

DIS – GUISE OF ANTHROPOLOGY

by

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ABSTRACT

Defining of the 'I' in self is implicated by and in the negotiation and juxtaposition of anthropological theoretical definitions. I am outside, in and inside, out. I will fill in the silenced gaps. Shadows illuminate selected events between the years of 1968-1972. The phenomenon is my experience, as a heroin addict in the DTES of Vancouver. I will deal epistemologically from a unique positionality and situatedness, filling in the social aspect of my life in the DTES. I have many identities that have been anthropologized, researched and othered – authored so this autoethnography will filter some of the impurities insinuated into my life. I will locate myself in relation to the places, times and situations only written about and not experienced. There will be a bricolage of methods reminiscent of past or continuing anthropology, always 'liminal.' The guise of anthropology wears many coats, and I don mine in relation to past and present – day controversy. Where I am is not the question, but where I have been, is the answered narrative.

DEDICATION

This is to thank all the women and men who told me I could do it.

I want to thank my grandmother, Ethel Pearson, for being a symbol of strength and love.

I want to thank my mother, Caroline Cranmer, for bearing me in every way.

I want to thank my sister, Valerie Frank for clothing me, and loving me.

I want to thank my sister, Jeannie Cranmer, for believing I was redeemable.

I want to thank my friend, Gail McDermott, for knowing I could make it.

I want to thank the women in the Downtown Eastside for reminding me where I came from.

I would like to thank Alcoholics Anonymous for helping me become the person I am today.

And last but not least, I would like to thank Abi for loving me unconditionally and keeping me young.

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CHAPTER 1: THEORY IN DIS – GUISE:

The purpose of this autoethnography is to take a tour of the Downtown Eastside (to be DTES from this point on) known to me as the 'Corner.' This is an empirical – pragmatic rendering of the years between 1968-1972. It involves my ontological perspective of how I know the things I know and the way I came to know these things, as a heroin addict. The field is still consuming and inventing, between fact and fiction; dressed in other guises but still anthropology.

I would like to describe the sense of being as heroin invades the whole body through a little puncture in the skin. I would like to describe the feeling as it enters the system, as it clears away the outside world. I would like to describe the colour the outside becomes when the inside is inundated with the narcotic. I would like to describe the sense as difference explodes into sameness, a sense of being, a being of sense, and for four hours the climate inside the body is exactly as it is supposed to be, altered but centred. The sounds of the noisy external environment become symphonic with the beat of the heart, the heart of the heroin addict. The outside becomes the inside, the borders merge, the layers fall away, and there is a peace of mind and body that enhances the soul. I would like to describe the impetus for injecting heroin over and over again until the arms are tattooed with layered upon layered dark scars like a determining line between 'them' and 'us.' I would like to describe the sound of the voice as it lazes upon

outside ears, punctured with heroin and the eyes pin-pointed with evidence of heroin injection. I would like to describe the crossing over from weekend use to total involvement, the need to have heroin, the inevitable hook, yet still the same feelings with difference and the eventual hybridity of other drugs to enhance the initial drug, heroin. I cannot so I will describe the external phenomena and how it affected – effected the interiority of my body and mind. I realise that not everyone could course her way like I did. I repeat the obvious, if only to me. I am the witness of my life.

Anthropology up to the 21st century has been the traffic across nature and culture. And because the traffic became chaotic, the use of maps became necessary. Maps became very important to early anthropologists as the basic point of reference. The construction of maps followed the beginning of anthropology as trying to interpret and study each culture text for meaning. Anthropology thus, is primarily interpretative. Anthropology constructs cultures, their significance or classification. The following is my roadmap that twists and turns, finally, in on itself. These roads will segue into each other and then turn themselves into the same problem of authenticity or fiction. I authenticate my own life through this writing by writing my experiences as I remember them. The solution lies in the reading. All my personal signposts are on the same level and in the same direction as other writings but are also different because they are from my point of experience. It will be a twisted road and hopefully the destination reached at the end will signify what I have attempted to record, my

truth, and my perception. This will be a construction of my order (nature) and my disorder (culture).

I have accessed newspaper clippings to give validity and reliability to my story because someone was there and wrote it down, and to juxtapose them with mine. I am the Indian, the heroin addict, the exotic, the familiar and am reminded of Derrida, who wrote: "the 'violence' of anthropology occurs at the moment that the cultural space of an exotic culture is shaped and reoriented by the glance of the foreigner" (Derrida 1976:113). My research will consist of recording and analysing what I know to be true about the heroin addict. I know that life is a choice and in the reconstruction of the past sometimes things need to be consumed.¹

Anthropological Theories:

There are many anthropological – sociological writings that address autoethnography, native ethnography, alterity, narrative inquiry, border and border – crossings, hyphens, interiority and insider – outsider. I am focusing on three theoretical and methodological debates in contemporary anthropology.

¹ An aside but it relates to consuming. "Maybe, that is why Mexicans jokingly refer to anthropologists as "cannibals" (anthropologos, anthropofogos!). Indeed, postmodernism often is "just another guise of power." Both the point of entry and point of leaving the field are about othering. So, who does it good, better or best? Any other Warren contributors? Bourgeois? Your scenario is very depressing. The Menchus will embellish the "truth," the Benedicts will explain away national cultures, Chagnons and Lissots will blithely exterminate the Yanomamo in the name of science. We (anthropologists) will keep eating each other. How does the circle get broken? Maybe our informants are starting to feed off us?" (Gates, Marilyn, September 5, 2002).

Autoethnography, memory, literature and fiction will disguise to form my story that eventually segue into the self, me.

In my life I have been documented, critiqued, analysed and written about as a part of a collective. My identity had become pan – all – across the board. This autoethnography is my reality; my experience and my moment to amend some of the myths – stereotypes that are perpetuated daily in anthropology, the media and other recordings. Now I write my self into the present about the past. The following is a critical review relating to these topics associated with the assumed non – science, autoethnography. I have a problem with inside and outside because I have always been the other side. I am more the ‘I – witness,’ as Geertz alludes to when he states, “To become a convincing ‘I – witness,’ one must...first become a convincing ‘I’” (Geertz 1988:79). I begin.

I will define some of the terms of autoethnography that I find is the past in new clothing. David Hayano (1979) is usually credited as the originator of term, the autoethnography. Hayano’s definition is:

Limited the term, to cultural — level studies by anthropologists of their ‘own people,’ in which the researcher is a full insider by virtue of being ‘native,’ acquiring an intimate familiarity with the group, or achieving full membership in the group being studied (Hayano 1979:100).

I am the familiar of my own heroin addiction and I write only of myself in conjunction with the environment of other heroin addicts. I define many of the terms associated with autoethnography and to find where I fit.

Autoethnography:

Autoethnography is an umbrella for many methodologies and I choose to use only two of them. They are *native ethnography* and *narrative inquiry* that I seem to fit into, sometime fitfully and other times not. Eventually these segue into and incorporate many more that I will define. I use the following as a working definition:

Autoethnography is the use of systematic sociological introspection and emotional recall. It is the inclusion of the researcher's vulnerable selves, emotions, body and spirit. It is the production of evocative stories that create the effect of reality. It is the celebration of concrete experience and intimate detail. It is the examination of how human experience is endowed with meaning. It is a concern with moral, ethical and political consequences. It is the focus on helping us know how to live and cope. It is the featuring of multiple voices and the repositioning of readers and subjects as coparticipants in dialogue. It is the seeking of fusion between social sciences and literature. It is the connecting of the practices of social science with the living of life and finally it is the representation of lived experience using various genres such as fragmented and layered writing and social science prose (Sparkes 2002: 210-211).

Native Ethnography:

I am the native anthropologist examining myself inside, and speaking back to those who have spoken for me. I am fashioning my life with the 'real substance,' of unwritten, silenced and discrepant – differing words. Under the umbrella of autoethnography the definition of native follows:

Native ethnography is written by...researchers who share a history of colonialism or economic subordination, including subjugation by ethnographers who have made them subjects of their work...and use their dual positionality to problematize the distinction between observer and observed, insider and outsider (Ellis and Bochner 1999:741).

I never realised I was colonised until I came to the halls of academia, certainly not subjugated, and take this definition one step further as I address the native heroin addict, me. As Appadurai (1988) argues, the concept of native is associated with an ideology of authenticity “Proper natives are somehow assumed to represent their selves and their history, without distortion or residue” (Appadurai 1988:37). I am a ‘proper’ native in this context and I can only write what I know to be true, from what I lived, what I insert as only my truth. I as a heroin addict, I as an anthropologist authenticate my life, differently, between the years of 1968-1972.

Alterity:

I am representing myself in one of my guises, the heroin addict, as alter ego to the dominant cultural model. Rosaldo (1989) posits:

That a sea change in cultural studies has eroded once – dominant conceptions of truth and objectivity. Social analysis must now grapple with the realisation that its objects of analysis are also analysing subjects who critically interrogate ethnographers – their writings, their ethics, and their politics (Rosaldo 1989:21).

In 1954 Laura Bohannan states prefacing *Return to Laughter*, “All the characters in this book, except myself are fictitious...the truth I have tried to tell concerns the *sea change in oneself* from immersion in another culture” (Bowen 1954: xviii, emphasis added). I am now the subject writing and reflecting myself back to front of analyses. The performance of my life, imagined by others and finally myself, a knower gives an insight to the slight of exclusion.

Border – Border-crossings:

The field is rife with metaphors and one of them is a border. “It is a version of Victor Turner’s (1986:25) ‘liminal space,’ an old, but new, border to be crossed” (Lincoln and Denzin 2000:1048). An example, “From the classic perspective, culture borderlands appear to be annoying exceptions rather than central areas of inquiry” (Rosaldo 1989:28). He goes on to say, “Such cultural borders are always in motion, not frozen for inspection” (ibid.). There is always movement across space, being outside the box, moving from the edges to the center and many more from many disciplines that I have studied since I came to the halls of academia. Borders are used often as separating and defining. I used to be. I am always in motion. I am also annoying in questioning all positions from where I stand. I rediscover myself in tandem with yesterday.

Hyphen:

Another metaphor addresses redefining the hyphen in hyphenated words.

Anzaldua shows how the word post – colonial may be used in two ways:

...one with the dash in – between, the other without the dash. ...is that all divides disappear: So we are neither one nor the other, we are really both. There is not a pure other; there is not a pure subject and not a pure object. We are implicated in each other’s lives (Anzaldua 1999:243).

In the same metaphorical nuance Fine is “working the hyphen, the hyphen at which Self – Other...the hyphen that both separates and merges personal identities with the inventions of Others” (Fine 1994:265). A quick aside to the

hyphen, a famous anthropologist, Radcliffe – Brown was only Brown before he re – invented himself. Today I have no hyphens but consider them in my life as a Kwakwaka'wakw Indian, as an anthropologist, as a daughter to my mother, as a niece and many other guises. I do not shorthand my identity and create divides where there are none. I am a singular entity with many definitions and not a single definition with many entities. I am the hyphen always crossing the inside – outside line.

And Naisbitt shadows this with:

We are living in the *time of parenthesis*, the time between eras. Those who are willing to handle the ambiguity of this in – between period and to anticipate the new era will be a quantum leap ahead of those who hold onto the past. The *time of parenthesis* is a time of change and questioning (Naisbitt 1986: 249-252).

It seems the flavour of the day is punctuation but that is another paper.

Hybridity:

This will be the imagining of my life onto black and white in concert with my 'hybrid' identity. Abu-Lughod states:

The practice of these anthropologists who know that their selves are multiple also break down boundaries of self and other, subject and object in productive ways. Their agony is not how to communicate across a divide but how to theorise the experience that moving back and forth between the many worlds they inhabit is a movement within one complex and historically and politically divided world (1990:26).

I speak to the movement of myself in one instance, and create a space to imagine and recall the past of a heroin addict, but only my story, myself. I agree with Rosaldo who states that:

It took time – for the concept of a multiplex personal identity to move in alongside its predecessor, the 'unified subject,' and for the notion of culture as multiple border zones to find a place next to its predecessor, the 'homogenous community' (Rosaldo 1989:166).

My investigation of these paradoxical notions must be researched and written. Initially I am not studying up, but I am at the bottom of the system (referring to the state, the law, and the implied status of a heroin addict), looking up. So in a sense I am now investigating the system by looking back to where I was and recalling these systems as a single entity.

I have many guises. Abu-Lughod (1991) speaks of 'halfies' but two halves cannot adequately account for the complexity of identity in the field of anthropology, and my research as applied to this field with regard to the Vancouver DTES. The borders are constantly changing. The rules are between and instead of common sense. In order to position myself as one of the voices, and I must acknowledge I am not the spokeswoman or for that matter an expert. I need to place myself as an experiential citizen of the DTES. Certainly there have been scattered voices criticising this dichotomy. I write what I know and have experienced. I am in a unique position to remember and recall my life as a heroin addict. Today I can use an anthropological lens, and experiential insight to a life, through connecting the personal and cultural attributes of that remembered life.

Many of the anthropologists I have cited are themselves from different cultures or usually essentialised pasts.

Narrative Inquiry:

Autoethnography qualifies my story and the descriptions of my life as a heroin addict. My connection is related to the *evocative narratives*:

Evocative stories activate subjectivity and compel emotional response. They long to be used rather than analysed; to be told and retold rather than theorised and settled; to offer lessons for further conversation rather than undebatable conclusions; and to substitute the companionship of intimate detail for the loneliness of abstract facts (Ellis and Bochner 1999:744).

I write from a personal place and make my self – public. As in the introduction I write from an intimated place and a place of exclusion but a knower of heroin addiction, mine.

Interiority:

The act of putting the self into the text is a contested arena and method. Alcoff states, “In speaking for myself, I (momentarily) create myself. And this public self will in most cases have an effect of the self experienced as interiority” (Alcoff 1991-2:6,7). And in the same rhythm, Clough speaks to the “compulsive extroversion of interiority” (Clough 1992:63). It is a contested site and I travel it, describing my interior and creating an exterior, making my private self, public in black and white. Roger Chartier theorises that:

The power of the image lies in the double function. The image itself is from a negative. Images (imagining) at once make the abstract, or the dead, present to the viewer (from the outside), and they constitute the spectator as a subject engaged (performance) in the act of looking (at the inside)(Chartier 1997:91).

I found that interiority has been addressed and written of by Sartre (1981) and Foucault (1986). The positive would not be plausible without the negative, the seeing without the sight. This topic of black and white, negative and positive shows itself throughout this thesis.

Insider – Outsider:

Patricia Collins wrote of the “conceptualisation of insider – outsider” in 1991, but Merton (1972) was broaching the paradigm earlier when he stated, “There emerge claims to group-based truth: Insider truths that counter Outsider untruths and Outsider truths that counter Insider untruths” (Merton 1972:11). Many others are using the inside and outside as, Kath Weston goes on to say:

A single body cannot bridge that mythical divide between insider and outsider, researcher and researched. I am neither, in any simple way, and yet I am both (Weston 1996:275).

It is another dis – guise of saying etic – emic. The experiment discusses outside influences and my sight is convoluted, with the aid of glasses, as I construct my life as a heroin addict. I represent many cultures. I have been affected – effected by outside phenomenon and I have been on the inside of anthropology interests, and I am now outside but it is fluid as I shadow both and am cognisant of both.

Literature – Fiction:

I am inserting myself as a representative of the research because of my experience, and education. Kirin Narayan writes:

Ethnographers would do well to take heed that some of the most volatile criticism of the blurring between fact and fiction has been voiced by the people who find themselves depicted within these ambiguous hybrid texts (Narayan 1999:143).

My life is fact and my writing fact² – ional and I finally write the social but only of my experiences. I read myself in texts and newspapers but cannot find the image of my experiences, and in fact the blurring of texts – images. Driessen writes:

That ethnography is increasingly autobiographical and, autobiography more and more reflects cultural and social frames of reference. It is a form of self – narrative that places the self within a social and cultural text (Driessen 1998:9).

I place myself, a silenced self into the context of heroin addict and write about the social life I lived between the years of 1968-1972. This is a brief sighting but I take umbrage to the exclusion of some parts of my life that have been studied and publicised as deviant and the bottom of the barrel by other social scientists not living their writing as I have. This is the anthropologist in me, it is not a fiction, and it is my ethnography personalised and actualised.

Experience:

² Clifford Geertz writes, "It is not clear just what 'faction' imaginative writings about real people in real places, exactly comes to beyond a clever coinage; but anthropology is going to have to find out if it is to continue as an intellectual force in contemporary culture (1988:141). From where I stand it is 'faction' reflected by 'fiction.'

Another contentious debate relates to the issue of personal experience. It is Kondo's view that:

The specificity of...experience...is not opposed to theory; it *enacts* and *embodies* theory" (emphasis in original), any writing, then, represents an enactment of some sort of theory (Kondo 1990: 35).

The theoretical positions are in transition, and always in dis – guise. An autoethnography is the way to authenticate myself, to myself. The importance of my narrative is to locate myself in and on the landscapes of my life. Kathryn Church (1995) also echoes that:

I choose to foreground my own voice. This is not narcissism; it is not ego – centric indulgence. Critical autoethnography is vital intellectual work. The social analysis accomplished by this form is based on two assumptions: first, that it is possible to learn about the general from particular and second, that the self is a social phenomenon. I assume that my subjectivity is filled with the voices of other people. Writing about myself is a way of writing about these others and about the worlds which we create/inhabit. Because my subjective experience is part of the world, the story, which emerges, is not completely private or idiosyncratic (Church 1995:5).

There are no betweens; no boundaries that cannot be negotiated, thus no limits, no life memories that need to be distilled and I make my life visible and vocal. This will be the fabric of my life as I weave it. There are many strands, there are many colours, and there are many contexts, all the stuff of anthropology. The social reality, the culture, the society I live will be written in one whole text, mine. It is I who lived as a heroin drug addict nine years ago, and it is I who write now. The past is mutative and mute so I write from a position of knowing. I narrate; I

analyse my life by recording what I recall. The theory segues into memory, narrative and continues all, which reflect back to autoethnography.

Memory:

Memory has made itself available with many writings of 'a foreign country,' 'another country,' a 'site' to be visited, and I will insert myself throughout as a visitor to these theories. This is a construction of where I was, a reliving and I write as text as evidenced by:

If the first person account has a certain kind of legitimacy of the 'I – was – there' sort, conversely documentation provides a counterweight of its own. Thus, the opposite tack on the comparison of history and memory, as oral historians have learned to their chagrin, is to trust only what has been recorded in writing, since, as it is said, memory is notoriously 'unreliable,' whereas, the texts stick to their stories (Lambek 1996:242).

