. On another occasion a tape was being played which featured many popular songs in an instrumental version. The group was concentrating on improving their writing skills when one of the men burst into song with the word ‘Feelings’ as that particular song was played. That was the only word he sang, apparently
unaware that he had sung it aloud. He was then silent but, to the delight of the listeners, he repeated the performance on another occasion when the tape was played.

Many learners took an interest in the music played as a background to written work. The music chosen was generally not identifiable with a particular culture, such as in ‘relaxing’ style music played partly electronically, or with pan pipes or similar. It was found that if music identifiably related to the culture of one group in the class that others felt left out unless a piece from their culture was also played. As it is not always possible to do this, and in any case the music was not intended to be a focus, more traditionally ‘universal’ music was used, preferably in instrumental versions. Some classical music was played in all classes, one teacher apparently always playing classical music. However, in classes of people who were very passive it was not found to be as useful as music which was more stimulating, as opposed to music which was more relaxing. It was also noted that younger school students did not respond well to very relaxing music as a background to writing, but seemed to concentrate better with music of a more lively beat (these students all being Primary aged boys, over 40 in number, over two terms.) I also felt that the children gained more benefit when they were able to be in some way active or reactive with the music, rather than doing something else with a musical background.

While the use of music and drawing in classes was not intended as a therapy but as an adjunct to language learning it has been shown by others to be therapeutic and university courses have become available in art and in music therapy since 1991-2. The theologian and ecologist, Matthew Fox (1990) has described a workshop he gave in Ireland. He was warned that people would not be interested because of the ongoing war. When the people came to the workshop he says that they seemed drained of energy, carrying the fourteen years of war on their shoulders. During the workshop they participated in imaging, drawing and circle dancing and he says that they changed, so that at the end of the day they said they had gained a new perspective on the past fourteen years.

THE GROUP EXPERIENCE

Teachers usually offer opportunities for beginning English learners to mix socially to practise their English, sometimes with a higher level class for a short period. During one such occasion, it was very gratifying for a man, who felt very lonely because he had no family here, to be able to express himself in English adequately enough to learn that another man, from a very different culture and background, shared his religion. This seemed to give him hope that he could begin to make connections with others through this shared interest, if not on a cultural or language basis. In other classes some learners had concerns about the hospitalisation of children and they received great support from other class members who listened while a mother talked about her frustrations in not being able to adequately understand doctors’ explanations of tests that had been carried out. This woman has since said that the experience of being able to talk about her feelings in a supportive environment enabled her to overcome her distress and resume her former optimistic outlook about her family’s future in settling into a new country without the support of any extended family.

The sharing of such experiences in a group, can enable language learners to develop contacts
and thus share a network, at least within a purpose and time framework which might continue outside the classroom. This is of great importance to people commencing their lives in a new land and concurrently learning new language. For some, who have lived in transit camps for possibly ten years, their arrival in Australia is a time for letting go, because they can at last begin to put out roots and make an attempt to belong after living on a state of uncertainty for so long. It seems that, although these people have had years to let go of their grief at leaving family and homeland there are still issues which have not been dealt with because their leave-taking was hurried and forced and they were obliged to suppress their feelings and emotions. It is not surprising that, after a period of settling in, they might find memories emerging as they gradually let go of their fears and settle into a new life. It sometimes seems that they have been emotionally frozen, not daring to think about whether or not their lives would ever improve through being admitted to another country as a permanent resident.

Some people have experienced additional grief through forming attachments to people they met in transit countries and who were chosen to migrate to another country other than Australia, leaving each bereft. Others, though feeling themselves fortunate at being accepted to live in Australia, feel great sadness at the situation of the ‘denied ones’ as one young man graphically described the people left behind in a camp. Another person, a midwife, had worked alongside an Australian nurse in a camp and she missed her friendship and her work. It is not suggested that either students or teachers have the power to alter such concerns but it is something of a dilemma as to whether or not people should be given the opportunity to tell of their grief experiences. Many do take the opportunity of entrusting their stories to teachers or other students when openings arise and sometimes they create openings themselves. It is considered that the opportunities to express feelings through non-language modes of communication such as in a drawing, fill a need because people do not have to offer any further explanation if they do not want to, they can choose to extend their communication in writing or through a conversation if they wish, and they can also be reminded that it is possible for them to paint or draw at home, and this is something that a number of learners and teachers have commented on, because they had simply not thought about doing this since childhood and they found that they quite enjoyed the experience.

Crabb (1961) Lozanov (1975) Hamel (1978) Lingerman (1983) and McLellan (1988) among others have documented that the vibrations of music and singing alter the vibrations in spaces and living matter with which they come into contact, especially over time. Singing in particular enables the gradual development of resonance if the right tones are produced and over a sufficient time period. Hikes (1991), Campbell (1992) and others have re-discovered the benefits of Harmonics as practised by the monks in Tibet. Music, if used intensively is thus able to alter the vibrational rate of several of the human body’s energy fields. It is a valuable adjunct to the learning environment if used with discretion and chosen with care. Negative effects would be if music is played too loudly, repeated too frequently, or if music from a particular culture is played when there are class members from other backgrounds in the group who feel that this is favouring that cultural group over theirs. It is not suggested that music be played all the time, but introduced a few times a week for part of a lesson. If the teacher notices that the class seems to be reacting unfavourably to a particular tape this should be noted and not included in the ‘program’ again. Music is an important addition to the teacher’s resources.
aimed at varying the learning environment to engender a positive atmosphere in the classroom, and to facilitate an improvement in concentration for reading and writing tasks. At the present time this is often difficult because many English learners are pessimistic about their future and some project this on to the teacher and the learning environment.

Teachers may introduce students to a variety of learning modes early in their course as many are accustomed to very structured learning environments and, although this can have benefits, it does mean that they are often unable to transfer their language knowledge to situations outside of the classroom. They seem to perceive English as belonging to specific situations and fail to ‘switch on’ to their English knowledge informally. It is important that learners be able to integrate English into all dimensions of their lives as this facilitates their interactions with the English speaking community, including into a work situation, and helps them make friends they would otherwise not meet. A majority of learners listed ‘making new friends’ as a priority goal for their language learning.

In the next and following chapters consideration will be given as to the ways the energy fields of human beings interact with their environments. However, before considering these complex relationships there is a further comment which needs to be made about the possibility of music acting as a destructive force on an environment and those in it. Writing in The Secret Life of Plants Thompkins and Bird (1973) describe many positive experiments where music was used to improve the health and growth cycle of plants, and even instances where the temperature in the soil of a field was inexplicably two degrees higher, presumably through an accumulation of energy from the resonating effects of the sound waves. However, in another experiment where the same two notes were played for twelve hours daily all the plants save the African Violet died after a few weeks (of boredom probably!). In other experiments hard rock music was found to be very destructive to the health of plants and lead to death.

These research findings with plants as the subjects are of interest as an example of the effects of sound on living forms. In all classes in which music was played the migrant students were in favour, but preferred a low volume (except at an end-of-term gathering.) Class members showed great interest in a new tape and would sometimes request a particular piece of music, while other people would occasionally bring along their own tape to share with the class. To summarise, music is a valuable addition in the learning environment but it needs to be varied and played at low volume. Although some adult students said they liked rock music at other times, no one wanted it to be played in class. In the school classrooms some primary teachers sometimes played the radio in class choosing programs which often featured rock music. When asked, numbers of students said that they did not like the kind of music but that they had ‘got used to it’. This is a reminder of how popular taste is shaped in our culture and the need for caution when subjecting young children to loud and repetitive noise, when they may be especially sensitive and vulnerable.
CHAPTER 4
LIFE FIELDS

"The more, as an irresistible effect of technical progress and reflection, mankind becomes conscious of the immensity, and even more, the organicity of the world around it, the more the necessity for a soul makes itself felt.....it becomes clear that the only form of spirit capable of producing this soul.....is the spirit capable of greater love and greater consciousness."

Teilhard de Chardin
Activation of Energy

In this chapter the human body and its energy fields will be considered as a complex of systems separated in functions but interacting in complex spirals. The ongoing processes of each system are influenced by, and in turn influence, the processes of each system, and these ‘master systems’ are in turn influenced by, and influence other living systems through their ongoing activities and processes. Within the complexity of these networks each system has its own laws and properties.

This principle that non-linear systems can be viewed as operating within a set of laws can be applied to the human system whether it be at the cellular level or whether it be at the level of the whole organism. The difference is that, for the human system, we know that there is a thought field of memory and intellect which has the capacity to make connections across space and time with other intellects. It is the human ability to lay down a deposit of wisdom through writing, through traditional story, through dance, song and art works which has enabled the species to draw on the past, although much has been lost through the destruction wrought by those who were unable to comprehend its value, such as during invasions over thousands of years. On the other hand, it needs to be recognised that while this wisdom may be inherited in direct and possibly also cellular forms, it is still necessary that each individual, each family, each society, process the understanding and make links with their particular world.

At the level of the individual the special functions of the body’s systems as, for example, in the skin or skeletal system, and including each individual cell, all can be viewed as functioning independently, while concurrently co-relating within the increasingly complex hierarchies which constitute the body as a whole. It is simplistic to view this infinitely complex ‘holistic’ body as being equal only to the sum of its parts when all the interacting systems create an energy through their interacting. In an illustration of his concept of Synergy, R.Buckminster Fuller (1975) (1) points out that the predictable behaviour of water cannot be anticipated from the behaviours of its components when observed separately. Gyorgy Doczi (1981) (2) has called the product of growth, DINERGY, and says that it is the source of the powers of the universe.

MUSIC AS THERAPY

In ancient times, such as within the Greek and Chinese civilisations, illness was treated with
music, the nature of the complaint determining the instrument and the pitch used (McLellan 1988) (3). Today, music is still used in some cultures, such as the North American Indians, some of whose Shamans work in the wider community as sound therapists (Garfield 1987). The application of music has been rediscovered as an accompaniment to modern treatments, such as dental treatment. Music as therapy is used for groups ranging from children to the aged, and music is commonly accepted as aiding relaxation, meditation or, in contrast, exercises. What has been less commonly discussed is that each organ and part of the body has a natural note, a vibration (McLellan 1988) (4). Taken together, these vibrations create a body chord which will be the mark of the individual through life, although it can become out of tune due to illness, trauma and some other factors. This body vibration is the basis of the aura of living organisms.

Harold Saxon Burr (1972) (5) worked for many years exploring evidence relating to the human aura which is said to have as many as seven layers. Each layer relates to one of the body’s energy fields. Burr concluded that it is the etheric body which determines the shape of whatever else is received from the environment.

In turn, the etheric body, is also affected by the health of the physical body and, later work demonstrates, by the thinking and emotive responses of the individual. The etheric field is an electro-magnetic vibrational field that shields and energises the dense physical body and integrates it with the Earth’s energy fields. It fluctuates continually in response to vibrational waves with which it comes in contact. It is clear that when this is extrapolated, taking into account that each living body, human, animal and also plant life, sends out vibrations into the cosmos (and possible to infinity), it is no longer possible to deny the inter-relationships between all life forms even though they may be vibrating and hence interacting within different vibrational bands.

Kirlian (1961) (6) and others who have studied the human aura in relation to physical health have said imbalances in the aural colours or shape precede the physical manifestations of serious ill-health. This belief was supported by work carried out by Saxon-Burr and his Associates at Yale University between 1935-60 which established that Life (L) Fields precede growth and development. Another researcher, Dr. Leonard Ravitz (1972) (7) considers that the electrical field determines the shape of the physical field, this electrical field being formed from the separate electrical currents emanating from the organs such as the heart and brain and from the skin and other body parts.

The work of these researchers indicates that nucleic acids are electrical conductors, their DNA and RNA macro-molecules interacting with their surroundings, the photons which contain the codes for ongoing functioning. Fritz A. Popp (8) a bio-physicist, formed the view that the DNA helix may act as a resonant circuit, with the DNA as the ‘coil’ and the membranes as parallel capacitors. He described the electromagnetic waves as ‘quantum information carriers’. As noted previously the harmonic functioning of this circuit can be altered within the body fields through physical illness or injury, disturbances in the thought or emotional fields due to, for example, trauma or drastic changes, the nature of which can, at least in part, be determined by the sensitivity of the individual.
Jones (1982) (9) says that “All vibrations... from the thoughts we think to those given off by inorganic substances... are scintillating with their own colour and sound and a guiding intelligence is present within their atomic structures.” Emphasising the links between thought, emotion and health. Chopra (1989) (10) points out that a 'depressed patient is sad throughout his body.' He says that a negative response to a stimulus is an ‘impulse of intelligence’ the thought and the molecule being tied together. He adds that thoughts must be brought out from the ‘deep regions’ beyond thought if a cure for illness is to be found. In his view the ‘neuro-peptide isn’t a thought but it moves with a thought, serving as a point of transformation... a thought of fear turns into a neuro-chemical... a transformation of matter into non-matter.’ With atoms subatomic particles are 99.99% empty space, therefore all solids, including our bodies, are proportionately as void as space.

THE THOUGHT FIELD

Chopra uses the following diagrammatic illustration to relate his statements to Newton’s theories and they are included here because of their value in demonstrating the internal processes involved in language learning and it would seem, having a corollary with the internalising of all learning. It is the reactions occurring within the life fields of the individual (i.e. under the line in the diagram) which determine the way the learning will be processed and hence, the eventual outcomes.

A-------B

CAUSE-------EFFECT

But he says that the diagram should be thus if A is a thought and B is a neuro-peptide:

A-------B

? 

The message doesn’t travel from A-B-C. The cells change with a thought, suddenly localised in time and space and with it all the brain’s cells are synchronised. Even a single photon of light can transmit a flash along the optic nerve although such a tiny stimulus would not be processed by the brain (a photon being a ‘quantum of light’ which has as yet no mass) as light can act as a wave or a particle but not as both at the same time.

LIGHT WAVE/PARTICLE---------WAVE/PHOTON

? 

Diagrams on this page are from Chopra (1989) (11)
The above is an example of non-matter being transformed into matter, as in the previous, examples of thought being transformed into neuro-peptides. Chopra gives the example that if a thought is A,...all others follow from A as physical processes and can be perceived as physical EXCEPT for the space between A and B.

\[ A \quad B \quad C \quad D \quad E \quad \text{etc} \quad **(12) \]

Work carried out by E.W. Russell (1973) (13) led to his concluding that the mind creates Thought (T) fields which interact with other Life Fields and other researchers have concluded that changes in mental states or consciousness correspond to variations in Life Fields. Because of the Life Fields we are able to recognise people after years of separation despite substantial changes in appearance.

Laeh M Garfield (1987) (14) points out that our individual body note is generated by the energy produced by the vibration of our body cells. We can change our energy waves through modifying the vibrations we emit, either consciously or unconsciously, and through the food we eat, the clothes we wear, through the use of perfume, or by wearing glasses or contact lenses, as some examples.

** Diagram adapted from Chopra D. (1989)

Alex Jones (1982) (15) has pointed out that ‘thought is one of the most potent forces in the universe’, the universe itself having begun as the result of God’s ‘imaginative thought’ and as a part of the Godhead we also have the potential to create. This applies to our bodies, our health and our environment.

Teachers and other concerned people recognise that situations and developments created by the human species interfere with innocent persons and other life forms, influencing and limiting their healthy development at all levels: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Examples include the lack of care in the use of pesticides and other chemicals, even the failure to acknowledge their effects until too late. The wars which many human beings have had to endure also necessarily leave mental and emotional scars as well as spiritual wounds.

Nevertheless, Jones (1982) (16) emphasises that most people have a considerable degree of responsibility for their own thought patterns over time and this follows through to our chosen pastimes, for example, the types of films watched. He points out that if a person has a healing treatment it is negated if the person follows it with negative thought or by watching a violent film.

**THE LIFE FIELD**

It can be said therefore that through the physical field the overall vibration of a human being (the aura) is affected by excesses or intolerances (as, for example, with food) the amount of
exercise, poor circulation, alcohol and other drugs and other substances which may be surgically inserted, such as silicon, as well as by harmful micro-organisms. These changes may not be discernible but if ongoing and cumulative, they can result in inharmonious vibrations which discolor or damage some parts of the aura (as viewed through the method of Kirlian photography) (17) thus diminishing the Life Field surrounding the body or leaving it vulnerable to penetration from negative energies emanating from the thought and emotional fields of others, as well as the more widely acknowledged mode of succumbing to physical infection. If the Life Field is damaged or permeated the mental, emotional, physical, and possibly ultimately the spiritual state of the individual will be affected.

Modern technology and science have enabled the people of many cultures to broaden their diets and to store food more safely and hence to improve the health of the population. Some cultures and religions take into account other factors such as the emotional state of an animal when slaughtered or have rituals relating to slaughter or the preparation of grains. Within the Chinese philosophic tradition it is believed that foods can be categorised as having Yin or Yang qualities and that there needs to be a balance between them. Nutritionists advocate a balanced diet from the major food groups to maintain health (e.g. Brostoff and Gamley: 1989) but some people need specific help to overcome allergies or intolerances which have developed.

However, there is growing discussion on the effects of chemicals and food additives and preservatives and it needs to be acknowledged that the body is vulnerable and will be affected by an excess of any substance. The body’s initial response may not be apparent for some time but if the excess is maintained, ill health will result, possibly also an intolerance or allergy to some food the tendency to which may be inherited which will not necessarily be easily identified (or may never be) but which can lead to a serious malfunction of body parts which eventually compound, causing serious breakdown.

CELLS

Chopra (1989) (18) points out that all cells of the body, including the vital organs, are replaced over determined periods of time, and says that this also applies to cancer and tumour cells. Such aberrant cells are the result of a memory that has persisted and ‘reincarnated’...a distorted blueprint of a cell. In health, the body senses deviation at a primary level and eliminates it. The immune system secretes interleukins, a hormone-like protein which is likely to replace Interferon as a cancer treatment. Chopra expresses concern that the research does not consider ‘interleukin’s intelligence’ which would be the source of the cell’s ability to fight cancer. The more discriminating the drug the less chance of it ‘hitting’ the one receptor needed to effect a cure. As he says, “If you misuse one string inside a piano, you have thrown everything out of tune.”

In attempting to place evolutionary change within a physics perspective Litvak and Senzee quoted D.G. Garan’s (1963) (19) image of the genetic core of the cell experiencing force in any one layer which causes a reciprocal distortion in one or more of the other layers hence causing it to lose its note or key and therefore to behave in a compensatory way. This can, for example, alter secretions or cause abnormal cell growth. However, there can also be ‘normal’ results
such as in the cell division of the developing foetus where the pressure created by the ever expanding cells was possibly a key factor in early differentiation.

**DISHARMONY**

If an inharmonious note is absorbed into the body through any of the layers or energy centres it must necessarily cause a distortion because the extra vibration cannot easily be absorbed if the body has been functioning harmoniously. However, in a state of disharmony the chord can be restored by the correct remedy although the difficulty is in ascertaining the precise amount needed so as not to absorb/ingest too much. With regard to maintaining stasis of the body, it needs to be recognised that such substances as potassium, calcium and sodium vary with nerve impulses and muscle activity, as does the production and action of body cells, and any vibration can have an effect either way through bio-feedback, causing behavioural change. The person who is very fit FEELS energetic because the body’s chemistry is well-balanced; the child who has had an excess of sweets or food colouring FEELS edgy and behaves in an excessively physical way because his bio-chemistry is out of balance. A similar effect is experienced by some people after ingesting caffeine in beverages such as coffee or ‘coke’ and for susceptible people, from chocolate. Comments made by and about children who demonstrate marked mood swings have often included references to certain foods and drinks as being ‘triggers’ which seemed to relate to poor concentration, and/or disruptive behaviour in class and at home. Some of the adults also experienced these problems and said that they often craved the very substances which cause their later discomfort. One family had even identified that a particular BRAND of cordial upset their son, although a similar colour in another brand did not.

While activities of development, management and interaction of DNA and RNA molecules are generally under the control of the individual’s central nervous system (or the cell’s nucleus) it needs to be recognised that it is not completely in either the physical or the psychological realm but rather a response to the forces resulting from the holistic functioning of the organism. Whether that is harmonious or otherwise will determine what happens in each spiral of regeneration. Hence a mutation of cell function and, in a more complex way, an alteration in behaviour, is likely to occur when there is a dissonance.

The way the cell responds to the disorder will determine whether the chaotic state is restricted to the immediate affected area and how soon resonance can be restored. To achieve this surrounding cells may need to be re-tuned. In one perception of reality this could mean by withdrawing from some systems (electro-magnetic fields) with which it may be out of harmony, even if the withdrawal is only temporary. This is what relaxation techniques, meditation, Yoga, Tai Chi and other practices aim to achieve.

When considering the ongoing process of cell memory, media reports in recent years and writers such as Chopra (1989)(20) seems to agree that it is linked to immunity and may be influenced by many sources, including antibiotics, through combinations and re-combinations of DNA and RNA through their nucleotide bases and through proteins and their amino acids building blocks. With greater insights into the evolutionary process there is ongoing concern in the community about the wide and frequently undetectable use of antibiotics, included in the
food chain. More and more people are declaring that these, and other chemical interventions need to be more carefully monitored.

To note some examples which seem to be of common concern, one could consider a child born in the 1980s. It is known that the child could have inherited genes which may have been altered over several generations by intrusive treatments, notably antibiotics, which for almost twenty years were used to treat every ailment, including long term low dosages for acne in adolescents. Several people (both males and females) who took such treatment said that they believe it to have harmed their immune system and feel that it has taken them a long time to reverse the side effects which included problems which developed in the digestive tract. A grandchild of such people could have a number of alterations to her genetic code. This same child has been born into a world in which fruit, grains and vegetables are sprayed with fungicides, pesticides and preservatives. Farm animals have anti-biotics and hormones mixed with their foods, as do chickens, as a matter of course. Some people express concern that intensive breeding of animals involved in the food chain may in itself prove undesirable from the point of view of ultimate health of consumers. (Healey 1992)(21)

THE THOUGHT AND EMOTIONAL FIELDS

In the thought and emotional fields of an individual, thoughts and experiences begin in either (or both) the conscious or unconscious. Some experiences, as in dreaming, may never reach a point where they can be expressed verbally, or even recognised in thought, as this would require relating the experience to language. As language is a higher order function, deep emotional and among others, life-threatening experiences, may be beyond the individual’s capacity to express verbally because the seeking for the right words may cause too vivid a recall of the experience. This could apply whether the experience was at the joyful or the sorrowful end of the spectrum.

Even though strong sorrowful emotions may not be externalised directly there is almost always a link to internal chaos with which the individual must come to terms. This is one of the challenges of intervention therapies in that the therapist and technique remain external and it is still the individual who must act on the therapist’s advice as to how to meet the challenges each time they are experienced. This may not hold true when drug therapy or hypnosis are involved, save that the patient agrees to become involved in the therapy in the first instance.

Following on Jung’s work there is evidence to support the concept of a complex form of knowledge often known as the “collective unconscious” which can be a source of enlightenment through the thought activity of the conscious and unconscious minds of groups and individuals. Although his theory has been put aside to some extent now, Noam Chomsky’s (1986) concept of the genetic memory for language, in which an individual is said to more easily learn the language of his forebears, fits here. However, it is also true that the unborn child would have heard his mother speaking the language and would experience the vibrations of her body as she spoke, would have heard the rhythms and intonations of the speech of others, and probably also music of his cultural inheritance. Thus, at birth he would have a memory in his body of his inherited language and musical forms. (22)
The writer believes that there is also a probability, based on personal accounts from a number of people, that a particular thought field may exist in a given place; that is, there is a vibratory band in which a certain thought or emotion is stronger and which may engender or trigger responses in those who enter into it. People were able to identify that in particular environments they could think more clearly (or the reverse) or had experienced emotions which they could not identify as their own. These experiences were reported as occurring when people visited old houses, or historic places where human suffering has occurred such as at the former convict site at Port Arthur, Tasmania, or in a place where there had been a battle and in a place regarded as a shrine. It is probable that, due to the anthropomorphic nature of human intellectual structures that such experiences change the complexity of the person who experiences them, particularly if there has been a sense of danger involved. A question which could be asked is if people who remain unaware of such influences are still affected by them perhaps in a more subtle way.

As stated previously our brains and nervous systems emit waves at a frequency which is influenced by our emotional and mental states. These brainwaves have been increasingly researched and this has led to the development of biofeedback, in all its diversity.

The brain waves may be considered under four main categories which are directly related to state of consciousness of the individual at the time. Beta waves range from 13 to 22 c.p.s., according to Randall McLellan (1988)(23) and are present when the mind is focussed on an external concern involving cortical thinking. Alpha waves range from 8 to 12 c.p.s. and are present in a state of relaxation while quite awake, such as when ostensibly watching television but in fact shutting off from the visual and auditory information. Alpha waves are blocked by conscious thinking, sensory input, or strong emotions. Theta waves range from 4 to 7 c.p.s. and are produced during deep meditation or in the state of drifting into sleep. “Hypnogogic” imagery may often be experienced in the transitions phases between Alpha and Theta waves, and many people complain that they drift into Theta waves when watching television. This is probably related to the degree of involvement with the program content but measurement would need to take cognisance of the physical state such as the degree of tiredness. Delta waves range from .5 to 3.5 c.p.s. and are present during sleep but may be attained during wakefulness by special techniques including any measure which attempts to bring brain waves down such as listening to a frequency below auditory level, or by meditating.

The true nature of brain waves has not yet been definitively established, although it is thought that they relate to changes in electro-magnetic polarities in the cerebral hemispheres. However, as stated elsewhere there is evidence within other belief systems which shows that all the energy fields emit vibrations and this creates a feedback system between the body, the emotions and the mind, what Chopra (1989) calls the Bodymind.

As well as the biological structures which are inherited it is possible that learning abilities for different knowledge and skill areas may also be inherited. This view was posited in several media reports over recent years and these resulted in discussions with peers in which the researcher took part. It was pointed out that many gifted artists, musicians and doctors for
example, follow in the footsteps of forebears. However, one must also consider the influence of the family environment which can engender a joyful desire to follow a similar path to an admired relative and also that parents, grand-parents, and other family members (including children if the learner is a parent) quite often exert pressure on the learner to participate in discussions, engage in family activities and study subjects which they favour and about which they have greater knowledge, hence making it easier, they believe, for the learner to understand, and gain the expertise needed to excel and feel the exhilaration of accomplishment in the shared field of endeavour.

QUESTIONING

Butler’s (1878) (24) linking of the biological and psychological has now been given a broader acceptance with the Quantum theorists becoming the current interpreters of the cosmos. However, there is still a need to integrate the spiritual dimension. The natural state for a human being seems to be to experience an urge towards transcendence, a yearning for a higher order. This is an expression of the universal life force and is the essence of our etheric vitality.

Again, considering the emerging human system, children are often more imaginative or willing to express themselves and verbalise their conscious perceptions within the levels of their ability. This often comes out as a ‘why’ and when adults are able to shake free of the many perceptual frameworks with which they are surrounded they are less likely to ask ‘why’ than to either rejoice in the complexities of nature or despair because others cannot comprehend their imaginative heights. It is through our senses that we perceive the world and through the intellect that we relate abstractions through such media as mathematics, metaphor and art.

To be able to go beyond the frontiers of the varying perceptions of philosophy, art, science and religion into one’s own personal Reality there is a need to explore one’s own spiritual field within each cycle of inquiry so that the new may fit more comfortably with knowledge and experiences already internalised. Litvak et al (1986) believe that it is here the ‘maturing intellect’ does hold an advantage over youthful imagination because of the extra experiences which can be drawn on. The greater the available store of knowledge of the various disciplines the more possibility there is for the knower to make the connection between his/her physical, cognitive, spiritual and emotional perceptions and link them in a cohesive way to a new and greater awareness and gain the confidence to take another step into the unknown.

High intelligence has traditionally been said to be the ability to make connections between the seemingly disparate, but the environment in which the intelligence develops and the store of knowledge it is able to draw on can make a difference to the pace at which the intelligence develops.

This is a variation of the nature-nurture debate and has enormous implications for the education system, for parents and for governments who wish to enhance the learning environments of a nation and develop ‘a clever country’. Assuming that educational systems and curricula are designed by those who have achieved success it is important to remain aware that there will be those who have equal potential but who have started from a less advantaged position and therefore need more preparation to make them ‘equal’. This is no doubt an important factor
for migrants who elect to live in another country in order to give their children opportunities they did not have in their homeland.

Without the coherence which comes from methodical ground-work one’s attempts to portray the inner Reality which is also the mystery of the cosmos are likely to lack coherence for others and hence remain poorly expressed or unexpressed. Reflection needs to have an ultimate purpose even though it may not be discernible for most of a lifetime.

Litvak et al (1986)(25) point out that while scientists follow artists and artisans in expressing thought and new knowledge through form, to enable further exploration, the action in giving a shape to the abstract in itself creates an energy which carries the exploration into another spiral.

‘Life remembers prior conscious/subconscious commonalities across nature primal phenomena
Attributed to Goethe.

There is a need to be constantly aware that although the body systems perform specialised functions, their inter-relatedness means that the body must be considered as a functioning whole. There is therefore a need to emphasise this individual internal ongoing process as being the precursor to the evolutionary changes often thought to be more likely the result of external factors.

SENSE OF IDENTITY

One’s internal psychology, as influenced by habits and behaviours if well established, could be more influential than external factors, as they form the personal etheric. An exception could be as when there is a state of chaos emanating from an external source or a growth spurt of some aspect of the individual, such as occurs during key phases of life, (as marked by traditional rites of passage) or at times of bereavement or great success.

At times in the life of any individual there will be crucial periods, interventions which offer opportunities for change. In youth especially, human beings experiment with various behaviours but in an ongoing way people wish to learn new ways while they are still able to adapt. From adolescence on there will be (varying with intensity with individuals) a need to mix with many etherics, eventually finding an ‘etheric for me’, and for a majority this dream is ‘me plus one’.

