

**'A Study of the Adult Learning Experiences of Peruvian
Single Women who Migrated to Australia in the late
1960s and early 1970s.'**

Submitted by

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Abstract

This thesis constitutes a study of the migration, settlement and adult learning experiences of single Peruvian women who migrated to Australia between the 1960s and 1970s. As relevant background, matters related to the migration of women to Australia generally throughout this country's modern history are also examined. This study aims to contribute to the knowledge of history and the knowledge of adult education. The specific goal is to highlight the migration and settlement learning experiences of single Peruvian women as well as exploring aspects of the adult learning strategies that they have put in place in the course of their new life structure in Australia.

The participants' decisions to migrate cannot be seen in isolation but rather as resulting from all or some of their life experiences leading to that decision and their own places in society. Accordingly this research recognises the importance of analysing the participants' narratives of their lives prior to that point and the period since and by so doing, acknowledge the basis of many of the decisions of early adulthood which set each of them on the path to change and learning.

The stories of six Peruvian women, who migrated to Australia in the specified period, are presented using in-depth interviews in an unstructured format. Analysed from a feminist theory perspective, their narratives are examined as discursive productions which provide valuable insights into the social order of society and how each person found meaning within the discourses available to them. Additionally interviews were conducted with a number of immigration officers in Australia. Being centred upon the experiences of the women the thesis has been influenced by the ideas of several writers and thinkers on the subject including (but not limited to) John Dewey a 20th century adult education philosopher and his concept of 'lifelong learning', Jack Mezirow and his work on learning as 'transformative and emancipatory' and Jurgen Habermas' 'categories of enquiry'.

Acknowledgements

Writing this thesis has been a fulfilling and satisfying exploration of the promise I made to myself in the early 1970s to research and write about the migration experiences of Peruvian women.

The work of this thesis has been possible only by the enthusiasm, active involvement and readiness of the participant women involved in this research of opening their lives to me and by sharing the joy, excitement and sometimes profound sadness that their experiences contained. I am grateful to these six women whose recounts have confirmed my own experiences and belief that life does not happen to us but that we make it happen and that reality is not separate from us, that we are creating our reality every moment of our existence. I am also indebted to the two former Immigration officers who, by sharing their work experience with me, provided a wider context of understanding of the experiences of the Peruvian women.

My gratitude and thanks to two people who have helped me during my own journey of learning cannot be adequately expressed. I have been privileged to have Dr Peter Hancock as my supervisor. I could not have asked for a better person, I have found in him all that one would want as student. He has been a source of knowledge - critically constructive in his feed back, very sensitive and emotionally supportive and an authentic person whose words of wisdom made me reflect and regain strength at times when I became disconcerted.

My 'companero' William Preece who has given me an enormous amount of patient and practical support as well as offering me his dedication and unlimited time to listen to my ideas and to offer his own valuable thoughts. I am grateful for his sustaining affection, caring and goodwill during the time of consuming involvement in my research and writing.

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This thesis is dedicated to the spirit of my mother.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	Page 1
 PART ONE – MIGRATION OF WOMEN TO AUSTRALIA	 2
Chapter 1	3
Issues of Migration of Women to Australia	
Gender, Ethnicity and Class	
Consumption and Reproduction/production and Labour	
 PART TWO - MIGRATION OF WOMEN FROM PERU. PERU HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	 12
 Chapter 2	 13
Migration of Peruvian women to Australia	
Recruitment and Selection	
Assistance and Resources	
Australian Catholic Immigration Services	
 Chapter 3	 17
Peru - Political and socio-economic background 1960 – 1970	
General Overview	
Gender and Status of Women	
 PART THREE – METHODOLOGY	 21
 Chapter 4	 22
Research Methodology	
 PART FOUR - LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF PERUVIAN SINGLE WOMEN – CASE STUDY	 37
 Chapter 5	 38
Theoretical Perspectives	
John Dewey	
Jurgan Habermas	
Jack Mezirow	
 Chapter 6	 43
An Examination of the Adult Learning Experiences of Six Peruvian Women who Migrated to Australia.	
Discourse Analysis	
 Chapter 7	 50
Case Studies Introduction	
Carlota	51
Rosita	68

	Page
Nelly	82
Lourdes	99
Marisol	116
Delia	139
 PART FIVE – CONCLUSION	 165
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 188
 APPENDICES	 202
I List of Participants	203
II Ethics Approval	204
III Initial Contact Letter	207
IV Participant information Sheet	208
V Questionnaire	212
VI Participant Consent Form	214
 LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	 216

Introduction

Between 1965 and 1975 there was a significant migration of young single Peruvian women to Australia as a result of a government Assisted Immigration policy. Whilst the number of persons involved in this group may not be significant in terms of Australia's overall population, the particular nature and characteristics of this policy and process should, I believe be documented as part of Australia's migration history and in particular the history of the migration of Catholic women to this country.

Unfortunately very little has been written on this specific subject but some of that which has been documented as historical fact I believe to be superficial and in need of investigation. I refer specifically to a half page mention of Peruvian settlers in Australia in the Australian People Encyclopedia in which the writer makes passing reference to an allegation that the Australian government was actively recruiting young single Peruvian women '....possibly even for the purpose of prostitution' (James Jupp 1988:733).

As a Peruvian born Australian citizen who migrated to Australia as part of the above-mentioned group, I am aware of the settlement difficulties, needs, failures and successes of many of those single women who were encouraged to come to Australia at that time. Additionally, as one of the women concerned I am very much aware of some of the factors that influenced the women and their parents to make the decisions for the young women to migrate to Australia.

I present the findings of a study of the experiences of that particular migrant group and by doing so confer due recognition to the role and contribution of single women to Australia throughout its migration history. This study will further contribute to the content of history and adult education. A specific goal of this research is to explore aspects of learning strategies that these women may have put in place in their learning to live a new life in Australia.

PART ONE

MIGRATION OF WOMEN TO AUSTRALIA

Chapter 1

Issues of Migration of Women to Australia

Introduction

This chapter considers the migration of women to Australia following the establishment of the first penal colony in 1788. This means that Koori and Murri and Torres Strait Islander women of Australia will not be referred to except to say that they were appallingly treated and exploited in the early colonial days and their exploitation and maltreatment still continues today in many respects.

It is necessary to start this exercise at the early colonial or penal colony period because the existing disparity between the numbers of men and women in those first two or three decades, later exacerbated by the gold rush and a generally male-weighted influx of new settlers, laid the basis for an essential feature of subsequent immigration policies. That feature was the attempt to achieve a balance between the numbers of men and women in the colonial community.

In dealing with women's migration to Australia it is important to address the issue of their status both before and after their arrival in this country, particularly from the perspective of those governments seeking the migration of the women. The status of women in Australian society results from a complex series of influences and interacting circumstances such as class, culture, religion, race and education amongst others. It is part of the overall background of this study to look at the particular roles and lives of women migrants to Australia over this country's modern history since colonisation.

In examining that historical background it is expected that patterns of social, political, educational and industrial behaviour that have affected the position of women who have migrated to Australia will become evident. Such patterns, as they emerge, may be helpful in creating a clearer picture of the situation

faced by the women involved in this particular study. Of course the total role of women in society generally, with all the variations that occur across the myriad of cultural and social settings, will also be a significant part of that picture. On the issue of governments' motivations in seeking migrant women, some of the literature (Collins 1988) (Birrell and Birrell 1981) seems to suggest that they fall in one or two categories - consumption/social reproduction and/or production (cheap labour). It will be part of this paper to examine such propositions.

Women Migrants to Australia

In the early 1830s women from the United Kingdom were brought to Australia in an attempt to correct a serious imbalance of population. The ratio of men to women in the colonies averaged around 6:1 at the time (Encel, MacKenzie, Tebbut 1974:27). These, mostly illiterate, women were drawn from the lower socio-economic sectors of UK society and were quite similar in social status to the convict women who had earlier been brought to the country except for the fact that many of the later arrivals came from rural backgrounds and may have been agricultural workers or domestics whereas the bulk of the convicts had come from larger, usually industrial, cities (Jupp, 1988:89). The status of the majority of these later arrivals became even more demeaned as a result of their induction to the 'Australia' of the early to mid 1800s. Not only had they endured appalling conditions during the trip to Australia but there were no services to assist them on their arrival and in most cases they had little or no money and no family support or contact. So it was that many of these women led what can only be described as depraved almost sub-human existences, many living on the streets. Some were 'lucky' enough to find employment as domestics or other similar lowly occupations (Martin in Bottomley 1984:109).

In the 1840s to 1920s period a number of private schemes were in place to assist the recruitment, travel and settlement of single women migrants to Australia from the United Kingdom. These started with the work of Caroline Chisolm. Later, other private organisations in the UK such as the Society for Promoting Employment of Women and the Female Middle Class Emigration Society continued the practice of giving loans to young women to enable them

to migrate to the Australian colonies. Even later, and moving into the 20th century more, essentially middle-class (again private), organisations came into being for the purpose of assisting young female migrants. These included the Girls Friendly Society, the YWCA and the British Women's Emigration Association for Befriending Young Servants (Jupp 1988:89-90). As a result of many years of the assistance schemes that brought these women to the Australian colonies, women generally in this country were perceived even more as second or third class citizens than they had been in their country of origin. This was largely because they were, for the most part, non-educated, poor and accordingly exploitable and of course they were exploited for all of those reasons. The status of most women in Australia around the 1880s was almost certainly at the lowest level in the modern history of this country.

Barbara Falk (1975:286) discusses some of the ideas of Millet, Encel and Martin on the matter of the status of women in society generally. She refers to Kate Millet's position that the question of gender is more fundamental than class when considering human beings in society and that whatever the class of her birth and her education the female has fewer class associations than the male. Relating this to the issue of the women of the Australian colonies in the 1800s, there is little doubt that the great majority of women in Australia were of a low class category and it is fairly obvious that, especially in the case of those women who were recruited from the 1830s through to the 1870s, they were sought, and were here, solely because they were women.

Encel (in Falk 1975:286) takes the position that class is the dominating feature in society, over-riding gender. He asserts, from a Marxist perspective, that if the class problem were to be solved then the basis would exist for the removal of the gender discrimination. Falk suggests that there is no single approach that seems to give a satisfactory explanation but it seems that all are aspects of the whole. That 'whole' would appear to be based upon the discriminatory treatment, in society, between some members of that society as against others by those in positions of power and of course the refusal to share that power. The discrimination may indeed occur on the grounds of

gender as Kate Millet strongly suggests. Discrimination and abuse of power have always been central and essential elements of matters of class.

Martin maintains that ethnic/cultural differences in any society almost inevitably are accompanied by '...some degree of inequality.' (Martin 1972:1) and this is relevant to the examination of the status of women who have migrated to Australia particularly when we deal with the post second world war period. One issue lightly touched upon by Martin (in Grieve and Burns 1980:243) when discussing ethnicity and gender is the question of what the general perception of ethnicity is and whether perceptions of ethnicity, particularly in relation to women, may be distorted by gender dominance in the cultural make-up and history of the person concerned. For example, by accepting that it is 'normal' for a Greek or Italian woman to expect to, in a marriage, stay at home and raise the children as her primary function in life, because that is 'part of the culture of her homeland' is to pronounce a clearly discriminatory situation as being acceptable. Or to say that, in a Greek family, because it is 'traditional' for the parents - particularly the father - to choose the future husband of a daughter, that such a practice should not be criticised is also to accept the unacceptable.

The gender dominance that has occurred historically throughout most countries of the world and pervading all aspects of life must be analysed for what it is, not hidden behind, or given respect by being included as part of, some 'cultural quality'.

'If ethnicity is equated with tradition, might not the ethnicity model be no more than a refinement of the universal male? or a debate about male ranking?' (Martin in Grieve & Burns 1986:243)

Returning to the attitudes of the colonial governments in the 1830s to 1880s period in regard to the importation of women for either the dual purpose of production/consumption and biological reproduction or simply for the latter, it is worthwhile to examine whether these aspects of migration policy have been repeated subsequently in Australia's migration history.

The imbalance of the population had started with the fact that, of all the convicts sent to the eastern Australian colonies, only 16% were women (Encel, MacKenzie, Tebbut 1974:27). This had been followed by the influx of many single men particularly during the 'gold rush' days and so it was not unusual to find ratios between 6:1 and 30:1 in the colonies depending upon the region. In these circumstances it may appear to be logical for a society - especially one as isolated as Australia was at the time - to seek to achieve some sort of societal balance as far as the ratio of women to men was concerned. It is in the methods used to achieve or attempt to achieve that balance where the problems may arise and it seems that, in the Australian case from the early 1800s right up to the 1970s, the methodology may have been open to question. One of the basic issues would appear to be related to an ongoing discriminatory perception of women in society. It was the norm in the 1850s (and largely still is) that women occupied secondary status in society because of their dependency upon men and male dominated institutions and most women came to the colonies either as wives, to become wives or to become domestic servants in patriarchal homes or institutions (Jupp 1991:16-17). The assisted migration schemes for women continued between the United Kingdom and Australian colonial and other governments right up to the 1920s and the majority of the women involved were described as 'domestic servants' (Jupp 1988:89).

The constant threads running through the history of single women's immigration to Australia have been; misrepresentation of the real reasons for the invitation to migrate to this country (those being procreation, consumption and cheap labour) and unfulfilled undertakings related to aspects of travel, potential employment on arrival and support services. Much has been written of the racist immigration policies of colonial, State and Commonwealth governments in Australia. These policies have resulted largely because of Australia's perception of itself as an outpost of 'Mother England'. For the most part of Australia's history all governments have adopted highly discriminatory immigration policies and actively promoted a national identity based upon white, Anglo-Celtic racial purity. The serious danger that such an historical

preoccupation presents is that there may exist forever in Australian society an undercurrent of bigotry against all of those Australians who have, as their ethnic background, anything other than Anglo-Celtic. Whilst the 'White Australia' policy was supposed to have ended in the early 1970s it is evident that elements of racial selectivity still exist to this day in the application of immigration policy in this country and even if this were argued not to be so the 'undercurrent of bigotry' referred to above will continue for decades to justify or allow discriminatory treatment of migrants of non-Anglo background, particularly poorer and women migrants because of the forces of gender and race discrimination acting in combination. In the decade following the second world war, immigration policy seemed to be directed to both population growth and the supply of labour for industry which was embarking upon a growth cycle.

The Labor government of 1945 established the Immigration Department which initiated what Jupp (1966:7) described as the 'longest phase in Australian planned immigration since convict settlement.' The numerous reasons for such extensive immigration that was to follow included the desire for population growth related to concern over a continuing decline in birth rates (which had been occurring for nearly 50 years), the perception that this country's security was vulnerable and shortages of labour in some industries such as the housing construction industry. The first post war Liberal-Country Party government of 1949 gave rather more emphasis to the 'population building for the country's security' aspect in their pronouncements on immigration policy with the then Minister for Immigration announcing a plan to take in 200,000 settlers in 1950 and to maintain that rate throughout the 1950s (Australian Citizenship Convention, Digest 1952:8).

It is conceivable that the issues of employment relating to many of those proposed migrants also occupied the minds of members of the government and the bureaucracy of the day from time to time. To accept that any government approached such a monumental proposition with a very narrow 'populate or perish' attitude as the only guideline would appear to be verging

on the absurd as would be the idea that employment and industrial growth were the sole driving forces behind immigration policy.

It seems that some commentators on these matters expect observers to take a position supporting one or other of those positions (Martin 1984:10) when it seems to be fairly obvious that a combination of all the factors made up the total thinking of immigration policy of the post war period. Indeed the change of government in 1949 would almost ensure a mix of attitudes emerging from both politicians and bureaucrats in the decade from 1945 to 1955. The recession in the latter part of that period certainly had its effect upon the 200,000 migrants per annum plan reducing the intake to approximately 80,000 in 1952.

Martin (in Bottomley 1984:110-111), in referring to the debate between Collins and Birrell and Birrell, suggests that Collins' position is that immigration policy was dominated by consideration of production and labour factors and that he was not giving due regard to the consumption /social reproduction aspects of the issue. She further says that Birrell and Birrell lent too much weight to the population growth (consumption/social reproduction) proposition as being the major feature of immigration thinking of the period and asserts that both Collins' and Birrell and Birrell's positions tend to accept the position of women migrants as being merely a sub-class of men rather than a class of their own. She makes the point that in her view it was a central element of migration policy that production is regarded as male and consumption/social reproduction is female and that this 'mind-set' has been a major influence on the migration of women to this country.

Even though the majority of women arriving in Australia as migrants from 1945 onwards were dependent wives, daughters, mothers or sisters, their roles were similar to those of the women who had been recruited by the colonies' agents a century before and that was to contribute to population growth and male/female balance. The post war governments continued to express the view (internally) that unless appropriate numbers of females of marriageable age were added to the population, population growth would not

occur (Immigration Department - internal report 1952 in Birrell & Birrell 1981:53). Even as late as 1970 the Immigration Advisory Council, in a report to government referring to the imbalance of sexes, advocated single female labour immigration in the context of those women being part of a marriage market for single male workers in this country (Birrell & Birrell, 1981:54).

Despite the quite dramatic change in Australia's migration intake from the early 1950s on to the early 70s in terms of the shift of the source countries of migrants from the United Kingdom (always the preferred source) and Northern Europe to Southern Europe, Middle East, Latin America and even Asian countries the emphasis upon cheap labour and population growth remained as central elements (Collins 1988:24-25). The reality for a very high proportion of male workers from these countries was and is that they are employed for the most part in low skill, low paid occupations and this has the effect of forcing their spouses to supplement the family income by taking any work that is available. This usually means the most menial blue-collar positions, often in the clothing and textile and other manufacturing industries. It is worth noting that women's wages remained significantly lower (in the majority of industrial awards ie: by legal decisions) than men's even up to the 1980s (and in some cases even up to the present). It is the case that married, non-English speaking background women comprise a higher proportion of these positions than Australian born women in those industries.

'In the clothing and footwear industry, by 1971, 51.9% of the predominantly female workforce were born overseas'. (Birrell and Birrell 1981:63)

Conclusions

There have been some recurring themes in Australia's history of women's migration. The exploitation of women on the basis of their gender, because of their socio-economic circumstances and the perceived necessity to use them to cater to the needs of the excessive number of single men in this country throughout its history since the convict days, forms one of the most dominant of those themes. This exploitation became known by the more 'acceptable' description of 'population growth' in later years. Another obvious and ongoing

characteristic of that migration history is the exploitation of women for cheap labour, initially as 'domestics' and later as menial factory workers and 'out-workers'.

The pattern of the 'ideal women migrant seems to have been repeated. She was to be between 18 and 35 years old (marriageable age), fertile (that is able to make a contribution to population growth), fair skinned and fair haired if possible (to maintain the 'racial purity' which so dominated immigration policy in Australia's history and will probably have continued effects for many years to come), physically sound (in order to be able to work if necessary as well as raising children) and of moral character beyond reproach (Martin in Bottomley 1984:109) (Encel, MacKenzie & Tebbutt 1974:28) (Jupp 1988:89).

PART TWO

MIGRATION OF WOMEN FROM PERU – PERU HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Chapter 2

Migration of Peruvian Women to Australia

Introduction

In the 1960s and 1970s in Australia, a government immigration policy, which offered significant assistance to migrants, led to the migration of numbers of young single Peruvian women to Australia. This researcher believes that the nature and ramifications of this policy and the processes involved should, particularly in respect of the history of the migration of single women to this country, be documented as part of Australia's migration history.

To understand the migration experiences of many of the young single Peruvian women including their settlement difficulties, needs, failures and successes, it is important to look at the factors that directly or indirectly encouraged them to leave their country and to come to Australia at that time. These factors need to be examined from the point of view their country of birth Peru, and the host country Australia. On one hand there was the Australian government interest for the recruitment of single women and the promise of free accommodation, assisted passage, free English language classes on arrival in Australia and recognition of educational and other qualifications (Lourdes - Interview 2, Pamela – Interview 1). On the other hand more and more people in Peru were witnessing a decline in government stability and a paucity of democratic solutions to problems affecting families and individuals at the time. Many drastic changes began shaking the foundations of that society's roots so, with an uncertain view of the future people began to mobilise themselves to travel to other countries in search of a better future. Many young women began feeling the necessity for change and to search for better opportunities as the choices available to them in Peru were not longer acceptable to them. "The search was for self-reliance." (Marisol – Interview 3)

Following is a brief account of the Australian migration process involving the

recruitment of single Peruvian women as well as a short overview of the socio-political and economic background of Peru including an examination of the status of Peruvian women in the period prior to 1970s and the role of gender in that society to the extent of its positioning of the participants of this research in the socio-economic climate of the time.

Recruitment and Selection

There was a consistent pattern in the way that women and their roles were perceived by the Australian government. This pattern was reflected in the selection criteria used in the recruitment of Peruvian single women migrants. The criteria included age; under 35 years, marital status; single and education status; some type of qualifications, either a University degree or a Diploma in a practical vocational course such secretarial, typist, clerical, nurse or teacher (Margaret – Interview 1).

Recruitment was publicly promoted. “I remember other girls applying because they saw advertisements in the newspaper offering wonderful things, including assisted passage.” (Marisol – Interview 3). The Australian government, through its immigration policy, set out to overcome the imbalance (dominance of males) that existed in the Australian population by introducing and extending recruitment of single women from Latin America – particularly from Peru (Margaret – Interview 1). “It was thought that these women were ideal because they were young, well educated, from good family backgrounds but, most of all, Catholics”. (ibid)

Assistance and Resources

The government provided federal grants for community organisations involved with the settlement of migrants (Foster and Stockley 1984: 30). As a result of these grants community organisations such as the Salvation Army and the Young Women’s Christian Association were involved in the provision of hostel accommodation to these young Peruvian women (Pamela – Interview 1). “These hostels were the first image of Australia for these girls...some women were very unhappy with the food and with the restrictions imposed by these institutions and stayed there only for short periods of time. Other women

especially the ones who went to YWCA hostel stayed much longer. The fact that the YWCA was close to the city and the Spanish Club helped them to stay longer". (ibid).

Many banks had extended their services by opening migrant service processes with the aim of encouraging migrants to open accounts with them. "The banks' officers, who were bilingual, were very good. They used to go to the YWCA hostel to introduce the girls to the bank facilities but also to provide them with English classes." (Margaret – Interview 1).

The Australian Catholic Immigration Service

In 1947 the Federal Catholic Immigration Committee and Secretariat was set up. "...to attend to all matters concerning Catholic immigration and settlement." (Migration Action 1980: Vol IV:17). The Catholic Church and other churches were actively involved with the migration and settlement of migrants in general and single women in particular. The churches developed structures within their bureaucratic systems to deal specifically with migrants and their problems. "The welfare role of the churches was greatly stimulated by official immigration policy". (Foster and Stockley 1984:34).

One of the key factors involved in the migration of young single Peruvian women was the involvement of the Catholic Church in advancing finance to the young women, the preparation of travel arrangements for them to migrate to Australia and the assurance that representatives of the Catholic Church would provide support and assistance on their arrival in this country (Marisol - Interview 3, Pamela – Interview 1, Margaret – Interview 1).

"The Australian Government paid 75% of my airfare to come to Australia.... As I did not have the rest of the money, the Embassy suggested I contact the Australian Catholic immigration Office in Lima. They paid the difference but I signed a document, I would imagine a contract, which said that I had to repay them in the Sydney Office as soon as I started work, which I did." (Marisol - Interview 1) "They told me that accommodation, English classes and a job were going to be given to me." (Nelly – Interview 1).

"They promised these young women wonderful things that they couldn't fulfil. The accommodation was in a Hostel. One of them was not suitable because it was not appropriate for them. They felt very lonely." (Margaret – Interview 1). "There was a long waiting list for the English classes and without English these girls found the situation very difficult." (Pamela – Interview 1) "They were placed almost immediately in factory jobs and though they didn't speak the language the nature of the job did not require them to speak or they would be placed with someone who spoke the same language. We encouraged these girls to work in houses with families that could help them with the English language. The families had young children and we thought that would be good for the girls that whilst they worked they could learn the language through the children." (Margaret – Interview 1).

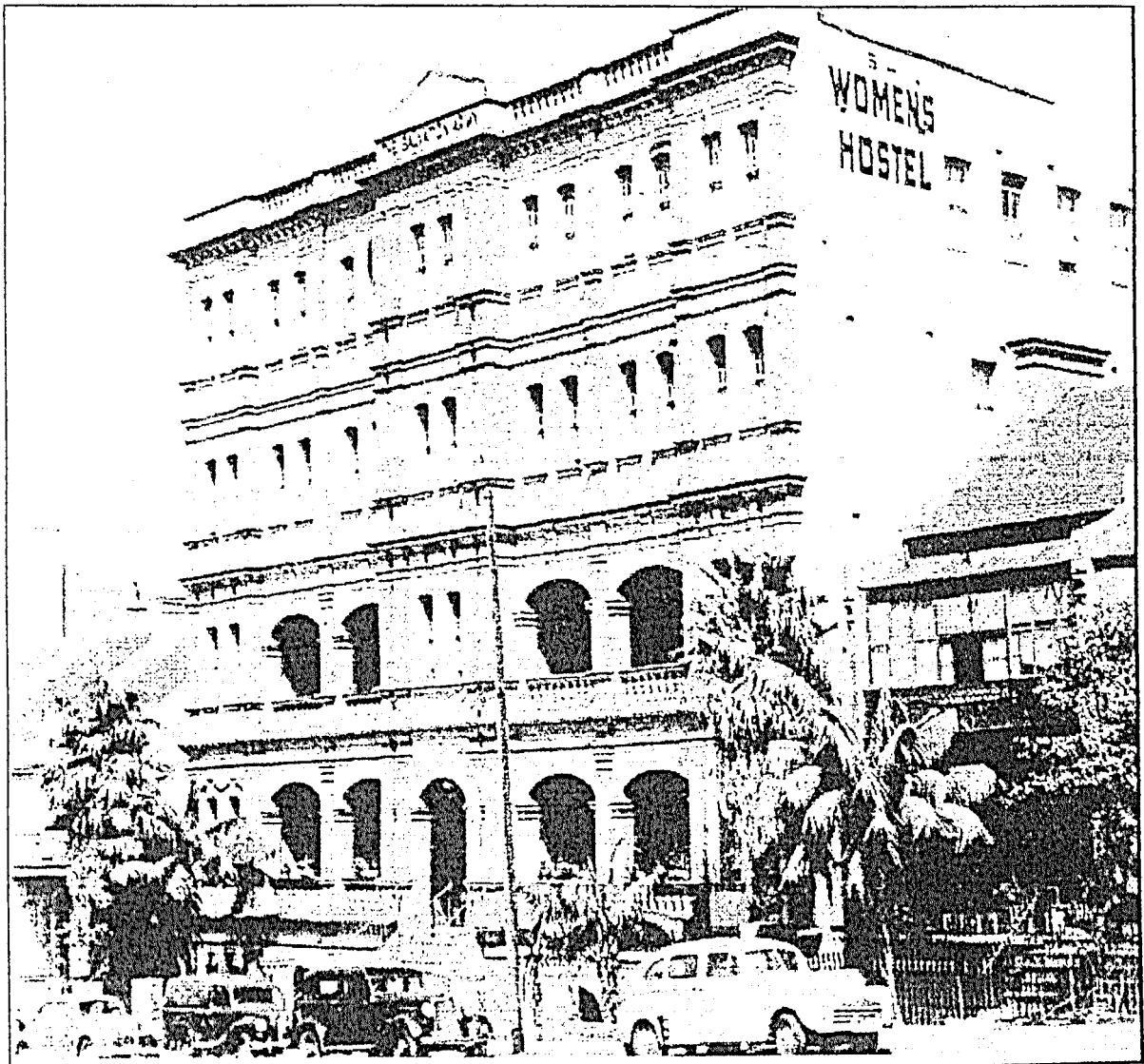
The Catholic Church played in an important role in influencing Peruvian families' decisions to allow the young daughters' emigration to Australia. "My parents will blindly trust the church representatives so in a way it was a bit of a comfort for my parents." (Rosita – Interview 1). In Sydney, officers from the Australian Catholic Immigration office were involved in placing women in Catholic family homes to work as domestics until they learned English. "They thought that it was the best for them to be protected from any outside influence that could endanger their well-being." (Marisol – Interview 3).

Figure-1

The contract required by the Australian government to be signed by the single Peruvian women migrants in order to qualify for assisted passage to Australia.

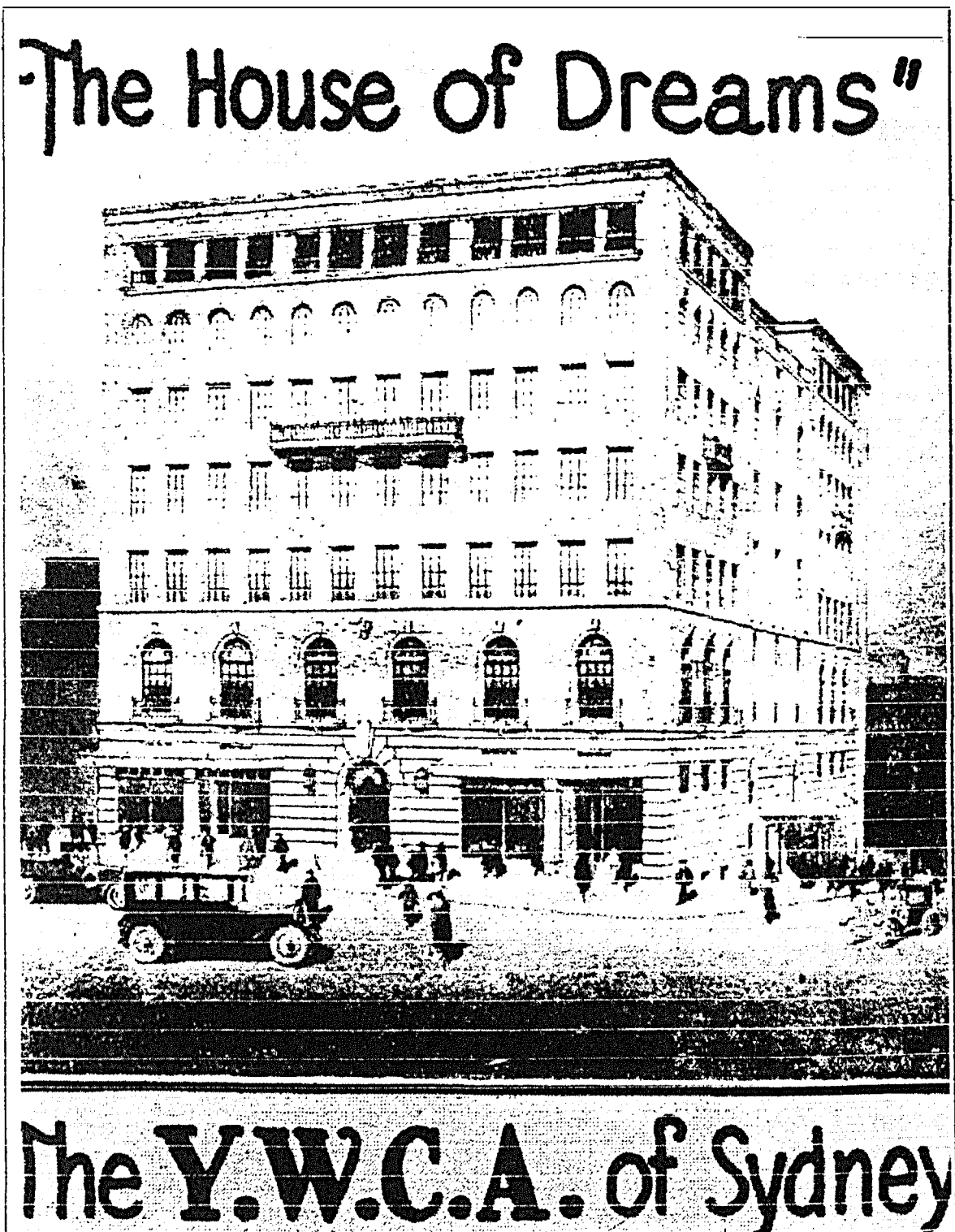
COMPROMISO	FORM OF UNDERTAKING
<p>A suscribir por los emigrantes seleccionados para traslado a Australia bajo el Programa Especial de Ayuda Económica.</p> <p>El que suscribe Name Covered</p> <p>Domiciliado en LIMA-PERU</p> <p>considerando que el Gobierno del Commonwealth de Australia me ha otorgado una contribución para solventar parte de los gastos de pasaje a Australia para mí y mi familia, de acuerdo con las previsiones del Programa Especial de Ayuda Económica. Por el presente me comprometo a cumplir con las siguientes condiciones que especifica ese programa:</p> <p><u>Primero:</u> Por ningún motivo, cualquiera fuera partiré de Australia antes de cumplir una permanencia de dos años consecutivos a partir de la fecha de mi arribo, a menos que haya abonado previamente al Gobierno del Commonwealth de Australia un importe igual al que me fuera otorgado en concepto de contribución para los gastos de pasaje a Australia, o salvo que, por razones especiales o humanitarias que se presentaran el Gobierno del Commonwealth de Australia resuelva prescindir del cumplimiento de este requisito de acuerdo con sus facultades absolutas.</p> <p><u>Segundo:</u> Por ningún motivo, cualquiera fuera partira de Australia ningún miembro de mi familia previo al cumplimiento de una permanencia de dos años consecutivos a partir de la fecha de su arribo, a menos que haya abonado al Gobierno del Commonwealth de Australia, en forma previa, un importe igual al que me fuera otorgado en concepto de contribución al costo de su o de sus pasajes a Australia, y salvo que, por razones especiales o humanitarias que se presentaran, el Gobierno del Commonwealth de Australia resuelva prescindir del cumplimiento de este requisito de acuerdo con sus facultades absolutas.</p> <p><u>Tercero:</u> Que durante mi estadía en Australia me dedicaré con empeño a aprender el idioma inglés y que concurriré con regularidad a las clases nocturnas más cercanas habilitadas por el Gobierno del Commonwealth de Australia para impartir enseñanza de dicho idioma al inmigrante.</p>	<p>to be signed by migrants selected under the Special Passage Assistance Programme.</p> <p>I of</p> <p>in consideration of the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia having agreed to make a free grant towards my and my family's passage costs to Australia do hereby covenant with the Commonwealth of Australia in the manner following:</p> <p><u>First:</u> that I shall not leave Australia within two years of my arrival for any reasons whatsoever unless I have first repaid to the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia a sum equal to the amount that was granted to me by the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia towards the cost of my passage to Australia or unless in case of special or compassionate reasons arising the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia shall in its absolute discretion, have waived this requirement.</p> <p><u>Second:</u> that a member of my family shall not leave Australia within two years of his or her arrival for any reason whatsoever, unless I have first repaid to the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia a sum equal to the amount that was granted by the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia or unless in case of special or compassionate reasons arising the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia shall, in its absolute discretion, have waived this requirement.</p> <p><u>Third:</u> that while I remain in Australia, I will make every endeavour to learn the English language, and will attend regularly the nearest free night class made available by the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia for the purpose of providing migrants with instruction in the English language.</p>
<p>Fecha: 15/1/71</p> <p>Firma: Name Covered</p> <p>Testigo: [Signature]</p>	<p>Dated this 15th day of January..... nineteen hundred and seventy one.....</p> <p>Signed:</p> <p>Witness:</p>

Figure 2(a)



The Salvation Army Hostel in Darlinghurst, Sydney

Figure 2(b)



The Young Women's Christian Association Hostel in Liverpool Street, Sydney

Figure 3



Immigration Minister Phillip Lynch at the signing of accommodation agreements for single migrant women in Sydney

Figure 4



Single migrant women being taken by Immigration Department officers to the country to work in selected homes

Chapter 3

Peru: Political and Socio-economic Background, 1960-1970

General Overview

The socio-political and economic developments in Peru in the mid-1960s, for the first time in Peruvian modern history, caused significant emigration of Peruvian citizens to other countries (Lourdes – Interview 1). The situation was an important factor in creating an atmosphere conducive to the emigration of these young women and the reluctant acceptance of such a proposition by their parents.

The 1960s saw drastic changes in Peru as a result of the population's long standing dissatisfaction with government. 'No nation of the Western hemisphere experienced such dramatic change in so short period of time...' (Werlich 1978). In the 1950s, political power, wealth and all social, educational and cultural advantages were concentrated in the hands of a few families, known to Peruvians as 'the oligarchy'. This group was criticised for having adopted an education system at variance with the needs of individuals and of society.

By the 1960s Peru was in the throes of a political, economic, social and economic crisis. From the economic point of view inflation was rising and deteriorating standards of living were predominant (Lopez in UNESCO 1989:50). The combined effect of unemployment, under-employment and the overwhelming migration of peasants and indigenous communities to the capital gave rise to the proliferation of poor settlements and very basic forms of employment known as the 'informal economy' (De Soto 1986). This subtly created new patterns of behaviour, new values, attitudes, standards, beliefs and lifestyles (Matos Mar 1984). From a social perspective, the internal migration problem went hand in hand with the demographic explosion. "The population is ethnically, culturally and socially heterogeneous. Wealth is unevenly distributed and a minority group of the population monopolises

economic power to the detriment of the majority which struggles to survive.” (Lopez in UNESCO 1989:53).

A series of internal and external factors sparked off a coup d' etat and in 1968, the 'Revolutionary Government' of the armed forces took power and commenced a twelve year rule. It introduced radical reforms intended to alter the social structure of Peru. The aim was to create a new kind of society by means of education. The goal of making education accessible to the entire population had not been achieved. Training and selection of teachers was inadequate. Inflexibility and bureaucracy were felt at all levels. Education did not correspond to the needs of society. No provision was made for poor children. Schools were few and reserved for privileged minorities. (ibid p51) For four centuries, universities in Peru catered for an elite (Bernales 1972), so that the children of the ruling classes might obtain a degree as a substitute for titles of nobility. In the 1960s, groups from the middle and working classes, who had received more schooling than their predecessors, fought to gain university entrance (Bernales, 1982; Lusk, 1984; Pacheco, 1985).

In the mid-sixties the contradictions in Peruvian society were deepening. On the one hand, the industrialisation process and the intensification of popular demands were in favour of a restructuring of class relations and progressive public policies. On the other hand the control maintained by a fraction of the oligarchy over key national institutions blocked any attempt at reform (Alberti 1981). The revolutionary government vigorously pursued an 'independent foreign policy' of friendly relations with all countries. In the long run Peru hoped to reduce its dependence upon North America by broadening its economic relationships with other countries. As a result Peru established diplomatic relations with many countries including Australia in 1969.

Gender and Status of Women

Gender is learned in society and individuals internalise it as the true reality. There is a cultural behaviour in terms of gender construction which women construct. Family is an important site of learning, with the binary setting of gender structure which rules that what is male cannot be female. Gender values are rooted in an historical and social context of what a woman is, and

what she does. “ ... and all of us from our experiences of growing up in that society carry powerful memories and expectations of what a woman does and how society wants us to relate to the rest.” (Carlota – Interview 1).

Women’s attitudes are encouraged by many experiences that are specific to women’s condition. Women are socialised to respond to the wishes of others, not to clearly define their own desires. They are socialised to think of themselves as ‘less worthy’ than men. Even in rural areas, where a greater equality of the sexes is detected, a midwife is paid more if the baby she delivers is a boy. ‘Machismo’, the particularly Latin American ideology of male superiority, is, in many ways, particularly oppressive for middle class and professional women. Poor women’s husbands cannot afford to prohibit their wives from working and sharing actively, with all the knowledge and skill they can muster, in the household’s survival strategy (Figueroa & Anderson 1983:11). In Latin America, women engaging in identity politics challenged structures of Latin American society around the family, sexuality, Catholicism and formal politics, all of which assign women to an un-problematised position as family maintainers on a daily and generational basis (Cubbitt 1988; in Radcliffe 1993:104).

In Peru, like in other countries in South America, history and gender relations were informed by the Catholic notions of female purity and sacrifice. The family structure is profoundly influenced by such ideas (Marisol – Interview 3) and explains the permanence of notable family networks in the country, in which women act as marriage pawns between powerful patriarchal units (Jelin 1991). Social attitudes and education are reinforced by racist ideologies of European heritage and non-black/indigenous past. Families in Peru focus significant discourses around duty, favouritism and loyalty (Marisol – Interview 3). Within this context, legal provisions place strict controls over women’s lives via their husbands’ authority. Through the twentieth century, for example, husbands decided on the management of the property, the location of the marital home and whether wives could work. ‘The Peruvian legal code states that the husband fixes the residence of the married couple and the wife is obliged to follow him. It states that the husband is responsible for the

maintenance of the household and that the wife may work if her husband permits it.' (Figueroa & Anderson 1983).