David Lowenthal (1985) included in his book an excerpt from The New Yorker that sums the whole process of memory in my opinion, and relegates its significance to (memory) process and place, and interpretation.

When 'history' overtakes some new chunk of the recent past, a commentator reflects, "It always comes as a relief – one thing that history does...is to fumigate experience, making it safe and sterile. Experience undergoes 'external gentrification; the past, all the parts of it that are dirty and exciting and dangerous and uncomfortable and real, turns gradually into the East Village" (Notes and comment,' New Yorker, 24 Sept. 1984,p.39).

In this research I am both the subject and the object. I write about my past and on the other side. I write of how I became a heroin addict. Some of the dirty details have been 'gentrified' by myself but are sullied and plagiarised by the

media and Others, made more dangerous and 'othered – authored.' It is explicit that "memory implies identity, the self caught between its roles as subject and object of memory, the telling and the told" (Antze and Lambek 1996:xix). The self seems to be intrinsically tied to memory, which is interesting in the process of what is remembered and how it is brought to life, in black and white. This is only one of my performances.

I write my memories in relationship to the events I have chosen from 1968-1972. I do remember as my performance as a heroin addict as cited:

We frequently do not recall how or when or where we have acquired the knowledge in question; often it is only by the fact of the performance that we are able to recognise and demonstrate to others that we in fact remember (Connerton 1989:23).

These memories and that the "reconstruction exerts a mutative effect on the past – supplying missing details in images of episodic (what we have experienced) and imputing meanings to events that were not present when they originally occurred" (Lewis 1995:405-17). I have located my life in simultaneous events. A negotiation of sites was being planned as I lived my life and recall. I became. All that had happened before was the framework for my life. In an act of rebellion – resistance I became a practising adult. The heroin addict's life style has two personas: one in the daylight and another never seen, and in retrospect I now know that my world consisted of two realities. I became legal in two aspects, as will be written of later on in Chapter 3. In another moment of retrospection, I was also old enough to be arrested. The significance of these two memories is

that as I write I realise that these events in my life would have parallel meaning not known at the time but are relevant now as I place them together. "Memories are produced out of experience, and, in turn, reshape it" (Antze and Lambek 1996:xii). My experiences are simultaneously structured externally and internally knowable. My descriptions of my memories are my truth, as I know it, and as I have experienced it and I also know that:

The past is never completely over; it continues to shape the present even as it is distinct from it, and at the same time it is available to be addressed by the present. Conversely, remembering entails engagement with the past (Lambek 1996:243).

It has been said that if I forget where I come from there is a chance I will return. In my life today I pass parts of my past and it brings me back, but only to muse, not to stay.

My subjective past is in my memory banks and many of the places I have been, the institutions I have attended, the geographic areas of my life need to be written of in narrative form. I did not know I would write my life as a heroin addict and situate the events in the years of 1968-1972. So again many theorists have spoken to and of memory and given the distortions of memory and the mediation of language, "Narrative is always a story of the past and not the past itself" (Ellis and Bochner 1999:745). And this is qualified by, "There is a kind of doubling I, who speak now, and I, who arrived in Rome three years" (Connerton 1989:22). And another, who says, "Instead, the process typically works in the other direction: narrative structure supplies the temporal sequence of memories"

(Kirmayer 1996:176). I thus arrive here and write about what happened in the years of 1968-1972. These are time – specific as I lived as a heroin addict for twenty-seven years, a brief chapter or two. It is not linear, it is not sequential, and it is spacious.

One of the memory instances is:

Memory becomes a 'site,' a monument visited, rather than context, a landscape inhabited. The ruins of memory are subject to restoration, and we all become the alienated tourists of our pasts (Antze and Lambek 1996:xii, xiii).

This is elaborated and qualified by a geographer, David Lowenthal (1985) *The Past is a Foreign Country* and an anthropologist, Stephen W. Foster (1988) *The Past is Another Country: Representation, Historical Consciousness and Resistance in the Blue Ridge*. There are many metaphorical nuances in academia of memory as another country. I understand the premise of these titles but I state that my memory is never absent from my self or myself, and I am a part of the landscape that I have never left and thus, never a tourist and certainly not a foreigner. What I would like to do with this dissertation is introduce tourists to my life, my country, one of my countries, a life that is not known but only imagined through the lens of media and stereotypes. I reflect on certain aspects of my life and in turn mirror only what I know, what I recall.

I come from a culture that has never been assimilated but understand the theories from anthropologists and historians that visit and construct representations of visited and researched 'other' cultures. My past is knowable

and is with me daily. I do not live there constantly but in quiet and academic moments visit it. And the romantic thought that my 'past is another country' leaves me answering it is not left, my memory, but quite right. I am my past and present. I know the native language and mythic rituals of my past as a heroin addict, and when I enter my mind and its memories I am cognisant of what is past and what is present.

It is all about who is writing and their position in the world. I write from personal experiences and I am always reminded of Michel Foucault's *Of Other Spaces*, when I write about memory. I love his analogy of the mirror. He states that:

The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror (Foucault 1984:24).

In this memory theory process I see myself where I am not, and I was there but am not anymore. In order to write my narrative I must be where I was but in essence not where I am now. I am giving my remembrance voice and silence it in one act and it is conceived again each time I read these words. I create a mirror with my experience and knowledge of a place, space where I lived and I was there. This is my reflection; this is my story according to my memory.

I write about personal recall, a state of approximation, however time delimited and partial. I cannot change what happened, nor do I want to but I think it is possible to capture and represent my experience and identity, then. I write what I know and have experienced. It is valid for me and it has been said:

Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything, which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being externally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being founded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of selves into eternity, identities are names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves, within the narratives of the past (Hall 1989:70).

I am in a unique position to remember and recall my life as a heroin addict. I write what I know and have experienced. Today I can use an anthropological lens, and experiential insight to a life, through connecting the personal and cultural attributes of that remembered life.

Literature on the DTES:

Beginning, the life in the DTES has been written of academically and fictionally. I will describe the distinction between 'empirical description,' 'representation' and 'explanatory analysis,' so I can locate myself, always with difference, in the field. Technically everyone is an 'outsider' when it comes to the DTES. Historically it was inhabited by Indians and then others. So I speak from an 'outside' position also.

There are some authors I have maligned for writing their perspectives and criticised because of their analysis, because it was just that; analysis. Rereading I understand that technically they are speaking their sense and are coming from a specific direction of academic conjecture and theory, and another time. I have scoffed but now realise that as I write, I am only coming from my own place of experience, my own imagining and my own memory and my own imagination, and may be scoffed at also. The issue I have with these 'other' writings is that they have not experienced the lives that they write of and come only with academic inference. I will negotiate between the spaces, where I was located. I will introduce my perspectives as a knower of who is and has been, and not as a has – been. I create a mirror of my experience and knowledge of a place, a space where I lived and was – am still an active participant, not heroin addict but a resident – shadow.

Empirical Description:

One of the writings is by Kenneth Stoddart, who did his research for his Master's Thesis at the Plaza Café in 1968. One of the things that attracted my interest was his stating "...the social activities involved in the use of narcotics are more or less systematically excluded as topics of study. And continues "...there is little available data on its social aspects" (Stoddart 1968: 1). His research was specific in the deviant behaviour of heroin addicts in the DTES from the Plaza Café. He notes from his location that:

Although they (sociologists) have noted that legal proscription has 'driven' the drug user in various behaviour patterns, they have not provided any data regarding the nature of these behaviour patterns (Stoddart 1968:2).

His descriptions align with mine and come from an ethnographer's reality.

The outsider – insider crisis was evident even in 1968. He writes of "a view from the outside or as a 'moral outsider,' observing persons who are likely to be engaged in illegal activities" (Stoddart 1968:25). I believe he is speaking of outside academics, the police and, depending on the time of day, the media and himself about the view and prejudice from the 'outside.' I insert Stoddart throughout my own writing to qualify it. Stoddart was there in the beginning of my time and this is my writing included as an – other point of view, simultaneously. It is a crossing of inside – outside.

Explanatory Description:

I have chosen two articles that are entitled *The Worst Block in Vancouver* (2002), by Jeffery Sommers and Nicholas Blomley and Bruce Alexander's (2001) *The Roots of Addiction in Free Market Society*. Their articles reflect back on each other and speak to the same problems, of the kind of representation in the media of the area I was intimate with, and their analyses mirror each other.

A characteristic of moral panic is the elision of boundaries between differing categories of phenomena and the blurring of causes and effects. The erosion of the boundaries between drug use and sickness, on one hand, and poverty, on the other, effectively pathologised the latter (Sommers and Blomley 2002:21).

This is qualified by Bruce Alexander's "'poverty of the spirit' which he calls 'dislocation,' that is the precursor to addiction" (Alexander 2001:20). Sommers and Blomley write of "new forms of inequality that come from post-industrial economy" (Sommers and Blomley 2002:20). This is a reflection of Alexander's, *The Roots of Addiction in Free Market Society* (Alexander 2001). The forms of inequality were always there, in different clothing. Sommers and Blomley have reified the rhetoric and created their own metaphorical language in stating "urban outcast as the instigator of the problems, as agents of infection and also morally isolated" (Sommers and Blomley 2002:23,25). As a past resident of the DTES I certainly recognise these writings as applicable to the present but not relevant to the past of which I write. But the past held its own similar problems but that is another story.

The analogies of 'ghettos,' 'frontiers,' 'pioneers,' 'exotic,' 'mythological,' 'conspicuous consumption,' from *The Worst Block in Vancouver* (2002) sound very much like introductory anthropology relating to colonialism. History continues to repeat itself in reifications and reconstructions of culture systems. The overlapping fields of anthropology, psychology and geography share the same field of research, the DTES. The academics whose accounts and mine come from different epistemological and ontological perspectives and emerge from different relationships to the subject matter and the time. Neither my account nor theirs is the 'ultimate (as positivistic or scientific) truth,' both are

interpretations of the same site. I write as an 'I – witness' of experience as a former addict whereas they are other touring that world.

Representation:

One of the most readable sources I have found is a local fiction author, Peter Trower. Trower writes about past instances in my life as a contemporary Indian heroin addict in a time when the 'Corner' was the heroin center. His novel provides the reader with context; and gives a historical view of Vancouver. There are many memories and experiences that warrant a record, and Trower has written such as fiction. I knew this street. It was home. It still is. In Trower's *Dead Man's Ticket*, he writes of an era just before I came into the area in 1968:

The usual crew of tenderloin regulars thronged the sidewalk around me – knots of carousing loggers lurching noisily from bar to bar; shabbily dressed East End housewives looking for bargains at the Army and Navy or the Save – On – Meat store; scrofulous winos with grimy paws cadging dimes in raspy voices; cut – rate hookers wearily heading for toast and black coffee at some greasy spoon café; a furtive heroin pusher bound for the Broadway Hotel – Vancouver's notorious "Corner" – to set up shop at the dim beer parlor table; a native girl emerging from a flea – bag walk – up with a black eye and a bleary, bemused look; morose old men who were neither bums, drunks nor junkies but simply trapped in this ghetto through poverty, poor health or ill – fortune, gazing wistfully from dirty curtained third – story windows; a couple of young rounders in strides and bomber jackets who gave vague nods of recognition as I passed (Trower 1996:27).

In this particular paragraph Trower introduced Alexander's (2001) theory of 'dislocation' as the root of drug addiction. He has introduced Sommers and Blomley's (2002) 'poverty' and 'ghetto' from a fictionalised aspect. It has his own hyphen system but as a writer rather than a cultural critic. He has made no

claims to authority and authenticity; rather fiction is his vehicle. I am reminded of James Clifford:

Ethnographic writings can properly be called fictions in the sense of 'something made or fashioned.' But it is important to preserve the meaning not merely of making but also of making up, of inventing things not actually real" (Clifford 1986:6). And he continues that "ethnographies emerge from 'systematic and contestable exclusions' and 'ethnographic truths are partial – committed and incomplete' (Clifford 1986:6).

I am excluded in most academic writings and while Alexander, Blomley and Sommers have an academic background and some sense of the problems of addiction, poverty and ghetto – like current conditions of the DTES, they miss the social as noted in Stoddart's 1968 thesis. Trower's description of Hastings Street in fiction form is explicit in ethnographic signposts of an area known to me as the 'Corner,' and later the DTES. Trower is a past participant of the social, as a logger, where I lived for twenty-seven years. The spaces where Trower's fiction recurs and Sommer's and Blomley's (they have lived and worked in DTES for many years) reality occurs contradict. I believe Alexander has done research in the area for as many years. The boundaries are limited from where one lived experiences and where one works experiments. Finally no one person is an expert in and of itself but different roads, and they all meet at Hastings and Main, or around the four block radius I used heroin in 1968-1972.

The truth of my life is the fiction Trower writes. It is like Foucault's analogy of the mirror. I create myself where I am but really where I am not. I imagine myself there but from memory in my own language and on my own terms. I was

there and I will write like I took notes. I am inside the conundrum, the dichotomy, the dialectic, the discourse, and outside looking at the two parts in snapshots developed from the negatives and representations what was my life. I am the hyphen. I inject this into focus as I have done with heroin most of my life and whether insider – outsider “the question here is not the truth of such statements, but how they are made believable” (Geertz 1988:64). And since I am an ex – heroin addict I speak to the drug, the excruciating joy of injecting and memory serves itself well as a resident in my head, in my feelings and my life. I expect the reading of this thesis will echo with recollections of instructive direction put in the first paragraph. Myself, I get lost in my head so watch for the signs. My life is real and my past was and still is real. The writing is navigational between and on the edges of anthropology, between recall, between the fabric of life and thus, truth. The assumptions and presumptions meld and they are sumptuary. This was my reality map of order (nature) and disorder (culture). I am always the hyphen in perpetual motion.

I now understand it is not the reporting I disagree with but the language of Sommers and Blomley (2002). It is fashioned and invented out of academic language and selectively cited. It is a generalising and homogenising brush-stroke and I do take it personally because I was there. Their writings become fiction when I realise the block they are talking about is 100 West Hastings and then I get more confused in their partial and incompleteness as cited before by Clifford (1986).

Conclusion:

As was foreshadowed in the introduction, all roads segue into the other. Autoethnography would not be autoethnography without self, memory and narrative. When I reread what I have written, I see the insider – outsider dis – guised as etic – emic, the uses of hyphens dis – guised as liminal space dis – guised as borders and am reminded of my anthropology theory class. The fields are overlapping and implicated and reflected in many arenas. As Foucault states, “We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side – by – side, of the dispersed” (Foucault 1984:22). Anthropology is maintained. The following writing is an injection of my life in moments of what happened, what places and what eventually occurred. The content is pure, there are no additives, no cut and it is straight into the vein, directly to the blood.

I decolonise myself in the guise as a heroin addict. I am a native writing my experience in narrative form. I am the hyphen travelling between imagining and recall. I place myself in the social context and create the performance and theorise how I arrived there. As mirrored in the first chapter I cannot describe the senses of heroin injection but point to the place I was. I identify my life through memory processes in approximate events. The literature I have chosen comes from academia and discuss the misrepresentation of an area and a vocation of where I lived and how I lived. I add a voice that has been quieted by the

symphonic rhetoric and ambiguous writings. I describe my life, my experiences and my memory of them.

In the next chapters I will introduce where I began. There will be selective erroneous events and descriptions. I have a family of anthropologists and a family of activists. They are separate entities and have always been. I will briefly describe how I came to be separate from and different from. I was born with white blood and that has been a contentious subject from one side of my family. Then I will continue in the next chapters of the introduction of heroin and some of the people who have been given other names.

CHAPTER 2: BEGINNINGS OF MY – SELF.

I now testify as a witness and write the evidence of my life, but before that I will describe some of the external events and institutions that have shaped me. This outline will be brief and will elicit facts of place, time and position, which are the basis of my beginning. I have a history. I have a family albeit two sides. Looking back and having investigated more thoroughly, I have come to the conclusion that the law, both the *Indian Act* and the white law, though both from the same source, affected my family history long before I came to life. I will insert the statutes as I introduce both sides and all sides of family and institutions that affected – effected me. Anthropology, too, has insinuated itself into my space. I have a family of chiefs, matriarchs, lawyers, anthropologists, mothers, fathers and political activists. I also have two different sides, my mother's and my father's, alien to each other, foreign from each other and yet they are a part of me as they are apart from each other. This must be brief and concise but this is a history that needs to be addressed. The boundaries are invisible but set and distinct. The separation coincides with myself and as I attempt to grasp some semblance of unity, it eludes me because of the history. Because of my own story which I know intimately, I also have to look to history books, anthropology books, and internet articles to become familiar with the history of my family. As evidenced from the footnotes I came to know the history of my family. I will

address the reason why I do not know my family, both sides, as their history is interjected into my autoethnography. It is from research and questions that I now begin to know how important my family is in my life and that of others. I am sorry that many family members died before I became interested in them. I am a witness from outer space and will record what I know.

One Side of Me:

To begin, I wish to validate one of my identities in the field of anthropology. My name has identified me with many active anthropologists before me. The Cranmer family has been part of the participant – observation research aspect of anthropology. I have accessed information from the Internet about George Hunt and the Indian names from my aunt, Gloria Cranmer Webster. George Hunt (1854-1933) (*K'ixitasu'*) worked with Franz Boas (1858-1942). They worked on the Kwakwala language and published books such as *Kwakiutl Texts I and II* (1905,1906) and *Ethnology of the Kwakiutl, based on data collected by Hunt* (1921). George Hunt also published his own ethnography in 1906. *The Rival Chiefs: A Kwakiutl Story*, in Boas Anniversary Volume. This gave George Hunt the unique status as a research assistant and participant that will be mirrored in my own position in this autoethnography.