The person seeking to establish a sense of identity may find fulfilment within a few years and after using energy to enter a few chosen etherics. For others, the journey is complicated by interactions with many, in ways where the self is stunted. Attempts to be accepted into an etheric which the person finds unfriendly or inappropriate may result in a loss of identity, and hence of vital energy which is not replaced by the interaction with the group, as, ideally it should be. The energy is just dissipated and the individual/s may feel drained and low in
creativity. They are unable to discern the reason, or find their true path because the will and emotions of others, and of the group as a separate entity, have used their energies through either drawing on their resources or influencing their choices, behaviours, thoughts and emotions. This is the negative side, the positive being that when a group is interacting with a genuine concern for the members, at a level appropriate to the group’s purpose, a positive energy is created which leaves each member being stronger and more energised and creative than before, each being a stronger self as well as enhancing the group.

Within the individual system, change evolves from the internal needs but no doubt influenced by external factors. This is also true for the more complex interactions which occur when groups of organisms (that is, systems) need to operate closely. Within the interactive patterns of intra-group behaviour, sub-patterns evolve, are learned, and become programmed into the ongoing interactions.

Within the individual, messages through the central nervous system (or the endocrine) which recur frequently are likely to make permanent changes in the central nervous system and this can have a direct effect on the genome through cyclical AMP (adenosine Monophosphate). Research (26) suggests that this enzyme-produced messenger plays an important role in the information storage and, hence in long term memory, including memory stored in the genes.

In times when change is needed the memory of one or more of the individuals may be triggered to recall the needed pattern of alteration. This has usually been taken to refer to the development of more complex structures of behaviour. However, it may just as readily be applicable when there is a need to revive similar behavioural patterns and that seems to be a groundswell of opinion which is being disseminated by groups in most countries of the Western world (Society) as the realisation of the ongoing effects of past treatment of the human body, of human life and of the earth (Gaia) comes to the full consciousness. There needs to be documentation of the needs of humanity in ways which can be easily related to the changes which the experts say need to be made to value systems and daily living. There is a genuine concern that the 1992 Earth Summit did not include serious discussions on the problems of ever-increasing population growth.

When memory is triggered the first need to be met will be to find a new behaviour which is outside the established pattern but which will secure the survival needs of the species or group. After the basic needs have been met other more complex needs will be reviewed. It is significant that a different behaviour may be needed for survival and this creates new patterns from which other needs can be met as they are recognised. These may have been previous constructs which met earlier needs but which will no longer be relevant unless adapted to fit in with the newly evolved survival behaviours.

**THE “OTHER”**

The ability to love is one of the higher stages in the evolutionary process, following after sexual differentiation broadened the possibilities for variety in behavioural thinking and attitudinal patterns. Interactions between members of the opposite sex and the environmental mores
which have traditionally developed around these lead to a core of knowledge which is circulated within the group, the internalising being modified by the individual's physical state and immediate and previous environments.

Love is of a higher order because it can be unconnected to the individuals own physical survival, the energy being created being so strong that there could be a build-up over millenium within the species, which has led to a gradual raising of consciousness, with behaviours of the group (or sub-groups) evolving towards the altruistic. This could be said to occur also on the individual level over a lifetime, some groups teaching that this growth toward altruism is more powerful when sexual energies are sublimated as has been traditional within some monastic traditions. This is probably true to the extent that if there is an excess of energy in one dimension of life it needs to be applied in another area and for some people, this may well result in a focussing of their life force in a given way to the exclusion of most other life influences. This may be for a lifetime, but most often seems to be for varying periods in order to achieve goals or fulfil a sense of commitment to a cause or an individual (Such as when a person devotes his/her life to caring for a sick or disabled person, necessarily setting aside opportunities for personal goal-seeking). A similar situation occurs when a parent (usually a mother) decides to care for young children and set aside her career for a time. The isolation of the nuclear family and the tendency to mobility has meant that young parents often do not have the support from an extended family network which is traditional in some cultures and some parents have formed other links to try and find support.

Having thus give some consideration to the complexities of the Life Fields of individuals and their possible interactions within varying historical and group frameworks, it is clear that learning of any kind can be extremely complex, depending on the state of the individual, environmental factors and the degree to which the learner must connect with the subject matter. Language learning must involve the personal to some extent because of the processes involved in producing language and in making links of received language with already known concepts in the first language. In these ways links are made between the thought fields of the language speakers, to a greater or lesser degree. Aspects of this will be considered in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 5

WHAT IS AN ETHERIC?
ETHERIC LINKS AND THE MEMORY PROCESS

The significance of acquiring a capacity for language that enables the individual to communicate thoughts and feelings and to respond meaningfully to their world of experiences in the culture in which they live and work cannot be overestimated. Many migrants living in Australia attempt to continue to live within their own cultural framework and in the past many found employment where they could still be surrounded by those who shared their previous language and culture.

The situation can also occur that people may be forced to stay within their own cultural and language group because of their inadequate English skills, which of course also affects their participation in meaningful discussions on current events and from enjoying many cultural events or English language media. It is important to remain aware that individual learners may not have a goal of native-like performance but an acceptable goal could be the gradual adoption of the second language as a community language which enables the migrant learner to enter into the thinking patterns of the new community, so as to be able to communicate and comprehend in inter-personal, business and social relationships. This need not interfere with the individual’s relationships within his/her own speech community although issues may develop for individuals. A distinction may be made between those who seek to learn a language because they have migrated to this country and those who elect to learn a second language for business or interest reasons.

Patterns of thought and thinking are influenced by internal and external language. The proposal is that thought patterns create energy fields vibrating at different rates through which we make contact with the thought of others. For the purpose of the treatise these thought energy fields will be termed ‘Etherics’ and it is suggested that they offer a view of reality which explains the otherwise inexplicable vulnerabilities, experiences and responses which we as human beings sometimes ‘know’ and other times just act upon without being able to identify why. An etheric has, however, a more complex pattern than a thought field per se, as it involves the will.

This chapter proposes that an etheric is a force field, its energy having evolved from the life fields of the people in it, but possibly mainly from language activity, whether it be as spoken external words or whether it remains unspoken thoughts. It is also understood that emotions, physical data, and other dimensions of the life fields will, by their pre-existence and ongoing influence, contribute to the etheric through individuals and through the group energy which is more complex than the sum of all the individual’s energies of which it is comprised.

ETHERIC LINKS

In general it could be said the people belong to a variety of etherics, each of which could influence their lives in varying degrees, in conjunction with personal characteristics and their will. Although linked closely with the concept of the thought field I suggest that an etheric is
influenced by the will as those involved may choose to accept a thought pattern. In the case of unspoken thoughts the length of time they are accepted by the conscious mind is a major contributing factor to the power of the force. I consider it possible that the thought of people, now deceased, could still retain enough energy to influence the thoughts of the living. This would be more likely to occur if the thought energy has remained undissipated through lack of expression or recognition, although deeply felt.

The etheric fields into which our subconscious projects and from which it received signals are determined by our ongoing moods and behaviours and we do therefore have some ability to raise the level of the thoughts we receive from others. In this way then we may be the major contributors to our own reality and it is up to the individual to remain aware of influences which might be attempting to influence him/her in overt and covert ways, and elect to accept the influence or minimise it, depending on the individual's needs and taken in the context of the needs of significant others.

People who belong to an etheric by way of their occupation or place of residence, for example, may find themselves excluded because by their will or by their lack of awareness they fail to conform to changes in the etheric. On the other hand it is possible to gain vibrational energy from being a member of an etheric which helps protect from the inroads of interaction with opposing forces. Whether consciously or not we contribute to the group energy. When an individual ceases to interact in the ways determined appropriate by the etheric, energy may be withdrawn from their personal fields and the vibratory rates will alter. This can occur from experience such as illness, or extreme emotion, especially fear. It would seem that in these situations an individual could become very vulnerable as their force field is altered. In such a situation the person might be more open to influences from the energy fields which can cause them to be unsure about their own decisions or, in the extreme, to act uncharacteristically.

Writers such as Dawn Hill (1987) advise that the way to overcome such problems is to use visualisation and meditation to strengthen the aura, while others would say that the traditional acts of prayer would have a similar benefits. Even so, while these practices maybe desirable they are not necessarily adequate as a protection from the dangers which can be encountered. When crossing a busy street, it may be essential to use the physical senses to apprehend possible dangers and to respect the potential power of the vehicles to harm. One does not decide to walk out in front of a car and trust that the driver will respond with love and that the vehicle will be able to transcend the physical laws of motion and stop on the instant!

It seems valid to suggest that thoughts which have been significant to the originators but which have not found credence or even been heard by others will remain as a force, possibly being stronger at a place frequented by the individual/s concerned. Poignant examples of this are places where people have endured suffering and lacked the power to voice their suffering and/or have found no-one willing to allow them to enter and share their experience or offer them empathy or compassion (or assistance?) Numbers of people have mentioned to me that they were surprised at their own emotive response when they visited places such as former World War II concentration camps.

Several people who contributed to this inquiry verified that they had experienced unexplained
emotions when visiting an old house, for example, but usually only in a particular room. The emotion experienced was described as being like a grief or sadness which the individual could in no way relate to his/her own emotional state at the time and which dissipated when the person moved away from the space. The suggestion is made that joyous thoughts and emotions are easier to experience and possibly easier to express to others and better received by them. Grief and trauma are often not received by others and may in themselves be consciously or unconsciously blocked by the individual, making their verbalising difficult for the individual. These emotions may also be exacerbated by not having anyone to acknowledge the pain and thus to 'share the etheric' with the person in the experience. Hence the energy generated by the thought associated with these emotions, being inadequately expressed or not voiced at all, remains as a force.

It would seem that the worst kind of suffering is that of the person who feels alone in their etheric, as we appear to gain energy from having others think similar thoughts, thus sharing our various ethers, even though we may not consciously know who these people are or how we are mutually reaching each other and therefore possibly influencing each other. It would seem that for a majority of human beings, belonging to a strong etheric is important even though its directions may be in error in some way in the perception of some members or of outsiders.

A man who had lost many close relatives in a war, spoke of the continuum of inner and outer space and the way we live our lives in both. He said that we have links into the rest of humanity through our tribes, whatever the constructs which make up the links in the chain.

The writer shares the view that it is part of the human condition to go toward one or the other of the continuum of Love in the sense of Agape and the creative forces which cause us to deny love of our own species and other life forms. This view was expressed by people who have worked for extended periods in jobs in prisons and who have lived with the fear of being attacked. One person, in response to my question about his concern that prisoners might know his thoughts said “No, it’s more that you don’t want their thoughts to intrude into your thinking.”

A fabric of thought is woven together by the many ongoing thoughts which are circulating within the mind of an individual or between the minds of members of a group. The warp and the weft are the thoughts which are accepted, entertained and which are chosen by the conscious Mind as being the chosen Reality. The strength of the fabric is affected by the conscious thoughts which are NOT voiced but which are strongly owned by the individuals within the group. This hidden agenda affects loyalty to group goals, one reason for its becoming so powerful in some groups is that, due to the policies of those in positions of authority, some views or opinions are not accepted.

It is the present view of the writer that thoughts which remain unvoiced may be powerful at least partly because the thought energy is not dissipated. Habitual unvoiced thoughts influence behaviour indirectly and cannot be traced to their source although they may be hinted at in voiced opinions. The risk here is that they may be traced to the WRONG source as the personal/group agenda of the hearers will cause them to interpret the incorrect information in
ways which fit in with their own fabric of thought and hidden agenda and their existing perceptions of persons and situations. Unfortunately, this information may be used in ways which are detrimental to the speaker and not necessarily a just application of the speaker’s intention.

This can of course also occur with voiced thoughts as they may be misquoted, partially quoted, misheard or removed from context. Words which may also be added in the retelling, or which incorporated the agenda or intentions of another thus altering the meaning of the original speaker. These concepts can be applied at the level of the family, the workplace, the school, the community and it can be seen that the clearer the communication of voiced thoughts, albeit this may involve a painful process, the healthier and ultimately more productive the environment.

THE ZEITGEIST

I suggest that within the universal framework there are etherics for various language groupings, hobby networks and socio-economic groupings, religious affiliations, gender groups and geographic, national groups etherics. Perhaps the most powerful etheric in this era of the mass media and rapid transport resulting in the image of the ‘global village’ is the concept of the Zeitgeist, the spirit or psychic ambience of an era or a culture. There seems to be little doubt of the power of the etheric mass which can also apply in smaller groupings and time spans. If the Zeitgeist is too powerful and dominates it will also ultimately destroy those whom it dominates if they do not retain an independence by linking with other ideas. Otherwise, when the Zeitgeist outlives its usefulness and enters a devolutionary phase so also will those who have not made the effort to think for themselves and renew their perceptions of their environment and themselves as participants in it.

In attempting to relate my concepts with the literature in other disciplines I draw from memory of articles I read years ago: one on the theory of Teilhard de Chardin on the Noosphere and another on Jung’s description of the Collective Unconscious and the radical Archetype. Litvak and Senzee (1986) write of Sheldrake (1981)(1) and his theory of the Field of Causative Formation.

It could be said that one of the most recurring influences in the growth of a Zeitgeist is fear which deepens the differences between those in opposing etherics. The connecting with etherics is ongoing during a person’s life. However, because of changing interests and needs and the fact that we enter new etherics, it is part of the process that individuals reduce contact with various etherics over time and sometimes withdraw from them completely. Some migrants have spoken of their mixed feelings when communicating with family and friends overseas because they sense that their points of contact are diminishing.

Traditions in many cultures mark times of great change in a person’s life by ceremonies termed Rites of Passage, the common thread for these being that the individual is leaving a major etheric and preparing for entry into a new one, such as a boy entering the ranks of men, or the single person entering into the ranks of the married: a separate issue to that of forming a joint etheric or having their existing etheric recognised with the new partner.
It is important to point out here that etherics are not necessarily entered or created consciously. While a marriage ceremony marks a community’s recognition that a couple have formed an etheric, many conversations with women who have entered into an arranged marriages lead me to suggest that the actual creation of the etheric has already begun whether or not the couple have had free choice and known each other beforehand. The question could be posed as to what happens for those who do not know each other before their marriage as statistics indicate that such marriages often work out well. In such cases where families arrange the union one could well ask if the etheric is begun by the thought and interchanges between the families with the couple being informed of the negotiations and hence thinking about their future meetings, creating a union of thought fields very much supported by their existing family networks.

THE WILL TO LIVE

It is accepted that a person’s will to live is an important factor in illness or surgery and this thesis proposes that a positive approach is also related to the strength of the person’s connections with others through their etheric network. In other words, the number and depth of their networks with people who care sufficiently about them to support them in one or more of their energy fields, the first one being thought, because it is usual to think about someone before we start to feel emotion for them or seek to be in their physical field.

It is further suggested that this aspect is crucial in diseases of degeneration especially of the elderly where healthy people often do not find it agreeable to spend time with the aged, especially if they are living in a nursing home situation which in itself can contribute to a decrease in mental stimulation for residents. Old or chronically sick people seem to reach a point where they are squeezed out of etherics and/or they gradually remove themselves because they have insufficient energy or they wish to focus their diminishing resources of energy on facets of their life which they felt they had not sufficiently enjoyed and/or had neglected in the past. People who have worked with the seriously ill or injured have agreed with the suggestion that in a sense the person nearing death may go through a process (albeit unconsciously) of giving him/herself permission to let go of the physical body in order to give over completely to the non-physical and, concurrently, those close to the person must also give their permission (though unspoken) for the person to leave this life. There is a fine line between loving someone and sending them needed energy to stay alive or recover if that is possible, and having the intuition to know that the person really needs to know that they have completed their tasks here and have their loved one’s permission to leave the precious tangible physical etheric.

Speaking with those who care for persons unable to communicate due to injury or illness it seems that where the brain is active, it is possible for the experienced staff or close family to communicate with the person in both directions and coma arousal programs involving intensive work have had success with some patients according to therapists who work with such patients.

Lack of shared etherics can be a life threatening situation for a human being and the contact needs to be made for all modes, otherwise an imbalance is created. For example, someone who is constantly thinking about taking an action but who does not act upon the thought will be subject to ‘day dreaming’ and will be less effective in their life. It seems likely that constant
focused thinking involving another person which, for varying reasons may not be accompanied by perceptible communication with that person or with some action, can create an imbalance in the T fields of both parties. This is clearly an invasion of the personal space (the physical etheric) of the receiver and can I believe account for a person experiencing unexplained variations in their concentration and energy levels, in the way that radio receivers can be ‘jammed’ because the projector is interfering with the receiver’s networking in his/her etherics, appropriate to the activity in process at the time.

It would seem that some spiritual masters have a high degree of transcendence over external influences through rigorous efforts designed to strengthen their energy fields and aimed at dissipating their own negative energies and deflecting those which emanate from other sources, (as in, for example the writings of H.I. Khan (1977)

The implications and applications of the concept are extensive because they relate to all contacts between human beings. The suggested experiences will be considered for an average individual and how this might vary for those language learners connected with study groups. We can create thought about ourselves, and hence an energy which can displace and interact with other energies. We can create thought about others .... ‘give a dog a bad name’ .... or a positive image.

It has been suggested that in groups who live close to their ancient ways, as for example indigenous groups of Aboriginal people, that the power of group thought may be very strong. the custom of ‘pointing the bone’ has been shown to be very successful for susceptible individuals and it is suggested here that one reason for this is because other tribal members, aware of the condemned individual’s situation, remove their thoughts, thus depriving the person of his customary share of the group energy. This in itself can have a serious effect on the physical state, and is partially responsible for the mental response of the victim who seems to contribute to his own demise, even though his physical state may have been healthy at the time of the group condemnation. The other possibility is the interior focus of negative thought from the person’s entire etherics.

**PROCESSES OF CHANGE**

As detailed elsewhere the evolutionary process may be marked by a period of stasis but neither an individual nor a group can remain stagnant indefinitely there will eventually be an intervention which will result in either a new cycle or a gradual decline. The process may seem too slow to be measurable at times but it nevertheless is universal.

The writer considers that the intervention can be part of a natural process, such as a child reaching school age when there is a very definite growth in its etherics, which can only occur by a lessening of the bonds with its existing support networks. The child who is balanced for his age between his physical, emotional and mental fields will have less trauma than a child who is still depending on mother to help him cope with relating to peers, for example.
We belong to etherics at various levels of existence, the first normally being shared with our mother, although this may be subject to influences such as the attitudes of the other. The term ‘bonding’ seems suited to describing the way a mother accepts a baby (or child if their meeting is after birth such as in adoption) into her etherics, and in more mysterious ways, the process of the baby willing to enter the mother’s etherics. It would seem that the baby shares the mother’s life fields before birth, but this may not be automatic, especially in relation to the spiritual field.

The first physical etheric we share is, therefore, with our mother but the acceptance into the ongoing energy fields of parents, care-givers and significant others will progress at a rate determined by the state of the individual’s energy fields and by the existence of a family etheric which is healthy and loving, and by the pre-birth experiences of the infant as well as its natal and post-natal experiences. Ideally, the family etheric would be a single strong grouping which was open to other etherics in mutually constructive ways. The individual needs to be able to stay in this etheric until able to become part of the other etherics in the extended family or community.

INDIVIDUAL ENERGY FIELDS

For the purpose of this paper the individual energy fields will be considered to be the physical, the emotional, the intellectual and the spiritual, although others may consider that there are other significant fields. For the new-born child it is essential that it receive acceptance and thus the nurture it needs for survival by being included in all its parents’ energy fields and therefore also becoming part of its parents’ wider fields of contact. It could be that, for various reasons, other than the parents will fill this role. If they do not, there is ample evidence that the child will suffer and possibly not thrive.

THE PHYSICAL FIELD

A physician, Thomas Verny (1981)(2) gives the example of a large group of orphaned children taken to the United States after a war. Although these children, all very young, received good nutrition, medication and what seemed like excellent physical care, they failed to thrive and numbers died within the first year from a condition known as Marasmus. It has been concluded that the infants were not given sufficient touching and this is now common practice for infants who need to be kept in hospitals away from their mothers, such as premature babies. The significance of the child being admitted to family etherics is critical for its survival in the early stages, and for the very young, a significant aspect of this is physical closeness and touching.

In the case of children (and adults) separated from their homelands and without family lack of a significant etheric can be crucial. The need is even more poignant for anyone whose family does not know that s/he is alive, or possibly that they have even been born, because such people may not be able to receive the benefits from connections with the thought fields of those closest to them, although it is possible that there could still be links through the spiritual fields. Carers are needed who will incorporate the children into their etherics as completely as possible until others can assist, as would occur when a child is able to begin making contacts of its own.

For reasons not explored, some babies (and of course, adults) have more appeal than others
and will be more readily accepted and receive the indefinable ‘extra’ from being connected to the subtle fields of more carers (as for example as in the case of children in institutional care, such as the disabled) or by more intense connections to one or two, as would be experienced by a loved infant with its parents. The state of the physical field is probably the easiest to identify and in this culture is now being given attention by officialdom and by the society although sadly, not for every child.

THE EMOTIONAL FIELD

The emotional field is more subtle and cannot be regulated by law or coercion. Children insufficiently networked into emotional fields, and thus not receiving emotional energy, will not be able to reciprocate, and the longer the period before links are made, the more serious the effects. It is likely that children in a deprived emotional environment will not receive the intellectual stimulation which would be available to an emotionally secured child, in the early years. However, it is possible that in later stages of development, and when opportunity is there, an emotionally deprived child will put extra effort into intellectual achievement at the expense of emotional development. This would be unsurprising because the child is seeking outlets for its growing need to make links with the world.

A child who does not participate in physical activity and is obese may have a physical disorder such as a misalignment of the spinal column. This interferes with energy flows and distribution and hence very definitely with the desire for and ability to participate in physical activity. This situation can develop in a person of any age due to accident or incorrect posture habits which may well result from poor seating facilities in school or at work. The physical problem can in itself lead to emotional blocks because, especially in the case of children, they learn from an early age that they are less than equal. The school system’s emphasis on physical adeptness, though admirable in purpose, can sometimes be very harsh in practice on those who are incompetent. While peers may sometimes participate in teasing, the offenders are sometimes teachers who misuse their position by publicly commenting on the appearance or ineptness of individuals, sometimes over a public address system. In these ways individuals or groups may be excluded from fully linking with the school etheric. Concurrently, it is possible that a child (or adult) may have emotional problems from other sources and these exacerbate the need for comfort which may be sought through excessive intake of food. Family eating habits are also significant for some. It is pointless to ridicule a child who has only been consuming the food put in front of him or in his lunch box. It is difficult to change this because the body has learned a particular pattern of absorption and frequency and quantity of intake. As food is linked closely with the care of one such as the mother, limitation is a difficult issue especially as advertisers sometimes exploit the idea of the ‘good mother’ as a provider of specific (usually high kilojoule) foods. However, awareness can be engendered in health lessons and the wider issues focussed on to enable the students to become sufficiently informed as to become responsible for their own welfare.

Verny (3) records that another study demonstrated that in emotionally deprived children the neurons and dendrites in the occipital quadrant of the brain were affected although the good
news was that this could be reversed in some children. When they were placed in a positive environment, they grew up to eight inches a year as compared with an average of two and a half inches. This and other studies seem to establish that the physical contact given by touching helps the individual to cope with stress throughout life and that this in turn directly correlates with intellectual functioning and faster learning. However, while acknowledging that physical nurture creates a strong physical ethic for the individual and this has measurable effects which can influence learning, it must be emphasised that extreme caution needs to be used in extrapolating from this in a generalised way. It is possible that a child may receive great care and yet, because of some genetic factor or possibly even its own will, may not thrive physically or yet still have a learning problem.

A point needs also to be made about the situation of the care-givers. It is possible that some children do not have all their needs met because the care-giver is over-loaded, such as in the case of a mother with a large family or who is coping with someone with severe disabilities and/or behavioural problems. There are some conditions which indicate that the person involved has not accepted the care-giver’s etherecs; that in fact, the individual refuses to become part of the network. Reasons can only be conjectured but it may be due to pre-birth experiences or possibly to thought energy received by the individual either because of his/her world view (i.e. a perception of another or an experience which places the other in a negative light) or through thought, even though actions may not indicate this.

A mother can change her attitude to a troublesome child, as can school staff, by a conscious effort, usually only brought about because someone has attempted to perceive the child’s behaviour in a new way, other than that of an instigator or tormentor of others. Such a change in perception is the beginning of an opportunity for change but needs to be accompanied by renewed efforts to allay the causes of the disruptive behaviour. It should be noted here that many cases of children having consistent disruptive behaviour may be caused by food intolerances or allergies which can cause a build-up of fluid in the tissues, and causing short circuits in the nervous system and the brain, thus leading to erratic behaviour.

THE INTELLECTUAL FIELD - THINKING

Intellectual links begin as soon as the child is able to be aware of its environment, although there is some evidence that even here, there can be memories of neonatal and infant experiences. There are various educational methods based on perceiving the developing child as a whole person. Some of these methods are expensive and therefore open only to those children whose parents are highly aware, informed and who can afford them. The majority of children begin by sharing the intellectual etherecs of their parents, extended family and immediate community including, in this culture, a strong input from the media, especially television. The more fortunate children may be influenced by a wider variety of stimuli which involve their input such as singing and having a story read to them, with opportunities for the child to ask questions which are given respect. It is normal for a child to go through periods of intense questioning as in the ‘why’ phase, which are quite wearing for parents.

In a general sense it can be said that stimulating the brain in a particular way as by, for example,
mathematics problem solving, will further define the neuron circuits thus making it easier to facilitate new learning in that mode in the future. Practice does indeed improve even if it may not result in perfection.

While the ideal is for balanced development, that is, concurrent growth and linking of all energy fields, the developing individual will often need to focus on one area out of proportion to the others for given periods. This could be seen as following the growth patterns of children, that is a 'growth spurt' in height, followed by a period of consolidation. However, if an individual has an ongoing lack in one of the major fields there will be repercussions commensurate with the lack and the period during which it increases.

It is possible that the concept of Karma, which decrees that we reap what we sow over consecutive lifetimes has a basis in the energy created by thought forms. The tenet of reincarnation as popularly described appears to suggest that the soul returns to the physical domain through a series of physical incarnations. This is a matter for individuals to accept or reject according to their belief systems. However, it is quite possible, I suggest, that people might over a single lifetime, receive back through experiences the kinds of thoughts with which they had habitually surrounded themselves.

The thought field of an individual is subjected to influences (and in a subtle way composed of) his/her own thoughts as well as energy from the thoughts of others, and from the environments in which the person exists. If the person is, for example, receiving negative energy from an external source this can influence his/her thought field and eventually the conscious thoughts and actions. This could cause illness, misadventure or death in extreme cases and it seems likely that this is understood, perhaps unconsciously, by some people who are very sensitive. I have suggested this hypothesis to several people of different religious and spiritual backgrounds, all with considerable life experience (including three in their eighties) and they accepted the idea. It was also agreed that if the person habitually thinks negatively over time, they could have an adverse affect on the thought fields of significant others. This in turn leads to conscious negative thoughts which influence interactions with the other individual in an ongoing way. The same processes can of course be involved in positive thinking and the ways its processes can be sources of creativity and self esteem in ongoing spirals. In close relationships, or in the situation of those who, lacking a close relationship, share energies interactively with many sources (at the unconscious level) in order to maintain life energies, the power of the climate of the relevant thought fields cannot be overestimated. It seems probable that this energy could be the source of the life force. In the situation of an individual being unable to maintain interactive conscious links through language with affirming thought energies, then the thought field vibratory rate would consist of energy from current thoughts and from memories. Clearly such a person would need to be very strong in order to maintain a sufficiently high vibratory rate in his/her thought field. Such a situation could occur for people in prison in some situations, and another example would be elderly people unable to be involved in the world because of physical or other infirmity and hence forgotten by others.

Another group which could be highly vulnerable would be people living within a new language and cultural environment, possibly also cut off from links with their homeland because of
communication barriers, due to illiteracy, or to a breakdown of services, or to the fact that all close members of the family are dead or their whereabouts are unknown. The situation is compounded if the person is living in a society where the migrant or ‘foreigner’ is unwelcome which is the situation for many refugees at present, throughout the world, according to media reports.

Another vulnerable group of people sometimes also fitting into the above category, are those who come from small, closely linked societies and who might then be highly sensitized if placed in an environment of very active thought fields where they could be harmed by vibrations. From memory, the writer recalls a scene in the film “The Gods Must Be Crazy” when an innocent Bushman is thrown into a prison cell and is portrayed as descending into a deep depression. In such a situation a person is cut off from the familiar physical environment and people and left exposed to his own fears and, it is hypothesised, to the thought field of the prison cell itself, certainly a negatively charged environment. The writer, some years ago, had the experience of standing for a few minutes in a cell where prisoners were held before appearing in court. There was a foul smell of urine but apart from this, I found it to be a very depressing place. It was not just ‘a space’.

When discussing the intelligent body and its relationship to the bodymind Chopra (1989) (4) says that the division is invisible....just a gap. He points out the intricacy of the brain and how there should be chaos, but that intelligence has turned it into patterns. In answer to the question of ‘where’ this quantum mechanical body is, his answer is that the gap is ‘silent, has no thickness and exists everywhere’ yet forms a barrier.

ACTIVE INTELLIGENCE

--------GAP--------

SILENT INTELLIGENCE

As Chopra explains it, the explanation lies in the difference between active and silent intelligence, in that we can express our thoughts or retain them. According to Chopra the same ‘difficulty’ occurs in physics. ‘A photon is a form of light as in the light wave, but both arise from a hidden field. In the ‘real’ world we see either photons or light waves but in the quantum field they both pre-exist as possibilities. Chopra says that Einstein referred to moments when he experienced this universal reality but he felt it to be a spiritual insight and Chopra adds that it is an ‘insight into our consciousness’ that we can attempt to view objectively.