In Peru, women's legal status changes on marriage and full rights over children were granted to husbands under the 'Patria Potestas Law' and, as in other South American countries, the rape of married women was considered more of a crime than that of unmarried victims (Medina 1989: in Radcliffe 1993:104). Middle class and wealthy women do not attend personally to the household (except in a managerial sense) and sometimes not even to the children. They have servants who do it. The great majority of poor women work at some productive activity whether their husbands like it or not. They may only take the husband's opinion into account in deciding what kind of work they will do, or what kind of schedule, since he will probably have to share in the care of the children, and possibly in the housework as well (Figueroa & Anderson 1983).

With this background many Peruvian women came and settled in Australia. Women saw that the physical and social environment constrained their learning and their advancement. Understanding that continuing in Peru was to perpetuate similar experiences that they did not enjoy, they decided to overcome this adversity by going to a country which, on the face of it, offered a better and more independent future for them.

One is inevitably drawn to think more about the nature of these young women who took such a drastic step. What kind of women were they? Why did they choose to come to Australia rather than other countries? What measure of courage did these women possess in order to face the enormous challenge involved in migration? and what did they think about Australia?

Figure 5



El Primer Embajador de Australia en el Perú y su esposa.

Primer Embajador de Australia Presentó Ayer Sus Credenciales

En ceremonia protocolar realizada al mediodía de ayer en Palacio de Gobierno, presentó sus credenciales ante el Presidente de la República, General Juan Velasco Alvarado, el primer Embajador de Australia acreditado en el Perú, Edwin Daniel Mackinnon.

El Primer Mandatario peruano y el diplomático australiano departieron cordial y amablemente por espacio de varios minutos, haciendo votos por la prosperidad de ambos países unidos por tradicionales vínculos de amistad.

Perú y Australia entablan relaciones diplomáticas por prime-

ra vez, después de 7 años ininterrumpidos de sostener relaciones a nivel comercial.

Poco después de ser recibido en Palacio de Gobierno, el Embajador de Australia convocó a una conferencia de prensa en el Hotel Bolívar, en la cual vertió interesantes conceptos sobre su misión en el Perú.

Dijo que Australia es un país altamente industrializado, sobre todo en materia de vehículos motorizados, renglón que se piensa introducir en el mercado peruano.

Asimismo precisó que su Gobierno tiene gran interés en realizar trueques comerciales en base al fósforo peruano y lana de ganado merino australiano que se exporta al Perú.

En este sentido indicó que próximamente sostendrá una serie de entrevistas con altos funcionarios del Gobierno y representantes de la industria y el comercio.

Australia's first Ambassador to Peru presenting his credentials in Lima and being interviewed by this researcher (as a cadet journalist for 'La Cronica' newspaper) in 1969

PART THREE

METHODOLOGY

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

The contextual aspect of this study has required library work, reviewing literature of many writers, philosophers and historians, on matters relating to the key question of this research, 'the learning experiences of Peruvian women who migrated to Australia'. These have included issues of adult learning, lifelong learning, generation of knowledge and different kinds of learning. Additionally, the research has included an examination of Australia's assisted migration policy related to the migration of women to Australia; a review of literature on Peru's socio-political, economic and cultural environment in the 1960s and issues of gender. This has been undertaken to reveal the contextual factors necessary to enable an understanding of the women's learning experiences and the environment in which these experiences occurred.

In an attempt to gather evidence that would reveal the lives, experiences and the learning from those experiences of the women, participants of this study, this research has drawn upon qualitative feminist methodology. The writer believes that such an approach was the most appropriate for this kind of research as the focus was on women, the research was carried out by a woman and the purpose and commitment of the research is on changing women's lives (Stanley & Wise 1990). Qualitative methodology was deemed to be the most appropriate because the research goal is descriptive of individual women's lives and their learning experiences.

Whilst there are many feminisms and feminist research is multi paradigmatic, feminist voices share the outlook that it is important to center and make problematic women's diverse situations and the institutions and frames that influence those situations, and to then refer the examination of that problematic to theoretical, policy, or action frameworks in the interest of realising social justice for women (Eichler, 1986:69 cited in Denzin and Lincoln).

Webb (1993) asserts that what is distinctive about feminist methodology is its engagement with the issues of concern particularly to women and its acceptance of methods that are used in ways which attempt to reduce power inequalities within relationships. Such a methodology reports women's experiences in their own terms whilst also attempting a structural analysis of the conditions of their lives and to include, within the analysis, the roles and influence of researchers themselves.

Bernard (cited in Webb 1993) proposes common criteria for feminist research and these include that:

1. The researcher is a woman
2. Feminist methodology is used, including researcher-subject interaction, non- hierarchical research relationships, expressions of feelings and concern for values.
3. The research has the potential to help its subjects
4. The focus is on the experience of women
5. It is a study of women
6. The words 'feminism' or 'feminist' are actually used
7. Feminist literature is cited
8. The researcher is reported using non-sexist language.

Feminist research uses critical theory methods and could be considered a subset of critical theory (Burnes and Grove, 1993:83). Critical theory contains the views of a number of philosophers but the overriding contention is one where social phenomena must be examined within an historical context and further, that the established political order, as well as being self evident, is a way that legitimacy and power are maintained (Burns and Grove, 1993). Feminist critical practice seeks to reveal how gender power relations are 'constituted, reproduced and contested' within social and cultural practices (Weedon 1987:vii).

A qualitative feminist methodology was chosen because this approach enabled issues of 'experience and learning' to be examined from a perspective which placed the women's voices at the centre of the analysis. As

most of the memories of these women have been mainly in the 'passive voice' careful analysis of linguistic construct was imperative. Lather (1991:71) contends that 'to do feminist research is to put the social construction of gender at the centre of one's inquiry'. This is what makes feminist research distinct from other research positions.

The use of quantitative research techniques involving the translation of women's experiences into categories predefined by researchers may distort the experiences of the women involved and resulted in silencing the women's own voices. Individual women's understandings, emotions and actions in the world must be explored in those women's own terms (Smith 1987). Smith argues that research methods must permit respondents to describe the world as they experience it '.. their reality, their variety of experience must be unconditional datum' (Smith 1987:43).

This type of methodology offers a more human, less mechanical relationship between the researcher and the women participants of the research. The most productive way of achieving data using interview techniques is by way of having a non-hierarchical relationship and by the researcher being '.. prepared to invest her own personal identity in the relationship' (Oakley 1981:41). In taking this approach the writer has spent a substantial amount of time with the participants thus allowing them to know the researcher and the reasons for doing the research and to involve them in the process of transcript, translation and interpretation of their experiences.

The 'Insider' Researcher - Costs or Benefits?

In this research the fact that the researcher shares many qualities of the women participants including gender, age group, cultural background, time of migration and living in one of the same hostels that the participants lived in on arrival in Australia can, on the one hand, be regarded as beneficial and as a unique opportunity. On the other hand these shared aspects may be seen as possibly damaging to the quality of the research as all of them have the capacity to jeopardise the researcher's objectivity. The researcher's

knowledge and experience of the world may limit or determine what she can accomplish and consequently influence the integrity of the study.

Safeguarding against potential bias

Taylor and Bogdan (1984) suggests that the option of critical reflection, that is, examining one's own perspectives, logic and assumptions, is capable of minimising any bias effects. There is growing literature on the effect of gender on qualitative research (Oakley 1981,1988 in Roberts 1988) and it is recognised that a fieldworker's gender, age, prestige, expertise or ethnic identity may limit or determine what she or he can accomplish. This researcher gave serious consideration to the possibility of bias at the outset of the research planning and determined that, at each stage of the research she would engage in bias checking and correction if necessary. In addition she ensured that the methodology utilised would be such as to facilitate a bias-free result.

It is argued that on one side the insiders have a special knowledge of their own group, that they are endowed with special insight into matters necessarily obscure to others, thus possessed of a penetrating discernment' (Merton 1972:11 in Minichillo, Aroni, Timewell & Alexander, 1995) and conversely that 'unprejudiced knowledge about groups is accessible only to non-members of those groups' (Zinn 1979:210 in Minichillo, Aroni, Timewell & Alexander, 1995).

Ensuring the integrity of the study

This researcher not only engaged in critical reflection by examining her own perspectives, logic and assumptions but she explored these concerns with the participants at all stages. Similarly all the women participants were provided with accurate information from the beginning to the end of the research including aims, goals, how the interview would be held, how the data would be stored, what the researcher would do with the information and the benefit of the research to participants. Preparation for interviews included a discussion and agreement as to how the interview sessions would be conducted. The researcher and participants were involved in the process of transcript,

translation, interpretation of their experiences and in comments, discussions, clarifications and corrections. In this way the researcher was able to develop a relationship based on reciprocity similar to the relationship issue raised by Oakley (1981, 1988 in Roberts 1988) in her discussion on 'feminist interviewing' where she examines the nature of the relationship between women who are informants and those who are researchers. As previously stated both the researcher and the participant became jointly responsible for the process of the research experience in a non-hierarchical relationship (Oakley p.41).

It is the view of the researcher that, in this research, the researcher's 'insider' status has been a valuable tool at all stages of the research process whilst at the same time every attempt has been made to correct any bias effects. This has had the result of maintaining a high level of integrity in the research process. In general terms, qualitative data collection has played a very important role in the personal liberation (during interviews) of the women interviewed. They have been able to reflect about their experiences in a critical way and to gain further understanding of those experiences.

'It occurs as and when women, individually and together, hesitantly and rampantly, come to see our lives differently and to reject externally imposed frames of reference for understanding these lives, instead beginning the slow process of constructing them. For us the insistence of the deeply political change as personal change, is quite simple, 'feminism'.' (Stanley & Wise 1983:192).

The last thirty years have seen the beginnings of a radical shift in the degree to which women are represented in knowledge production. The growth of consciousness-raising and of self-help groups and campaign groups around women's issues have begun a process of challenging, on the one hand, what constitutes useful knowledge and on the other, access to knowledge as it is already constituted (Weedon 1987). Hence the overt ideological goal of feminist research is to correct the invisibility and the distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women's unequal social position (Lather: 1986). This entails the substantive task of making gender a fundamental category for our understanding of the social order, '.. to see the

world from women's place in it' (Callaway 1981:460). The methodological task becomes that of generating and refining interactive, contextualised methods which search for patterns and meaning rather than prediction and control (Reinharz 1983). This research has not simply described women's experience from their own perspective but has developed theoretical discussions (Webb 1992).

Both the researcher and participants have been actively involved, through discussions and consultations in interpreting the participants' narratives and responses. The analysis and interpretation of the data have been checked for accuracy by the participants involved. The researcher, after recording her own reflections on participants' responses, sought confirmation and/or correction and that in itself led to further discussions. By following a feminist approach, the researcher was no longer just the researcher but a person who became a part of, and a witness to, this new experience of the re-creation of the participant's truth. Participant and researcher become jointly responsible for the process in which both learned the experience together in a non-hierarchical relationship (Oakley 1981:41).

In this research the expression 'participant' has been used instead of 'subject', 'informant' or 'interviewee'. Thus it has been a reminder to the researcher that the individual participant had legitimately taken a pivotal role in the direction and flow of the interview.

Ethics

Ethics approval for the research was sought and obtained from the Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University on 21st September 1998 (see Appendix II).

Participants: Identification and Selection

Eight interviews were conducted with Peruvian women and former Immigration Department officers. Six Peruvian women and two officers were interviewed.

Information regarding participants was obtained from a list provided by a Peruvian Association and from a list of names of Peruvian women collated during the celebration of their twentieth anniversary reunion.

From one hundred names given to the researcher sixty names were chosen at random. Sixty letters were posted with six women responding to the invitation to participate including signing the consent letter and completing the preliminary background information questionnaire.

Another four women contacted the researcher expressing interest and giving information about their migration experiences but expressing their reluctance to sign the consent letter or any other written material.

After receiving written responses to the initial correspondence the researcher contacted participants to arrange the times and places of interviews.

The women were approached by an initial letter (see Appendix III) which included the participant information sheet (see Appendix IV), a preliminary questionnaire (see Appendix V) and a copy of the participant consent form (see Appendix VI). This initial contact was followed by telephone contact during which the researcher thanked the participants for their interest in participating, acknowledged their written responses and agreed upon interview dates, times and locations.

Three former Immigration Department officers who worked with the single women as welfare workers during the early 1970s, and who were known to the researcher, were contacted. One was unable to participate because she was travelling overseas and two were interviewed. Both expressed their satisfaction and pleasure in the knowledge that research on the issue was being carried out and were happy to participate and to provide information. These interviews were aimed at providing extra background information rather than presenting them as case studies. However a transcript was developed from the interviews and the interviews were carried out after translations and transcriptions of participants' interviews were finalised.

Initial Questionnaire

It was intended, for the purpose of establishing the final selection of participants, to gain some initial information and to give an indication to the potential participants of the possible issues that could be included whilst exploring their experiences. The questionnaire was divided into three sections in a specific theme: information before migration, at arrival and soon after and in the last twenty years. Each section contained a number of questions and space for comments after each section. This was very useful as the participants themselves followed that theme at the interviews.

The questionnaire, like the other documents, was written in English and Spanish.

Interview Process

The interview research process was conducted over a period of twelve months. Six women were interviewed face to face for a period of one to two hours per session. Three women were interviewed in two sessions and three in three sessions resulting in fifteen sessions in total. The total interview time with Peruvian women was in excess of twenty-six hours and a total of three hours with former Immigration Department officers.

The reason for the second interviews was that participants, together with the researcher, felt that there was more to be said about their experiences and that the first interview time (one or two hours) had not been enough to reflect on the first reflection exercise. The third interviews, involving the participation of three women, were used for clarification and/or confirmation of what was said previously. The other three women were satisfied with the interpretations gained and did not respond to an invitation for a third interview.

Interviews - Locations and Times

The researcher agreed to the places and times suggested by the participants on the occasion of each interview. Four preferred to be interviewed at home and two outside the home at venues that included an office work-place, a restaurant and a park.

Reactions

Participants responded to the research in general and the interviews in particular in a very positive manner. The women showed enthusiasm but some initial apprehension and nervousness was evident. Throughout the process they were very responsive, attentive, polite and punctual particularly when interviews were conducted in a public place. Some of the interview sessions contained a preamble session at which the researcher shared some food that had been prepared by the particular participant. The researcher recognised that gesture and at the following session took some fruit with her to share in preparation for the interview. This served as a way of developing a relationship and also a reinforcement of the cultural significance of the evolution of a relationship with the sharing of food. It contributed to a more relaxed environment. During this time one participant said that it was “.. good that we are able to talk about this because I thought this was part of my forgotten past that I left behind.” (Marisol: Interview 2). In cases when the interviews were in the participant's home some of the women made the effort of playing Salsa (Latin) music as a background whilst the interview was carried out. One of the participants played classical music.

The Interview Style

For all the participants this was the first time that they had spoken in detail about their personal experiences and the first time they had engaged as participants in research of this nature (when self-disclosure occurred). To ensure privacy, as well as a form of protection to those interviewed, pseudonyms have been used for all participants.

Initially the researcher had planned to use a structured questionnaire containing both coded and open-ended questions but, influenced by her counselling and journalism experience, and following the first interview it became clear that, in keeping with the aim of exploring women's experiences, the most effective method was to use open-ended questions in an in-depth, participant-centred interview approach. The researcher would commence by

saying, at the beginning of each interview after summarising issues of the previous interview, "Let us continue. What comes to your mind about your experience?"

In-depth interviews involve a high degree of interpersonal skills including establishing rapport, listening reflectively, using cues to encourage the telling of the story, summarising, using empathy and employing questions to clarify meaning (Egan 1994). The in-depth interview is a conversation focussing on the participant's perception of self, life and experience expressed in her own words. Through this approach the researcher is able to gain access to, and subsequently understand, the private interpretations of social reality that the participants held (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell & Alexander 1995).

The participant-centred interview approach recognises the importance of feelings, as well as reason, emotions as well as intellect. The participant is not treated as a passive subject but as a responsible person who is in charge of her story - hers alone - but prepared to share it with the researcher. This approach to interviewing has been valuable in developing a relationship of trust, respect and confidence. The participants in this research wanted to tell more about their lives and as they were communicating more deeply they were discovering more perspectives and realities of those lived experiences.

As the interview progressed memories of their accounts seemed, at times, to fill the individual participants with joy and excitement and sometimes sadness. At times their faces would light up and their voice pitch would rise with excitement whilst smiling and laughing. Some other recounts brought sadness, anger and intense pain displayed by tears. Scheurich (1997) proposes that interview interaction is fundamentally indeterminate 'The complex play of conscious and unconscious thought, feelings, fears, power, desires, and needs on the part of both the interviewer and interviewee cannot be captured and categorised.' (p73)

At times there was a range of interactions and feelings occurring. As participants recounted some of the events it seemed that they struggled with

re-living the experience. Silence would prevail until they found understanding. At some points a participant would hesitantly repeat statements slowly whilst thinking and reflecting. She would elaborate reasons as to why she thought those experiences happened, one saying "I think I understand that it was the culture and the way people perceived women at the time that my mother acted that way. I cannot blame her for it, but I would not do it myself now." (Rosita Interview 1). The researcher, at all times, displayed and communicated feelings of empathy and rapport and this not only had to do with communicating them verbally but had a lot to do with being, and being seen to be, attentive. 'It is basically a matter of understanding their model of the world and communicating understanding symmetrically.' (Bandler and Ginder 1979). Non-verbal communication and silence were the main tools used by the researcher in dealing with complex situations that arose as a result of the women recounting their experiences.

Language and culture

The initial written material sent to all participants was in English and Spanish (see Appendix V). All the interviews except for one were carried out in Spanish (the native language of the participants). Language played a very important role in revealing and interpreting their experiences because some of the words did not have translations in English so the understanding and meaning would have been lost if the researcher had conducted the interviews only in English or if she had been from another culture. Idiomatic expressions are the most difficult to use in another language and are open to the greatest degree of misunderstanding by the non-native speaker (Keats 1993:119).

The language, for the most part of the participants' narratives, was energising, full of images, metaphors and poetic expression. Some used literary devices that captured their poetic language. As the interviews were in Spanish the language used was very descriptive and provided extensive detail of the stories that the women were trying to reconstruct.

Some of the women, in telling their stories, used the literary devices of dialogue and conversation thus weaving the listener into the story as a means

of achieving empathic understanding and the feeling that they were 'getting it right'. There were terms and expressions used by the participants which were embedded in the culture and values of the time. "I was told that, as a girl, I should not go out of the house because there were 'los pistacos' that could chop off my head and drink my blood... do you remember that?" (Rosita: Interview 2). (*after the disappearance of several persons, people created a mythological figure to scare girls specifically*). There was an expectation and implicit understanding on the part of the participant that the researcher knew about it.

The use of the language and the knowledge of the culture facilitated the flow of the interviews and assisted in creating an atmosphere of understanding and identification with the facts. Culture influences our behaviour in general and our communication in particular. Cultural relativism suggests that the only way we can understand the behaviour of others is in the context of their culture (Gudykunst & Yun Kim 1997). Herskovits states that behaviours must be understood '... relative to the cultural background out of which they arise'. (Herskovits 1973:14).

Cultural assumptions are embedded in the language people use. Sometimes words become broader symbols that communicate cultural content. Symbols are simply things that stand for something else. Words can be complicated symbols loaded with cultural meaning. For example the expression 'the girls' ('las chicas') normally would be used to describe young women but in the narratives of the women interviewed, even though they are referring now to the women they met in the 1970s, they still used the words 'las chicas'. This may reflect a continuing longing for that period and a feeling of youth. Each phrase symbolises a cultural setting and is loaded with cultural baggage.

Accordingly, to understand what participants were saying, the researcher paid attention to the symbols and metaphors used by them when describing their experiences. For example, Carlota, relating her situation as a young girl said "I saw my mother suffering and I said to myself '*In this mirror I will not look at myself*'." (Interview 1); Nelly recounted "I couldn't understand his illness or death (*of her father*) because I have always thought that *he was like an oak*."

(interview 1); Delia in reflecting on her decision to leave Peru said “If I would have told them about my intention to travel to Australia *they would have cut my wings.*” (Interview 1); Rosita recounting her family environment and her frustration with some aspects of it said “She (*her mother*) was always sitting there in the corner *like a saint* sewing, and working whilst my father...”(Interview 1). The process of metaphor analysis can assist in unpacking meaning and revealing frames of reference or structures of assumptions that have influenced the way one perceives, thinks, decides, feels and acts upon one’s experience (Black 1962). Embler (1996:ix) states: ‘Cultural beliefs, ideas, causal assumptions are embedded in figurative language about human condition.’ Analysis of metaphors provided participants with an opportunity for reflection on their views of life.

Recording

An audio tape recorder was used to tape the interviews. Two hour tapes of 60 minutes each side were used to avoid interruptions and also to serve as a guide for the researcher in terms of having reached one hour of interviewing. At the beginning of each interview the name of the person being interviewed and the date, time and place of the interview were recorded by the researcher. Additionally, at the beginning of each interview, the researcher briefly spoke about the theme of the interview, such as ‘migration experiences’, and in the case of second and third interviews the researcher briefly recalled the issues that the participant had referred to in the previous interview. Participants were advised that the each tape was of one hour duration and that if the participant felt that there was a need for a continuation that it was acceptable to the researcher. The participant was also reminded that if, at any time she wanted to stop or didn’t want to talk about a particular issue, she should advise the interviewer.

It was rare that any written notes were taken except when participants raised an issue that needed future clarification but which, at the time, would have constituted an interruption which may have been detrimental to the continuation of the narration. In such instances a note would be written as a reminder for the interviewer who would later come back to the matter

concerned.

Transcription and translations

The content of the interviews was translated from Spanish into English almost immediately after each interview took place, a one-hour interview taking approximately nine to ten hours to translate and transcribe.

The total translation involved more than 260 hours or approximately two months work. Translation was literal and careful consideration was given to figurative and colloquial language so as to ensure accuracy.

The transcripts were developed from the translations by word processing into computer. Long pauses, voice intonations, laughs and sighs were indicated. These transcripts were sent back to each participant for their approval or correction. They were asked to contact the researcher if any changes needed to be included. No changes were requested.

Searching for Meaning

Content was analysed as soon as the transcripts were ready. The initial analysis required the researcher to constantly compare the English translation-transcript to the Spanish recorded version. The interpretation and analysis of the women's narratives was an interactive process by which consultation and clarification were sought and achieved with the participants.

In viewing the narratives as constructions of the experiences it was necessary to find ways of analysing the interviews. Discursive models were very helpful in providing a theoretical basis for techniques for exploring a person's construction of the social world. The work of Marie-Francoise Chanfrault-Duchet (1991) was helpful in understanding narratives of the interviews. She presents four analytical devices within her model of analysis. Similarly, the work of Katherine Borland (1991) was helpful in understanding the interpretative conflicts in oral research (*see further explanation in Chapter 6*).

Understanding is not embedded in the experience as much as it is *achieved* through an ongoing and continuous experiencing of the experience. As

narrators and performers of the story, the participants of this research have gained a perspective on their experiences and a sense of what they meant, in ways that they had not previously known. Making public and vivid some of the intricate details of migration may assist in breaking down the barriers that shield public awareness of the difficulties associated with the migration of women particularly when there are no support mechanisms in place to help the women in a new environment.

Researcher's experience

The researcher constituted the audience that witnessed a performance during the narrations of the participants thus, in addition to hearing their words, she was subjected to the women's facial expressions, movements and gestures. She heard the intonations and inflections of the actor's voices and she felt and witnessed the passion of the performers. The researcher, as the audience, was moved away from the universal and she had to deal with the concrete – particular people in particular places, in face to face encounters (Conquergood 1990).

The narratives of the women touched an emotional centre in the listener. They have showed how patriarchal strictures have controlled them and how they went about breaking away from those constrictions. Because of the intensity and nature of their narratives the researcher began re-writing herself. The narratives took the researcher to different sites and allowed her to see familiar sites in new ways. She has become more attuned to lived experiences and has become more cautious, more contemplative, about what 'conducting research' means. She has come to understand that, as a researcher, 'sometimes one writes the consequences to others but less often one does one reflect upon the consequences to ourselves. Even more rarely do we consider those consequences in terms of subjectively felt experiences' (Richardson in Ellis 1992).

PART FOUR

LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF PERUVIAN SINGLE WOMEN – CASE STUDY

Chapter 5

Theoretical Perspectives

The work of this thesis has been informed by the ideas of several writers and thinkers on the subject of learning including; John Dewey, a 20th century adult education philosopher and his concept of 'lifelong learning', Jurgen Habermas' 'categories of enquiry' and Jack Mezirow and his work on learning as 'transformative and emancipatory' kinds of learning.

John Dewey's ideas have assisted in reviewing the connection between the learning process, adulthood and life span development stages including the phases of adult life. They have helped in assessing prevailing assumptions that adulthood is a long period of stability where previously learned capacities, skills, attitudes and values are applied to one's activities whether at work, in a family situation, recreational activities and civic life. Dewey challenges this view and stresses the importance of addressing the needs associated with adult development and growth and the fact that learning is a continuous process that encompasses the whole lifespan of the individual. On this issue Allman (1982), in exploring adult development, observes that studies of adult life reveal it to be a period of change and development much like those of the childhood and adolescence. This notion has been influential when viewing the learning experiences of the women in this research as it is impossible to ignore the fact that the migration process necessarily involves significant transition and change. So the learning experiences of these women in coping with and adapting to a new set of circumstances have contained a range of fluctuating experiences. These include difficult, rewarding, painful, joyful, exhilarating, frustrating and/or satisfying experiences and in most cases have involved a continuous process of exploration and testing, reflection, critical thinking, action, further testing and analysis, altering behaviour and re-definition of some aspects of the self then even further reflection. Dewey proposes that ' .. learning whilst in the process of living is the finest product of schooling.' (Dewey 1964:51).

Dewey broadened the view of education to include the experiences and interactions of the learner, hence, learning and experiencing is not seen as restricted to a particular period of life, but it is a process that encompasses the whole lifespan of the individual, whether learning through formal, non-formal and/or informal ways. Within this framework, learning and education is not seen as a fragmented spectrum of the individual parts but integrated as part of the whole of the individual. King (1997) proposes that '... learning is the active construction of knowledge. When we learn, we make sense out of new material by relating it to what we already know. This process of making connections to prior knowledge allows us to organise and reconstruct the new material for ourselves and integrate into our existing knowledge base, thereby allowing us to understand and remember it better.' (p32). Learning, for Dewey, is the reconstruction and reorganisation of experiences which increases one's ability to direct the course of subsequent experience. He postulated that growth, as a result of educative experiences, enables the person to assimilate something from each new experience. This new experience, added to the next, improves and changes the individual's views and actions as a result of this ongoing process. Dewey referred to adult learning and to the fact that all adults would continue to learn throughout life if their earlier education had sown the seeds for continuation of the learning process. For Dewey this continuity in learning would be achieved through his notion of growth. He defines growth as:

'... a general and persistent balance of organic activities with the surroundings and of active capacities to readjust activity to meet new conditions. The former finishes the background of growth; the latter constitutes growing.' (Dewey 1964:52)

In this research each woman has had her own individual set of circumstances, influences, pressures and ways of perceiving the world around her and each of these factors has contributed to her particular learning experience and growth. Dewey postulates that to live, the individual must learn to conduct successful transactions with her environment and to grow she must create novel forms of recognition and response that she must refine in ways that take

them more fully into her experience (1964:51). This research has revealed that the women participants did indeed engage in such processes.

Jurgen Habermas, a German philosopher and sociologist, propounds a critical theory of knowledge and human interests in which he proposes three 'categories of inquiry'. In each category knowledge is generated from human activities motivated by a different kind of interest. Each defines cognitive interests of learning domains which are grounded in different aspects of social existence (Habermas 1972:308). In relating their settlement experiences, each of the women explained how she found herself in a specific situation with respect to work, studies, family life, friends and community life and in situations that called for adjustments or change. Whilst they began to learn some options available in the pursuit of changing or reversing the situation they each began to arrive at knowledge through explorations of the environment and the possibilities in it. Habermas' 'categories of inquiry' have particular resonance to the experiences of these women.

Jack Mezirow (1981) provides ideas about learning that is transformative. He discusses 'meaning perspectives' and 'perspective transformation' as kinds of learning and draws upon Habermas' ideas in search for insights into adult learning. Mezirow's work has also provided valuable insights into gaining an understanding of the learning experiences of the women presented in this research. He proposes that 'meaning perspectives' are the particular way a person interprets experience and the assumption within which a new experience is absorbed and transformed by one's past experience during the interpretation process (1981:2). He developed a number of concepts from research he conducted into why mature women, after a considerable length of time, return to university study. He explored several issues including what it was that caused women, who had for a number of years accepted 'the traditional stereotypic view' of their 'proper' role, to revise that view of themselves and set off on a course of renewed learning and personal development. From this research Mezirow developed a number of concepts to describe and explain these kinds of transformations in attitudes and expectations. The two main issues of his work in this area are 'meaning

perspective' and 'perspective transformation' Mezirow takes certain ideas from Habermas' areas of inquiry, and adapts them to the context of adult education. The following is an outline of Mezirow's and Habermas' ideas.

Habermas (1972, 1987) describes three areas in which we generate knowledge. The first is the technical area. This is where we create knowledge in order to control and manipulate our environment. This area of knowledge has to do with understanding and managing the world around us. Mezirow relates this first area to adult learning and describes it as the kind of instrumental learning we engage in to achieve task-related competencies. In this domain of learning we are concerned with understanding relationships between cause and effect, with developing knowledge by testing hypotheses and with the gathering of observable evidence. 'Instrumental learning always involves a prediction about observable things or events.' (Mezirow 1991:74). This domain of adult learning relates closely to the mechanistic tradition, to the world of training to achieve behavioural objectives, to the business of designing and providing learning through needs assessment and task analysis, to the business of training people to survive in the world and to perform their jobs.

Habermas describes the second area in which we generate knowledge as the 'practical' area being the area where we create knowledge in order to understand our condition, not so much in terms of our interaction with the material world but in terms of ourselves and our inter-relationships with others. Mezirow suggests that this second domain is learning for interpersonal understanding. In contrast to the instrumental learning of the first domain, this domain is concerned with dialogic learning, with gaining insight and understanding through communication and interaction. 'Most significant learning in adulthood falls into this category because it involves understanding, describing and explaining intentions: values; ideals; moral issues; social, political, philosophical or educational concepts; feelings and reasons.' (Mezirow 1991:76). In this kind of learning we arrive at generalisations and solve problems not through objectively testing a hypothesis but by reaching a consensus through 'rational discourse', that is

through careful and considered communication and consultation with others.

Habermas' third area is the 'emancipatory' area where we are concerned with self-knowledge, with knowing who we are, how we came to be who we are and the factors that continue to constrain and shape the way we see ourselves. This kind of knowledge is to be found in the critical social sciences such as psychoanalysis and the critique of ideology. Mezirow describes this domain as learning for 'perspective transformation'. In this kind of learning we do not just learn to look at the world more clearly but learn to look at ourselves looking at the world. We learn how to perceive our perceptions. We become aware of our awareness and of how our awareness is constructed. Perspective transformation involves not only becoming critically aware of habits of perception, thought and action but of the cultural assumptions governing the rules, roles, conventions and social expectations that dictate the way we see, feel and act (Mezirow 1981:13). In this kind of learning we address problems through critical reflection, through examining awareness, through identifying and examining meaning perspectives in order to understand how they influence the way we see the world and the kinds of position we adopt. In this process we may recognise that our perceptions are distorted by 'institutionalised ideologies', 'reified power relationships' and 'internalised cultural myths.' (Mezirow 1981:13). We may set about transforming our perspectives so that we are freed from the kinds of influences that limit our vision and cramp our ability to act (Newman 1993:178).

It was with these important concepts, forming the basis of the approach to examining the learning experiences of the participants of this study, that this researcher then began to listen to and analyse the narratives of a group of women who had engaged in substantial changes to their lives.

Chapter 6

An Examination of the Adult Learning Experiences of Six Peruvian Women who Migrated to Australia.

The literature consistently highlights recurring themes in the history of migrant women to Australia and the limited roles and participation of non-English speaking background women. The literature also shows that in the 1980s and 1990s, subsequent to the end of the White Australia policy, though progress in terms of education policy evolution had occurred, very little research, in terms of the education needs and participation of NESB women in education, has taken place (TAFE: 1993). Most studies relating to the experiences of NESB women has been both marginal in character and, in the main, subsumed into discussions on migration and resettlement. With this background this research sets out to examine the stories of the learning experiences of Peruvian single women who migrated to Australia in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

In contributing to knowledge of history and to knowledge of adult education, a specific goal of this research is to explore aspects of the learning strategies that these women employed in the course of creating a new life structure in Australia. The methodology of this research has included in-depth interviews with each participant followed by a consultative review process at different stages (researcher with narrators). Details of the interview and research process are contained in the section of this paper entitled 'Research Methodology'.

Discourse Analysis

The function of the examination and analysis of the narratives of the participants of this research is to discover their learning experiences prior to, during and subsequent to, their decisions to migrate to Australia.

The participants' decisions to migrate cannot be seen in isolation but rather must be viewed as resulting from some or all of their life experiences leading

up to that point in addition to their perceptions of their own places in their society. As such this research recognises the importance of analysing the participants' narratives of their lives in that earlier period in each case in addition to the period since. This researcher has taken care to base those analyses on the participants' own views and their own reflections upon the various aspects of their life stories and of decisions which contributed to their migration to Australia

Whilst this research deals with adult learning experience it will become evident that the childhood learning experiences of each participant has formed the basis of much of the subsequent adult learning processes and most certainly the basis of many of the decisions of early adulthood which set each of the participants on a path of change and learning leading them to the point of ultimately discussing their lives with this researcher. On this issue Knowles (1986) suggests that as we grow we develop an 'expanding reservoir of experience' and that, as we shift from child to adult, this experience not only continues to increase in quantity but changes in kind. While we are children much of our experience is 'provided for us' - to an extent we are defined by others. As we become adults, we increasingly take possession of our own experience, and increasingly define ourselves through that experience. In a sense we *are* our experience. He further discusses how, as we move from childhood to adulthood, we move from dependency to some kind of independence. While adults may not be totally independent, they nonetheless have a need to be seen as independent. John Dewey (1964), placing individuals' experience at the centre of learning, saw experience as the basis for one's own learning experience, development and growth.

Exploring the learning experiences of the participants of this research has involved a self-confessional process of telling one's own personal story about a real person and real events. In the case of these participants these have been stories which have been kept in secret until now. Ellis & Bochner (1992) state that telling a personal story is a way of giving voice to experiences that are shrouded in secrecy and that telling a personal story becomes a social process for making lived experience understandable and meaningful. They

postulate that a personal narrative can be viewed as an 'experience of the experience'. In performing the narratives the participant extends the process of inquiry by introducing another form in which the participant experiences the experience. Turner (1986) has argued that performing narratives and ethnographies is a mode of inquiry that operates reflexively to reveal ourselves to ourselves in two ways: 'The actor comes to know himself better through acting or enactment; or one set of human beings may come to know themselves better through observing and/or participating in performances generated and presented by another human being.'(p81).

With this in mind the narratives contained within this research are the 'life stories' and 'learning experiences' of the participants rather than answers to the researcher's questions about particular time periods of their lives. Their narratives are offered as a mode of inquiry into the learning experiences of each participant. A feature of the narrative process adopted has been that the 'listener' has been a woman (recording the narratives of other women), with a common cultural and language background, similar age grouping as well as a shared migration experience. The former is an essential element in the research and documentation of women's experiences and history and the commonality of language has been particularly valuable in ensuring accuracy. Shared culture, experience and age have been of additional assistance in the facilitation of the narrative process and subsequent analyses.

The context in which a narrative is given, that is the audience or listener as the case may be, is an important factor in the way that the narrative is presented. Katherine Borland (in Berger & Patai 1991) takes up this issue and discusses the pitfalls of interpretative conflict in oral narrative research. She argues that, in the performance of a personal narrative, meaning construction occurs at two levels. Firstly, in the interaction between self: the dynamic interaction between the person and the narrated event and secondly, in the interaction between the event and the intended audience. Borland's first level refers to the reconstruction of the memory, which includes the struggle by the narrator to make sense of her own history. The second level of performance of personal narratives is what she terms '.. the assumption of the

responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence.'(p63). She elaborates that 'As performance contexts change, as we discover new audiences, and as we renegotiate our sense of self, our narratives will also change.' (ibid). She also warns of the danger of the researcher's own set of standards, political attitudes and theoretical approaches leading to interpretations of the narratives which may conflict with the narrators own interpretation of her recounts. The interaction between the event and the intended audience, also raises the issue of the relationship between the participant and the interviewer and hence the embedded issue of power relations and its effect upon the narrative. In regard to the latter, Borland concludes that, whilst the researcher has a responsibility to interpret the narrative, the danger of that interpretation being contradictory or conflictive with the narrator's own understanding can possibly be overcome or minimised by opening up

'.... the exchange of ideas so that we do not simply gather data on others to fit our own paradigms once we are safely ensconced in our university libraries ready to do interpretation. By extending the conversation we initiate while collecting oral narratives to the later stage of interpretation, we might more sensitively negotiate issues of interpretative authority in our research.' (p73)

The interviewer in this research believes that there was a high degree of equality between the participants and the researcher as a result of the extent of their involvement in the process and outcomes of the interviews. She was also a woman who migrated in similar circumstances.

On the matter of Borland's concern about the nature of the narrator's audience and the potential variations to the narration itself as a result, this researcher agrees that the audience (in the case of this research a single listener) can be a vital element in influencing the course of the narrative content. It can be a determinant in discovery of the narrator's real experience rather than what may be a version of that experience possibly shaped by the influence of the narrator's understanding of the expectations of the audience. Being aware of the danger of such corruption this researcher has consciously

engaged in a self-imposed monitoring of interview and analysis techniques in order to achieve the purest and most uninfluenced (by the researcher) account of the discourses by the participants.

Marie-Francoise Chanfrault-Duchet (1991) presents a model of narrative analysis which was helpful in identifying meaning within narratives, in particular how the person positions herself in relation to the hegemonic social model of the world. Chanfrault-Duchet argues that the facts and events take their meaning from the narrative structure in which they are embedded. Exploring these facts and events within the narrative structure makes it possible to locate not only the relationship between self and the social sphere but, importantly, women's conditions as they are shaped by the society in which they live and how they construct meaning from this experience. She states:

'... women's life stories ... deal not only with the relation between the self and the social sphere, but also, and above all, with woman's condition and with the collective representations of woman as they have been shaped by the society with which the woman being interviewed must deal.' (p78)

When discussing the analysis of the life story narrative Chanfrault-Duchet indicates that the researcher who examines the overall form of the narratives will identify recurring themes and phrases within the narratives which are important in constructing the meaning system contained within the life story. (p79). She refers to these recurring elements as 'key phrases' and formal recurrences which constitute a 'key pattern' within the narrative structure. She describes these 'key phrases' as formal markers which define the relationship between the self and the social sphere - the community (which contributed to the formation of the self) - and, more broadly, society as a whole. The key phrases, in her view, express 'the harmony, the indifference, the ambiguity, the conflict and so on existing between self and society.' and that '... such phrases aim to express the image of the self the interviewee intends to provide.' (pp79-80).

In the narratives of this research such 'key phrases' have been evident and constitute important pointers in the analysis process. Some participants would move from the use of the first person singular, 'I', to represent their separateness from the group into the first person plural 'we', when they spoke with others with whom they found affinity. At times when issues or actions taken required someone to take responsibility for them, participants may avoid it by using the neutral 'one'. 'One knew about the consequences but still did it.' instead of 'I knew about the consequences...'.