There has been a controversy about George Hunt not being a real Indian and a real anthropologist. Jeanne Cannizzo (1983) wrote an article called *George Hunt and the Invention of Kwakiutl Culture*. When I first came across this

article I expected another writer to dispute George Hunt and was quite surprised when it actually pointed out his great contribution to anthropology. Hunt helped many anthropologists “through the darker waters of his culture” and Cannizzo continues “that he is a primary contributor to the invention of the Kwakiutl as an ethnographic entity” (Cannizzo 1983:45). She cites Wagner (1975):

When an anthropologist studies another culture, he ‘invents’ it by generalizing his impressions, experiences, and other evidences as if they were produced by some external thing. But if the culture he invents is to have meaning for his fellow anthropologists, as well as other compatriots, there must be further control on his invention. An anthropology that refuses to accept the universality of mediation, that reduces meaning to belief, dogma, and certainty is forced into the trap of having to believe either the native meanings or our own. Anthropology will not come to terms with its meditative basis and its professed aims until our invention of other cultures can reproduce, at least in principle, the way in which those cultures invent themselves (Wagner 1975:29,30).

This is where Cannizzo derives the term, ‘invention.’ She states that:

George Hunt and his work are a solution to the anthropological dilemma outlined above; he has simultaneously invented both views, that of the anthropologist and that of the native (Cannizzo 1983: 55).

The latter is qualified by Goldman (1975) “he (George Hunt) tried to be faithful to the texts, that is to the Kwakiutl mind “ (Goldman 1975: vii, 13). I insert myself as faithful to the memories in the mind, a significant part of being Kwakwaka’wakw and a heroin addict. I invent according to Wagner (1975) and Cannizzo (1983). And this is echoed and qualified by another anthropology professor at the University of British Columbia who posits:

We can only ‘invent,’ rather than more or less accurately come to know, the ‘Other,’ and only ‘They’ can speak knowingly about themselves.

Reality is found, however imperfectly or incompletely, somewhere between the extremes (Ames 1992:14).

I am the hyphen in this story and this is my reality.

While Jeanne Cannizzo (1983) writes in a positive manner about George Hunt there are many critics. Years later there are still books and articles written about George Hunt and his work by one of his biggest critics, Judith Berman. Berman seems to have shaped her career investigating the non – Kwakwaka'wakw in George Hunt and his un – anthropological methods. She has a whole website regarding her essays and upcoming works on George Hunt. Some of the articles are: *George Hunt and the Kwak'wala Texts*; *The Culture as it appears to the Indian Himself*, *Unpublished materials of Franz Boas and George Hunt: A record of 45 years of collaboration*; and forthcoming *Raven and Sunbeam, pencil and paper: George Hunt of Fort Rupert, British Columbia*. He was genuine enough to be 'consumed.' And I realise that Berman speaks of Hunt's invention of the Kwakwaka'wakw culture but qualifies Hunt's credibility by 'consuming' him. So anthropology continues to reassert itself in positive and negative ways, both sides of the same picture.

The following quotes are taken from a paper my aunt presented at *Constructing Cultures Then and Now: Celebrating Franz Boas and the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, 1897-1997*. It is titled *Consumers, Then and Now* (1997):

Judith Berman is another reader whose statements can be challenged. In her paper, "Native Ethnographers: Franz Boas, George Hunt and the Native Point of View" (1992), she writes: "Aware as Boas was of Hunt's non-Kwagul identity, the manner in which Boas presented Hunt's material is disingenuous, if not deceiving." Berman seems to imply that Boas was deliberately misleading Readers. Hunt's information is about the Kwakwaka'wakw, not about the langer (Tlingit) world of his mother. George Hunt's marriage to (Tlalili'lakw) Lucy was a Kwagu'l ceremony, with her father bringing kis'u, including names, dances and songs to him, thus establishing George's position in the society (Webster 1997: 5).

So while there is dissension that Hunt was not a real anthropologist, a real Indian and for that matter an expert, there is other information that qualifies him as an Indian. I found that George Hunt was charged with eating human flesh. He was arrested, jailed and taken to Vancouver and brought before a jury. He was acquitted and I found this information in *An Iron Hand Upon the People The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (Cole and Chaikin 1990:74). He was Indian enough to be arrested in the eyes of the law so the discrepancy was the power struggle between academia and the state.

There are also two films, *Franz Boas: The Shackles of Tradition I and II* used in anthropology classes. George Hunt also worked with Edward Curtis in making a film called *The Land of the War Canoes* in 1914 (originally *The Land of the Headhunters – A Drama of Kwakiutl Life in the Northwest* (Holm and Quimby 1980).

Then, there was my great step grandfather Mungo Martin (Naka'penkum) (1881-1962) who was hired by the Hawthorns of the UBC Museum of Anthropology in 1950, to restore poles purchased by Dr. Marius Barbeau,

another anthropologist who worked with Edward Sapir. My great step grandfather played a significant role in Victoria where he built, because of his prerogative, a replica of his house in Fort Rupert. It was called Wawadit'la and he held the first potlatch there after the law had been deleted from the law books in 1951.³

There is further information about the potlatch in the following paragraphs about Daniel Cranmer, my grandfather. In 1956, Chief Mungo Martin and his son David and Henry Hunt carved the world's tallest totem pole⁴ (160 feet). As a child growing up I remember hearing that Mungo Martin's son had drowned but that is another story (see Duff 1961).⁵ Mungo Martin was a participant with Wilson Duff as an expert on Kwakwaka'wakw songs. His wife Abaya'a (T'lakwagila'ogwa) worked with the UBC Museum of Anthropology to further enhance their weaving data.⁶ Audrey Hawthorn wrote an article in 1964 called, *Mungo Martin. Artist and Craftsman*. She went on to write a book called, *Labour of Love* (1993), that outlines Mungo Martin's work in the Museum of Anthropology at the University of BC. Wilson Duff wrote a paper titled, *Carver of the Century*, published in the Museum News, May 1959 (personal communication with Gloria Cranmer Webster) and the article was also put in *The World is as Sharp as a Knife*, in 1981. His association with museums paved the way for generations after to walk

³ <http://rbcml.rbcm.gov.bc/programs/kidspage/pdf/thunderbirdpark3.pdf>

⁴ http://www.city.victoria.bc.ca/cityhall/departments_compar_prkttm.shtml

⁵ <http://www.lanecce.edu/library/don/copper.htm#mungo>

⁶ Mungo (Nakapenkem: 8 times a chief). This site also published that Martin drowned tragically in 1962. It was his son David who drowned in 1959.
<http://www.artnet.com/library/05/0546/T054668.asp>

in his path and amongst the poles that now stand in front of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC. A film called *The Slender Thread/The Legacy*, by Barb Cranmer⁷ (Laxaloqwa), in 1991 creates his significance on the art world. There is also a travelling exhibit entitled *Mungo Martin: A Slender Thread* which was produced by the U'Mista Cultural Centre, celebrating the roles of a great father, a grandfather, a great grandfather, a carver, a composer, a singer, an historian, a potlatch chief, a fisherman and an ethnologist. He was a great teacher and helped to keep Kwakwaka'wakw art alive. His efforts are definitely a continuing thread of his culture, the thread that has been filmed and museumified. I stayed at his and Abaya'a's house in Victoria when I was on holidays from the residential school I attended. I remembered him but I did not. Our lives touched briefly and I remember a man who carved and sang in his Big House in Victoria, and his wife making Indian ice cream. I remember listening to the radio when he died. His body was taken on a navy frigate to Alert Bay. They also lowered the flags in Victoria Harbour to half-mast. He was posthumously awarded the Canada Council Medal, the first native Canadian to be given the award.⁸

Other works describing Mungo Martin are by Borrelly (1971), Carter (1971), De Laguna (1963), Harry Hawthorn (1961), and Nuytten (1982).

Following George Hunt's death in 1933, my grandfather, Dan Cranmer

⁷ http://www.firstnationsdrum.com/biography/wint00_cranmer.htm

⁸ <http://www.nativeline.com/newsin.htm>

(Pal'nakwala Wakas) (1883-1959) worked with Boas and some of his songs were recorded in New York City in 1938. Helen Yampolsky, Boas's daughter and Dan Cranmer worked on the Kwakiutl Grammar, published in 1947 (personal communication with Gloria Cranmer Webster).

Dan Cranmer had a potlatch in 1921 at Village Island. Helen Codere wrote a chapter in a book in 1966 called *Daniel Cranmer's Potlatch*. This was more from an anthropologist's slant. She mentions the potlatch being held at Village Island.

The following is his (Daniel Cranmer's) summary of the main events of this potlatch. "Everyone admits that that was the biggest yet. I am proud to say our people (Nimpkish) are ahead, although we are the third, Kwag'ul, Mamalelegala, Namgas. So I am a big man in those days. Nothing now. In the old days this was my weapon and I could call down anyone. All the chiefs say now in a gathering, "You cannot expect that we can ever get up to you. You are a great mountain" (Codere 1951: field notes, as cited in McFeat 1966).

This potlatch was illegal as noted in the following statute:

Chapter 27

An Act further to amend "The Indian Act, 1880" [assented to 19th April 1884].

3. "Every Indian or other person who engages in or assists in celebrating the Indian festival known as the "Potlatch" or in the Indian dance known as the "Tamanawas" is guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not more than six months nor less than two months in any gaol or other place of confinement; and any Indian or other person who encourages, either directly or indirectly, an Indian or Indians to get up such a festival or dance, or to celebrate the same, or who shall assist in the celebration of the same is guilty of a like offence, and shall be liable to the same punishment."

6. Section one hundred and fourteen of the Indian Act is hereby repealed and the following substituted thereof: —

Chapter 35

An Act further to amend the Indian Act [assented to 22nd July, 1895].

“114. “Every Indian or other person who engages in, or assists in celebrating or encourages either directly or indirectly another to celebrate any Indian festival, dance, or other ceremony of which the giving away or paying back of money, goods or articles of any sort forms a part, or is a feature, whether such gift of money, goods or articles takes place before, at, or after the celebration of the same, and every Indian or other person who engages or assists in any celebration or dance which the wounding or mutilation of the dead or the living body of any human being or animal forms a part or is a feature of is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months and not less than two months; but nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the holding of an agricultural show or exhibition or giving of prizes thereof (58 & 59 Vic., C. 35, s. 6 (1895).”

(This was the law under which George Hunt was charged).

There are articles, and many writings from extensive fields in academia about this event. Forty-five people were arrested and charged with various crimes, such as giving speeches, dancing, carrying and receiving gifts at the potlatch. These people were witnesses to the host's generosity and wealth. Of those arrested, twenty-two were given suspended sentences. The sentencing was based on an illegal agreement that, if the tribes gave up their potlatch paraphernalia, the sentences would be suspended. Twenty men and women were sent to Oakalla prison in Burnaby, on the mainland far away from their homes, to serve sentences.

Many more books were written about the clash of cultures and the law, and following is an example from *Dan Cranmer's Potlatch: Law as Coercion*,

Symbol, and Rhetoric in British Columbia 1884-1951, by Tina Loo (1992) who states:

The churches turned to the federal government, asking it to assist their efforts by outlawing the potlatch. The government complied, and in 1884 the apparatus of white domination was further reinforced when the Indian Act was amended to meet the wishes of BC's missionaries. The efforts to suppress the potlatch were part of a larger attempt on the part of white society to use the law, as well as other institutions like schools to assimilate Indian peoples into the Western capitalist culture (Loo 1992: 129).

Another book in the same vein is *An Iron Hand Upon The People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (1990 Cole and Chaikin).

On the other side of that particular law is the Indian law illustrated in the award winning film, *Potlatch! A Strict Law Bids Us Dance* (1975) by Dennis Wheeler. Many people have researched and analysed the events of my grandfather's potlatch and the repatriation of regalia and it was not until I returned to the classrooms of academia that I realised what an event it truly was. My name has been linked, sometimes without my permission, to such events. I graduated from the University of British Columbia where the anthropology classrooms are punctuated with echoes of my paternal side of the family. I wandered through the halls of the Museum of Anthropology, and outside among the totem poles of Mungo Martin and take the ambience as a positive aspect of my life, my education. I have taken a linguistics course with a woman, Anne Goodfellow, who did her dissertation on the Kwakwa'la language. And I am doing my thesis on my life as a heroin addict outside of my family's history. I

learn more each day of the significance of my history, my family and since I grew up away, far away from this side of my family, I accept it as a small part of my life. Because of the silence between my families, I heard of my paternal grandfather's death in my maternal grandmother's backyard when I was on another holiday. I was young and I was sad for a moment and continued playing.

Daniel Cranmer's daughter, Gloria Cranmer Webster (Yotu) (1931-) attended the University of British Columbia. It is important to note that she had no financial help from the Department of Indian Affairs and that she was the only Indian woman attending university at UBC in the mid 1950s. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology in 1956. While she was attending university she worked as a matron in Oakalla Prison and was a parole officer at the John Howard Society where she met her husband, John Webster (this shows up in my story later on). She received her Doctor of Laws, honoris causa, at the University of British Columbia in 1995 for her work in the regeneration of Kwakwaka'wakw language and culture. Gloria has also been part of the Department of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. In 1971 she taught undergraduate courses and with colleagues, developed the Museum of Anthropology Studies Program (personal conversation with Gloria Cranmer Webster). She continues to be an anthropologist in many capacities like a museologist, an interpreter, a curator, an editor, a faculty member and an aunt. Many identifications, many positions and thus, history replicates itself in me.

The concept of the insider – outsider noted in the first chapter from conversation with Gloria Cranmer Webster was alive and well long before it became the issue it is in contemporary anthropology as noted below:

The insider-outsider was the title of a documentary film that was going to be made. The idea for it came out of the 100th anniversary Boas-Hunt reunion we had in 1986. The Boas descendants, about 35 of them, were certainly outnumbered by the Hunt descendants, who totalled about 400, between here and Fort Rupert. Thinking about it, I realised that the event was probably pretty unique in the world of anthropology. I can't think of any other anthropologist who is so highly regarded by the people he studied that his descendants would celebrate with the descendants of his collaborator. In fact, I thought of the old man, Jim King who, when I said, "So I hear some guy wrote a book about Gilford." The old man said, "Yeah, and if he ever comes back, we gonna kill him," adding that the book was full of lies. I can't remember what the guy's name was but according to the old man and others, he behaved most unprofessionally, e.g., loading up with booze at Echo Bay, spreading it around and then recording people's behaviour when they got drunk.⁹ It seems highly unlikely that a 100 years from this time in Gilford that the Gilford islanders would welcome his descendants back. Anyhow, the title had to do with the positions of Hunt and Boas in their worlds. George was a half-breed son of an Englishman and chief's daughter from Alaska – you probably know that Robert and Mary came to Fort Rupert to manage the Hudson Bay's operation. George married a high-ranking woman from Blunden Harbour, thereby acquiring stuff that he needed to be recognised in Kwagu'l society and becoming sort of an 'insider,' although he faced discrimination and ridicule. He had particular problems with the Indian Agent, who considered him an 'outsider.' Boas, the son of German Jews, lived with rejection from colleagues but who remembers them? Franz Boas is considered the father of American anthropology, which ain't bad for an 'outsider.' Boas became an 'insider' in Kwagu'l society by his collaboration with that 'outsider' George Hunt (Email Aug. 5, 2003).

Gloria Cranmer Webster's defence of Boas and Hunt (1997) come from a personal and academic background. She tells of the data collected by Boas and Hunt and how it is consumed by our culture. She states, "Those few examples of

⁹ Ronald P. Rohner in 1967 wrote an article called "The People of Gilford Island: A Contemporary Kwakiutl Village."

the way we 'consume' the material produced by Franz Boas and George Hunt give some idea of the distance between us, the Shakers and them, the Readers" (Webster 1997:8). And continues:

At one point in my life, I was an assistant curator at the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. One day, when I was busy, the late Wilson Duff came in and showed me a raven rattle saying, "Isn't this beautiful?" I agreed that it was. Then he asked, "But how do you read it?" I replied impatiently, "Wilson, I don't read things. I shake them." The title of this paper could have been "Shakers and Readers," because that is how the world is divided for me. There are us and there are those who write about or 'read' us. Readers have little relevance in the world of Shakers, primarily because their statements are often wrong (Webster 1997: 2).

Following and always aware of the illegal taking of the potlatch regalia, she became instrumental in the repatriation of the *Potlatch Collection*. This event may be interpreted in many ways depending on where one stands. This is the stuff of anthropology and it, the event has been written, investigated and reinvestigated, critiqued and recritiqued, sometimes positively and sometimes negatively, depending on who is writing about it. This historical event became explicit in the field of anthropology and was implicated by the past. While potlatches were written about and investigated, a new phenomenon called repatriation came to the forefront. Gloria Cranmer Webster writes in an article called, *The 'R' Word* (1988):

Briefly the history of repatriation for us began in 1922, with the arrests of 45 people, following a large potlatch in December 1921. At the time, the federal law prohibiting potlatches was in force. When the trial was over, 22 people were sentenced to jail and 17 containers of masks, rattles, whistles and other dance paraphernalia were crated and shipped to the Victoria Memorial Museum in Ottawa. There, part of the collection was transferred to the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. A smaller part of the

collection, consisting of 33 objects, was purchased by George Heye for the Museum of the American Indian-Heys Foundation in New York.

In 1974, the board of trustees of the National Museums of Canada agreed to return its portion of the collection, on the condition that museums be built in Cape Mudge and Alert Bay to house the treasures.

In 1979, the Kwakiutl Museum opened at Cape Mudge and one year later, the U'Mista Cultural Centre opened in Alert Bay (Webster 1988: 43).

There are reams of literature on repatriation and new laws concerning this particular phenomenon in anthropology and museums. There is also a film called *Box of Treasures* (1983), by Chuck Olin about the emotional return of the regalia to Alert Bay. From research I have found that Boas, Barbeau, Sapir, Codere, touched each other's lives and those of the Kwakwaka'wakw at different moments in time. Many anthropologists have had tea at Yotu's house in Alert Bay but that, too, is another story.

The Other Side of Me:

Now I am going to introduce the other side of my family, which is as important in the annals of history to me and to fields such as policymaking and the Indian politics today.

My grandmother, Ethel Pearson (Pudlidi) was a powerful matriarch of the Musg_a'magw Dzawada'enuxw. She attended St. Michael's Residential School in Alert Bay British Columbia, which was open from 1929-1975. She was there because of the following law:

10-11 George V. Chapter 50.

An Act to Amend the Indian Act [Assented to 1st July 1920]

Sections nine and eleven of the Indian Act, Revised Statutes of Canada, 1906, Chapter eight-One and section ten of said Act as enacted by chapter thirty-five of the statutes of 1914 are repealed and the following are substituted therefor: —

“9. “(1) “(a) “(b), “(2), “(3), “(4), “(5), “(6).