DISCONNECTIONS AND NEW LINKS

The individual needs to separate from her existing thought fields when she feels the need to grow. This could be initiated from internally experienced needs or could be because of magnetism being sent out from the unexperienced thought fields which could necessarily be operating at a vibrational level and on a network which responds to the thoughts of individual needing the change. Generally speaking, a person seeking a new field in which to operate will
be firstly thinking in a different way and later, acting in some way which would bring her into the operational field of the needed etheric. An example would be a student entering higher education when others in her family have not done so. There is a great sense of loneliness for such a person because family members cannot or will not enter into the new knowledge with her, and she is unable to participate in the energising conversation which comes from shared perceptions. Such a person needs to be accepted into a new etheric at least for part of her daily living. Whether or not she is able to remain a member of her existing etherics depends on whether she can find a way of adapting which enables ongoing interactions but which will not entail her having to disown or possibly reveal her new perceptions within unaccepting etherics. This is a particularly poignant situation to be in and commonly affects young people who seek to enter fields of endeavour which are unusual for someone from their background, residential area or gender, among other factors. If they are not accepted into the etheric of the new network they experience great isolation and may drop out, embittered. The writer has known numbers of young women migrants, some still at school, who had the potential to succeed if they continued their education. They were supported in their goals by one parent, sometimes both, with neither parent having had more than a few years of primary school education. These girls experienced great inner conflict, often manifested in physical symptoms because they gradually realised that they were becoming separate from the rest of their families, and also because, despite their ambitions for their daughters, the parents resisted any behaviours which were unfamiliar, such as not being available to wait on guests because they were studying. Sometimes the resistance became overt, especially if one parent opposed the study, undermining the girl’s confidence in her ability. Sometimes there was interference from extended family who worked on the emotions of a parent because their own daughters had not opted to continue their education. Those problems can begin in High School. It is emphasised that these experiences are not common to all or even a majority of migrant girls and women but are difficult to identify and cope with.

It is also possible that such experiences can involve both males and females, migrants and non-migrants and people of different age groups. But they have particular relevance to people who come to live in a new culture and try to learn the language. In the past there was an emphasis on learning about the culture while learning the language, but it is uncertain to what extent this can continue within a limited time frame. As another example, people who wish to enter a particular profession may find that those who come from families where there have been a line of members of that profession will be greatly advantaged because they will have the contacts and will find it very easy to pick up the non-verbal behaviours, the attitudes and other subtle factors which constitute the etheric of the profession or sub-group within the profession. On the other hand, if there are changes needed within an etheric it is possible that a member of the group who is not deeply linked in with the traditional etheric might be better able to adopt and implement fresh perceptions.

As a child grows it is usual for it to gradually enter more etherics, including increasingly those separate from their parents. This is seen as a desirable evolutionary step; however, a question that has come up in discussions has been the re-adjustment of the parent’s etherics which have previously had to adapt to include the children in their existing etheric networks. It seems that there is often confusion about the changes individuals need to make in these processes, but it
needs to be remembered that the parents also have a point of view and that letting go of an etheric (such as when children distance themselves from their parents, either physically or emotionally) while presumably granting freedom from traditional responsibilities, also means that the other parties have also been freed and any assistance they give is through choice and not obligation.

Additional to the links individuals make within their own contact groupings there can be secondary, possibly unknown links with those we do not meet directly or know well, but with whom we are connected through mutual links, the links being considered here being made through emotion, thinking and language. In a simple example, a person may tell one of her family members about her experience with a friend, be it a positive comment or a negative one. The family member receives an impression about the friend and formulates his/her own thoughts which are not necessarily going to be entirely in sympathy with those of the speaker. As a result the person spoken about is the recipient of thought forms from both her friend and the friend’s relative, and thus may be affected in some way by the thought of someone she has never met. This can be effected both through thought forms travelling through the etheric and by the third party voicing thoughts to one or more in the relevant etheric.

In adults there should be a tendency to return to a state balanced between their various energy fields if there is an overall tendency to give attention to all aspects of life, even though one field or other may dominate at times (for example, during pregnancy or during examinations etc.) Children and adolescents need extra care as their fields are opening up and therefore are not tending to a state of equilibrium. They need guidance in all fields until able to achieve some degree of stasis.

To consider more specifically the situation of the individual I offer the view that in love relationships, the two may feel a need to separate from their ongoing etheric of family and social groups in order to create their own etheric/s. When they feel ready they might re-enter their wider circles but as a joint etheric, not as the individuals they were. It is likely that some of the ongoing etherics for either of a couple will be unwilling to accept the evolved couple etheric and links may be severed over time, or indeed one member of the combined etheric may make it a requirement that some networks may be discarded as a condition needed for the securing of the links for the new etheric.

In the past there was a great emphasis on the influences we inherited from our ancestors through our physical genetic links and on environmental factors which helped to shape an individual including cultural and religious, socio-economic and educational influences. These factors remain important but it needs to be acknowledged that there are other factors, always having had some relevance, but in this era, having an increased influence. This is because of modern communications facilities, the media coverage of world events and the greater likelihood of either visiting another culture and knowing people who come from other cultures in one’s own country. Sheldrake (1981)(5) has written of morpho-genetic fields through which species operating within the same electro-magnetic fields link up, and it seems likely that in actuality we are now simply more able to recognise what had always been occurring and which has been known in some way in previous cultures and times but which has been discarded or
sometimes, rejected through fear. People who train animals ‘telepathically’ and for example, dogs often know when their owner is approaching home. Other examples given have been when someone knows who is calling them on the telephone, or that someone was going to write or call them, often calls and letters being instigated by both parties at the same time.

To refer back to the energy field of an individual, the work of Israeli physiologist, Moshe Feldenkrais (1972)(6) and some other body therapies, perceive the body as a field to be reorganised, so that if the shape of the body in space is altered this should change its overall frequency and, by implication, assist the individual to form links with new vibrational fields. As an example, from one perspective, a person may follow through with a course to increase bodily fitness and meet a new group of people in the process. This will necessarily make changes in some of the perceptions of the individual because of increased knowledge and expanded horizons. However, the extent to which a person becomes more fit and the extent to which the person alters, for example, leisure pursuits, is very much related to the person’s choice, which in turn is related to how much the person is prepared to devote time and effort to the new interest and possibly also relinquish links with other interests and people. However, the fact remains the the person will be changed by the new involvement, even though it may take time for this to become obvious in his life. Initial changes will be in the thought field through new perceptions and these gradually influence behaviours.

A wider application of the principle is often illustrated by the story of the one hundredth monkey which, following the breakthrough principle, makes the point that there is a critical mass which controls group thought. The story describes a project carried out on an island off Japan in which monkeys were given unwashed sweet potatoes. One monkey is said to have been observed washing its potato in the surf, others followed and when a critical number (say one hundred) followed this pattern, all the monkeys washed their potatoes. *The same principle could be said to apply to fashions in clothing or to children’s games such as skipping or hopscotch which will be resurrected after periods out of favour for no apparent reason.

When an individual is in a situation of change necessitating leaving or minimising contact with an etheric s/he may go into a period of seeming dissonance until contact is secured with a replacement ethereal resonating at an appropriate frequency, and which will generate an energy adequate to replace the lost etheric. Clearly this has significant implications for migrants, particularly refugees.

For anyone during an illness, especially if lengthy or serious, there is an especial need for the energies of others in ethereics to which the individual belongs, to reach out and help keep up the sufferer’s vibratory rate. It seems that this can become crucial when death approaches as negative emotions such as fear, unresolved grief, or unexpressed anger, can lower the vibratory rate leaving the person open to an overwhelming fear, described by some as psychic attack. According to Hill (1987)(7) forces acting at lower energy levels, either negative thoughts from themselves or others or, according to some, entities not now in a corporate state, can have a deleterious influence on the vulnerable person, firstly influencing their thought field and, later affecting other fields including the spiritual, at worst creating an overwhelming despair. This means the person is at risk of dying in a negative state rather than in the frame of mind at peace
with their level of evolution and effort during their lifetime. A woman ** who had recovered from a seemingly fatal heart attack reported that she ‘saw’ animals surround her bed. She was in hospital and her family surrounded her and no one could account for her perception.

The suggestion has been made that thoughts take a form which fits in with the person’s belief system, including about the spiritual world, and that perhaps this mother saw her family in the symbolic mode of the unconscious. It could be asked if we all have an animal symbol for others, or it could take the form of some other materialisation.

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* The story has been reported in various sources, but the writer first heard of it as told by a team member on an Elisabeth Kubler-Ross Workshop in 1989
** The woman’s daughter told me of this. The family had lived in Australia for generations and there was no cultural heritage which could explain the experience.

Some cultures tend to give names within a particular framework, such as qualities as appropriate to the sex, or flowers for girls or other elements from nature. This is so common that it does seem that there is a deep instinct which acknowledges the perception of another reality and the deep and unseverable links between all creation and humankind. It also seems that in our culture we are moving further and further away from this ancient knowledge, this ‘primitive clairvoyance’ as Rudolph Steiner (1923) has called it.

This is seemingly part of an evolutionary cycle. It is possible that if we as a species continue to reassert the perceived traditional differences between ethnic and social groups we will be blocking needed interventions which through their interactions could reverse revolutionary tendencies, as a living system cannot remain stagnant, nor indefinitely maintain a state of involution. This paper suggests that this is true for the bodily physical systems and also for the thought energies which may be either inherited or absorbed from the environment. Some of the influences of the memory process at the individual level will now be discussed, as they interact with other personal processes.

**MEMORY PROCESSES**

Within the physical framework there is a link between the brain and the endocrine system through noradrenaline. For short term memory the neurological circuits are self exciting, creating an ongoing aura of energy around the neuron cluster. The more clusters involved the greater the energy.

Writing about the use of mantras and sound R.D. Grisell (1979) (8) says that large areas of the brain are active in speech and hearing. Electrical repercussions appear to extend far into many other areas, including those for association and sight. Alerting stimuli and the inhibitions working with them pass up and down between the cortex and the reticular activating systems, deep in the base of the brain near the spinal cord. This extensively regulates both the conscious and subconscious mental processes as well as modulating incoming and outgoing signals of the spinal cord and other large nerve trunks to the head. Therefore, massive psychophysiological reactions should result from the hearing or pronouncing of a word. Rhythmic repetitions would
set up periodic waves of electrical and chemical activity in the brain, reducing extraneous thoughts and distractions as a result. Negative words produce an effect on the adrenal and sweat glands, the heart rate and other organs and functions are also affected. On the other hand, specific patterns of brainwaves can produce positive flows in other neuro-hormonal and glandular secretions, as when some people experience a prickling sensation in the spine when certain music is played.

The circuitry involved in medium range memory includes the processes for short term memory plus a macromolecular (biochemical) process which stabilises some of the energy in a pattern. As it is necessary for language learners to repeat sounds and phrases in class it must therefore be recognised that learning another language does make changes within the individual’s vibratory field. For some people this could cause stress which may manifest in various ways. This is an argument in favour of lower intensity courses possibly accompanied by work experience where needed, or social activities where English can be practised. In some regions numbers of English language learners do not speak English at all outside of the class, and therefore do not reach an adequate oral proficiency with low intensity courses. However, within the context of their communities many such learners have little opportunity to practise English because in areas with large numbers of migrants they do not meet proficient English speakers with whom to practise. Unfortunately this can also mean that people can lose much of their proficiency after they have reached a satisfactory level in language classes if they do not have a reason or opportunity made available in community centres or other venues where meetings could occur, but it is not possible to predict how successful such initiative would be unless the people concerned felt that there was something to be gained from attending. Financial gain through employment is always of course an effective motivation but so also could be opportunities which can open up for education and entertainment and the gathering of useful information which is accessible in a very limited way to non-English speakers. This is also of course linked with literacy which is an issue for both native speakers and English learners as the individual does experience many areas of life in a limited way if s/he is unable to freely access the printed word. In terms of economic benefits ongoing for the whole community it is suggested that there could be an increased consumption of goods and services such as travel, reading material and entertainment if non-English speakers and others limited in language knowledge and appreciation were more competent. In short, they are likely to participate more fully in more aspects of life in the culture.

NEGATIVE INFLUENCES

There is evidence that, in times of economics downturn, there is an increase in health problems, especially as there may be a concurrent increase in the consumption of alcohol, nicotine and illicit drugs, due to a sense of frustration and hopelessness. People affected by unemployment are often forced to live in areas plagued by industrial pollutants and other environmental hazards and, especially in children, are susceptible to inadequate nutrition, especially lack of adequate protein.

There are also apparently identifiable benefits for the individual which come with learning.
Long term memory is patterned through the neurological processes initiated by the original stimulus, biochemical processes plus the RNA and proteins needed to lay down sensory memory traces. These proteins and RNA increase in response to brain cell activity which is the result of structured learning. These changes contrast with the changes occurring from emotions, stress and random activity. Emotion in particular depletes protein levels and negative emotions can exacerbate this.

No doubt there are many broad implications of this, but two will be noted here. The first is that, with an increasing ‘older’ population which is said to become a greater proportion of the overall population, it would seem to be of benefit to all if older people from all groups were encouraged to develop new interests through courses which are financially accessible to them and do not necessarily have a vocational focus but are designed to keep their mental faculties functioning as well as possible. Indeed much of the material for courses could focus on health and participants could be asked to demonstrate in some way what they had learned. Other topics which appeared to be of interest were relating to crafts and gardening practices which avoided use of chemicals.

**ASPECTS OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The other general implication which is indicated is that the learning situation needs to include some structure in the syllabus while retaining the great benefits to be achieved from deductive learning practices. In initial language learning this structure may be very subtle as this early period is very stressful for the learners. However, as students develop in proficiency there is a need for written and expected outcomes from students at each session and where this is possible, a homework requirement that students look over materials worked through in class. (Although there can be a problem with new material set for homework as some students will obtain help from family and this is quite frustrating for the teacher.) It could be said that, in broad terms there could be reason for concern if the emphasis on ‘discovery’ learning methods are not balanced in the language curriculum (in school and adult language classes) by periods of structured activities where both students and teachers are clear about outcomes. The other issue which was noted in relation to curriculum was that where negotiation is used, such as with adults, there needs to be an awareness that more vocal participants often seek to have their demands met to the detriment of others the latter often being women, but not always, as personality factors are important. Learners who are more reticent about expressing their preferences might simply withdraw from the situation. In this area, too it is indicated that the teacher needs to have an input about the core and students can perhaps elect to undertake special interest work within a guided but independent framework. In the case of new learning it is the pacing and intensity which is important. The release of energy which occurs through protein production as a result of the learning should be re-absorbed by the next process, the next piece of information, that is, the next thought. There is significance in the this for those who are placed in a situation of boredom, such as the unemployed, the retired or those who, through illness or disability, are unable to occupy themselves with interesting activity. For a person who experiences a sudden decrease in activity as, for example, a person who loses a job may be initially surrounded by excess electrical activity and if this activity is not gainfully utilised, the mental field begins to decline. The longer this state of devolution the harder it is
to reverse the lower vibratory rate of the mental energy field and the more likely there will be ill effects in the other dimensions of existence.

During the learning process the interactions of the neurons can result in variations of the RNA through the making of new connections. This occurs at the neuron level when impulses leap across the synapse to connect new cells which have been formed as a result of the learning activity. Where there has been a decrease in brain cell function there is recognition that brain and neural cells can regenerate to some extent provided conditions are ideal, and other cells can learn to take over some functions in brain-damaged people. (9)

This paper suggest that this regeneration can be related on a macrocosmic series of levels to individuals locked in negative thought patterns, to friendships, to groups, indeed to cultures and nations. We can reverse situations (albeit over time) but only if a majority are sufficiently interested to make the effort to provide the ideal environment which will trigger off the series of patterns to facilitate a positive creative evolutionary spiral.

In one sense the victim feels release if able to speak of the experience to an empathic listener, possibly even going through a period of seeking opportunities to speak of their experiences, but in another sense the more people who know of the details the more thought energy is created, in my understanding, and there is a risk of the thought energy re-focussing instead of dissipating. In such situations as rape, the victim may go through details of the experience, trying to understand “why it happened to me” and asking if she had any responsibility in the matter. If she discusses this with one or two people who do not take the matter beyond the discussion she may feel freer than she does if the case becomes a public issue. In such a situation many thoughts are generated and the matter seems to exacerbate. For the victim the fear, abhorrence and (imagined) guilt contrast with the perpetrator’s guilt and alertness to protect himself from any thoughts of self blame. In this sense, innocence is truly a state of mind, nurtured by the will of the perpetrator (and also of a way of thinking - an etheric- which habitually blames women for such occurrences and denigrates women as human beings.) In a news report, a rape victim spoke of an experience where she had to walk past the perpetrator, standing in the dock. She said “There was this terrible bond between us.” (11)

If the electrical field around a person changes there should be a sudden release of stored energy in the form of amino acids released from the cells. If the individual is unprepared for this, or lacking in appropriate support the energy and proteins can be lost from the system causing an acute deficiency. A state of chronic deficiency could similarly result if an individual is consistently subjected to situations which are hostile and/or negative or is CONSTANTLY being required to alter behaviour and re-learn.

Consideration of the foregoing therefore leads me to support the suggestion that people who are isolated and especially if they exist within a largely negative mental and/or emotional environment are at risk of harmful consequences. These begin in the individual thought field, are very often connected to the person’s own memories and in many cases, also to energies which remain from the memories and thoughts of others which can result in destructive processes beginning in the other personal life fields and eventually in the physical body and the
conscious mind. It is therefore important to realise that we can influence, and be influenced by thought energies of which we may be unaware. The significance of this within the universal framework of membership of the human race and of the shared etheric of a planet which is under threat are cogent factors which also have positive and beautiful as well as potentially negative aspects and involve mutual awareness and responsibility, both in behaviour and to develop awareness. Some ideas relating to this are discussed in the next chapter.
We are members of a vast cosmic orchestra,
in which each living instrument is essential
to the complementary and harmonious playing
of the whole.

J. Allen Boone
CHAPTER 6
THE ULTIMATE ETHERIC LINK: THE LIFE PROCESS

In this chapter there is an exploration of some of the implications of belonging to the energy networks of a species. When investigators (1) have explored the concept of bio-electrical fields as the governing forces of evolutionary and genetic behavioural developments there has always been the query as to the relationship with the environmental factors—the ever-contentious nature versus nurture debate. However, it must be conceded that each dimension has some influence on all individual and group systems, the respective influence of inheritance and environment varying with each system.

Biologists such as the Goulds (1980) (2) have documented research which demonstrated that neural circuits can be genetically shown to govern human behaviour but this in no way abolishes the traditional acknowledgement of our free will. However, as has been shown, this in turn might be influenced more than has been traditionally realised by the electro-magnetic fields of others and, as is becoming more accepted, by the electro-magnetic fields of the earth itself and possibly much more.

Within the animal kingdom higher order animals may exhibit behaviours demonstrating free will on occasions but the point needs to be made that this can only be measured after the animals have made contact with humans and there are few, if any, animals which have not had to learn new survival behaviours at least at the species level. One area of concern is the extent to which both the human and animal species gene pools have been affected by the long term use of chemicals, pesticides, and anti-biotics, as well as by planned breeding programs which limit the gene pool in the food chain, as is common with cattle breeding. Additionally there are chosen lifestyles which allow the crossover of viruses between animals and humans as in, for example, situations where farm animals live in close proximity to humans and with some pet owners. Work carried out by animal geneticists (3) has led them to consider the links with genetic tendencies in all life forms.

As both external and internal factors influence the vibratory fields of the body and hence its overall vibration it needs to be recognised that past and current environmental factors can have influences which are not always easily separated from the known facts about a person. It is for this reason that this thesis proposes that the thought fields are potentially the most powerful because they permeate the other fields as well as the individual cells. Hence if we are truly from the stars and all matter is recycled over aeons then even the physical bodies are a reflection of the thoughts of the past, as we know the emotional states so often are. If body parts are over-used, dischord results. Similarly a person who is over-active in one field of endeavour to the detriment of the other facets of life will usually show some signs of dissatisfaction and may, in the normal sense, feel the need to redress the imbalance at the first available opportunity. However, if the environment has, over a significant period, accepted or contributed to an imbalanced state, it needs to be recognised that the body as a whole may, I suggest, not easily return to harmony because it will not readily recognise the needed pattern. It is also true that there may be a need to follow a program which concentrates on some other facets of life in
order to redress the imbalance. Examples are such as when students who have completed examinations immerse themselves in sporting activities to make up for hours of studying.

**IMBALANCE AND STRESS**

Another matter for concern is that people need to learn how to close off from worries and from influences which are not beneficial to their welfare (4). Ideally, this would be to remove oneself from the disharmony producing stimulus, but this is not always possible. People often say that they ‘tune out’ when a speaker went on too long. In a very real way we also need to know how to remove ourselves from etheric networks which may be influencing us overtly and covertly to our detriment.

Magneto-encepholograms (5) have measured the biomagnetic fields created by brain activity through cryogenic sensors and this supports the now commonly held acceptance of the influence of thought on bodily health. This knowledge has been implemented through the use of visualisation as an adjunct in, for example, cancer treatment. In the negative sense thought can be used to engender or hasten the progress of illness. Examples are the practice of ‘pointing the bone’ as has been traditional in some cultures and in a positive sense in treatments such as those used by the Simonton’s (1984) and others for seriously ill patients.

As these practitioners have pointed out, cancer can result when the body’s immune system learns to accept particular antigens through frequent contact, losing their vital ability to differentiate between ‘self’ and ‘the other’. The work of Hay (1985) and Simonton (1984) suggests that similar imbalances in the mental state of an individual can begin in the Thought Field. The individual may be congenitally disabled or because of, for example, ingesting an excess of a substance (be it food, drugs or metal) may be unable to formulate his own thoughts and hence maintain a strong magnetic field around the body. This inability can also develop when a person has experienced trauma or ongoing grief. It is likely that the effects of these disturbances will be gradual, with periods of personal grief when the individual may need to make conscious decisions about whether to compromise and assimilate aspects of the collective thought. It could also be that there is a state of chaos throughout the etheric when numbers of individuals question attitudes or practices and the change in essential ways, causing some long time members to leave.

As previously explained the etheric is more complex than a thought field through its interactions with the wills and emotions of the members. It is more comfortable to work and live within an etheric which is mainly harmonious to one’s general attitudes. However, it is within the responsibility of the individual to build up and maintain his own vibratory fields through active use of the power of thought. This can and does occur in all cultures and life situations as the individual diagnoses environmental or personal problems and attempts to solve them.

Those who exist within a comfortable framework which does not offer challenge (e.g. physical or mental) might then tend to create challenges through emotional stress brought on by boredom (negative stress). This accounts, for example, for the fact that some who have led hard physical lives are often very healthy into old age because of having met so many challenges.
in the physical field, even if this means just maintaining a level of fitness in a body which has less youthful vigour. In their situation it would be the physical field which would be the strongest and it needs to be remembered that this would have taken discipline over the years. A doctor who had worked on Elisabeth Kubler Ross Association workshops and in other programs said that many young adults he had met in his work, who have experienced seemingly happy childhoods, can sometimes feel deep frustration which results in an unexplained anger towards their parents because they have been unable to grow through not being faced with a sufficient degree of challenge in their lives. However, there is of course a difference between insufficient opportunity for growth through healthy challenge and being overwhelmed at too young an age by having to make too many decisions about priorities.

When changes occur through either natural alterations in the body functions or through external occurrences, the individual is stimulated to increase the vibratory rate of one or more of the body fields. In periods when there are no changes (hence no challenges) the vibratory rates may gradually diminish unless action is taken to maintain interactions with the vibratory fields of others. In this personal sphere also there is no room for stagnation. We either engage ourselves sufficiently so that we continue to evolve or we risk entering a devolutionary cycle. Involvement with at least some of the fields of other beings, preferably with some of one's own species and vibratory level, is crucial for survival because of the interactive energy patterns involved. To follow the theory through to the ideal it would seem that the most cruel deprivation is that of being kept outside what one feels to be one's own group. However, in practice it may well be that many people never discover their true group or vibratory band. Examples could be highly intelligent people who are born into communities where their potential is unrecognised or their status prevents recognition, or people who are in other ways unable to express their talents and understanding and thus be in turn stimulated by those who have talents and wisdom in the same field hence facilitating development of skills and talents.

The Ancient Greeks understood this very well with their custom of ostracism, while the various religions have had similar practices (ex-communication within the Christian church was a severe penalty in medieval times as is shunning by the Amish). It should be noted that in these examples the individual was faced sometimes with economic hardship because the social structures and religious beliefs and practices were closely linked within the walled city or monastic enclosures or within the isolated society.

However, this enforced separation from a group which was condemning was not altogether unwelcome because living in close proximity with those with whom one is not in harmony is also destructive. This does not negate the need to link in with harmonious vibrational bands, even though the links may not be made at the conscious level.

**THE POWER OF THE GROUP**

The other cogent factor is that the negative energy generated by the group 'the mob etheric' is indeed dangerous if its strength is focussed to cause harm or indeed, if it is unrecognised and therefore uncontrolled. The villagers of the ancient Hebrew had a custom of sending a goat into the desert each year. This was very cruel to the scapegoat but the idea could certainly be
adapted today through the use of some symbol which could not itself suffer. Seemingly, the customs associated with welcoming in the New Year and making resolutions, found in many cultures, have roots in this at the subconscious level. The current chaotic state of the world society is evidence that the destructive tendencies are still strong and, for example, on the attitude level, could mean that in times of high unemployment some people will be excluded from some or all chance of employment, depending on the predominating thought in the area where they are seeking work. In the 1990s the power of the group to cut off or exclude members is still present, the positive aspect being that, with extra knowledge about thought processes at least some people may be able to ‘seal off’ the links with the rejecting and therefore, for them, destructive group, and begin again, as did many of the first migrants to Australia, the convicts. Examples of this during this research have been migrant families who have settled in an area where numbers of their former ethnic group lived, only to later move away because they felt pressure by religious differences, which had roots in their country of origin.

As a species progresses through its evolutionary cycles there seems to be a basic tendency to improve the efficiency of its interaction with the environment or, at the end of the spectrum, the species dies out. Litvak and Senzee (1986) cite studies in which the progeny of slow learning rats tended to learn at a faster rate than their parents and in other studies the learning of a maze seemed to indicate that Darwin’s theory of randomness was not verified in situations which called upon memory, learning and the development of purpose. This may be compared with the current theories describing morphogenetic fields which Wolpert (1978) among others, believes could logically exist and develop concurrently during biological growth such as when, for example, embryonic cells differentiate and organise according to determinants such as polarity, boundaries and gradients.

In discussing some of the writing of Watson (1979) these authors quote him as saying that as well as our genetic inheritance we are formed and influenced by a force which is of a collective universal nature, distinct from the individual and the personal. Watson emphasises that the will is the determinant which can change direction on a conscious level. This thesis proposes that this force which Watson describes, gathers energy from individual and group thought fields, possibly even originating from this source, as when something in creation began to think. The process is ongoing and even more complex than its components because thought processes continually interact and develop with the other energy fields in evolutionary spirals. This thesis proposes that the interaction of the will with these ongoing multi-dimensional processes is the nucleus of an etheric which also evolves through devolution or change. The amplification of this principle is a reminder that we human beings belong to a species and the growth and fate of one in some way affects us all and that all our needs may not, and probably cannot, be met by one person or group. This becomes more apparent as we develop: while the adolescent may seem compelled to operate closely within a particular group’s behavioural code this usually becomes less important later on, and new interests are developed which aid independence and a flexibility to move between ethereics. The need, therefore, is for the individual to acknowledge that she or he has needs in all life dimensions: the physical, emotional, intellectual and the spiritual. These needs may not be identified specifically but it is part of the growth process that they become more clear at the conscious level. The other
dimension is that the individual interact sufficiently (that is, be connected with a variety of etherics) so that he can identify with one or more who share his thoughts, relative to each dimension of existence, and that he should be recognised in some way by the group. To remain part of the web of life, sustenance must be given and received on an ongoing basis, across the four identified fields and possibly involving more, yet to be clarified and accepted.

ETHERIC NETWORKS

For human beings, and probably for all living creatures existence is linked to being able to be part of the etherics, with others, in thought even if other contacts are impossible. This was emphasised in a news item when a man who had been held hostage for seven years was freed and spoke of having been held incommunicado for the first four or five years. He then received a card from an unknown (to him) person assuring him that he was not forgotten and others were working to procure his freedom. In his moving account he acknowledged that this message was vitally important to his keeping his sanity and, after receiving the card, he began to receive others. The original link through thought was supported by action and it is reasonable to suggest that his captors began to alter their attitudes and subsequently their actions as a result of the change in the thought field they shared with their prisoner, the persistence of his supporters eventually having an effect (9).

This chapter suggests that an important factor in the eventual release of hostages and other similar prisoners has been that others kept praying for them and thinking of them, possibly actions accompanying this to some degree. But the actions will not be instigated unless the thought precedes them. The energy from the thoughts of the caring group toward the needy person concurrently creates an energy focussed at the captors to change their thinking. The crucial factor is the degree of concern felt by a sufficient number of the community not directly involved, but willing to persevere in primarily thinking about the unfortunates and working toward changing their physical situation. This is relevant for many migrants who worry about the volatile situation in their homelands. Change may sadly take too long to evolve to save all people at risk but thought evolution is subject to the same processes of development, maturation and eventual devolution as other evolutionary processes. It is not suggested that this concept of the power of focused group energy supplants the creative force and Supreme Being many know as God, but rather that this is at least one of the modes through which the Source interacts with the human species. This interaction can be revealed through acts of compassion and kindness but these must be preceded by thought. It is a possibility that if those who have the strength ceased to close off their minds from those who suffer that this in itself would begin to reverse some of the seemingly endless cycles of deprivation, experienced by many. The writer considers that this is one of the salient points of social ecology in that it instigates and nurtures new thought patterns.