Another device of analysis that Chanfrault-Duchet proposes in this model involves looking for key patterns in which the person attempts to express her relationship to others particularly to the dominant social mode. This tool has been valuable in identifying some of the patterns in the narratives in which participants related their social positioning and accepting behaviour when facing the authority of the male figure and/or the passivity of the female figure. Chanfrault-Duchet introduces another interpretive device involving the examination of the narrative models borrowed from literary forms as a way for the person to share their particular quest for values. Such models are; the 'epic model' in which the person identifies with the values of the community; the 'romanesque' model which expresses 'the quest for authentic values in a degraded world' and the 'picaresque' model in which '...change is confronted through questioning of the dominant values.' (pp80-81). This tool was very helpful in understanding the meaning of participants' references to their identification with the values of the places where they grew up, the persistence in carrying out a romantic dream, or their determination in changing their position in the life structure and destiny that was (implicitly or explicitly) determined for them both in Peru and Australia.

Chanfrault-Duchet's claim of the value of the life story methodology as a 'tool' of importance in the field of women's oral history would seem to be reasonable. She says;

'The aim, furthermore, is not to lead the speaker by means of her narrative, to a clear consciousness of her relationship to the social image of woman, past and present.

Notwithstanding R. J Grele's suggestion, the construction of narrative here is not a conscious process but a preconscious one which means that any such consciousness-raising, if attempted, must take place after analysis. But it would be illusory and ethically questionable to use the narrative as a means to transform the conceptions held by the interviewed woman. This would be to practice a kind of savage social therapy.' (p90)

However, she makes no mention of one facet of the narrative process which this researcher believes to be of significant importance, that being the effects upon the narrator, by virtue of recounting her own life experiences, of the reflective process in which she engages during her narration. There is little doubt that, in the case of each of the participants in this research, they engaged in reflection and critical thinking when recounting their experiences, which ranged from early childhood through to adulthood. It is the view of this researcher that those processes have, in themselves, constituted a learning process or at the very least contributed to the participants' individual learning experience.

Whilst it is inevitable that there will be some perceived commonality and similarity between the experiences of the participants, the researcher stresses the need for preservation of the individuality of the learning experiences in each case. Hence the presentation of each story as a stand-alone history of the participant concerned.

Chapter 7

Case Studies

During the narrations of the six women migrants who were interviewed for this research it has been possible to gain insight into the active processes of reconstruction of the past experiences and struggles of each of the women to find meanings in those experiences within the current frame of reference - meanings with which they were able to feel comfortable. This relates to both the past and the present levels.

Through the narration process the interviewer observed the dynamics of Borland's (in Berger & Patai: 1991) analysis of that interaction as the women sought to gain understanding of their past experiences, whilst at the same time providing an understanding which would be acceptable to various audiences, in particular members of their families and with friends with whom they have shared the migration experience.

In the following the analyses of the narratives of six Peruvian women who migrated to Australia in the early 1970s, their interviews, are presented as case studies within which various forms of analysis are used in order to identify the women's search for personal meanings and, in particular, the construction of learning within the framework of their experiences.

To provide an opportunity to the reader to share the experiences of the participants of this research whilst observing the rationale adopted by the researcher in the analytical process, an attempt has been made to find a balance between analysis and individual story. Some of the case studies are quite exhaustively probed from theoretical perspectives whilst others flow, as much as possible, in the narrators own words so that the reader can, in a sense, become involved in the participants' experiences and, by so doing, create her/his own interpretations.

Carlota

Carlota, as a young Peruvian child in a single parent family of low socio-economic status, had, from an early age, begun to formulate the desire to escape from what she described in her narrative as “.. the worst...unhappy time of my life... I saw every thing as an immense dark sea full of unsolvable mysteries and me, almost invisible standing at the corner of it.” (Interview 1).

She is describing the worst time of her early childhood. Her words refer to her perception of her environment and to the uncertainty of her future. The ‘immense sea’ being the society with its rules of class, gender and race. She is not prepared to uncover the ‘mysteries’ possibly because of the pain that it may cause so, as a solution to this powerless situation, she becomes almost ‘invisible’ - observing by being at the edge of the scene. On the other hand she has not given up, she has not run away, she is there, she is standing at one side which indicates that she may have been in the process of assessing the ‘pros’ and ‘cons’ of the situation. Whilst she is not active she is there in a corner protected by her invisibility. Her later narrative gives some substance to these possibilities when she unveils her strong belief that she would only fulfil her dreams by going to another place - away from Peru.

One of the characteristics found in Carlota’ s narratives has been the way she describes her experiences, especially those that have been painful for her. As she narrates she is re-living the experience so she tries to lessen the degree of pain of some of them by being short, non-explicit and by using figurative language, key phrases and metaphors. On this issue Borland (in Berger & Patai 1991) explains that in any narrative the narrator adopts a certain attitude towards the events that she is recounting, towards the characters and the thoughts and emotions she is presenting. She proposes that there is a ‘dynamic interaction between the thinking subject and the narrated event (her own life experience) and between the thinking subject and the narrative event (her assumption of responsibility to an audience) (p63).

In her narrative Carlota was constructing meanings of her experiences in growing up. These were meanings with which she could now feel resolved and which were acceptable to a wider audience. She takes personal responsibility for arriving at certain conclusions. In her narrative she is consistent in the use of the first person singular "I" which one can read as reflecting her reluctance to identify with the social order. In fact since very early age she actively questioned her condition. On many occasions these were a kind of 'self-talk', an internal conversation with herself at times when she has despaired due to the social and economic situation in which she found herself each day. In Peru girls and women are assigned social roles inferior to those of the male members of society and the domestic setting is a natural stage for the display of these differences. Girls are dependent upon the presence of significant others and in these circumstances Carlota indicates a failure to develop internal criteria for an evaluation and definition of herself. Figueroa and Anderson (1983) in writing about Peruvian women elaborate:

'We have alluded earlier to the middle class women's passivity and basic conviction that change is not within the conscious control of individual persons. In a poor and dependent society that attitude is easily absorbed. In the case of women such an attitude is encouraged by many experiences that are specific to women's condition. Women are socialised to respond to the wishes of others, not to define clearly their own desires. They are socialised to think of themselves as less worthy than men' (Figueroa and Anderson 1983:11)

Knowles (1986) postulates that while we are children much of our experience is provided for us. To an extent we are defined by others. Carlota, as she was learning the meaning of life, was constructing her own 'meaning perspective'. Mezirow (1990) describes meaning perspectives as the distinctive ways an individual interprets an experience, the kinds of mental filters we develop that distort our perceptions of reality and let us see what we want to see or what we think we should see. 'Most meaning perspectives are acquired through cultural assimilation.' (pp2-3). As Carlota began learning to make sense of her difficult situation she projected herself into what she had considered at the time to be an ideal situation, thus creating in her mind an alternative reality, an

illusion which provided her with a way of managing the situation in a healthy way. This attitude helped her, as she was growing up, to strengthen her determination to change her life status and condition.

Consistent with the idea of escaping from her unhappy existence she adopted a practical strategy at the age of eight years (of helping her mother sell food on a street stall) thus assisting her to deal with the economic aspect of her circumstances whilst 'blocking out' her feelings about the situation. Mezirow (1990:4) tells us that 'When the experience is too strange, threatening to the way we think or learn, we tend to block it out as a way to manage the situation and as a defence mechanism to provide a more compatible interpretation.' What an event means to an individual depends on the ways of interpreting the world, on the discourse available to her at any particular moment (Weedon 1987:79). Hence experience is the production of various interpretations which arise out of discourse. Experience is constructed through engagement in the world, and consciousness, rather than being 'a continuous stream', is a '.. fragmented and contradictory effect of a discursive battle for the subjectivity of the individual.' (p105)

As Carlota tries to reconstruct her experiences she drew upon discourses of class and social status when she recounted that she had constant reminders of ".. feeling like an outsider .. " as a result of comparing her family structure – an absent father – to the '. nuclear families ' of her peers. At the age of about 15 or 16 years she was able to attend a private school where she came into daily contact with fellow students who were all of a higher social status. She attached herself to a group of these girls as part of her strategy to re-position herself from a low socio-economic group to a more desirable higher status group (in terms of the social reality of Peru at that time). Even though she felt like 'an outsider' she was convinced that her day was going to come and that she would not have to do things alone. When something in the school needed to be attended to she had to do it by herself because her mother was so busy. She had to face it alone and she would say to herself that this was only a temporary thing and it would change. She always lived with the hope that one day everything would 'come to normality'. She didn't know how or where but

she knew that everything was going to be all right in the future. She knew that help would come.

Mezirow (1981) calls this a process of coming to grip with our meaning perspectives and changing them so that we can see the world and ourselves a little more realistically. It is a learning process by which one comes to recognise how one has been culturally induced to dependency roles and relationships, the reasons for them and to then take action to overcome them. Carlota's strategy of allegiance to a higher status group proved to be successful in re-positioning herself and was, in a sense, confirmed when she gained a good employment outcome (earning over four times the average wage at the time) as a result of having been a student at that school. Her employer had also attended the same school thereby creating a relationship and an opportunity that would otherwise probably not have existed. She had been employed prior to that in a low paid job and had taken the risk of looking for something better. It was a continuation of her developing ability to take practical action to improve her situation. The fact of taking action and engaging in risk led her to new discoveries and hence new learning experiences.

But Carlota didn't stop there. Even though she had a good job and prospects she wasn't feeling fulfilled. She felt that her fulfilment would come from leaving Peru to find what she wanted even though she wasn't clear about what it was. Perhaps it was " .. the man in the train ..". (Interview 1). The 'man in the train' was a man that had caught her attention when she was travelling in a train at the age of 16 or 17 years. He was blonde, white, good-looking and was with a woman and two children. She had looked at the man and said to herself that when she went to another country she would marry someone like that man. That was her dream. She always had it in the back of her mind that she was going to go out and find that 'Mr. Right'. The 'man in the train' was an idealisation or representation of societal status and values to which Carlota aspired and which was normally unattainable for a young woman of her socio-economic status in that society. She had in her mind to get away from Peru and the patriarchal social structure which she perceived as leading her

inevitably towards a totally unacceptable situation - that of being married, having children and perpetuating the 'normal' role of being a woman in that society "... the typical Peruvian girl's dream." (Interview 1).

Planning and setting goals with or without successful outcomes, had been a predominant feature of Carlota's life even from when she was little. She planned to go to Australia. Then, when she was here, to get married or to have a partner, to have a family. Biggs (1991) postulates that the most basic type of control that people exert over their learning activities and other actions is in setting goals. Goal formation is an important theoretical aspect of many accounts of learning and acting and they are what give purpose to such basic mental processes as attending, or more complex processes such as planning and problem-solving. Goals may be considered as ways of controlling one's own learning since they provide the basis of choice between different directions of behaviour. Learning to set goals, to evaluate them, and to use them for planning is thus likely to be an important aspect of control over learning. Many of our goals are concerned with our relationships with other people, with enhancing our own resourcefulness, efficiency or sense of achievement or with preserving our self-concept (p52).

In her planning to find her alternative life she had heard about Australia from friends, but felt that it was too far away. She visited the United States, thinking to spend her life there, but was shocked to observe that the life of Latin American people in the USA was often as poverty-based as in Peru but with an even wider gap between working class people and professional 'white' Americans. She said "Oh no, this is not for me." (Interview 1). She recoiled from this potential 'backslide' and returned to Peru and again began inquiring about Australia as an acceptable alternative (it was at this time that the Australian government was actively seeking the migration of single women from Peru). She had engaged in reflecting upon the past and projecting her potential future if she stayed in Peru (or even if she went to the United States) and having thought critically about her status and her potential future had decided to leave the country and to start a new life in Australia.

"...I think the suffering and the effort that you have put to live and survive during your young life as a girl or 'as a teenager' - those formative years - prepared you for the future. Especially when facing questions such as - how you are going to come to this country without English? How are you going to face an unknown place by yourself? So I think that all of those past experiences give you courage to leave everything that is yours, your work, your family etc. and to start again in this country." (Interview 1)

With this reflection in mind Carlota prepared herself for the experience of changing the path of her life.

For Dewey (1933) reflection referred to 'assessing the grounds [justification] of one's beliefs,' the process of rationally examining the assumptions by which we have been justifying our convictions (p.9). Freire (1970), in discussing issues of conscientisation, concludes that only individuals who can reflect upon the fact that they have been determined are capable to freeing themselves. 'Their reflectiveness results not just in a vague and uncommitted awareness, but in the exercise of a profoundly transforming action upon the determining reality.'(p29).

Carlota migrated to Australia in her mid-twenties in the early 1970s under the Department of Immigration's assisted passage scheme. She arrived in Sydney with a group of young Peruvian women that she had met on the flight and was taken by a Department of Immigration officer to the Salvation Army Hostel at Darlinghurst. She stayed at the hostel for a month and described it as an unpleasant experience. She then moved into a flat with a number of other Peruvian women. She spoke little English so commenced English language classes at a TAFE College then later attended the University of New South Wales as a full-time student of English. She found that handling everyday life was

"... not easy. You feel lonely. Migration to a foreign country can be difficult especially if you do not speak English fluently. You feel alienated." (Interview 1)

Her first employment in Australia, soon after arrival, was at a private hospital. Carlota had been an administrative assistant in a private hospital in Lima, the

capital of Peru. She said that she wished that she'd had more information about work availability in Australia before migrating. The group which had moved out of the hostel with Carlota has been an important part of her life. They have provided important support to each other right up to the present. She describes those friends as replacing “.. the lack of a sister or a mother .. ” (Interview 1) with whom she could confide and discuss issues. This reference occurred in her narrative when she was discussing the loss of her mother.

The importance of the support mechanisms resulting from the formation of this group has been immense. In the early days of the group in an alien environment with little English language and little government or community support she was destined to fail had she not had the support of others in similar circumstances. Their collective strategies and efforts assisted her to make progress in her goal of making a new life in Australia – the life she had dreamed of and planned for as a child in Peru.

“ I saw my mother suffering and I said to myself in this mirror I will not look at myself.”
(Interview 2)

It was with these powerful words that Carlota at a very young age described her resolve to avoid the lifestyle of her mother and the potential drudgery, as she perceived it, of marriage and the life that would inevitably follow in Peru. She vehemently rejected the prospect of being the wife of a ‘machismo’ Peruvian man – the normal and accepted future for a young Peruvian girl of her status.

At a very early age she perceived her mother as a victim of the society and the culture of the time, being used by men and then, alone, having to support the children that resulted. So even as a child she was resolving to break out of that cycle and by the time she was in her mid ‘teens had a clear plan to leave Peru and find a new and better life. In this way she had taken responsibility for her own future rather than allowing the societal norms of the place and the time to dictate her life for her. In her narrative Carlota said;

".. that is one of the sad feelings I have about my mother. She always went for 'looks'. When she saw a good looking man she would get crazy (*laughing*). But on the contrary I looked for other qualities so I think I tried not to repeat 'the mistakes' that my mother made and I used to see the mistakes that she was making and I said to myself 'In this mirror I will not look at myself.' Because she used to look for a younger man who had a good body and so on. For me that hasn't got any value and because I have seen her suffering through her relationships I have looked for something different in my partners uhh, (*pause*) to what she, what she ...(*thinking*). I feel sad because when I went to see my family - my aunties - who knew my mother when she was young they told me, 'Carlota you do not look like your mother, she was such a good looking woman'. What they were trying to convey to me is that my mother was very attractive. I said 'I know that she was very attractive but it is sad that even with her looks she did not have luck. Such is life.' (*deep sigh*). Such is life." (Interview 2)

Carlota was making reference to her positioning of her mother as a victim – it follows that she too should have been a victim due to her dependency upon her mother – but she positioned herself as the one with the power to change her future from that which seemed inevitable and tragic to something better.

That 'better life', in the setting of Australia, took on different form on the occasion of her first marriage, a marriage that she entered into for reasons of companionship and security. The marriage was not happy. It started with disillusionment. The day of her wedding was traumatic and not anything like she expected. At the ceremony she did not understand what was being said and that evening found herself cooking for some friends without having cooked before. It was one of the most terrible days for her. Whilst she felt that she had to get married for security she also thought that she was going to have a companion so that she wouldn't be alone, but more than anything it was for her own security. Her marriage turned out to be nothing like she had imagined. It became more like a burden than anything else. She soon realised that it was a bad decision but she had a small son and she didn't want him to go through the experiences of growing up in a home with only one parent. She didn't want the life that she'd had to be repeated for her son. She also thought of herself as well. Her life wasn't all that bad, she had the house, she had comfort and holidays and decided for all those reasons not to 'upset' the situation that she had. She did not relish the thought of a divorce and selling

the house, these things would have caused too much drama for her. She had never liked that. She wanted to have as peaceful life as possible even if it meant putting up with an unsatisfactory relationship with her husband. That marriage lasted eleven years.

Her second marriage was completely different. She was in love and had a 'gut feeling' that it was going to work. She didn't know why she felt that way. Her two husbands were completely different and she felt that there was a good chance that it was going to work compared to the first time. She wanted a companion who could also help her to educate her son. Her son needed a man. She thought that in every marriage there are some necessary compromises. In her case she was going to have a companion, who could help her with her son and her life was going to be easier. Her marriage is a very relaxed environment. She does not have the pressures of having to clean or cook, having 'duties' as she felt was the situation with her first husband. Carlota had, in her first marriage, evaluated the positives and negatives and reached the conclusion that, despite the unacceptable aspects, she would stay in that situation.

One could speculate that whilst evaluating her situation in this marriage the thought may have passed through her mind that separation or divorce would have placed her in a very similar situation to that suffered (in Carlota's view) by her mother, a situation that she despised. Her abhorrence of that possibility may have played a significant role in her decision to stay in that marriage until the death of her husband after eleven years. Carlota had shifted the meaning of life and new concepts of reality had been formed, a new framework from which she was experiencing herself and the world. She became conscious of a new view of the experiences of her mother. Living through the process of her own relationships she began knowing personally of the need to balance, evaluate and re-interpret life from the perspective of the one who is primarily involved in the situation. Perhaps her mother had accepted her own situation to avoid entering into a worse one? She now understands that.

Carlota was hesitant to express her feelings about her father. When she did she did it with understanding and compassion. She recounted that as a young girl she adored her father and thought that he was the best man in the world. He was very affectionate and treated her well. She was his only daughter. He had many women but never had other children. When she was older she realised that he wasn't the person she thought he was, particularly when his visits became less frequent. Despite the fact that her father wasn't always present, he was always keeping an eye on her life, on what she was doing and in which school she was studying. Carlota was in Australia and was married when her father died. The first time that she went back to Peru, after some years, she found out that he'd had a very sad death. His sister had put him in a nursing home (for destitute aged people) and it seemed that they were going to place him in a common grave. A cousin of Carlota paid for the funeral expenses but they hadn't included a plaque so she had a plaque made for her his grave. On her last visit to Peru, three years ago, Carlota went to place some flowers for him, to pray there and to tell him that she forgave him for the fact that he wasn't the best father in the world, though he was always in her heart. But it gave her a great deal of sadness to know how he died. She found out that he had always been proud of the fact that she had given him a grandson. He had kept a photo, of her and her son that she had sent to him, until he died.

Carlota has no regrets about coming to Australia. On the contrary she says "... this country has been good to me." (Interview 2) She likes the way people in Australia "treat you for who you are, for your worth". She thinks that in this country people don't worry too much about the colour of the skin and that they appreciate you for who you are. But she believes that Peru is a very racist society, that it is one of the most racist countries of the world. She loves her country of birth but accepts the realities of the people. She believes that poverty is the major cause of the racism in Peru and that poverty makes one see the colour of the skin as an important thing leading to the rating of people according to their colour.

"The Creoles, the darks can even be thought of as criminals and an assassins but if they are blonde - white, we look at them with different eyes because of ignorance or lack of education." (Interview 2)

She hadn't experienced such racist attitudes here. She felt that the arrival of the Spanish in Peru had ruined the culture and led to an acceptance that the white race is more powerful and nothing could be done about it. She came to this conclusion from reading in her adulthood - something that she didn't do when she was young. She believes that she was probably racist when she was young. She illustrated her attitude by describing her son as 'a tall, dark good looking man, an attractive type with many blonde girlfriends' and she doesn't care '... if he gets married to a Chinese or a Latin (woman) whoever it is'. As long as he is loved and respected the colour of the skin doesn't mean anything to her anymore.

Carlota's hardest personal experience was the death of her mother in Australia. It was a shock that she feels up to now. She lost her best friend and lost part of the security that she had in life. She had coped with the pain because she had her son and her work. She recounted that she had to be strong and to keep on fighting it otherwise she would lose her job and she wouldn't be able to look after her son properly. In the beginning when she knew that her mother was going to die at any moment it was something like a nightmare. She couldn't sleep because she was going to lose her. It was about seven weeks of suffering knowing that, regardless of what anyone could possibly do, her mother was going to die. She described it as seven weeks of 'torment', 'a nightmare', 'a terrible pain'. Her mother had died with a brain tumour. She was alone here with her son when the doctor said that no matter what treatment was given to her mother she wouldn't survive. Her brother wasn't in Australia at that time and so she was the only one who was visiting her mother at the hospital. During that time she used to walk in the street 'like a sleep walker' but she had to go to work and look after her son at the same time.

On reflection she feels that she didn't appreciate her mother when she was alive. Now when she sees other mothers and daughters together she thinks how lucky they are to have a mother as a confidante. When Carlota came to Australia there was a period of separation but then they were together again. Despite the fact that there were occasional 'clashes' there was a real friendship and many pleasant moments. Another hard personal experience that she had to endure was the death of her husband, however, on reflection she said that if he hadn't died she would not have had the opportunity to meet her present husband marry him.

"So there is something good about something bad that happens because I could have been married to him up to now and I would not have met my second husband"
(Interview 1)

In attempting to explain her coping mechanisms in dealing with difficult times she said that she thought that at the moment of crisis she had operated "on auto pilot." She drew upon her faith by invoking strength from God. She found that by praying and by having faith she had the strength to continue with life, to concentrate on her work, and to look after her son. For Carlota coping with difficult situations has been a process of learning and refining ways of handling different situations. It has depended very much on how she has appraised the situation each time and the variables involved. Her response echoes Parry's (1991) views of coping which he describes as responsive to contextual variables temporal factors, and feedback from the flow of events which affects adaptational outcomes, and which requires redefinition in order to handle one's thinking, feelings and the environment (pp45-59).

As a way of reassuring herself she often engaged in internal dialogues. Parry explains these as ' .. a self-talk that aims at tackling the catastrophic thoughts directly. It is giving access to positive memories and beliefs about self and others. This releases internal resources in a situation which taxes the person's normal capacity to tolerate stress.' (p54).

In thinking about the future Carlota worries that, one day she will not have her loved ones and that, for whatever reason, she may become alone again. She

thinks that it would be the end of her and she would want to die because, though she had been able to sustain suffering when she was young, she thought that at an older age it must be terrible. However on reflection she thinks that it is possible that she could 'bounce back'. In difficult times in her past she has asked God for strength and has somehow found the strength she has needed and has been able to persevere. She believes that she would have had the same fears and doubts that she has now whether she was living in Australia or Peru. She has begun to think in that way because of her work with aged groups and since she sees them every day it causes her to think about the uncertainty of the future and the fragility of life. That this is what her future could be - like them in a wheelchair or with a walker or that a sickness could leave one as an invalid. As a young person she had the courage and strength to face all sorts of difficulties, in a sense as adventures, with excitement and with great optimism but now, 30 years later, she seeks tranquility and peace and to avoid experiencing suffering. Through her recounts she has constantly highlighted her ability to plan for, and project herself into the future.

“... all my life I have planned. I projected to do something when I was very young. I am going to Australia. Then, when I was here .. I am going to get married or, I want to have a partner or, I want to have a family or, I am going to get married again. All of that I have planned and, thank God, it has come true. So now, perhaps, I have begun planning for whatever may need to come, the next step ...” (Interview 2)

Although Carlota related these fears about her future she is, 'deep down', happy with her life. She said that she doesn't want to be 'more happy or less happy'. In reviewing her life and her attitude to values and changes she says that since her arrival in Australia she has changed in terms of her ideas having become much more liberal but her values have not changed. Her attitudes about right and wrong have always been that if she thought something was wrong she would try not to do it because her idea was that she would not like that 'wrong' to be visited upon her. "Treat the person, any person, the way I would like to be treated, with respect". (Interview 2) The happiest experiences Carlota has had since leaving Peru have been to have her son which she described as ' .. one of the most wonderful experiences of

my life'. The second experience that gave her a lot of happiness was getting married for the second time with her son at her side. Another wonderful experience that she had was when she went back to Peru and saw all her cousins and friends.

In keeping up with Chanfrault-Duchet's discussion (in Berger & Patai 1991) of discourse analysis one can, through an examination of the overall form of Carlota's narratives, identify some key patterns and phrases within her narratives which are important in constructing meaning. For example, Carlota recounts that at a very young age she had said: "I saw my mother's suffering and I said 'in this mirror I will not look at myself.'" (Interview 1) In the first part of this sentence one learns nothing specific about her except that she is recounting events in which she is a passive witness of her mother's suffering. We do not know what she thinks of that event or her attitude towards her narration except that after what must have been the outcome of a reflective process she expresses her sentiment of rejection of that event with figurative language. She put forward a proposition about that world of suffering and her determination of not being in that world. The "I" represents her directly as the narrator and her spatio-temporal situation. Her statement is definite and not subjected to time, that is, starting now. Chanfrault-Duchet defines such 'key phrases' as formal markers that define the relationship between the self and the social sphere and play a very important role in the ongoing search to discover meaning. What it means to be human and in finding answers to a new way of redefining the way one looks at the world. Embler (1996:ix, in Mezirow, 1990:310). goes further in proposing that figurative forms of language, which developed out of social conditions, influence us in our socialisation process and shape our social behaviours. The identification of figurative language like metaphor provides an occasion for reflecting upon meaning perspective. Carlota's narrative indicates that she has continued to be in an active learning mode. She has constantly challenged her meaning perspective and had determined to change her life structure. All of this has required thinking processes of reflection, critical analysis and growth of consciousness.

In searching for answers and outcomes of her constant planning and goal setting, she has been actively involved in learning and one of the salient features of her narrative has been her standing up to situations that had seemed impossible to overcome - 'bouncing back' and planning the next move forward by setting goals. Bandura (1988) explains that the extent to which a person develops realistic positive goals, and plans to attain them, depends also upon the strength of the belief that the goals can be achieved. Skinner and Chapman (1984) argued that such 'control beliefs' contribute to cognitive performance and development. They proposed that the selection of any one particular goal rather than another relates both to its perceived value and to the person's subjective belief in the likelihood of obtaining it. The person's perception of the likelihood of attaining the goal depends, in turn, on the availability of a plan to reach the goal and the likely success or failure of the plan (p27). In constantly reviewing her goals, Carlota has become confident and self-assured about the extent to which she can reach her goals.

She has learned to accommodate to a life of continual change. Most of that which she has learned has been the result of her efforts to solve problems commencing from a young age with how to help her mother to solve her problems and as an adult, how to understand the meaning of life, particularly in another country. Dewey (1964) is clear on this, stating that the process by which we define and solve our problems becomes the context for most learning. Learning through this process has been crucial to Carlota's ability to grow in awareness, to think independently and to master the knowledge necessary for surviving and thriving in life. Though at times she has created an alternative mental reality, a kind of illusion, as a form of dealing with a painful experience or as a way of propelling herself to do the tasks necessary for her daily living both in Australia and in Peru. These illusions (of going away to an unknown place, of romantic love, of learning English) have been healthy. They have supported her during periods of transition and have given her hope. Illusions like these have kept her going and have encouraged her growth.

Dewey proposes that learning is discovery and that one needs to be

searching or at least able to see in order to discover. Carlota, in questioning, seeking possible solutions, testing those solutions and ultimately reflecting upon the 'answers', has been able to discover learning experiences that have ultimately enhanced her whole life experience. These learning experiences have in turn taken her to a learning that has involved growth of consciousness. Consciousness refers to the primary frames of meaning with which we interpret our own life and the world. We know that all that we experience is filtered through the lenses of our personal versions of reality, our frames of meaning if you will. Growth of consciousness then is when we alter our version of reality in some permanent and significant manner so that our new understanding calls for changes in attitude, behaviour and even feelings (Weiser in Boud & Griffin 1988:99). Freire (1975) refers to the process in which individuals, not as recipients, but as knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives and their cultural capacity to transform that reality. He calls it conscientisation and proposes that it is a human process (p27) and that; 'Conscientisation is a basic dimension of reflective action. Men are conscious beings capable of acting and perceiving, of knowing and recreating.' (p50). This has resonance with Carlota's way of learning. For her, consciousness has been about knowledge, awareness and feelings. This growth in consciousness enables her to know herself better and the world with which she interacts and to appraise her knowledge, ideas and values generated in that interaction.

In challenging the objectivity of the reality, by creating communication about the object of her concern and by expressing by means of language, Carlota has engaged in critical reflection about her material reality. At times testing that reality became too problematic and strange so she managed it by dealing first with the problem at hand and by setting aside her feelings and her pain by way of 'bracketing'. The energy required for the discipline of bracketing and the focusing of total attention on one part of the problem can be accomplished only by 'practising, by experiencing, by learning and by growth.' Dewey (1964:52). This aspect of learning through critical reflection has associations

with the ideas of Habermas on generating knowledge for emancipatory interests and has been a means of liberation for Carlota.

Figure 6

LIVE TOGETHER LIKE SISTERS



Out on a sightseeing spree in Sydney are (from left) Maria del Carmen Menacho, Hedy Falkenheimer, Carimela Maldonado and Bertha Gierla.

An article in the Sydney Sun-Herald 14-6-1970 about Peruvian migrant women who were planning to leave the Hostel accommodation to find a house to share.

19 PRETTY GIRLS ARE LOOKING FOR A HOME

Nineteen pretty girls are looking for a big old house in Sydney "where we can all live together like sisters."

They are the newest group of migrants to settle in Australia — olive-skinned, dark-haired, young Peruvians.

The girls, whose ages range from 19 to 26, are determined to live together until their English improves and they have found jobs in which they are happy.

"It will have to be a very big house — but girls in Peru aren't accustomed to the idea of living alone in flats," 21-year-old Maria del Carmen Menacho, a private secretary, told me.

And 22-year-old Julia Castro, a student, "We shall live together like an army."

The girls arrived in Sydney on Monday. They stood on Tuesday and said they were lonely, depressed and homesick.

By Wednesday they were smiling again. The tears had been brushed away; temporary jobs had been found for them — and they were spending their time sight-

BY CHRIS PRITCHARD



JUANY BOBADILLA ... the girls' Bolivian "sergeant-major."

seeing in the city, with their eyes searching for a "big, big house" to rent.

I spent several hours with the girls this week. It was raining outside, but inside the Salvation Army Women's Hostel — where the girls are being billeted until they find their house — there was a cheerful sound of South American folk music.

Most of the young migrants are skilled typists or secretaries. "But those of us whose English isn't too good will probably work as baby sitters until our grammar improves," said long-haired Hedy Falkenheimer, a

The Department of Immigration gave the girls a three-day stopover in Tahiti on their way to Australia.

"It was very clever of them," 25-year-old Carimela Maldonado said. "When we arrived in Tahiti we could think only of our families sobbing at the airport back home."

"Then we met those fantastic Frenchmen and our sadness disappeared. Our hearts are still in Tahiti, I think."

To help the girls settle in Australia, the Department of Immigration allowed Juany Bobadilla to accompany them.

Confusion

An efficient young Bolivian woman, she runs the immigration desk at the Australian Embassy in Peru.

"I will stay as long as is necessary and then I'll return to Lima," Miss Bobadilla said.

Why did the girls choose Australia?

"A few years ago we would have gone to Argentina, or Brazil," secretary Bertha Gierla told me. "Now economic conditions have tightened throughout South America and they don't need so many typists and secre-

young men find it easier to obtain employment in Latin America. For girls it is difficult." 26-year-old Ada Fernandez said. "There are too many who are qualified to type or be secretaries."

The young Peruvians' introduction to Australia has not been without its minor misunderstandings and confusion.

"We were very depressed in this Salvation Army bungalow at first," Maria del Carmen Menacho told me. "No one told us that they wanted smoking in this place."

"People would say to us: 'Put out that cigarette' — and we were left to wonder why they were being so cross with us. Some of us even thought it was because Australians could be offended by the sight of a woman smoking."

Rosa Maria Vargas had the last word: "We hardly knew each other before we left Lima. Now we are like sisters."

"All we want now is a big house to live in."

Rheumatic

— FIONA WRIGHT
Just take a half teaspoon each morning of "sodium citrate".
JANOS
Mineral Springs, California

RUPTURE
NO TAPES
WE HAVE 20 DIFFERENT TYPES OF HERNIA SUPPORTS
TRAINED PHYSIOTHERAPIST
GUARANTEED SATISFACTION
REDMOND FUS

Rosita

Rosita was the second of ten children. Her parents were very religious (Catholic) and she described her family as very close and united but described her mother as being opposite to her father.

“ ...like a saint to me, she was so ... never was angry, had incredible patience, a woman that I have always admired because she was very calm and quiet.” (Interview 1)

However, due to her understanding of the family situation at the time she used to become frustrated, saying to herself; "How can she be so quiet, so calm and never upset?" (Interview 1). She described her childhood as being very pleasant and very family oriented. As part of a big family she grew up around many cousins, uncles and aunts. Since early age she had liked studies and was a successful student. She was always the first in the class and she recalled that her father was very proud of her. But she was very disappointed when she couldn't enter university because she didn't gain enough entry points. A girlfriend at the time (who had even less points than her) told her that her own father had paid a substantial amount of money and so she was admitted to university. Rosita said that it was a lot of money at the time (in 1968).

As she was making meaning of life and interpreting her experience she was perplexed by the contradictory messages that she was receiving. As part of the family orientation and part of the culture and values of society she has been learning the rights and wrongs and moral and religious values of 'doing the right thing', so she has learned that by being fair, honest always telling the truth and by being good and obedient one could get ahead and achieve ones desires. But she was now faced with the harsh reality of not being able to enter university, not because she wouldn't be a good student but because she did not have the means of buying education. Rosita was caught in the two dimensions of making and interpreting meaning explored by Mezirow (1990). He refers to the structuring of meaning and to the importance of differentiating two dimensions of meaning:

' .. meaning schemes .. are sets of related and habitual expectations governing if-then, cause-effect, and categories relationships as well as events sequences. We expect food to satisfy our hunger; walking to reduce the distance from one point to another...Meaning schemes are habitual, implicit rules for interpreting. Meaning perspectives are made up of higher order schemata, theories, propositions, beliefs, prototypes, goal orientations and evaluations... Meaning perspectives refer to the structure of assumptions within which new experience is assimilated and transformed by one's past experience during the process of interpretation.' (p 2)

Rosita asked her father to do what the father of her friend had done but her father could not raise the amount of money necessary to bypass the entry requirement. She was, at the age of 17 years, deeply disappointed and affected by this situation.

"I was left very sad because I didn't enter, I felt like I had been let down, disappointed, disillusioned. It was then when I said 'Oh no, in this country I am not going to stay, I am going to go to another country and to a place where I can study English', because at the time I loved the English language. I loved it, because I saw the Americans walking around the Lameda de los Descalzos (*a colonial site close to the place she lived*). I used to say 'One day I am going to learn the language'." (Interview 1)

As she found herself in an unbearable situation because could not pursue university studies, she assessed her situation and decided to search for a solution. Mezirow (1990:18) contends that meaning schemes and meaning perspectives that are not viable are transformed through reflection - through critical reflection. And it was through reflecting critically about what she was going to do now that she has finished high school but not able to enter university that prompted Rosita to reassess her situation and transform her meaning scheme and perspectives.

She then actively pursued her plan to leave Peru, going to a number of Embassies seeking to apply for a scholarship to leave Peru and study. Whilst searching for the Austrian Embassy she became lost and ended up being directed to the Australian Embassy. When she sought directions from a police officer he said;

"Why do you want to go to Austria, why don't you go to Australia? ... look .. that building over there on the corner, the pink one, that is the one. In there they are taking young girls like you to Australia." (Interview 1)

She went there and said that she wanted to go to Australia. The process was quite simple. She was asked to provide photographs of herself, a work certificate and to undergo a medical examination. To break the news (of what she had done) to her father she told him that she had received a scholarship to go to Australia saying that she would be gone for two years to study and then to return. He was happy, thinking that she had won a scholarship from the Australian Embassy and because Australia was going to assist with part of the passage and helping to find employment but with the restriction that she couldn't return until she had completed the two years.

She remembered when she was in the 'plane seeing all the girls, who were migrating at the same time, crying.

"... inside me I said 'Why are they crying?' I was so happy with life ... I was so happy for the whole trip, very happy. It was the first time that I had travelled. I had never experimented with that and it was wonderful because at the places where we went they gave us nice motels. We were six that left together from Peru. I didn't know any of them but we became friends during the trip. Everyone was crying but I was very happy. My family took me to the airport and I saw from the window that my father, my mother, my cousins, uncles and everyone was crying but I was so happy. I used to say 'Why are these girls crying if it is so beautiful to travel.' In my life, I wouldn't have thought of all the things that were there waiting for me, you know." (Interview 1)

When Rosita arrived here she went to the Salvation Army hostel at Moore Park in Sydney but was there only two days because the government employment office found jobs for her and for one of her friends as Nurse's Aides at a nursing home at which they were to live. She felt that she and her friend were fortunate to meet some kind people through their jobs at the nursing home. They treated them very well, taking them to their homes and showing them around Sydney. They were made to feel 'at home' being treated 'like daughters'. They then left the nursing home and went to live in a

flat with a number of other Peruvian girls. This lasted for a year during which Rosita went to study English at a TAFE College and, together with her friends, went to work, firstly in a pharmaceutical factory for six months then to a department store as a typist with her friend working in the same office.

Later she went to work in a bank for one or two years. During that period she married a European migrant whom she had met at her English classes. She then went to work in the Public Service in different clerical jobs staying for many years as a typist/receptionist. and had began studying a welfare course in TAFE whilst she continued working. Her English was improving slowly as time went on and she completed both Certificate and Associate Diploma courses. Later, and with great personal satisfaction, she moved into humanities work in other government departments for the following ten years and then to her current position as a sociologist. As she progressed in her settlement in Australia she was gaining knowledge and experience from each of the different activities that she undertook as part of work, studying and other interests. The process that she was engaged in corresponds to Habermas' (1972:302) postulation of three categories of the process of inquiry. In each category knowledge is generated from human activity motivated by different kinds of interests. Dewey (1916) proposes that learning and experiencing is a lifelong activity that involves continuity and connectedness and that one cannot separate a phase in life from the whole life itself. Education and learning is a continuous growth of the mind and a continuous illumination of life. 'Real education comes after we leave school and there is no reason why it should stop before death.' (p25).

In describing herself Rosita identified strongly with her father.

"I think I was like my father. I remember I had my father's character. He was very happy, friendly, many friends, liked going out, dancing. I have always liked parties and dancing very, very much." (Interview 1)

When asked why she thought that her father was so happy she said

"Why? because my father used to drink. At parties he was the only one drinking and he was very merry ... because he liked to drink and became very jolly. Now that I think about it, one could say that my father was an alcoholic. Here he may be seen as an alcoholic but over there we never saw that as being an alcoholic person. One never said 'My father is an alcoholic' or anything like that. It was very normal because he worked from Monday to Saturday and on Saturday night he used to go out drinking with his friends. So we never saw it as anything like that. He was like that, he had that character." (Interview 1)

Whilst giving justification for her father's drinking behaviour Rosita drew a comparison between him and her mother saying;

"My mother was the opposite, she didn't drink and she was happy seeing my father dancing. She would remain sitting there and when she was invited to parties she would say 'No, I don't want to go, I'll stay'. We used to tell her 'Go, you go.' and we tried to put make-up on her because she didn't use any make-up – nothing. She was a very simple person, very simple but we wanted her to go and have a good time too. We thought that it wasn't fair that she was always at home sewing whilst my father was enjoying himself." (Interview 1)

She described herself as being her father's favourite because of her strong personality. She was the only one who would rebel against him when she believed that he was acting unreasonably.

"I was the favourite of my father because I had character (*meaning strong personality*) and my father had also his character. So I sometimes had to rebel against him and tell him 'No, you have to give the money to my mother.' because sometimes he would go and drink with the money. I used to impose myself." (Interview 1)

Rosita drew from discourses of religion when recounting her frustration at seeing her mother continuing to have more children.

"She was very Catholic, very religious and she thought that God would punish her if she did something like an abortion. She wouldn't even imagine doing that." (Interview 1)

She reflected how she was internalising what was happening. Here there are competing discourses that highlight her rejection of Catholicism versus her traditional values of respect for the elders and for her mother.