“10. (1) Every Indian child between the ages of seven and fifteen years who is physically able shall attend such day, industrial or boarding school as may be designated by the Superintendent General for the full period during which such school is opened each year.

“(2), “(3) “(a)“(b)”(c).

It should be noted that the same man, Duncan Campbell Scott, whose letter was used to legally encase the *Potlatch Collection*, was also the man who said in 1920:

I want to get rid of the Indian problem. Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question and no Indian department.

Duncan Campbell Scott - Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs 1913-1932.¹⁰

My grandmother was born at HopeTown British Columbia. She married Alfred Coon of Gilford Island British Columbia and my mother was born in Kingcome Inlet British Columbia. As a child I remember going to Gilford Island when I was on holidays from the residential school again. I remember the coal – oil lamps, the outhouse and my great granny Audama. There were stories about

¹⁰ http://www.shannonthunderbird.com/residential_schools.htm

tall men in black suits roaming the hills behind the village to keep the children close to the houses. I also recall my mom telling me about speedboats coming in the early morning to cut down the totem poles in the graveyard and take them away. My grandmother then married Charlie Wilson of Cape Mudge British Columbia. She had four children. She and her husband bought a house in Comox British Columbia. It was something quite significant for Indians in those days, to own private property off reserve (important to note as the house was used for bail purposes in one of my trials). She then married Fred Pearson, a white man, which brought many consequences that would be affected by the *Indian Act* as stated below:

Indian Act Section 12 (1) (b) The following persons are not entitled to be registered, namely, (b) a woman who married a person who is not a registered Indian, unless that woman is subsequently, the wife or widow of a person described in section 11.

Section 11 (1) (f) allowed a non-registered woman to become a registered Indian when she married an Indian man.

Ethel Pearson became very active in the fight to change this discriminatory legislation: "She was involved with the British Columbia Association of Non Status Indians later to become United Native Nations" (Shackelly 2000). She was also in attendance in the formation of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs. Ethel Pearson, my grandmother became involved in the Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of BC because her youngest daughter, the late Donna Tyndall, was a Native Courtworker for over

seven years. My grandmother adopted, Leonard Peltier¹¹ according to Kwakwaka'wakw protocol by lobbying fifty-two chiefs to legally adopt him as a member of the Kwagiulth Nation. At a ceremonial potlatch she confirmed her adoption.¹² In 1987, the National Film Board made a documentary entitled *Dancing Around the Table, Part Two*. My grandmother played a leading role. She was tireless. She went to Oka. She gave potlatches. She attended and was a member of the council of elders of the Assembly of First Nations. I read of her activities and am amazed for a moment and then I remember she was not a woman to slight and the Canadian government had done that. In 1985, Section 12 [1] (b) of the Indian Act was repealed and replaced with compromise Bill C-31.¹³ She was to become a "real Indian" again.¹⁴

I remember my grandmother's kitchen and the smell of freshly baked bread. I recall our visits in her kitchen when she would speak Kwak'wala and I would eventually have to tell her I did not understand her but it is too late for me to document her life. It was always one of the things I was going to do. Now she

¹¹ Arrested for allegedly murdering two FBI agents in 1975 during a time of enormous conflict, political corruption in the Tribal government and the BIA and military style Federal confrontations on the Pine Ridge Oglala Lakota Sioux Reservation (a time period infamously known as "The Reign of Terror." <http://www.yvw.yvwiusdinvnohii.net/peltier.htm#back>.

¹² <http://www.yvwiusdinvnohii.net/LeonardPeltier/1999/LPDCC991113passing.htm>

¹³ What is Bill C-31? On June 28, 1985 Parliament passed Bill C-31, "An Act to Amend the Indian Act." Because of a presumed Constitutional requirement, the Bill took affect as of April 17, 1985.

¹⁴ Bill C-31 amended the Indian Act in a number of important ways: 1). It ends many of the discriminatory provisions of the Indian Act, especially those discriminating against women; 2). It changes the meaning of "status" and for the first time allows for the reinstatement of Indians who were denied or lost status and/or Band membership; 3). It allows bands to define their own membership rules.

is no longer here and I am left with warm memories and when I smell baked bread, I am in that moment. Her energy did not wane even in her later years.

She lost three children, two daughters and a son but unfortunately that is also another story. My mother and her brother Billy are still alive and I write about Bill and his children next.

My grandmother's son, (Chief He'mas Tlatlilitla), Billy Wilson, was a minor when his mother married a white man. He was affected and he too became a non – member and an outsider, not quite a legal entity in any defined way. I spoke to him the other day and he told me of his student loans. Still. I remember when he graduated from UBC Law School (the second Indian graduating from UBC Law after Alfred Scow, Kwikwasutinuxw, who was called to the bar in 1962), the Indian associations were beginning to form and that was to be his direction for many years. He attained national prominence with the Native Council of Canada as its spokesman during the 1983 First Ministers Conference. He became an outspoken, ardent speaker for the Indian community, dealing with treaty processes, native court issues and he has a member of been with many of the national, provincial and local associations. Bill Wilson was instrumental in helping create The British Columbia Treaty Commission 10 years ago and has been on the executive of the First Nations Summit. His daughters, Jody and Kory, followed and graduated from the same law school in 1999. Jody has been a prosecutor in the City of Vancouver and is now working with the Treaty Commission. Today she is the only woman serving on the Commission and she

is also the youngest person at thirty-two to be voted to their executive in 2003. Kory is director of the First Nation Studies Program at Langara College (Pemberton 2003: B4). My mother's sister's children are still associated with the Native Courtworkers of Vancouver.

My mother, Caroline Cranmer, nee Coon, went to the same residential school as my grandmother. She married my father and lived in Alert Bay, British Columbia for six years. The marriage produced three children and the two girls were born at the infamous hospital and delivered by the same doctor that has been written about by Dara Culhane in 1987, *An Error in Judgement: The Politics of Medical Care in an Indian/White Community*. My older sister Valerie was born in 1949. I was born in 1950 and my brother Geary in 1952 in Comox. We all moved to Comox where my grandmother's house was. When Valerie was six and I had just turned five we went to the residential school in Alberni, British Columbia. In and around that time another law had been changed, and another relaxed. In my opinion, the resulting changes would have an effect on many lives. The law that was relaxed was the insistence that all Indian children attend residential school. Many children attended schools in their communities. The law that had changed was

Chapter 149 An Act respecting Indians

1. This Act may be cited as the Indian Act. 1951, c. 29, s. 1

95. (1) No offence is committed against subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (a) of section 93 or paragraph (a) of section 94 if intoxicants are sold to an Indian for consumption in a public place in accordance with a law of the

province where sale takes place authorising the sale of intoxicants to a person for consumption in a public place.

This opened up avenues previously only thought about. Many people already living in urban areas went to pubs, which they had never been allowed to frequent. The consequences of this act would be felt for many years but that too is another story.

I went to Alberni Indian Residential School (AIRS) for ten years. Even there, conflicts began and were drawn. I was whiter than a large percentage of the children that attended the school. I was the offspring of young parents who had never lived anywhere but Gilford Island, Alert Bay and other Kwakwaka'wakw communities. Because my mom was now a single parent there was no other alternative for her but for us to go to AIRS. It became a required adventure and my sister and I were there for ten months of the year. My brother Geary joined us when he was four. My mother worked at the school and knew the principal from the school she went to in Alert Bay British Columbia, a Mr. Anfield. Alberni Indian Residential School and was opened in 1891 and closed in 1973. It has a history of abuse like most of the residential schools in Canada. I read the newspapers and the names of the students that are in court and I read the name of the perpetrator. He was there. I certainly do not deny that abuses occurred, but I did not suffer any abuse at the school. But that is another story.

I have no idea why I finally left my family but I find in retrospect that I was on the cusp of two powerful families and governed by two laws. The early start of

being a hyphen. I was the product of a mother and father who stopped communicating. This left my brother, sister and I to the residential school. I now understand why my mother made some of the choices she did. It was important that her children maintain their Indian status so she remained unmarried. I have two other sisters, Jeannie and Vera and two other brothers, Robert and Billy, in total there are seven of us. The younger ones did not attend residential school but that is also another story. Turning sixteen, I began running. I left the residential school and ended up in Prince George. Years later I found that the police got in touch with my mom. She authorised my life and said it was okay for me to be where I was. Many of the same laws would touch my life as I grew into the individual I am today. The significance would not be known until I researched this dissertation.

I became a 'hybrid', as George Hunt was the son of a white man and a high ranking Indian woman. I was a child that was defined by two high ranking families. I became a shaky dash and grew into the hyphen I am today. I became aware of who I was supposed to be and left to find something else. Today I have joined the ranks and leave the family history to yesterday. I have seen the films of Barb Cranmer. I have attended the funeral of my maternal grandmother and finally cried but I get ahead of myself. I am a new 'Reader' and write about a few events in my life. This is an 'invention' of my life as a heroin addict, and an inventory of my memories.

Today I am a registered Indian, a registered addict with the methadone clinic and a criminal. It seems significant also that I have a criminal record and it will be an Act of Parliament that wrests me from a criminal record. Now that I have created a base for my life, I now attend my beginnings into the heroin world that I chose and hope that I may tie all events together. There are many stories to be told but I am going to relate my history of heroin use in the DTES beginning in 1968-1972.

CHAPTER 3: THE DASH FROM THE MIDDLE:

I was at a crossroads, a turning point and ambled into Vancouver. I am going to write about my experiences in a bounded area around Hastings Street. The allure of life in recreation, in dire straights, and in the process of change made the present liveable, tangible, and exciting. I was almost an adult, I was on my own and the architect of my structuring – constructing. The rule of law was an important aspect in my life. It ruled my activities, my choices, and my responsibilities. I have discovered that I have lived a whole lifetime in a year. I wondered – wandered into my life around November 12 of 1968 and left.

In other writings I have said that 1969 was the year of my life's beginning. I find that when the men first landed on the moon on July 20th, 1969, and walked around, I watched from a bed, tossing and turning from the lack of heroin. This was a preface for the next twenty-seven years of sleepless nights and the familiar welcoming of the morning. So it has been huge world events that have put order in a disorderly life. I become more cognisant of the order of events as more is revealed. The passing of days, of months and finally of years revolve into a life that has been spinning out of orbit for some twenty-seven years and now comes to light in the autumn of my life. Past reality, the past needs to be constructed about what really happened and not only the romanticization of it. There is a conflict, facts, imagination, recall, and like a heroin or methadone

addiction, the withdrawal is silent, replete with aches of decisions, sweating of ideas and diarrhea of thoughts. There are changes as each memory is plucked from my brain and the sequences change their location as an event outside myself comes to light and my memory is darkened again. The sequence of events changes as I remember an event and I enter a past that I have not thought about for many days. There is a sequence of order; I will write my experiences as I recall and it will not be anybody else's; only my own.

In the middle of my musings I recall going to the Vanport Hotel at the age of eighteen, early 1969 waiting for my nineteen birthday in November. I was a young adventurer – foreigner just out of school, away from the confines of childhood and off probation. But that too is another story. I became the activator of my adult life and wanted it all. I wanted what I thought adults had had all my childlike and childish years. A negotiation of sites was being navigated. I was eighteen but not quite an adult. I was between the ages of consent and consequence. Legally I was allowed to be on my own. And this was an important part of my cycle of life and living. I turned eighteen and took it to heart. I left Prince George, and the task of school, a semblance of order, and a life of getting up and doing life on an installment plan. It was all about when I finally turned eighteen. Technically I was adrift and physically I was on the edges of the DTES and adulthood, but not quite. This was to foreshadow my life, always being on the edge or border of some event, something. I was legally allowed to leave

school but not quite legal to vote, to drink or to be deemed an adult. I was an adult – in – waiting, still undefined by self.

I came to Vancouver with a partial knowledge of some of the places I could not enter, namely bars and clubs that served alcohol. I went to Deep Cove and stayed with a father that I only knew from a distance of always aware but never near. I worked as an underpaid student of Kwakwaka'wakw art. I carved totem poles, in the back yard of my father's residence, at the minimum wage of \$1.25 an hour. I digress because that is another story. When I had settled in Deep Cove, I found my way to Vancouver and visited a woman, Ada¹⁵ who I had known for many years, and been attracted to her, also. She lived with another woman; Helen¹⁶ and we went to a bar that they frequented. I believed that she and her friend were lesbians but was not sure, but was almost – always hoping.

So I wandered into the Vanport Hotel ripe for this – that life and it was where I thought and finally knew I belonged. The Vanport Hotel had a culture some have called deviant, anti – social and criminal. But it was mine. For the first time in my life I had a place to imagine and to call home. A majority of the clientele at the Vanport Hotel consisted of women but also women on the edges who had been in jail. These were the women, the persons I became infatuated – interrelated with, not people but their lifestyle. Some of the women had short hair, and wore themselves, their attitudes and behaviours, like an emblem or symbol

¹⁵ Pseudonym.

¹⁶ Pseudonym.

of who they were. It seemed symbolic of a unifying condensation. It was an act of participation and an act of incorporation that was mobilised by a subculture that reinforced its solidarity in the absence of a political consensus. This was their disguise of power and ambiguity. It is also a refutation of the dominant society. This was a subtle contention and was an act of socialisation inherent in the field of injection of norms and beliefs, and on the edge, their use of the drugs, totally separate from the other women in the hotel.

Because of their lifestyle, they had two personas: one in the daylight and another never seen, in twilight, in moodlight, and in retrospect I now know that their world consisted of two realities. The self seems to be tied intrinsically to memory, which is interesting in the process of what is remembered and how it is brought to life, in black – white. I was still in the middle trying to maintain some semblance of the straight life and yearning, wanting to be a part of this other life. It was like a photograph, positive in the daylight and negative in the dark. And this began my collection for my life's photo – album.

I found out that most of the women I became obsessed with were heroin addicts; and I was drawn to that side of them. Drugs were new in my life, as was alcohol, and as I became a regular at the bar, I became familiar with the drugstore across the street. It was on the adjacent corner from the hotel and was called the Vanport Drugstore. Stoddart speaks to this, "Similarly, the drugstore a block away from the café stocks large quantities of small envelopes containing an inexpensive hypodermic needle, syringe and a bottle cap for preparing heroin

for injection” (Stoddart 1968:3). A small point, the drugstore was three blocks away across from the Vanport Hotel. I began a defining moment of my life, the ongoing chemical experiment. The drugstore was an early supermarket for different drugs and I was soon buying pills called *Christmas Trees*. They were large capsules filled with an array of colours, yellow, orange, red, blue, green and a magic formula that turned, made my body speedier, with an ability to pay close attention to everything that was occurring about me. These pills were a mild form of speed – amphetamine. I was eighteen, I was able to stay up all hours of the day, and I made the whole day mine to live, twenty-four hours. I became a morning – night player observing the world around and beneath and beside me. It revolved and vibrated in waves of light and dark, in rain and dusk; it happened.

The Vanport Hotel became the site of implementation of new directions, new adventures and new, brand new insights. The buying of beer, the playing songs on the jukebox, the pool – playing and the sharing of space and talk was a normal process of interrelationships in the bar. I have looked at my recollections and realised that I was only eighteen when I began to frequent this bar. There was an implied sense of legality, and it was best to stay cognisant of the bartenders’ mood and who was serving and when they were not.

On my frequent visits to the bar I was still on the edges of discovery, of reputation and of realisation. I still lived the pre – tense of normality at my father’s in Deep Cove and with a few of the women at the Vanport Hotel. I worked during the week and the weekends were mine to go out and risk, and dare. I became

enamoured with a woman, actually two women but Alex,¹⁷ the other one, would spend the day in the Vanport Hotel and would disappear into the night. Alex introduced me to methadone, barbiturates – Tuinals – Seconals, called ‘bombers.’ It was an unwritten law of the street that says no person shall knowingly give any person his or her first injection of heroin, and Alex was from the old school but she introduced me to the injection of methadone which I suppose was different. It seems the unwritten law had some loopholes, which justified methadone and not heroin. Alex was a heroin addict who was being prescribed methadone pills. Methadone was legal; injecting it was not, legality in the daylight that eventually turned into illegality at night, which in turn became a whole day.

One of the other significant phenomena I was to learn is that given any circumstance an addict is one of the most ingenious people I have ever met. An addict prefers drug injections to oral medications. I found that a few ten-milligram tablets of methadone could be crushed and mixed with water in a larger spoon in order that it could be liquefied. The solution was then drawn up in a syringe, after being filtered through cotton batting and injected into the body.¹⁸ Many older addicts using methadone this way suffered from the chalk that was introduced

¹⁷ Pseudonym.

¹⁸ Vancouver Sun. “Black Market Axes Sales of Methadone.” February 16, 1972. “Dr. Low said there has been many cases where addicts or persons posing as addicts have sold their methadone tablets obtained through prescription. He said the tablets are dissolved and injected. It was thought that methadone in orange juice holds little attraction as a sales item.” (Years later addicts would heat the orange juice away and inject it melted down so to speak).

through the injection process but that is another story.

I was to become a connoisseur of pharmaceuticals in the coming years. One of the downsides of pill taking is the possibility of overdose if one drinks alcohol and takes pills. I was using all kinds of drugs during the twenty-seven years and became addicted to most of them. I took Valium or benzodiazepams and became addicted to them, I took Fiorinal and became addicted to them, and I took methadone and became addicted to it, not once but four times. I have been addicted to heroin, and I am in a program that defines insanity as doing the same thing over and over again, expecting a different result. I have withdrawn from each of these drugs and each has its own withdrawal symptoms. I will relate later on what the symptoms are with methadone. I once thought this was the longest and most painful withdrawal but I never withdrew from Valium until nine years ago. I certainly never thought such magic pills would have such a horrendous downside.

Inevitably and I mean by design, I ended up on Hastings Street. The location was only a few blocks to the north. Alex disappeared at night and would usually leave after I had been plied with a variety of drugs. Eventually I went looking for her and ended up at that place I would call home for the next twenty-seven years. What happened as a consequence of me finding out what she did at night was a revelation that would be one of the turning points in my life. I found out she worked the streets as a prostitute. I was very naïve and did not know a lot of the street and how it was constructed – maintained by the ‘knowers,’ and

judged by the 'unknowers;' me in particular. I had stepped out of a world mediated by family, teachers, institutions and the occasional laws and expectations for a relatively boring life into the unknown. The teachings began, as I became an actor – student and no longer a daytime object – subject. I still did not have the whole picture. The location of my life was being processed and the light immersed with the dark. After locating Alex on Hastings Street I was injected into another phenomenon.