SOME PERSPECTIVES ON THE BRAIN

Problem solving puts demands on the brain, making new neural links through axons and dendrites, thus increasing the density of the grey matter. Viewing the brain through the evolutionary perspective Litvak and Senzee (1986) (10) point out that the matter of the brain
stem is shared with the reptilian brain, the limbic system being the mammalian brain and controlling the fight or flight response. The cerebrum is what differentiates the brains of primates and humans; while motor functions relate to the cerebellum which also monitors the limbic system, hence emotions and sensations. Some scientists say this is the psychic store which feeds back dreams, trances and extrasensory information.

In a sense the brain can be linked to a hologram in the view of Pribam (1984) (11), Litvak and Senzée (1986) (12) and others, with each fragment of the image containing the whole, as each cell of the body contains the DNA code of the body. In the same way the intricacies of each individual brain are mirrored in others and together pulsate as the global mind brain, the network of living, growing evolutionary processes. It is not difficult to appreciate the connections between this concept and earlier theories, as for example, Chomsky’s (1968) theory of genetic memory for language.

One perception of the inter-relationships of universal and individual intelligence could be said to be based on a continuum of perspective, perception and understanding, and including the ways these are integrated into past experiences and processed into a higher understanding and more effective behaviour patterns.

As awareness seems to be a significant component in the evolutionary process, it needs to be accepted that not all will reach the same understandings at the same time nor be able to even relate to the experiential worlds of others. It is this growth process when one reaches a moment of knowing and, finding that it is not shared by others in the etheric, that causes the individual to seek a new etheric.

**THE RECORDING OF THOUGHT PROCESSES**

The way the universal force reaches the individual is through the various etheric networks with which s/he is involved. These etherics affect the individual to a major extent through thought. It is not possible to pinpoint when this dominance began but a key factor would have possibly been when writing forms evolved in a culture. In early times the process was time-consuming and required specially fashioned tools and stone or hand-made papyrus. If something was to be recorded in this form it would have been essential for the scribe to be very clear about what he wanted to record and this was an impetus to honing language skills and hence to thinking. When thoughts are written they take on a new dimension. They are encoded and solidified and the encoding processes demonstrates that the writer desires to communicate a message for known or unknown readers.

Many written texts and films illustrate the fact that some people paint their bodies in a variety of set patterns for specific purposes (e.g. TIME-LIFE series on ancient civilisations). These designs along with cave paintings and patterns in fabric weaving are viewed by Aedean Cremin (1992) among others, as marking the beginning of literacy. As stone writing began to take form it seems it was often used to mark something or someone, as in the eulogy for a dead leader. The messages served to activate the ideas of the viewer rather than being a final statement. Since that time the power of the written word has become mighty and although an author may
intend it to be definitive through the activity of the readers' minds it continues to be a catalyst which generates new thoughts and new connections across etherics. In this way a piece of writing can begin an etheric across the time and space and cultural and generational divisions. This is because it has a form which is constant and can be perused again and again in the light of new understandings, new awareness and hence lead to deepening perceptions. This constancy also applies to film and auditory taping and pictorial matter.

I have come to perceive the very great importance of having access to etherics through such media as books and films as they enable individuals to reach outside of their usual networks and make connections with the ideas and emotions of others they will never meet. In particular this can apply to people who do not have the opportunity to make many contacts with those who share their interests or intellectual pursuits and others such as people who live in remote areas. Teachers of adult migrants may assist them to connect with interest groups such as bush-walking or hobby groups. Music can offer a similar connection, as explained. We need the energy generated by being connected with others and we suffer when we are rejected or excluded from needed contacts. It is imported for each one to know that she or he belongs and is part of one or more etherics.

Human beings have the capacity to work out the directions of their own evolution but their awareness of this capacity is in itself an evolving process. As the perspective widens a series of ongoing goals open up due to the increasing ability to make connections between etherics both at the individual level and at the whole race level. It becomes recognised that one's own survival needs have begun to combine with the survival needs of the earth itself. The moment of truth has arrived.

While it may not yet be true that all members of the human species share the level of awareness which constitutes responsibility for creation, the crucial issue is that those who know about instances of exploitation have a responsibility to pass on their perceptions and concerns and they need to devise ways which will assist others to share their understanding. Whether we like it or not we are all part of the human etheric and of the etheric of the earth and when groups or individuals are allowed to suffer without remorse or receiving compassion, or when lack of respect decreases the standards of humankind, we are all diminished in some way. For many people this will mean to act and speak according to their understanding of their daily lives. From others, more is needed. And yet the price for speaking out now could mean loss of livelihood for many if their beliefs are unacceptable in their work place or their jobs may be lost because of changes which are believed to be necessary to create a new order.

THE WEB OF LIFE

As so very little is known about the levels of consciousness in subhuman species the greatest care needs also to be taken when working with animals. Just because a creature is unable to voice its suffering does not mean that it does not experience pain. Again, the statement needs to be made that we share the Earth's etheric and if one species is deprived of life and respect for its existence, there is an imbalance created. Through my life experience I have come to believe that at least some members of the animal kingdom can experience emotional pain
through having a degree of conscious awareness. Some groups show this through their behaviours, notably elephants and whales, in the way they respond to the death of one of their number. Among instances the writer has observed was when a cat became terminally ill through the night and other felines gathered around in a circle apparently to keep it company. There was a definite sense of grief in the group when the sick animal was taken for veterinary care. Another instance given by a friend was of her pet canary which stopped whistling each time the owner underwent recurring traumatic treatments which necessitated her head being bandaged. This bird did not whistle again until the owner’s health improved, and this was unrelated to normal cycles of moulting and not whistling.

On a gentler note, one dry summer the writer observed a baby sparrow sitting on a bush while I was hosing the garden. It appeared to relish the fine spray and, as it was able to fly a short distance, I placed a shallow tray of water in a protected spot, tilting the tray so one side was dry. Eventually the parent birds could be observed guiding the fledgling through a series of short but circuitous flights, apparently to bathe it. To my delighted surprise the next evening I found two small birds sitting on the original bush, apparently guided there by their parents and anticipating their evening’s ablutions. There was a feeling of great joy at being so trusted to assist the parents carry out their responsibilities in a temporarily parched urban environment. Clearly these sparrows had learned to use the resources available to them in a suburban setting.

The evolution of biological structures is paralleled by the evolution of the mind and consciousness throughout the planet, and possibly of the cosmos. Because of their inter-relatedness the developments in each facet influence the direction and process of the developments in other facets in ever complex cycles in the evolutionary spirals.

Presumably because of interactions within and between species there seems to have been a gradual increase in awareness both within and across species and between species. Examples of this can be observed in behaviours of household pets such as dogs and cats who adapt to communal living and compete keenly for their owners preferential attention. There are many examples of pets pining because of the owner’s absence or illness or refusing to meet physical needs such as eating if they are out of favour with human companions. Therapists and others working with the elderly say that people who live alone enjoy better health if they have a pet. This especially applies to the elderly who may be limited in their ability to mix within many other pets have been introduced into communal homes for the elderly offering opportunities for a mutual exchange of affection.

One of the key factors which is involved in what seems to be the decline of the ultimate etheric is the state of chaos which is at the same time a necessary phase leading to the next stage of evolution and toward new connections and new cycles. For the purpose of this thesis these new phases involved the processes experienced by human beings as they begin life and live through the experiences brought to them by destiny and their own choices and actions. However, with the growing concern at the risks to the human species and to the environment because of population pressures and the ways the earth has been mistreated by those who have appointed themselves as its keepers, it is also recognised that there are concurrent and probably interactive patterns with the chaos that has been recognised within and surrounding Gaia, the living earth
system.

In this chapter there has been consideration of the complexities of the processes and the links between living systems. In the next chapter there will be some reflection on the forces which lead the individual towards new cycles of consciousness thus enhancing the development of the spiritual field, which has a profound influence on choices made by the person and it may be pondered, is also enhanced or retarded in turn by acts of will.
I am part of a network of events that have occurred in the lives of many people, some of whom are unknown to me. I know that their deaths must have contributed to my life, and that without them I would not be who I am.

To be aware of this is to carry their love within my heart, and to live in a spirit of gratitude.

Jean Lanier
CHAPTER 7

THE SPIRITUAL FIELD

One cannot erase from the soul of a human being what his ancestors liked most to do and did most constantly... It is simply not possible that a human being should not have the qualities and preferences of his parents and ancestors in his body, whatever appearances may suggest to the contrary. This is the problem of the race.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1)
Beyond Good and Evil

It is an open question as to how much of Nietzsche's perception was personal and how much of his statement was influenced by the thinking of his time and culture (which of course would have been related to and stemming from tradition) but there is no doubt that his statement is very significant. The spiritual field is the most subtle and elusive for the conscious mind to comprehend, developing perhaps more from adolescence on, although existing from before birth. The great world religions have traditionally incorporated ceremonies whereby the child is introduced to the community as a member of a spiritual network although, for some, the solemn ceremony is delayed until adolescence or adulthood, when the choice is made to make the commitment.

Evolution in the spiritual field is often recognised by an increased awareness of 'who am I' in relation to God. It is achieved partly through individual efforts and partly through destiny as being our natural evolving toward a higher level of consciousness, of Oneness with creation, over eternity.

I will lead you through the loneliness.
The solitude you will not understand but it is my shortcut to your soul.

Thomas Merton (2)

Although there will probably always be ongoing discussion as to the exact moment of unification of soul and body, this is when the soul commences a cycle of experiences and evolutionary processes on the physical plane.

The mystical and esoteric traditions of both East and West stress the general importance if remembrance and recognition of the links with the higher planes through practices such as meditation and chant, often in a group such as with monastic communities. These practices evolved to tune and retune the body and to establish resonance within a group (3) There is also an overall dedication to the ongoing development of the individual and the group through ongoing renewal, toward a greater and more profound reality. At the centre of this was the recognition that all energy fields must be balanced and this is achieved by an order and consistency to the daily routine, with, as in The Rule of St. Benedict, an emphasis on a balanced
lifestyle. As with any such community when such groups are not governed by a theme aimed at raising the evolutionary processes of all involved, the practices can become destructive, causing the energies, thoughts and efforts of the individuals or the group to become stagnant. Creativity is blocked, the focus looks only inward, falls back on the internal and loses links with the energy fields of the wider community, with each other and, ultimately, the individual loses vitality and a sense of purpose, then going into a devolutionary cycle. The outward signs of this are an obsession with grievances and scandals, with egocentric personal or national pride which is centred on self-aggrandisement and a narrow limiting world view which is clung to despite opportunities to expand it.

The actualised person who has, or is close to, integrating the inner psyche, the soul, with the external expression of thoughts, behaviour and attitudes, takes on the meaning of higher consciousness and human evolution. One wonders how many such actualised beings have attempted to share their insights with others only to be rejected or ridiculed. The problem is a real one due to the inability of those who are aware, to comprehend the reality being described. It is not perceptible to their senses, is not in their memory, hence they cannot hear or see any evidence put before them describing a more meaningful (if more demanding) existence. It seems that a majority in our culture are coming to reject many of the traditional values as espoused by religions but many have not yet found a replacement. It could be said that we are in a state of chaos in our spiritual evolution, and what is happening in the invisible plane within individuals and their spiritual ethers will determine the way we evolve as a culture. It is very significant for migrants who may easily lose links with their traditional spiritual traditions in a new culture, and, because of language and other barriers, do not feel a close enough tie with any new spiritual support to nurture a sense of belonging and growth.

At critical moments in the evolutionary time of the human race highly evolved beings seem to have intervened, some through incarnating in the physical form, through the human birth process. There is evidence that others have manifested to a select audience through visions or other experiences of enlightenment, which seem to have enabled communications between human beings and other beings who were vibrating at frequencies different from those of the average human being. According to some traditions this state, or a similar one, has been reached by certain holy gurus who lived or have lived in isolation although occasionally accepting visits from selected individuals. On their own evidence these gurus appear to have developed their perceptions far beyond the senses, (for example, Khan 1977.) It is significant that for some years before the present outbreak of violence and suffering in what was Yugoslavia there was said to be a series of appearances of the Virgin Mary, accompanied by certain visible phenomena. I have spoken with a person who spent time in this town and described his experiences. He is a young lay person and not of the background of that country, but he said he was profoundly affected by his experiences there, that “there was something in the air” which gave him a sense of “peace and joy” and that he wanted to return.

Some traditions teach that the soul has opportunities to evolve during physical incarnation which are not available to it in a discarnate state, that it is only during earthly existence that karmic issues can be resolved, if indeed they are relevant. Other belief systems seem rather to
emphasise the earthly existences as being a constantly threatening devolutionary process in which the soul is beset by temptations which abound on the physical plane. Their adherents are reminded constantly to keep themselves unattached to earthly matters. Although both Eastern and Western traditions validate the idea that the soul can evolve into higher level of awareness, there have been serious disagreements as to the extent of the predestination or whether our progress can be determined through the choices we make using our will. There is a general emphasis that it is important for the individual to reflect on experiences and seek to understand the lessons which need to be learned and the ways in which adaptations need to be implemented.

**RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS**

In this culture Christianity is still a professed religion for large numbers and, as stated, other religions have similar ceremonies which mark the child’s rite of passage into its spiritual community. The question could be asked as to what happens to one who does not receive this rite from his/her own community, either because parents do not believe in it (thus making a choice for their child) or because he or she has been removed from their background, as is the case for many migrants. Parents have for some time been electing to have ‘naming ceremonies’ not linked to any religious affiliation because clergymen from most denominations began to deny Baptism to children whose parents could not show that they practised the religion involved. Studies have found that churchgoing is decreasing in Australia and this seems to have also come to mean for many a complete denial of the spiritual dimension in their life. This has created a sense of loss in the developing person which is not readily expressed in language. Young people reaching adolescence, have an especial need to ‘belong’ and it is possible that this is very much a yearning for the spiritual which does not have to be met through a formal religious connection, but which may be more easily met through this way and be less painful and traumatic for the seeker because there is strength to be gained from being a member of a community and hence receiving its teachings, rites and being a part of its interlocking energy networks. In the event that a particular ethereal dose not ‘fit’ it is still easier for the individual who has had the experience of being a member and of having had some experiences of the teachings and challenges involved so that s/he has some basis on which to make comparisons and, when necessary, to rebel against.

Writing in the nineteenth century Carl Jung said that there was a reason that a person was born into a particular religious tradition and that it was necessary for the person to come to terms with that tradition even though he might explore other spiritual pathways. In other words, before a person can know whether or not a particular spiritual Way is for him or her, s/he must have some knowledge at a conscious level to provide a conceptual framework which enables growth and the actualisation of the will.

It is a tragedy but part of the ongoing spiritual struggles of both individuals and religious groups that throughout history and to the present day, religious beliefs and affiliations have been used as a pretext for engaging in war and violence, which can also extend to persecution of groups and individuals. Many people, fleeing from such disorder in their homelands, have settled in Australia, retaining their belief systems, but nevertheless shaken because of the conflicts they
have witnessed between expressed principles and observed actions. Such people need time to come to terms with what has happened and to re-assess their beliefs and come to terms with the spiritual contexts in which they find themselves. This cannot be taught in a class but there is a need to respect customs as far as is practicable between individuals and between individuals and the systems.

In a lecture at an Australian university in 1990 on Theology as Liberation, Matthew Fox pointed out that there is an urgent need for a religious/spiritual awakening, the need being for more wisdom, not for more knowledge. He emphasises that we need to free ourselves from our ‘miserly’ traits and start returning to the earth from which we are constantly taking. In so doing we will be delivered from our sense of powerlessness. Annie Diller, whom Fox calls ‘a modern day Thoreau’ says that Nature is above all, profligate and extravagant: ‘atomic particles are as spirited and wild as any El Greco saints’. Fox fears that youth, especially in the First and Third worlds, are in despair, yearning to know that there is more that just a world built on the value of money, to know that they have a place in the universe. He says that we need to stop reading the patriarchal stories and instead read the stories of the victims, including the stories of the women of history. We in Australia need to listen to the story of the Aboriginal people... and learn. We belong to this land and have inherited its stories and pain, thus we must seek reconciliation with the ghosts of the past.

Restrictive systems train us to reference ourselves externally and to deny our true selves. We must remember that the truth comes from within. We create our true images through our work and our daily lives and our etheric interactions. In this way we are enabled to come into contact with the God within us which in turn yearns to make contact with the God in others and, to evolve toward the source.

Within the limitations of our survival needs and our ability and freedom to perceive and act within our internal and external environments, we have free will. If there are serious limitations such as a severe disability in the physical domain or a state of enslavement in the external domain, we clearly have less ability to exercise it. There is a belief that a person with such a limitation stemming from apparently predestined conditions, such as to live in a cruel or very deprived society, may have accepted a greater challenge by incarnating into such a life situation, with the intention of facilitating the evolution of the soul. Some also say that an intention could be to learn a lesson, previously resisted (in former incarnations) or as a model for others to facilitate their evolution. Others believe that each soul incarnates only once, but their concept of the evolutionary cycle follows a similar pattern, whether it be through one lifetime or many. Others believe that in some sense, both belief systems have validity in that while each soul is a separate entity incarnating in the physical state only once, within the energy fields and within the soul matter, if that needs to be described separately, there are remnants of energies which emanate from the thoughts and emotions of beings who have previously lived. These could well be negative vibrations which were undissipated from the energy fields of these beings while they lived. In a like manner there would also be positive fields vibrating at a higher frequency than that usual for a living person, these emanating from a cosmic store built up from positive thoughts and emotions and love for creation which may not have been expressed to others or accepted.
The significance of this for any person who is sensitive to their spiritual growth is important because through practice, we can work toward freeing our thought and other energy fields from negativity and thus opening up to positive energies in the same way that we open our lungs to oxygen through breathing out carbon dioxide. However, as the lives of many mystics record, the journey toward the higher evolutionary state seems to include periods of attack by negative energies, as indeed Christ was said to be tempted by the Devil to accept the gift of unlimited power over the kingdoms of the earth.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The concept that a person has the power to improve health and life situation is valuable and assists the development of the optimistic outlook for future betterment. However, it must be understood in the context of the life fields and must not be permitted to regress into a primitive way of thinking which exonerates the fortunate from any responsibility toward compassion for the suffering of others, using for example, the excuse that this misfortune may be the result of karmic forces or, as is sometime heard, that they are free to choose another way of living. In real terms, many people are not.

Whichever theory of existence one elects to adopt it is still clear that accidents causing misfortune can happen! For example, in the past, and still for some cultures, many babies died in infancy or early life because of poor nutrition or some environmental factor. Medical advance may have lessened the likelihood of this in many nations but modern lifestyles have created other hazards, which can end a life or drastically interfere with what seemed a predictable pattern. If the chaos created is so extensive that it ends the life, it can be understood that there might well be thoughts, actions, emotions or some other energy which has a desperate need to be activated into a tangible energy before it can melt back into the cosmos, dissipated.

The ongoing tension between individual free will and its relationship to the wills and rights of others remain a barometer which indicates the level of evolutionary awareness of individuals, groups and the human race in general. Those involved with other people (involved being a significant word) make their own choices in situations which to a greater or lesser extent, affect the opportunities, freedoms, and even the lives of others. Additionally, the cumulative result of these decisions in any etheric, be it a family, culture, or a species, creates a general quality to the etheric, a force which can create, build or destroy. As with any force it builds up, in the target, be it within a family or group. The suggestion has been made that the power thus engendered by a group force could also affect natural forces such as the weather, which relates to traditional practices such as rain ceremonies and some shamanic rites as are customary with, for example, some Indian tribes in North America.

Such a force can be misused and directed against the innocent to prevent their growth or inhibit their progress toward a worthy goal. There is no evidence that in the short term the unaware can be protected against such a force, but over time karmic forces would come into being so that a malicious intent could rebound on the perpetrators. The need for awareness and protective practices is unfortunately not widely acknowledged. Dawn Hill, writing in EDGE
OF REALITY says that there will come a time when mothers will train their children to seal their aururas as they 'teach them to clean their teeth'.

Within a societal context there is an ongoing tension between the desire to respect personal freedom while yet remaining vigilant at curbing trends and developments which may harm the common good. An example would be the need for strict regulations on building construction where it may impinge on the rights of others, or harm the environment.

As with all interactions the exercise of free will in any context must work toward a balance if one or many are not to be harmed. Perhaps karmic law can protect us by limiting our opportunities to exercise free will. Those who have much have the most to lose, and the more power we have, the greater can be our errors in the exercising of it. We will make wrong choices and miss opportunities and these are the ways our progress is inhibited, preventing us from channelling all our life energy into our chosen sphere. Most people experience very real grief when they recall occasions when they have failed to recognise opportunities for learning, or for failing to integrate their learning and acknowledging who they are.

THE EVOLVING PROCESS OF THE SPIRITUAL

For many, it seems to be the essence of the human condition that we create a fabric of resistance toward our own evolution mainly because we are unable to maintain a balance between our evolving energies. Early in life, it is usual for the physical field to dominate as the young person enjoys exploring her world. The cognitive and affective domains are also developing at this time, often one at the expense of the other. While the spiritual dimension of the personality is always present and naturally developing. This is our most subtle field, which contains the awareness of who we are in relation to ourselves, to others and to God. Thus, while it seems that our destiny should lead us to a state of balance, it might be that it is our free will, whether it be a gift from the Divine source or, in some mysterious way, the result of a chaotic process in past evolutionary time, which tends to throw us into a state of imbalance. We need to enter a cycle of disequilibrium so that we can alter our behavioural patterns. While opening the way for needed changes this intermediate state tends to throw us into a state of imbalance. The same states can be found in organisations and societies which are experiencing challenges to existing patterns and functioning levels.

Within Nature there are many examples of co-operation between species to facilitate their survival. It is true that this co-operation has taken millenia to develop, especially across species, and also that in life threatening situations it is the natural predilection of the organism ( or a system such as an organisation) to protect itself firstly, or its species, and it is a higher order function to show compassion toward those of another species or group. It could then be said that the development of this capacity is a marker in the evolutionary process, for the individual or the group, and it is possible that individuals who have not yet reached this point may still be able to act altruistically when operating as a member of a group which is functioning on such a level. From the historical perspective it seems that when each civilisation seemed to be at its peak of knowledge and, seemingly of operative efficiency, that this has been the moment in time when the ruling members were confronted with the choice of using their
knowledge and expertise altruistically for their neighbours, or consolidating their resources of knowledge and enjoying the fruits of their previous effort with the view that, as they were of a superior stock, they deserved to retain their advantages. It is possible that this has been the evolutionary moment when involution began to change into devolution and the civilisation began to decline, although the process may be slow. There is natural tendency to redress a state of imbalance.

**SUBTLE HIERARCHIES**

Any society which permits a great imbalance between the rich and the poor to be widespread and prolonged is at risk of decline because of the tendency toward a balance. This is not to say that those who have should be deprived of their lawfully gained possessions by force, rather that it is necessary to raise the consciousness of those who have that they may not take from the underprivileged and to engender in all a sense of moderation of desires for wealth.

However, at the same time it is also often true that the underprivileged, when their situation is moderated through a changed situation which gives them an increase in power over their lives, have not had a history of using their powers wisely, moderately or patiently, perhaps because their sense of injustice has built up over a long period and, as a group, they have had little experience in using power over their own lives or over others. It is also often the case that the underprivileged have their own hierarchy and have evolved ways of coping which have worked well for them under the existing system and this sub-group will strongly resist attempts at changing a system. At the least they will lose the prestige or notoriety they enjoy within their own sub-system and they may lose their freedom, their possessions, or even their lives through being condemned by both sides.

In the past it has been the historian who has sifted through the evidence and attempted to reveal the under-currents involved in wars, where victims were preyed upon by members of their own ‘side’ (while distinguishing between apparent group membership as perceived from outside and the sharing of an etheric as this paper discusses.) It is well known (but not usually highlighted by previous history) that as a group women have always been doubly the victims in any war. With the wars currently raging between factions and groups based, it is claimed on religious beliefs, inherited culture, or perceived economic advantage, the documentation is being carried out within as immediate time frame, in many instances by the media and other such as aid workers and intermediaries such as United Nations representatives. It is to be hoped that this will significantly alter the likelihood of future hostilities because aggressors and hidden aggressors from within the ranks of the victims may find their deeds and their intentions revealed to the world before they can escape repercussions or re-write the record. Unfortunately, even here there will be an ongoing resistance by many to accept the truth because it will not always be comfortable and will demand changes in policies and actions at societal and governmental levels.

**ETHERICS IN CHAOS**

At the time of writing the nation which has been known for most of this century as Yugoslavia has been devastated by violence of the most relentless kind, with no mercy being shown to
human beings, or to the land. There is an awesome significance in the fact that one of the
triggers to the outbreak of the First World War early this century was an event in Bosnia-
Herzegovina. We all have to face the fact that this part of the world is still the focus of ongoing
hatred and trauma, seemingly without a permanent solution, as we enter the final years of the
twentieth century. At the same time the horror which swept through the land of Cambodia,
only a few years ago, is now again a focus as attempts are made to establish stability. The land
has been devastated, mines scatter the countryside and the same is still occurring in other
countries where some groups aim to gain power through starving others. Destruction of food
sources is not new to history but the power to ruin the land through laying mines, or through
biological or chemical warfare, is a product of this century. One needs to ask what will be the
cost for all of humanity of human beings misusing knowledge which could have been reserved
to improve foods supplies and generally lead to a world in which the human condition was
improving ...

This is a misuse of power in a way which is irreversible especially as the earth’s resources are
being depleted by population growth and others are working very hard to devise and implement
changes to lifestyle which will share the available resources more equitably. Traditional
wisdom from many cultures emphasises the links between humanity and its environment and we
defy this tradition at our peril.

On the positive side there is evidence that growing numbers of people reject war and violence
as a solution to disagreement. History records that powerful groups showed little concern over
the suffering of individuals when they wished to achieve certain goals. In the past there has
been little reverence for human life or human suffering at an individual level. Perhaps it is
because the media and films bring suffering and consequence of violence before our eyes in a
graphic and intrusive way, perhaps is is also a sign of evolutionary growth, but it is apparent
that there is, in this and other societies, a growing concern and a care for victims of violence,
including concern at the emotional consequences which have so often been ignored but which
can stunt a person’s development and immobilise them in attempts to take initiative in their life,
such as to earn a living. Unfortunately it has also to be recognised that violence and aggression
are not confined to other countries and to wars. Within some communities in Australia social
problems are exacerbated because of a high concentration of unemployment. The reasons for
this are complex and some are discussed elsewhere in this paper. However it has to be
recognised as a fact that the violence is increasing because some people have not had their basic
needs met in the past. If people come from a war they need to be assisted to ‘de-brief’
otherwise they carry on with some of the thinking which belonged to the etheric of the war or
violent situation. A particularly tragic group are the children who lose parents and other
significant adults and come to start a new life in a safer world. They may have their physical
needs met but often suffer great loneliness and lack the security which comes from being able
to refer to an older person for advice and, when needed, to place restrictions. In the vital
adolescent developmental phase such people may well enter into dangerous and destructive
etherics out of a sense of desperation in trying to understand where they truly belong. This has
already happened in part of Sydney, the situation having developed from numbers of children
who had no other family in Australia (or perhaps anywhere) being allowed to live without
supervision. This appears to have been because, at the time, there was no other easy solution.
Care needs to be taken that we do not repeat the mistake because society is paying for it and will continue to do so.

When large numbers of a national or cultural etheric are massacred or suffer through war or starvation there will be a psychic trauma for the survivors even though they may not have been directly victimised. A person who has experienced starvation or violence may undergo interior chaotic processes for many years after seeming to have recovered, and it is probable that they and other members of their national or cultural etheric also suffer from a spiritual loss due to the suffering endured by so many members of their spiritual energy fields. This is separate and additional to the individual and family experience.

There also appears to be a spiritual significance associated with places, along with other co-existing ethers relating to social and racial factors and it is feasible that this is an additional factor which leads to trauma and long term effects for combatants of war. For example, troops from a country such as Australia who are involved in combat in another country, or aid workers dispensing supplies, medication and support, carry with them their existing involvements with family, friends and national identity. However, by entering into the ecological and cultural etheric of the other land, they then have an involvement with its condition, though unconsciously. Hence when the land and its people are devastated by the combat or the famine or disaster the foreigners are also affected in ways which are hard to define. This would be greatly exacerbated when the land is damaged in lasting ways because the life essence of the land, and therefore of all life forms connected with it, inter-react in subtle ways. This is additional to the effects of individual experiences, injuries, or karmic consequences of actions.

However, at least some of the people who thus become involved in the troubles of another land, either through duty or concern, or even through giving donations or praying for the victims, may in some way also give part of themselves through their thought thus helping to bear the psychic pain by their acknowledgement of its existence as well as by their practical help and by spreading word of the suffering so that others may also care.

The need for victims to be supported by being kept in the thoughts of others has already been referred to in this paper and the significance of this for the spiritual field has been noted, as has the need for changes in global thinking on respect for human beings and for the environment. A perspective on reality held by a large number in a society or culture has been referred to as a Zeitgeist and there is a need incumbent on those who are aware of the need to change to try and raise the awareness of the unaware and apathetic. It is doubtful that changes in attitudes at individual level can be wrought by way of coercion, even though the pressures be applied for a long period, as has been shown by the urge to regain freedom which has been a mark of the last few years in so many countries rejecting the communist yoke.

THE ZEITGEIST

The Zeitgeist is a prevailing thought, a mental climate, which begins with one or more people adopting it as a result of a feeling or experience or because of a situation. The thought spreads through being expressed, either directly or by inference. It may be confined to specific ethers or it may spread across a range of ethers. The most comfortable etheric to be in is one where
there is consensus as to the prevailing attitudes on issues or behaviours, comfortable that is if the individual is able to fit in with the mental climate without distortion to his own etherics. In large thought fields such as a nation there will be many co-existing etherics which, while maintaining separate identities in many ways, need to link at times for the common good. When the differences in thought become so great that this linking is no longer tenable for a critical number, people may begin to call for change or indeed take action to hasten change.