"I was the one getting annoyed because, being the oldest, I understood what was happening. I used to get angry with her and say 'It is not possible' you know, because the more children she was having the worse it was for us. I used to get angry but I didn't know how to tell her, because I also had respect for my mother. But I didn't want to look after my brothers and I pretended that I didn't see them to avoid giving the milk bottle. So that was my rebellion, that was my rebellion." (Interview 1)

She recounted that since she was very little she had assumed the responsibility of role-modelling - that she had to do everything at home - that all the time she had to be the one giving a good example. So ingrained was that sense of responsibility that twenty years after leaving Peru when she separated from her husband she didn't know how to tell her family that she had separated. Rosita explained that her experiences and the fact of being in Australia have been the factors that made her realise that;

"...if something doesn't work why one has to suffer living an unhappy life, when one can be very content." (Interview 1)

Though the separation would appear to be a negative aspect in the sense of role-modelling she rationalised it by referring to the difference between her original values and the different values that she has acquired in Australia. One can perceive, throughout Rosita's narrative, not only the importance that she gives to role-modelling in her life but also to the need to grasp opportunities as they occur.

" ... I have always wanted to get ahead, all the time. All the time I wanted to have something, something to do, something for me. I wanted to excel so that I could be a good example for my siblings and they could have someone like a role model. Not only for them, but for me, because I love it, not because I want to give a good example but because I love studying. I said 'If in here, Australia is offering so much - because this is a country has given us like that - and if one hasn't been able to take advantage of all the things that this country has given us, it is because one is very silly not to have taken all the benefits that this country offered.' That is what I think

you know. This country has offered me so much, that I am very grateful. It has offered me English that I always wanted to study and opportunities to study at the University. I remember when I came, I studied at New South Wales University, a three months intensive English course. Since then my English began improving and I began speaking in a better way. I was able to understand better also. Afterwards, with the continuation of my studies, it has been then that I saw progress. I have always said 'If this country has offered us so much why not take advantage of it?'" (Interview 1)

Rosita identified acquisition of English language skills as being one of the biggest challenges she had to face as well as coping with the difficulties that present in everyday situations while attempting to learn the new language. In reflecting upon that experience she indicated her desire to assist others in working through similar difficulties.

"I always say 'Any person who is an immigrant and wants a favour from me, I am there to offer it.' Because I remember how it is when one is a migrant and how much one suffers. One really has dark times, when one is a recent arrival and doesn't know the language. I remember that I had to show with my fingers how many bananas I wanted or one apple because I didn't know how to express myself and so when I see - including in the jail - there are some young men who can't speak English I try to help them as much as possible." (Interview 1)

The learning of English language is only one aspect of the significant adaptation required by the new migrant. The necessity to adapt to a different culture involves learning to be part of a new social system and this may mean having to relinquish elements of one's previous culture (Nann 1982:11). However, in Rosita's case, rather than abandoning her previous coping strategy used when facing challenges she modified it by replacing her sources of advice and comfort (mother, sisters, aunts) with new friends and confidantes. She has added to her previous experience a new way of dealing with and solving problems, she has adjusted to what may have constituted a constraint – that of not having her mother or sisters. This is a process of becoming critically aware of our circumstances and our assumptions, it is a process of reconstituting a structure that permits a more inclusive integration of experience and acting upon this new understanding. It is learning for perspective transformation as formulated by Mezirow (1981).

"At the beginning, when I was very new in this country, I missed my family very much and I used to cry, and cry. I have always been the type of person ... to express myself. If I am happy I laugh a lot and if I am sad, very quickly I cry and my eyes get swollen, I cry a lot. For example when I missed my family I would write letters, or make a call but I used to write letters mainly, and I would talk to my friends. I have always been very lucky that there has always been a couple who have been like my parents protecting me. I have always been lucky that wherever I have gone I have found a couple acting as parents when mine were not there." (Interview 1)

Places of learning are often sites of social interaction where many people find opportunities for friendships often arising from the sharing of common goals, difficulties and experiences. In Rosita's case it constituted an ideal setting for implementation of her coping strategies and provided her with a supportive environment. It was in this environment that she met the person who was to become her husband.

"We were going to Technical College to do English and it was there that I met him. All of us who were going together met our husbands in there during English studies (*laughing*). Norma met her husband there, I met my husband there, Lily met her husband there, the great majority of us met our husbands in there ... the four of us went out together all the time. They got married first and we did the same a year later." (Interview 1)

She did not go back to Peru after the two years according to her original plan (as told to her parents when leaving Peru). She married in early 1973 and subsequently had two children one of whom has since completed university studies in psychology and is pursuing further studies. The academic success of this daughter has made Rosita very proud and has been a reinforcement to her long held role-modelling value.

"I feel proud because she has followed my steps, very studious. She is even more studious than me. I know that I have always like studying but she is very good." (Interview 1)

Whilst her marriage ultimately dissolved she had found learning opportunities within her marriage. She learned about her husband's culture including music,

arts and language but the marriage paradoxically contained a barrier to her need to continue formal studies which she had felt were necessary in order to enhance her employment and career opportunities. Her husband could not cope with her continuing engagement in formal studies saying that she did not give him enough attention or importance whilst doing so.

"I tried not to study when I was with him and when he was not at home I would study. I was not going to stop studying because of him. I said 'I like to study and I want to do something in the future. I don't want to work all the time as typist. I want to get ahead.'" (Interview 1)

This circumstance, of her being impeded in her efforts to study and to attain academic success, thus a better life and personal fulfillment, went to the heart of the issue that caused her such disappointment as a young student in Peru and which had led to the total change of her life. Her socio-economic situation had determined that she could not attend university in Peru and it was at this point that she realised that she was entering a future that was totally unacceptable to her. This was a key time in her life and was the reason that she resolved to take actions to reverse the direction in which her life was about to take her. She had resolved to leave Peru to go to a country - any country - which would give her the opportunity to study. Through this resolve she entered the domain of learning for perspective transformation. Mezirow describes this aspect of learning as the way by which we learn to look at ourselves looking at the world.

'Perspective transformation involves not only becoming critically aware of habits of perception, thought and action but of the cultural assumptions governing the rules, roles, conventions and social expectations which dictate the way we see, feel and act.' (Mezirow 1981:6)

This kind of learning involves moving from the uncritical acceptance of one set of values, beliefs and assumptions to a state of critical appraisal of all our assumptions. Mezirow goes further in proposing that this kind of emancipatory learning must include action. It was through this kind of appraisal that led Rosita to take action.

'...reflective discourse and its resulting insight alone do not make for transformative learning. Acting upon these emancipatory insights, a praxis, is also necessary.'
(1990:355)

So it was likely that Rosita would not allow herself to be stopped from her studies once again despite what effect this had on her marriage and the criticism that she would be bound to endure from her family in Peru. The result was that she found herself in a situation of working full-time, looking after two children and studying at the same time and divorced. In reflecting upon how she coped with these demands she demonstrated a capacity for perseverance and a strong belief in her ability to achieve goals that she had set for herself.

This scenario was the type of situation discussed by Bandura (1978 in Zimmerman 1995) in relation to people's perceptions of their efficacy. These perceptions influence the type of anticipatory scenarios that provide positive guides for performance. Those who judge themselves as inefficacious are more inclined to visualise failure scenarios that undermine performance by dwelling on how things will go wrong. Rosita has a healthy and positive regard for what she can do and has a firm conviction that one can successfully achieve what one sets out to do. She has proved this to herself by the results that she has been able to achieve despite the fact that at times the environment and the conditions were perceived as inefficacious or difficult.

"If it is something that is in you and that it is deep in your heart as something that you want to do, then you can really do it." (Interview 1)

Rosita recounted the strategies that she needed to adopt to succeed with the daily challenges.

"Look, one needs to be very organised. Even now I am thinking 'How did I do it?' I worked full time, studied, doing all the work and alone with my children. But what was happening was that my children were also students and had to study so I studied with them. So it meant that I had to organise myself to be good with my ... working in the

public service they gave me time to study. So I went to work four days a week and on the fifth day I would go to study. I had all the subjects on one day and that was a great advantage. But one needs to be very organised, to re-structure time and things. If you are not like that you cannot get anywhere. It would become the end of the world. Sometimes I said 'But when I am going to do that?' but if it is something that you want to do, you can do it, you find the time no matter when, you find the time." (Interview 2)

This drive to succeed has been a recurring theme throughout Rosita's narrative. When she arrived in Australia, a time when she was probably most vulnerable, very naïve and with no English and a very dangerous period for her as it was for many in the same position, her determination was still evident.

"... when I came to Australia it was very difficult as it was for all other migrants. The realisation that I didn't have my parents, my family to give me support, it was an incredible thing. Because I was very young when I came here, and thank God I met the friends I have now. They were like my eldest sisters to me. I remember that they became aware that I was very, very girlish and naïve. They assumed the responsibility of looking after me. The other thing that was terribly difficult was the fact of not been able to speak English. But I had inside of me this thing saying 'I have to learn English, I have to learn it.' I liked English. I have always liked the English language and I have always said 'I will learn it.' I remember with the other girls we used to go to Technical College. No matter how slowly, slowly we were learning something." (Interview 2)

Throughout her narrative Rosita recounted difficulties that she has faced and how she has dealt with them. In each case she appears to have made the difficulty itself and her method of overcoming it part of her total learning experience rather than allowing the difficulty to become a reason to 'give up'.

"I had many crises. The first one was soon after I arrived in Australia to come to the realisation that I didn't have my parents, my family, my brothers. My family was so important over there and all the time, even now it continues the same. The realisation of knowing that I was alone and that I didn't have my family was a terrible crisis. I cried a lot at night when I was alone. I spent time writing letters every night, mainly that way. I cry very easily I am very sensitive and I get emotional very quickly, but also I recover very quickly. I am not the type of person who keeps on it. The other

crisis was when I separated from my husband. That was very difficult. I suffered a lot because the separation after (so many) years of marriage is very strong, very strong to think that you are again alone. That you have to support two (children) whilst trying to do studies, all of that was very strong. Also when my mother died which it was soon after my separation. So everything came one after the other. At the time I had a very stressful job and I didn't want to continue in that job and they were all continuous, one after the other. It was very harsh for me but thank God at the time I continued my studies and I think that it - the fact of deeply attaching myself to my studies was my salvation. I knew that if ... my concentration was in it. I had to continue and finish my Masters, you know, to finish my degree to do my Masters and it was all that way. It was very hard but it made me not to concentrate too much on my problems but to concentrate on something else. I tried to concentrate more on this other thing and that made me ... and the tremendous satisfaction of knowing that I was reaching what I wanted." (Interview 2)

Although Rosita has had several crises that at first glance were difficult to cope with, she has resorted to her internal resources for energy and support, she has been guided by her own belief that " .. after the storm comes calm." (Interview 2) Her strong will and sense of achievement has assisted her during times of 'low tide'. We find resonance in Carl Rogers' (1978) writings on personal power, wherein he proposes that;

'Individuals have, within themselves, vast resources for self-understanding, for altering self-concept, attitude and self-directed behaviour and these resources can be tapped only if a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes can be provided. There is in every organism at whatever level, an underlying flow of movement towards constructive fulfillment of its inherent possibilities. There is a natural tendency toward complete development in man. The term that is most used for this is 'the self-actualising tendency' and it is present in all living organisms.' (p7)

Rosita's narrative illustrates this proposition:

"I say everything depends on you. Your life can be .. like some people said 'Oh my life is already pre-determined and there is nothing I can do because I would be a failure for the rest of my life.' No. I say that everything is inside you, in how you feel about things. If you really feel with all your heart like you want something, you can do it because you have all your energy, you begin studying, reaching what you want.

Thus all is in one-self. If one makes mistakes ok, we have made mistakes, but you know that you have made them and the consequences that they have brought to you. One learns through experiences. I remember when I arrived I was so naïve, I didn't know anything. But all of that teaches you, because this country opens your eyes very quickly, you know. You began learning many things, knowing people from different countries and with different opinions. I have always been the type of person who liked to listen. 'What can I get with that person who has told me such and such thing. She told me such and such thing, ahh she thinks that way.' I always like to model those persons that for me were good examples. So I always try to listen. So one is learning all of those things. And I have always liked to learn from persons that I have admired and I have always tried - not imitating - but to think 'What is the good thing that this person is saying?' Do you understand?" (Interview 2)

Rosita's discourse has assisted the researcher in unpacking meaning, to uncover frames of reference and structures of assumptions that have influenced the way she has perceived, thought, felt and acted upon her experiences. Through her narratives she has provided ideas as to the process she adopted in critically reflecting about her experiences. She began, at early age, to question her situation and her environment and this in itself constituted a learning process. In one of her narratives she recounts how she perceived her mother's relationship with her father and also the situation that she had to endure because of being the eldest in a family of ten children. In this narrative she placed herself as a passive witness 'seeing my mother...' The action is an internal one, one that produces anger but that at the same time propels energy to question and challenge - 'why doesn't she say something...' The questioning is about the behaviour of her mother's passiveness and her mother's acceptance of the world rules. In keeping up with cultural and family values she doesn't question her mother or what she represents as such, but questions her behaviour, her responses. She challenges the society's status quo and her father figure and what he represents. In this contradictory and paradoxical thought one can read internal action and reflection. Through this process of reflection and testing she came to understand that her present and future experiences were constrained by societal values and material context and she decided to free herself from that predictable routine and at that point began searching for alternatives and options. She felt that she found these by leaving Peru and coming to Australia. The clue to understanding her

behaviour of leaving the country, her family and friends was her realisation that the conditions were not favorable and positive to her aspirations and desires and that it was necessary for the fulfillment of her potential that she move towards growth, change and learning. Since her arrival and now in a different environment which presented a different set of circumstances, she began facing, removing and overcoming obstacles as she moved forward. Although confronting continuous and significant changes in many areas of her life which imposed pressure and stresses upon her, Rosita has faced them as 'learning experiences' as changes that one needs to go through in order to learn. Dewey postulates that, in a changing universe, nothing is eternal. Things and people are continuously open to reconstruction as needs, interests, and purposes change. To think otherwise is to commit what Dewey called 'the philosophic fallacy' that is the 'conversion of eventual functions into antecedent existence.' (Dewey 1964, 1916:108).

In Rosita's narrative one can see the determination, motivation and purpose with which she has handled her experiences in life, it is has not been about what has happened to her but how she has dealt with what happened to her. Even her perceived failures she has taken as opportunities and thus she has succeeded in obtaining her desired outcome, and in some cases the importance hasn't necessary been the outcome but the trying, the experience, the learning. Her determination, motivation and purpose have been about persistence, about vision, about believing in something with enthusiasm and with internal drive.

Nelly

Nelly is currently enjoying her baby grand-son. Her own family background contained strong family values in the sense that the family was regarded as a unit where every member helps each other and that a new member, a child, in the family was everybody's responsibility. She feels that her grandson is like her own child. She is re-living the early years of motherhood but this time with first hand experience. Nelly works as a social worker in a government department. She still enjoys the family unity and the affection of her daughter, her son, her husband, her in-laws and her sisters. She also still enjoys the long-term friendship of the Peruvian women with whom she became friends in the early 1970s during her migration to Australia.

Nelly has vivid memories of her experiences before, during and after her arrival in Australia and although she has shared some of those experiences with her family there have been others that she did not talk about before this interview. As she sets herself to remember those experiences she reconstructs them with a degree of surprise and disbelief, because when those experiences occurred she was very young and very naïve. Strong challenges were involved in those experiences, however, she did not see them as such at the time but now, as she reflects on them, she praises herself for being so brave, and for being so daring in taking decisions that led to those experiences. If presented with the same decisions today she would hesitate.

In telling her personal story Nelly is unveiling experiences that were dormant in her memory. She is now '... giving voice to experiences that have been shrouded in secrecy' (Ellis & Bochner 1992). As she thinks about them she reconstructs each experience with a new feeling and with her current knowledge. She is able to construct a distance from which she see the experience and this allows her to create a better understanding of that experience. Nelly's personal narrative can be viewed as an 'experience of the

experience'. Her narratives express her values that she constructs, formulates and remakes and in the process she is able to understand those lived experiences in a meaningful way. In performing the narratives she has extended the process of inquiry by introducing another form in which she is experiencing the experience. Turner (1986) proposes that performing narratives and ethnographies is a mode of inquiry that operates reflexively to reveal ourselves to ourselves in two ways: 'The actor becomes to know himself better through acting or enactment; or one set of human beings may come to know themselves better through observing and/or participating in performances generated and presented by another human being (p81).

Migrating to Australia was a unique experience for Nelly. It was the first time that she had ever left home or that she was away from her family unit. She now talks to her children about it as a way of sharing with them her experience and as a way of feeling proud of herself for having done it.

"I found out about Australia.. I became interested mainly because - the ticket was with assistance passage. I knew that my mother couldn't afford it because in those days you used to work but it was for everyone in the family. So I told my mother. I said 'This is a unique opportunity, it is only for two years after I will be back.' I said to her 'I will be able to practice all the English that I have learned and get fluent.' But It was really frightening coming to a new country a different culture and not knowing anybody... but they told us in the letter that if we wanted to come in a group we can contact this Catholic Office so.. I said 'Yes that was the best'. There was a meeting and eleven girls came to that meeting they told us that we were travelling together." (Interview 1)

"I did not have much experience, except for the experience of home, so I was terrified to the extent that even when I was in the plane I said to myself 'I think I am going to die.' I was petrified in the seat. I thought the plane was going to collide. So the realisation that we had come here under the thought that it was all very nice and fabulous but then suddenly one got to the realisation that one didn't have her family and that it was something that one missed the most - the family life, the food, the conversations, you know? Even though one had girlfriends, people that recently you met, there wasn't anybody intimate that one could tell your things what or how you were feeling." (Interview 2)

Nelly and her family, very strict Catholic believers, felt intrinsically reassured in terms of the safety and well-being of Nelly by the fact that the Australian Catholic Immigration organisation in Peru was involved in the migration arrangement including providing information and introducing other prospective migrants to her. Nelly thought that migrating was a way of financially helping the family situation and a way of getting ahead in her personal pursuit of practising and learning English and “ .. for better prospects.” (response to initial questionnaire 26 October 1998). The circumstances in Peru were not as she would have like them to be. On the one hand she wanted to study to be a pharmacist at the University but she didn't achieve a sufficient level to achieve entrance to a public University and her humble financial situation would not have enabled her mother to send her to a private University. On the other hand, as a result of her father's death, soon after she finished school she had to go to work during the day and study in the evening doing vocational studies that could take her to a reasonable employment. Although her younger sister was only thirteen she also had to help by working and studying part-time. The Australian Embassy was offering the opportunity of being assisted with travel fares, accommodation, courses of English and with employment to any young girl wanting to travel to Australia. The only condition was that one had to stay for two years. Although she felt frightened by the thought of going to a place far away, she felt that the possibilities of helping her family and herself were greater than those then available in Peru.

“... my younger sister and myself, we started working. I had chosen to become a pharmacist but I didn't achieve the score and I knew my mother couldn't afford to send me to a paid university. I thought that in coming here I could still help them I could send some money which I did. I was heart-broken after I made that decision. I tried to make myself strong. My mother later told me that she thought that her family was falling apart. My father had died three and half years prior to that, one of my sisters was out working so my mother only had me and my other younger sister at home so for my mother was a shock...it was a shock for every one. It was the first time that I went inside a plane .. so everything that it was happening was new and of course I was terrified, you know? Even though when you go to the interview at the Embassy and they tell you 'this is what is going to happen' and you are young and you dream and you say yes, yes to everything. It was nice but frightening at the same

time, even though I had met a group of girls that were going to travel with me, I had only met them briefly. I didn't know anyone besides those girls." (Interview 2)

Nann (1982) suggests that the decision to migrate is based on an evaluation of the conditions in both the country of origin and the country of destination. He argues that the decision to emigrate is the result of calculating the costs and benefits of staying and of moving and that one of the costs of moving into a new environment is an inevitable confrontation with unprecedented demands. He further proposes that migrants consider this cost in the process of reaching the decision to migrate, decide that the value of the benefits exceeds the value of the costs and are prepared to 'pay' for these benefits by confronting the 'costs' of these demands (p9). Similarly, Ben-Sira (1997) explains that the decision to migrate involves factors that 'push' prospective migrants out of their country of origin as well as those that 'pull' them towards a particular destination. 'It is difficult to calculate the relative weight of each of these factors' (p3). The factors pulling Nelly to migrate were by far greater than those pushing her to leave. All of what was offered by the Australian government was unheard of. No other country was offering such assistance and although Nelly was frightened she felt motivated in making her migration a pleasant experience.

"Sometimes when I think back I asked myself 'How did I do it?' To leave home and to be able to get on with life in Australia, I wonder how did I do it. Because some of the experiences were not very pleasant. For example, I remember that with two other girls we decided to move to Paddington. We rented a flat there but we didn't last there very long because the owner of the flat, a Greek man, wasn't very nice. He used to pass our flat and constantly look into through the windows, it was very frightening so we stayed there only two months then moved to Petersham. At Christmas we organised a party and invited friends and we tried to do it the way that we celebrated in Peru, so that we wouldn't feel lonely. We were always nostalgic and we kept on counting the days and months saying that at the end of the two years we were going to back to Peru. You know, it seems untrue but I strongly believe that the Australian Government knew that two years was all they needed for you to stay here permanently. They were well aware that in those two years you had assimilated, you had become accustomed to things and the majority of girls had found someone and in fact the majority of the girls have met someone, married and then couldn't or didn't

worry about returning. The first six months were the worst ones. I cried, cried, cried, missed my family but slowly, slowly, it seems now unbelievable but one began to accept it, but at the same time I kept on saying to myself that after two years I was going to go back but later I began saying I'll go there for a while to see my family and later I will go back to convince my mother that here it was better and to come." (Interview 1)

As she recounted her experience she smiled and said that every time she faced an unknown situation she did it by confronting it with comforting thoughts that 'everything was going to be ok' and that she was going to succeed, in her words 'I will try to beat the challenge'. This positive attitude and thinking connected people with her and as a result she made friends with whom she shared, up to this day, friendship and love.

"I kept on saying to myself 'You'll survive', you know, even though I remembered crying every night I went on with what I wanted to do and because I started working, I think three days after I arrived, and because of my knowledge of English I was employed in a big retail store selling plastic flowers and I didn't know anyone but I met this wonderful lady, who just passed away this year. She has been my friend all through these years, 27 years, and she has always made me feel like that she was my adopted mother. She said 'I'll be your mother - you haven't got a mother here.' and she introduced herself as an adopted mother when I married here in Australia. She taught me everything. She wrote little signs with different flowers' names so I studied and she taught me how to make flower arrangements so, you know, so it was good." (Interview 1)

Writers on migration studies contend that migrants have to go through a considerable amount of change in a wide range of areas. These changes are sometimes 'abrupt and potentially threatening to the their ability to achieve life goals in a foreign world' (Rumbaut 1991:57). Nelly was no exception because she felt constrained by the language and by what the accommodation was offering. At the time she saw them as a temporary challenge. There were other matters that were occupying her mind and sense of purpose. She felt pressured by the thought that she needed to help her family and by her strong belief that she could succeed. She saw the environment and the people as very supportive and this perception in itself provided her with fertile grounds

for achieving her daily goals and in turn gave her the confidence and the and fortitude required.

Bandura (1986) believes that individuals make causal contributions to their own motivation and actions within a system of a 'triadic reciprocal causation'. In this model action, cognitive, affective and other personal factors and environmental events all operate as interactive determinants. Among the mechanisms of personal agency, none is more central than people's beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over events that affect their lives. That belief in one's own efficacy functions as an important set of proximal determinants of human motivation, affect, and action. They operate on action through motivational, cognitive, and affective intervening processes. Self-efficacy beliefs affect thought patterns that may be self-aiding and self-hindering. These cognitive affects take various forms. Much human behaviour is regulated by forethought embodying cognised goals, and personal goal-setting is influenced by self-appraisal of capabilities. The stronger they perceive self efficacy, the higher the goals people set for themselves and the firmer their commitment to them (Locke, Frederick, Lee, & Bobko 1984, Cited in Bandura 1989).

Bandura (1989) explains that people's beliefs in their capabilities affect how much stress and depression they experience in threatening or taxing situations, as well as their level of motivation. Such emotional reactions can affect action both directly and indirectly by altering the nature and course of thinking. Anxiety arousal in situations involving some risks is affected not only by perceived coping efficacy but also by perceived self-efficacy to control intrusive perturbing cognition. He believes that the stronger the perceived coping efficacy, the more venturesome the behaviour, regardless of whether self-perceptions of efficacy are enhanced through mastery experiences, modelling influences or cognitive simulations.

Nelly's strong belief in her ability to get ahead in the new country contributed to her ability to cope with changes and daily difficulties. She refers to a possible naivete or innocence but on reflection she feels that, in her country of

origin, the competitive nature of that society at the time was extensive and she saw Australia, at the time, as a good place to succeed. The hurdles were there as a challenge that she was prepared for and prepared to overcome. She stayed at the Hostel for a short period only and then moved out to a house with other girls. Nelly married an Australian man three years after arrival and she had three children. She recalls with pride and affection the events of her marriage and the details of her experiences of going back to Peru for the wedding. As she progresses in her accounts about her learning experiences she goes to the heart of those experiences by describing how they have affected her growth and her understanding of life. Nelly's discourses reflect her struggle with the values of the society where she grew up particularly in school. She had some enduring experiences whilst at school with the nuns. Those experiences had left in her some emotional scars that she still cannot resolve because of what they represent – 'her beliefs, her moral and religious values'.

" I don't look back with resentment because we had a sort of discipline at home and discipline at school, for me was ok, but (hesitant) there were a couple of times that I felt like I was victimised, you know? I think they were a bit too harsh. I felt humiliated. We were sitting in a test situation and someone called me over to lend a rubber I picked it up and put it on the desk I didn't even look at the girl, but the nun who was looking at me, said 'Nelly come here.' She took my test papers, tore them into small pieces, threw them outside the window and told me to pick them up and to wait outside. I was in only sixth grade so I was probably 12 years old. Uh, to me that was very humiliating because she didn't even ask me what happened or say 'You shouldn't talk.' I was so upset I was crying and I was silently angry at her and I don't think I ever forgave her for that because at that time she robbed me of having the chance to pass that exam, and of my dignity as student, you know?. I was even angry at myself at first because I didn't want to cry. So I didn't do anything in retaliation except telling my mother who, due to the respect one has for the religious, did not do anything. But I did something that proved to me and to her that I was the winner, you know, and that was through studying very hard. As a result I passed my course with good marks. However, the experience of what she did to me left me impregnated by a very strange feeling that began affecting my self-worth and confidence. For me to even remember it now, can you imagine how much anguish and anxiety it created in me at the time?. I felt uhm (silence) you may say powerless ... she was in power and she did it because she had power, you know." (Interview 1)

Those experiences have given her insights into the social and school order and into the societal values that she had questioned at the time. Her discourses contain markers that help us to interpret and to create meaning beyond the words. Chanfrault-Duchet (in Berger & Patai 1991) refers to these markers as 'key phrases', such as -"I told my mother as to the cruel behaviour of the nun" and "we did not want to upset the religious" - as expressing harmony, the indifference, the ambiguity, the conflict and so on existing between self and society. The 'I' in Nelly's narrative seems to reflect a conflict with the social order whilst the 'we' is the identification with her family's decisions and thus the acceptance of the pattern of the social order. However, she gives evidence of her actively questioning, in her own way (internally), the status of the religious at the school then positions herself as fighter who is challenging the authority by proving that she is not a victim as they would have wanted her to be but the winner. One can speculate that those were the sort of experiences that assisted Nelly in her strong belief that she was going to succeed in Australia. However, this experience and similar ones seemed to have left vestiges of doubt when it came to the issue of studying and succeeding. She tells us that, even though one of her main goals in both in Australia and in Peru was to obtain a University degree, it has been hard for her to attain anything involving formal education. She has found that studying has not been easy for her, however, this has not discouraged her from doing it and from achieving tertiary qualifications in Australia.

"I was the type of person that, to achieve the things that I have now, I had to do a lot of hard work, through studying very hard because I am not a person that has the facility of retention and good memory. I have had to study and study and memorise and that has taken a long time." (Interview 1)

As Nelly narrates her life learning experiences one is confronted with powerful accounts of sorrow which seem to have a recurring thread based on 'disorienting dilemmas' caused by experiences of tragic separation and death of people who were very close to her. Being disoriented has meant, for her, states of confusion as to what direction to take and being perplexed by a

situation and not knowing what to do. As a listener to her narrative, one cannot fail to be moved by the thought of the amount of pain and suffering that Nelly must have encountered each time that she confronted a tragic situation. Although she has been able to come to grips with her losses, this rationalisation has not diminished the amount of pain and sadness that she seems to have each time she tells of and re-lives her experiences. As she 'experiences the experience' (Ellis & Bochner 1992) she is able to reconstruct and reorganise it in a way that enables her, through this process, to increase her ability to cope and also her ability to direct and control any similar subsequent experience. Experience in this case has an active and a passive component. It was not just what has happened to her but what she did with that experience (Dewey 1968:42).

As she learns from each experience her state of confusion, her 'disorienting dilemma' takes a turn towards a state of clarification and understanding. Mezirow writes of the way that we may be confronted by a disorienting dilemma either suddenly or over a period of time. A crisis may project us into a period of reassessment. Or we may find ourselves presented with a disorienting dilemma that has developed over a long period of time. Gradually the reality of our situation grows further removed from our view of reality until finally the contradictions in our life become simply too great to ignore or explain away.

'There are certain challenges or dilemmas in every day life that cannot be resolved by the usual way we handle problems – that is, by simply learning more about them or learning how to cope with them more effectively. Life becomes untenable, and we undergo significant phases of reassessment and growth.' (Mezirow 1977:154).

Her first disorienting dilemma was triggered by the crisis she suffered as a result of her father's death. She lived in a patriarchal society in a very protected environment where a man, is portrayed as a super-human being. She has grown up with a belief that her father was so strong that he was never going to die. His death affected her very significantly.

"Many things that happened in my life made me learn to be stronger, you know, because I think you learn from things that happen and if they don't push you down you really come up to be a better and stronger person. My father was a very dedicated husband and he supported my mother in every way even though she didn't work. My father seemed to work long hours in the bakery and we used to help him just like a family business. One of the things that affected me the most in my life was the death of my father, (*very deep sigh*) and the other, the death of my son. The death of my mother affected me but for me the death of my father affected me much more and I don't know why? Maybe it was because at the time when it occurred I used to be very close to my father. When he passed away, for me it was an immense missing feeling as if my whole world has finished as if there was no worth in living, that it was better to die. So I used to beg that he could come back to take me. I'd beg him that he wouldn't leave me. So even though I had my family and my sisters, for me the loss of him was like my whole world was finished. I was 16 years but we had been brought up in another time. I was perhaps a bit innocent. My father was never a sick person, I never saw my father sick, he was very strong. He looked like an oak, full of energy and a hard working man. Seeing your father like that you would only think that your father is immortal and that is why I could not conceive the possibility that it could happen, you know? For me it was inconceivable that my father could have died mainly because I had never thought or been prepared for it and I never said goodbye properly to him. I, (*hesitant*) was so much affected by his death that I called him. I wanted him to come and properly say goodbye. It was something that - I don't know - I used to live in a fantasy, how can I tell you?, like if I had my life missing, the air missing because for me it was an inconceivable loss. 'Oh no, no it can't be, it can't be.' I used to wake up and (*hesitant*) they would have to give me tablets, because I used to wake up and scream 'No, it can't be, can't be. He is not dead!' They had to drug me because I was forcing myself to believe that my father was not dead. And, you know, they brought me home to view him and I used to have such attacks that I wanted to take him out of the coffin. I said 'Take him out, he is breathing, he is breathing!' Oh, oh it was a terrible thing that affected me terribly for months because my father died in May and, do you know, that my father came after five months for my birthday and that was the last day that I saw my father. I called and called him because for me it was like he hadn't said goodbye. I dreamed of him every day. I dreamed that he was alive and that I was the only one who knew that he was alive and that tormented me. It was like if I was going to open a door and I was going to find him alive. Well, the day of my birthday (*pausing and speaking very slowly*) my mother was with us, we had dinner at home. They went to bed and I stayed downstairs because I was sure that my father was going to come (*pausing, looking down*) so, (*long pause*) so I felt him, I felt that wave as when someone opens the 'fridge and one feels the cold air (*said in diminutive form*) that comes, just like that,

and I knew that it was my father so I didn't actually see him but I felt him and I was talking to him and I felt peace and tranquility from that moment onwards. I was able to debrief myself and from that moment I was resigned to the fact that he had truly gone." (Interview 1)

Mezirow (1981) states that such dilemmas can be the source of a profound and very special kind of learning and they constitute significant phases of reassessment and growth, a period during which we take hard look at ourselves and at the kind of assumptions and values we may have accepted up until that point. From here we may look for new roles and new ways of leading our lives; prepare for and try out our new roles and finally effect 'a reintegration into society on the basis of conditions dictated by the new perspective'. Knowles (1970) states that the volume and quality of personal experiences provides the individual with a rich learning resource that conversely contributes to a more mature approach to the next experience. In Nelly's case she has had recurring painful experiences of loss and death and though they have been profoundly disabling she has arrived, at the end of it, at a more mature realisation that there are losses that we have to face because they are unavoidable and inescapable. She has more recently learned, after the tragic death of her son, that she has not yet learned to completely let go. This mature realisation has helped her to rationalise her pain and feelings but the loss of connectedness that she has learned to have as her security blanket (as part of her socialisation process), - the trauma of losing her father, her inevitable separation from him and the death of her mother - have all left her very sensitive to losses. She has memories and feelings of the anxiety she felt when she lost her son and although some time has passed since then, she still re-lives those feelings as she tells the story. One of the ways that she uses to deal with that painful memory is by helping others. It is through helping others that she deals with her pain, so alleviating that pain and her pre-existing sense of helplessness. Viorst (1986), writing on bereavement, states that a complete renunciation to separation especially to the ones we love is a kind of 'supreme way of learning', through which one changes the direction of thinking by learning to give up the deepest and strongest attachment to others, the giving up of a dream, giving up part of

yourself, because it is through this giving up that one can accept the limitations on our power (pp2-5).

In her narratives Nelly recounted her experiences and feelings as a result of a tragic accident that caused the death of her teenage son. Her son had been excited by the idea of becoming a mountain climber and he had read literature on the different ways of tying ropes. Nelly had decided to take the day off to watch some videos with her son who was on his first day of school holiday. She went to the shop to hire the videos whilst her son stayed back preparing some snacks to share with his mother. When she returned she found her son dead - he had a noose around his neck.

To understand the intensity and the powerful emotions conveyed by Nelly in her narrative part of the original transcription is presented.

"With my son, (*short pause*) well that was an atrocious. I think all mothers have the same wish 'Oh god, I hope that nothing happens to my children.' One is always so careful and I have always said that if anything happens to my children I would prefer to die, and that is how you feel when you lose a child. (*voice changed as participant became upset and tearful*) When you lose a child, the only thing that you want is to die, one feels a hatred to nature, hatred to the day and to the night because one gets up and says 'My son is not alive - why is day, why is there sun,...how do you dare to laugh if my son has died?' It is a terrible sensation, it is an emptiness that one cannot imagine and the pain is not only of sadness but it is physical a pain that really eats you. I don't know if it is like a heart attack but it is like if your heart has been nailed and the only way that you could get a bit of relief is by crying, to disinfect yourself because you feel that you are suffocating. It is indescribable that pain that you feel, ... at the beginning we were on tablets because ... we didn't eat, we didn't sleep because how can I describe it to you? Everything you do, all the activities that you do every day, you think. 'How can I eat if my son has died?' It is like if you are but you are not and the first that you think is - how can I describe it to you - for example you do not want any physical contact, nothing, because everything is like, how can I say, it is like how can you dare to feel love, pleasure for something when your son has died. It is something terrible something that uhh is not easy to describe. Sometimes one thinks that it may be a nightmare, one goes to bed and when one gets up because due to the tablets one gets up very relaxed and are not completely awake, when you suddenly think 'Oh my son has died.' So it is like each minute of the day,

every second you live with that. It seems like you want it to be a dream but it isn't, it is the reality. He is not here and sometimes one thinks 'What would have happened if I didn't go to the shop?, what would have happened if I'd have forced him to have come with me?' so many things that cross your mind. Uhh, perhaps he would have been alive and I could have helped him, so perhaps he has just put it on and he became scared and heard me knocking at the door and perhaps I could have saved him - all of those things that I was accusing myself of, all the things that I was feeling guilty - and there were no answers." (Interview 2)

As a narrator Nelly often struggled to find distance from the events and from the characters involved in her story, including herself. At times she is temporarily at a distance but as she progresses in the sequences of the events she gets closer and closer, feelings of pain are conveyed and seems that intense emotional pain is invading her as the narrative continues. At times of despair, when no solution is found, discourses of faith and religion are sought.

"Ahh (*still tearful*) look at the very beginning when that just happened, when I was asleep it was as if I was anaesthetised by the events and by the discovery. It was a thing (*silence and thinking*) like on the physical side my mouth was like, what can I say, you know, that my mouth was very painful because my lips were stuck to my teeth, apparently when one enters into a shock the adrenaline, (*hesitates*) the doctor said that the saliva glands or something like that because I used to say to myself why I was feeling, uhh, physical pain. I think one's organism, to prevent one staying in shock, protects in that way, and do, you know? that later it was like someone has put you on a bench and you are passively looking when suddenly you say 'What I am doing here? What has happened?' Uhh, a sensation like you are lost and, you know, the people tell you, uhh, (*hesitant*) and you try to think to imagine things, uhh, it is a terrible experience. But slowly, slowly I think God gives you strength because I found (*crying*) that what helped me was the prayer. I pray the rosary every night and I asked the God to look after his soul I said 'Please take care of him, take care of him'. So in the beginning the only way I could sleep was praying, praying every night. Praying, praying and then I fell asleep. In the beginning when the pain is so huge that you think 'Oh no I won't be able to.' you know, because it takes time to be able to resume to things that you were doing before, return to everything that you had before because it is like you want to punish yourself, like you want, on the one hand that it finishes, but on the other you want to suffer more because you do not deserve to stay

alive because if your son is dead. Nothing counts anymore and one asked oneself many questions and always why, why?" (Interview 2)

In building a family of her own Nelly has followed her traditional way of seeing family unity. As a mother she has assumed complete responsibility for the emotional and spiritual upbringing of her children and that in itself has not helped her when coming to grips with the death of her son. Psycho-analyst Roger Gould writes that;

'Our subjective experience of life and our behaviours are governed by literally thousands of beliefs (ideas) that compose the map used for interpreting the events of our life (including our own mental events). When we grow, we correct a belief that has restricted and restrained us unnecessarily. For example when we learned as young people that there is no universal law requiring us to be what our parents wanted us to be, we are released to explore and experiment. A door to a new level of consciousness is opened.' (Gould, 1978:116)

But opening up the doors is sometimes frightening because safety can often be assured by keeping the door closed. The experience of her son's death has been paralysing for Nelly. She recounts that even after a year she still couldn't believe it and whilst she was remembering details of the event including the intervention of the police, the ambulance people, the kindness and love displayed by her friends and relatives and the shock that her husband suffered when he arrived home, she was still in such state of mind that for her it was as if she was watching a film and that it was not her tragedy but that of somebody else. In living with this denial she remembers how one day she was at home preparing dinner when the telephone rang. She answered the call and then she screamed calling her son's name, she began crying and asking 'Where are you?' It was her other son who had telephoned but for her both sounded exactly the same. Nelly's grief had continued. Counsellors tell us that grief is not an illness but it is a way of working through the implications of loss. She comforts herself by denying that he is not there, she doesn't abandon the internal hope of finding her son so she is in constant search for him but then as she confronts the reality of the loss she experiences desolation. These experiences have been part of the process of

coming to terms with a new reality that her son is dead, gone forever. She experiences powerful emotions that drain all her energy, that overwhelm her to the extent of her desiring not to live. She feels intense guilt and questions herself constantly about things that she could have done to prevent his death. This learning and the pain involved have been so terribly hurtful that even now as she struggles to describe it. "There is no language to describe it, the pain was so sharp and nailing that words can only tell one part of the experience but not the degree of it." (Interview 2). Nelly has sought help and though she is still affected by the loss she is able to rationalise it more as she recounts.