We went to the Plaza Café and entered the café. Stoddart addresses this in his dissertation when he describes what "is indicative of the 'type' of person that officials expected to be around the Plaza Café" (Stoddart 1968:28). Then, "a view from the inside, that only certain categories of persons will be present. The drug user normalises the presence of some persons in the café by referring to the time of the day at which they characteristically appear" (ibid.). There were players in their roles and the café owners were cognisant of what was happening at particular times of the day. The darkness shadowed and heightened the expectant arrival of the drug pusher; the protocol and the business of buying and selling all wound up in the obvious. In 1968, there were twenty-four hour cafés, the 'insiders' were aware of the market and as well as the 'outsiders' (the police) who sat outside and were legally bound to arrest and follow the consumers. "The 'special uses' in which the café is put can be taken as structuring the categories available for those seen in the café by both habitués and outsiders" (Stoddart 1968:33). It was an environment where there was a sense of community, one of

the first I knew. We sat at a booth and I asked what we were doing and Alex said to wait. A waiter came and took our order of cokes instead of coffee because the spoons had holes bored in the middle of them to dissuade their use as drug paraphernalia, or plastic spoons were given, instead. There was a steady stream of people coming and going and waiting.

Finally two women entered the café. Now I see these two women today in a mind and I have to describe them because it was to become significant later in my life. The aura of the women was as if they were from another culture, other than the ones up the street at the Vanport Hotel and the other ones, my family, on the island. There was a blonde woman named Mary¹⁹ and a black haired woman named Beth;²⁰ they were mother and daughter. Their hair was teased and coifed high and held by hairspray. Their eyes were made up and their lips were lips ticked in red. They each had short skirts, and wore blouses that shouted for attention, nylons and high heels that got attention. They exuded a sense of class. Their entrance was noticed and afterwards not only their appearance but also the product they held in their mouths. The waiting was over for the stream of people who were coming and going. The addicts entered the two women's booth or circled the booth, waiting for a silent cue that it was their turn. Then it was Alex's turn and we both slid into Mary and Beth's booth. Introductions were made, and I, as the new actor, became more addicted to the

¹⁹ Pseudonym.

²⁰ Pseudonym.

lifestyle. These women controlled the environment – atmosphere and the air was charged by their presence. Alex began talking in drug – speak, in a very low voice in the direction of one of them but it seemed to be more in the middle of the space of the two women. I saw a ten – dollar bill and a five-dollar bill go across the table. I then saw the woman with black hair, Beth, take a balloon out of her mouth and very deftly untie the knot, nudge a capsule out of the neck, that was sprinkled with baby powder and to push it to Alex. I was in shock. I could not believe the amount of money paid for the small object and my mind raced to how, she, Alex, made the money and the value placed on such an insignificant capsule of what? This was a landscape I was not familiar with. I did not know the rules, I did not know the value system and as a newcomer I did not know how to act, or even if I should. I did not know what the capsule contained. When Alex received the capsule she took her Export cigarettes out and tore a large piece of silver foil from the package and wrapped the capsule in three ripped pieces of the foil. She then popped it into her mouth. We got up from the booth and left the café. As we were walking down Hastings Street I asked her what it was that she had in her mouth and what was so valuable that it had to be concealed and bought for so much money. She said it was heroin.

The next part of the ritual was to find a place where she could inject the heroin. Stoddart states: “The area’s many cheap ‘walk – up’ hotels or their unlocked bathrooms are often used by drug users as a location to administer heroin” (Stoddart 1968:3). Because I did not know the protocol – procedure I

suggested we go home. This was not part of the plan, because I learned later that if an addict is sick, or is in danger of being sick, the first thing after purchasing the drug is to get somewhere quickly and inject it, to take away the beginning withdrawal pangs or expected pains. I soon learned when and once you have made the buy, the next thing is to find a place with a door and access to clean water. A spoon was needed and matches or a lighter, and the most important object, a syringe. In the days of capsules and balloons a heroin addict usually smoked Export A cigarettes with the heavy silver foil, in order to wrap it after the purchase to enable some protection after it was put in the mouth. As we maneuvered our way down Hastings Street Alex stopped and spoke to a woman about where she, Alex, could fix. The information – directions were explicit and as we neared the hotel on the corner of Hastings and Carroll, Alex suggested that I go home. It was not safe and there were ‘narcs’ around (depending on the time of day, these could be RCMP or Vancouver City Police, in plain clothes who would physically choke an addict in order to get the illegal drug wrapped in foil).²¹ I replied I had been through the whole process and I would like to stay and play it out until the end. I was truly fascinated by the ritualistic; I did not know this word then, procedure – ritual.

We arrived at a small hotel near the corner of Hastings and Carroll Street.

²¹ Paul Grescoe. “The Chokers.” Province, October 4, 1969. “They can get 7 years in jail for possessing heroin, 25 for trafficking, and life for importing. So they usually carry their heroin in capsules in their mouths, swallow them at the first sign of a cop and then throw up when it’s safe again.”

As we climbed the stairs, the process began. The atmosphere – energy became charged and the air of excitement and anticipation that would foreshadow the years ahead. Alex entered a small washroom and proceeded to ready the heroin. Now I recall this as a ritualistic endeavour because it affected – effected me in many ways. So as I stand in experience and knowledge of events, I muse that the practices are and can be ‘common sense’ and ritual makes it sensible to me. I have been part of the procedure, as an eye – I witness.

Back to I was there. Alex entered the bathroom and was shutting the door on me. She stated that I was to “keep six,” which meant I should be watching for the police. I insisted I wanted to observe the process. So I entered into a space that would familiarise me with foresight – forbearance of many years to come. Alex took its layers of foil off. She took the minute capsule, a number five gelatin capsule, between both her hands’ fingertips and unsealed the capsule letting the contents fall into the bowl of the silver spoon. She took the syringe and went to the water tap and in her palm turned the water on to elicit – illicit water, which she drew up in the syringe. After turning the tap off, she returned to the spoon and pressed the plunger of the syringe and the water mixed with the granules of heroin. She lay the spoon on the back of the toilet and set it down gently as she took out a package of matches and ripped off three paper matches and struck them on the striker. A distinct smell of sulphur exploded in the atmosphere, a lightening of flame filled the space and she lifted the spoon and held the matches under the bowl full of uncooked, raw heroin. The scent of heated heroin – sulphur

penetrated the bathroom and the water and the heroin became chemically infused and active. She put the spoon on the back of the toilet and drew the contents into the syringe. The act was almost complete. Alex was a woman who preferred that I did not watch the next part of the process, but because I was totally immersed – hypnotised by the procedure I continued to watch as she sat on the toilet and put a tourniquet on her left arm. She used her purse strap to do this. She put the pointed part of the syringe, the needle into the crook of her arm and found a vein that was ready and thirsty after the tourniquet had prompted the required vein to bulge. She moved the syringe into its heart; its middle until blood spurted into the syringe and she let loose the tourniquet. As she sat on the toilet seat, she slowly pressed the plunger with the cooked heroin mixture into, what I found out later, was a very willing and knowing vein. As the heroin mixture found its way into her body, a subtle change occurred. She, Alex, became relaxed and another feeling entered the small environment, one of wellness – peace that was evident in her actions. After she withdrew the syringe from her left arm, she went to the sink and washed the blood from the inside of the syringe and wiped it down and returned it to her purse. She returned to the discarded spoon and took some toilet paper and went back to the sink, turned the tap back on and actually looked around the small space looking, looking and I asked her for what. She needed some ashes from a cigarette in order to clean the carbon-blackened bottom. This done, she put the paraphernalia, the instruments away, as she turned to me and became the daylight Alex that I knew and was familiar with. We held each other in the small bathroom and stayed like that for what seemed like

an eternity, but not. The process was over and, as I learned or became more cognisant of later, this was the chance for an intimate moment before the next capsule of heroin came to mind. And it did. And the circle widened as it was not only Alex who wanted – needed heroin but me, the I in me that had been treated to an experience that hooked me there and then.

The other woman was straight, as in not using heroin, married, beautiful and gay. We played on the fringes and one time we went to the Balmoral Hotel on Hastings Street. We met a couple of people she knew from the New Fountain on Cordova Street, a hotel that had catered to the gay crowd before the Vanport Hotel. This had been closer to the drug core; it had a blurred relationship of the – in – between and the knowing and the acceptance of drug use and alcohol. The couple eventually said that they were going to score a cap of heroin and asked if we wanted to do some. Brandy²² said no, but I said oh yes. We left the Balmoral and went to the Washington Hotel, a couple of doors east of the Balmoral. This in fact was the first time I was to inject heroin. We ascended in an old elevator and the hotel room had a glass partition on the entrance. We went in and seated ourselves around the square room that consisted of a bed, a sink and an open window to the alley. They took out the paraphernalia and prepared the heroin with water, matches, a syringe, and a spoon. A factor I was to become familiar with was the speed with which all this was done. There were shadows and

²² Pseudonym.

whispering at the door and the male said the door was coming down. Instead of mainlining the heroin there was a flurry of quiet injections called skin – popping (skin – popping is a method of injecting the heroin into the skin rather than the vein and the heroin takes a few moments longer to process). I had lifted my shirt and quickly directed the syringe into my mid – section and pushed the plunger to release the heroin – mixture directly into my body. The man grabbed the syringe and threw it out the window. The door came in with the brute force of being kicked and banged open and surprisingly the window that made up part of the door was not broken. We came face to face with Vancouver’s finest, the narcotic squad. One of the officers choked the man and he said that he had nothing. It became clear to the officers that they had missed the event by seconds. I recall the questions, the names, the ages, the stiff veneer of an addict or person when questioned by the authorities. There was a sense of relief in the environment and, as the heroin took hold we, the addicts, were smiling within and feeling no pain. This was to be the basis for the life ahead. The sense of anticipation, the ritual of preparing and injecting the heroin, the awareness of everything around while the world happens around us. This was exciting! This was life on the edges! This was the first taste of a freedom of self and I was still unsure. I was with Brandy; I played at this life. I was not yet an active actor. When the police finally left, we returned to the Vanport Hotel. There was a sense of separateness between Brandy and I. But I was immersed in a drug that was moving through my body, finally, and I did imagine I left for a few hours, but was still present and next to other people. I alienated myself from the drinkers. I was complete in

myself for once. I liked this. For years after Brandy would feel guilty about her role in that hotel room. But I said if it wasn't then, it would have happened another time.

Now the next few paragraphs will be speaking of two incidents dealing with the law system and I describe events leading up to around them. My wanderings into the core of the city, Vancouver, came again when I wondered where the drug – jail women who I spied in the Vanport went after and during the day. Alex had been arrested on one of her forays into the night and I played the part of the new, young just out – lesbian in the Vanport Hotel. I was attracted to two cultures, the straight lesbians that worked regular jobs, played softball and drank alcohol. By this time I had given up someone else's dream of being the next – in – line carver.

Life became a series of half – lies and half – truths. I lived my life on the edges of my usually normal life and returned to the Vanport Hotel to resume some sense of normality into another culture I had chosen to be a part of. The boundaries were merging and I had to remember that parts of my life could not be mentioned or lived in one section and had, in fact, to be lived separately. I was a wanderer in my life and I had entered an area where a choice had to be made, one day. It was possible to meld the many cultures for a time but the laws of the country soon became a detriment to one part in balance with the other part. I was a player of many cultures and wanted all of them. I was greedy. The environments were ones of welcome but it was assumed that I could play on the

edges and be part of many scenes. I acted out the new healthy young impressionable lesbian in the Vanport Hotel and stole away to the New Zenith Café to become the new healthy young impressionable heroin addict.

The law began to make itself known and I was slowly becoming unbalanced. I will briefly describe an event that was to be the first of many. It pales in significance but in recall I have to add it because in other ways it was to signify my passage into the centre of myself. On November 12, 1969, I turned the legal age of nineteen. I became legal in two aspects; I could legally drink alcohol and identify myself as a lesbian. This was enacted in parliament by former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau but that is another story.

After going from the Vanport Hotel to the Balmoral Hotel, on a mission of celebration, I made my way to the Army and Navy department store. I had a few Tuinol pills that cost me a dollar a piece.²³ I bought these pills from old men who supplemented their income by selling barbiturates. The 'bomber pilot' was despised by most addicts because the 'pilot' became incoherent and falling down and had no perception of right and wrong. This was referred to as a 'dry drunk'. The 'bombers' made the person belligerent and when mixed with alcohol more so. Many people overdosed and an example would be when someone would buy

²³ Province. June 3, 1968. "Researcher reports most popular barbiturate among addicts is Tuinal – equal parts of amobarbital and secobarbital – which is freely available on the illicit market for \$1.00 per 3-grain capsule. The study group admitted they ingested barbiturates either just before or at the same time as their 'fix' as a means of getting a more intense "high." It is noted that the use of barbiturates is not socially acceptable in the addict subculture."

ten pills and forget by the fifth one how many they had taken and overdose.

I became invincible, bullet – proof and invisible. I entered the Army and Navy store wanting to buy a new shirt. I was normal to a point of lucidity. In wanting to return to my celebration of adulthood and in a hurry, I decided not to pay for the shirt. I went into the dressing room and put it on discarding my other one. When I left the store, a woman came behind and grabbed me. I turned and threw a very effective punch that flattened – faltered her. In my stoned – state I hesitated and was caught by another store detective. The police were called and I was on my way, to what was to become very familiar to the Main Street jail. The demeanour I held was one of drugged incompetence and the whole process of signing, fingerprinting, and picture – taking was done with little coherence on my part. I awoke the next morning not cognisant of what I was there for and in front of a judge who set my bail at \$500 surety.

I made the phone call to my aunt and uncle, Gloria and John Webster, introduced in the second chapter, who bailed me out of jail. There were hidden strings attached to the release and I followed the implied behaviour for a few days until the weekend, and then I was off again. There was a trip to a house in Kerrisdale called X-Kalay. I walked into the house with my uncle, John Webster, who was a man who worked for the John Howard Society and the parole board. There were some men and women in the living room that I recognised from the downtown environment. There were whisperings, mutations in shadows, and I was asked if I would like a coffee and I said yes and a tide of the people's same

shadows were circling, surrounding me and enclosing me. I discovered in a split second what was happening, and put my coffee cup down and looked at my uncle and said, "Nice try!" This was a rendition of the "hot seat" that was used in recovery houses for persons who wanted to quit the drugs and drug lifestyle. I had no desire to quit because I had not even started to begin my life, one of my lives, at this point in 1968. I was to face one of the first consequences of that act of walking out when I returned to court and my bail had been pulled, relinquished. I would be making an impression that would follow me through life. A prescription consisting of rebellion, youth, drugs, alcohol, pills, and supposed freedom.

The police took me into custody as the judge remanded my case of Theft over \$50 (Section 280 [A]) and Common Assault (Section 231 [1]). He stated that I should be seen by a probation officer and given over for a pre-sentence report. I was processed and sent to Oakalla and remained there until my next court appearance, which was in one week. I do recall the ride to Oakalla, in Burnaby. I do remember riding up to a stone building that looked like Alberni Indian Residential School where I had been already. I was bathed and deloused with some evil smelling potion put on my hair. I was then taken up to a nurse's station through a locked door at the top of the stairs. Being so new, I was asked if I used heroin, and I answered yes I did. The process that was saved for addicts meant that on arrival in jail, they were locked in a cell with other addicts for seven days. Some of these addicts were in the throes of acute withdrawal. There were six beds in the cell. I was new, I was unmarred by experience, by a record, by

association, by relationships, by reputation, by withdrawal symptoms and it was good as I observed from a place, a shadow of inexperience, taking notes in my head, and saving information for later. This was pre – addiction and to see what withdrawal entailed made me think that heroin injections would be only controlled and on weekends. I was so naive. The women ached and threw up and had diarrhea and could not sleep. I found that this was a sickness that involved silent aches, aches not seen to the outsiders, where baths, hot baths only accessible in the morning when the area was cleaned and aired with the door open to let the rest of the women in, offered the only relief. I went back to court and was given a one year suspended sentence and probation and one – day in jail for the assault. This was convened on the 24th day of December in 1969. I had turned nineteen in November of 1969.

I was moving to the right of myself, but still in – between. Because of my week in Oakalla, I had become more familiar and knowing of the culture of the heroin addict. In my naivety, I became an expert immediately. I ventured out alone. There were still the women who held a fascination that piqued my interest who stayed in the Vanport Hotel all day and came and went so I followed them and I was introduced to a second café called the New Zenith Café. It was like the Plaza Café up the street but the din was more exciting, possibly because it was daylight. There were many booths lining the wall to the right and a few more in the middle. Off to the left was a solid counter that protected the owners and lined the boundary between solid and transparent lives. There was an atmosphere of

smoke, a slurping of weak coffee, mixed with spoons with holes in the middle, also. There was a din of constant movement between booth and counter, between entry door and exit somewhere in the back, and an array of characters that were to become my friends. Women who were dressed in short skirts and dresses, makeup fading into daylight, mascara sliding down the face and lipstick caked and relined about lips that were beginning to reveal the onslaught of heroin withdrawals with the sniffing of noses, the impatient sighing and muted agonies of expected withdrawals. The men and some of the women were clothed in leather, the signified dress of the drug culture. There was an air of rumpiness to a degree of once – put – togetherness. This was an area of insulated safety and a place of the elite of heroin subgenus. And smoke winding endlessly to the ceiling never espied by anyone who walked through the doors of the New Zenith Café.

I pushed through the entrance the New Zenith Café of two glass doors into a soon – to – become familiar environment. I spotted a known face and slid into the booth with Glenda.²⁴ Her eyes were pinned (the eye becomes the teller of tales as to what drug is in residence in the body and if it is an opiate the irises are small, minute). And her eyes were the blue of unswum – in pool water, brightened by drugs I was to find out later. I asked what she was doing and she said that she was getting ready for the day. She scratched her nose with one of

²⁴ Pseudonym.

her hands and it was an almost languid movement and moment, her eyes were closed and she disappeared into herself. The scent of tiredness and a pronounced sense of realism innate with her non – movement enveloped her aura as she sat. Her cigarette was smouldering as she nodded and came to when the heat of the lit – cigarette seared her finger – flesh. Immediately Glenda wakened and looked and changed position of her hands and returned to her previous dreaming, nodding.