It has been pointed out that the evolutionary process is ongoing individually and collectively at all levels of existence. History records that at times there seems to have been a surge of thought which swept across cultures, causing upheavals, the independence movements of the nineteenth century being an example. At other times the status quo seems to have never been questioned. One way of perceiving this is to view the growing thought which supports change as being an electrical disturbance which interferes with the existing etherics and, because it cannot be contained within fences or national boundaries, it affects other etherics with its energy, touching perhaps one small etheric. The way the thought evolves from that time on may be similar to or different from the way it has evolved in the preceding communication patterns. It could be that the thought may cause a negative reaction. For example, a thought of rebellion which has grown to a powerful force and erupted into action in one country, may result in a majority in another country becoming more accepting, because they fear the thoughts of dissatisfaction becoming strong enough to cause similar strife in their own country. This situation can be reflected in the workplace over rights and conditions, within marriage and the family where the consequences of separation are feared or within an individual. Hence the thought of dissatisfaction is replaced by a stronger thought of fear of the consequences if the dissatisfaction is acted upon. As a further example affecting migrants, many new migrants may have initially worked long hours for little or no pay after they arrived in Australia, sometimes to repay airfares to relatives who had sponsored them through working in their business. At some later time they may develop a changed perception as to their obligations and may seek to alter their situation. Others, in the current depressed job market may accept pay or conditions which are outside the law. For others, the fear coerces them into working long hours of enforced overtime which they do not want.

It is apparent that in certain periods of history the Zeitgeist did not favour questioning. The early Middle Ages in Europe have sometimes been described as the ‘Dark Ages’ because in the retrospective view of the Renaissance period, a time of ‘new light’ and hence of very active thought fields, the preceding period seemed dull. In reality there must have been evolutionary progress in this time which led to the Renaissance, but this was not obvious at the time.

Change does not just happen, it needs to be perceived as needed or is the result of changes in systems which need to be made because of developments in connected systems. There is a general agreement on the needs of humanity to modify behaviours and reach a level of global consciousness and a sense of responsibility which will affect the changes in lifestyle which are said to be needed. As noted this is facilitated by a greater general knowledge of the world situation and of groups working toward change by way of knowledge being disseminated through the mass media and by a generally greater accessibility to education of more people, thus enabling more people to reach their potential at an intellectual level. Communication
technology is a key factor in all this although at times it is used as an agent to promote destructive lifestyles and practices.

The benefits of technology are highlighted by the plight of the great mind of scientist, Professor Stephen Hawking which would have become in accessible to others on the language level without the sophisticated technology provided for him. Others may never be able to act as a cohesive group to share their wisdom and knowledge so they must act and develop in isolation, calling upon the universal consciousness to guide them and their efforts and those with whom they interact. Through their writings and television films writer scientists such as Dr. David Bellamy, Dr. David Attenborough and Dr. David Suzuki, among others, have provided opportunities for people living in isolated cultures to pass on their wisdom to a wider audience. In this way thought can be communicated without seeming to be imposed from above. No one cares for the imposition of policies through indoctrination such as under authoritarian regimes, after they have experienced an environment where freedom of thought is respected. Although change can be introduced by force and laws can be imposed it is preferable for all concerned if the people concerned are given opportunities to think about the needs and the implications and given opportunities to offer input. This is the basis of action research and a principle of social ecology. There is a need to remain aware that human beings are also part of the life system of the planet and when any segments of that life are disregarded there will be consequences.

LEADERSHIP AND ETHERICS

At the same time it needs to be acknowledged that leaders are elected to make decisions because of the complexity of maintaining the structures of our society and these leaders will not necessarily share the same perspectives as many of their people. Indeed the responsibility of leadership entails the development of a perspective which is beyond that which was held previously and hence requires the leader to leave behind former etherics, thus likely creating a state of inner chaos before the person can begin to feel secure within the new etheric forming about him. The pressures can be very great because of the stimulus of interaction with many new thought fields (interest groups). The person chosen to be leader can either evolve new ways of thinking and acting as a result of their responsibilities and the new knowledge which accompanies it or retain their old patterns and risk, over time, losing the qualities which placed him in the position in the first place. In part it is possible that this is because the person has been unable to integrate new patterns of thinking into his/her world view in a balanced way.

The experience of making decisions affecting the welfare of others must necessarily have a profound effect on the energy fields of the leader causing them to re-assess their priorities. In this way the group or cultural etherics and the individual are caught in ongoing interactions. The seriousness of this cannot be overestimated if one applies this principle to persons who have a high profile, for example, world leaders. Such people are within, and the focus of, the energy circuits of nations and of interested pressure groups within and without their countries. The forces acting on them are enormous and it is essential that they take care to keep all their energy fields well balanced and retain close links with trusted others who can be relied on to support them in a closed etheric in which thoughts and feelings can be expressed with safety. This need for a support group applies to all of us, the need being greater at different times. At
the same time when energy is positive this can of course be beneficial to the focussed person and the greater the circuit the greater the energy generated. Examples of the two ends of the spectrum are the concept of hubris the ‘tall poppy’ syndrome where a group ultimately destroys the popular image of a person which they have in fact partly created and, where many people join together to pray and send positive energy to someone seriously ill or a group who is suffering.

The development of the spiritual field is greatly influenced by life experiences and the way the individual responds to these. Many of these significant experiences relate to life changes which in turn involve connecting with new etherics or moving away from an etheric which has previously formed part of the person’s life fabric. These changes often involve chaotic processes and some of the factors involved are discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 8

PATTERNS OF CHAOS, NEW CONNECTIONS AND DISCONNECTIONS

There is a perception of reality which recognises that all atomic particles are alive and conscious Gerber (1988) (1). If the particles cease to innovate in their interactions with the environment they ‘devolve’ and hence be more vulnerable to sudden or consistent environmental changes.

This concept of devolution also offers a framework to understand the disappearance of some civilisations as indeed it has been for the disappearance of some organisations. It could be hypothesised that these groupings, having achieved what appears to be a high level of stasis with their environment were enabled to concentrate on other dimensions of their existence such as on the mental or spiritual planes. This situation having endured for a given length of time there then began to develop flaws in, say, the physical environment which were overlooked due to established complacency, an unwillingness by a majority to alter behavioural patterns, or perhaps a reluctance by an aware minority to share knowledge or wisdom, or of others to accept their revelations. The question may be asked if we have reached a similar period in our civilisation when choices must be made and new perceptions integrated into lifestyles and value systems.

On a minor scale this pattern may be repeated over a lifetime when individuals accept or reject challenges thus enabling or depriving themselves of opportunities. This may also apply to a class when some students extrapolate information and thus develop their knowledge, skills and expertise to a greater extent than that of their peers. However, it is essential for instructors to remain aware that students enter a program at different starting points, influenced by their relationships with home and learning environments, their physical state and other factors. Birch (1993) (2) has written of the effects of “regarding the human person.....as an isolated ego.....instead of a ‘person in community’ who has internal relations with other persons.”

The rate of absorption, that is the learning pace, is determined by the ability to concentrate, the ability and freedom to organise time, materials and thinking time to internalise class work. Emotional maturity and past experiences, including experiences of learning environments which may need to be put aside, may have a powerful influence on a learner’s progress. In effect the person needs to ‘reprogram’ his mental set and attitudes to being in a learner situation.

In the case of second language learners the above are all relevant, plus an extra dimension relating to their former lives and possible traumatic experiences of social disruption, violence and including for some, of war. In particular, this applies to adult migrant learners but it cannot be assumed that children have not also experienced trauma. Such a person needs to reformulate mental and emotional sets and if needs be, to overcome memories which surround the words they are learning, as connections are made with the first language, thoughts will be recalled relating to the past. Some of these may have been close to the conscious memory, others sublimated. Hence emotions may be triggered in an ongoing way with language learning. This occurs as the person’s thinking makes connections with his first language, which can have a powerful influence on later language usage. This does not mean that deficits cannot be

108
remediated but it does mean that a person whose early language experiences were inadequate for the needs of that particular individual, may need extra understanding and a special program, including in the affective domain where language begins.

There can be many interventions for the newborn infant, beginning a relationship with its first etheric on a physical plane. In the past, many infants died at birth or soon after. This mortality rate has been greatly reduced in Australia and many other countries although, sadly, not in all countries. However, the means by which many babies are kept alive may in fact have repercussions later on, especially it seems from studies on premature babies, who are said to have a tendency to learning difficulties of undetermined origins later on. Suggestions have been made that intra-uterine medications such as inductions to facilitate labour and the use of anaesthetics at birth can all have some effect on the baby, depending on the length of time they are used. Various medications taken during pregnancy under medical supervision, have later been shown to cause harm, one infamous example being thalidomide. It needs to be acknowledged that because the damage from this was obvious and physical, in that it usually inhibited the growth of one part of the body such as in the extremities, the cause and effects were linked. There seems to be an extreme reluctance by the medical profession to make similar links with other pharmaceutical products although doctors generally advise pregnant women to avoid all medications if possible. It was suggested by some people that some practices have been discontinued or limited without any admissions made as to the reasons. A young mother who asked for a continuation of a Pethedine induction drip was told that it was now limited to a specific time period during the birth process as it ‘affects the baby’ if administered over an extended period. (Note: this woman is well-educated and a native English speaker.) There has been public controversy through the legal systems of several western countries during the last year over the relative rights of the mother and child, the main query being over the extent of the mother’s freedom to act as she chose during pregnancy without giving regard to the possible effects on the developing foetus. Unfortunately, as the issues are not infrequently related to law suits with a disabled child suing a parent, there is always some concern as to what other interests are involved. There is clearly a vast amount of information available resulting from validated studies and if expectant mothers all followed the generally accepted precautions, usually centring on moderation of foods and drink intake, and abstention from smoking, alcohol limitation and avoidance of all but vital medication that they could feel confident in their preparation for the child. However, it is also true that the information is not always received by those in need of it and not always accepted by those who receive advice. Nevertheless the great majority of women seem to err on the side of caution which necessitates intervention, medical staff cannot be blamed for focussing their efforts on saving lives, and for assisting the mother with pain relief where indicated.

In the emotional domain it seems that there is still a gap within some sections of society in comprehending that there is a relationship between pre-natal environment and later life and the time to increase awareness to this link is in the years before pregnancies begin, while school students are impressionable, the education being for both boys and girls.
CONNECTIONS

For the expectant mother, there may be ample sources of information available but at times she may have questions and feel that she needs to have extra support and this needs to be respected. Her questions must be answered with respect and she should not be spoken to in a derogatory manner. It seems that there are two main areas of concern with the dissemination of the collective pre and post natal wisdom, one being that not all mothers have access to it. If information is given in the printed form it cannot be guaranteed that all recipients will be able to access the desired message. The main groups of concern would be those whose literacy in English was inadequate and sometimes in their own first language (as some bi-lingual materials are available). There are also numbers of native English speakers who have failed to attain competence in reading. It must be remembered that, additional to those who are measurably illiterate, there is a large group who are ‘functionally illiterate’ becoming more so in the years after they leave school. They may be able to fill in forms or read some signs which interest them at a supermarket but the act of reading an article or book is daunting and they are unable to place the information in the context of their daily lives unless it is written in a simple point form and an instructional mode. One of the issues for literacy teachers is the resistance of some students to change their habits or often, to admit that they do not understand something. This is because they have developed ways of adapting to being non-readers and of course they feel humiliated at their reading disability. It is an extremely sensitive area to work with adults who are illiterate and the resistance to acknowledge the problem can begin even in primary school because children suffer through a series of failures until they learn to close over and seal their personal etheric from the influences of the teacher and the learning environment.

If information is given orally there is a good chance that it will be only partially retained, at best. Discussions with interested parties suggest some concern in that while the psychologist might say that we can remember a maximum of seven items, many people cannot, and what they do remember in a series of oral instructions is imperfect. It also needs to be realised for example, a woman visiting, an out patients’ clinic at a large hospital, is not feeling in any way that she belongs in the environment. She is one in a long list of patients and may feel daunted by the atmosphere, administrative or medical staff. The possibility is of course greater if her English skills are limited. These factors interfere with auditory perception and she may well also have other concerns that she wishes to ask about, thus interfering with her ability to absorb new information. If she needs to rely on a family member, including a husband, to interpret for her, she may also be too intimidated to ask her questions or it may be that her concerns will not be shared by the interpreter and will therefore not be adequately communicated to the attending doctor. These issues can cause problems even when a mother has a confident attitude towards the pregnancy and no other concerns related to social or economic issues, the problems being exacerbated if she does have other agenda to concern her.

If information is disseminated in English language classes it may involve lectureettes, exercises and viewing videos, all of which are very helpful and account for non-reading modes of instruction. However, due to the amount of information needed to be remembered and the fact that much of it may be new to the mother it is desirable for the patient to have a summary to keep for reference. Needed information may not be readily recalled at times of stress unless it
has been strongly internalised and connections made with existing understanding and experiences. In areas with a high migrant population, the hospitals and health centres make a big effort to educate and offer interpreter’s services but a considerable percentage of staff time needs to go to community information sessions which advertise their services and there is a very great pressure on resources and staff.

There can also be difficulties for people living outside the immediate vicinity of the hospital or medical centre to keep appointments. Sometimes this entails a man taking time from work (or his class) to drive family members. Others use the public transport system, and it needs to be understood that, even though the distances may seem short, this can be a challenging experience for many people who are unused to moving outside their residential etheric. To consider a different group of parents, those who are able to access services and expert supervision, it needs to be acknowledged that not everyone is willing to implement knowledge given to them and in the long term it could be that their babies do not necessarily grow up more healthy or have fewer learning problems. Some people feel that, for this generation of women, educated, financially often more secure than their parents, and accustomed to independence in most areas of their lives, other issues have become more significant. Although there are individual differences, a woman’s body and all her energy fields may be thrown into temporary periods of dissonance during pregnancy. It is not in any way possible to comment on the degree of influence a given energy field might have on conditions such as nausea or other imbalances for an individual. However, it needs to be recognised by the woman, her partner and family and medical advisers that all her energy fields are adjusting to a re-arrangement of energies and that she (and the developing baby) are learning to interact with each other and are more vulnerable to outside forces than she would be in the non-pregnant state. Pregnancy is said to be a ‘natural’ condition, and so it is, but it is also meant to be a temporary condition and women have to adjust to it, in conscious and sub-conscious ways, many of which are still being appreciated.

For migrant women, especially those newly arrived, these adjustments can be more challenging especially if they do not have support from women from their own culture. After the birth of a child, for migrants, as for many Australian born families, there is nowadays not always a choice about whether a woman will work. For some it may be that the wife is better able to earn an income or may possibly be the only one of the partners to find employment.

Some couples have resolved the dilemma of two careers by alternating as the main care-giver. The ease with which they exchange roles depends very much on personalities and communication levels as well as their individual career pathways. One couple, parents of four children, decided that it was the father’s turn to stay at home when the youngest child was about one year old. They were both trained teachers but the wife, though the more highly qualified, had not worked in her profession because of her early marriage and child-bearing. They were fortunate in having friends whose counselling backgrounds enabled them to facilitate frank discussions about their responses to their changing roles. For example, the husband reported that he felt annoyance when the wife came home and wanted to relax after work, while he was busy preparing meals and keeping the children occupied. The wife reported that she felt guilty about not helping during the busy pre-dinner period instead putting in the extra hours
needed to prepare her school lesson at home. This was even though the husband had not been very active in helping her on week nights when he had been the income earner and she had accepted his low level of involvement at the time in family responsibilities.

In the preceding example the woman clearly continued to feel some of the responsibilities she had accepted when she was the main carer for her children and this way of thinking (this etheric) continued to influence her behaviour patterns. Some people try hard to fit into a work etheric and realise that it IS the right work environment for them but also find that they are unable to fit into it completely due to ongoing links with other significant etherics such as family responsibilities. Although the solutions are never going to be perfect for everyone involved it does seem that levels of part time work are often the best solution. For this to work it is important that pay and conditions be reasonable and pro rata to full time workers. In practice, ‘permanent’ part time work is not very secure and the workers are not necessarily covered by the same pay scales, benefits or conditions, even though they may be most conscientious in carrying out their duties. Job-sharing, where two people agree to share a full time job, and usually fill in for each other when one is sick, seems to have been favourably received by those who participated in it. However, one problem would be that for those who choose to fill in as ‘casuals’ this would not be good news because they would find that their services might be less used.

However, it is clear that stress levels are greater for a woman working full time if she has young children, but this does not mean that she cannot adequately fulfil her responsibilities in both her work and family etherics. Women’s groups and some unions have made statements about these issues over years and some public figures have instigated discussions in an effort to view the current developments in society and economic trends.

**DISCONNECTIONS**

It is acknowledged that, although women have been the focus of this discussion, that men can be placed in the same situation, both because of family illness or disabilities or commitments (including those who have the sole care of children.) In particular, men experience social pressures if they decide to remain at home with their young children if they are sole carers. This is not confined to professional men (who are more likely to be able to afford private carers). It has long been recognised that men in general gain benefit from their work in the area of self esteem no matter what their field of endeavour is. In terms of the etheric theory they gain energy from mixing with colleagues and solving problems in the workplace. Men who stay at home and try to join in with play groups and school committees report various responses depending on their location, and probably their own personalities. Again the issues are exacerbated in a scarce job market because it can be hard to explain why he took time out from the work force when he does try to find a new job.

What is not yet always acknowledged is that many women now experience the same problems when they find themselves removed from the energy sources which they had grown accustomed to at work. However, women do not experience the same resistance if they attempt to join volunteer school groups although it is likely that some women, may experience difficulties
adjusting to this kind of role. Despite years of supposed new thinking on gender roles, the reality still is that most women see themselves, and are perceived by others, as the primary care-givers and it is difficult for those who try to alter this, especially in the current social climate. Other groups affected by subtle pressures are people in later middle age, particularly women, who seem to always be assumed as being supported by someone else (a man?). The thought seems to be that they could ‘get a pension’ (although just what and how remains unspecified) and that they are taking a job from a younger person. This is not a universal attitude but is more common than is admitted to.

As always there is a prevailing thought within the affected subject groups and it is difficult for the person who develops individual coping mechanisms which are not common to his/her particular environment, be it a workplace, extended family, or residential area. An example which came up in various ways was the expectation of social involvement with fellow workers. A worker, man or woman, may well be able to fit in with the formal working hours and fit harmoniously in with colleagues. However, in some places, woe betide the person who does not appear, even briefly, at the after work social gathering. For someone who has to collect children, or even for a person who may just wish to maintain separate work and social ethersics, this can be an invasion of personal time. There was of course some humour in the remark but unfortunately there was also some truth because this could be a way of gauging whether or not she would fit in as a permanent employee. It has been noted that when a person’s needs are no longer being met by belonging to an etheric that they may gradually withdraw. For a variety of reasons either the individual, the group as a whole, or even some factions within the group, come to an awareness, albeit unconsciously at first, that energies would be better expended by interacting with another group. It might not be as clear as this initially, more perhaps that the individual finds that the ongoing group, which once sustained and energised, is now enervating, or the group recognises that an individual was a source of dissonance in the group. In terms of resonance, either the individuals vibratory rate has for some reason changed frequency so that it is no longer in harmony with the group, or else the group is evolving at a faster pace than the individual can keep up with, either through choice or available energy.

It is also possible that people can have their vibratory rate lowered through illness, despondency and, according to tradition, through behaviours and associations which are damaging to health and balance of any of the life fields. This is usually associated with excess in any aspect of living. It could also include the ill or elderly person who can no longer maintain the levels of interaction which the evolving group demands.

In the workforce many industrial disputes develop because some perceptions of the managers and workers are permitted to evolve and gain momentum even though they may not be based in fact, or have been formed from a very limited viewpoint. Opportunities for a frank discussion of concerns may be severely limited or non-existent often because management is fearful of losing control of the discussion and workers as individuals fear that if they are honest about their concerns they will be victimised by either colleagues or management. This retribution may be overt but is more likely to be covert and may be effected through the thought of the group excluding the member from the shared etheric by way of information and sharing opinions. The significant factor is that each individual may well have the capacity to perceive that the other
side has a valid concern but the separate etherics of both workers and management have a force independent of the individuals within them and it is these Group etherics which prolong disputes because people become locked into established thoughts and cannot hear a different perspective. It is also true of course that one or both sides does not want to hear the other’s point of view because someone will have to lose privileges or advantages.

NEW CONNECTIONS

When a person is in need of a new etheric but is unaware of what it is or of ways of connecting with it contact seems to be made through the thought fields. This accounts for the fact that we meet someone, find a book, or make contact with some other needed link at a time when we feel a lack and are therefore receptive to the new contacts. We may suddenly become aware of new potentials in a person or situation with which we are already interacting. People say ‘It was meant to happen.....’ and it seems that it may have been because of previously made connections through the thought fields. Needless to say, such connections may not necessarily fill needs for both parties but they may do so and it is important that we remain open to new connections and prepared to accept that we have something more to learn. It is necessary for existing members of an etheric to send out vibrations that they are willing to open their circuits and admit the newcomer and this needs to be done at both action and attitude levels.

Initial contacts in the etheric are not necessarily made at the conscious level. We as individuals are constantly sending out messages through our thoughts which are circulating to others who operate within the same frequencies that we are. Etherics do not only correspond with the groups we mix with at a conscious level. For people engaged in repetitive tedious tasks, especially if working alone, it is common to ‘switch off’ and work automatically while entering into another thought field. This is very likely the cause of many accidents. It is also suggested that connections with thought fields is made during sleep, especially in the periods before waking. These contacts could be during the periods known as Rapid Eye Movement which are said to be periods of less deep sleep.

When working with long term unemployed people there is a need to remain aware that their life situation may have caused them to become under-active, especially mentally, for their potential energy levels. There is a risk that they will sink permanently into an inactive lifestyle and therefore find great difficulty in overcoming their torpor and initiating changes in their lives when opportunities do arise. This particularly applies to the young unemployed who, after leaving the school environment enter into a lifestyle and way of thinking which reduces their potential for future improvements. Hence programs designed for such people need to emphasise attitudes and positive thinking as well as training. In addition there seems to be a need to assist such people to consider making lifestyle changes, such as to move to a new area, if it seems that their ongoing contacts within their existing etherics are a negative force, slowing down any efforts they make to increase their energy output. Clearly, this is the ideal, and a new living environment may not be accepted by everyone and definitely should not be made compulsory because of the impossibility of officials assessing what is a positive force and what is a negative force for the individual. Losing family supports, for example, could be extremely destructive for some, but a stimulus to others to seek their own inner strengths. To take an
example of a person who has completed a training program and finds that family or friends are not supportive of their efforts to seek and remain in an appropriate form of employment it is necessary that they find some tangible form of support which will assist them to change their ethic if needs be. This includes being offered the opportunity to change their living quarters if necessary.

In a time of high unemployment and consequent cuts in funding to ancillary services such extra concerns as attitudes and morale of employees are likely to be ignored in practice, although theoretically they may be valued. Nevertheless the issue is an important one because otherwise the population as a whole is affected and this is a devolutionary process which in the long term costs money through lowered productivity and increased health and education costs. Instead of an anticipated general tendency to improve employability through initiative and ongoing training, there can develop a powerful thought which accepts the status quo and does not seek to move onwards and upwards. This is the situation where the population in general lives at a subsistence level, reflected in limited diet, based mainly on grains and deficient in proteins and possibly also minerals and other essential nutrients. This is NOT to say that societies where the people are adequately nourished but choose a less materialistic lifestyle to the Western norm, are to be categorised as deficient. For many groups, and wider, cultures, this is a matter of values and needs to be respected. However, even here, the Western economic thinking frequently and eventually intrudes through offering what appears to be exciting goods, marketed enticingly and thus creating dissatisfaction where previously there was contentment, yet the profits from any scales made do little for the people in the less developed country.

For migrants to Australia who have come from a country with an impoverished lifestyle there has clearly been a choice and a desire to improve their prospects and that of their children. They come in high hope of finding employment and improving their lifestyle and of giving their children opportunities which were not available to them. Their thoughts have been positive, they have made a great effort to learn a new language (where necessary) and to adjust to new ways. If they then find that their energies are not gainfully employed they will begin to lose their momentum and enter into a state more depressed than they would have been if they had not made the effort at all.

The same situation applies to school leavers and anyone else who has made an effort to reach a point where they thought they would be employable and then find that their hopes are dashed due to ongoing economic problems. Unemployment of those who want to work is more serious than other forms of economic hardship and an unequal burden on those who are employed. It is a danger to the future of the society because of the power of negative thought (3) to create a vortex which will be powerful enough to absorb positive energies generated by those who still keep trying to improve the situation. Whatever the initial reasons or policies which have contributed to the present situation, the attitudes which have been engendered will not easily dissipate and will have a cyclic effect for ongoing generations as they have had for the indigenous Australians. There seems to be some concern in the community that governments at all levels have tacitly recognised this and have set in motion ideas which will contain the unemployment in pockets. In these areas, it is believed, some people will be employed, but they will be at risk of rejection from the overall ethic because they will not be
of it. Interestingly there seems to be an awareness of this in some areas and within some groups and their response is to make an effort to avoid accepting a welfare mentality. This seems to have been demonstrated in external ways such as a return to a more formal dress style and a withdrawal from those who are considered to be in an etheric deemed to be less desirable and lacking in initiative.

Another effect seems to be that people are reluctant to make complaints about risk from, for example, chemical companies, because they are worried about reducing employment in the area. On the positive side, some such companies are attempting to improve community relations by involving community representatives in information campaigns and having open days where the community has access to the facility.

It is then, possible to say that patterns of organisational and societal transitions, whether they involve an upward spiral or a revolutionary cycle, begin at the internal level within the individual, perhaps often as thoughts which influence attitudes, hence the attitudes of others, and thence behaviour of those in any way included in the process. If the adapted behaviour appeals to those it touches it is adopted, becoming integrated into the group thought, usually with further adapting being made at the individual and group level. This is one of the most powerful forces in the universe, having the capacity to shape events and re-shape nations and their governments. The thought energy of groups of people who recognise their own values, held at a deep level, cannot be easily changed by order of a law or by force; although people may be forced to live as though they do accept the imposed system, such changes may be more easily wrought if the target population is subjected to severe physical deprivation or suffering and/or ongoing fear. (See Goricheva 1986)(4).

On the physical level it may take generations before structures are altered although individual behaviour may show changes in groups especially receptive. This would accelerate physical adaption in those groups or individuals. Lamarck (1809) (5) and Butler (1878) (6) considered such evolutionary developments to be the result of stored memory and this is supported by recent research which shows that the central nervous system encodes memory in the RNA and protein thus creating a source of enrichment to the ongoing evolving organism.

Applying this to an organisational environment it can be seen that new staff create a similar rich source of memory and experience which can be drawn on by the ongoing group, as also can the life experiences and enrichment which can occur from exchanges in class between students and teachers and students, in either direction. However, on the negative side, there is the possibility of negative responses brought about by misinterpretation and rejecting opportunities which indicate a need for change or more flexibility whether it be in the attitudes of the individual, within a marriage, a group an organisation or a nation. This can come about when people are too tightly linked in with etherics which tend to be closed systems.

The gestation of the human embryo is an historical and biological microcosm of the stages of evolutionary development on a grander scale, reflecting the billions of years it has taken for human beings to evolve. The embryo has a range of DNA codes to select from in the physical sense depending on its ancestry, and it seems likely that even before birth, it begins to make
links with emotional and mental vibrational fields, commencing as noted, with the mother and her patterns of thinking and knowing before and after birth, with gradually increased influences from others. The impact of others is greatly increased from the time the mother ceases to be the main carer but it is important to remember that whoever holds the child most closely in his/her thoughts is of at least as great an importance as the physical carer over time and this may well of course be a parent.

R.Buckminster Fuller (1969) (7) has said that ‘energy can neither be created or lost therefore it is finite’ and he adds that man has not adequately defined the metaphysical universe, despite the progress made in describing other dimensions of reality. Fuller’s description of the universe is electro-dynamic and he likens its evolution to the processes involved in the projection of a film strip (or one could add, a television picture) which is projected or transmitted and must lose its form before being re-patterned and resuming its shapes. This would seem to indicate that the conscious mind continually brings aspects of the subconscious to the light of awareness while it is also thus evolving the metaphysical into the physical reality and hence continually redefining the boundaries and complexities of the universe. The influence of the thought fields is enormous especially with modern communication and media technology and distribution systems. The new information thus garnered constantly opens up new dimensions of understanding. When a thought is voiced it is changed by the thinker from a knowing to a form which can be understood by another. Yet there have been many examples of people transmitting information through telepathy at times of great need, and especially so when other forms of communication are denied them. This capacity does not always develop and there must be certain levels of communication and development which vary with the persons and situations.

Examples of where communication seems to occur without words being uttered vary from the life-threatening to the mundane. People who know each other well may be able to pick up messages without speaking such as when a couple make what seems to be a spontaneous decision to leave a social gathering. One or other makes the initial decision and through thinking and non verbal messages communicates this desire to the other. This also occurs on some level where a person wants something from another and focuses much of their life energy on achieving this. If the achieving of the goal involves participation of another person it could be that person might experience some physical symptom, such as a headache, if they are unaware of or rejecting of the thoughts being projected. More identifiable and yet dramatic examples can involve people whose lives are in danger, such as people living in a war zone, hostages kept in solitary confinement, and people in comatose states or otherwise unable to communicate because of illness or injury when the person may channel all their available energy into this dimension of communication. This is our sixth sense. How many others do we have?