"I saw the doctor he explained to me, 'Look Nelly, his death was almost instant,...his face was like of one who is asleep nothing more. Nelly live with the peace that he has not suffered and that the death has been sudden and do not feel guilty because even if you would have been there at the door it would have been too late for reviving him. I know that you blame yourself, that it could have been different, but don't torture yourself because perhaps it was his time to go.' The first year was the hardest, the first year was like floating. I didn't know what to do, you know, although, although I saw counsellors I was still in a terrible pain. I used to ask God 'I don't want to live any more I want to die.' you know, but then one needs to react and say but I have another two children to live for, the other two children. But at the time when that happens the only things that matter are to stop suffering and to know that the loved one has gone." (Interview 2)

In reviewing Nelly's narratives one is astounded by her experiences, by her understanding and acceptance of her tragedy and by her understanding of the fragility that is connected to being a human being. In coming to understand herself and the devastating nature of her experiences, she came to understand, a little better, what life is and by learning about herself she has extended her knowledge and ability to learn about others. Some of her experiences have been not only about the impact that she has suffered as a result of growing up in an environment in which she expected to be passive, submissive and dependant, but about how she (within the scope of her knowledge and understanding) dealt with them. When she was young her experiences were subject to those who raised her. Her experience and knowledge were the result of their actions or in-actions and all of these would shape her thinking and the way she learned. Considering the length of her

dependence, she was at risk of developing thinking patterns that would have been debilitating to her capacity to learn well. Nelly's experience of injustice at school left her with confusion between what she thought the religious were supposed to be and the reality. Nuns are religious leaders who have been portrayed by society as good and fair but this one was not like that. The action of that nun left her with an ingrained thinking that she can not learn like everybody else. This thinking could have destroyed her confidence and self-worth completely but the unfairness of the act itself provided Nelly with a reason to challenge the nun and to prove that she was wrong in her actions. She learned to recognise the deceptive messages that she was receiving at the school. As a result of this process of contradiction Nelly showed ability from a young age to think independently but became conscious that she had constraints because she was dependant on her parents and her parents dependant of the thinking of the nuns at the school. She understood the conditions involved in fitting into one's society. She was discouraged from questioning or sorting through the behaviour of the nuns because one is 'not to question the reputation of those who give us the insights of our beliefs.' So she felt compelled to be silent because the nuns had control of education and of telling parents what is best for their children. These are the sort of issues discussed by Freire (1970,1975) when he speaks about control by ideas which is the most pervasive form of social control and by far the most difficult to describe.

Nelly was able to learn that nuns are humans and as such they can lie and be deceitful like any other human being. Her redefinition of what religion is and who the religious are has not removed her affiliation for her faith. In fact she has, at times of crisis and grief, validated her experience through her religious belief. Through the process of resolving her grief she has learned that in order to live in a healthy way one must confront one's thinking and this has involved thinking in a challenging way, in thinking and deciding what is essential to think or learn about, and what is not essential. It has also involved acknowledging the gaps in her knowledge and endeavouring to know those gaps by seeking assistance.

As she becomes more accepting of the reality she becomes more in command of her life and, more importantly, of her thoughts. As she talks about her experiences and her learning she is over-whelmed by what she is able to do and how she has been able to live and learn through such tragic moments. Most of her learning has involved internal processes, conflicting emotions and thinking. They have been enduring, disorienting but most of all have been learning of a supreme nature. They have meant transformation.

Lourdes

Lourdes was in her mid-twenties when she migrated to Australia. She had finished a five-year university degree in education and was teaching in an American school in the capital Lima. This was her first experience as a teacher and she was very happy. She was respected as a teacher and given all the necessary facilities. She described the students as being really intelligent. Very few had learning problems and their response was excellent. If there were any problems, they were problems of behaviour. The majority of the students were children of diplomats and people from large corporations. Later in Australia, when she finally began teaching, after her battle of mastering the level of English language that was necessary for her to teach in Australian schools, she encountered quite different experiences.

The experiences of migrating to another country can be complex. Successful adaptation is subject to a number of variables some of which, in many cases, are the cause of stresses and negative effect. Nann (1982) in exploring those stresses discusses some of what he perceives as the requirements for settlement in a new country suggesting that, in the process of adaptation, the individual requires proficiency in the new language.

'Migrants must learn the language of their host culture or remain socially and economically disadvantaged. This cannot be separated from cultural values and norms. Learning a new language, means learning to be part of a new social system and this in turn may mean having to relinquish elements of the old.' (Nann 1982:11)

In Australia there was an expectation that individuals should assimilate to the country's values and systems and language was the first step in the assimilation process. Lourdes, like other migrant Peruvian women, knew that in order to enter her career and to become a teacher in Australia she had first to learn the language. She became very focussed on what she wanted to do. Her main ambition was to learn the language, the main reason why she had migrated in the first place. Of course there was another reason, one which Lourdes had embraced since she was a child, and that was her fascination for

all the things her father used to tell her every time he returned from overseas including places to which he'd been sent by the Peruvian Air Force.

She recalled that her experiences had been geared to learning English and to meeting Australian people so she decided that, instead of immediately working, she would dedicate her time to study as much as possible. She initially found that she couldn't access much information about English courses but then, through the Immigration Department she and two colleagues, with whom she became very good friends, found some English courses. The first course that they did was a course lasting three or four months and consisting of 4 hours each day. This was the first of a number of full-time and part-time courses that they undertook.

Lourdes described a period of happiness and of feeling fortunate to have found many other Peruvian girls, including the ones she did courses with, with whom she developed strong friendships which have endured up to the present. They supported each other and went everywhere together which gave them strength to deal with all the changes that they had to face as new arrivals in a foreign country. When they finished two basic English courses they felt that they had sufficient knowledge and courage to try to get jobs in offices. They realised that at that stage there was no hope of getting jobs in their professions. Lourdes' two girlfriends found jobs in a government office and she found a job in the pay office of the British Leyland Motor Company. She remembered it as a unique and incredible experience. She told the company that she had a University degree and that she had just finished an English course, thinking that mentioning her university qualifications would be an attractive proposition, but in fact it caused an opposite reaction. The personnel officer was concerned that she would only stay in the company for a short period of time due to her higher education. However the company did employ her and she stayed in that job for 18 months until a vacancy occurred at the Department of Lands where one of her friends was working.

Lourdes recounted that she and her friends felt young and enthusiastic, they were learning, together, to be independent and to handle their own affairs.

She felt that their standard of life was good and even though they were not earning much money they learned to share the expenses in the flat and always had money to go out as well as being able to save and travel. Lourdes' fascination for Australia motivated her to travel for short periods of time to different parts of Australia. For her it was not only a way of practising the language but of coming to know and interact with other people in different environments. All of this gave her a very good insight into the country and developed her perception of people living in Australia whom she found friendly and very accommodating. However it was always in her mind that one day she had to return to her profession and not spend the rest of her life doing clerical work. So after being in Australia for two years and not being able to enter the teaching profession she left to the United States. She left Australia thinking that she would never return.

Lourdes explained that her learning experiences have been 'full of surprises' and she has found these surprises in all aspects of her learning of life and her growth. She had acquired a formal education as part of her family orientation and as a result of societal expectations. Her belief was that having a respectable education enabled her to have acceptable standing in society. This 'technical area' of learning in Habermas' terms, or 'instrumental learning' as described by Mezirow, gave Lourdes competency in the area of teaching but unfortunately migrating to Australia meant that before she could put that training into practice she had to learn a new language - English, and also to learn the idiosyncrasies and culture of people in Australia. She also needed to learn how to relate to them thus entering another domain of learning, the 'practical' area or, as Mezirow put it, 'learning for interpersonal understanding'. Since arrival, through interaction with others and in her search for educational concepts, she gained insight and understanding as to the thinking and behaviour of people and the rules of education and employment. She couldn't get into her profession because, apart from the difficulties with the language, her qualifications were not recognised. She was so disappointed with this that she decided to go to United States hoping to work there as a teacher. Initially she worked as a volunteer under the auspices of the Catholic Education organisation whilst concurrently engaged in some

university studies. Her idea was to gain experience with English speaking students, an opportunity that she did not find in Australia.

"In the United States I enrolled as a post graduate student at the University and I did courses related to the teaching idiom as a second language, but I did not like the environment very much and the fact that I couldn't get a permanent job influenced my decision to return to Peru." (Interview 1)

She had left Australia with the idea that she was not going to return, but after a few disappointing experiences in Peru she came back.

"I returned to Peru, of course to see my parents and explore the possibilities of finding a job. But of course it was very difficult in Peru. I worked for some months and at that time I decided to come back to Australia. I missed the life and the environment here. It was a bit difficult to adapt and live in Peru again so after nine months and, with great sadness because I had to leave my parents again, I returned to Australia." (Interview 1)

Returning to Australia meant continuing with her experiences in all domains of learning.

Her experience in Habermas' 'third domain' of learning – the 'emancipatory' domain, or, in Mezirows terms the domain of 'perspective transformation' - began much earlier in Peru during her transition from adolescence to adulthood. She began questioning her father's attitude and the home rules. Through her narratives one can see that she gives credit to her father's attitudes but not without a critical examination. This in itself has provided her with an understanding of his ideas and in turn has assisted her in examining her present life situation in a more relaxed manner, in a way that makes sense to her. She described her father as;

" .. a very authoritarian father but also very generous. He dedicated a lot of his time to helping me with my studies and motivating me to study. He did not accept that I knew a lot just because I had good marks but would constantly ask me questions to see whether I really knew the subjects. If I didn't know the answer he would mock me.

Lucky for me, it provoked in me an incentive for inquiring, for investigating so that the next time it wouldn't produce mockery and joking." (Interview 1)

Lourdes' attempts with her own children to reproduce her father's 'tactics' (as she described them) in his way of testing Lourdes' knowledge did not always produce good results. She learned that it didn't have the same effect and she realises now that sometimes this way of testing can have the opposite effect, in that the subject of the exercise may accept as a reality that they don't know and thus lose interest in trying. But in her case there was a strong desire to try, to demonstrate that she knew, in order to please her father. She feels that this motivation has helped her considerably through her life. This 'trying' may have to do with the way culture prompts a woman, from an early age, to feel ambivalent about her achievements and about rewards. Williams (1971) posits that;

'The culture prompts a woman, very early, to become sensitive to the responses of others and to evaluate herself accordingly. She learns to be and to behave in ways that will maximise for her the powerful rewards of love, admiration and approval. But to the extent that her self-esteem and sense of self-worth become dependent upon such rewards she is dependent upon the presence of significant others for their delivery and she fails to develop internal criteria for an evaluation and definition of her self.' (p184)

Although Lourdes states an admiration for her father, she described, as a 'negative' aspect of her adolescence, the fact that her father was so strict that he didn't let her to go out with other girls to engage in activities that were generally thought to be acceptable for an adolescent, activities that he did not agree with. She believed that he didn't trust her and that his view was that girls at her age shouldn't have too much freedom or to go to parties frequently. Of course like any other adolescent she wanted to go out, she wanted more freedom as the other girls had. For her all of that was forbidden. It was a 'battle' which left her feeling bitter and often crying from frustration.

"If I went to a party on a Friday there was no way that I could go to a party on a Saturday. And if I went to a party on a weekend, it was for sure that the following one

I couldn't go. That lack of freedom made me... specially when I grew up and when I was older ... it made me cry and feel desperate and that was the negative part that I can remember of my adolescence." (Interview 1)

Similarly, whenever she requested something such as things other girls of her age were wearing such as a dress or a pair of shoes, he would refuse to buy it for her. Money was not the issue because as an officer of the air force he was well paid. She would cry and be upset by his refusals, however at the end of the month and when she did not expect it he would say to her "Guess what I have here?" and, as this became a common practice, she would say the name of the item that she had previously requested, and the answer would be "Yes it is."

She couldn't understand why he would do that. It is only now that she explained that her father's idea of life was that one must not think that things are easy to get, and that we need to earn them. Later in the interview, referring to her relationship with her brother and father, she talked about the paternalistic and masculine attitudes which were prevalent in the culture of Latin American countries. It is here that one can speculate that her father's attitude towards Lourdes was an extension of his cultural belief that it was the role of the father to have control and authority over his children in general and the females in particular and that it was not enough to have control but he had to demonstrate, and remind others of, that control.

Lovell (1982), writing on the lethal effects of paternalism in nursing, proposes that 'paternalistic deception is a strong and vital thread in the intricately woven fabric of control'. She believes that the view of paternalism normally refers to one person caring and guiding another in a fatherly way and it is on this concept that society's social system is structured; paternalism flows from patriarchy (p213). To correctly understand the concept of paternalism she explains;

'The derivation of the word helps one gain understanding of exactly what patriarchy means. Pater means father, possessor or master. The family is the basic social unit

of patriarchy. Family comes from famel, which means servant, slave or possession. Paterfamilias therefore, means owner or possessor of slaves'.(p210)

Figueroa and Anderson in 'Women in Peru' (1983) describe the Peruvian legal system as a 'rigid legal framework' under which a number of specific familial arrangements are hung:

'Peru's civil code states that the husband fixes the residence of the married couple and the wife is obliged to follow him. It states that the husband is responsible for the maintenance of the household and that the wife may work if the husband agrees to permit it. The husband, however, is legally recognised as chief administrator of all property.' (p6)

With this background Lourdes was developing her meaning perspective and her view about herself including the roles that her father and family would play in fulfilling her wishes and desires of the future. The situations of restrictions by her father caused her to constantly think of alternatives and possibilities of becoming independent, notably by way of working and earning her own money so that in this way she didn't need to depend upon him. Part of her thinking was to go away to another country.

In talking about her experience of misery and frustration when her father would not give her permission to go out with other girls, she talked about her feelings and the experience of those feelings but she does not talk about what she did or didn't do in response to his mandates. One can presume that the reason has been that she saw herself as having no control over her father's decisions and no control over her actions.

Egan (1984) highlights the writings of Weisz, Rothbaum and Blackburn who discuss issues relating to people's ability to control their destinies. They defined and described them in terms of 'primary and secondary control' in the following way:

'There are at least two general paths to a feeling of control. In primary control, individuals enhance their rewards by influencing existing realities (e.g., other people,

circumstances, symptoms or behaviour problems). In secondary control, individuals enhance their rewards by accommodating to existing realities and maximising satisfaction or goodness of fit with things as they are.' (p.955)

Using this criteria one can say that Lourdes, whilst feeling overpowered by her father's decisions of constantly rejecting to her requests, took what was then the only realistic option for her which was that of secondary control. She accommodated herself to the current realities and rules of the family and made the best out of it by studying and going to the university with her father's blessing. Whilst she was conforming with the rules she began directing herself to a path of primary control by first thinking how to go about it and later by actually exploring possibilities available. One of them was going to another country. Her thinking about it has to do with taking an internal action and as Egan postulates;

'Many cognitive action processes, those things that go on inside our heads, are really forms of internal behaviour. These include such actions as thinking, expecting, attending to the things inside or outside oneself, registering information, daydreaming, rehearsing behaviours in one's mind, turning things over in one's mind, making associations, imagining, thinking about one's emotions, thinking about one's thoughts....' (p90)

When she went to the Embassy to find out about the possibilities of going to Australia she engaged in external action which is action that can be witnessed by others (Egan 1984:90).

The internal action had involved assessing her situation, questioning and answering how she felt about it and how to solve her perceived dilemma. This was what Dewey (1933) called 'reflection', the process of assessing and examining assumptions. Through this process she learned that she could change the direction of her life and her dependency on her family. Searching for solutions and finding them gave her great satisfaction and a primary control over her life. What she had learned was product firstly of her internal effort of silently looking for solutions and secondly her action-effort of solving and finding solutions. These experiences have given Lourdes an

understanding of the meaning of life, family life.

Through reflecting she began seeing and understanding her world more clearly but more importantly she understood the role she was playing in the boundaries of the culture and society in which she found herself. She began learning that she could play an active role in changing that, not knowing exactly how, but she knew that she could. Lourdes had begun what Mezirow calls 'perspective transformation' which, in her case, was triggered by a gradual realisation that her lifestyle, her way of thinking were less 'authentic' than those of her more emancipated friends and her gradually sensing that she would share her friends' interests if she could only free herself from a belief system based on gender stereotypes. In recalling earlier experiences she says,

"The relationship with my brother was quite good I think because of the fact that we were only two children...I believe that my father had a weakness or predilection for my brother and my mother for me. So we were always happy because my father would play football with my brother and had an affinity for cars and that type of thing, whilst my mother and I spent innumerable hours doing activities imagined to be typical for women. Despite the fact that I knew that my brother was his favourite I never felt jealous of that relationship because I knew also that I was the favourite of my mother, you know? My brother and I spent many hours playing in the house, because my father was very strict and, for example, we could go and play with friends during the day but not in the evening. The other children - in summer - would be playing in the street but my father would say 'no'. So we learned to share all kind of games in the house. When I was working I knew that my father was giving him more money than he would have given me and...perhaps it would be important to mention that (*this was*) typical, typical of our Latin culture. The fact is that it is considered that a man needs money but not a woman." (Interview 1)

Lourdes began realising that her perceptions and views had been the result of her family and socialisation processes. Egan suggests that, through the socialisation process, we develop a variety of filters through which we come to see ourselves, others and the world around us. Egan (1984) quotes Hall: (1977:85) who notes:

'One of the functions of culture is to provide a highly selective screen between man and the outside world. In its many forms, culture therefore designates what we pay attention to and what to ignore. This screening provides structure for the world. We need filters to provide structure for ourselves as we interact with the world. But personal, familial, sociological and cultural filters introduce various forms of bias into our view of things and do so without our being aware of it.' (p118.)

The stronger the cultural filters, the greater the likelihood of bias (Egan 1984:118). For instance in Lourdes' case she had been influenced, not just by the culture and religion of the country, but by the exclusive regimental environment in which she was brought up. As a result of her father being in the armed forces she lived in a town far away from the city in a secluded, exclusive zone designed for officers and their families only. She only mixed with children and the family members of other officers. They had their own teachers for few students, a vehicle with a driver to take all the children to school every day and a private beach. The middle class environment, coupled with the regimental type of upbringing, had influenced her in using similar filters when dealing with herself and others.

In looking at her narratives and the figurative language that she uses one can see the influence that environment has had upon Lourdes up to this date. Embler (1996:ix, in Mezirow 1990:310) states that cultural beliefs, ideas and causal assumptions are embedded in figurative language about human condition. These figurative forms of language, which develop out of social conditions, influence us in our socialisation and shape our social behaviours. The language exerts some social control over the user. Of relevance is Weedon's (1987) discussion of language as the common factor in the analysis of social organisation, social meaning, power and individual consciousness.

'Language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organisation and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity is constructed. Subjectivity is produced in a whole range of discursive practices – economic, social, and political. Language is not the expression of unique individuality; it constructs the individual's subjectivity in ways which are socially specific.' (p21)

Lourdes' use of language has much to do with such social and parental influences.

"I remember I put in place some tactics." "It was a battle, a very intense battle." " .. it was his duty to tell me." ... "I was armed with my degree." (Interview 2)

These key words reflect the regimental way of life that existed for Lourdes through childhood and adolescence. She remembered how protected she had been to the extent that when she returned to the capital at the age of fourteen years she was afraid of the city and its environment.

"I arrived in Lima and found that all the 14 years old girls had boyfriends, make up and nobody was interested in playing with dolls. (*laughing*) It was an incredible change, and I grew up like that (*clicking her fingers*) quickly and with a hard push. There, another type of life began, more sophisticated of course and with all the care necessary to face the problems that a city brings. I couldn't go out and walk anywhere that I wanted, there was traffic everywhere. It was very interesting and there began another stage of my life another stage of my learning. Not only because of geographical changes but because I was then an adolescent who began questioning and thinking beyond the environment seen by my eyes." (Interview 1)

Amongst the extensive literature on protection of girls in the family environment Hoffman (1972) elaborates that parents are more protective of girls and grant them independence at a later age than they do boys and notes that since children pick up attitudes of their care takers, it is not unreasonable to infer from such findings that girls begin under these conditions to sense themselves as less able and as more fragile and thus more in need of support and reassurance from others. Such 'rewards' then become necessary for security. Figueroa & Anderson (1983) further confirm this view as being the reality in Peru. Although, initial feelings of inadequacy invaded Lourdes' mind, they lasted only a short time. Due to the influence of other girls in the school she saw, under the light of culture, the meaning of her life, she was learning what Mezirow (1990) calls 'meaning perspectives', meanings that one uncritically acquires during childhood through the process of socialisation which are often in the context of an emotionally charged relationship with

parents, teachers or other mentors. The more intense the emotional context of learning and the more it is reinforced, the more deeply embedded and intractable to change are the habits of expectation that constitute our meaning perspectives. Experience strengthens, extends, and refines our structures of meaning by reinforcing our expectations about how things are supposed to be (p2).

For Lourdes, going to another country has provided a support climate for this kind of personal reappraisal. She has become aware of the constraints on her personal development, autonomy, and self determination imposed by social stereotypes. These perspectives have provided Lourdes with principles for interpreting. They have involved looking at the symbol systems and how they have significantly affected her perception, understanding and remembering of meanings within the context of communication. Our perspectives selectively order and delimit what we learn.

Lourdes regards the greatest difficulty in her life as being the birth of her son with an intellectual disability. This has been a learning opportunity of a different kind, something that was totally new to her but that involved her coming to grips with her meaning perspectives and those of her husband. However she was not prepared for it. Though she acknowledges that when she became pregnant she was at an age considered to be risky to have children, she thought that being married to a doctor would ensure her safety because her husband would be able to take care of the situation and have the solution to any medical problem and the knowledge of what to do. However, in the event, it was a shock because there was no solution. Nothing could change the situation because her son was already born. She recalls that it was very difficult for her to accept it and very difficult to face other people for the fear of what they were going to think or say. She used to cry a great deal worrying about things that could happen to him in the future. She used to worry about what was going to happen when he grew up, what was going to happen when he wanted to have an emotional relationship with another person. She worried about him living the rest of his life alone without having a companion with whom to share his life. She describes her feelings by saying;

"You don't have a break, the problems are there, the problems are there every day, every year, every month. Sometimes I get very depressed and one way to deal with it is by keeping interest in my work. I spend a considerable amount of time preparing my lessons and when I leave home somehow I manage to leave problems behind. When I am in the classroom situation, it is me, my profession, my students and my world, it is mine. The minute I am on my way home all the problems start. The other thing I do is to have a lot of friends and I like to talk to people, to get involved in other things and like to have a good time thus I feel re-charged." (Interview 2)

When she was three month's pregnant she had the opportunity of having a test to find out whether everything was all-right. When she discussed the possibility of having the test with her husband, a very strong Catholic believer, his response was that regardless the outcome he wasn't going to accept an abortion if something were to be wrong, so she felt that there was no point in having the test.

This in itself was a further learning experience about her husband's thinking and also about the assumptions she'd had about what a husband means and what being a doctor means and the role that he plays. She realised that as her husband and as a doctor it did not necessarily mean that he had all the solutions to her difficulties. This part of her experience has a resonance to her growing up belief that her father was always going to solve all the problems of the family and that as a female daughter (or a wife in this case) she was "...in good hands". (Interview 2) As she was not too convinced by the reaction of her husband she decided to become informed and decided to go ahead with the pregnancy and not to have the test. She learned that, in many cases, as a consequence of the test the pregnancy may be aborted. By then she had made the decision that it was going to be her last child and felt that she could not risk the possibility of the child being 'normal' but becoming disabled because of the test. When the baby was born he was diagnosed as having an intellectual disability.

"I became very upset and very distressed. I knew that I didn't have to wait for the blood test to come. Of course it was stressful to look at your baby and to try to find

out all of these features that they described as typical of Down's Syndrome. It was awful, I remember the mixture of sadness and joy. You pick up your baby and then you feel this terrible pain of knowing that something is wrong." (Interview 2)

Much of what we learn involves making new interpretations that enable us to elaborate, further differentiate and reinforce our long-established frames of reference or to create new meaning schemes (Mezirow 1990:4). Lourdes's new meaning scheme had begun with this "mixture of sadness and joy", with a puzzle, with the struggle and confusion of facing something unexpected. She is confronted with a paradoxical situation. She loves her son but not what he is, a child with a disability. There is confusion and mixed feelings of fear, remorse and happiness. In seeking to manage what was an inevitable situation that could not be reversed, Lourdes has learned, through the process of dealing with her difficulty, how society perceives human beings and some of the consequences of those perceptions. This in itself has been an awakening, learning experience for her in terms of understanding another dimension of cultural views and perceptions including her own. From the beginning, and as she struggled to understand her current situation, she felt alone and with many questions that she felt no-one could answer but as she confronted those questions the answers gradually came to her.

"...the pain was there constantly, day and night I was scared, I was scared about what was going to happen... I was so scared that I thought, 'Maybe this child may never walk, maybe this child will never be able to hold a spoon and feed himself'. The doctor wasn't very helpful ...the help came through the social worker at the hospital, who arranged for another woman who had a child with a disability to come and visit me at the hospital and this woman brought her child with her. It was nice to see that. Then, I remember, I was horrified about having to tell my other children that there was something wrong with their brother. It took me months and months and I could not do it because they were so excited, they were so happy about the little boy and I thought that if I told them that there was something wrong I would destroy that illusion, you know. And, thank God, it has affected them very little. They have never had any hesitation. I never saw them feeling embarrassed about their brother. When he went to school he started at the same school where the others were and they were as happy as anything to have him there." (Interview 2)

The outcome of being fearful has been positive for Lourdes so far because it has provided her with opportunities for growing and learning and this in turn has provided her with powerful tools of control and decision-making and choice when answering questions of what to do or how to do it. It has been a self empowering time as she sees it. Freire (1987) refers to fear, not as an abstraction, but as something that is very normal that causes us to reflect about the necessity to be very, very clear about our choices. This demands some kinds of concrete procedures or practices, which in turn are the actual experiences that provoke the fear. He recognises that having fear is normal because it is the manifestation of being alive, of being freed from not understanding why fear can be immobilising when one challenges the foreseen consequences of the societal status quo. Whilst he recognises the right to have fear he teaches us to be aware of the need to set limits and to cultivate the fear and to cultivate the means to accept it.

'If you rationalise your fear you deny your dream...The more you recognise your fear as a consequence of your attempt to practice your dream, the more you learn how to put into practice your dream' (Freire, 1987:156)

Lourdes has learned that she does not need to feel diminished by fear but, on the contrary, it encourages her to recognise that she is a human being and the limitations that one has in this world. This recognition allows her to feel secure and in control when an unexpected situation arrives and to set limits when fear tells her 'not to do this or that'. She has further learned to understand that there are deforming myths that come from the dominant ideology in society about people with disabilities. In her daily facing of the chores of helping her son and her family she has come to understand and learn the responses of society to the issues of impairment. She has begun talking and reading about it and she has learned that the social responses of people to the issue of disability cannot be explained with reference to single factors, such as the economy, belief systems or cultural relativism, but that it is culturally produced through the complex interaction between the mode of production and the central values of a particular society. This gives her strength when advocating on behalf of her son to the authority of school or

society in general. The experience of growing together with her son and having to respond to his needs, which are different to those of her other children, provides her with a new discovery about herself and assists her in learning more about herself and the changes that she has had to face.

"I learned to be flexible, accommodating, to bring myself to the level of the basic things that life offers us such as playing at the level of a child. I did not have that happiness, that imagination you know, that cheerfulness to play, you know. Having worked all the time with teenagers I was rigid and more adult-like. But I had to do it because I had to help my son and now it is part of me. I think that what I didn't realise before are the changes that we go through in life that we either do not acknowledge or that we resist due to fear." (Interview 2)

One of the most important challenges we face in life is to be able to adapt to ongoing changes by understanding the fundamental importance of reshaping our ideas. For Lourdes there have been major redefinitions and understandings of life and values. She has changed her view of fear and pain because she has changed her way of thinking. She has partially abandoned the application of logic that dominated her in the past and she has engaged in major changes of conceptualisation including how resources can be used to enable her son to live and participate in the community and live a valued life style, not segregated from her friends and family. Lourdes has been able to understand the broader environment in which we live and this has been an essential pre-requisite in changing her understanding of specific issues. She has begun networking with others and speaking about the issues. Now that her son is approaching adolescence Lourdes does not know what experiences will come with that and although she feels that thinking about it would generate anxiety she sees it as a challenge and as a continuous opportunity to test what she can and cannot do.

"Initially when he was a baby I thought that I wasn't going to manage. The situation appeared to be an unresolving eternity that I was not able to cope with but now, having passed those struggling years, I see that they have been an opportunity to test and re-test my ability and skills. Sometimes I feel tired and depressed but I realised that it is part of the process." (Interview 2)

Lourdes affiliation is to her son's difference, to his disability, she has re-interpreted her thinking and she behaves accordingly. Her life and the meaning of it have been re-structured by her in such a way that it is inclusive. Her whole family and her interests are contained in it. She has redefined her life in a way that she is also able to do the personal things she likes the most including working as a teacher with young people. She enjoys going to work because it provides her with another dimension.

She is able to compare her values at the time when she was growing up with those of her children who now are reaching a more mature stage and to compare to those of her adolescent students. This allows her to value and interpret her past experiences. Mezirow (1990) refers to 'meaning perspectives' as the distinctive ways an individual interprets experience at what developmental psychologists describe as 'different stages of moral, ethical and ego development and different stages of reflective judgement'. Meaning perspectives involve criteria for making value judgements and for belief systems (p2). It has been her meaning perspective that has taken Lourdes further to be able to understand certain cultural assumptions. She has learned that the difference amongst individuals' understanding and attitudes depends on the amount of information and cultural property that is acquired which in most cases corresponds to the amount of material property one has. She realises that at least she has a comfortable life in economic terms which allows her to seek and acquire information and she feels grateful for it. Being informed allows her to question what is beyond this cultural property, to question the status quo and to be aware of the contradictions that exist in society and to be aware of certain problems and issues that people prefer to evade. She has learned to distinguish when people speak from the brain and when they speak from the heart or both and she developed this ability as a result of becoming aware of the importance of listening and the importance of looking for details and simplicity. Although in the past she has taken for granted all of these factors she now feels and understands that they had been the core of her learning experiences.

Marisol

Marisol began her narrative by emphasizing that her childhood was different to many others because she lost her parents when she was 4 or 5 years old. She was brought up by her grandparents and grew up with cousins and uncles being part of a fifteen member family group. The oldest of her uncles acted as her guardian and was the one who was responsible for her entering an English school. Marisol was actually born outside of Peru of a Peruvian mother but, at the age of four, was sent to Peru after her mother's death and brought up in Peru in accordance with her mother's wishes.

Marisol reflected that the reason that she wanted to travel from a very early age was because she had been born in another country. When she grew up she wanted to go overseas to practice the English that she had learned. After going to a private school with English classes she undertook the shortest path to a career mainly because she didn't want to cause too much expense to the family. She chose to study in a secretarial course which prepared the students for work. In the beginning it was not easy to find employment that was deemed to be 'appropriate' in light of social and family expectations.

"Over there the culture and idiosyncrasy of people is such that to work as a cashier or a sales person selling shoes is not seen as a good thing. The ideal is for the woman to have a good job. Because I didn't have parents, my uncles protected me and didn't want me to work but I wanted to work so I could gain my independence." (Interview 1)

Despite the social constraints she began doing work experience without any pay and once worked in a car park earning virtually nothing. At this point she internalized her situation, reflecting upon her position posing the question to herself; "Is this type of work I want to do after all the education my family has given me?" (Interview 1) After working in a 'temp'-agency she learned that there was a job available in a government department. She applied and was able to get the job. For three months she was in a typing pool and then there was a better opportunity within the department. She was asked if she wanted

to replace a girl who was going overseas whose job had been as secretary for the director of administration.

"I began working for the director of administration. I had my own office and I had another person who worked with me and who was the personal assistant to the director and had to do the correspondence, ministerials and set up interviews for him. The work was fantastic but I used to say to myself 'I am 21, I have in front of me a career in the department but I have travelling ambitions. I have studied English for so long, and for what? for nothing.' because in my work I didn't use the English language." (Interview 1)

Marisol was faced with an ongoing dilemma between wanting to travel (originally to the United States) or to stay in a good career. Additionally she had begun a relationship with a man but discovered that he was married.

"He used to say that the relationship with his wife wasn't too good and that they were about to be separated - all of those tales and stories that a married man tells you, and that in a way contributed to me taking the decision of leaving Peru." (Interview 1)

Marisol's first contact with anything Australian was through doing some unpaid translation work for the Australian Consulate in Lima. She had been introduced by a friend to a person who was working on a newsletter produced by the Consulate and on several occasions she had helped to translate information about Australian farmers, tobacco and agriculture. Her next contact was after she heard about the possibility of migration to Australia.

".. this friend told me that the Australian Embassy had opened migration for people who wanted to go to Australia. I wanted to go America. Everybody wanted to go to America due to the closeness of the place but I said 'I am going to find out and to see my luck.'" (Interview 1)

After returning from a short holiday travelling around Peru she was told that the Embassy had advised that her visa was ready and that she needed to contact them as soon as possible.

"I had an interview with the Consul, he wanted to see me personally and he told me to bring all my papers and asked me whether I wanted to have the interview in Spanish or English. I responded 'in English'. He began talking to me. I hadn't practiced English very much so my English was more or less ok. He said 'You will go over there and be able to work as a cashier, in a shop, you will be able to study because there are English classes and you will be able to develop.' Nothing else, he never told me anything about where I was going to arrive, or where I was going to sleep. I only knew that I was going to go to Australia and nothing else." (Interview 1)

She didn't know how she was going to get the money for the ticket but then the Australian Embassy told her that there was an organisation called the Catholic Immigration Office helping with the paperwork and with finances for the passage ticket. She went to the Catholic Immigration Office and was told that they would finance her ticket if she brought them a reference and in Australia she could pay them back in instalments.

They told her that she was going to be picked up at the airport in Sydney and that another twelve girls were going to travel with her. When asked if she wanted to travel in December she said that she wanted to go in January so that she could spend Christmas with her family. The woman at the Catholic Immigration Office, who knew that she spoke English, gave her the responsibility of being in charge of the group during the trip and told her that she needed to guide and help the girls because they didn't speak English.

The long awaited day of departure arrived. There were conflicting feelings between the sadness of leaving the family and the excitement of leaving. There was also the hidden fear of facing the unknown away from home. She had developed this feeling as a result of being in an over-protected family situation and by constant reminders she had always had of the dangers attached to being a girl wanting to explore the world outside her home environment. She had an inculcated belief that she had to be close to the family otherwise something bad may happen to her. This thought, which for Marisol, was translated into a possibility of failure because she wasn't with the family members, was influential in future decisions that she had to take. She felt that she had to prove to herself, and thus to her family, that she could do

things by herself. That thought, in itself, later prevented her from returning to Peru at times when she felt stressed by new situations.

“So the day of leaving arrived - the sadness of leaving the family - but I remember I didn't cry. I wanted to travel, to know another world and have an adventure especially to go for an adventure. I was positive that it was going to be fine, that I wasn't going to return too soon. Mainly because the family brought us up in a protected world always thinking that something is going to happen to you and thus super-protecting us. So I always said 'Oh no, everything will go fine, otherwise what is my family going to say, that I have failed, that things were not the way I thought.' Especially my sister, because she used to say 'You are going far away, and if anything happens we won't be able to go and see you.' That was imprinted in my mind.” (Interview 1)

She met the group of women of similar age with whom she travelled and with whom she has maintained a close relationship to this date.

“I .. helped them with their passports and some orientation. It was a good group and from the time we stepped into the plane we made a good friendship.” (Interview 1)

The excitement of arriving in Australia had built up to a peak. This didn't last long because as she was transported to her accommodation she began to experience feelings of alarm about Sydney not being anything like the image that she had created in her mind.

“When we arrived to Sydney, it seemed so empty, so quiet, that in the transition from the airport to the Hostel we felt so lost. When we arrived in the city we were told that we were being taken to the YWCA. In the Hostel they registered us, gave a room to each, some had to share with an other person. We began making friends. Other Peruvian girls who were already there began giving us orientation and told us that there were English classes and that someone from Immigration would come to give us a job.” (Interview 1)

Going to work and earning money was one of Marisol's first goals as well as the beginning of a new learning experience in the field of work. Whilst she waited for the Immigration employment officer to interview her and offer her a job as she had been told would happen, one of the girls who was working in the Benson and Hedges factory told her that she had to actually go to the

place to get a job. Another girl had met a Greek boy who was working in the 'Street's' chocolate factory and he told Marisol to go there and apply.

"So I went there and they asked me to start the following day. I had to pack chocolates and lollies. I was there about four days out of the 6 or 7 days since my arrival in Australia. I said to myself, 'Is this the reason why I came?' I saw a different type of people. They smelt. They were rough in their way of talking and that was a shock because I hadn't seen that world before. I have had a job in which I was the personal assistant of the Director and a lot of contact with people and on the other hand very protected by my family so I decided no to go the next day." (Interview 1)

The change of moving to another environment, the confrontation of significant changes in many areas of the immigrant life, the interpretation of these changes and the perception that the individual develops of the new situation all impose severe pressures on the individual. These pressures often challenge one's available resources and obstruct the ability to explain a new situation and conversely set into motion an escalating cycle of discord which can harm the wellbeing of the individual to the extent of impeding settlement and adjustment. (Espino 1991). However, in the case of Marisol, she began with great deal of positive thinking and reflection to assess the environment and to search for alternative steps that would assist her in overcoming difficulties. Unfortunately she suffered a serious health problem just when she had planned to follow up a reference that she had been given to the Peruvian Embassy in Canberra.

"I was a bit upset so during dinner and talking to the girls, another girl working in the Wills cigarette factory said 'I am going to make an appointment for you, because I want you to come.' As I was considering to go there to work I was also thinking of going to Canberra with a letter that the Minister in Peru had given me, in that letter he was recommending me to the Peruvian Embassy for a job. But that night I became ill and ended in hospital The following day, after having found out where I had to take the bus for Canberra I decided to go to Canberra. I said 'Ok I take my passport with me and I return during the day.' But during the evening of that day I began feeling ill, pain in the stomach and having nausea. The girl who was going to take me for the interview at the cigarette factory said 'No lets go to the hospital.' The night before I had already been to St Vincent's Hospital and they told me that it was nothing and

gave me some tablets to make me feel better. But that night I couldn't sleep. I was worse. Every time I turned I felt like I had a brick inside." (Interview 1)

Her friends took her to Sydney Hospital and so began another learning experience. Having no knowledge of the system and being virtually helpless she was fortunate that the other girls at the hostel assisted her despite the fact that they too knew very little about what to do and had the added difficulty of not speaking English. She had an operation for the removal of kidney stones and was so ill that she remembered nothing for seven days after lapsing into unconsciousness on the x-ray table. The support from the other girls from the hostel was of paramount importance at that time in addition to Marisol's own strength in dealing with this crisis situation.

"Afterwards the girls from the Hostel came to see me including those girls that didn't even know me. It was the 'hot gossip' as you could call it. They were upset because I was newly arrived and I ended up in hospital. One of the girls was saying 'It is better if they send you back to your country, God knows if you are going to be well again, you may die and your family may not even know anything.' But it was my pride, I didn't want to do that." (Interview 1)

She was in the hospital for 16 days and then returned to the hostel. She was advised by the doctors that she couldn't work full-time and that her recovery would take some time. On her return to the hostel she was very disappointed to find that some of her money and valuable property had been stolen while she was away. The single women migrants at the hostel were told that they could only stay in the hostel for one month however after her illness she was told that she could stay there for another three months due to her not working and because she needed to recover.

"I think they felt sorry for me. Two girls who were close to me and that had been looking after me were given the opportunity to stay with me. Usually nobody could stay in the hostel any longer than one month. Normally in two weeks, Immigration would find a job for you. You couldn't stay there because that was exclusively for immigration. What they used to do was to take the majority of the girls to the hospitals where they also offered accommodation, such as Turramarra - there were also centres in Manly - and to work with developmentally abnormal children in group

homes. At the time we didn't even have any idea about disabilities, but I think in Australia nobody wanted to work in those institutions. Of the two girls with whom I shared a room, one was a chemist and the other a teacher. We were in the hostel and my girlfriend, the chemist, was interested in doing an English course so she took charge of finding classes. So when I left the hospital they told me that I had to attend classes and in fact they took me there for three months." (Interview 1)

One of those with her in the hostel had already started a job in the evenings with STC and worked from 3pm to 11pm. Marisol, recounting her perceptions of what she saw as a hostile environment, recalled that her friend suffered because she had to travel by 'bus alone, late at night. Her friend had said "When you get better I'll take you to my work so that you could come with me." (Interview 1). Marisol and her friends came to the realisation that the only way to succeed in what they wanted to achieve was through learning and practising English and so they studied during the day and worked in the evening. The three months in the hostel were over and Marisol and her friends were told to move out. It was disconcerting for her.