The people around and among the café were buying, and leaving. Others were purchasing capsules of heroin and wrapping them in Export A foil paper and popping them into their mouths. There was urgency in and after the buy. As balloons were tied and untied by the traffickers and put back into mouths and the exchanged dollars were folded and put into pockets and in some instances bras, the product sold, bought and finalised with short hellos, the quantity asked, and ended. There was a pattern that required continuity to stay in place and furtive looks at the entrance for unknowns and police. This was an environment of sameness and, if the unknown entered, or any difference presented itself, then the unbalanced required balancing and caution.

I asked if I could buy a cap of heroin and Glenda came out of her nod and asked if I was sick. I said no but I was familiar with shooting methadone with Alex and wanted to try heroin. I also skinned some heroin and I had money and wanted to try it. The fact that she was so stoned probably helped in my pursuit of heroin. The conversation was impeded with starts and finishes as I played a role

that was the beginning of my transference from one area of my life to this new one. It was an area with which I was to become adept at, the half – truths in order to get something I thought I needed to fulfil my life. The memory was to be infused into my psyche for years to come. I remember the air, I recall the environment, and I create a semblance of what started a part of my life that was to impress myself with its reality.

The assumption, today, seems to be that all that is needed to be a heroin addict is the desire to use the drug. Yet, in 1968-1972, how a person becomes a heroin drug addict was not as easy as now, as qualified when Stoddart states:

Granting a person access to drugs includes the acts of selling drugs to him, buying drugs for him, and providing him with information about where drugs can be purchased. Granting a person access to drugs by performing these acts is the procedural aspect of defining him as a drug user (Stoddart 1968:70).

It was my introduction by another heroin addict that hastened my growing knowledge of the places to buy the heroin, the places to buy the paraphernalia and the eventual knowing of how to inject the drug. . It has been noted that “drug addiction and participation in sub – cultures organised around the consumption of drugs presuppose that persons can secure access to drugs and knowledge about how to use them” (Cloward and Ohlin 1960:152). Kessler shadows that with, “a person must first secure drugs before he can think of actually using them. Ready access to drugs is a factor of addiction; the average person does not have ready access to drugs” (Kessler 1952:27). In the years before easy access to paraphernalia, it is noted that one had to know the procedures and knowledge of

certain events concerning heroin injection. I was moving to the centre – right of my own self, gathering memories and knowledge.

I was introduced to a pusher across from our table and made the move that was to affect – effect my life. I was known by association and as Stoddart states, I was “...introduced to a drug peddler by someone who is known to be both a drug user and a person that can be trusted” (Stoddart 1968:74). Many drug traffickers did not sell to anyone they did not know, which is different today. “Hence, while the drug user’s practical actions are intended as elements of a methodology designed to minimise the risk of arrest, they also must be understood as exercising a sort of regulatory effect on new admissions to a drug using pattern” (Stoddart 1968:122). There is a method, a protocol, that was followed but that is another story.

Finally, I slid into the pusher’s booth and asked to buy two caps. I pushed a twenty-dollar bill and a ten-dollar bill across the table and the pusher pushed two gelatin capsules toward me after he unballoned them from his mouth. I went back to the table and asked Glenda where I could fix. The first thing she said was to quickly wrap them in foil and put them in my mouth. And then she said she had fixed in the bathroom and I could borrow her syringe if I would give her some of my heroin. I replied I had no problem with that and we went to the bathroom. I asked her to prepare it and she did. The ritual as I looked on was déjà vu, and the capsule was opened and the grains of heroin were submitted to the bowl of a silver spoon. The syringe was put under a tap of running cold water and filled to

an even number of units to be divided between the two of us. Matches were lit and the smell of sulphur exploded into the small space of the bathroom. The mixture heated and a scent I was to become enamoured with was released as the chemical reaction momented. The spoon was placed down on the counter by the sink and she drew up half of the contents. She asked me if I wanted her to fix me, and I said yes. I lifted my sleeve and she said to tie off. Because I had such healthy and virginal veins, they popped up with just a tight fist around the upper right arm. She had drawn up half of the mixture or what she believed was half and in hindsight this act of possible deception probably saved my life that day because the quality of heroin in 1969 was greater than it is today. Then she ran the syringe under the cold – water tap. There were no lies told, and she placed the syringe point on skin untouched by any point for countable days. The point went in and blood spurted into the syringe. She said let go of the tight fist and the plunger was activated and heroin filled my veins.

As soon as the drug hit my system it was like I had been given a new position in life. I was to remember that first injection of heroin into my vein for a very long time. I immediately got sick, my breakfast came up and I retched and retched until there was nothing in my stomach. This was to be a prelude to my first days and months of using heroin. My body did not want the drug and it reacted and kept reacting for many more moments. We finally left the bathroom and the drug now came to peace with my body. I felt warm, safe, and absolutely capacitated. A cigarette tasted better, the world looked smoother; the people

around became approachable. Time took on an hour of its own, and day turned and spun in waves. I ordered a pop and drank it, and seconds later my body reacted again and I ran for the bathroom. This was to be the ritual of shooting heroin into my body until it made itself a resident and a welcome one. I sat and resumed the position Glenda had. I lit another cigarette and went to places only imagined or fantasised by many. I was enveloped and consumed by heroin. This was the starting point and the finishing point of my earlier years. This love – hate affair was to last many years. It was an obsession, later an addiction. I had been catapulted into another sphere of life. I was at ease and comfortable in my skin now branded by the first of tracks on my veins. The inner crease of my right arm was to be injected with many more pricks of the needle that would be imprinted on my skin, my life as a memory enhanced by lightlessness and the standards of a heroin user. There were many more trips to the bathroom as anything drunken or eaten was dislodged as soon as it entered my body.

I still had the second cap of heroin I bought that morning in the New Zenith Café. I taped it to the left side of my chest with adhesive tape just above my heart and in hindsight it was to be a revelation that this was my heart's choosing. I was arrested. I now know that police watched and I did not for a moment realise that I was being watched. I was and as I walked out of the Vanport Hotel I was in the process of changing positions of my cap of heroin from my chest, to my hand, in turn to my pocket. This was how new I was, and I learned seconds later why heroin addicts put the wrapped capsule in their mouths. Behind came a hand that

said I was under arrest. The policeman went directly to my right – hand pocket and removed the wrapped capsule of heroin. I was stunned into silence and handcuffed and charged with of a narcotic (Possession of a Narcotic. Section 3 [1] Narcotic Control Act).

I was to take the another trip that would be reminiscent many more times in my life. I was taken to the police station and directed to the elevator that rose to the floor where I quietly and ignorantly walked to the desk. My pockets were emptied and my address taken and the generalities of my life written on the arrest record for a second time. I was then directed to a room where I had to lay both hands on ink – black, again, to ensure my fingerprints were placed in perpetuity. And I was placed in front of a camera again, and photographed in shock, but very silent shock, as I became a part of another culture that was to bind me for many years to come.

This was my first drug arrest. I was then taken upstairs to the women's holding cells. I was locked in the drug cells separate from the other big set of cells to my immediate left and placed on the right with individual, separate locks and an aura of a foreignness. There I slept until court the next day. Before I retired for the night the nurses, who were actually female Vancouver police, asked if I was going to go through withdrawal. One part of me replied that I was not an addict and I wondered about that reply for many seconds, minutes and then forgot about it. In the morning male prisoners, trustees, who had assumed the roles generally given to some women, served breakfast. There was colored

water with a smattering of sweet and another smattering of white that made the liquid presumed coffee. There were slices of greasy bread toasted and made tan or brown that served as sustenance for someone.

New female prisoners were called and given invasive internals purported to seek out venereal diseases and other injections of bigger syringes that took another part of you in the form of blood. The nurses were always abrasive, and when the blood was taken from the same place that the heroin was injected a bruise was left. This had been done prior to my first heroin arrest.

The significance of this particular arrest made me more cognisant of the court system and sent me back to Oakalla. I was given three months for possession of heroin (Possession of a Narcotic Section 3 [1] Narcotic Control Act), and forty-five days consecutive for not keeping the peace (Failing to Comply with Probation Order Section 640 [A]). An interesting aspect of being institutionalised was the ease and comfort I associated with the act. I was to learn more and more of the heroin culture I was leaning towards. Because I was so young, I was an avid learner, and there was not a lack of people wanting to teach me. As the scales of my life were leaning towards the left side, I did not realise how unbalanced my life was becoming but in hindsight, would I have tried to adjust the equilibrium? I became known. The reputation was taking form.

I chose to be alone, without my family, away from my family, and discovered years later that my mom had a newspaper clipping²⁵ that I am going to write about. This was the beginning of a reputation that would last and be strengthened by similar events involving confrontations with knives.

I was nineteen at the time and the true statements in the newspaper were my address and the café. I was hanging out at the New Zenith Café quite often and mixing more and more with the heroin element. This was early in 1970 and I was an adult in the eyes of the law, I had a criminal record of sorts and now I dressed in black dress pants with shirts and vests. I knew more people and both worlds were layered on top of each other. My life was melting together from one area to the other area. I believed I could be a part of both worlds but the next event would slice my reality to the left.

One of the women I met at the hotel was a heroin addict and as I found out later, she had claimed me as her own. The New Zenith Café had a glass door that entranced – entrenched into booths on the right hand side with stools at the counter to the right. I had come from the Vanport Hotel from drinking and playing pool all day. I pushed through the glass doors and saw a woman known as

²⁵ Woman Knifed in Café Fight: A 23-year-old woman suffered four stab wounds in a fight in a Skid Row café. Myrna Cranner, (sic) of 4320 Miller was in good condition Tuesday in Vancouver General Hospital recovering from three superficial wounds to her back and one to her chest. Police went to the New Zenith Café, 105 East Hastings, at 11:30 p.m. and found that the injured woman had apparently become involved in a fight with another woman. No arrest has been made (n.d. or source).

'Redcoat Madge'²⁶ because she was supposed to be a stool pigeon and the "Redcoat" came from possible association with the RCMP. I was new and since it was never proven, that she was 'wrong' (a police informer) when she beckoned to me from the counter, I went and sat beside her. She gave me a couple of Seconals and we began to speak and I began to feel quite comfortable. The other woman from the Vanport tapped me on the shoulder and said she wanted me to come home with her. At this point in my life I still rebelled at someone's assumption that they had any power over me. I said, "No. I am busy and I will be going to my own place, in my own time." The next request – order was, "I want to see you in the bathroom then." I said, "I will be right there." So saying to my other friend, Madge, that I would be right back, I went to the bathroom at the back of the café. The bathroom was quite cramped as I entered. The door opened to a sink and counter and to the left was a toilet. Dana²⁷ as in front of me and she swung and hit me in the front of my head with a glass ashtray. I went down face first and I was bleeding from the forehead. She climbed on top of me and I could feel something hitting me two times in the back. I thought in screams, "She's stabbing me!" Now I was bleeding from the head and getting my shirt quite bloody. She had just punctured the back of the same shirt with two knife thrusts. Dana was saying, "This is what happens when you don't listen to me and would rather talk to a rat." Somehow she managed to get out the door with me lying and

²⁶ Pseudonym.

²⁷ Pseudonym.

bleeding, sprawled in front of the door. It took me seconds to realise that I had been hurt but I was filled with rage, a rage that had never been released until this point or two points. I think the scenario was that I was to be discovered on the floor and be a clear message to all not to interrupt Dana's agenda. Looking back at the events I believe I was not stabbed to die because of the careful thrusts in the right – hand side of my back. I opened the door bleeding from my head and there standing by one of the booths was my stabber. The look on her face should have been enough to quiet the urge to hurt her. It was not. I picked up a glass sugar shaker and swung at her head. It was a direct hit as she fell to the floor. The one – sided fight was long enough to make a couple of significant points. She did not own me and I began to create my reputation. Now the combination of two Seconals, beer and anger at being taken advantage of because of my youth and inexperience became lethal for Dana. The police came and two ambulances were called, one to take her to St. Paul's Hospital and me to the other one, Vancouver General.

I was still mad as hell and the hospital asked me if I had any relatives. I gave them my aunt and uncle's number and as I stormed around in a sheet trying to get out, I ran into my father. He came to the hospital because he was in Deep Cove when my Aunt Gloria got the call. My face was covered in dried blood, the sheet on my back was becoming soaked with blood and for some reason that persuaded me to the hospital bed. (Many years later Dana was found dead from an overdose of barbiturates, discarded beside a garbage bin.)

In the morning after a night's sleep I woke in pain. My back hurt, and a nurse said they would be taking me for x-rays soon. It was discovered I had a collapsed lung. Now I believe the operation was in direct relation to my antics the night before. I was on my stomach and there were two surgeons, one teaching the other how to insert a rubber tube into my lung. The tube had a metal serrated edge and it was two or three inches long. They may have frozen the skin but I do not think they did, so for the third time in less than twenty-four hours someone pushed a foreign object into my back and this time I felt it. The teaching doctor said, "She was not supposed to feel that." "Oh, thanks," I muttered in my head. After a very painful rite of passage into the life of a new culture, I was wheeled to another room. It hurt and when I asked for something for the pain I was told that they did not give heroin addicts drugs. So my mouth, my behaviour was certainly having a negative effect on my personal physical self. I was hooked up to a machine that was sucking out the blood that had invaded my lung. I hurt and had no recourse.

I felt very small and very insignificant, the same feelings I had before I entered this new life. Then I heard a voice. It was my Auntie Buntu who had come to visit. I found she had just graduated from nursing school. She asked me how I was and I said that I hurt and hot tears streamed down my face. She said, "Aren't they giving you anything for the pain?" I said, "No, because they think I am a heroin addict." She went to the nurse's station and had a talk with the nurse. I believe she informed them that, no I was not a heroin addict and I was in

pain. They had a discussion that seemed to last forever. Buntu came back and asked about my drug use. I told her I had taken a couple of Seconals the night before and had been drinking. There was a nurse – woman who had been in nursing school with her and the mix – up got straightened out. So there I was on the edge again. I wanted to be a heroin addict, but was one in training. I wanted to be tough but there I was in pain, and there was my aunt who came to my rescue. The nurse gave me a shot and in a few minutes the pain dulled. This feeling was to become very familiar like the pain relief from withdrawal. That was the last time I cried.

I was taken to a wing in the hospital and left to heal. My other aunt came to visit me; my uncle came to visit me, and my aunt Buntu came again. The woman, 'Redcoat Madge,' also showed up. She brought me some heroin and I cringed as I thought, "Now, what." I refused as I was on painkillers already. She looked at me strangely and then professed that I was the talk of the New Zenith Café. So it was begun, at nineteen and the rite of passage, the right of way that was to follow me for many years. I did not get in touch with my mother and this was also a pattern of many years. The significance of this event made a clear direction for my life but I was still a niece, a person who had denied heroin use and on the edge of reality. I hurt; I had tears streaming down my face as I lay in pain. In that moment I decided to become a heroin addict. I decided to become someone who could not be hurt or refused help because of assumptions. I also decided that the people in the downtown were my friends. No one from the

Vanport Hotel had come to visit me so the façade was over. There was no need to be in the middle of two cultures. It all became one truth, my truth in accordance with the day, my day, and my choice. I would not be hurt again.

I returned to the New Zenith Café and went to the owners and apologised profusely. People called to me and I spoke to them. I found that some men from Alert Bay had come and asked who had stabbed me because they were going to impress upon them no one could hurt one of their own. They were told that I had taken the matter into my own hands and to be assured that no one would make the same mistake twice.

My life began in earnest. I began to use heroin but I was still not cognisant of all that was to be learned. I knew about the 'narco bulls'²⁸ and many more units were formed but that is another story. But I had not seen them in action on the street, only in the Washington Hotel when they broke down the door.

One afternoon a woman, Connie²⁹ asked me if I wanted to fix with her. I said sure and this was not usually my time to be in the New Zenith Café so she bought the heroin and did what addicts did, wrapped the capsule in silver foil and popped it into her mouth. We walked to the front of the café and opened the door and as soon as Connie walked onto the street she was jumped by at least two

²⁸ "The Narcotic Control Act (NCA) 1960-61, c. 35 and the Food and Drugs Act (FDA), c.38 grant police who work in drug enforcement virtually unequalled powers of arrest, search and seizure." http://www.cfdp.ca/canrep/chap_2.htm

²⁹ Pseudonym.

men and surrounded by more men. She was soon horizontal on the sidewalk with hands around her throat, and I grabbed the closest man to me. I shoved him away and for a moment interrupted what I found out to be a normal occurrence in the neighbourhood. The knowing people stood as I saw my friend choked and brought down, and in my unknowing tried to unman the one on top of her. One of the men spoke very loudly in my ear saying, "If we find anything on her, you are going to be charged with interfering with the law." I quickly understood what was happening and tried to back away. Connie was able to swallow and when the 'narcs' found nothing on her person we walked away. She thanked me for interrupting because she said she was able to get rid of the heroin by swallowing it. We went to her hotel room and she swallowed a mixture in a glass of shampoo, water and anything that would make her throw up. The process was not very pretty as she leaned over the sink and put her fingers down her throat. After what seemed like forever the heroin that was wrapped in foil came up mixed in with soapy suds and rank smelling other liquid and she dried it as best she could. The heroin was unwrapped and the gelatin was beginning to turn to mass but the little time that had elapsed between when she was jumped and when she threw it up, made it easy to open. The usual procedure followed and Connie had not thrown up all the mixture of shampoo, water and other ingredients so she was sick while she prepared the heroin. This was another lesson and the first of many times I was to be jumped.

In my crossing – over I made an earnest conclusion that no one would try to take it or anything from me again. This has introduced my life as a heroin addict and as stated in Chapter One it is not linear nor is it sequential. The next chapter will be about how I interpreted the law of the state, the law of the street and was to recognise them as separate, foreign and alien to each other. The days turned into weeks; the experimentation turned into a habit; and I needed it. Heroin had made its point. I was consumed. With the paraphernalia it became the act and art of being prepared; it became the habit and the reason to get up, rather than the initial one of getting high.

CHAPTER 4: IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BEGINNING.