Mystics of various religions have developed the facility to transcend their bodily limitations and have been associated with altered phenomena of physical objects. Some, as for example Hazrat Inayat Khan (1977) have been reported as leaving their physical body and have been recognised some distance away while their physical body was apparently sleeping or in a trance. This has been recorded as occurring only when another urgently needed their help.
Individuals so gifted seem to have a history of persecution and rejection by their societies whether the gift was occasional or enduring to the end of their lives or beyond (as with some who are said to have wrought ‘miracles’ after their death.) However, it could be said that if the person was a male and had some credibility within the formal structures of his society (for example, was a monk or a priest or a royal personage) he had a greater chance of being appreciated for the wisdom and the other gifts he could offer. History records that gifted women were often feared for their gifts and put to death.

This chapter has considered some of the complexities of the processes of change involved in just living at the individual and group level. Arising from these transitions involving evolutionary social processes are challenges to previously identifiable role definitions. This process is now well recognised but it is considered appropriate to give some consideration in the next chapter to some of the situations confronting many of the people discussed in the study. They are, in common with other people in the community, seeking to adjust personal and family etherics within a rapidly changing employment, economic and social environment, but for them the problems are compounded because many come from societies which are (or were when they left them) much more traditional and structured than Australian society has been. They are, therefore, placed in situations where they may need to readjust their perceptions of role definitions but may find it difficult to identify role models to observe within the existing society, or may feel quite threatened when they do. These differences can include a wide range of perceptions, including a sense of financial responsibility towards parents from adult children, or between extended family members, or even leaving a child in the care of others, if a mother has come from a socially disrupted situation. Some of the more common concerns are discussed in the next chapter.
THE MOON SHELL

Moon shell, who named you? Some intuitive woman I like to think. I shall give you another name.....Island shell. I cannot live forever on my island. But I can take you to my desk in Connecticut. You will sit there and fasten your single eye upon me. You will make me think, with your smooth circles winding inward to the tiny core, of the island I lived on for a few weeks. You will say to me ‘solitude’. You will remind me that I must try to be alone for part of each year, even a week or a few days; and for a part of each day, even for an hour or a few minutes in order to keep my core, my centre, my island quality. You will remind me that unless I keep the island quality intact somewhere within me, I will have little to give my husband, my children, my friends or the world at large. You will remind me that woman must be still as the axis of a wheel in the midst of her activities; that she must be the pioneer in achieving this stillness, not only for her own salvation, but for the salvation of family life, of society, perhaps even our civilisation.

Ann Morrow Lindbergh
CHAPTER 9
A LINK INTO THE CONCERNS OF SOME WOMEN

In this chapter there will be some discussion of concerns which were voiced by women during the period of this inquiry. Many teachers of language are women and many women are to be found in classes of recently arrived migrants, although they often have their pattern of learning disrupted because of child-bearing and other family responsibilities. This has now come to mean that they may never be able to reach a proficient level of English because they will no longer be eligible to receive free tuition unless they are registered job seekers. Other factors which relate to their continued English learning are the limited number of child care places for language learners and the attitudes of the family members, to her expanding her horizons.

These issues can be said to reflect the broader societal issues which face women, especially those with children, in Australia and in many overseas countries. Women have had to adapt to changing circumstances and expectations from society while yet being perceived by those close to them, such as partners and children, as still filling the traditional roles of wives, lovers and mothers, even though now they may have had to take over the role of part or sole income earner. Issues which affect a mother also affect her child, as noted in the previous chapters. Even a child receiving adequate physical care may experience deleterious effects such as frequent illnesses or failure to thrive if it shares a parental etheric which is often angry or stressed.

In times of high unemployment women are often found to be subjected to more discrimination in employment (in practice if not permitted by law) and less flexible attitudes from employers and in opportunities for post-school education, ranging from Outreach courses to mature age tertiary entry. Yet women may well be the bread-winners in two parent households as are the many women who find themselves the sole carers of children or aged or disabled people. Hence a knowledge of and an ability to use English to a level which gives them independence is essential. The other issue is that dependent women can be an influence on their husband’s keenness to seek full time work as they need an interpreter if business has to be transacted or medical treatment sought. It is difficult to ascertain how much of this is the woman’s need or how much she has been conditioned by her husband to consider herself inadequate to cope.

Unemployment is also linked to an increase in violence both in the home and in the street and women are frequently the victims. This can make them feel apprehensive about attending a class which finishes in the late afternoon (as well as causing concern about who will pick the children up from school.) People who live in areas where there is a high crime rate may feel reluctant to let their children walk alone to and from school and sometimes bus services are inadequate or fares place too much of a strain on the budget. The present emphasis of English language programs on high intensity courses disadvantages women and, as noted, where payment for tuition or books is required it is less likely that the family will find the money for a woman learner.

In many cultures it has been traditional for children to grow up within an extended family which
may be housed under one roof or, while living separately, still forms a strong ethic which greatly influences the upbringing of children in both tangible and intangible ways. Adults who have grown up in such a family system, but no longer live within it, reflected favourably on the benefits. When asked, they did not seem very eager to return to such a family dominated environment, which they said can be restrictive in practice, particularly it seems from the female perspective, especially after the individual becomes aware of alternatives. A common problem cited, across cultures and socio-economic groups was the expectation of maintaining traditional hospitality with a range of dishes which were labour intensive and very time-consuming to prepare. Unfortunately, even if a man spent more time at home and his wife was a student or worked it was not always found that he assisted in preparing meals. However, it did seem that the younger men, both married and unmarried, were beginning to change their cultural patterns and give assistance in cooking and other household tasks.

However, one advantage of a tribal or extended family system has sometime been that children once mobile, were cared for as a group, leaving adults free to carry out needed tasks for the whole group’s needs. Depending on the severity of the living conditions of the family group this could also mean that there was time for relaxation or craft or cultural pursuits, because tasks needed for survival were spread across all adults, and possibly also adolescents. In practice in most cultures, this system has also meant that anyone who sought to be different from the main culture of the ethic, suffered the consequences.

As education, especially of women, has become more relevant, it has been possible for women to learn about the way women in other cultures live, gleaning their information from advertising, films, the media and from tourism, whether they be visitors or the visited. Overall, this has led to many younger women resisting the traditional roles of wife and mother because they feel they will be more able to actualise their hopes as persons if they follow the practices of western cultures which by and large tend to permit women to work for money outside the family unit. This means an independent income and hence the hope of more personal freedom in their social lives and living conditions. However, these perceived benefits are not necessarily accessible to a woman with a family unless she has access to help in the home. It needs to be noted here that some men may feel that their lives are much less restricted, although less secure, after they come to Australia because they were formerly employed in family businesses which would not be viable under Australian conditions, and here they must find their own way.

On another level there can be misconceptions in the perception of the way the average woman in a country such as Australia lives. This was illustrated by the experience of a young Australian woman who worked for a short time in a Pacific Island country as part of a specialist education program. This program entailed her working with teachers at a school for children with particular needs and, during the last few days of her visit, an ‘Open Day’ for parents was held. The Australian woman joined in when staff began to clean and otherwise prepare the classrooms. The reaction to this was one of astonishment because, as the staff explained, they did not realise that Australian (or apparently any Western) women had to perform menial tasks. It seemed that they had gained this impression from the way tourists acted when they were on holidays in the resort areas of their country. The surprised Australian assured her hosts that she was familiar with the theory and practice of housework in her own home. All the women
involved felt that the laughter and shared tasks helped them gain new insights into the common threads which united them. However, the incident emphasises the ways misconceptions between people of different cultures can arise and can grow to great proportions with media promotions emphasising particular aspects of a holiday lifestyle.

From a woman’s perspective the childbirth experience is still momentous in the ways it affects her body and her life and, except for those who organise their lives in other ways, thereby sacrificing either money or freedom, or the perceived kudos which is believed to flow from being competent in the traditional role, daily life is a series of repetitive tasks and children need constant monitoring, often in addition to work outside the home. If the family live in crowded conditions it is also more stressful and difficult to keep children safely occupied. The impetus to follow through with her role comes to the woman from her environment and from her attitudes to parenthood and presumably, from her own childhood experiences. In other words, the etherics with which she has linked and which continue to influence her thinking and hence behaviour patterns.

In their report, ISSUES FACING AUSTRALIAN FAMILIES, Batten et al (1991) write that changes in the view of the mother’s role as ‘the source’ is seen as freeing for women, enabling them to develop skills and to participate in the workforce as contributors and income earners. In countries such as Australia where it has become the norm for women to work after they have had children, for either economic, personal or career reasons, it seems that in practice the gains might apply more to those whose income is sufficient to afford to hire household help, pay for adequate child care or who are fortunate enough to have trusted adults such as grand-parents who can help with children and also often with household management.

The situations of varying categories of women need to be considered separately. For the married woman who works because of an economic need there are gains in buying power and hence a greater peace of mind in not being worried how mortgage, rent or other essential payments are to be met. In the cities rents are high with the additional concern that they may have lack of security in tenancy if there is an increase. Essential service charges for electricity, water and environmental maintenance have risen sharply in recent years and there have been frequent media reports by social service agencies that an increasing number of families cannot meet these payments. However for a full time working mother there is a recognised loss in the quality and quantity of time spent with her family and it seems that working mothers may have a much higher rate of stress related illness, although they do not take extra time from work, usually because they are afraid that employers will make the assumption that absences are due to illnesses in their children, and that this could affect their ongoing employment prospects.

Conversations with some mothers from other cultures show a different perspective. These women often work full time and for very long hours. One, living in Australia, was working seven days a week over a period of months. This woman is a university graduate in a technical field but, because of her concern at keeping ANY job, she worked in a lowly paid and very repetitive job, and placed the needed skill of improving her English at a lower priority. She coped because her mother lived with her and her husband and child, carrying out the daytime child care and many of the household tasks. The family income needs to cover the wife’s
mother and it seems that the wife feels obligated to contribute as much as she can. The family are also concerned at saving a deposit towards a house. The other issue which seems to come out is that the grandmother needs to feel that she can still contribute in some way, realising that she would not be able to find paid employment, this is her way of showing her gratitude at being able to live in freedom and be with her grandchild. The arrangement is not an unusual one for migrant families, particularly those who have been separated for lengthy periods. The joy at being reunited serves to overcome any inconveniences flowing from cramped living conditions and within a limited income.

In the above example the daughter could be said to be still operating under a traditional way of thinking in supporting her parent both financially and emotionally. The younger woman is positive about her life and has recently proudly become an Australian citizen. Many migrant families who have sponsored their parents to this country also operate within this framework, the grandparents taking seriously their role as child carers. The other significant factor for many migrants is that they have NOT got ready access to their grandparents because they are still in the home country or are deceased. The impact of this varies with the culture, in some, there is a tradition that the older generations continue to work and contribute. In others, the old are respected and not expected to work. For this latter group the presence of parents or parents-in-law could significantly add to the workload of a working mother, although it appears that in Australia many of the grandparent generation regard child minding as a part of their contribution.

For grandparents born in Australia it seemed to be not unusual for the grandparent to give support when the daughter or daughter-in-law returned to work after children were born. Where distance permits, it was not uncommon for the two grandmothers to share the childminding over several days a week each. As with the migrants, this arrangement seemed to work well if the grandfathers were also at home to help. In general the main difference between native born and migrant families is that separate residences are preferred between the generations and the migrant women are more likely to work in lower paying jobs among the groups in this inquiry. Whether or not grandparents were paid for their time devoted to child care in these circumstances is a delicate matter and was not part of the inquiry, but certainly the role of grandparents must be considered as making a contribution to the volunteer pool of this country and should be recognised. It is an issue for many parents especially if they live in areas with a high crime rate, that they will not permit their children to walk or travel to and from school alone and many also are reluctant to leave their homes unattended. If grandparents are available to help out parents who have been out of the work force for long periods and thus have entered into a life pattern which is centred on their own dwelling and is very rigid in scope, can be encouraged to feel more confident about leaving the immediate area of the home when they look for work. This is again in the subtle area of emotion but the fear is pervasive and not unjustified. Indeed many women do not like to go out alone in some areas and it is possible that their concern is a strong bond to keep the husband available should they need assistance. These factors need to be considered when people are scheduled for language classes as they may wish to alternate with another member of the family.

Within the broader society it has become the norm for a mother of young children to feel that
she is obligated to return to work because of economic necessity. As Batten et al (1991) point out children have not necessarily made the needed adjustment and neither have men. Many women are still confused by their expected dual roles and they say there appears to be a growing reaction to their enforced duality as workers and progenitors. They emphasise the need for men to learn how to be nurturers and the actuality of this seems to have depended on the man’s own family and background, including schooling. This is a relevant issue for school and post-school curricula, as there are many opportunities which can be used to provide learning experiences for both discussion and integration of the learning with past and ongoing life experiences. Mothers also expressed an awareness that children from a stable environment which provides time and opportunity for shared activities with a parent, and for the mutual enjoyment of past-times such as reading, have a sounder language base for both receptive and productive language. Although it may be a thorny issue it needs to be added that the parental educational background is a factor as is the availability of resources within the home environment. This does not mean that the child of parents who do not have time, or do not like to read, for example, will necessarily not do well at school. It does mean that the child will have to overcome deficits in background knowledge and attitudes to the literacy skills which are still inherent in the formal education system if the parents (or at least one parent) does not place a high value on those skills. On the other hand a migrant father, emphasising his deep concern that his daughter should follow through with her education, explained that he and his wife ‘have no name’ (meaning they were not educated at all) he wanted his children to have access to more opportunities. In yet a different situation, children in a primary school class were told to research a topic which involved using an atlas, and an encyclopaedia. One boy failed to make any progress. It eventuated that they did have an atlas at home but it was in Polish (he could speak his first language but was not literate to any extent in it.) His parents both worked and they were unable to help him research the topic. This would not be an isolated example and teachers need to be aware that, when they set such ‘research’ assignments that some children will not be able to receive the help which is commonly given to younger children. For older school students the issue is even more complex because they may not have access to the wider sources of knowledge which can come from belonging to a family where numbers of people are well-educated, have extensive libraries and have experience of the education system and business or professional networks. Much of the burden of helping children with homework seemed to fall on mothers, including working mothers, and they seemed to accept this as part of their role. Some mothers whose children had learning difficulties, put in an enormous effort in helping their children to keep up with their peers.

Many women expressed a deep weariness at the difficulties of carrying out such extra-curricular work (although they did not begrudge the time spent with their child) in addition to their other duties. Many women also agreed that it was easier to let the male in the family assume certain roles which he saw as his by right, although there seemed to be an underlying anger which, if left unexpressed, could lead to the woman suddenly leaving the relationship, to the distress of all and to the detriment of the children in quality of lifestyle and security.

According to Batten et al (1991) many women have tried to hold on to the benefits of their conventional roles (whatever they may be) while asserting their right to participate equally in the new mode. It also seems likely that men, in some groups, are threatened at a woman’s
independence or, in times when many men have lost their job security, that they resent the woman’s significance as an income earner. In these situations women seemed to sometimes succumb to the expectations of others that they could not really cope and this added to their stress levels. This is more likely to happen if, for example, male relatives have more free time than the woman and are able to sit thinking about her activities and (often) observing her carrying out duties, instead of doing them for her.

When asked about their experience of a ‘group will’ a number of women agreed that they felt susceptible and that this imposition of an outside force on their thought and will was more powerful when in the presence of one they loved or admired. This is also the case if a person chooses to focus his will to achieve a desired behaviour in a subject. Some people are more sensitive than others and POSSIBLY women are more likely to be on the receiving end of such ‘thought power’. It is possible, as noted previously, that this is a factor in women enduring physical violence and coercion in its various forms. However, there would be situations in which the technique is used by both males and females, although possibly in different situations and in different ways. It is important to realise that we can all learn to turn such interference in our thought fields back to the sender, while at the same time learning to remain open to positive energies which can be shared through open discussion and the consideration of other people’s ideas, concerns and approaches.

A person subjected to strong pressure from the will or thought field of another, whether the pressure be voiced or not, can be forced right in on herself, have physical and other health problems, and yet may never perceive the underlying cause. Examples can be found in people subjected to sexual violation as children. In the long term such a person can be described in terms of astronomy as a ‘Black Hole’ who has contracted her/his substance and energy into a dense void. Once a star, their energy mass loses its magnetism to attract and interact with the environment through his/her various etheric networks. Other people seem to be energy consumers and need constant affirmation, from those around them. Their energy circuits are either short circuited through being forced back on to their inwardly-focused patterns or, in the case of external interference, they are on a forced fixed trajectory toward the dominating force, their vectors distorted and unable to make the needed contacts with alternative stimuli from other more open systems.

Apart from the influences of external thought fields, such problems and behaviour patterns can be rooted in a dominating thought within the personal thought field which overwhelms all other thought energy eventually, both in receiving and transmitting. Whatever the triggering factor, be it external or internal, the results are destructive.

50+?

Another group which is becoming aware of discrimination (in education circles and related areas) are older women. Many who are still seeking to work are single or are supporting a spouse. The conflict is that younger people need experience and jobs. There seems to have been instances where both men and women were pressured out of a job which they had been fulfilling adequately. No one queries the desirability of offering opportunities to the young but
it is a dishonest society which makes one group, such as those over, say 50, the scapegoats while espousing equal employment opportunities for all. It is quite ironic that the retiring age for women was extended to 65 at a time when it is very difficult for older women (and men) to gain employment or change jobs. This is true for those born in Australia, in the commonly expressed view but, even more difficult for migrants, even those whose qualifications and experience should transfer readily to the Australian workplace. I have heard sad stories of refugees who have worked and saved throughout their lives to provide for their old age but who were forced to flee their homes and possessions, and often being left with health problems from their experiences. One Bosnian, aged in the late fifties, described the personal experience of sleeping on the ground for five months, including during winter, and said that this was a common experience.

Among some of the groups involved in the inquiry there was an issue which is also shared with other groups in the community. This was the effects on other members of a family of a heavy smoker (usually a man). It appears that people who are stressed and/or people who have a lot of unoccupied time, are more inclined to be heavy smokers and this criteria of course fits the majority of unemployed people. The issues which were raised were the cost, which greatly reduced an already limited income and the effect on the air in the dwelling, which was often very small in relation to the number of people who lived there. In a class exercise a number of men said that they spent over $4000 a year on cigarettes. There seemed to be an additional factor in that there is clearly a 'smoker's ethic' which links across groups and gender and, in groups which meet regularly, such as in a class, this makes it additionally difficult for a person to reduce or give up smoking should they wish to try to do so. The other issue which was raised was that the tobacco companies are sources of employment and anyone who advocated an anti-smoking campaign could be made to feel guilty for putting jobs at risk. It is ironic that a person who works in a family business which sells cigarettes commented that it was distressing to see that women came in and bought food for the family and then bought a carton of cigarettes for the husband which became a major portion of the final amount of the bill. This person voiced concern that the family would be eating adequately in some cases.

Within a different context a teacher supervising school children cleaning up their school grounds decided that the children should not have to pick up cigarette butts which were in a particular area. The teacher commented that the butts should not be there and was told by a child whose father was president of a football club that the school oval was used on the weekend by the club. When the teacher took the matter up (with the addition of concern at a barrel of empty beer cans in the same area) with a superior she was told that the school relied on financial assistance from the football club. It is possible that the matter was taken up diplomatically and club members were asked to take more care, but the situation had been going on for a long time.

The other issue which was voiced by mothers was concern at food and beverages available in SOME school canteens. It seems that some school communities put the students' health before profit, while others retain arrangements with companies who offer financial incentives to sell large quantities of their products, even though there is some concern that the product is not in the best interest of students, or some students in particular who react badly to some additives,
for example. The mothers expressed concern because they said that, for example in cold weather, they gave their child money to buy extra food with instructions to avoid items which had been shown to be harmful to the child and then found that the child still purchased the item. It is true that a school canteen cannot be asked to avoid every item which might be harmful to every individual but there were some beverages which were high-lighted as fund raisers and which had been known to cause adverse effects in numbers of children.

This chapter was formulated to reflect the concerns as they evolved from the people involved in the inquiry. The teachers and parents who spent time in drawing and discussions were women although there was some input from men in these groups and of course there was a slight majority overall of men in the adult classes. I wish to emphasise that I am aware that some of the issues discussed affect men equally across our society. I have also formed the definite impression that, over the years more and more men have become involved in a redefining of family roles including within the migrant communities, but some more than others.

This is a typical example of the way issues which had originally seemed straightforward to the writer (and others in the initial inquiry group) have been found to have become infinitely complex. The unemployment (hence the money) issue seems to have become a predominant factor and with it the sense of fear which is an etheric spread across the community. In this way it becomes clear that, while we as individuals and groups certainly contribute to the reality of our lives we are affected by wider issues and by decisions being made by others and, without doubt, by the decisions and actions of others over years which have gone before. Society seems to be splitting between those who have a legitimate concern for the environment and (not necessarily the same group) those who have a legitimate concern for the health of human beings. It seems that industry and the national economy are often at odds with the goals of these groups. However, the reality is that many people are so concerned at eking out a living that they cannot feel an interest in the concerns of the first two groups. Additionally, in New South Wales there was a series of natural disasters which caused hardship and, as pointed out previously, vandalism is a continuing drain on governmental resources. It seems clear that all interest groups need to develop a broader and realistic perspective and, in particular, take responsibility for areas of life over which they do have some control. Some of the thinking behind this is examined in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 10

CREATING OUR OWN REALITY

I am not what I think I am
I am not what you think I am
I am what I think you think I am.

Attributed to Goethe

Collaborative networks within different work and life environments are evolving to meet the needs of the earth and society, with cycles of inquiry and reflection tapping into the collective wisdom and knowledge of those who are involved. Throughout history the majority of people had little knowledge about the world outside their immediate environment and little power to intervene in the cyclic or chaotic processes of nature. Rudolph Steiner has written in *The Cycles of the Year* (1923) (1) of the time of ‘primitive clairvoyance’ and that these connections are lost when a civilisation becomes more conscious at the intellectual level.

In my understanding this relates to our current state of development in science, technology and human interactions. This means that we have developed our knowledge and skills and have irrevocably changed the earth and cultural systems and we now must take responsibility for the outcomes and include this as part of our planning in new ventures.

Steiner (1923) (2) emphasised the need to value and retain connections with the rhythms of the seasons which, he says, is an integral part of the evolutionary process. It is cyclic, a joining and mingling which unifies and there are intermediate states when differentiation takes place, followed by a merging, ‘always besides these two conditions: the rhythm between.’ He calls this the third state and says that “All life depends upon the activity and interweaving of primordial trinities.”

When one reflects on the many benefits which have been gained through acting on accrued knowledge it is unlikely that many would wish to permanently return to a lifestyle of complete vulnerability to the forces of Nature ranging from the weather to illnesses. However, we have become unbalanced in favour of seeking ways of using our power over Nature and in the case of some, over others. While it has always been true that some have used their physical power to conquer, in this era there has been much emphasis on using the forces of the mind and many have also lost their connections with the spiritual. Due to the impact of television and other communication modes our society is no longer able to avoid knowing about the suffering other human beings endure when at the mercy of the uncontrolled power of the elements and power misused by other human beings. There seems to be a general feeling that we are living in an epoch in which decisions made and actions taken have altered and will continue to irrevocably influence the future of mankind and of the biosphere.

NEGATIVE THOUGHT

Mind is greater than matter because having evolved later hence, in a deceleration spiral, it is the
matter which must dissolve into a state which leaves its cells available for reconstruction. When
the capacity for thought evolved a new dimension was added to life in the universe (Teilhard
1993) (3).

The intelligent mind is a creative force which can affect all matter and its ongoing evolution. If
the mind is usually occupied with trivia the force created is ephemeral and unable to develop
the momentum to move away from its source thus creating an etheric field which can
additionally block out or obscure the energy available from the thought of other creative
sources and thus stultifying the mind’s evolution. If the mind is habitually occupied with
thoughts destructive to the thinker, to others, or to some environmental factor, thus lacking
respect for their existence or their rights there may be created a strong negative force which
could eventually seal off the mind from the higher sources which could recharge energies.
Although the thinker may discharge some of the negativity into the environment, thus letting
off a safety valve, I suggest that the effects of the negative thinking may remain in the thinker’s
own thought field and could eventually result in damage to the personal aura, leading to
physical ill-effects. On the global level, Steiner’s (1923) (4) words are again apt: “All that
people are hoping for.....will come about from all the discussions and all the institutions based
on what is externally sensible. It will be able to come about only where a mighty inspiration
goes through.....which the moral-spiritual element will once again be felt and perceived along
with the natural-sensible element.....a thought impulse drawn out of the spirit.”

The important point needs to be made that there is a difference between habitually choosing to
see the negative side of people and situations, and acknowledging, when appropriate, that an
environment, situation or person has been unjust, unloving, rejecting, cruel, or violent. Even
so, it is likely that each person contributes to the common etheric in the various environments
in which s/he interacts. For example, a workplace or a home becomes what a group makes it,
even acknowledging that some individuals make a greater contribution, whether it be toward
harmony or the opposite.

**RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

If the will is there, management can use action research to create a group etheric which follows
principles favoured by management, but which also is enhanced by including the ideas and
methods contributed by the staff group. In this way, policies are more likely to be supported
through the mental fields of employees as well as by the required adherence through actions.
This is of course more likely to happen if people are given acknowledgement for their input and
efforts regardless of their place in the organisation hierarchy, and this has relevance for the
educational communities connected with this research project. There is validity in the
perception offered by colleagues and others who were interested in sharing their view that there
seems to have been a return to more hierarchical structures, in practice, in many parts of the
education and other sectors.

Because of the obvious influences on our personal etherics by others, it is therefore inaccurate
to state as an axiom that we create our own reality as is sometimes claimed. We do indeed
generally make a greater contribution than we may be willing to admit but, in any group, there

129
are those who have greater power, either through birth, money, gender, education or position. I believe there are also situations where some, through concentrating all their thought, hence their energy and life force, achieve or maintain power over the etheric fields of others, though not necessarily at a conscious level.

As most people need to spend a large part of their time in earning a living, and hence need to conform to an employer’s expectations, they do not have the power to create and live within a world of their own making. All that most people can do is work toward this by developing and maintaining a positive attitude, by being involved in their various environments and in choosing these environments with as much care as possible. We need to aim for an accepting attitude to limitations and aim for an overall harmony whilst maintaining and reacting to opportunities to develop and evolve. For most, the steps are small, indeed infinitesimal, and it is wearying to hear the chorus of supposedly enlightened apologists of the ‘New Age’ who preach that the universe will supply our needs provided we think positively and insist that we have a right to this. Questions which need to be owned by all who have the capacity to understand are:

Who or what is the ‘Universe’ in this context?
Where is the source of this beneficence?
What happens if all only seek to withdraw benefits and no one deposits into the store of resources?
When will the Universe demand that the accounts be balanced?

It is obvious that it is becoming the increasing responsibility of our generation to care for the earth (and the universe in so far as that is accessible to us) and this care must include the human beings whose life fields are part of the fabric of the universe. It is true that the evolutionary processes will eventually lead to adaptations but these could be unwelcome and we have to accept that some have already intervened, indeed intruded, into as many facets of the biosphere and as many dimensions of existence as they have been able to access. Through knowledge obtained with a view to achieving specific changes perceived as desirable by some, humankind has interfered in its own genetic evolution in many direct and indirect ways. All who have the ability to comprehend have given at least tacit permission if they have not asked for explanations and demanded that those with power be more accountable to those who must bear the consequences for research and practices affecting all life forms. We accept that, once the ‘natural’ processes of evolution have been hastened or intercepted, it is not going to be possible to predict the long term outcomes in evolutionary terms, bearing in mind that during the chaotic process there may be very little to link in a cause and effect cycle, and that this must surely be operative in the evolutionary processes within the four energy fields which have been identified as influencing the growth, development, productivity and awareness of a human being.

Because of our interactions with others and our struggles to cope with our daily existence, experiences which enable growth are constantly offered to us. The more we accept the challenges, the greater the growth in a given direction. We need to consider our own rights as a person to exercise our free will, the rights and free will of others and the need to achieve a balance between these.
This challenge may have ancient roots and be across cultures but within the Western European tradition in the sixteenth century Martin Luther and Erasmus had a disagreement, so serious that it split the Christian Church and created chaos in social structures. For reasons that were complex and involved his own personal experiences and concerns, Luther argued that we are predestined toward a certain fate and that we had little power to alter what was ‘in our stars’. Erasmus contended that we have free will and that sensitivity to our conscience should enable us to act and shape our own destiny in the spiritual domain. In the social, political and religious structures in which this argument occurred it seems from our perspective now, that the general population, though deeply affected, had little real opportunity to gain an overview, because they had no free will in the serf-like social structures of the time.

With the insight we have been able to gain through our relationships within the global village it seems that each of the protagonists had a valid point of view and if they had only been able to dialogue constructively and achieve a consensus, Western European and associated cultures might have been spared much suffering. The thought that change was needed occurred, chaos resulted and in the process some took up rigid positions through fear of losing all their supports, others joined together in new religious groupings which they felt expressed their belief systems; or at worst espoused these belief systems because they lived under a prince or landlord who expected all his dependents to accept his religious affiliation.

**OPINIONS ON LEVELS OF MIGRATION (1992)**

Many people are of the opinion that there has been a resurgence of fundamentalism within religious groups in Australia and it seems that we are currently within a spiritual cycle in this country in which those on opposing sides are again separating out, due to economic and environmental concerns. For a period this society seemed to move toward a climate of greater tolerance hence toward a state of balance. Many feel that this is no longer the case.