"The hostel was ok, because we felt protected. I didn't have knowledge how I was going to survive. We had to move out of the hostel and we found a flatette in Centennial Park. It was shared accommodation and wasn't anything extraordinary, but it was all we could afford in relation to what we were earning." (Interview 1)

In recounting her experiences during the period that she was recovering in the hospital she said that she was able to make friends there and that that in itself gave her the opportunity and the confidence to go back and see the supervisor to request a job. All those experiences had been so new and so different to what Marisol had expected that she has remembered them in detail up to the present.

"I began working in Sydney Hospital as a tea-lady in the dining room. I picked up the plates, put them in the washing machine and later for supper I had to put the biscuits and the cups and so on. I worked 5 days per week. I had to work Saturdays and Sundays and I didn't like it. I was there for 4 to 5 months until I finished my English classes. Later my girlfriend found a job for me in the telephone factory. It was very difficult to return from the factory because it was in Botany-Alexandria and we were

living in Centennial Park. It was terrible. We had to walk two long blocks that seemed an enormity." (Interview 1)

Her goal of mastering the new language was controlling her life direction - her learning experiences. It became her point of reference and the basis for her choice between full-time employment thus more money, or part-time employment with less money but the opportunity of doing English classes. She was able to evaluate these two directions and to decide that she could work and earn money without jeopardizing her main goal. It meant extra effort, discipline and hard work but for her that it was part of the process that she had to follow in order to reach her desired goal of succeeding in the new environment. As she progressed in her settlement path she learned what was happening in different environments such as employment, accommodation, health, education, finance and she also learned the restrictions and demands attached to each of them.

"We finished that course and we joined another course in Broadway. It was an intensive course and the three of us were able to do it together so we decided to change our accommodation and rent in Randwick for which we paid \$45, paying \$15 each. We could afford it and besides it was the closest place we could find. One of my friends changed her job and began working in the dining room of the University of New South Wales. I continued with my other friend. Then we finished that course but I injured myself in the factory. The work in the factory wasn't very good. It was work that we had to share with women from other countries, Yugoslavs and Greeks and they spent most of their time swearing and complaining. I couldn't stand that atmosphere." (Interview 1)

Marisol wasn't only confronted with different environments but with an internal conflict caused by what she was experiencing in one of them, the environment of work. As she became stressed she became ambivalent about staying in Australia.

"When I had the accident I didn't know anything about compensation and the only thing they gave me was physiotherapy to my finger. They never told me that I could take time off. They gave me two weeks. All of this made me very anxious to return (to

Peru). I had little knowledge about things. I was living in an apartment and had to send money home to help my family". (Interview 1)

Whilst it is understood that immigrants have goals to achieve and that they have formed expectations about their new country one can also understand that the absorbing or hosting society would have expectations about migrants and an understanding of how migrants should fulfill those expectations. From Marisol's narrative it could be interpreted that the government was closely monitoring her progress (and of the other women as well) – starting at the hostels then on to the English classes - and appeared to be planning to channel these women into particular employment situations, consulting with them but apparently not giving the women too much choice. As soon as they finished the English course officers from the Employment Office went to the places where the women were studying to tell them that they were going to 'help them with jobs'. They were going to send the women to some interviews but Marisol and her friends broke free from the future that had been planned for them. They used their previous experience and the knowledge gained during discussions between themselves and other Peruvian migrant women to make their own decisions about their futures.

" ... by then I had seen in the newspaper that there were positions advertised for helpers to work in the government in Chifley Square. I said to my friend 'Lets go and apply.' So the three of us went and after the interview we were sent to work in different parts of the government. My girlfriends went to Registry and Land and Titles and I went to GIO, an insurance company, where I had to codify papers as a stepping-stone to the work of a typist. The other girls worked as office assistants too." (Interview 1)

Entering the Public Service at that time – a new learning environment - started a chapter of Marisol's life which has continued up to the present. She started learning about the dynamics of the system and became aware of the ways that discrimination can be entrenched and can have ongoing and long-term influence upon the recipient particularly if one was not inclined, for whatever reasons, to challenge it. She was a woman, a migrant (with a strong accent) and a mother – all of which seem to have a magnetic attraction for

discrimination. Marisol explained in her narrative how she had ultimately given priority to her family, her children and husband, rather than to become involved in any potentially stressful conflict with her employer. As a result she did not advance in her employment situation, staying as a typist for over twenty years. At one stage she suffered from repetition strain injury but managed to draw something positive from that experience.

“At the time I became ill. I had RSI, but I think it was more tension than anything because I had to attend to the girls. At least the break was good. I went to physiotherapy every day and was able to spend time with my daughters for six months. This wasn't very good for my work of course because instead of progressing I was stuck with a record of an accident. They didn't want to give me anything else except light duties and that has been a barrier that stopped me to get ahead up to this date. I am working, yes, but I am in the same grade as the one I had when I entered the job. I can't complain because I have been able to spend time with my family. When I have been sick I have been able to have time off or have holidays.” (Interview 1)

Marisol was never afraid to work hard. In fact from her early settlement stage she worked at three jobs as well as continuing to study. She was very much committed to helping her family in Peru as well as paying off the Australian Catholic Immigration Office for her fare to Australia.

“I was still living in the hostel and continued paying for my ticket to the Catholic Immigration Commission I wanted to get rid of the debt as a friend in Peru had been my guarantor I didn't want to let him down. Because of the commitments, I had to work several jobs. I had to send money to Peru because when I left my grandmother, she was old, my sister was helping but I felt an obligation to help because they gave me a home and an education and I had another two brothers. My sister was married and had her children and wasn't in a good situation and besides, it was supposed that if I came to Australia, it was to work, to improve, mainly to improve. I used to send \$200 regularly and so many times we were left just with the necessities. What we used to do was to spend on accommodation and clothing and our entertainment was to go to dance. Especially since it was very close. Our intention wasn't to find a boyfriend or anything like that but to have a good time and entertain ourselves, to listen to our music more than anything.” (Interview 1)

One important issue to consider when looking at the settlement and learning experiences of immigrants is the interaction factors that may occur between the newcomer and individuals in the host country. Both their attitudes and responses to each other would facilitate or delay successful settlement. By successful settlement one means away from high levels of stress, pressures and demands that are often placed upon the individual as a result of changing cultural values and situations. The interaction that may occur can provide the new migrant with newer and more accurate data about the culture that she has entered and the profile of the members of that society. The revised perception is likely to serve as a significant starting point in adjusting to the new society. One can illustrate that interaction through Marisol's starting point in her relationship with the first Australian family that she met. When talking about that friendship, she does it with pride and affection. Their interaction and the relationship that developed played a very important role in her knowledge about people in Australia. That knowledge gave her peace of mind and confidence to the extent of seeing them as part of her family, as the people that she could completely trust. She also felt good about the way she was perceived and treated by them.

"When I was in hospital I met an Australian person and her family who, I think, felt pity for me. The lady had had an operation and she became my friend, and she told me 'When you get better come and see us, we live in the country, in Gosford'. So she gave me her 'phone number and I began writing letters and then they invited me to go there. What I used to do was to go there on weekends and my girlfriends stayed there as well. I had met the elderly couple and I felt sad for them because they didn't have children and they reminded me of my family and especially my grandmother. So for about a year I visited them every single weekend. The lady had a bachelor or widower brother who did me the favour of taking me to The Entrance every weekend. He used to pick me up at 6 o'clock in the morning from Randwick. I kept in contact with them for many, many years until they died." (Interview 1)

One of the drastic changes that Marisol had to endure was not having her extended family and the ongoing interaction that used to occur within the family environment. Although she had made friends, both with other young Peruvian women of similar age and with an Australian family with whom she

felt very close - as if they were their own family - she felt the need for a system that could provide her and the other women with other kinds of support and assistance. The kind of assistance that has its basis in a cultural background and that it is recreational and therapeutic. There were some difficulties to be resolved in Marisol's mind as to her culturally based needs and expectations. She had thought that she would find places and gatherings where she could have gone to share a dance but she found that the only place close to what she wanted was the Spanish Club.

"I remember that many girls went to the Spanish club to eat and because it was very close to the hostel many girls felt that the Spanish club was like their home. At that time there was music and dance and so many girls just walked to the club and returned to the hostel because the hostel closed the door at 2 o'clock in the morning. One couldn't go later than 2 o'clock. It was not allowed for anybody " (Interview 1)

The nature and quality of support is significant when examining the settlement of migrants, and '... one important source of such support is the existence of a relevant ethnic community' (Nann 1997:3). In searching for her own ethnic community support Marisol became actively involved in the formation of the first Peruvian association in Sydney of which she is still an executive member. Going through the process of forming the association gave Marisol the opportunity to learn different aspects of the Australian system and the resources available. She had to contact institutions, something that she hadn't done before, and this experience gave her the opportunity of confirming her social and interpersonal abilities and in turn gave her self confidence. She recalls the experience as a new and exciting learning experience.

"I continued with English classes and I met some Peruvians who were working towards forming an association, a Peruvian association, in 1972. I also met the Honorary Consul, who asked me to help him in organizing a party for the Peruvian people for the anniversary of Peruvian independence. Several of us began cooking, making things and taking them to the place so that in that way we could carry out the party. This was held in July in commemoration of the independence of Peru. It was held in the Paddington Town Hall and 500 people attended. It was a very successful party. From that day I met more people. We began doing activities such as picnics, but mainly parties because Peruvians like dancing very much. Besides, dancing was

a good distraction. It was like therapy. So several women met in different houses and different dishes were prepared and everything was free nobody had to pay. So how did I live with the girls without knowing how to cook? I went to different houses and helped these women to cook, this was the best way for me to learn how to cook". (Interview 2)

As she began settling in Australia the questions of where and with whom to live was a dilemma which Marisol needed to resolve. Her two friends decided to take different directions with one of them going to the United States and another marrying a German man.

"I went to live in Paddington. I wasn't very happy because I was living in a shared single room. I felt very demoralised. I said to myself 'Have I come to Australia to be enclosed in a room, I think I am better off in my country with my job.' I went back to the hostel and I asked whether I could live there and I explained that I was alone in Australia. The lady said 'Yes, you can live here. Come back in two weeks.' It was the happiest feeling I had at the time, because it was close to my work and I was going to be with other girls and I was not going to feel lonely. Not really lonely because having been to the Association I had already met many people. But it gave me the opportunity to know more people and to help others because many girls were coming alone and didn't know many things. They were as ignorant as I was when I initially came to Australia." (Interview 2)

The distress and demoralisation that Marisol felt were not the problem. They were the consequences of the problem of not being in the right environment and around people who made her feel comfortable. She saw her misery as a signal containing a message and she understood it and acted upon it. She was determined to get back into the hostel and believed that if she explained her situation they may have considered her return despite the fact that she had learned that was almost an impossibility as places in the hostel were restricted to a particular time-frame. People's ability to achieve goals and to put into effect the plans necessary to achieve those goals depends upon the extent of the strength of their belief in their ability to do so. Such beliefs contribute to cognitive performance and development (Bandura:1998). For Marisol, achieving her goal of getting accommodation in the hostel not only served as a 'security blanket' and a point of reference, a sort of 'family home',

but also as a step forward in her understanding that she could achieve things if she was prepared to challenge and question perceived barriers. Another stage of Marisol's experience was learning through social interaction and personal relationships and it required Marisol to go through several processes from reflecting and thinking critically about the situation to a decision-making process. The latter, in some instances, caused her pain and were hard to make. She recounted in detail the events, her feelings of happiness, sadness and doubts during her relationship with the man who later became her husband. She also recounted the inner conflicts that she had in thinking about the moral principles that she had been taught whilst in the family situation in Peru. Her internal conflict began to emerge when she had to decide between her love for the man she was going out with and her moral values. He had asked her to leave the hostel and go and live with him. Not accepting the proposition may have meant losing him. She constantly reflected on the consequences. There was no family to tell her what to do which, from the point of view of decision making, would have been easier for her. Her previous knowledge about relationships, the value-less position of a woman who goes to live with a man (in Peru), and the recommendations of her sister, were transferred to her present situation and she began asking herself questions thus preempting the responses that her family members would have given to her decision.

"Why would I go and live with him, why would I go to cook and wash for him without being my husband? so I said 'Oh no, if we get married yes, but like this, no, I am not interested.' Whilst thinking, I remembered very much my family and all of those things that they taught me as being very bad if one went to live with a man and worse if one had a child outside a marriage. So I kept on thinking about all of those things that they would say such as: 'Is that why you went to Australia. Perhaps to live a free life, not to have anybody to control you?' So that helped me to be positive about my thinking and not just to change the way I was." (Interview 2)

They went out together for a while until he decided to leave Sydney and go to work in the Northern Territory as a mechanic. He was also a migrant with his own ambitions. He wanted to set up a business and the quickest way to get money was by going to work in the mining industry. This was a shock to

Marisol as she thought that his feelings for her were stronger than his desire to leave Sydney. But even worse was becoming aware of his doubts about his feelings toward her.

"He told me 'I am going but I am not sure whether I am going to return. I don't know whether I'll get married to you, I don't know what is going to happen.' That shocked me. I said 'After a year of going out together and he doesn't know what is going to happen?'" (Interview 2)

It was at this point that she contemplated the possibility of returning to Peru, although there was an ambiguity about doing so. Through a girlfriend who was returning to Peru she booked a seat on a ship. It was a way of coping with the situation and seeking refuge in the thought of going back to her family and her previous routine. However this rushed decision was quickly overtaken by the excuse that she gave of not having completed her two years in Australia – the period that was required under the Assisted Passage scheme as proposed by the Department of Immigration - she needed to wait for a few more months. The trip never eventuated because deep down she did not want to return.

"I told her 'I am not going to travel with you, I don't feel very secure ... there is something telling me to stay.' She was upset with me and said 'You can't fail me now.' I think in the end she understood. She went back to Peru then." (Interview 2)

A rushed decision was to accept the proposal of marriage from a South American man that she met in the course of going out with her girlfriends. Her narrative appears to indicate some contradictions between her professed feelings for the man who had left her and the one whom she met after just a month and to whom she was about to get married, but one can also assume that it was the manner by which she was testing her self-worth in terms of her cultural values. Previous relationships had been disappointing and she had become aware of the second place that society gives to women. She had learned that marriage was the 'acceptable' and 'desirable' thing for a decent girl.

"After a month that I met the Argentinian boy. He wanted to marry me so I said 'Okay I'll get married. In any case that is what the family wants one to do, to be married and to live in a decent home.' So we went to see the priest. We were going to get married in the Cathedral that was close to the hostel. I was very impressed by that but I felt that it wasn't right, that it wasn't love. We spoke to the priest, who spoke Spanish, and he said 'Daughter why do you want to get married so quickly. Are you pregnant?' I said 'No, I only want to get married'. 'Don't do that. You shouldn't do that.' he said. So the priest spoke to the boy and told him that we shouldn't get married. The boy suffered alot. I had a trying time for about two months because he didn't want to accept it. He began to behave inappropriately and that made me feel more disillusioned but I learned that it was the best decision that I made because he would have behaved in similar manner the day he didn't get his way so this was a blessing." (Interview 2)

The man who had previously wanted to live with Marisol, and who had then left for the Northern Territory, returned and asked her to marry him.

"I lived in the YWCA hostel until the last moment before I went to get married. I left from the hostel married. It was very nice because the girls organised a singles night and a surprise that I didn't even imagine. I remember we had about 200 people at the wedding and my husband said ' . to feed so many women! so many people that I don't even know myself.' At the time there was a Spanish restaurant and we had about 200 people there." (Interview 2)

Marisol's romantic dreams did not come true. From the 'honeymoon' onwards she was disillusioned. Her husband worked long hours and she recounted how she used to arrive home from work to find the house empty. From being in the hostel with so many people to go to an apartment to be by herself made her feel sad. In order to cope with the loneliness and to maintain her self-esteem and perhaps to channel her energy into something productive she continued with her participation in the Peruvian organisation as a member of the committee. Her husband left the service station where he had been working and went to work at Bega saying that he was doing it to earn more money and to raise a deposit for a house. In 1975 they decided to travel to Spain and Peru to see each other's families. On their return they returned to work and set out on the path of trying to buy a house. They disagreed upon where to live, Marisol wanting the familiar surroundings of the eastern suburbs

and her husband wanting to live in the western suburbs. In the end it was economic considerations which dictated where they bought their house. By continuing her work in the government job they were able to save a deposit for a house which they bought in Petersham, an inner western Sydney suburb

Marisol emphasised that she didn't want to lose her independence. She recounted how she needed to be amongst people and specifically people of her own language. As well as continuing her involvement with the Peruvian organisation she was doing other work in the Spanish-speaking community. After being in the new house for nine to ten months her first daughter was born. At that time maternity leave was available but she didn't know that she could have asked for 12 months leave without pay. She was preoccupied with ensuring that they didn't fall behind in the payments for their house loan so she returned to work as soon as possible. Two months after returning to work her house was robbed. She was very stressed by the event particularly because she had entered the house whilst the thieves were stealing from her kitchen.

"That was a shock. I lived with the constant idea that if someone would come to my house to rob me or that I would find someone in the house, so I began locking all the doors. My husband said 'Don't you think that if they want to enter they would do so. If they want to want to rob they will break in.' But in any case that helped me to feel protected." (Interview 2)

They didn't have insurance. She didn't know about house contents' insurance at the time and so they couldn't recover anything. This was one of three episodes of robbery that she had encountered. Marisol tearfully recounted the problems that she had experienced in attempting to organise satisfactory care for her child while she was at work. In one case a mature-aged woman who used to look after her daughter told her that she couldn't do it anymore saying that her son-in-law was jealous. He was claiming that she was not looking after her own grandchildren properly because she was giving too much attention to Marisol's daughter. " Ummm, that was a shock. It was painful to

leave her.” (Interview 2) When Marisol fell pregnant with her second daughter. Her husband didn't want it.

""With one it has been so hard and now with a second one, how are you going to have a second one?' he said. "Well, we are going to have this child whether you want it or not.' I said." (Interview 2)

She was one or two months pregnant and decided then that she had to learn to drive because it was very hard to go anywhere otherwise, especially going shopping, pushing the trolley and so on. So every night for almost three months she went to practice driving and after some tests obtained her licence when she was about seven months pregnant. Her husband bought her a small blue Volkswagen which she described as a 'bomb'. When she was two weeks away from having her second baby and because she had been told that it was very difficult to find a vacancy in a nursery she decided to speak to the Director of a nursery that she had discovered. She told her that she had to go back to work after her daughter's birth.

"I was tearful and I told her that I was looking for a secure place because .. I told her the story of my previous baby sitter. She said 'I'll see what I can do, there is here a waiting list, but I'll see what I can do. I will call you anyway'. One day before my return to work I received a 'phone call telling me that there was a vacancy for my daughter. I was so happy but then they told me that for the eldest one there was no vacancy." (Interview 2)

As Marisol's children were growing up her husband changed jobs quite frequently and at one stage they went to Spain and even contemplated staying there but the lack of available work led them to return to Australia. For reasons not elaborated by Marisol her marriage was steadily breaking down and she and her husband eventually separated and divorced. She was a very independent person and was very happy with the responsibility of caring for the children who were by now in their mid to late teens. She and her two daughters continued to have a very close relationship up to the present time.

At Marisol's last interview and as she was reviewing her narratives of previous interviews she was able to succinctly and methodically highlight her learning experiences from the time that she arrived in Australia almost thirty years ago. Learning to start over again, to adapt to new situations and changes, was hard but she was able to do it by giving each situation a timeframe. This gave her control and the comfort of knowing when something was about to conclude according to her plans such as accommodation, employment or studying. Situations which she described as being beyond her control, such as becoming ill, she accepted as things that would pass in time. Such a situation may take a little longer to resolve than she would have wanted but she believed that it would only be a temporary obstruction. She recounted that she began what she called 'real, valuable learning' after having her children. This learning, though reflective and internal, had tangible and measurable results. As she was bringing up and teaching her children she became aware of herself and previous learning and teaching she had received. She learned that, not only had she tolerated some unacceptable (in her current view) aspects of her own up-bringing and her family experience but she had actively sought to maintain that experience as a form of personal protection when teaching her own children. However, in becoming aware of this contradictory position she learned to discriminate by assessing her own feelings and responses against her previous experiences. This guided her in the things that she taught her children. She used affection and the display of love that she learned in her own up-bringing but she excluded the discipline and dependency that she had experienced and replaced it with flexibility and understanding toward her children. She came to the realisation that what she was giving to her children was the most precious thing that she possessed. She gave them her attention, her joy, her interest, her understanding, her affection, her sadness and her respect. She feels that in giving of herself in this way she encouraged and enhanced similar feelings and responses from her children and as a result she felt enriched, experiencing pleasant feelings which she saw as rewards. This positive regard for her children became reciprocal and enduring.

At the personal relationship level she has learned to respond to a guiding voice inside her because at difficult times it has helped her to dissipate confusion and mixed feelings by giving answers or clarifying confusion. Though this has been difficult at times, when decisions had to be made, she has followed this intuition. "I do things according to what I feel and that has helped me to get ahead in life." (Interview 3.)

She reflected on the things that she could have done better but in the same breath she answered herself by saying that she did what she did because she felt that the priority at the time was her children. She related that what she had learned from her experience of trusting others is that, whilst she has always liked to help people, because she cannot ignore what is in front of her, she has to be cautious about trusting people too much.

"I cannot have my eyes blind folded or not seeing or acting when something is in front of me, I have to help . . . But now I know that I have to be careful of seeing too much." (Interview 3.)

Marisol has a clear picture of the sequence of events that her life has taken leading up to her current situation.

"I can say now that I am at a three quarter part of my life now. I have peace and tranquility. I don't have preoccupations, I feel more relaxed and I see things from another perspective. I see that one can survive. I feel more secure in myself and about the decisions that I take. Before I was very indecisive. Now I am more in control of the situation and though I have difficult things to attend to I am in control of them." (Interview 3.)

Part of Marisol's learning has been about staying open to, and willing to accept, change and to face the unknown. This learning has involved risk-taking and transcending her limits into the unknown. She has called it 'adventuring' but this learning has enhanced her capacity to trigger new connections, new understanding, new thinking and therefore new ways of seeing the world and thus herself in it. She has added a new dimension to her learning and it has come from her inner self, from her intuition, which she has

followed and developed in the course of her life. This intuition has clarified confusing situations and given her new insights. In turn these insights have given her confidence about asking critical questions regarding previously accepted values, ideas and behaviours. Although at times she felt fearful of the consequences that may have arisen from contemplating alternatives to her old ways of thinking and living, she also felt joy and relief as she was breaking through new ways of looking at her personal world. As she abandoned assumptions that had been inhibiting her learning and personal development she experienced a sense of liberation and independence. In Australia Marisol began changing her perceptions and thus her thinking about all aspects of her life. In each of these aspects she began to explore available opportunities and, as she began that process, she engaged in a learning that she described as 'different realities' some of which she rejected for another which made her feel more at ease. When she found a desired opportunity she held tightly onto it, not only treasuring it but working hard to make it develop into something that made her feel proud and happy. Examples of this were; meeting the first Australian family who became like her own family, the occasion when she was accepted back into the hostel, when she entered the Australian Public Service (she thought that the latter was a great achievement as she had learned in Peru that to enter the public service you either needed to be extremely good or to have a godfather to introduce you into the system), finding a sympathetic child care director who assisted her with a placement for her children at a time when she was feeling disturbed and stressed by the situation and continuing in her place of employment even though she became ill with RSI. Achieving all of that on her own gave her confidence and increased her self-esteem. She felt self-assured by what she saw as positive outcomes. She discovered that all her efforts hadn't been in vain and that she had learned from each difficulty. She emphatically stated that looking at a problem without thinking of a solution was not healthy and that when she felt weak and in pain she did not procrastinate about the problems but was concerned with seeking solutions. She realised that there may be a number of solutions to a problem but that one needed to be careful which one to adopt for a particular situation. In most situations when she had to make decisions she was haunted by cultural values which made her stop and think of

consequences and the risks that she was taking as result of those decisions. She came to see those risks as healthy and as learning opportunities that provided her with new insights to situations.

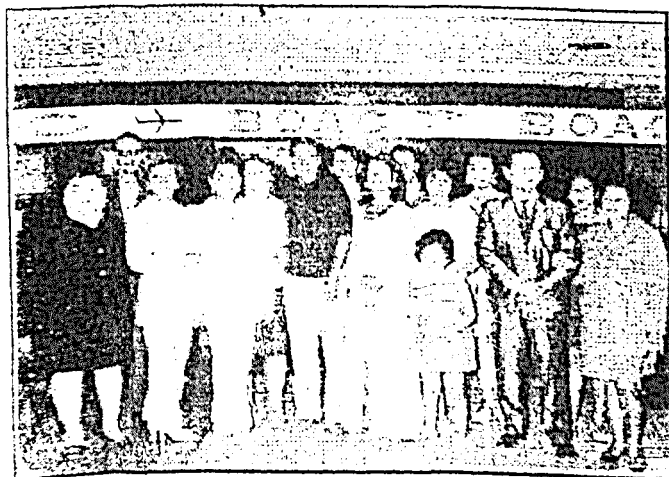
Learning is part of life but is not automatic. 'Learning is active. It involves reaching out of the mind' (Dewey, 1966 b: 127). Handy (1995) confirms that learning requires energy, thought, courage and support and warns that it is easy to give up on it, to relax and to rest on one's experience, but that this is to cease to grow (p50). Through her narratives one can see how actively involved Marisol has been in learning and growing and this has been possible through the continuous changes that she had undergone as she was settling in Australia, her new country. Change has been a salient feature of Marisol's narratives. Dewey posits that change is just 'another word for growth, another synonym for learning.' and Marisol is consciously aware of this. She had engaged in that process and she has seen it as part of life, as something that one inevitably has to do. Dewey idea's of growth and learning is the notion that people would want to learn more as their lives progress. He says 'the more one learns the more one has to learn, in order to keep oneself going; otherwise death and catastrophe' (1979c:20). As she was engaging in life she was confronted with different changes, some were confusing to follow and difficult to understand but she was able to meet the challenge presented by them. In assessing her situation she came to the conclusion that the small changes were the ones that made a significant difference to her life, and though the changes were small she was able to learn through them by using her past experiences as a guide and as the base of new, re-framed experiences. Re-framing, according to Handy (1995), is the ability to see things, problems, situations or people in other ways, to put them in other perspectives or different contexts, to see them as opportunities not problems, as hiccups rather than disasters. 'Re-framing is important because it unlocks problems, it can give a whole situation a new look.' (p52).

Marisol began to reinterpret her past thinking, actions and ideas from a new vantage point. She questioned whether her original assumptions about one's roles, personalities, and abilities were completely accurate. This re-framing

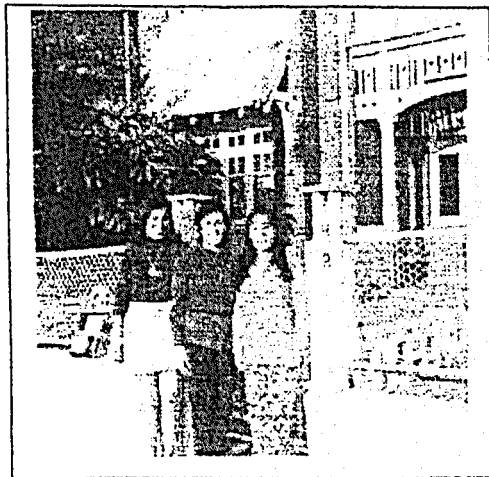
caused her to recognise that the assumptions underlying her beliefs and behaviour had a cultural basis. In deducing that she was able to clarify and give justification to some of her ideas and actions thus allowing herself to feel more content. As she re-framed new situations she engaged in a reflective dimension and in critical thinking - defined by Boyd and Fales (in Brookfield: 1987) as '...the process of internally examining and exploring an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self, and which results in changed conceptual perspective.' (p14). She learned that some of her failures had been about not thinking well, about acting on impulse, about thinking through one-dimensional logic. She realised that the issue was not about the way she behaved but about the way she thought about a situation. This lead her to conclude that to achieve her desired outcomes she had to change her thinking rather than the way she acted because her behaviour would be the reflection or outcome of her thinking therefore if she thought well she would behave well.

Travelling to Australia as a young woman helped her to break away from a way of thinking that was limiting and oppressive. Her dependency upon those who raised her had begun shaping her thinking and that which she was learning. Just as her capacity for learning depended on thinking, her capacity for thinking well depended on learning. Learning has been crucial to her ability to grow in awareness, to think independently and to master the knowledge necessary for her living and thriving in life.

Figure 7(a,b,c)



Marisol leaving Peru in 1970 at Lima airport



Marisol at her first home after leaving the Hostel



Marisol's marriage in Sydney in 1974

Delia

Delia's first interview began with her stating that she didn't have anything in her life that could be seen as interesting and that, on the contrary, her life has been very plain and boring. She was born in a small town in the south of Peru. Her father was a Creole - Chinese/Peruvian and her mother from Spanish/French parental backgrounds. From an early age she learned from her parents and the remarks of others that they (her family) were different because of their ethnic background. Later in her narrative as she talks about the degree of discrimination that existed in Peru and spoke of her own experiences resulting from her ethnic background and the way people perceived her.

"It may have been that because we were Chinese that they marginalised us I don't know, but when you are young you do not give any importance to it. I always heard the Japanese, the 'pulled eyes' and all the names that they used to call them. So there is discrimination in Peru spite the fact that some say that there is no discrimination, but yes there is. They always insulted me. 'Midget, Dwarf, China.' I said to my mother '... probably because we were from a Chinese family.' I don't know but my father all the time taught us 'No, no, if you don't want to, do not mix with them. Find someone else that accepts you.' So in that way it hasn't been a problem."
(Interview1)

One could speculate that this differential treatment became the basis for many of the house and family rules relating to not being allowed to associate with other children except her siblings. At the age of twelve she ingeniously requested permission from her parents to go to the capital Lima, to visit her aunt, knowing well that with the support of her aunt she would not return to the small town and nor to her family environment. Despite her parents opposition she stayed in Lima where she continued her education with the assistance of her aunt but with the financial support of her father. Going to Lima was a way of 'coping' with what she had already assessed as an aversive environment and avoiding the severe discipline at home and the responsibilities that had been placed upon her. Coping can be described as a way of dealing with aspects of life that are perceived as difficult. Learning to

cope, for Delia became an essential ingredient of her life when confronted with difficult situations as she progressed in life. There are several theoretical models of how an individual copes. The model centred on psychoanalytic ego psychology concepts defines coping as;

'... a set of ego processes that develop from infancy and are centred on ways of thinking about relationships between the self and the environment.' (Psychology Encyclopedia 1994:326-327)

Another model of coping is the one derived from the 'drive-reinforcement learning model'.

'Coping consist of acts such as escape, avoidance, that successfully control aversive environmental conditions, thereby lowering the psycho-physiological disturbance or degree of dis-equilibrium created by the aversive conditions.' (Levine & Ursin 1980 in Miller 1980:326)

Lazarus (1981) offers a model of coping that emphasises cognitive appraisal processes and an assessment to coping. In this model, coping is viewed as responding to a number of variables including contextual variables, temporal factors and feedback received from events that affect adaptational outcomes. Coping is defined as;

'...efforts to manage demands that tax or exceed the person's resources. The word manage in this definition means that coping can include toleration of harm or threat, re-definition of past events, acceptance and putting a positive light on the situation – a set of ways for managing oneself and one's thoughts and feelings – as well as mastering of the environment'.(Lazarus 1981:198)

As Delia developed in life and was confronted with situations that she perceived as difficult she developed her own coping mechanism that became very much entrenched in her as her narrative subsequently illustrates. Her denial/avoidance mode of coping with her father's death has had an unfavourable outcome in terms of unresolved feelings and issues that she still endures up to this date.

She recounted that communication with her parents was not easy. She referred to the time when she had begun to menstruate at the age of eleven and how she was afraid to tell her mother.

"My mother didn't know anything, so she (her sister) said 'And now what are you going to do?' 'It doesn't matter' I said 'I get home, I'll cut my things from the materials because I know how to use the sewing machine.' 'But,' she said 'you have to tell your mother.' I said 'You must be crazy, how can I tell my mother?' She hadn't even talked to us about anything like that so it was about two years until my mother discovered it. I use to throw them to the rubbish, every time I used them I threw them to the rubbish" (Interview 1)

As she was the second oldest of seven children she was reminded of her responsibility of being the example and role model of her siblings. For her it meant feeling restricted in what she wanted to do because she was constantly guided by what the family wanted her to do. However she accepted it as her responsibility and as something that she had to do for the family. It is only now that, in looking back, she says in a regretful way that, in this context, she now sees that she was the only one of the children who didn't achieve a university degree. This was the result of her leaving Peru shortly after commencing her tertiary studies. She was too preoccupied in doing the right thing for others that she forgot about herself. She was expected to comply with her family values and, although she exhibited some resistance from an early age, she accepted them as the normal truth. This type of perception and acceptance of the world that one has learned to see as a reality is what Mezirow (1981) refers to as a 'meaning perspective'. Mezirow explained that this;

' ... refers to the structure of psycho-cultural assumptions within which new experience is assimilated and transformed by one's past experience.' (1981:6)

Here Mezirow is talking about how one can look at something and see something else. He is describing the kinds of mental filters we develop that distort our perceptions of reality and let us see what we want to see or what we think we should see. Given the societal and parental messages that Delia received, in terms of values and the role that the female is supposed to fulfil,

she learned that she, as a girl, was supposed to be passive, submissive, obedient and hence the one who received praise for pleasing her father and family. One can assume that, for Delia, such psycho-cultural assumptions meant the traditional stereotypic view of women in a patriarchal family home was a perception that she didn't fully realise then. As a result of her upbringing, the culture in which she lived, her conditioning, the assumptions she made about life, the values she had and because of the way she and others had behaved in the past, she had interpreted all the evidence in a manner which led her to believe that her father (the authority) was stronger, more capable and therefore entitled to make decisions on her behalf. Learning since very young the consequences of being disobedient to the mandates of her father and experiencing the burden of having to look after so many children (in helping her mother), had made Delia resolve never to have any more than one or two children and never to punish them.

'Returning to the experience' has allowed Delia to reflect and to explain what are, for her, acceptable reasons for this resolution. She said;

" .. it would be a way of giving more attention to the children unlike the situation which had existed in my family." (Interview 1)

and speaking of her only child she said;

"I remember that I have always said 'The day I have children I will not punish them. I will have to discuss things with them and reach an agreement and not blame them'. But that has been another thing that I have said to myself that I was not going to punish my children." (Interview 1)

The importance of 'returning to her experience' has been the result that Delia engaged in a thought process of self-reflection and learning from her experience. On the issue of reflection Boud (1987:233-234) developed a schema that focussed on the stages that people would go through when reflecting on their learning and this model identifies three steps: returning to the experience, attending to one's feelings and re-evaluating the experience. Delia's self-reflection has clarified for her some of her life issues including the dependency and protection under which she had lived.

Psychologists and behaviourists explain that children adopt attitudes of their carers and so it is not unreasonable to infer that girls begin under these conditions to sense themselves as less able and as more fragile and thus more in need of support and reassurance from others. Such rewards then become necessary for security and any threat of their loss is anxiety provoking. Delia has been able to vocalise her dependency by saying that she;

" ... had lived in a cocoon, completely protected from everything, because my parents, my family...how can I say it. I have been super-protected, too protected so that one can not see the bad around the world. If I didn't go out of Peru I would not have seen it. It isn't so much the world when people say 'she has gone to see the world' but it is what happens when you do that. One goes to see what is happening in the rest of the world because in your own family environment where you have grown up nothing has happened and one is so involved that one does know that there is another world." (Interview 2)

Dependent orientation can result from parental behaviour, which threatens the child's security, such as neglect or rejection and also from over-protectiveness and failure or delay in providing experiences which encourage independence striving. The development of self occurs as the person increasingly becomes able to perform independent acts, to do things for herself and to experience herself as a competent person. In Delia's case, she has reached this conclusion through self-reflection.

Although Mezirow (1985:233) introduced the concept of self-reflective learning as a particular function of adult learning, Boud (1987) postulates that human learning is a complex process which is not fully understood and that reflection is a key element in any learning from experience. Mezirow in his 1981 work on perspective transformation sees this kind of critical reflection leading to perspective transformation which he describes as a uniquely adult form of learning.

'It is only in late adolescence and in adulthood that a person can come to recognise being caught in his/her own history and relieving it.' (Mezirow: 1981:6)

Her father's obsession with keeping close family unity away from the influence of the outside world included his imposition, upon the family members, of a rule forbidding development of friendship relationships with anyone outside the family. Delia recounted - with feeling - that her parents, particularly her father, would often physically punish her and her brothers and sisters for breaking this rule, and that she had resolved never to repeat that with her own children. This kind of resolution has been the result of what Boud (1987) describes as 'When reflecting on one's learning one proceeds through by attending to one's feelings' (p234). Although as girl she acknowledged the feelings, she was not able to express or to rationalise them. However, later those events provoked strong feelings of rejection in her and she was able to recognise them and their causes.

"Well that is another thing that has influenced me a lot. My father was very rigorous, he would always say that where there was one the other has to follow, 'You are brothers and sisters and you have to do everything together.' Because with my brother, the older brother, there was always a competition, and the other thing my father would say was 'What is a best friend, or the best friendship if it is not your brother or sister? Why do you need more?' Always, always with that idea, and whenever he saw us fighting he would punish everyone, will punish everyone, not just one but everyone involved. He would say 'This is so that you can learn to maintain unity and not to fight.' And ohh, that punishing, ahh, because he used to punish us quite hard." (Interview 1)

Her mother on the other hand had always silently agreed with her husband's severity and ways of raising her children under complete submission and dependence. Her silence could be viewed by some as a 'deceptive attitude' reinforcing, with her silence, Delia's meaning perspective and highlighting that the dynamics occurring in the family were right and acceptable, the right way to be and to act. Adriene Rich (1979) a feminist theorist and poet explored how silence in general has been a deceptive force maintaining women in a powerless position throughout history. Another feminist writer Mary Daly (1978) suggested that deception is totally pervasive in patriarchal societies.

Mariann Lovell (1982), in her article 'Daddy's Little Girl', elaborates that this kind of paternalistic deception is constantly used for those of limited understanding such as children. The truth is bent to convey what the speaker believes to be the right picture. This is apparently supposed to compensate for the inexperience or the fears of the child and of course the lies designed to protect the child are ultimately used to suffocate her, the one for who we claim to care (p13). Bok (1979) writing on the same issue explained;

'Throughout history, men, women, and children have been compelled to accept degrading work, alien religious practices, institutionalisation, and even wars alleged to 'free' them all in the name of what someone has declared to be in their own best interest. Deception may well have outranked force as means of subjection: duping people to conform.' (p15)

Daly explains that paternalism silences and splits women by embedding fears;

'These contrived and injected fears function in a manner analogous to electrodes implanted in the brain of a victim who can be managed by remote control. This is a kind of 'silent' control'. Women may feel that they are free from certain fears ('liberated') and then bend to the acknowledged power of those fears with mental knee-jerk responses.' (1978:212)

Even after thirty years as an adult, in conversations with her mother Delia gently discussed the interaction and the beating up that occurred at home with her mother still responding:

" 'I had permission from your father to punish you.' " (Interview 1)

The deception was continuous without any explanation except for Delia actually giving justifications to herself for her mother's actions.

"She only did and taught us what she knew herself" (Interview 1)

Delia retains a strong memory of the fact that she was forbidden to have friends. The only friends that she was encouraged to have were her siblings.