The world was in the throes of growth and it seemed to be going crazy. Men like Martin Luther King Junior and Robert Kennedy were assassinated, and artists like Jimi Hendrix, Jim Morrison, and Janis Joplin were overdosing on drugs. Wars were being started and continued in the name of peace. American university students were demonstrating against the Vietnam War and their own countrymen were shooting them. The ones that were not demonstrating were coming to Canada and were called draft dodgers or deserters. This was outside the 'Corner' but it was affecting it. The moon was conquered in the name of science and I was not as old as I thought I was. Mounted police were riding through the Broadway Hotel³⁰ in the name of order and containment. Soft drugs and hard drugs were saturating Gastown and coincidentally the mayor's name was Tom Campbell who wanted to shut it down. Hippies were joining the heroin element and heroin traffickers were visiting Be-Ins at Stanley Park. Borders were being crossed in the name of democracy in lieu of communism and consumerism. Many other areas in Vancouver were opening up to the heroin drug culture; Granville Street with twenty – four hour restaurants, Davie Street came into its own. Fourth Avenue catered to soft drugs, but since I am writing

³⁰ This is now the Sunrise Hotel (owned by the Portland Hotel Society) coffee shop, dental office, laundry facilities, and a radio station.

about the 'Corner,' I will remain there but like everything else it is overlapping. The world was in crisis and so was my life. I did not want to separate my life in two parts. I wanted to live in the middle. I wanted to use heroin and still keep a foot in the straight world. I wanted to play softball, I wanted to go to nightclubs, and I wanted both sides of the street. I was at home in both but the sides were armed against the other. My heroin counterparts did not speak to my other friends or the other way around. I thought I had made my choice but heroin had made it for me.

Time was passing; my whole identity was becoming addicted to heroin. I have always thought that the lifestyle was the hook and I was certainly hooked into the everyday life of the newness. My world was encased in one block. I would prepare for the day and go to the New Zenith Café at 105 East Hastings. There was a revolution in the subculture I was entering. I was doing research, taking the pictures and recording them in my memory. This is the order of my memory, not in sequence, but as I recall my life it supplements orders of another.

I was never in a position to feel any kind of withdrawal but I felt the beginnings once when I was sitting in the Lux Theatre and I did not like it one bit. I sat in this theatre when there was no one around to talk to, or I did not want to play any part. I was sitting watching a movie and could not sit still. My nose was running and my eyes hurt when the screen flickered and it flickered a lot through my body. I kept moving, trying to find a comfortable position. It was like my insides were growing and my skin did not want to grow with it. I finally left and

went to the New Zenith Café. I bumped into a friend of mine who I met when I did three months in Oakalla Prison for my first possession of heroin. Her name was Vonne³¹ and she was a rather large Indian woman in stature and in conscience. But that too is another story. She called me over to her booth and asked how I was. I said, "I think I have the flu." She laughed from her belly loud and long. I said, "What?" Vonne was a woman who used once in a while, usually if another addict bought the heroin. But that day she asked, "Do you have score dough?" I said, "Yes." I bought a capsule of heroin and we went to her hotel room over on the next block of Cordova Street. She prepared it and fixed me first. The aches left, the insides that had been growing out of proportion eased, my nose stopped running and became itchy instead. There was a relief that flooded every cell of my body when the heroin found its way through my veins to my whole body. She said, "I think you have a chippy habit." As much as I thought I had found a community, I did not want to be shoehorned into another category. I did not want to be wired to heroin. I did not want to need it. I did not want to have to depend on anyone to get it, the heroin, for me. In that moment I made a promise to myself that I would not be sick if I could help it.

Because the DTES addict economy is officially illegal, anything addicts do is not subject to binding contracts and they can get arrested and shut down anytime. Heroin costs money, so a woman addict has a few choices. I was infatuated with the women who made their money catering to men's sexual

³¹ Pseudonym.

needs. They exuded class in their attitude, their clothes, their hairstyles and their business acumen. I noticed that many of these women could talk the money out of the wallets of the men they met, without taking their clothes off. Rather than giving any of the expected services and sex to them, money would be exchanged and no crime was committed. Their strut as they walked into an environment and their echo as they exited the same place. It was an art to watch. They left a part of themselves resounding and scalding my brain. They were a symbol that caught my attention whenever they were close and they flirted incessantly and asked if I wanted to go home with them because they would look after me. Enticing, but I was young, I was a lesbian and they knew. Many of these women had been addicted to heroin for many years, in some instances as long as I was alive. They had been arrested for Vag C³² (now known as Soliciting Section 195) done time and been exactly where I was. In the middle of the beginning!

Other women were at the doors when the stores opened in Vancouver and were very adept at lifting or 'boosting' the merchandise without paying for it. Now I am speaking of expensive articles that were sold to middlemen, men at the Western Sports Club that catered to lawyers, policemen and men who made their money playing cards. This club was between the Plaza Café and the New Zenith Café. Some of the orders were placed the day or night before. The women that

³² In 1972 section 175 (1), commonly referred to as Vag. C and in place since 1867 was repealed and replaced by a soliciting offence 195 (1), "Every person who solicits any person in a public place for a purpose of prostitution is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction." This meant a woman could get six months in jail.

worked the area as prostitutes placed many of the orders. There was an abundance of new to replace old. The women whose job it was to lift merchandise were able to blend in with the 'other' public so their outside melded with the inside. It was a job they worked until the stores closed and then they would call it a day. The charges in that day were Theft Over \$50 and as I peruse my record I see that Theft Over \$200 was repealed and replaced with Theft Under \$1,000 and today it has been replaced with Theft Under and over \$5,000. I used to meet a woman who had many charges of theft and eventually she had so many that the courts sent her to Kingston Penitentiary for two years and this certainly stopped her thieving but she went on to crimes that would not send her to jail.

Then there were the female traffickers; the women who maintained their heroin habits by selling their own product. This was a group of women I was to be linked with in two instances, in jail and on the street. To back up a bit, there were women who were partners of male traffickers. The women would sit in the booths with their male partners. I remember a couple who sat daily in the New Zenith Café and the woman would buy 'bombers' on the sly and by the time she ingested them, her male partner was livid. He stormed around the café promising to personally kick whoever had sold the pills to his lady friend. This happened not once but many times.

Most addicts, at one time or another could afford to buy in bulk but would end up consuming the drugs for their personal use. The women who worked the

streets, the beer parlours, clubs and other places were able to make enough money to buy bulk and be individual and separate from the street. The law was very clear in its language of trafficking in heroin in these days. The history of containment and incarceration are written in the records of many women that I would come to know. The street became three because Granville Street and Gastown were oasis but I am speaking of Hastings Street so I will remain here or there.

First, I had the money to buy ten caps. The price in 1968-1972 was eight dollars per cap for any quantity of ten or over. The process began with talking to the individual I usually bought my heroin from. He introduced me to the middleman who buys in quantity, an ounce or more of heroin.³³ The middleman cut the heroin with milk sugar (usually) and – or Epsom salts for a heat – rush when injected into the body system. He obtained number five gelatin capsules from a drug store and filled each capsule with the grains of heroin. He then separated the capsules into twenty-five cap lots and put them into a balloon with a bit of baby powder to keep the individual caps apart. Depending on his position, he would hire other people to do this and paid them either with money or drugs. And this was a big job so the money was five thousand dollars in some instances. The price at that time was two hundred dollars a bundle. This was the

³³ Vancouver Sun. May 18, 1971. "Undercover agents bring drug roundup. (An ounce of heroin when diluted with milk sugar and capped for street sales is sold in 400-capsule lots at \$2,200 on the illicit market. Peddlers then sell individual capsules for \$15 each, bringing the potential value for 400 capsules to \$6,000)."

usual quantity a pusher bought in Vancouver and sometimes as many as two bundles (50 capsules).

Because I was only buying ten caps, the trafficker did it happily because it made him useful to the middleman for introducing new heroin addict customers and I would not be any kind of competition for him. We agreed to have different times at the 'Corner:' Hastings Street and Columbia Street. When I became a seasoned pusher of heroin I made it to the old Traveller's Hotel in Gastown that I will write about after the next event.

The product in those days, 1968-1972, was maintained by a good business sense, a type of quality control. It was a field of economic viability that encompassed who had the best product, who would sell it and be available at any specific time, and if the product remained at the acceptable level of consumership. If the heroin was one degree off, the customer would not be back and the word would get around that the heroin you sold was not good. The news pipeline in the DTES is one of the fastest moving communication sources anywhere I have been. I was using a half capsule of heroin to wake up, and the other half before I went to work to put it out.

After I had picked up my ten capsules I went downtown to put the heroin out at fifteen dollars a piece. When I sold eight caps I went to pick up ten more and called it a day, I would treat myself to a whole cap when I got home. The heroin in those days was potent. I heard the expression, "that if God made

something better than heroin, He kept it for Himself.” It was a ritual, it kept me from any kind of withdrawal, and it was all the company I needed. It was a long day and this was my time. I remember the preparation, the smell of the sulphur, the scent of the heroin heating and the introduction of product into my body. It was a relationship that I became immersed, entrenched and totally integrated into. I was in a position when I did not ever need to feel withdrawal symptoms. I kept turning the original ten caps into another ten caps. I had money left over to take a taxi to the place I lived and then to the downtown area to sell my product, heroin. And home was various places. I had not moved into the DTES yet but I was spending more and more of my life there and my time also.

In the beginning it was pure luck that I did not get arrested for trafficking. After injecting heroin I was still getting violently sick. There were many doorways that I left my breakfast in; many alleys I left with my upchuck beer or pop and when I closed the balloon and put it back in my mouth, the taste of baby powder sent me back to the same doorway. In fact, the taste of the balloon itself and its rubber outside taste would make me gag. There were many episodes of throwing up but it was the times in between that I remember. It took me to a place of secure and safe horizons. I could talk to anyone. I felt warm, always warm and at ease, always at ease except when I was throwing up and eventually that would ease out.

Eventually I was able to score twenty-five capsules. I met a man from Alert Bay, where I was born, and who was a friend of my father. After the business of

waiting, waiting and being directed where to pick up we began to speak to each other. We picked up from the same middleman. He asked me where I was going to fix and I said up on Kingsway. We went to his house, or his mother's house, in the West End on Alberni Street. He opened the door and we were about to go up the stairs when his mother came to meet us. She recognised me as belonging to a Kwakwaka'wakw family and asked Evan³⁴ that my name was. He said, "Myrna Cranmer." And a look of astonishment and shock crowded her face. "And what are you doing?" she asked. "Just going upstairs." Evan replied. He was doing what most people do when they do not want to answer a direct question. And what most of the same people do when they come face to face with a truth they are not sure of, and they do not even want to think that there has to be an answer. His mother was as tall as he was and had been in this position before. She knew what people did upstairs. The question was a rhetorical one. We continued up the stairs and went to his room. He put a butter knife in the space between the door jam and the door to make it more secure, and keep anyone out, and tonight it was his mother.

We hovered over the spoons, and the rest of the paraphernalia. We each undid our balloons and took out a single capsule of heroin and retied them. It was late in the day so I prepared a whole cap. We stood close together; crowding out any unwanted air that would interrupt the flame of the matches, and close in case the other did anything to impede the ritual. After we were both finished with our

³⁴ Pseudonym.

separateness, the individual cleansing of spoons and syringes, emptying the water, flushing the tissues that cleaned the blackened spoon, we fell onto his bed. We lit cigarettes, relieved and secure that it was okay to relax. We nodded in and out of each other's reality. In between and from the edges of my high, I asked him what his mother said in Kwakwa'la? Being more at ease and not in front of his mother, he replied, "She knows who you are. She remembers you as a baby, a little girl. She is just shaking her head at where you are now." One of the things that really became scalded on my brain was when he said, "Your father would kill me if he saw us!" I left that remark hanging in the cigarette smoke as it wafted to the ceiling and gave it no importance because it was not. In hindsight, I would now say, "You are lucky my mother does not see us."

Evan and I began to pick up together. One batch of heroin made me sicker than usual. He remarked that this was cut with strychnine. Patricia³⁵ his mother became quite worried because I would throw up constantly and was losing weight. It was falling off in layers; like everytime I threw up, a piece of me would be attached. Eventually I just stayed at Evan's place. I was sick with the heroin and sicker without it. I had to fix in the bathroom next to the toilet because as soon as the injected heroin hit my stomach, up everything would come and even parts of me that weren't supposed to in various shades of yellow bile and foamy spit. His mother became very vocal in Kwakwa'la and I recognised the

³⁵ Pseudonym.

urgency even if I could not understand the words. He became concerned and said, "You are going to the methadone clinic." And for once there was not much fury at being told what to do. I gave him what was left of my drugs and he said he would fix me until I got on methadone. His mother insisted I live there and I felt quite welcome and safe. Because he was more afraid of his mother than me, I got my own room and he later got a girlfriend as I did. But that is another story.

It was August of 1970 and the methadone clinic had gone through some significant changes since Alex was on the methadone pills. The clinic was on Broadway and Cypress. First there is the preliminary interview, and then seven days of leaving a urine specimen. One of the most important measurements is the amount of heroin that showed up in the analysis of your urine. This qualified for how much methadone the government institution gave you. After seven days, I received my first cup of orange juice and methadone. Methadone is a drug, a plastic drug, because it is manmade. It is a synthetic narcotic and its effects usually took twenty to thirty minutes to be absorbed by my body. There was a restaurant around the corner on Broadway that most of the addicts went after the required urine test and the drinking of their juice. I was never sure if the benefits of coffee or a hot beverage after drinking the juice was a myth but it was a social drug, as I came to know. As I sat in the café drinking coffee I felt a warmth I would remember always. I did not shoot any heroin that morning so I was a little sick. The drug enveloped me in a cloak of feel – goodness and it came in degrees and as it heightened I thought that this was okay. It was slower but more

intense. It took away the beginning aches, sniffles and ended with a peace I would look forward to every morning. It completed me, and the bonus was I did not get sick. I soared and mellowed out. The interesting thing is that it was a thing that happened in unison. All the addicts melted into their seats and the effects – affects were like but unlike heroin. Methadone has a holding power of twenty-four hours.

I went there every day to leave a urine specimen and drink my daily dose of methadone. I went back to the Vanport Hotel. The excitement was not there and I eventually returned to the 'Corner.' In looking at my criminal record I find that I was on methadone for almost two years. Because I was on methadone I did not use heroin exclusively anymore. I found that with the amount of methadone I was taking the heroin did not have any effect – affect. It was a maintenance drug with a very subtle form of regulation, and I maintained the habit until I finally went to court on my second possession of heroin. I briefly touch on this particular incident with the methadone clinic because it would significantly affect my life for many years.

I became business – involved with a woman who I met at the Vanport Hotel through her girlfriend who was putting out heroin. I was not receiving welfare and was not working in any legal or illegal job. So it made sense that I did what I did because I was experienced at it. I would sell heroin. We moved to a hotel that was part of a church on Pender Street and paid our rent daily from our revenue from putting out heroin. In the morning I would leave to pick up my

methadone and come back to help her put out the heroin in the DTES. We had our regular customers and we sold only to people we knew and I was beginning to be a familiar face and a recognised one both by the addicts and the police.

I finally went to court April 4th, 1972 for my second possession of heroin charge (Possession of a Narcotic. Section 3 [1] Narcotic Control Act). The courts opened early. I did not go and pick up my methadone and asked the woman I was trafficking with if I could have a capsule of heroin. She said no and I went to court. The judge sentenced me to two months in Oakalla Prison and two more years of probation. Because I was a drug addict I was put in the individual cells on the other side of the big holding cell. There is a metal toilet, a metal sink and a mattress on a steel bed. There are bars and during the day the cells are left open. Many women have had the beginnings of withdrawals in these cells.

I had never experienced any kind of withdrawal in my first jail sentence almost two years before on April 23, 1970. I had never been without methadone for long and I was aware of the physical pains associated with withdrawal, and would go and pick it up. Now I was behind bars and sentenced to two months. I could not leave. I was stuck and I was getting sick. An addict prisoner is kept apart from the general population even in the city cells. The day passed very slowly. I would not go to Oakalla Prison until the next day because my papers were not ready. When a judge sentences a prisoner to jail the sentence has to be processed through various offices and because the prisoner is going nowhere

the process can be very slow. The cell I was in got very small. And it was shrinking as my skin was.

An interesting phenomenon of methadone is it gets into your bones and seeps through every part of your body. My body was inundated with it and my body was also addicted to it. And it had not had its daily dosage and was clamouring for it. Since there was no way I would receive any, the withdrawal became intense. Methadone is not the same as heroin, and I was to find out very soon and would not have any peace for the sentence of two months of which I would serve one third. Time became the enemy and I counted twenty days to the end of my sentence.

Methadone has a withdrawal that is silent and invisible. My insides were in turmoil. I could not lay still. The rubber mattress bothered me. My clothes bothered me. Anything touching my skin sent tremors through me. My bones hurt. My teeth hurt and this was only a few hours after I had been admitted to the cells. When the policewoman came to check on me I asked if there was anything she could give me for withdrawal from methadone. She said no that I would have to wait until I went to Oakalla Prison but if it got any worse she could give me a Valium in four hours. Since time was my prison I tossed and turned on the steel bed. Cigarettes became my drug, as it was the only available one. I inhaled like the nicotine would suffice, and of course it did not. In four hours the policewoman gave me a Valium. I tried to make this little blue pill appear to do something. My body repelled and rebelled and I could almost hear it scream as it received such

an insignificant amount of drug. Supper came, and went and the night had not even begun and my life was coming undone. My physical body was in silent agony screaming from the inside out to be let out, to be eased, and to be quieted. After another four hours I was given another Valium. This was to be the last one. It was not enough.

This began one of the longest sleepless nights of this particular methadone habit and in total it was nineteen days before I would be introduced to sleep again. Having all this time and all this quiet pain, I thought about the woman who had refused me a capsule of heroin. I thought about my being stupid and not opening the doors of the methadone clinic before court. I had so much time to think because I did not sleep and was in no danger of ever achieving shuteye for many, many days. One of the places I found that had no give was the floor. It was cement but it gave my body a point where the pain could be stopped and then turned inward again. I did not sleep. I eventually went to Oakalla. I saw the doctor and he gave me sleeping medication for a week. Now as I have stated methadone is a silent, invisible withdrawal unlike heroin withdrawal. I did not throw up or have diarrhea and the only similar symptom was no sleep. I was moved to Group Seven and housed with another woman.