The matter is a sensitive one but all the people involved in this inquiry offered the view that they felt Australia has been very responsible in acting on its concern for refugees and they were proud of this. Both migrants and Australian-born people voiced concern at the likelihood of large numbers of people continuing to migrate if they lacked the skills likely to obtain employment, although others pointed out that the job market is depressed at all levels even for qualified people and in fact, qualified migrants are more likely to become angry if they do not find employment quickly, especially if they had a job in the homeland and are not refugees. Some people, both overseas born and born in Australia, expressed concern at large numbers of overseas students taking University and TAFE places formerly available to Australian citizens. One person suggested that this was a source of income for educational institutions. People in both groups as well expressed concern for the plight of refugees. For some of the people who had been refugees themselves, it was apparently a new concept that there are ongoing numbers of people (as it happens, increasing numbers at the time of writing) who are being left destitute and often physically impaired from injury and malnutrition, because of the aggression of others. The opinion was offered that maybe it was desirable to support such people in their own environments if that is a possibility, and that there needed to be a greater interest in the general population and by governments to actively support peace in all countries by an awareness and
rejection of individuals and groups who tried to dominate for their own purposes and gain. Some of the low level English speakers, themselves poor, expressed a desire to contribute toward refugee relief in countries other than their own, others were already sending money regularly to relatives in need in their homelands. People with a higher educational level also expressed concern at the devastation of the earth’s resources and the environment and recognised that while energies and resources were needed to cope with ongoing human disasters and suffering this depleted the resources available to find alternate lifestyle modes which would be ecologically sound.

As in other cultures and other civilisations, just as humanity seems to be approaching a moment of breakthrough, something in the way of a distraction, intervenes. Some say that this is due to negative forces which resist the urge towards the higher planes and lead back toward a state of involution or stasis. To create the force needed for our nation to break out of a cycle we need to focus our energies in ALL fields towards achieving a breakthrough of people at all levels taking greater responsibility for themselves and their immediate environments, instead of expecting that someone else will supply their needs or, for example, repair their bodies when they have knowingly lived and acted in ways which leave them exposed to injury, or poor health in the long term. There is a Chinese-Vietnamese saying, ‘Tu te’, which means to take care in small details. The application is for all of us to inform ourselves of the needs of our particular environments and to do our best to take care in carrying out our particular responsibilities within them. After consideration of the concept of etheric links it is clear that our environments may be much more extensive than we have realised, and that the term includes other human beings and their rights. Hence while taking responsibility within our own etherics we need to keep informed of the wider implications of attitudes, policies and actions. The following quotation, from Knudtson and Suzuki (1992) (5) and attributed to Chief Seattle (1854) brings home the point:

‘The air is precious to the red man. For all things share the same breath.....the beast, the trees, the man.....If all the beasts were gone, men would die from a great loneliness of spirit. ...For whatever happens to beasts soon happens to man. All things are connected.....Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth.’

Knudtson and Suzuki’s precepts to achieve the needed changes within the limited time frames available is of the same vein as Steiner’s (1923). They say that these changes will only come about through reconciliation between Western and Native ways of thinking and that this will occur ‘within individual human minds, through mental and emotional processes of personal transformation.’ (6). Further, they quote Bateson (7) that it is ‘monstrous’ to attempt ‘to separate intellect from emotion’ and ‘monstrous and dangerous.....to attempt to separate the external mind from the internal.’

Some of the concerns which would seem to be very relevant as influences in educational environments are discussed in the next chapter, bearing in mind that educational environments are taken to include inner personal processes as well as extending to the broader issues concerning a society and which, through prioritising, can influence all levels of education through pressures exerted by interested groups, including business, politics, religious groups,
to name a few, and hence influencing funding and sometimes more specific aspects of education.

The familiar life horizon has been outgrown: The old concepts, ideals and emotional patterns no longer fit, the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand.

Joseph Campbell
CHAPTER 11

NEW WEAVES

REFLECTIONS AND PRIORITIES WHICH HAVE EMERGED FROM THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The process of being involved with the research and the Social Ecology Centre has been unexpectedly difficult in ways which I was not able to predict in the beginning. The research proposal grew from years of work in education, within a range of contexts, the immediate concern being the challenges faced by teachers working with groups of migrants in a large region. Many of the migrants were new arrivals from countries were there was ongoing violence and privation including from what were in effect war zones, even if this was not officially recognised. The ideas for the research had already been explored through use with groups of adults and younger people in different situations with feedback being positive. There will be other comments in this chapter relating to overall language development problems, particularly in reading and writing for both native and non-native speakers of English.

It would be fair to say that the perception of the work was changed because it became a research project for a higher degree and this, taken with the marked changes in the focus of policies within the educational systems involved, affected the long term participation of some teachers. This could have been due to fear of being perceived as being involved in anything outside their specific responsibilities in a climate which was not encouraging of initiatives from teachers. There was also the factor of their extra time, additional to working hours although this was minimised through careful planning. The participation of other teachers has been greatly appreciated and it is understood that some people will have developed the ideas when appropriate without further involvement in this project or indeed, without ever having been involved, but were aware of the project.

As I have explained this research project began with an intention of restoring ‘the colour’ to the lives of those who had been refugees and to some other people who had experienced grief, frustration and a diminishing of hope because of failure to cope with achievement levels in education. I envisaged this as being facilitated by enhancing the learning environment, in part through music and providing opportunities for the learners to express themselves through drawing and occasional brief periods of physical movement through stretching or breathing exercises to relieved the build up of tension stemming from unaccustomed long periods of sitting in a classroom. The underlying assumption was that a learner needed to be understood as as individual and even though requirements for a learning program were adhered to some people might need a longer time span to learn course pre-requisites (such as learning the English alphabet,) or as in physical therapy programs for pre-school or school aged children who were not achieving to their age level.

I used the symbol for this idea of a many coloured carpet. I could also have used the symbol of a rainbow or the spectrum of colours I have seen through a prism or sunlight reflected through a crystal, all symbolic of a beauty which can remove a person, albeit temporarily, from negative
thoughts, sad memories or worries about the future.

Along with other teachers, I have memories of student responses such as laughing while learning words for directions or movement, following instructions or sharing a drawing or an experience. There are also memories of school students painting with gusto their interpretation of a poster portraying the Mandelbrot set and demonstrating their perception of balance in the pattern, although this had not been pointed out to them. On other occasions school students shared their wonder and appreciation of the natural world through talking or writing about their pets, or their gardening successes and discovering the complex structures of crystals and rocks. This resulted in several boys bringing in their own treasures - two examples being a lad who dumped a bag of crystals and rocks (with no protection for the crystals against the rocks) on the teacher’s desk saying ‘Here miss, have a look at these.’ The other boy brought in a miniature engine his uncle had made him which worked on methylated spirits, and gathered an enthralled audience while he set it to work under teacher’s supervision.

For student, teacher or parent the moment when a person understands or achieves something in which they had previously been unsuccessful is a moment to be known but not easy to be adequately described. Such achievement can include non-academic successes such as being accepted into a sports team or into a choir or musical group. In my understanding a way of describing this is that such a person enters an ethic of those who can do this task and it can equally describe an adult or child entering into a new level of achievement (that is, a higher level of difficulty) which is one of the aspects I perceive as pertaining to ethic networking.

**CHANGES IN ADULT MIGRANT ENGLISH LEARNING**

In planning this project I now perceive that we were operating within an overall ethic which could be said to be largely imbued with a spirit of agape and which involved ongoing ethic networks across the community. The practical day-to-day needs of the learners, as members of the community, involved connections with many other organisational or governmental networks and assisting those in need to make connections with these is part of the teacher’s role.

Since the commencement of this inquiry there have been considerable changes in course structures for the adult migrant English learners, notably in the number of hours allowed for a person to reach a given level of proficiency. A new focus opened up on English for work for students from different language levels in English. This focus would seem to be productive for people who had previously attained to achieve the specified outcomes in the allocated time for people who entered the course with no knowledge of English especially if they had little schooling in L1. The challenge is even greater if the learners, having been unemployed for a long time, have entered into a passive lifestyle pattern in which they had little contact with English speakers.

A comment which could be made about some of the students now learning English in classes with a job focus is that they have tended to cling more closely to their first language ethersics. This would be for many reasons, varying from the individual personality, past experiences and
family pressures, to the fact that they have not worked to any extent in an English speaking environment or possibly not at all, hence have not experienced daily challenges to think in English. Others have lost the motivation to use English after they were retrenched or injured while working in Australia. These and other people unfortunately lose a level of expertise if not given opportunities to practise English, hence they have learned to live within an English speaking culture but within a framework of their own language ethic. In many ways this adds to the difficulties of the teachers because habits or speech may need to be unlearned. Policy changes which now require migrants to register for English language classes soon after arrival will hopefully assist newer arrivals to avoid problems which might otherwise arise. The ongoing challenge is to encourage people to practise English after they complete formal instruction.

I believe it is fair to say that the pressure to assist students to reach specified work-related language goals within a time frame has become a presence in the learning environment of itself. Such special training programs have been designed to help people develop skills in a time when unemployment is a problem, especially for people with poor English and/or literacy and often lacking formal qualifications or, as in the garment industry, people whose skills were superseded. Some of these learners might not have chosen to upgrade their English skills but agreed to participate in programs in the same way people throughout the community have entered into various courses in an effort to obtain or secure their employment.

Such language tuition may be channelled through different organisations offering a range of programs to suit the needs of different student profiles. Because of some of these factors during some of the period of the study there was a closer collaboration with some groups of former language learners who wished to discuss their family problems or other worries.

The writer has shared and respected the privacy concerns of all involved because a significant part of the learning she has experienced from the process of working and writing throughout these ongoing cycles has been that information cannot always be protected nor can it be ensured that it will not be misquoted, taken out of context or attributed to the wrong source over a series of connections. Although there may be no immediate consequences a reaction can be set up and could in the long term affect some person or group in ways unknown to them through policies which determine funding and possibly opportunities offered to groups or individuals.

As noted earlier the project design was in response to the needs of people who were escaping from a war situation or other violence, some being refugees. It is not possible to predict the need for such concerns in the future, one can only hope that the need for people to leave their homelands through fear will become less and less because the challenges are very great and the adjustments require great courage and persistence as well as flexibility. Damage to persons or property through violence is a tremendous waste of resources which could otherwise be channelled into development - of people and economic growth. It needs to be recognised that for some people life in their own country was happy before their existence was disrupted by the actions of others or as a result of other’s actions or decisions. Given a choice, they would have continued to live there. Others find that having invested savings and energy into coming to Australia, or bringing out relatives, that the family reunion including some marriages, does not
always work out.

This is not surprising considering the tensions which occur between generations, couples and other relatives within the community as a whole. For migrants it could be said that there is a likelihood that all such problems will be exacerbated. It needs also to be remembered that for refugees, Australia was not their first goal. Their destination was perhaps of secondary importance to that of escape, and many actually chose to flee to another country, close to their homeland and with many cultural similarities, and they may have already made the effort to learn the language of that transit country. They came to Australia because this was the country which offered them opportunity for a new life, but the language and cultural differences may be very much greater than originally anticipated.

**YOUNG MIGRANTS**

One group which has been particularly vulnerable are the young people who have come here as lone migrants after losing family members or who have lost contact with their families due to communication problems. Many have endured tragedy, have missed schooling because of civil strife, even though education may have been formerly available in their country, and hence they have also missed out on the needed experiences of childhood which lay the foundations for successful progress in learning language skills. In a sense some could lack a true first language because of lack of use within a trusted ethic, such as a family. Due to poverty they are often forced to share accommodation with others who, while possibly friendly, cannot be expected to treat them as close as family. Like many other migrants, at least in the past, many have also lived in camps in transit countries and made friends there, establishing a form of community, and some came to perceive themselves as practitioners of a particular craft and are disappointed to realise that the production methods are very different here. On the other hand older people who have had a profession could be more fortunate in that they may be able to establish links with members of that profession here. This could of course also happen for someone in other kinds of jobs, depending on the culture from which they come and similarities with Australian conditions. It is emphasised that no generalised comments could be made because of the complexity of the factors affecting each individual and including his/her experiences after arriving here and their support networks or lack of supports.

There have been special programs introduced for such young migrants which were designed to assist them overcome emotional blocks which may have built up. The results of such programs will have been assessed by those running them. However, it could be said that an individual who has been suffering and lonely since childhood is not going to let go readily of defences built up over years and this applies across all categories of persons needing help to re-establish positive attitudes and behaviours in their lives.

**PARENTS AS ROLE MODELS**

It needs to be acknowledged that changes in social structures have resulted in many young people whose native language is English and who were born in Australia, also experiencing a lack of sense of family and this has been occurring across socio-economic groupings. It would
be unfair to say that this is always because of parental behaviour because there is a recognition by many that the cult of youth and physical attractiveness projected by the media and advertising, which had targeted over years on the significance of age as a divisive barrier, have also encouraged negative attitudes across generations and affected the perception of people as valued individuals. This has meant that many young people have lost confidence in their older family members as role models.

A LANGUAGE ETHERIC: LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Belonging to a language etheric involves more than a measured proficiency in a language’s skills including also the significance of what is not said as well as the subtleties of tone, inflection and pauses. It also is recognised that language ability is an important indicator of other facets of a person’s general development and, as the muscle tone of the body can deteriorate with lack of exercise or a poor diet, so also can the ‘tone’ of the inner voice, in the sense that the voice is the outward expression of the person’s well-being and interior etheric. The problems of working with people who have lacked an adequate venue to express their feelings are a challenge but attempts to resolve them are potentially of benefit to the individual and the community as a whole. For this reason it has been very discouraging to find that many older students, having invested their time and energy in learning English and having had time and energy invested in them, will probably be excluded from furthering their English studies because they proceed at a slower pace and have used their allocated hours. A side issue from this is that this can mean that they lose respect from their children and longer term effects from his can involve the whole community. In ways such as increasing violence and even criminal behaviour because the traditional cultural pattern of respect for elders no longer carries weight. Many parents, especially men spoke of their hurt about this. For women the effect was more that they would not attempt to speak English if children (and often husbands) were present.

There is a need for strong efforts to be made to prevent new generations evolving into ‘problem’ learners because their basic language needs are not being met.

UNDER-ACHIEVING SCHOOL-AGED LEARNERS

Some funding is available to schools, pre-schools and other organisations which prepare appropriate submissions for programs to assist such students and the staff concerned work hard but the numbers of children in need of special help are great and there remains a problem concerning children whose parents are not able to access services due to ignorance, poverty, location, or staff not recognising that the child does need extra help. The latter was an issue for some parents in the inquiry and they had had their early misgivings about their child’s development dismissed by those they had first consulted.

In schools there can be disagreement in the way language support hours are timetabled and the mode in which the hours are utilised. Due to the ad hoc nature of funding for such positions there is also sometimes a problem in due recognition being given to the role of the language support teacher by the staff who may not adequately understand the functions of the role. It is important that school children in need of such extra support be enabled to make at least small
achievements in their language support programs as in their regular classes they are constantly being required to progress into new areas when they have not mastered pre-requisite skills for various reasons.

Within the area of reading difficulties it has been noted that some people benefit from using tinted lenses, other practitioners point out that, as colours are part of a spectrum of vibration, that listening to specially prepared tapes can help to overcome the disharmony which they believe is the cause. In terms of this paper the salient point is that the attitude of parents, school staff and significant others is crucial in supporting a child who needs to use any such aid. Sometimes parents might pay for such items and be supported by the child’s teacher while others in the school environment target the child, making she or he feel ‘different’. With respect for the child and careful handling this need not happen. There is a real need for schools as learning communities to respect the difference between individuals and their needs and develop a positive approach through information sessions to staff and parents, as well as students, where appropriate. The interest and will to do this needs to come from the highest level in the school.

HARMFUL ACTIVITIES

The cause of visual perceptual problems which affect reading and writing are often a mystery, but an issue which was raised is whether there can be significant harmful effects on young children from being moved vigorously about, such as by an adult in play or during a fun park ride. The concern was especially about babies and very young children and whether they could be harmed in the neck which can affect the eyes. Another concern is the potential damage to the eyes from exposure to the sun and it is clear, from observation, that many parents are not protecting babies’ eyes as they lie in their strollers. Some schools have been very slow to include a really adequate hat as part of the uniform, particularly during sporting activities. Where this has been done students who do not wish to wear a hat will often cause problems for those who do wear one, thus highlighting the need when school commences, for every child to be expected to wear a hat all the time when outdoors in sunny weather, and with teacher giving an example by doing the same, as well as parents.

THE FAMILY CULTURE

Another factor which has been briefly referred to is the influence of parental levels of education on growing children, whether they be migrants or otherwise. It needs to be recognised that it is the value that parents place on education and language competence which is crucial. Some parents who have been deprived of an education themselves place a very high value on education for their children, while some educated parents are so occupied with their own careers that they are not able to give time to children in ways that are needed, although they may well spend money on obtaining extra help. Neither of these extremes describes the majority of interaction between parents and children, but it is very difficult for a child to develop a high level of language competence when parents do not support this. Yet this is what needs to happen if the children are not to be caught up in the cycle of low skills and prospective unemployment in a world which is demanding multi-skilling and technical expertise.
It has been said that composition of a household influences the language which is transmitted, even in mono-lingual families (Saville-Troike: 1984 P206-7) and there is also a wide variation between the tendency to taciturnity or loquacity of both the individual and a cultural group. It seems likely that the more frequently a person uses a language to express personal communication, as distinct from strictly functional language, the more fluent s/he will be orally and that this flows on to written communication. Saville-Troike (1984) (1) points out that within a cultural context language is a primary medium through which knowledge, attitudes and skills are transmitted through generations and that all cultures use all modes but formal predominates in a culture where family authority is strictly hierarchical, where the supernatural influences behaviour and where tradition is respected. She adds that the technical mode predominates in a knowledge oriented society which values cognitive skills and the mental capacity of youth.

THE BROADER CULTURE

With this in mind it could be said that the community of learners as well as the society need to decide the purpose of the language learning, whether it be restricted to utilitarian survival needs or be programmed to include aspects of culture and therefore facilitating the socialisation process. Whether a speech community chooses to acknowledge it or not the reality is that social forces influence ways of speaking and hence what is social and psychological reality in whatever roles are open to members of a community. In practice this means that both learners and educators make decisions, but I believe that these decisions can be influenced by an encouraging atmosphere in the learning environment, although there may sometimes need to be a sense of challenge to achieve a desired outcome (and thus earn the affirmation which results.) However, I do not believe that these desirable outcomes can always be achieved within a minimum time frame which may only relate to outcomes achieved by learners with established learning skills or possibly previous learning experiences which, though latent, can be at least subconsciously recalled when needed.

In addition to the conscious and subconscious decisions of learners and educators it needs to be acknowledged that decisions are also made about education and, it would seem, particularly about free access to adult migrant English learners in the specified categories, through the funding process administered by Government departments. It seems reasonable to say that the Government policies which determine the way funding is used and by whom, have also been influenced by community attitudes and certainly by the state of the economy and the openings for employment. At the time of writing adult migrants are limited to 510 hours of English tuition if they are eligible for free tuition and this would apply to refugees. The situation for those who pay may vary. It is also necessary for people to register for a class within three months of arrival and to commence learning within twelve months and they must finish within three years. In addition, for people who arrived before July 1991 but have not reached competency in English, it is possible to receive tuition through enrolment as a job seeker, as noted previously.

These English for Work courses have specified outcomes for which the learner is credited on a statement of attainment. The focus is very much on job seeking skills and is beneficial for those
who enter the course with some previous experience of English but presents difficulties for those learners with no previous English training especially if they had little previous schooling in L1. I suggest that for a refugee who has not recovered confidence and direction that this difficulty to attain the competencies specified within a set time frame is considerable and I feel some concern that such people may feel negative about future learning of English if they work hard but cannot keep up with others in their group. Where possible, I believe an interim course is needed, preferably at a lower intensity than the 20 hours weekly current for English for Work. This would ease students into the language usage needed and also into the changes in daily routines which are often difficult to adjust to for the long term unemployed and even more so for people who have lost all initiative through the refugee experience, especially if they have lived in a camp situation. In some specific situations some pre-English for Work courses have been offered.

At the individual level it is a particular frustration to adult second language learners that they are often unable to comprehend and particularly, to convey, humour. At a more complex level there can be frustration at an inability to comprehend and interpret puns, smiles, irony or metaphor as this can only follow some level of competence in literal structure. I would, however, make the comment that if a student group is formulating elements of a learning curriculum, it can happen that the most dominant member (who may be so because of personality, gender or cultural differences) may attempt to determine the curriculum and this can mean others do not have their basic goals met, or do not feel that they have been heard. With some student groups this may not be a factor but there is a need for the teacher to be sensitive to the dynamics of the group.

LITERATURE AND CHILDREN

Although the benefits of language competence are emphasised this is not to say that everyone needs to be highly perceptive in literary appreciation, although this is very important, in that literature (or story-telling in some cultures) offers a way of understanding the complexity of relationships without necessarily relating personal experiences. This applies to literature across a range of age groups, including adults. Teachers generally do make an effort to find books which appeal to their students within the constraints of budgets and syllabus requirements, and it is true to say that the books a young person can link to are also their links to the wider world of thinking and concept development. An issue which recurs frequently is the type of material which is presented, particularly in teenage years. The comment has been made in ongoing discussions with parents who are interested in their children’s progress, that there is more than enough violence and sadness portrayed in the media and just encountered through the experiences of living in a society where we are now highly aware of the magnitude and intensity of human suffering around the world. These parents have voiced the view, as have some teachers, that it is desirable to present the child with as positive a world view as possible when it comes to literature experiences. Within the framework of an ethic theory. I would suggest that the child (or adult) has access to an alternate world should the need arise. This is an integral part of the process of ‘growing up’. When children use their imagination in play such as when they include imaginary playmates in their games, it is possible that, assisted by their lack of sophisticated caution, they do enter into another dimension, in a way breaking through
a ‘thought barrier’. There is also, of course, a need to require that attention be given to practical matters of the present also, and even up until early high school years numbers of children have a problem in achieving a balance between their creative self and concentrating on matters deemed as important by their parents or teachers. For children said to have an attention problem a way of describing their behaviour is to say that they find alternate thought fields and etherics more attractive than that of their classroom.

**CHILDRENS’ LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

In an age when technology is ever more dominant it is not surprising that early emphasis on creativity is modified in curriculum but it is to be hoped that there always remains an opportunity for the benefits which can be gained from open learning experiences. So often when there has been an imbalance in praxis those attempting to rectify it tend to over-compensate. With more understanding of the need for attention to the many facets of a developing human and for a child living in a society which values a formal education and the ability to focus on a task, it is beneficial to experience some routine early in life and, as s/he grows, to be given some small area of responsibility commensurate with their developmental stage, both at home and at school. However, the degree to which a child can carry out tasks independently is individual and they should be given guidance if needed, but the task should still be carried out. This applies to school projects which are often fully completed by a family member, with small input from the child.

Even when a program is implemented to assist under-achieving children with language skills there can be problems if parents are not supportive because, as noted, in the early years especially, children lack power to alter their environment although, through exercise of their will they may resist changes being imposed. It is possible that this tends to happen more if there is at least tacit support from a significant other. This matter is raised because, for example, a therapist or teacher can suggest a daily or weekly program for a child to be followed at home. If there is no one willing or able through time constraints or lack of understanding to carry out the program, the child loses out, as does the wider community in the long term. During the period of the study the parents who commented were very pleased with help they had received, although not with delays, and sometimes no specialised help was received for long periods and this is when parental skills and attitudes are crucial. For this reason the need to educate the next generation of parents is emphasised, particularly on the need to talk to and listen to their children within a consistent framework which also respects the rights of others. These expectations can be onerous on parents both emotionally, and in time, especially as both parents may work sometimes in order to pay for the extra services or education their child needs. The issue is very difficult and results will no doubt always be imperfect because of the complexity of the factors involved, but we have to keep caring and trying as a society. With the passing of time more influences affect the child so that it is sometimes hard to effect changes in adolescence. This is where the attitudes of the child are crucial for, if they remain positive, she or he may still be willing to try to change ineffective learning approaches even well into the high school years, provided there is someone available to support them and believe that it is worth the effort.
While mothers are not necessarily the only or most significant language communicators to their babies and young children, in a majority of cases they probably still are. For the child learning a second language the mother’s attitude to the new language and her proficiency level are very significant. Many migrant women, for differing family reasons, have in the past not taken up their option to learn English. Under the most recent guidelines longer term residents are seemingly ineligible for English classes in the beginning levels unless they are prepared to register as being job seekers, although the Home Tutor schemes would be available for some women. It is possible that some women may be able to access classes at higher levels through other providers but, for many, although they are now more free to begin study as children grow up, it is seemingly impossibly hard. As some may not wish to register for work because their chances of finding employment are limited or they have too many home duties, this can be a problem for the families as well as for themselves. Husband or children may be needed to accompany them for business or medical visits, thus missing work or school and also leading to an ongoing dependence in the woman which can have ramifications for the family structures. Hence there is a case for considering special circumstances of women who, for example, have had very young children to care for in the years after arrival, because childcare is not unlimited and some mothers do have a fear of leaving their children if the family has experienced traumatic conditions.

CHILDREN AS ENGLISH LEARNERS

Saville-Troike (1984) makes many references to the language of the classroom in a range of formal educational settings (especially in Pages 240-7), and its effect on the learners. For the younger child learning English the inter-relationship of the two languages is more likely the significant factor, not the fact that there are two languages. Closely linked to metalinguistic functioning is the capacity for concrete operational thought. Children of migrants who are not proficient in English may seem to be functioning at an adequate level for their age because they act as interpreters, but this is on a concrete level and does not necessarily transfer to the abstract usages needed to do well in the education systems. An issue which does recur is that parents, naturally enough, want their children to become proficient in their inherited language and so do not speak English at home and enrol the children in classes to learn the parents’ first language. This is of course the parents’ right and is broadening the child’s education. However, the timing and intensity of this extra language activity does need to be considered from the perspective of the language gained by children whose parents are not well educated in English and where language resources are limited in the home and possibly also in the schools in their areas.

An additional problem is that the child is usually struggling to keep up to the level of classwork required and is very tired by the end of the week. A Saturday class in this situation may or may not be helpful until the child is coping better within the school framework. The issue is very emotive and complex but any child with even a minor learning disability can experience great difficulty with reading and writing when constantly exposed to two languages before mastering one. In this situation, bi-lingualism is not a benefit in the early years and the child may be worse off than if he only knew one language well. It is the timing of the second language learning, not the fact, which is being queried and of course it is recognised that it is not possible to instruct
every child to a level of competence in a first language before commencing school. The matter is noted because linguistic research may have been carried out with children from more advantaged linguistic backgrounds and not necessarily living in a new culture as is the case with a migrant, who is experiencing so many other life changes.

It is clear that Australia as a nation must decide on priorities for spending but if we neglect early intervention, pre-school and school programs for language development the cost to the nation will be ongoing because inadequate language development has implications for thinking capacity, reflective processes and hence the ability to train and re-train for a work-force which has undergone what is essentially a second industrial revolution, with possibly more drastic ramifications than had the first. An equally important aspect, but often overlooked, is the destructive consequence of people growing up with negative memories of school because they were so often lagging behind other students due to language deficits. An additional concern is that boys and girls must be equally educated to be competent as child carers or as breadwinners due to societal changes and the unpredictability of employment options. Educational administrators clearly recognise this but not all parents and students do. One excellent innovation has been the increasing opportunities for adults to return to senior studies within the school system because if they missed out during their school years, the school system may be better equipped to give them the support they need.

**REFLECTIONS**

At a time when teachers and schools are increasingly being required to fulfill more complex functions of curriculum preparation and administrative reporting there has been an increase in family breakdown, often exacerbated by poverty and employment concerns. Over years schools and child care centres have been expected to carry an increasing load of responsibility for the welfare of the students, including outside of attendance hours, because of a deepened awareness of the complexity of human growth and development but also by default of others in the community, including some families, to take responsibility for the outcomes of the world view we as a culture present to developing young human beings. This adds to the complexity of budgets and staffing in schools and other educational centres at a time when economic rationalism demands proof of skills based competency which, though desirable, cannot be evaluated in isolation from the human beings who are purported to be its focus. For many people the predominating zeitgeist could be one of fear: of the increasing violence of our society and the apparent links with employment, poverty and drug abuse of different kinds, as well as concerns about the environment and the planet. In this climate teachers and child care staff in their varying situations are carrying a heavy load and the strain is telling because in most cases they are trying to shield their students from negativity and present a positive and optimistic world view. The challenge is certainly also applicable to teachers of adults learning English.

A conclusion has been drawn that a significant contribution to the learning environment is also made through the personal experience and input of students and teachers and their interactions and the fact that there is an ongoing interest and concern in improving these interactions by most of those involved. This is the etheic of the language classroom. Efforts to beautify the
space are helpful but most important is that students feel that someone is interested in their progress and is providing a positive reinforcement for their efforts. Many adults, previously competent in their language skills, feel humiliated when they are unable to adequately express themselves, while others have never experienced praise for their efforts. The same applies to child learners who for varied reasons have not kept up with their peers. People spoke of their memories of schooling as being forced to leave school at a very young age because their parents needed any income they could earn. Their teachers had come to beg parents to let them stay on. They still had to leave school but it was very important in their memory that the teacher had made the effort.

There was agreement that ‘atmosphere’ builds up in a place of education or of work as it can in a home or historical site and the overall effect can be destructive or energising. Each person contributes to this as do groups, whether they be linked by cultures, age, gender, class or other dimensions of life which shape thought patterns. This is not to say that it can be assumed that links are made through such perceived similarities because, as stated previously, the use of the will is also a factor in belonging to an ethereic, both from the individual and from the group towards individuals. This in turn is influenced by the individual’s ongoing experiences with the group ..... his or her cycles of action learning and responses. Hence if a teacher can instil confidence in students through positive reinforcement and encouragement this is immeasurably significant and can break through negativity which has been built up around the students through memories of failure which can often prevent a person focusing thoughts in the present learning situation. In a sense the process is one of reciprocity ongoing between students and teachers and the administrative system in which learning is being carried out. When a person has had a positive experience in a learning environment he can then choose to draw on the memory of this in future learning situations instead of the previous negative memories.