"I remember the beating up my father gave us, but my father hit me hard also because I used to go out. He said 'You go with your girlfriends when you have here your brothers and sisters? Why don't you stay with them instead of walking in the street?' That may have been one of the reasons why I didn't get to make good friends, you know, or perhaps being the oldest daughter, I don't know. When I didn't arrive on time they beat me up with a belt and later, when my other brother became a bit older, about four years old, they used those things of leather - 'el chicote'. (a long hard but flexible leather belt made of twisted pieces of long leather with split ends)" (Interview 1)

An incident that left a very significant fear in Delia's life and that seems to have paralyzed her psychologically for many years was the day when a new girl arrived to town with new toys. As Delia was excited about seeing those new toys she did not go home straight away after school but went to the girl's house. The girl belonged to a decent, reputable family as perceived by the values of the town. Her father was a banker who had been transferred to the small town, and there was little danger that anything could happen to Delia.

"I remember one day I froze, seeing my father coming, and I said 'Oh my father!' He said 'Go home, your mother is getting crazy looking for you.' That night they hit me. The next day my friend asked what happened. She said 'Tell the teacher.' 'How, how can I tell the teacher if it is my fault because I had gone out yesterday and besides, the teacher is my mother's cousin, if I tell her, they will give more because of that.' That was the end of it. I never did anything like that again. That was a good beating up." (Interview 1)

She did not seek friends anymore. That incident disturbed and confused her. This state lasted for many years and through her narrative one can see that that experience, coupled with the constant teaching of her parents of staying within the family unit for safety and protection has, up to now, left traces in her of those values and beliefs. She learned to accept what happened to her as a valid and acceptable practice. Though she gained insights as to why her parents were doing what they did she finally broke through and away from the expectations of her parents and from the traditional and cultural conditioning of being a daughter and thus rigidly depending on their mandates. She

decided to leave her home-town, first at the age of twelve and later in her twenties to leave the country to travel to Australia. This was something that devastated her father - the reason for Delia's feelings of guilt up to the present. This was a process of coming to terms with our meaning perspectives and changing them so that we can see the world and ourselves a little more realistically. Mezirow (1981) describes perspective transformation as;

'...the emancipatory process of becoming critically aware of how and why the structure of psycho-cultural assumptions has come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationships, reconstituting this structure to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience and acting upon this new understanding.' (1981:6)

Having given this definition he goes on to say;

'It is the learning process by which adults come to recognise their culturally induced dependency roles and relationships and the reasons for them and take action to overcome them.' (p7)

Mezirow is describing the process of becoming aware of the filters through which we look at the world, of understanding how they got there and how they distort the way we see ourselves and others and the adjusting of the filters to get rid of the distortions. Delia, in trying to justify the reasons that her father had for the beating and punishment of her and her siblings, found herself with a disorienting dilemma, a confusion that developed over a long period of time. Gradually the reality of her family situation has grown further removed from her view of reality and even though she sees that there is more to life than beating up defenceless children she cannot break away from her past experience and her entrenched values. Mezirow (1977) explains that;

'There are certain challenges or dilemmas in everyday life that cannot be resolved by the usual way we handle problems, that is, by simply learning more about them or learning how to cope with them more effectively. Life becomes untenable, and we undergo significant phases of reassessment and growth.' (p154)

These significant phases of reassessment and growth include periods in which we take close look at ourselves and at the kind of assumptions and values we may have accepted up until now. This may lead to a sense of alienation from traditional social expectations, that is, having realised that we have been living a lie we may feel like an outsider from those who are still living the lie. This in turn may force us to seek out others who feel like us or who have been down the same track before us. From here we may look for new roles and new ways of leading our lives, prepare for and try out our new roles and finally effect;

'.. a reintegration into society on the basis of conditions dictated by the new perspective.' (1981:7)

Elaborating further on her relationship with her parents Delia said that despite the fact of the beatings she received for going out without permission she felt that the relationship was good. She justified their actions by putting the blame upon herself. She said that they hit her because she didn't tell them where she was going but as she continues her narrative this 'disorienting dilemma' persists when she recounts that, in turn, she didn't tell them simply because they wouldn't have given her permission to do what she wanted to do. She had internalised the dynamics of the situation and decided to disobey and bear the consequences.

"It is easy if they don't know. Well, ok, but if they know everything is fine - and I think it is why I did everything very quietly because if they would have known they would have 'cut my wings' and stopped me from going." (Interview 1)

Through the experience of being punished for saying what she wanted she initially developed a belief that secrecy was very important and if you wanted to achieve things it was better not to say anything. Now that idea has been converted into her strong belief that we are all born with a predetermined life and that nothing we do can possibly change that and it is better to follow without resistance. Her previous experiences have left in her strong feelings of powerlessness and devastation to the extent that, to preserve her self-

esteem and self-efficacy she now explains her life as being pre-determined and in this way avoids the responsibility of facing failure or success. She has redefined past events and the acceptance of them and has put a new light on the situation as a way of managing her thoughts and feelings as well as coping with and mastering the environment.

"Life has been pre-determined by a mysterious hand. There is the destiny for each person. I think that each person has their own destiny and no matter what you do, that is marked...If I planned something and I go and tell someone, no matter how close it is to have or to happen, it doesn't occur. It doesn't happen. But if I only tell myself where I want to get without telling anybody, it happens." (Interview 1)

Later in life as she experienced difficult times as a result of her life process she explains them as being part of what she has to go through because her life has been pre-determined.

"I am always back to the issue of destiny - that no matter what you do you cannot change things. Everything is predestined, and it is not a religion because I don't follow any religion but I believe in pre-destination. That is why I always look at the positive side of it. For example, the time when they retrenched me I was left stunned and I said 'And now what? my daughter has not finished her secondary school yet. So something will happen tomorrow.' And it did." (Interview 2)

She doesn't know how she has reached that conclusion except by things that have happened to her that she cannot explain. When Delia was asked to explain how, then, she went about succeeding in coming to Australia, and in getting the job she wanted if her life was already predetermined. She hesitated and after a short silence and reflection, she responded that she hadn't thought of that.

Delia always aimed to be successful in education and achieved that. At the time for entering university she applied to and entered a medical university but due to a university strike she had to wait until the following year to start medicine. Whilst this was happening she was able to get a student exchange scholarship. When she finished secondary school she applied to the Lions Club and they admitted her to a student exchange program. They sent her to

the United States. She was in the US for six months and when she returned she didn't want to know anything about Peru. She decided that she wanted to study in the United States. Her father wasn't of the same opinion and said;

" 'You can go up there but I am not going to send you money because if I send you money you are not going to study and you are possibly going to be doing other things and not studying. If you want to study, study here.' " (Interview 1)

The whole family at this stage had moved to the capital of Peru and her father, whose work was to receive fruit at the produce market, could not afford to pay much to assist in Delia's tertiary education so she began doing intensive courses of conversational English. She liked English very much, and because she had typing and shorthand skills she began making a little money by attending lectures at the university, taking detailed lecture notes, making copies of them and selling them. This was a way to help herself with her own expenses but also a way of feeling self-sufficient and self-reliant.

Deciding what can be done requires making a judgement, and one is inevitably influenced both by current emotions and by previous experiences. Although Delia has realised her dependency, the over-protectiveness of her parents and the consequences of disobedience, she did not see herself as a victim but as the actor of her own life. This is evident when she narrates how she was pursuing the idea of leaving to go to another country. The lack of belief in one's own efficacy is a major stumbling-block to problem-solving because one does not even attempt to change things (Parry 1990:54) However this was not so in the case of Delia. Realizing that she could not count on her father to assist her financially she went to the United States' embassy to apply for a visa but was told that they weren't giving visas at that time. She had told the embassy that she wanted to go to the US to study English but they suggested that she should go to Australia.

After applying to the Australian Embassy for migration and being accepted she was very happy. She thought that what Australia was offering was excellent so she decided to take the opportunity and to leave. She was told

that she didn't need to be worried about paying for her ticket because she would receive assisted passage to the extent of forty five percent of her fare and that the difference would be paid by the Australian Catholic Immigration office to be repaid by her after arrival in Australia. In thinking about her plans for departure, her previous experiences alerted her to the strategy of not telling anybody about her plans to leave until the day before the event. In reflecting upon this she thought that it was a great risk and she described it with an analogy:

“ they would have cut my wings and I would not have been able to fly.” (Interview 1)

As she assessed her situation and what she wanted to do, she necessarily turned to her previous experiences for judgement and insight as to what the outcome would be if she took particular steps including that of telling her parents and so she decided not to reveal her plans. This process is, as Boud (1987) describes, the 're-evaluation of the experience' stage where one's new experiences can be related to prior experiences and where new knowledge can be fitted into one's existing way of looking at the world (p234).

Psychology shows us that in the course of testing limits and trying autonomous behaviour a person (child) inevitably experiences anxiety that comes from the violation of norms. But in doing so one also learns the nature of real consequences and at the same time learns to make rational choices from the range of alternatives. Delia decided to make a commitment away from home even though later in life, as a result of her father's death and the way she left home, she was plagued with guilt.

“My mother didn't know anything and that is why until now my mother is still complaining. Everything was kept very quiet. My father didn't know either. The day before my departure I said to my mother 'Mama I want to talk to you.' Ahh, my mother was fainting, my father also and they said 'Where will you get money?' Oh no, because I was doing part-time (work) so I said 'I have the money and the ticket, they will be paid and when I get there I will return the money.' ” (Interview 1)

During the trip to Australia Delia met six other Peruvian girls with whom, to this date, she has maintained contact. They still meet every month. They arrived in Sydney in December 1970 and were placed in a Salvation Army hostel. They left the hostel in January to live in a flat in the eastern suburbs of Sydney. As she recounts her experiences since arrival she was judgmental of many girls who were very upset and complaining about the conditions of the hostel and she remembered telling them;

“What else do you want? In other countries they give you nothing. I have been to the United States and I have seen the situation of migrants, very sad. In here at least they are giving us a room, clean linen, changed towels and the only thing that we need to worry about is to get a job.” (Interview 1)

She politely described the hostel as ‘an antique house’ with small rooms. Their necessities were provided including breakfast, dinner and lunch. Even though the newly arrived girls were told that they could only stay at the hostel for three months Delia and her group stayed only 4 weeks. She recounts meeting a group of Peruvian girls who used to say horrible things about the hostel. Some were shocked to be brought to such a place, which they said was full of old and drunk people. As Delia displayed a compliant and accepting attitude towards the hostel conditions and rules some of the girls questioned her previous standards in Peru by saying that they wondered what Delia had been used to in Peru. Her response was that it was not about what she was used to, but about what they were being offered. She told them that they should look at the country as a host country that was accepting them. She had felt grateful at what had been offered.

Nann (1982), in discussing the adaptation and resettlement of migrant families and children in other countries, states that adaptation will be influenced by previous personal and socio-economic experiences and by the background of the individual.

‘The adaptive demands upon an adult female immigrant can be difficult. Apart from having to learn a new ‘woman’s role’ as defined by the cultural values of a host society, previous life experiences such as earlier moves either within or outside one’s

own country, can modify the settlement experience. Factors such as age, sex, marital status and educational and vocational background are also important variables.' (p4)

In Delia's case, previous experiences of migration from a small town to a big city had provided her with some background information about the difficulties that one encounters when moving to another place and this has, in some ways, assisted her adaptation and settlement in Australia. On the other hand her culture has prompted Delia, from a very early age, to become sensitive to the responses of those in authority and to evaluate herself accordingly. She has learned to behave in ways that would maximise the powerful rewards of acceptance and approval of significant others and this was the case in disagreeing with the other girls about the situation of the hostel even though later she moved away from it.

As she began to narrate her experience in employment since arrival in Australia she does it by talking about the experiences of other girls rather than her own and relates that when she arrived, due to the proximity of Christmas, there were no immediate interviews for employment. But in the following week someone from Immigration arrived and offered them employment in cleaning positions. None of the girls wanted to do cleaning.

" 'We haven't come here to do cleaning.' they said. And then is when she told us 'Well what do you think, that when you come here you are going to have the same ... without speaking English - you are going to have the same position that you had in your country? I don't think so. You have to start somewhere.' Everyone said 'Oh no, I don't want, I don't want.' "(Interview 1)

Delia's speaking in the first person plural may be an indicator of her not wanting to be seen as personally disagreeing with the employment offered and also with trying to be inclusive of the other girls in her narratives. By word of mouth the girls found their own employment with some working and living in hospitals. A girl who went to work in the Royal Paddington hospital told Delia that there was a position available. She went with another girl to apply for the job. The chef was the person doing the interviews, and they were sent to work in the kitchen.

"I said 'Until we get used to the place and until we get our feet on the ground, it is ok.' In the beginning two girls left because they went to study English, they worked only two months. Another girl, the one who was doing medicine in her country, was from Uruguay. We developed a very good relationship to the point that when she left the Royal Paddington and went to work at Burroughs Welcome, which was a laboratory, she returned to visit us." (Interview 1)

The group that went to work in Montifiori (a hospital) was a little bored as they couldn't go out to dance because of working weekends. The girl who was working in Burroughs Welcome, in one of her visits, suggested that the girls go to that company because they were looking for people to work in the laboratory. As a result of that they were given jobs. Delia's job was to fill the saccharine container. At the end of the day her hair and body were covered in saccharine. She spoke nostalgically about the interaction that occurred.

"It was funny, we had a good time. We used to talk during lunch-time. Ahh, how beautiful, what a time! We were there, I think, about three months. But then I said 'I think I've had enough, as an experience it has been enough.' Because before that I had never seen a factory or a laboratory - I hadn't seen anything like that." (Interview 1)

After three months, during which time the girls were studying English, they felt more confident to apply for something else. Delia scanned the advertisements and saw a job in accounting so she applied. They asked her whether she knew how to do invoices.

"Invoices! I didn't know the meaning of the word invoice, 'Oh yes I know how to do invoices.' I said. I said to the girls that I knew conversational English but not the language of the office. I hadn't worked in an office to be able to know. Do you know how to do this?' 'Yes.' I used to say. Fortunately invoices were simple, as things were sold, it was a matter of multiplying, putting it on the machine, make a note of it, debit and credit and that was it. From there they sent me, oh yes I was the timekeeper. I had to pick up all the cards from the factory and take them for calculation of the working hours. All the hours were calculated, entered into one page and taken to the computer sections for calculation of payment, overtime and so on." (Interview 1)

She became bored with that work and left. In a period of one year she had three jobs. Firstly at Paddington then Burroughs Welcome and then Standard Cables. At Standard Cables, where she was doing time keeping she learned invoicing. As she began establishing herself in Australia she began working towards improving her employment situation. Delia gave a detailed account of the steps that she took and the progress she made over the years and the experiences and interactions that occurred as time went on. She spent eleven years in a bank and although she enjoyed the work she was confronted with racist attitudes, not new to her experience, but still painful.

"Oh my God, there I really sweated because there was direct contact with the public, and it was my first experience. At the time my accent, of course up to now I have an accent in English... Now of course it is different, but in those days all the suffering I went through because they didn't want to make any effort in understanding me, or make themselves understood. 'What? what?', they said, I used to repeat it again, and again, 'Ohh, I don't understand you. Call somebody else to explain to me.' they kept on telling me. The manager who was trying to get rid of me said 'Delia for your own good it is better that you go back to head office. There, it is less dealing with the public. I don't have any problems in understanding you, but the problem is with the public, and you know that the public is always right.'" (Interview 1)

As a result management sent her back to the head office to a new department. Soon afterwards, as the bank was merging with another bank, she was confronted with a new experience – the possibility of being retrenched. Her line manager, concerned with her situation, assisted her by encouraging her to look for another job rather than being retrenched. She recalls the support and well wishes of her manager:

"Take it easy, and if you want to go and look for a job somewhere else you are permitted to do so. Go and see what is better for you'. He said 'I wish you well and please type this letter.' He gave me a very nice letter of recommendation. The bank never gives you a letter - only a statement. But he did." (Interview 1)

Whilst Delia was going through the process of seeking new employment through an agency organised by the company which had retrenched her, she

was pleasantly surprised to find out that a place where she was applying for a job was the same company she worked some years before. Since that time the company had expanded and Delia has acquired many skills which, at the time of the application, were essential for the position she was applying for. Delia was successful in her application and has been working there for the last seven years in information technology.

The most profound learning that we experience is the one that occurs as a result of a personal relationship. Brookfield in his article, Significant Personal Learning (1988) elaborates that, in his experience, significant personal learning has to do with a number of other learnings such as learning how to develop a relationship with people who are important, how to accept change in a relationship, how to fight one's own self-centredness, vanity, arrogance or laziness, how to be more open to one's own feelings, how to communicate them, how to listen, how to comfort, how to enter others' frames of reference so that one can see situations from other points of view. Although these are difficult to fully achieve one can engage in such learning throughout one's life

Delia hadn't had any personal relationship experiences before coming to Australia. Everything was completely new and, to some extent, frightening for her. Once again the strictness of her upbringing and the memories of the repercussions of meeting with someone outside the family lead to haunting feelings of being watched by her parents when she began going out with the man who later became her husband.

"The first time I went out with someone was in here. The first time, and that was because I didn't have anyone that ... and I even used to say that there maybe my mother is around there, checking on me." (Interview 2)

She met her husband soon after arrival and in the street in her way to work.

"Ahh, I met my first husband. I met him when I was going on my way to work at the hospital. So I told the girls, 'Guess what? I have met a boy. He has invited me to go to the beach.' he said that this weekend he is getting a new car and he has invited me to go to Wollongong. A few days later I was going past when he said 'Look that is my

car.' I said 'Oh yes, good luck.' So he asked me 'Do you want me to pick you up?' I said 'Yes, but there is another girl coming with me.' 'Ok, you don't trust me.' He used to take both of us to my place and from there the girl would be picked up by her sister. He would stay to talk to us and from then on slowly, slowly I was settling down to the situation. That is how the romance started." (Interview 2)

They continued going out and she became pregnant and two years after her daughter's birth they married. Delia related that her husband didn't want to settle down but they were together for seven years.

" ... seven years married and goodbye. In 1978 I told him that I wanted to divorce him he asked me 'Why, to get married again?' 'No, but to be in this situation, forget it.' I said. He didn't like Sydney so he would say 'Let's go to South Australia.' Then he would not like South Australia so, 'Let's go to Melbourne.' I said 'This is not life I don't want to go around and around.' " (Interview 2)

Delia did not regard the separation as traumatic because they were mostly fighting while they were together.

"It was a situation in which we used to argue all the time. He only looked after his future but not the future of us, my daughter's and mine. It was only what interested him. He would say 'I am going there because it is a better job.' Then he would return saying 'It is not worth it.' So I said 'Oh no, if he wants to carry on with that kind of a life it is his problem, what is the aim of it?' " (Interview 2)

The experience that Delia has had from relationships has been similar to the one between her family and her. She had learned many things from the family environment which have been of crucial significance when she transferred them to her marriage situation. From her perspective and from what she has learned in the past about relationships the relationship with her husband did not make sense. She had known about the role that each individual plays in the family, the husband being the person responsible for the home and the well-being of the family and the one providing stronger support. This was not happening in her situation. Although she tried to redefine herself in terms of her new role and in this new situation, her strong cultural belief was more powerful than her relationship. However in this relationship she had learned

that she didn't need to hide anything to be free and it has been this awareness of being in control and of having the capacity to decide options such as getting a divorce that had been her main learning. Brookfield (1988) postulates that learning within the intimate relationship can be seen as exhibiting three conditions of social reflectivity: the development of contextual awareness, reflective scepticism and imaginative speculation (p41). Delia has come to the realisation now that what she was perceiving as the natural order of things was only a reflection of her previous social and cultural prescriptions, what Brookfield calls 'contextual awareness', and though she realised that she was constrained by that she felt comfortable with it. What is important here is that she has become consciously aware of the difference. Similarly by initiating a divorce she was going against her own cultural rules but she challenged them in any case. This is described as a reflective scepticism and defined as;

'The questioning of beliefs, norms or advice which are supposed to carry universal truth and authority' (Brookfield 1982:42)

Another condition of critical reflectivity is 'imaginative speculation' which is defined as 'The capacity to imagine ways of thinking and living alternative to those one currently accepts'. In resonance with this condition Delia had made a deliberate and conscious effort of avoiding replicating the kind of treatment that she received at home with her daughter. On the contrary she had decided to be a supportive and open-minded person for her daughter. This experience has given Delia another learning dimension in her understanding of family interaction and her relationship within it. It has assisted her in feeling more in control of her life and in discovering that there are predictable consequences which she can control such as giving her daughter the home education that she considers to be appropriate.

However, her cultural background and her previous experiences have been prevalent in Delia's life particularly when opportunities for further personal relationships arose. Constant moral and cultural dilemmas and the fear of changing previous ways of thinking and acting were evident in her narrative.

The confusion arose as a result of constantly comparing the present with the past situation and her previous parental teachings. Delia met an Australian man and went out with him. The relationship lasted three months. She wasn't able to adjust to his ways nor him to hers. He was upset that she was giving more attention to her daughter than to him. She emphasised that her daughter has been always her first priority.

"But he wanted bed and I wasn't divorced or anything to give him bed. So I said 'Sorry.' He said that I had a 'narrow mind'. I told him that it didn't matter that I wasn't in Peru. It was the life that they had fixed for me and I can't change my ideas. They are too grounded, rooted, to be changing. I think my home ideas were the reasons why. Because of the way I was formed. At one time my family said that the fact of being divorced and with a daughter wasn't seen as a good thing. They said that in Peru a single mother is not seen as a good thing. I told them that perhaps in Peru it wasn't seen as a good thing but I wasn't in Peru." (Interview 2)

A month after her divorce Delia met Peter through a friend at her evening part time work. He was a man who had also been divorced. Delia this time reflected upon her life and her feelings and she came to the conclusion that she also needed to think of herself and that there was nothing wrong in wanting someone. They decided to live together but there was pressure from her mother who reminded her of her social moral values including that it was wrong to live in a de-facto relationship with a divorced man. Delia married at the registry office.

"I had my daughter but I have my life to live also. Which was a normal thing to do and I didn't need to feel ashamed for being separated from my husband. That is why, when I brought him into the house, my mother told me 'Do you think that you can change men as you change underpants?' My mother told me that he was also divorced and said 'What are people going to say?' I told her 'Forget about what people are going to say.' When Peter moved into the house at first my mother was angry and said 'What kind of life are you leading? What do you mean by leading that kind of life?' as I had recently separated from the other one and that I had now found someone else. I said 'It is not like if I am sleeping with a different one every night.' She said 'Yes, but sleeping with someone without being married.' So we went and married at the Registry." (Interview 2)

Delia undertook courses at university but discontinued because she felt that it was not what she wanted to do and she also found it difficult to study whilst raising a child. She later matriculated in computer studies and successfully graduated. These studies helped her in progressing to her current position in which she feels satisfied.

In trying to resolve some extended periods of inner struggle resulting from her upbringing, value beliefs and her relationship with her father Delia tracked back her steps during a visit to Peru with her first husband and her daughter. That experience wasn't very pleasant as she felt once again confronted with a confusion, with a disorienting dilemma with what she was learning as she was trying to break through the cultural conditioning that had made her conceive herself as a derivative person. She learned that societal values were again trying to constrain her.

"When Michela was two years old I went to Peru and I tried to have a communion because it was a long time since I had a communion. I remember it was with the Franciscans that I said that I was married by the civil law but not religiously. He told me that I was in sin. I said 'In sin? I am living with one man only. Are you telling me that because I am not married religiously I am in sin and that I cannot have a communion? Keep your church and your communion. This is the last time I set foot in a church.' I told the priest 'In Australia we don't need to confess. We can have a communion just like that.' 'Ahh, that is worse, it is a mortal sin.' he said. I told him 'Ok, father I am a mortal sinner'." (Interview 2)

Even though she was very disillusioned by the attitude of some sections of the Catholic Church she raised her daughter as a Catholic. Her daughter questioned her own teaching:

"My daughter said 'But mum, you made me go to mass but you don't go to mass.'" (Interview 2)

Delia now is planning early retirement in another state with her husband. She seems contented but still appears to be mortified by the death of her father. She still struggles with the unresolved issue of the relationship with her father

and her leaving the country. To cope with this struggle she decided to deny that her father is dead. Initially she did it automatically as a response to the shock but as the years have gone past she has internalised it and decided to deny it consciously. She is able to explain why she is doing it whilst at the same time she is trying to search for her father in the unknown by consulting with a clairvoyant. Her father died two years after she came to Australia at the age of fifty years. Delia didn't go to the funeral.

"For ten years I didn't go because I had the idea that my father was there. It is so painful that I prefer to leave things as they are. Even though my mother doesn't want to tell me anything she says that my departure to Australia was a shock to my father and that since I left he didn't want to go to the airport to say goodbye to anyone anymore. Later on when I went to Peru my mother said 'Let's go to the cemetery.' I said 'No mum, I don't want to go to see my father in a tomb.' I said 'If I go and I see the tomb I won't know what to do.' When I called my sister I often asked 'Buy some flowers for my father's birthday.' She said 'Of course, but why don't you come to pray for him or to put flowers yourself?' I said 'No.' I don't know, but the only thing I know is that I will never be able to cope with the fact of seeing him in the tomb. I have my father in my mind the way I left him. Don't tell me about the way that he was ill or the process of it, no I don't want to know." (Interview 2)

This situation causes Delia feelings of anger, sadness, frustration, and thus she is not able to articulate them explicitly. One can assume that, apart from coping, it has to do with not being able to have control of the situation, of not being able to talk to her father to explain the reasons as to why she left the country because he is dead. She prefers to deny it by believing that he is alive. She has consulted with a 'psychic' about reaching her father.

"Although the psychic has told me that my father is not here anymore, 'Your father has taken another form, another soul.' 'Oh yes,' I said 'where has he reincarnated?' She said that they are around here for some years only. She asked me 'How many years since your father died?' and I said that it was about 20 years. She explained that there are so many years for this. I think that it is the only sadness that I have - of not having been there. In part, some times I said to myself, 'Instead of sadness at least I was not there to see it. If I would have been there I would have been in a much worse condition than my mother.' My father had spoiled me, uh, too much. My father trusted me so much. It may be that he looked for support because my mother couldn't

give it to him. I don't know, I don't know. That is why I thought 'If I hadn't come (to Australia) would have he lived?' Who knows? I don't know." (Interview 2)

Despite her expressed belief that life is pre-determined and that there is a determined destiny for each of us, in her accounts she demonstrated that she has had an active participation and role in what was happening with her life. She has demonstrated to be a person who plans, seeks, grasps and processes information. She makes decisions such as deciding to go and look for employment, about her relationships and to move from one place to another using a great deal of initiative. She doesn't stop at the decision-making point but she assesses the outcome and makes further decisions. She acknowledged some of her qualities by saying;

"Initiative is something that I have never lacked but if I planned something and I go and tell someone, no matter how close it is to have or to happen, it doesn't occur. I planned in my head and then I follow steps." (Interview 2)

In looking at Delia's story one can see that a very important factor in her narratives has been the rendering of certain events rather than the events themselves. The events have been helpful in highlighting the process and the ways she dealt with those events. One prominent feature of her narrative has been 'coping' with the events of her life and whilst it has been an active process it has also been a complex process that has been changing with the phases of stressful encounters and from one context to another. Thought, actions and feeling involved in coping depend on the type of stressful encounter being experienced. The pattern of coping also depends on how the person appraises the situation. For example whether it is judged as uncontrollable or as open and ameliorative action. In the former instance, coping becomes more heavily oriented toward the regulation of emotion by avoidance, wishful thinking or detachment, whereas in the latter, problem focussed modes predominate (Parry 1990:54). Delia's coping has been responsive to contextual variables, temporal factors, and feedback from the flow of events. Coping in this context can be defined as efforts to manage demands that tax or exceed the person's resources. The word manage in this

definition means that coping can include toleration of harm or threat, redefinition of past events and putting a positive light on the situation. In other words, a set of ways for managing one's thoughts and feelings as well as mastery of the environment (Parry 1990:54).

Another feature of Delia's learning process has been her experiencing confusion and with some aspects of her life and staying in that confusion, which is described by Mezirow (1977) as a 'disorienting dilemma.' If we view the experiences of Delia with Mezirow's analysis in mind we also see an account of Delia going through a profound learning experience. Dilemmas, according to Mezirow, can either lock people into stereotypical positions or bring about considerable reassessment of themselves and their values and assumptions (p154).

An example of gradual disorientation is found in her story of being trapped within the societal structures of her country. At home she shares the responsibility of bringing up her siblings, dealing with her family crises and helping her parents to meet a whole range of aspirations. There she is told to be obedient and to follow the parents' rules as they were there to protect her. As she compared herself with other children at school she began assessing the difference and questioning it. Mezirow argues that such dilemmas can be the source of a profound and very special learning. As she began to give answers to her own questions she began shifting to the extent of taking drastic decisions such as leaving the home environment. This shift gave her the opportunity to be physically free from the restrictions and restraints of her parents. But her 'disorienting dilemma' continued and, as she tried to construct new perspectives in her new environment, her previous conditioning and lack of true knowledge in terms of personal relationships did not give her the opportunity to completely free herself. Soon after arrival in Australia she fell pregnant. She doesn't give details of this experience but we know that the union did not last because she again found herself in an oppressive situation and of being the sole person looking after the family because the husband spent his time travelling. He could not settle as she would have expected. She shifted her meaning of life when she initiated a divorce. Inconsistencies in her

narratives began emerging after her recount of her father's death. Conflicting statements were also evident as a fatalistic discourse of countervailing forces of action and inertia being present when she discusses life and 'pre-destination'. To manage and cope with her life situation she has tried to divert attention from the distressing internal tensions and conflicts that her father's death left in her by restoring an inner equilibrium and emotional peace with a denial that her father has died. Her most difficult task in the journey into herself has been the recognition and acceptance of those aspects which were hidden from conscious awareness as a result of her socialisation process and psychological adaptation.

One can see through her narrative that Delia, in working through her experiences, has involved herself in successive experiences of disorientation, doubt, questioning and internal discomfort. Trying to change her attitude, particularly when bringing up her daughter, has required more than just gaining new information about how to do it, but has been more about working out her own experiences and gaining an insight to them. She has struggled with her sense of worthiness and competence and she has used a great deal of energy in trying to hide this inner conflict from others. Within what she knew she has tried to overcome her situation by liberating herself, by changing perspectives and thereby overcoming low self-esteem and claiming inner authority. All of that has involved a learning process and a transition to a path of self-transformation. Mezirow describes this domain as learning for perspective transformation.

'Perspective transformation involves not only becoming critically aware of habits of perception, thought and action but of the cultural assumptions governing the rules, roles, conventions and social expectations which dictate the way we see, feel and act.' (Mezirow 1981:6)

Through this kind of learning we begin transforming our perspectives and in that way we begin our liberation from those influences that blind and corrupt not just our vision but our ability for action.

PART FIVE

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This study has examined the learning experiences of Peruvian single women who migrated to New South Wales, Australia in the late 1960s and early 1970s. A specific goal of this research has been to explore aspects of the learning strategies that these women put in place in the course of establishing their new life structures in Australia.

Exhaustive examination of the narratives of the women involved in the research has provided valuable insight into the learning experiences of these women. Additional information was acquired from former Immigration Department officers whose work was to provide on-arrival assistance specifically to single migrant women who were assigned accommodation in hostels in Sydney.

It was relevant to the analysis of the learning experiences of the migrant women participants, for the researcher to engage in a critical examination of the general history of migration of women to Australia. Similarly a critical overview of the political, economic and cultural background of Peru for a similar period was necessary in order to gain an understanding of the contextual factors that shaped the experiences of the women involved. Examining the women's lives before coming to Australia has facilitated an exploration of the social order and associated discourses, as well as an examination of the various ways in which individuals, both in the past in the present, found meaning in and positioned themselves in relation to those discourses. The findings of those examinations has lent weight to the importance, when writing of learning experiences of women, of the need to focus on the lived experience as well as on the ideology of the time.

Analysis of the women's narrative was conducted from the base perspectives of Dewey's concepts of learning and Habermas' and Mezirow's models of adult learning. However an important feature of the analyses has been that, rather than solely concentrating upon the content (verifiable facts) attention

has also been given to the overall structure of the narratives. An important gain in this regard has been that some experiences, which at first glance seemed to have no apparent association with the task at hand, have elicited critical meanings and provided insights into how the participants constructed their experiences and their relationships with the order of society.

Considering the narratives as performances has provided insight into the participant's current construction of experience. The examination of their narratives has also provided insight into how discourses available to the participants as children, and how they then positioned themselves in relation to those discourses, have informed the construction of adult subjectivity. Such exploration has revealed how, influenced by their migration to Australia, their discourses changed and this shows the relevance of the contention that we construct the world according to the discourses available to us. Yet in addition to such insight, it is possible to see how the individual struggle for meaning resulted in diverse outcomes in the meanings that each of the women assigned to various experiences. This diversity resulted from the influence of experiences and associated discourses both before and after their time of migration.

Whilst the discourses during the period of their lives prior to coming to Australia were discourses of obedience, of conformity and acceptance, of experiencing dilemmas and of critically thinking and reflecting, their discourses after arrival are of joy, search, independence and action. Similarly, whilst discourses of love and admiration of a father were associated with a father figure of 'a powerful, all knowing, strong head of the family' and the obvious patriarchal society in which they were born and raised, it was the discourses of emancipation, expressed as wanting to break away from those in authority, which informed the migration of these women.

In exploring the narrative structure it has been possible to obtain meaning about the facts and events which have been embedded in those narratives. A common feature found in the narratives of these women has been the impact that the relationship with their father has had on each of the women. The

patriarchal culture has prompted them, from early age, to become sensitive to the responses of the father and the male figure and to evaluate themselves accordingly. It had become normal to seek the acceptance of the father and to avoid his rejection. At home every aspect of their lives and their learning had been subjected to the approval and consent of the father. The familiar rationalisation for the demeaning treatment that they experienced as daughters was based on the paternalistic view 'I know what is best for you'. This has been indicative of the paternalistic ideology that views women as inferior, passive and subordinate beings. Girls in Peru have been raised to be wives and mothers. Education and jobs are seen, not in terms of life-long commitments, but as stopgaps to marriage. Institutional organisations including the church, holding the religious beliefs of people, have reinforced and contributed to this mentality.

As they began understanding the power of the father they began understanding the dominance they were subjected to. When they understood that, they began internally (in their thought processes) and externally to look for options and choices. One of them was to leave Peru. Paradoxically however, we find that these women, whilst they decided to break away from their paternalistic family and from their father dependency, learned to identify themselves with their father and to stay very close to their father image. Their narratives illustrate the constant comparison they make of others with their fathers, including attempts to repeat, with their own children, some of the ways of teaching that they have learned whilst growing up and observing the techniques of their fathers. It is common in a patriarchal society to believe that one can attain power and security by associating with powerful men such as the father. In patriarchal societies women are not known for their own accomplishments but by accomplishments of the father or brother. That is to say that women are non-existent unless they are associated with a male.

Through examination of the facts and events within the narrative structures it has been possible to locate not only the relationship between self and the social sphere but the women's conditions as they were shaped by the society in which they lived (Chanfrault-Duchet in Berger & Patai 1991). Their

narratives provide insight about the concern and preoccupation that these women had for role-modelling and for being an example to their respective family members, particularly their siblings. These included assuming the responsibility of financially supporting their family. The family is the first and most important group association that an individual experiences. The patterns of interaction learned there provide a model for behaviour in future group membership. The personality that the individual develops is greatly influenced by the role that she learns to play in the family unit (Brodegaard in Muff 1982). It follows that these women learned to care for their siblings and to take responsibility for the wellbeing of their family. This aspect of growing up and learning is closely linked with the paternalistic view described previously by which girls are assigned roles that prepare them for their passive role of a wife or, if not married a passive role of a spinster, who works for the expected reasons of taking care of her parents, brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews. Role assignment is what is known in psychology as 'projective identification'. It refers to a situation in which an individual becomes expected to enact a certain role, not because of her needs, desires, or internal tensions, but because of the needs of others that can be met through enactment of this role. One of the most commonly assigned roles is that of the parent. Role assignments are important vehicles through which behaviour is moulded and family values are incorporated into the personality. By assuming a parent role, a child learns to identify with the responsible roles that she will fill in adult life. Projecting this role onto the child is one of the ways the family meets their needs and obligations but additionally parents can find occasional relief from the stress and responsibility of parenting. All of these have provided a firm basis for understanding how these experiences have affected the women, how they have shaped their learning experiences and the context in which those experiences have evolved.

Contribution to knowledge

1. History

It became clear that many Peruvian women came to Australia in the early 1970s as a result of the active recruitment of single women by the Australian

government with significant assistance from the Catholic Church. Although the number cannot be accurately determined by this research we know that a considerable number of women came to Australia under the Assisted Migration Scheme. The guidelines were specifically based upon single status woman, aged under thirty five years of age, physically sound (requiring medical examination) and of moral character beyond reproach (women were required to present personal references - normally from the local church priest - as well as police references). This was remarkably consistent with the recruitment policy used by Australian governments since the early 1800s as referred to in chapter one.

Another feature of the recruitment process was that Australian government would assist single women with forty five percent of the passage fare with the condition that the recipient of that assistance was required to stay in Australia for a minimum period of two years. Failure to comply with this condition meant that they had to return the money to the government before leaving Australia and to buy their own return ticket. The assisted passage scheme was attractive in that it had the appearance of a holiday with cheap travel but in reality it constituted a significant control mechanism. On face value the two year 'qualifying' period provided a fixed horizon or known parameter within which they could, in addition to feeling somewhat secure, plan and execute goals such as learning the language, acquiring jobs in their fields, sending money to their families, furthering their education and/or finding satisfactory partners. The two year 'stay' requirement had both positive and negative implications for the migrant women and mostly positive outcomes for the Australian government. Whilst it appeared to be a long time to be away from their families it would be long enough to learn English language and also give an illusory assurance to the women's families that the women would return after that period. It seems that the qualifying period gave many of the women and their families an understanding that their stay in Australia would be in the form of a 'working holiday' rather than an irreversible change of country. For the Australian government it seemed likely that the two year period would be long enough for any feelings of 'home-sickness' to diminish and for the women to become sufficiently involved in work, relationships and or

community to dissipate any (expected) early desire to hurriedly return to the security of family in Peru.

It became evident from the narratives of the women participants that, in the late 1960s and early 70s in Peru and prior to migration, all of the single women found themselves in a set of circumstances with respect to their work, studies, family lives and community that called for adjustments or change. The narratives elicited evidence of dissatisfaction with the home and their general situation, their increasing recognition that prejudice and discrimination were barriers to their education, employment and equality in general. During this period young women began mobilising themselves and many began feeling the necessity for change and to search for better opportunities as the ones available were no longer acceptable to them. In respect of the proposition of migrating to Australia, even though it was difficult to envisage a long term future in another country, the important thing was that these women decided to take prospective action, the type of action that allowed them to achieve and perceive immediate change and/or success, such as going away from the 'protection' of their family and facing the world of work, study and life away from their family's view. Their success not only constituted affective meaning for them in that they felt free from the overprotection of their family but was tangible as they were able to earn good wages (salaries in some cases were three times those received at home), to form a group and manage their relationships within the group and to learn a new language and new culture in an environment totally new to them.

The role of the church, whilst not specifically central to this research, was in no way insignificant in the migration of young Peruvian women to Australia during the specified period. From the narratives it became clear that the Catholic Church, through its office in Lima, played a crucial role in facilitating the migration of these women by offering them loans for the thirty five percent balance of the travel costs ensuring that the women were not required to make any 'up-front' payment. It was made clear to the women that as soon as possible after coming to Australia they should start to repay the loans received. The participants recounted that many Peruvian women migrants were visited within days of their arrival by a sister from the Catholic

Immigration office in Sydney who offered them employment as domestics in Catholic homes in the country with the assurance that 'that was the best way of learning English - by talking to the children of the family involved and by learning from them'. (Margaret former Immigration officer-Interview 22.9.1999) It follows that this was also an assurance of the repayment of the loan.

It was evident that these women were placed in a unique and rather predictable situation in which failure in their goals and potential poverty were imminent. The environment was not only hostile and inhospitable but the women came from close-knit family units, from rather protected environments, they were young and certainly vulnerable and did not have any family or friends in Australia. They did not speak the language, did not know the culture, there were no language or welfare support services appropriate for them and they did not have an ethnic support group to assist them. Accordingly everything was pointing to a situation in which these women were doomed to fail in settling in their new country.

The literature on the experiences of migrants is extensive and demonstrative of the challenges and problems that immigrants have to face including the changes that they must undergo in a wide range of areas. These include physical changes including a new place to live, frequently problematic housing; biological changes such as different sources of nutrition; political changes such as different types of government and political procedures; economic changes, including different types of employment which require different knowledge and skills; cultural changes, including a different language, types of education, approach to religion; and social changes, including those involving inter-group and interpersonal relations as well as different types of dominance. Because of all the changes required, immigration constitutes a change for which individuals are not likely to be adequately prepared by 'anticipatory socialization.' (Merton 1968:20). Similar literature highlights that the usually abrupt change of their entire life-style that migrants face is apt to exceed the capacity of their adaptability to a new country. Rumbaut (1997:57) contends that the significant amount of life change that immigrants have to cope with as well as their often marginal

position in the new society, can lead to ' .. relative powerlessness and alienation which in turn can affect their ability to achieve life goals in a foreign world'. (ibid: p3)

In the case of the Peruvian women one can see through their recounts that they faced the changes with a great deal of enthusiasm, although, sometimes they had to endure painful challenges. They developed and enacted strategies that assisted them to face the daily difficulties that settlement implied. One significant strategy they adopted was to face the difficulties as a group rather than alone and they learned in active interaction with each other at their shared homes. The homes became social sites of learning. They started to achieve freedom as they began to learn some options available and began arriving at knowledge through explorations of the environment and the possibilities within it. All the migrant women participants of this research related that, as they did not know anyone in Australia and as part of feeling secure in an unknown place and with little or no language, they continued and extended their association with the girls with whom they migrated to the extent of forming a group, leaving the hostel and living together. Group dynamics was one of the most important aspects in achieving positive settlement as they shared common experiences and exchanged information and ideas giving themselves more options and opportunities. Some of the women had met previously in Lima at a meeting organised by the Catholic office and this in itself gave reassurance and credibility to both their parents and themselves that all the girls were, in a sense, compatible. Therefore they were not strangers to each other and living together as a group was acceptable as they could protect and supervise each other.

It could be assumed that the security and stability represented by the women's religious and social backgrounds was a resource that they were able to resort to in a collective or individual way to assist them to cope with the difficulties that they were facing. While this may appear as a contradiction it is not unusual that the positive and negative aspects of, in this case a religious belief system, as perceived by the persons concerned, can be utilised as and when required for either support or as reasons for justifying actions which are

essentially opposed to the expectations of the belief system. In this case the women, whilst having rejected certain controlling aspects of the church as manifested within the patriarchal society of their homeland, were still able to draw upon the positive features of peer support and common moral standards and the security represented by them in order to assist them to cope with the harshness of their new environment.

2. Adult Education

The specific goal of this research has been to highlight the migration, settlement and learning experiences of the Peruvian women as well as to explore aspects of the adult learning strategies that they have put in place in the course of their new life structures in Australia.

Learning takes place not only through organised educational processes. Throughout life, informal learning events and processes occur. Learning is a lifelong activity and adult learning occurs in a number of ways including in formal, non-formal and informal manners and contributes to continued growth and development of an individual (Dewey:1968). It can often result from the impact of life experiences more than structured learning processes. This study has explored the extent to which each has shaped the lives of the women concerned. In this research life itself has been demonstrated to be the major source of learning.

Adult learning occurs not only in an individual setting but is often significantly influenced by group dynamics. The narratives in this research have indicated the importance for the participants of learning as part of a group and the emancipatory value of the adult learning experiences achieved by them.

As referred to previously Dewey's concepts of learning and Habermas' and Mezirow's models of adult learning form the basis of the analysis of the women's narratives. The narratives of these women exhibited a common thread which was that of learning through reflection and critical thinking in the domain of emancipatory, transformative learning. Another common feature

evident in each narrative has been the extent to which each of the participants learned in group situations and through facing continual life changes.

Learning through Reflection and Critical Thinking:

A salient feature of all of the research subjects' narratives has been learning through reflection and critical thinking. Mezirow (1990:5) contends that critical thinking is a productive and positive activity and that critical thinkers are not only actively engaged with life but they see themselves as creating and recreating aspects of their lives. Critical thinkers appreciate creativity, they are innovators, and they exude a sense that life is full of possibilities and they see the future as open and malleable rather than closed and fixed. They are self-confident about their potential for changing aspects of their world, both as individuals and through collective action.

The Peruvian migrant women, through thinking critically, became aware of the diversity of values, behaviours and social structures in Australia. Thinking critically for them meant recognising the assumptions underlying their values and beliefs. It meant judging the rationality of the justifications they had given to their ideas and to their actions. For these women critical thinking has not been a mechanical activity but has involved emotive aspects – feelings, emotional responses, intuition, sensing – all of which are central to critical thinking in adult life (Mezirow 1990:12).). A particular aspect of the experiences of these women has been the ability to imagine alternatives to their ways of thinking and living. They deliberately broke away from the mode of thought of their culture and society and this in itself gave them space for thinking creatively. In doing so they felt liberated.

Carlota and Rosita demonstrated that they constantly challenged their meaning perspective and had determined to change their life structures. This required thinking process of reflection, critical analysis and growth of consciousness.

Nelly, through the process of resolving her grief, learned that in order to live in a healthy way she needed to confront her thinking and this involved reflecting and thinking in a challenging way, in thinking and deciding what was essential

to think or learn about, and what was not essential. It also involved acknowledging the gaps in her knowledge and endeavouring to know those gaps by seeking assistance at times when she needed it.

Marisol began to reinterpret her past thinking, actions and ideas from a new vantage point. As she re-framed new situations she engaged in a reflective dimension and in critical thinking. She learned that some of her failures had been about not thinking well, about acting on impulse, about thinking through one-dimensional logic. She realised that the issue was not about the way she behaved but about the way she thought about a situation. This led her to conclude that to achieve her desired outcomes she had to change her thinking rather than the way she acted because her behaviour would be the reflection or outcome of her thinking. Accordingly if she thought well she would behave well.

This aspect of learning through critical reflection is associated with the ideas of Habermas on generating knowledge for emancipatory interests and has been a means of liberation for all the women in this research

Learning that is emancipatory :

Thinking critically took the participants to a learning that was emancipatory. Habermas (1979) distinguished this as one of three domains of learning (the others being technical and communicative learning). The process of emancipatory learning has become evident with these women when they became aware of the forces that placed them in the situation that they were in and with their taking action to change some aspects of that situation. To Apps (1985:151), emancipatory learning is that which ' . frees people from personal, institutional or environmental forces that prevent them from seeing new directions, from gaining control of their lives, their society and their world.'

Thinking critically involves a reflective dimension. Boyd and Fales (1983:100) define reflective learning as ' . the process of internally examining and exploring an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self, and which results in changed conceptual perspective.' Mezirow concludes that the ability to think critically is crucial to understanding our personal relationships, envisioning alternative and more

productive ways of organising our activities in life and becoming politically literated.

Reflecting and thinking critically allowed the Peruvian migrant women to confidently make decisions and take action. In deciding to come to Australia they became involved in examining the potential dangers - the pro and cons of the situation - and then became involved in making judgements and in taking action. Thinking critically was concerned with developing an understanding, about experiencing that understanding and either confirming or negating those judgements and expectations. It was a 'learning for emancipation' in a practical, social and intellectual manner. These women created knowledge to meet their emancipatory interest. This emancipatory interest, which involved critical knowledge, grew out of their desire to be free from constrained situations. In their efforts to change their situation, the cultural forces that were limiting them and the way they lived, they created emancipatory knowledge. This knowledge involved understanding how they had internalised ideologies and ideas that had worked against them. In terms of their relationships and interactions with others this kind of knowledge helped them to understand the power relations of society and the belief and value systems upon which various forms of power are based. This kind of knowledge has helped them in identifying and resisting both internalised and external domination (Habermas 1972; Mezirow 1981,1991).

As Nelly became more accepting of the reality with which she was confronted she became more in command of her life and, more importantly, of her thoughts. As she talked about her experiences and her learning she amazed by what she is able to do and how she has been able to live and learn through some tragic events. Most of her learning has involved internal processes, conflicting emotions and thinking. They have been enduring, disorienting but most of all have been learning of a supreme nature. They have meant transformation and emancipation.

One can see through her narrative that Delia, in working through her experiences, involved herself in successive experiences of disorientation, doubt, questioning and internal discomfort. Trying to change her attitude,

particularly when bringing up her daughter, required more than just gaining new information about how to do it, but was been more about working out her own experiences and gaining an insight into them. She struggled with her sense of worthiness and competence and she used a great deal of energy in trying to hide this inner conflict from others. Within what she knew she tried to overcome her situation by liberating herself, by changing perspectives and thereby overcoming low self-esteem and claiming inner authority. All of that has involved a learning process and a transition to a path of self-transformation. Mezirow describes this domain as learning for perspective transformation.

‘Perspective transformation involves not only becoming critically aware of habits of perception, thought and action but of the cultural assumptions governing the rules, roles, conventions and social expectations which dictate the way we see, feel and act.’ (Mezirow 1981:6)

Through this kind of learning we begin transforming our perspectives and in that way we begin our liberation from those influences that blind and corrupt not just our vision but our ability for action.

A feature of Delia's learning process has been her experiencing confusion with some aspects of her life and staying in that confusion, which is described by Mezirow (1977) as a ‘disorienting dilemma.’ If we view the experiences of Delia with Mezirow’s analysis in mind we also see an account of Delia going through a profound learning experience. Dilemmas, according to Mezirow, can either lock people into stereotypical positions or bring about considerable reassessment of themselves and their values and assumptions (p154). Mezirow argues that such dilemmas can be the source of a profound and very special learning. As she began to give answers to her own questions Delia began shifting to the extent of taking drastic decisions including leaving the home environment. This shift gave her the opportunity to be physically free from the restrictions and restraints of her parents thus lead to her transformative and emancipatory learning.

Learning through continuous life change:

The Peruvian migrant women have learned to accommodate to a life of continual change. Most of that which they have learned has been the result of their efforts to solve problems. For Carlota for example, it commenced from a young age with learning how to help her mother to solve her problems and, as an adult, how to understand the meaning of life, particularly in another country. Dewey (1964) is clear on this, stating that the process by which we define and solve our problems becomes the context for most learning. Learning through this process has been crucial to Carlota's ability to grow in awareness, to think independently and to master the knowledge necessary for surviving and thriving in life. Though at times she has created an alternative mental reality, a kind of illusion, as a form of dealing with a painful experience or as a way of propelling herself to do the tasks necessary for her daily living both in Australia and in Peru.

Dewey (1964) proposes that learning is discovery and that one needs to be searching or at least able to see in order to discover. In questioning, seeking possible solutions, testing those solutions and ultimately reflecting upon the 'answers', Carlota has been able to discover learning experiences that have ultimately enhanced her whole life experience.

Since her arrival to a different environment which presented a different set of circumstances, Rosita began facing, removing and overcoming obstacles as she moved forward. Although confronting continuous and significant changes in many areas of her life which imposed pressure and stresses upon her, Rosita has faced them as 'learning experiences' as changes that one needs to go through in order to learn. Dewey postulates that, in a changing universe, nothing is eternal. Things and people are continuously open to reconstruction as needs, interests, and purposes change. To think otherwise is to commit what Dewey called 'the philosophic fallacy' that is the 'conversion of eventual functions into antecedent existence.' (Dewey 1964, 1916:108).

One of the most important challenges we face in life is to be able to adapt to ongoing changes by understanding the fundamental importance of reshaping our ideas.

For Lourdes there have been major redefinitions and understandings of life and values. She has changed her view of fear and pain because she has changed her way of thinking. She has partially abandoned the application of logic that dominated her in the past and she has engaged in major changes of conceptualisation including how resources can be used to enable her son to live and participate in the community and live a valued life style, not segregated from her friends and family. Lourdes has been able to understand the broader environment in which we live and this has been an essential prerequisite in changing her understanding of specific issues.

Change has been a salient feature of Marisol's narratives. Dewey posits that change is just '... another word for growth, another synonym for learning.' and Marisol is consciously aware of this. She had engaged in that process and she has seen it as part of life, as something that one inevitably has to do. Dewey idea's of growth and learning is the notion that people would want to learn more as their lives progress. He says 'the more one learns the more one has to learn, in order to keep oneself going; otherwise death and catastrophe' Part of Marisol's learning has been about staying open to, and willing to accept, change and to face the unknown. This learning has involved risk-taking and transcending her limits into the unknown. She has called it 'adventuring' but this learning has enhanced her capacity to trigger new connections, new understanding, new thinking and therefore new ways of seeing the world and thus herself in it.

As she was engaging in life she was confronted with different changes, some were confusing to follow and difficult to understand but she was able to meet the challenge presented by them. In assessing her situation she came to the conclusion that the small changes were the ones that made a significant difference to her life, and though the changes were small she was able to learn through them by using her past experiences as a guide and as the base of new, re-framed experiences.

One prominent feature of Delia's narrative was 'coping' with changes and different events of her life and whilst it has been an active process it has also

been a complex process that has changed with the phases of stressful encounters and from one context to another.

Learning as part of a group

Learning as a group and learning from each other involved sessions of consulting, explaining, sharing, elaborating, discussing, questioning, answering, supporting and correcting. The women engaged in what they described as a natural way of learning in an environment of safety and security where they were able to clarify concepts and ideas in their own language. The socio-cognitive theoretical view of learning proposes that, discussing the matter with others 'actually transforms how we think about it' (Cobb 1988; Vygotsky, 1929, 1978:).'During such interaction with another, we clarify ideas, negotiate meaning, develop skills, and construct new knowledge; thus learning becomes a by-product of that interaction.' (King 1997:221).

The learning that occurred at their places of residence during informal conversations and discussions of the group whether when planning to find a job, applying for a course, meeting someone new, finding a place, starting a relationship, social activities, coping with stressful situations such as missing their family, discussing language difficulties and so on, happened as a result of sharing experiences or sharing a particular concern, need or event. Thus the learning that occurred was in a social context and in a life-need situation. Each of the women contributed by mediating and regulating their own learning as well as that of the others. They did it through comparison, correction, sharing of meanings. As they shared and support each other, new cognition was constructed.

One can assume that during this process, their constructed knowledge, thinking processes, reasoning patterns, and problem solving strategies all became internalised. Throughout the interactions, they were continually modifying their thinking and reconstructing their own knowledge. The internalisation of these jointly constructed cognitions was accounted for by the process of verbal mediation. According to Vygotsky (1978) aspects of the actual dialogue used during interaction are internalised by the individual as

inner speech, which is later used by that individual to guide their own thinking and problem solving in subsequent similar situations. In this way each individual regulates their use of knowledge, thinking and problem-solving strategies thus they engages in complex cognition independently (King 1997: 222). Webb and Palincsar (1996) contend that in contemporary group learning such socio-cognitive learning happens as a result of cognitive conflict within the individual which itself is prompted by conceptual discrepancies that arise during social interaction (King 1997:222).

During the social interaction with others, we sometimes find that the knowledge that we have or the assumptions that we have made of a situation vary to a greater or lesser degree from those of others. When such conceptual discrepancies occur we experience internal cognitive conflict and we feel the need to reconcile the differences. In this process of resolving our own cognitive conflict we continue further interaction with others, we explain our concepts and defend them and those with whom we are interacting do the same. Thus, in an effort to come to an understanding of each other's ideas and concepts, we engage in mutual meaning negotiation - a convergence toward shared meaning. These women, in sharing knowledge and experiences, were confirming and providing evidence for an official truth but also became aware of a common identity through their shared history.

They recounted the beautiful memories that they still have of those early years of sharing a house together, the happy and playful attitudes that they had to each other and how much these attitudes have allowed them to learn in a harmonious way. One can deduce from this that when an attitude of playfulness accompanies learning, the pressure to be correct is removed, mistakes become vital parts of the process instead of tragedies. There is less defensiveness and more enjoyment involved in learning.

The dynamics and the environment of living together as a group were so positive that all of the women interviewed in this research felt that their lives at that period of time was enhanced and contributed to their decisions to stay and settle in Australia. Dewey (1968) was optimistic about the potential of human growth given the right environmental situations and the fact that the

person could, through experimental thinking and learning, achieve a more satisfying life. Dewey and other adult educators gave support to group learning activities as means of promoting learning and preserving democratic ideals. This type of learning fosters personal growth and development through an experiential process (Elias & Merriam 1984:129). For the individual woman the group entity became a symbolic representation of their family and their need for dependency was gently fulfilled by their affiliation to the group where they operated as sisters, caring for each other.

Although these women had initiative, intention, energy and responsibility and felt enthusiastic and positive about their life prospects and their future, they experienced a variety of problems and challenges. They also faced barriers that interfered with the process of their formal learning experiences (formal, further education). These were institutional, situational and linguistic barriers.

Institutional barriers had to do with the lack of acceptance of their qualifications, knowledge and/or experiences, so they had to work in menial jobs. At times, even when applying for menial jobs, they were perceived as not suitable because they had qualifications that exceeded those required by the position and were thus seen by the employer as overqualified for the position and as such having the potential to become unmotivated and bored with the job. Another institutional barrier occurred when they sought entrance to further studies because of the central requirement of English language which these women had not mastered and again because their previous academic achievements were not recognised. Situational barriers arose from the life situation at the time and included lack of transportation, distance, missing their families, having to live in a place of potential danger of being sexually harassed by the landlord, having to eat food that conflicted with their diet and interpersonal difficulties and language barriers due to the fact that English was not their first language and it was a requirement to speak the language fluently even for jobs such as clerical, accounting and typing.

Through facing these barriers they learned about the unfavourable conditions

of the environment as well as their own needs and interests. As part of the group they individually debriefed themselves and reviewed what they learned. In planning their immediate future they engaged in a process of rationalising and prioritising their needs. For example, they knew that their own individual goals were to earn money and send some to their families and to learn the English language. Language was the first priority for them but it was something that involved a long process of learning and practice. As they progressed in their relationship with the environment and as they became more confident of succeeding in it, they became more sophisticated in their goals. An illustration of this was that, at the beginning, they worked hard to have enough English to pass an employment interview either in a factory, a hospital or a laboratory and later, once they had achieved that, their goal was to pass the NSW Public Service examination. They thought that they needed just enough English to understand the questions of the entrance test because they felt that as far as the practical test (typing skill) was concerned they were very proficient. In the event they applied and were successful.

The Peruvian migrant women gained knowledge through the experience of handling everyday activities and challenges. Although part of their learning has been in the 'technical' and 'communicative' domains referred to by Habermas, by far the most dominant feature and the common thread that all these women shared was their learning in the domain of emancipatory, transformative learning.

It may well emerge from further research that similar dynamics of learning occur with other migrant groups and it would then follow that some important knowledge may be available to relevant authorities in the areas of Education, Immigration, Social and Welfare etc. in the formation or variation of strategies, procedures and assistance applicable to a continually important group in the Australian community, that being this country's new migrant population.

Examination of their narratives has provided particular insight into how they aligned themselves with the various discourses available. Some of the women constructed themselves both as members of the family and society and as part of cultural values with the acceptable discourses and yet at the same

time found themselves privately resisting them. Resistance was evident in all narratives. Although the degree varied, all of them explored resistance and emancipation silently, in their thinking.

Becoming political

It is the assertion of this researcher that moving towards changing the direction in which we are going depends upon political action. These women, who decided to migrate, became political. They used political methods and tactics to manage their situation at the time. They took power and control over their own lives. Politics has to do with power and control and with the extent to which persons desire, attempt to obtain, possess, share, or surrender power and control over others and themselves. It has to do with the manoeuvres, the strategies and tactics by which such power and control over one's own life and others' lives are sought and gained or shared or relinquished. It has to do with the locus of decision making power - who makes the decisions which, consciously or unconsciously, regulate or control the thoughts, feelings, or behaviour of others or oneself. Politics has to do with the effects of these decisions and these strategies (Rogers 1978:4).

These women came to understand that their learning experiences were embedded in historical, social and material contexts. They understood these and decided to transcend them. The women saw the need to free themselves from the normal growing, development and predictable routine. They saw the need to remove and overcome any obstacles as the way to move forward. In choosing to migrate, these women intentionally or unintentionally decided to privately parade their protest of wanting independence and equality.

The participation of the church, in helping these women to migrate, positively influenced the perception of people in society in regard to women leaving the parental home for migration to another country. This was something that would normally have been seen as unacceptable and undisciplined behaviour for a daughter and something that would have created a slur upon the family, particularly the father's failure to control his daughter and, by inference, his family. Their decision to migrate was implicitly political. It was a challenge to

educational, societal and cultural beliefs including the view that the nature of a woman was such that she could not be trusted, but needed protection, guidance, instruction and control by those who were wiser or higher in status such as the father, the brother or the mother.

The clue to understanding their behaviour of leaving the country, their family and friends was the realisation that the conditions were not favourable and positive to their aspirations and desires or to the fulfilment of their potential so they needed to move towards growth and towards becoming independent.

Research focussing on learning experiences

By focussing on the learning experiences this research has made central the stories of those (migrant women) who are usually not only marginalised in society but who are categorised as persons full of problems and regarded as having a 'suffering' or 'victim' type of status. This research, in concentrating upon the learning experiences of this group of women, has given recognition to a different kind of status that has to do with resistance to victimisation, with having inner resources and processes which lead to raising awareness and consciousness of what life is and what one can do whilst also retaining an open mind. Part of having an open-minded attitude is the willingness to face the unknown and this involves risk-taking as well as the potential for transcending ones limits into the unknown.

In moving to learning experiences this research gives recognition to the fact that these women have been actively involved in their own learning. They sought and gained (within their situations) independence and emancipation and as pioneers of the migration of single women from Peru and South America they made a significant contribution to the history of migration of single women to Australia.

This research has highlighted that there have been patterns of social, political and cultural behaviour that have affected the position of women in general and women migrants who migrated to Australia specifically.

The Australian government continued from the earliest 1800s to the 1970s to recruit women to correct the gender imbalance that afflicted the country. Australian governments engaged in several systems for the recruitment of women from different countries including the failed 'bride-ships' exercise which had the consequences of the migrant women having to return to their countries because Australia failed to provide them with the support that these women required in a new country. It is obvious from the narratives of the women participants of this study and interviews with former Australian Immigration Department officers that the Peruvian women were recruited as a response to the deficiency of women in the Australian population at the time and perhaps for cheap labour.

This research has found that the 'learning experiences' of the women involved in this research have been central to the success of their migration process - against all odds. Features of their learning have been coping, thinking critically, reflecting, consulting, sharing, imagining solutions, being creative, following their hunches or intuition and most of all being enthusiastic and optimistic about themselves and about life. For the most part the circumstances presented to these migrant women on arrival in Australia would, under any reasonable analysis almost guarantee the failure of any settlement. Successful settlement then must be attributed solely to the strength and perseverance of the women concerned. There is little doubt that throughout Australia's migration history, such aspects have occurred with many migrants, particular single persons, and it is almost certain that individual qualities of those people have caused any successes that could be attributed to Australian migration programs, rather than the design of the programs themselves.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Peruvian Women

Nelly
Interview one 25 November 1998.
Interview two 6 March 1999.

Delia
Interview one 27 November 1998
Interview two 15 January 1999

Carlota
Interview one 18 December 1998
Interview two 20 February 1999

Marisol
Interview one 29 November 1998
Interview two 10 February 1999
Interview three 28 July 1999

Rosita
Interview one 7 December 1998
Interview two 29 December 1998
Interview three 19 June 1999

Lourdes
Interview one 25 January 1999
Interview two 15 February 1999
Interview three 15 June 1999

Ex-Immigration Officers

Margaret
Interview one 22 September 1999

Pamela
Interview one 28 September 1999

Ethics Approval



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr Peter Hancock
c.c. Executive Officer, University Research Projects Ethics Committee

FROM: Administrative Officer (Research)
Mount Saint Mary Campus

SUBJECT: University Research Projects Ethics Committee Approval Form – Ms Flor Becerra

DATE: 21 September 1998

Please find enclosed Ethics Approval for the project N98-35. Please sign and return this form with any requested material to the Office of Research as soon as possible so that your approval is confirmed. Further, it is recommended that you retain a copy of the approval for your files.

Thank you in advance for attending to this matter.

Regards,

Naomi Watson
Administrative Officer (Research)

OFFICE OF RESEARCH

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AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY A.C.N. 050 192 690



A USTRALIAN CATHOLIC U NIVERSITY

Office of Research

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PROJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE
ETHICS CLEARANCE FOR A RESEARCH PROJECT – APPROVAL FORM

Supervisor:	Dr Peter Hancock	Campus: Mount Saint Mary
Researcher:	Ms Flor Becerra	Mount Saint Mary

Ethics clearance has been provisionally granted for the project:

A study of the adult learning experiences of Peruvian single women who migrated to New South Wales, Australia in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

for the period: 14 September 1998 to 30 August 1999

Research Ethics Committee Register Number: N98 - 35

subject to the following conditions as stipulated in the *National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Statement on Human Experimentation and Supplementary Notes 1992*:

- a) that principal investigators provide reports annually, on the form supplied by the Institutional Ethics Committee, on matters including:
 - security of records
 - compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
 - compliance with other special conditions; and
- b) as a condition of approval of the protocol, require that investigators report immediately anything which might affect ethical acceptance of the protocol, including:
 - adverse effects on subjects
 - proposed changes in the protocol
 - unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project

and subject to the conditions stipulated by the University Research Projects Ethics Committee:

- a) ***A Final Report Form will need to be completed and submitted to the University Research Projects Ethics Committee within one month of the completion of the project.***
- b) ***In a memo to the Office of Research, please clarify the method of recruiting participants i.e. will the invitation be given during association meetings, open letter, or advert to public servants?***
- c) ***Please correct the spelling of the supervisor's name in the initial Invitation Letter to Participants***
- d) ***Please make the following amendments to the Information Letter to Participants:***
 - ***use first person throughout the letter,***
 - ***breakdown the requirement of 20 hours participation and give participants the option of only taking part in one section,***
 - ***remove "Strathfield Divisional" from the top of the 2nd page.***
- d) ***Please remove "Authorised Representative" from the Consent Form.***

OFFICE OF RESEARCH

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AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY LIMITED A.C.N. 050 192 660

- e) That data will be kept inside a locked cabinet at Australian Catholic University following the completion of the study.

Signed: *P. W. G.* Date: 21 September 1998
Administrative Officer (Research), URPEC

(To be completed by the Chief Investigator or Student and Supervisor, as appropriate)

The date when I/we expect to commence contact with human participants or access their records is:

I/We hereby declare that I/we am/are aware of the conditions governing research involving human participants as set out in the University Research Projects Ethics Committee's *Guidelines for Researchers* and agree to the conditions stated above.

Signed: Date:
(Principal Investigator or Supervisor, as appropriate)

Signed: *P. Guerra* Date:
(Researcher, if student)



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

Letter of Invitation

11 August 1998

Dear Potential Participant

You are invited to participate in a research study that this University will be conducting as an acknowledgement of the presence of Peruvian women who migrated as single women to Australia in the late 1960s and early 1970s and in recognition of the contribution that you, as one of these Peruvian women, have made to the Australian society.

At this exploratory stage of the research, you only need to decide whether you would like to participate in this research.

If you decide to participate you will need to:

1. Fill out the attached questionnaire
2. Return it in the self-addressed envelope included herein.

Upon receiving your response by **Monday 1st of November 1998** I will telephone you to arrange the most suitable time, date and place for an interview as well as sending a confirmation letter with details of the arrangement. I will be also sending prior to our meeting information details of the study and a letter of consent.

If you need more information and/or clarification about this study please contact me: Flor Becerra (02) 9413 7966

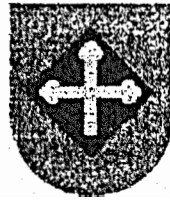
Please send the documentation requested before the above mentioned date too.

Dr. Peter Hancock or Flor Becerra
 Re: Study PWomen
 Faculty of Education
 Australian Catholic University
 Mount Saint Mary Campus
 179 Albert Road Strathfield
 NSW 2135

Thank you

Flor Becerra

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY LIMITED A/CN 58 194 02
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 TELEPHONE (61) 02 934 2160 FACSIMILE (61) 02 934 2165



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

Information

TITLE OF THE PROJECT: *"A Study of the Adult Learning Experiences of Peruvian Single Women who Migrated to New South Wales, Australia in the late 1960s and early 1970s"*

SUPERVISOR: DR. PETER HANCOCK
RESEARCHER: FLOR BECERRA

The aim of this research is to present the findings of a study of the adult experiences of Peruvian women such as yourself who migrated to Australia in the late 1960s and early 1970s. A specific goal of this research is to explore aspects of learning strategies that you may have put in place in the course of a new life structure in Australia and to highlight the contribution that you have made to Australian society.

For the purpose of this research individual as well as group interviews will be necessary and these will demand some time and effort. These interviews will be held at the University Campus or at a place convenient to you and will be taped. Following the interview a full transcript of the interview will be forwarded to you. After receiving the transcript you will be contacted by telephone to verify, clarify or correct aspects the interview or if possible another face to face session could be arranged only if this is more satisfactory for you.

Results of this study may appear as aggregate data in publications or may be provided to other researchers in a form that will not identify you in any way. Your identification will be protected and guaranteed by the privacy and confidentiality of the research which will include disguising the identity of you and all other participants. It is important that you are aware that this research is about your diverse experiences. Some of these experiences may involve joyful memories whilst others may be distressing to discuss so you need to decide that this is an experience you want to go through.

It is expected that several interviews of 20 to 40 minutes in a period of twelve months will be required with you as a participant involved in the research.

The intention in presenting the findings of this research is to give due recognition to the roles and contributions of Peruvian single women to Australia throughout its migration history and at the same time contribute to the knowledge of history and to the knowledge of adult education.

Your participation is free and involves no obligations so you can withdraw or discontinue participation in this research project at any time during the research prior to publication without giving a reason for doing so.

You are welcome to ask any questions about the procedures involved in this research. Any questions you have concerning any aspect of the research procedure can be directed to:

Researcher Flor Becerra
 Telephone 9418-7995 or

Supervisor Dr Peter Hancock
 Telephone 9739-2100

This study has been approved by the Australian Catholic University, Strathfield Divisional Research Projects Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints about the way you have been treated during the study, or any query that the Researcher or Supervisor may not have been able to satisfy you can write to the Research Projects Ethics Committee. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

You can write to :

The Chair University Research Projects Ethics Committee

C/o Office Research

Australian Catholic University

Mount Saint Mary Campus

179 Albert Road Strathfield 2135

Tel: 9739-2100 Fax: 9739-2191

If you agree to participate in this project study, you should sign both copies of the Informed Consent form (attached), retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to the Researcher.

Informacion

Título del Proyecto: *" Estudio del aprendizaje de las experiencias adultas de las mujeres Peruanas solteras que inmigraron a Nueva Gales del Sur-Australia a fines de 1960 y comienzos de 1970."*

Supervisor: Dr Peter Hancock
Investigador: Flor Becerra

El objetivo de esta investigación es presentar los resultados de un estudio sobre las experiencias adultas de la mujer Peruana quien inmigro para Australia a fines de 1960 y comienzos de 1970. El específico fin de esta investigación es explorar aspectos de las estrategias de aprendizaje que la mujer Peruana puso en practica cuando se enfrento a una nueva estructura de vida en Australia y de esa forma resaltar la contribucion que la mujer peruana ha hecho a la sociedad Australiana.

Para el proposito de este estudio tanto entrevistas individuales como en grupo seran necesarias y estas demandaran tiempo y esfuerzo. Estas entrevistas seran llevadas a cabo en la Universidad o en un lugar conveniente para usted y seran grabadas. Despues de la entrevista/s una completa transcripcion de la entrevista le sera enviada. Despues de recibir la transcripcion se le llamara por telefono para verificar, clarificar o corregir aspectos de la entrevista o de ser posible arreglar otra entrevista personal pero solamente si es que esto es mas satisfactorio para usted.

Los resultados de este estudio pueden aparecer como agregados en publicaciones o pueden ser provistos a otros investigadores en una forma que no identifique a las participantes. La identificacion de las mujeres envueltas en este estudio sera protegidas y garantizadas por la privacidad y confidencialidad que esta investigación demanda incluyendo disimular la identificacion de las participantes. Es importante saber que este estudio trata de las experiencias diversas de la mujer. Algunas de estas experiencias pueden significar memorias agradables mientras que otras pueden ser sensitivas o aflictivas para discutir asi que cada participante necesita decidir si es que esta es una experiencia que desea pasar.

Se espera que por lo menos 20 horas en un periodo de doce meses se requieran de cada participante en esta investigación.

La intencion al presentar los resultados de este estudio es dar reconocimiento al papel y las contribuciones de la mujer peruana soltera a Australia atraves de la historia inmigratoria y al mismo tiempo la contribucion hecha al conocimiento de la historia y al conocimiento de la educacion adulta.

La participacion individual es libre y no requiere obligaciones de las participantes asi que las participantes pueden retirarse o descontinuar su participacion sin necesitar dar explicacion del porque se retira y lo puede hacer en cualquier momento durante la investigación pero previa a la publicacion de esta.

Las participantes pueden hacer cualquier pregunta acerca de los procedimientos que envuelven a esta investigación. Cualquier pregunta referente a cualquier aspecto del procedimiento de la investigación puede dirigirla a:

Investigadora: Flor Becerra
Telefono: 9418-7996

Supervisor: Peter Hancock
Telefono: 9739-2100

Informacion

Título del Proyecto: ***" Estudio del aprendizaje de las experiencias adultas de las mujeres Peruanas solteras que inmigraron a Nueva Gales del Sur-Australia a fines de 1960 y comienzos de 1970."***

Supervisor: **Dr Peter Hancock**
Investigador: **Flor Becerra**

El objetivo de esta investigación es presentar los resultados de un estudio sobre las experiencias adultas de la mujer Peruana quien inmigro para Australia a fines de 1960 y comienzos de 1970. El específico fin de esta investigación es explorar aspectos de las estrategias de aprendizaje que la mujer Peruana puso en practica cuando se enfrento a una nueva estructura de vida en Australia y de esa forma resaltar la contribucion que la mujer peruana ha hecho a la sociedad Australiana.

Para el proposito de este estudio tanto entrevistas individuales como en grupo seran necesarias y estas demandaran tiempo y esfuerzo. Estas entrevistas seran llevadas a cabo en la Universidad o en un lugar conveniente para usted y seran grabadas. Despues de la entrevista/s una completa transcripcion de la entrevista le sera enviada. Despues de recibir la transcripcion se le llamara por telefono para verificar, clarificar o corregir aspectos de la entrevista o de ser posible arreglar otra entrevista personal pero solamente si es que esto es mas satisfactorio para usted.

Los resultados de este estudio pueden aparecer como agregados en publicaciones o pueden ser provistos a otros investigadores en una forma que no identifique a las participantes. La identificacion de las mujeres envueltas en este estudio sera protegidas y garantizadas por la privacidad y confidencialidad que esta investigación demanda incluyendo disimular la identificacion de las participantes. Es importante saber que este estudio trata de las experiencias diversas de la mujer. Algunas de estas experiencias pueden significar memorias agradables mientras que otras pueden ser sensitivas o aflictivas para discutir así que cada participante necesita decidir si es que esta es una experiencia que desea pasar.

Se espera que por lo menos 20 horas en un periodo de doce meses se requieran de cada participante en esta investigación.

La intencion al presentar los resultados de este estudio es dar reconocimiento al papel y las contribuciones de la mujer peruana soltera a Australia atraves de la historia inmigratoria y al mismo tiempo la contribucion hecha al conocimiento de la historia y al conocimiento de la educacion adulta.

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Investigadora: Flor Becerra
Telefono: 9418-7996

Supervisor: Peter Hancock
Telefono: 9739-2100

Este estudio ha sido aprobado por la Universidad Catolica Australiana, Comite Etico de la Division de Proyectos de Investigacion, Strathfield. Si usted tiene alguna queja acerca de la forma que usted haya sido tratada durante el estudio, o alguna pregunta que el investigador o el supervisor no haya podido darle una respuesta satisfactoria usted puede escribir al Comite Etico de Proyectos de Investigacion. Cualquier queja que usted presente sera tratada en forma confidencial y sera totalmente investigada y usted sera informada del resultado.

Usted puede escribir:

The Chair University Research Projects Ethics Committee
C/o Office Research
Australian Catholic University
Mount Saint Mary Campus
179 Albert Road Strathfield 2135
tel: 9739-2100 Fax: 9739-2191

Si usted estuviese de acuerdo en participar en este proyecto de estudio, usted debe firmar ambas copias del formulario de Consentimiento Informado (adjunto), retenga una copia para sus archivos y devuelva la otra copia al investigador.

Questionnaire

*Please feel free to answer in the language you feel most comfortable
Por favor sientase libre de contestar en el idioma que usted se sienta mas comodo.
(English or Spanish)(Ingles o Espanol)*

1. Before Migration
Antes de Migrar

How old were you when migrated to Australia?
Que edad tenia cuando inmigro para Australia?

When did you leave Peru?
Cuando salio del Peru?

What qualifications did you have then?
Que calificaciones tenia en ese entonces?

What occupation did you have?
Que ocupacion tenia?

Where in Peru were you born?
Donde nacio en Peru?

How did you know about Australia?
Como supo de Australia?

Why did you decide to migrate to Australia?
Porque decidio inmigrar para Australia?

Are there any other comments you wish to add regarding your experiences before migration?
Hay algun otro comentario que desearia hacer acerca de sus experiencias antes de su inmigracion?

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3. **In the last twenty years**
En los últimos veinte años

Have you visited Peru since migration. When, how often and why?
Ha visitado Perú desde su inmigración? Cuando, con que frecuencia y porque?

Where do you live now?
Donde vive ahora?

What kind of work do you do now?
Que clase de trabajo hace ahora?

Have you done any courses ?
Ha hecho algunos cursos?

Which ones?
Cuales?

Are you single, married?
Es soltera o casada?

Who are the members of your family??
Quiénes son los miembros de su familia?

Are there any other comments you wish to add regarding your experiences of the last 20 years?
Hay algun otro comentario que desearia hacer acerca de sus experiencias en los últimos 20 años?

.....

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.....

Migration and settlement learning experiences

Would you like to discuss, in a future interview, your migration and settlement experiences and the learning strategies and coping mechanisms that you may have put in place in the course of dealing with a new life structure in Australia? If yes please include, with this questionnaire, your name, address and telephone number so that I can contact you to arrange the most suitable time and date. You are also required to sign the attached consent form after reading the information attached.

Name

Address

Telephone Number

Attached is a self-addressed envelope

Consentimiento

Título del Proyecto:

" Estudio del aprendizaje de las experiencias adultas de las mujeres Peruanas solteras que inmigraron a Nueva Gales del Sur-Australia a fines de 1960 y comienzos de 1970."

Investigador:

Flor Becerra

Yohe leído y comprendido la información adjunta y las preguntas que he hecho han sido satisfactoriamente contestadas. Yo estoy de acuerdo en participar en esta actividad, sabiendo que puedo retirarme en cualquier momento durante el estudio investigador.

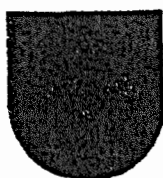
Yo esto de acuerdo que la información recogida para el estudio puede ser publicada o dada a otros investigadores siempre y cuando sea hecho en una forma que no me identifique en ningún aspecto.

NOMBRE DA LA PARTICIPANTE

FIRMA FECHA

NOMBRE DEL INVESTIGADOR *Flor Becerra*

FIRMA FECHA



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

Consent

Title of Research Project

***"A Study of the Adult Learning Experiences of
Peruvian Single Women who Migrated to New South
Wales, Australia in the late 1960s and early 1970s"***

Name of Researcher

Flor Becerra

I..... have read and understood the information provided above and any question I have asked has been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I can withdraw at any time during the research.

I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT
(block letters)

SIGNATURE **DATE**

NAME OF RESEARCHER ***Flor Becerra***

SIGNATURE **DATE**

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Figure 1. Marisol leaving Peru
Leaving the Hostel
YWCA publication 1970
- Figure 2. 'Live Together Like Sisters'
(Sydney newspaper article)
- Figure 3. The first Australian Ambassador in Peru
- Figure 4. Minister Lynch at the signing of the Accommodation
Agreement for single women migrants in Sydney
- Figure 5. The contract between a single woman migrant and the
Australian Government
- Figure 6. Single migrant women being taken to the country to
work in homes.