Despite the stresses involved in persevering with such an inquiry within educational structures which were themselves undergoing drastic changes, and often appeared to be operating without a sense of direction, I feel affirmed that the philosophy behind the inquiry was sound because of the acceptance of its validity by those who were and are involved in actually teaching and learning. Teachers often feel that they do not know the long term results for their students, especially if they teach younger school children or beginning English learners. However, there is feedback when contact is made with a student who has successfully negotiated the education ethereic in a particular field of endeavour or simply when a former student makes contact with the teacher. She may not have any great successes to relate but if she indicates that her experiences of that language classroom which she shared with you, the teacher, was a worthwhile experience in her memory, then the teacher knows that something important was achieved, the competency to feel positive and to experience being valued as a person and to have achievements recognised.

On the following pages are some examples of students writing about their feelings or experiences.
This young woman dropped out of a class because she became pregnant and experienced health problems. She later wrote to me that her new home was far away from the centre where she had been studying. I wrote care of her relatives at her previous address but did not receive a reply. I know that there was family resistance to her studying and that she had been highly motivated to learn English.

August

Dear Teacher Margaret;

How are you?

I always think about you.

The teacher who used to encourage me and have enthusiasm.

She also pays attention to someone too.

The teacher who made I have sympathy to her when I said left room 4.

God bless you.

Love x take care.
It is too difficult to write all my feelings that I had when I came to Australia, but I can say that it was as though it was my third birthday and I was like a tree that is transplanted for the third time and it needs time until it gets used to the new conditions. I was born and died in Iran and Turkey and after these two types of life, I want to begin a new life with my last experiences of life. But generally, I am so happy that I have come to Australia, and I have more confidence about my future.

Student A
Dear Teacher

This is ...

I am a young man.
I am tall of medium build.

My hair is black and long.
I don't like my eyes, because they're small and brown.

I am usually not happy with myself.

Student B
My name is a young woman. I'm tall of slender height. My hair is short and straight. The colour of my hair is black. My eyes are brown. I always play bowling on the weekend. I'm happy about my young sister, because she is good student. But I worry about my mother, she's old woman. She's weak, she's always sad. I'm very angry with my father. Because he had married another woman. He dropped my family.

Student C
When I first arrived in Australia, I felt so afraid because I left my country and all my friends there. For me, Australia is a good country and I will get used to the idea of living here. It's still hard for me with all the new changes in my life, but nobody can help me to get used to it. So I will have to help myself to settle in to the new life.

Student D
When I first arrived in Australia, I was like a deaf person in a big musical concert. I wasn't understanding the people, it was very hard to get used to the accent. But, it began to get better due to some talking with Aussies, and a little bit of practice.

I'm convinced that I can make a better future here, even though that means I have to always think about my homeland.
Communication from people about their past will only be offered if they feel safe in the classroom environment and this can only develop over time with a gradual build up of trust.


Dear teacher: Margaret,

I would like to tell you about how I was feeling before I came to Australia. My life was normal before coming to Australia. I had a good job and I continue studying law at university. But my normal life changed when one day coming out of the University, I and my brother were picked up. We were taken to an unknown place with the purpose of torturing us to investigate names and information of some political groups.

Some days after we were free, with certain conditions that we had to live the country or we would die with our family. While we capture and after the owing to live the country for Australia, two family members were murdered.

This is why I had the need to ask for help as a political refugee, in either Australia or Canada. We chose Australia because was a shorter wait period (1 month). While Canada was 3 years wait.

I don't know anything about Australia before I came.

I felt confused and afraid when I came because I wasn't sure if I was coming to a prison or a camp refugee. Shortly after I found out that it was the complete opposite for I found freedom.

I want to know if I personally thank Australia and its people for how good understanding and humanitarian they are. Add to this, I believe there is no other country which you can live in the world, compare beauty and kindness of Australia.
Anti-crime politician gunned down
The original of the drawing on the preceding page was in crayon colour and was a fine visual representation of the funeral procession of the local member, Mr. John Newman. The motorcade proceeded through the Cabramatta CBD through crowds of silent and respectful onlookers.
As a result of the inquiry process and the reflective processes inherent to it, it could be said that the learners are influenced by the sensory experiences accompanying their learning, such as the visual surroundings and any accompanying sounds. It could also be said that their sensory memory of previous experiences can be an influence on current behaviours and experiences. It was found that one of the significant factors influencing the learners involved in this inquiry was the personal relationship experienced within their classes through interaction with their teacher and with fellow students, the relative influence varying between individuals. It was found to be very important that someone, usually a teacher, was interested in the individual and their progress and attempted to make the learning environment pleasant and accepting of individuals at their various stages of language knowledge and usage. It was also found that, in the current climate of adult second language learning the students and teachers are feeling more pressured than was the case at the beginning of the study and that accompanying music is helpful when students are required to carry out written activities.

It was also clear that, for all the learners, the personal environment of the physical body was an important influence. There have also been ongoing media reports referring to concern as to the effect of air and water pollution, food additives and preservatives on community health. Relating this to the theory of etheric fields the question could be asked as to the extent people in a community come to accept certain chronic conditions as ‘normal’ for the area. Within Australia this could be, for example, that people initially complained about the increasing rate of asthma in a given region but, over time, they find that others do not respond to their concern for reasons which may be to do with concern at loss of property values, or loss of employment for some members of the community. The sufferers then begin to accept their condition, use medication constantly and do not talk about their problems. In an area which has experienced
pollution from warfare possibly of air, soil and water with ongoing and unmeasurable damage to the human genetic chains it seems likely that the same change in the zeitgeist has also occurred, partly because people begin to forget what had gone before, but also because of pressures from others to conform to a particular world view. Indeed, one way that this could be described is to say that people lose hope that the process of living can be a more positive experience. In contrast, one man told me that “Time is like gold in Australia”. His meaning was that he had never perceived his time as having any value before he came here and he was moved to make the remark after he had visited the display of Floriade in Canberra. Other adult students have shown long term changes in attitude and progress after visits to local places of beauty such as gardens. At the same time concerns about opportunities for employment are strong influences for both adult English learners and even for children in primary schools who, in some instances, are being frequently reminded about their need to find jobs in the future.

Due to the national and global nature of these concerns about peace, the environment and the economic situation and the fact that most people lack the power to take direct action which can influence the situation, there is a risk that this can itself worsen the situation in a sense lowering the energy levels of communities and of the nation through the interactions of lowered energy fields of individuals. The results of such processes are more powerful than that which would flow from the individual only, because of the compounding effect of thought field energy through memory and, in ways as yet to be explored, by the lowered energy rate of places which have been laid waste or denuded.

It is therefore important that individuals do begin to reverse this process, which can only be described as devolutionary, in whatever ways they can, but beginning with lifestyle. This would include considering diet and exercise and, it needs to be said, avoiding prolonged listening to heavy rock music or indeed any loud noise. The idea of singing or practising harmonics has also been suggested as being beneficial and open to everyone who is interested in experiencing these processes as they appear to strengthen the individual body fields. Even more important, we need to regain a sense of hope for Australia’s future and work toward a sense of unity. We need to remain aware that we are the sum total of our experiences and we need to take more responsibility for ensuring that those experiences be as positive as possible, and one way of contributing to this achievement is to choose to adopt positive attitudes, while each taking responsibility for our own contribution to our various environments. In practical terms one way of working toward this is to increase job opportunities within Australia by supporting Australian industries. Many migrants, especially those who have experienced retrenchment, have expressed a conscious commitment to a ‘Buy Australian’ policy because, at the very least, it gives them a sense of contributing to the country’s well-being.

Should a significant proportion of Australia’s people make a commitment to strengthening their personal energy levels in all fields, over time others around them will be influenced in ongoing ways, in turn transforming spaces. When a person is vibrating at a high level in all energy fields he or she is much more likely to be aware of alternative solutions to previously insurmountable difficulties because of interaction with a greater number of vibratory bands, notably in the thought fields. In the long term this is what is needed to help the individual and the nation regain lost impetus. Such processes can work toward the positive or the negative and to achieve the desired benefits there must be a consciousness of membership of the community and
the personal responsibilities this entails, and an action response.
“When nothing seems to help, I go and look at a stonemason hammering away at a rock perhaps a hundred times without as much as a crack showing in it, yet at the hundred and first blow it will split in two, and I know it was not that blow that did it.....but all that had gone before.”

Jacob Riis

My theory has always been that if we are to dream the flatteries of hope are as cheap and pleasant than the gloom of despair.

Thomas Jefferson
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**CHAPTER 4 LIFE FIELDS**


7. Popp quoted in ibid P132.


11. Diagrams adapted from ibid P100.


15. ibid P123.


24. ibid P83.

25. ibid P122.

*CHAPTER 5 WHAT IS AN ETHERIC?*


3. ibid Ch 8.


CHAPTER 6 THE ULTIMATE ETHERIC LINK: THE LIFE PROCESS


7. ibid Pp137-8.


9. This reference is from memory, from an Australian Broadcasting Corporation News item, Sydney. The captive had been held in a Middle East country and was released some years ago.

162


12. ibid Ch 2.

CHAPTER 7 *THE SPIRITUAL FIELD*


2. Source: a card.


CHAPTER 8 *PATTERNS OF CHAOS*....


CHAPTER 10 *CREATING OUR OWN REALITY*


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LANGUAGE LEARNING AND LIFE PROCESSES

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With thanks to those who showed interest in this project in the early years in various ways and those who have given support or constructive criticism.

With gratitude to the members of my family and the friends who retained their trust in me and the work despite the chaotic processes.
In memory of my dear nephew James, an under-achieving child who developed into a musician and composer and a lover of poetry and nature, with a profound sense of the spiritual. A life journey ended in an accident, yet a life which has inspired many others to express their love through their own music and writing.
INDEX

BEGINNINGS
SYNOPSIS

PREFACE: THE RAINBOW CARPET 8–14

PROCESSES
CHAPTER 1: METHODOLOGY 15–26

Table 1: THE LEARNING COMMUNITIES 17–19

CHAPTER 2: MOTIVATION, OBSTACLES & FACILITATORS 27–38

CHAPTER 3: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, CULTURAL INFLUENCES & PERSONAL EXPRESSION 39–53

CHAPTER 4: LIFE FIELDS 54–65

CHAPTER 5: WHAT IS AN ETHERIC? ETHERIC LINKS & THE MEMORY PROCESS 66–85

CHAPTER 6: THE ULTIMATE ETHERIC LINK; THE LIFE PROCESS 86–95

CHAPTER 7: THE SPIRITUAL FIELD 96–107

CHAPTER 8: PATTERNS OF CHAOS, NEW CONNECTIONS & DISCONNECTIONS 108–119

CHAPTER 9: A LINK INTO THE CONCERNS OF SOME WOMEN 120–127

CHAPTER 10: CREATING OUR OWN REALITY 128–133

NEW WEAVES
CHAPTER 11: REFLECTIONS AND PRIORITIES 134–159

CHAPTER NOTES 159–164

BIBLIOGRAPHY 165–170
LANGUAGE LEARNING AND LIFE PROCESSES

SYNOPSIS

This paper describes processes and my conclusions after working collaboratively in the broad area of language learning. The inquiry process considered factors in the learning environment which might benefit the learners, with music and drawing in the classrooms being trialled and discussed with teachers and adult migrant English learners in different contexts. The responses of some primary aged students with learning problems and their parents and/or teachers were also studied.

The inquiry process indicates that the term ‘environments’ must be understood to include personal environment, involving the Life energy fields, considered here to be the physical field, and the field of thought and memory, as well as the cultural, family, educational and other significant environments, within the context of the evolving Australian society.

The term I have chosen to describe the interaction of these experiential fields with the will of the individual, is an etheric. Membership of, or exclusion from, an etheric, may be subtle but can be discerned when considering a migrant attempting to enter the Australian workforce or, I believe, any person trying to enter a new field of endeavour. I suggest that this concept explores the phenomenon of acceptance of a language or entry into a group.
In January 1990 I was among a group who began working towards a Master’s Degree through the Social Ecology centre.

It was the first group in a new degree program.

In the beginning, there was a Residential
A chaotic process.

There was colour, sound, a beautiful place
And there were people
There was sunlight but no light on the way our
Inquiry programs would develop.

One evening, the group process decreed that
There should be an evening’s entertainment
In the form of a Symposium
After the oratorical style of Socrates et al.

I was asked to write and orate words on the topic,
Love.

The mood of the gathering during the orations was
very serious.

The piece was prepared with only that occasion in mind. However, my experiences of the process of this research project and its documentation lead me to feel that the concept of Agape, as described, holds the answer to many of our problems, whatever word we should choose to describe it.

“First Chaos came, and then broad-bosomed Earth
The everlasting seat of all that is, And Love.”

Hesiod
Written for a Symposium after Plato, Socrates et al.

The question was asked: "What is Love?"

My answer was thus:

To understand Love is to understand Life.

In my philosophy these are the elements of love:
There is the love of Knowledge and Enlightenment
This is like an eagle which soars to the craggy peaks
This is what drove Jason to search for the Golden Fleece.
It is the star which shoots from the sky to sea
It is the love of the Immortals.

There is the love between family members
It is like a warm fire in the cold winter
It is a haven from the noise and conflict of the daily transactions in the market place.
It is the love of the ewe for her new born lamb.

There is also Epithymis, the love of passion and desire.
This is like honey, sweet and addictive.
It is exclusive of other than the loved One
It is a deep lake in which one can drown
If Epithymis exists alone it is transient
The lips may be loving but the soul is unstirred.

Then, my good friends, there is Philia,
the love between friends,
In its perfection it has the power to overcome
The separateness
Of the human spirit.

Philia provides the harmony for the Song of Life
Against it the angry sea has no power
It is a posy, red-petalled poppies, snow-drops and violas
In the cave of the heart it is a fire of oaklogs beneath the cinders.

And above all is Agape, the love of creation which is the self-transcending element of Love
Agape is the warm cloak which draws together all other forms of love
And makes them Divine
It must be within to be without.

Hawkesbury January 1990

7
THE RAINBOW CARPET

This study began in a spirit of great enthusiasm and with the intention of working with others to enhance the language learning environment for those who had experienced or were experiencing difficulties due to factors which seemed to be outside their direct control. Included were those who had undergone forced migration due to national upheaval or persecution and are now permanent residents in Australia and a number of children who were included at the request of their mothers who felt in need of extra support and were keen to try new approaches with their children who were having difficulty keeping to their age level in language learning skills.

A proposal developed that, as the senses convey stimuli to the individual and to groups, through such means as sound and colour, which are communicated through vibratory bands, these means could be used as a support to learning. The idea being that a pleasant sensory accompaniment, such as music in the classroom, assists in the creation of a positive energy field, in a sense a rainbow carpet, which, while enhancing the learning environment, could also be accessible to the learner at other times through a memory sensory process. Underlying this proposal was the intention that the learners should feel a sense of belonging to the language community and the learning community as in a school, whether they be first or second language learners.

The members of the inquiry groups are detailed in Chart 1 and the following pages. They were teachers of adults learning English and their students, a number of school aged children and their mothers. There was also an input from school teachers of both primary and secondary students, and two sessions with university peers who participated in drawing workshops and reflected on their experiences. One young man of English-speaking background also participated on request, as he had had a head injury from being hit by a car as a child and was learning delayed as a result, as well as having communication and emotional problems.

An initial facet of this inquiry was the use of music during learning sessions and the inclusion within a learning program of some session of drawing to facilitate the language communication process. As the inquiry process proceeded the important consideration emerged that, although sensory input through the playing of music or the use of drawing might be beneficial, there appears to be a more profound influence from an extra subtle sense which influences and is influenced by, thinking. A hypothesis developed that this is operative within individuals and across groups and has a profound influence on the learning outcomes. This sense influences the motivation of the individual learner and the willingness of the group to admit new members to a speech community. This extra sense may be described as a series of vibratory fields, based in thinking and related to language. The inter-relation of these fields is influenced by the will of the individual, his/her immediate and past environments and the wider community.

The term ‘environments’ is defined here as involving the person’s internal environment (as an independent system), their field of memory and their educational, family, cultural, economic, religious and political environments to list some key influences. These environments influence thought and behaviour patterns, and interact with the will of the individual and significant groups. The term used in this paper to describe the interaction of these experiential fields is an
etheric.

The term etheric is used in a specific sense in this paper and was chosen as a working concept and term because, in my mind, the word suggested mythical links through the aether. I cannot recall where I first heard the term ‘aether’ but my concept was of an invisible matter which I had, previous to this inquiry and the subsequent reflection involved, regarded as being some part of the air, but acting as a transmitting medium. I did not perceive this concept of the aether as emanating from human emotions or thoughts although I had read Leadbeater’s (1927) book on the aura. The initial reason the term was chosen was because of the described personal experiences of individuals which appeared to be borne out within a classroom situation as well as among other life learning situations. After some discussion with my then supervisors I elected to retain the term. After this paper was written I found references in A.Besant’s and C.W. Leadbeater’s book Thought Forms (1925) to thought fields and thought forms.

The concept of the Zeitgeist has been found to be most relevant to this paper. This term has been known to me for a long time and it is also in the writing of Litvak and Senzee (1986). The Zeitgeist is a predominant world view within a group and a time frame which influences the thinking of increasingly larger numbers of people across ethersics until a critical mass is reached when the Zeitgeist may become (apparently) universal. The phenomenon can be recognised when considering the art and music of a given period, such as the Renaissance or the Baroque when the arts convey what is being thought and experienced and what is valued in the culture at a given time. It would seem that among other factors, a Zeitgeist can evolve as reaction against what has gone before. This has a special relevance for some people who have left their homelands as refugees, not necessarily choosing Australia as their destination. Although these people are grateful for the opportunity to begin a new life here it is not surprising that they may also retain a special love for the land that they left behind, which is so deeply symbolised in their native language. For some people it can be a tremendous challenge to relinquish the dominance of their first language even during the time span of their English class, yet the teachers working with students in this project considered that this was necessary if they were to become fluent in producing language at will. They needed to choose to become members of the English-speaking community, and in an ongoing way, develop and maintain their skills through practice. Within an educational system an example of a Zeitgeist is the adoption of a particular theory for teaching, for example, reading and writing. The speed with which a particular theory takes hold can be hastened through employment or promotion criteria as well as through specifications prescribed by educational funding bodies. Concepts related to this inquiry had grown over the years working as a teacher of English in High Schools and with adults in a variety of language learning contexts, as well as a short time with upper primary students. I have also taught religious studies and personal development courses for a number of years, the classes having included students from different religious backgrounds. I feel that these experiences increased my awareness of the need to be sensitive to individual differences and the significance of the links between opportunities for concept development and general language skills. This is of course relevant to children’s language growth and for second language learners, especially if they are learning the new language in a culture very different from that in their previous existence.
The context and culture in which the learning of the new language is taking place are also significant, as are also previous educational experiences, including literacy level in the first language (L1). My ongoing interest, as a teacher, has been to understand why some learners have difficulties in achieving goals that others in the same situation can readily achieve and I believe it is helpful to the learner if s/he has some understanding of their own perceptual processes, such as whether or not they find it easier to absorb information through visual or auditory processes. While there are many methods which offer insight and relief for learners with difficulties, and many are valuable, some are open to use by classroom teachers, while others are not. It is fair to say that for many parents the cost of extra-curricular help is a difficulty, as can also be travelling to a provider. This means that for many children or adults many intervention techniques are not available options. For teachers, there is also the need to conform to the guidelines within which they are working. This alters within educational organisations, between schools and learning centres. For example, a teacher may be familiar with varied approaches to assisting students but may be required to focus on the use of particular methods depending on the available resources or the philosophy of the school or organisation. A brief survey of job advertisements in the English language area for schools demonstrated that some schools do specify particular methods.

For the purpose of this study, as it applies to children, the emphasis was working with parents and in co-operation with teachers. Work with adults included migrant second language learners of English, living in Australia and overseas. The initial focus of the research phase was the possible benefit of music and drawing as facilitators of the communicative process, especially writing. In the last five years there have been discussions with people who have lived in Australia for varying periods of time, about their experiences of re-settlement and language learning. These discussions were on a voluntary basis.

Since this study began in 1989 there has been much more public discussion about migration and unemployment has become higher, leading to special training programs to try to build the skills of job seekers. High unemployment has been accompanied by lowering of morale of migrant language learners. Some have not worked in Australia or indeed at all, and some have had years of forced underactivity in refugee camps. Others have been unskilled employees in the Australian workforce for periods up to 20 years but became unemployed in a diminished job market. Within the sphere of adult language learning there can be requirements from the funding sources (which may be business or government) which are not always easily explained to, nor fully understood by all the learners.

There was a small input to this project from non-native English speakers who teach English in their own non-English speaking country. It was interesting to note that they also placed high priority on the culture and this included songs in English. A Japanese friend wrote that she had taken a job with a company well known as a producer of musical instruments. Her job was to teach English to children and the method, she said was “the same as for teaching music, with songs.”

With a tightening economy there has been a greater difficulty in obtaining money for special projects. The opinion was offered by several people that where a student learns can have
significant effects on outcomes due to school staff ratios, resources, physical environment and community attitudes. For example, in communities where children's schools are constantly vandalised, finances are being drained by the need to repair buildings and replenish equipment (including those donated by parents and other groups in the community). This limits and slows the building up of resources and an optimum learning environment. While some communities would appear to have a higher toleration for such behaviour, other communities (that is, other national groups, or other suburbs, for example) react strongly to such behaviour and try to curb it through parental control or school discipline, for example.

In the early phases of this research project the predominating world view of the teachers and students could be described as positive and optimistic, although there was an increasing concern about the environment. This concern still exists, and is more marked among people from some national groups, but unemployment is now a greater personal concern for all students. The migrant classes were held in outer western and in two suburbs of south-western Sydney, Villawood and Cabramatta. Over the period there also developed a greater concern, especially in the south-western area, but spreading across the broader community, about personal safety and safety of family members or property, which can affect the learning of numbers of adult migrant students. In many cases they feel worried about leaving their homes unoccupied, and many do not want their children to walk to and from school, but arrange to collect or accompany them. Women in particular are fearful of attending classes which finish late in the day (although, according to ongoing weekly news items in a local paper, violent acts involving theft occur at all times of the day and sometimes close to busy shopping areas.) People commented that they were concerned at the increasing audacity of the criminals and many people seemed to restrict their lives because of fear, which is apparently not unjustified. However, the growing fear is causing increasing numbers of residents to overcome deeply held reluctance and to report crimes to police. In Cabramatta, as in some other areas, there are community liaison officers who speak the languages which predominate in the area and there is a telephone line residents can call and leave a message in their own language should they prefer to do so. Over a period of years it was common for police representatives to visit classes or for groups of students to visit the police station to develop a greater trust and understanding. Many new residents in Australia have a fear of law enforcement representatives because of their past experiences during war or civil unrest or as refugees in other countries.

In the following chapters some of the issues and processes involved in language learning are explored, these issues having developed around the basic premises of teaching migrants the language needed to survive and with a work focus, and/or teaching within a broader framework which encourages the learners to want to become part of the new speech community and to feel they are able to make a valuable contribution to the Australian community. For the adult migrant students the teachers included a goal of raising students' awareness of the benefits to them of using English outside the essentials and particularly also to assist them make a connection with their first language skills through a non-language activity, drawing, followed by discussions about the experience in English. For some second language learners this connection is much more difficult than for others. A minimal educational background can be a factor as can also be coming from a refugee situation, as well as other more personal factors. In the case of the children the main issue seemed to be the extent to which a society values the
progress and development of the individual with a learning difficulty.

The need to balance required outcomes with economic output has become a key issue and this paper posits the view that it is necessary to aim for a balance between the two. In the case of some migrant language learners the approach taken may influence whether or not they choose to use English outside the classroom. Another aspect to this is that the learners feel able to relate to the English language in a way that enables them to express personal experiences and thoughts that they are able to ‘own’ English as a mode of personal expression.

When considering the issues involving non-achieving child learners I suggest that there is also a significant moment when the first language learner who has experienced difficulties in acquiring skills such as reading, writing or even the production of fluent oral communication, will choose to persist in their efforts or opt out. Teachers and parents spoke of a change in attitude from the enthusiastic efforts of the young child to the resentment of an adolescent whose hope has been destroyed by too many experiences of failure. The strength of personal hope and optimism of course varies with the individual and with the attitudes of their support networks. As an example, I remember working with a child who became physically ill when she tried to read. Her mother expressed great anxiety as the child exhibited signs of what is known as Dyslexia. I was teaching a group all of whose members had a history of under-achievement against their peers in year groups and chronological age at reading and writing. One of the most successful approaches at changing the children’s attitude to reading was found to be play-reading. The girl previously mentioned made remarkable progress and began to compete vigorously to read one of the parts, which she was soon able to do with reasonable fluency. Yet, if she was asked to read in another context she would lose her confidence. Over the year (Year 7) she began to read in other classroom situations, eventually even in the car on the way to a sporting activity. The other attitudinal factor was that of her mother, who needed to be encouraged to remove her (unspoken) pressure and let the girl begin to enjoy reading without being accountable for spelling, comprehension and fluency. Her attitude and confidence needed to change before her skills could.

It is crucial that for both adult migrant English learners and the children with reading/writing problems that they have access to opportunities for learning over a sufficiently extended period to maximise the internationalisation process. This need for encouragement and affirmation from the learning environment applies, I believe, to both groups in the early stages of learning, but possibly the early stages are more crucial for the adult learners who must learn within a very restricted time frame. I also believe that the most vulnerable group are those who have had little or no education in their first language and hence little experience of former learning and sometimes they are unfamiliar with keeping to routines governed by the clock and the calendar because their previous lives were in rural settings which functioned more closely to the rhythms and vagaries of nature, as with the weather. When a person reaches a more advanced level of learning a new language, affirmation is gained through their successes and they develop a momentum which enables them to access new sources of learning. However, until this point is reached they depend very much on external encouragement and acknowledgement of achievements by peers and the teacher. As referred to later, some learners also have a negative influence from family members who resent being left out of the new learning environment or
fear that the person will change too much and leave their old culture behind, thus altering the dynamics of family relationships.

On the following pages is an outline of the methodology, the learning communities and introduction to the processes used in the research project with more detail in following chapters. The thesis begins by establishing the context for the study and outlining the methodological framework used and includes details of the learning communities. Chapter 2 considers factors related to both the backgrounds and circumstances of the English language learners and factors, internal to the learners, related to things such as motivation, emotional states and cognitive structures. There are also references to theories of significant factors influencing particular adult learners and to some of the issues involved in disseminating the information to a target group which includes migrants and semi- or illiterate adults. There is an introduction to the concept of the energy fields created by thoughts, to be developed further in Chapter 5. Chapter 2 concludes with a personal experience account written by a young refugee.

The contextual emphasis continues in Chapter 3 where factors related to the wider Australian culture which impact upon the English language learning of migrant people are considered. Details of the participants in the study include references to a small number of children who are of English speaking background but not achieving to their age level in language skills, and who were included because it was hoped they might gain some benefits. There is a reference to visual perceptual problems and colour and an account of the responses of the learners when music was used in the classroom.

Chapter 4 is a central chapter introducing the concept of Life Fields and demonstrates how aspects of these individual fields impact upon the language learning ability. There is a discussion on some of the factors affecting the health of the physical field and references to theories regarding the processes operative in the thought and emotional fields.

Chapter 5 builds upon the concept of Life Fields and develops the related concept of Etherics. Etherics, unlike Life Fields, are not individually based but result from the interactive energies of thought, language and the will to build a collective forcefield which also influences the capacity for language learning. This chapter also extends to a consideration of the links between etherics and the memory process. One aspect of an individual’s Life Field is their Thought Field or that energy field created by their forms of thought. There is a consideration of the connections developed between the individual Thought Field and the collective etheric energy fields and some of the influences these have on learning language and developing competency in its usage. Memory, both as part of the Thought Field and as part of the collective networks of which the individual is a member, such as in race memory, is another important factor in the learning of language, and this is, therefore, the other focus of this chapter.

In Chapter 6 there is an exploration of the implications of the etheric networks through their ongoing influences on attitudes and behaviour, for the individual and for groups. This chapter is a synthesis of the concepts of Life Fields, Thought Fields and Etherics. It represents the ideal
field or Agape, the universal energy field in which learning may take place most effectively, and is a medium through which life-giving energies may be transmitted.

The individual's responses to internal and external environments, throughout life, influence the growth process of the Spiritual Field which is discussed in Chapter 7. A way of perceiving this field is in terms of the development of soul consciousness and the opportunity to move from the reality of the present world to that of Agape which provides a nurturing context for personal growth and evolution. Broadening this perspective to interpersonal connections there is a discussion on the development of a zeitgeist, a prevailing thought which is espoused by a group and the possible consequences for those who may be a focus.

The ideal learning field of Agape is contrasted in Chapter 8 with the majority of learning situations and their connected influences. Entering the energy field of a new etheric network and disconnecting with an etheric network through choice, need or rejection, usually involves a chaotic process for the individual, even though it may not necessarily be an unpleasant chaotic process. In this chapter there is also reference to difficulties faced in balancing family responsibilities such as childcare with earning a living and the special challenges facing poor migrants who have no relatives in Australia.

The main ideas of the thesis have been presented in the foregoing chapters. In Chapter 9, however, there is some integration on all of these ideas through a focus on a particular group, women, who were involved in the inquiry process and their concerns within particular contexts.

Chapter 10 presents some major points which concerned people involved in discussions during the study and which have since become very significant issues debated within the broader community. Finally, Chapter 11 reflects on some of the experiences of the inquiry process and attitudinal changes which have been experienced both personally and within a broader context. This chapter also includes some examples of adult students written comments about their experiences, including that of learning a new language. Chapter note references may be found following the final chapter.