I will describe the layout of housing in Oakalla. Every woman who enters is kept in Group Six, that is the hospital or holding wing of jail. Then she is interviewed by a woman in classification and moved to a group where she is housed for her sentence. There is a group that many of the old timers went to.

That was Group Four and another one where young prisoners go that was Group Eight. Group Seven was a group where a woman was held if she was not quite a recidivist but in danger of being one.

I knew some of the women from the street and from my last trip to Oakalla. Risa³⁶ was an old hype and she had never been addicted to methadone but she suggested hot baths. I lived in the bathtub with hot water. As soon as the doors opened in the morning I could be found in the back room where the bathtubs were. Our room or cell faced the rock garden, which was an enclosed area where the female prisoners could go after work and suntan or just get out in the air. I would become familiar with this enclosure because I did not sleep and came to know every tree and every barb in the wire that topped the fences which helped in later years when I entered the same rock garden to pay an illegal visit to a girlfriend. The birds awakened early and I was jealous that they had had some sleep. I became a friend with the floor, which was tiled and waxed within an inch of its life. This was reminiscent of the residential school but that too is another story. I came to know the night staff that checked the prisoners every hour on the hour at night. When they shone their flashlights in the little hole on the door I would wave. The Sundays were hell as we were locked for an extra hour. I got to know the women and we spoke of what we would do as soon as we were released. I was going to fix some heroin and sleep for a few days.

³⁶ Pseudonym.

Another phenomenon of jail is the ability to get drugs inside. There was a Chinese woman in Group Seven and she had a partner on the outside. After we were unlocked from afternoon count she came to my cell. She had received some heroin in her mail and she knew that I was sick and had not slept for many nights. In those days I have mentioned the heroin was quite strong. (A story that circulated in the early days was the narcotic squad kicked in a bathroom door and could only confiscate the Kleenex used to wipe the blood from the injection site in the crook of the elbow. This evidence was taken and analysed and there was enough of the heroin to incriminate the suspect.) She cooked the heroin and drew it up in a syringe when she received her mail. She came to my room and gave me ten milligrams and gave my roommate ten milligrams also. She was able to fix six women with what she got in the mail. This was all from one syringe and she skin – popped us all. This time I felt the heroin introduce itself to my sleepless body and as it coursed through my hungry body with just enough pain reliever to quiet and soothe my bones, my muscles, my heart I knew it was going to be alright. I was up until lock up and then fell onto the mattress and covered my body with the hospital hole – ventilated blanket. I had one last cigarette and talked with Risa until I felt sleep, the stranger, knocking me down. It was the right thing to do. I closed my eyes and woke not to the birds but the key opening the room or cell. I had slept and the guards – matrons knew that I had. This was my second last day in jail. I did not mind staying awake with the rock garden. I knew that I would be downtown in the early morning next, to buy some heroin and continue my life as an addict. Most people would not return to the place that had

infringed on their sleep. I could not wait and I could not wait to give the woman who refused me a piece of my mind and my mind was in one piece now. When I did see her, she was unwashed, she was staggering from barbiturates and she was sick. This was enough to see and I did not have to be vindictive or payback. But she asked me if I could fix her and I said no.

On my release from prison I returned to what I knew best. I got out in the summer of 1972 and it seems my life was on fast – forward. So many things happened in the space of a few months. I partied to make up the time I had spent in jail and was very aware of sleep because I had lost so many hours. The price of heroin had skyrocketed from \$15 to \$35. I am not sure of the exact time but it was around 1972 and when I got out of jail it was \$35.

In those days I returned to trafficking in heroin and went back to the Traveler's Hotel³⁷ in Gastown and it was strongly suggested to me that I sell my product at the new price. I would sit in the hotel and put out my heroin. Since I was using my own product it was substantial in its quality but as the price had gone up the quality had gone down. I was using one and a half capsules instead of the usual half. Many events outside the DTES were causing dilemmas. The

³⁷ Vancouver Sun, July 23, 1971. "Pushers of both heroin and the softer drugs function openly in half a dozen beer parlours in the Gastown area of Vancouver." The city council at that time wanted to shut down the whole of Gastown."

Vietnam War was ending and this was creating shortages.³⁸ There were newspaper articles naming many reasons for the new price of heroin.³⁹

Another consequence of selling drugs came when I was arrested for trafficking in a narcotic (Trafficking in a Narcotic Section 4 [1] Narcotic Control Act). Life was happening to me and I went where the drugs were. After looking at my criminal record I find that in a very small space of time I was arrested twice, once for trafficking and another time, for robbery all in the time frame of months after getting out of jail. I was becoming a retread to the city jail commonly referred to as the city bucket. I was becoming very familiar with the court system, the bail system and waiting, always waiting to be released to get to heroin again. My world was shrinking and I was now living with various partners in crime. I was too well known to the narcotics officers, too well known to the city police and by reputation to the core of addicts. I was not always putting out heroin and turned to other crimes. There is so much and I will only tell of significant events.

I was arrested and taken to jail for the trafficking. I missed the roundup

³⁸ Montreal Star. November 18, 1971. "In fact, oriental white is gaining popularity throughout Canada and the United States, largely as a result of the influence on the illicit market of American soldiers returning from Vietnam."

February 12 1972. Montreal Star. "Lately pink or purplish heroin suspected of being brought into the US by troops returning from Vietnam is showing up in Vancouver."

³⁹ Province. May 5, 1973. "The street price of heroin has gone up in Vancouver because drug dealers are having difficulty buying gelatin capsules used for packaging the narcotic. Drugstores are becoming more reluctant to sell qualities of the capsules, primarily used for packaging dosages of many illegal drugs, without knowing what the buyer will be using them for. "In the instances following this the plain gelatin capsule was replaced with the pink and white capsule used for Benadryl. The capping process would require the Benadryl capsules be emptied and then filled with the heroin."

that occurred a few months after I had been released in the May of 1972. A roundup in 1972 consisted of undercover policemen posing as addicts and buying drugs. A roundup would consist of at least a hundred arrests and when the roundup occurred there were many arrests, and a shortage of heroin. Stoddart comments on this in his dissertation, "Canadian law enforcement officials are permitted to use entrapment procedures to gather incriminating evidence" (Stoddart 1968:5). I had trafficked in the Traveler's Hotel and to the best of my recollection I was now gallivanting on Granville Street and living with an aunt on 35th and Victoria but that is another story. I had stopped trafficking in heroin and now began to enter life as a heroin addict looking for the next fix, to keep from being sick. It had its consequences. I began to do what I had seen other women do and not well as seen in the next paragraphs.

I was not a willing prostitute and took short cuts. So I was also arrested on a robbery charge while I was out on bail for trafficking. And because I was already out on bail, I was kept in custody for the robbery. Now it was a game of waiting and waiting. But because I finally came to be cognisant of the court procedure I was able to find a lawyer who had just passed his bar exams. Now I was still of the belief that when I was guilty I would plead as such. I assumed that I knew of the court system but I did not have all the information. A guilty plea is easier for the court system because it takes no valuable time; it is in and out and done, over. But when I got this new lawyer through Legal Aid he informed me that a court has to prove your guilt beyond a shadow of a doubt. Now there are a

lot of shadows and I found that out when I pled not guilty to the robbery charge. It was dropped to Theft under \$200 (Section 294 [B] CC) and I was given nine months. I was also charged with a Soliciting (Section 195 [1] CC) charge and given one month consecutive but that is too long a story for this writing. I received this sentence September 9, 1972.

At this particular time many events were happening. Women were receiving federal penitentiary time if sentenced to more than two years, and were waiting for their papers to fly east to Kingston Prison for Women. An older woman decided that since I was going to go to court on a trafficking charge I would also get penitentiary time and she would show me the ropes back east. She had received twelve years for selling one capsule of heroin. Other women were receiving ten and eight years or trafficking in heroin. Now as comfortable as I was with this idea I had a lawyer who was just whetting and honing his craft in court. So many untold stories, but back to the court case and my new mouthpiece as lawyers were called.

On the morning of October 31, 1972 I went from Oakalla lockup on the long and bumpy ride in the police wagon to the city jails. I went to the cells and waited my turn for court. I had learned of due process only recently and had no idea how my pleading not guilty would turn out. I was handcuffed and led to the courtroom. I was unhandcuffed as I was led to the table in front of the high position of the court reporter, the witness box to my upper far right and the prosecutor to my right at the same table but separate from my lawyer and me.

Very explicit borders. My lawyer was excited and I appeared as aloof and unconcerned as I could be. I sat and listened to my lawyer as he told me what I would be doing. The audience was there. There were the official people in their places and we all stood as the robed judge entered. The charge was read and I pled not guilty. The process began. The first and only witness took his place in the witness box. I did not recognise the undercover policeman I was alleged to have sold to in the Traveller's Hotel. The prosecutor stood in a makeshift box also to my left and as he wended his way from my right to the left I began to feel some trepidation. The questions started and the policeman described the place, and it was the Traveler's Hotel and it was my table against the wall. The prosecutor's job is to question and get the witness to describe the events of the day and the precise hour of the day. He described of the money passing from his hand to mine and the product, heroin, being passed. This sounded like the doomsday oration of my downfall and guilt, and I could imagine Kingston Penitentiary. Now the courtroom began to become lively and yet it was slow motion from where I sat. The judge asked the prosecutor if he had asked all his questions and my lawyer appeared quiet yet fidgety, and I say appeared because he had his head down and was waiting, waiting for the drama that was occurring in front of us. The judge asked the prosecutor more than twice to look at his notes and again if there were any more questions. The prosecutor was to my left side and the witness was to my right sight. It seemed the witness, the undercover policeman wanted to reach across and show the prosecutor the page and the lines he should be looking at. Finally and finally seemed like a long time waiting,

waiting because the judge finally stopped and the prosecutor sat down after he gathered his papers and ended his questions. He sheepishly sat and put his head down as my lawyer finally got to his feet with a flourish and made his presence known. He made a request that the charges be dropped and as my jaw dropped he made his case. The officer did not identify me as the person who sold the heroin to him that day, that hour in the Traveler's Hotel. The prosecutor had led him through the whole process and failed to ask the next question, the one that the judge knew he forgot to ask, whether the person was in the courtroom. The judge banged his gavel and pronounced the charges dropped. I had no idea of what had just happened but I heard the pronouncement. I was not going to the pen but I was still going to do the ten months in Oakalla.

I returned to the jail cells and was happy but not quite as excited as my new lawyer. The trial was late and I had to stay in Vancouver cells over night and would return to Oakalla in the morning when my papers were processed. I went back to the big dorm part of the cells as I was from Oakalla and not an addict waiting bail or charges. When I returned a woman had been arrested and she had some heroin but no one had any 'outfits' (syringes). She gave the five women who were there each a capsule of heroin and we held onto it still with the problem of no syringes and no way of effecting – affecting the product into our bodies. One of the women heard that if we put it under our tongues it would be close to the huge veins under there and be absorbed and when the heroin dissolved the excess would go through our body. So that is what we did and it

was not quite as effective – affective as a point right into our veins but it worked and we had the whole night to wait and endure the procession of drunks, of new prisoners and old prisoners.

The jail pipeline is faster than most new – fangled communication in that day and most probably today. The prison population knew that I had won my case in court. Oakalla was a respite from the street and I was getting healthy again. Now I was to do ten long months and the next item on my agenda was how to resolve this problem, of doing this time. I did by getting in touch with my uncle, John Webster, the parole officer. He became my parole officer and came to the gates of Oakalla Women's Jail to escort me from the prison in a beige Cadillac, on February 2, 1973. This massaged my already too large ego.

I have never been a person to follow any sort of rule and I was to return to jail and finish the ten months I had been sentenced to for theft and soliciting. The parole stretched out longer than the original ten months and I was to return to Oakalla another time before I finally realised that the only way to get it over with was to do the time.

When I was released from jail I returned to heroin. By this time it took more than a half a capsule of heroin to get any kind of sensation of completeness or sameness like the first fix of heroin. I began in between visits to the 'Corner' and wherever home was at the time to fix one capsule of heroin and the mode of insertion was different. Now it was injection into the vein. I became very adept at

the ritual that introduced me to solitariness, to self and to aloneness. The act of sharing was replaced with the individual and the cohesiveness and solidarity because of the poor quality of the heroin. New drugs were introduced to enhance the heroin. I began to take Valium and took this drug off and on for twenty-seven years, more on than off. My arms were becoming indicative of a heroin addict. The inside of my right elbow with defining 'tracks,' needle marks and one of the only ways anyone could tell if I had injected heroin was to look at my eyes which would be pinned.

This was my life for the years from 1968-1972. I became a heroin addict, I became a lesbian, I became a registered methadone user, I became recidivist to jail and I unmade and squashed any dreams I ever had. I thought I would die in the DTES, I thought I would be on welfare which was a phenomenon that occurred in the years after these ones. That is another story and this was the end of this part of my life. I was to stay addicted to one drug or another for the next twenty-two years and graduate to more serious crimes. I have seen the DTES go from community to individualism. I have seen different cultures introduce other drugs. I have seen the law change as the drugs changed. I have seen many of my friends die, and I turned right in the middle, and left.

CHAPTER 5: HYPHEN MOVING BETWEEN DIS – GUISE.

This autoethnography has been a way to authenticate myself, to myself. My narrative was to locate myself in and on the landscapes of my life. The beginning of my life in 1968 was exciting. Some of the memories and the theoretical positions were in transit, and always edited. In the chapters I had to locate myself and edit some of the memories in a more sequential order. I found I did not speak of many things because I wanted to 'fumigate' and 'make it safe and sterile.' But in order for it me to fit I recorded the 'unsafe' memories. There were no betweens; no boundaries that could not be negotiated, and now no life memories that needed to be distilled and I make my life public.

This has been my voice and 'I – witnessed.' I have given voice to an excluded self, the heroin addict. It is only my experience. This has been a construction of my order (nature) and my disorder (culture). This is the obvious, in black and white, and I trust that it has a sense of verisimilitude. Finally, I become the hyphen — which makes my position solid between changing names of phenomenon and self. I included the now – written experiences of a heroin addict in 1968-1972. I intended to make the unfamiliar familiar, and one of my guises has been exposed. I become a part rather apart of anthropology.

Now I am gone from the street. I no longer need to be there but I wander still and look at the empty buildings that used to house the New Zenith Café (105 East Hastings) and the Plaza Café (151 East Hastings). The New Zenith Café has become vacant and empty. The Plaza Café has become another place to buy pizza and pop. I wonder where the people have gone. I know some of them have died, many of them have died. The some of sums is quite extensive. The 100 block Hastings has become a site of evicted and rejected people yet someone has forgotten to tell anyone. The Broadway Hotel (103 East Hastings) has become the Sunrise Hotel bought and owned by the Portland Hotel Society. Up the street where I first 'skin – popped' heroin at the Washington Hotel (177 East Hastings), it has become a residence also, owned by the Portland Hotel Society. The Western Sports Club (137 East Hastings) has become apartments and the downstairs that used to be a barbershop and shoeshine place (139 East Hastings), has become the official office of the Safe Injection Site. Across the street, the Portland Hotel Society has bought the Roosevelt Hotel (166 East Hastings) and the downstairs has become one of the many health centres now constructed the DTES. In between the churches, the health places, the empty spaces, the organisations are the people, the addicts, the mental patients deinstitutionalized from Riverview in the 1970's, the new refugees and the old loggers, the old veterans and the new, young addicts.

The time changes but the problems re – invent themselves with new names, new drugs and new solutions. This is not a new phenomenon because

there is abundant evidence in the newspaper articles that this has been and continues. The street is disguised in different clothes but still the same.

I recall a street shining with neon signs that was alluring as well as luring. This was a site of danger tinged with excitement. This was my street. There was the Kit Kat Club on the left – hand side and the Smiling Buddha (109 East Hastings) on the right – hand side. There was the Montreal Club (between 159 and 165 East Hastings) that catered to the gay and lesbian populace. On the same side of the street as the police station on Main Street was the West Coast Club, now replaced by the Bruce Erikson Building. It offered respite to lawyers, pimps, drug middlemen, fishermen, loggers and the class of women who sold their bodies for cash or just went to relax and get off the street. Everything was connected in those days. The lights offered warmth and companionship. The doors to the bars and the restaurants offered entrance into another world. In the next block I could go to a movie in the middle of the day to get away. The Lux Theatre is evident now only by a few of its past tiles on a vacant lot.

Now there is empty, vacant space that is filled up with memories. There are two types of bars on both blocks. Steel bars to protect the merchandise on the other side of dirty windows and the other bars the Regent Hotel (160 East Hastings), the Balmoral Hotel (1159 East Hastings), and the New Empire (122 East Hastings), which has become the Brandiz Hotel. The other block offers beer from the Dodson Hotel (25 East Hastings) and the Pennsylvania, which was the Rogers Hotel on the corner of Carrall and Hastings, and around the corner is the

West Hotel (488 Carrall). I have gone back to remind myself where Alex and I first climbed the stairs to introduce me to this world. I am convinced that it was on the same block as the Dodson Hotel and was either at 9 or 41 East Hastings that was replaced by China Arts and Crafts store. Today my street is dirty, empty, and the alleys are strewn with cast – off syringes. They reek of urine because most of the places with bathrooms will not allow addicts to use their facilities (usually with good reason), and there are people who are like bomber pilots (people who took barbiturates), sloppy, dirty, scabby, unclean and incoherent. The connection is between the unshowered, the unhealthy, the unfed, the unhoused and the unruly and the care continuum that flourishes in the DTES. The care continuum as stated by Randy Stoecker (1996) “the terrible paradox of thriving organisations and a dying community.” And today it is echoed by Sommers and Blomley (2002), “claiming that the level of services has created a ‘service-dependent ghetto”(25). The DTES has become a parasitical system, or maybe it always has been and I was cloaked with a heroin – insulated perception.

When I became a learner in 1968-1972, I was welcomed and the sharing of resources, the sharing of paraphernalia was prevalent, the sharing of living space, the ritual was embedded without any force except the force of belonging to this particular group. There was an implied hierarchy in the DTES. There was no formal degree of government and there was no specified leader or spokesman – woman. There was a cohesiveness and congruity in the community that was enforced by the implicit and explicit laws of the street. The community

used to work and the activities were two – fold, the concept of safety and the realisation that this area was home. Today and yesterday, the newspapers are and were rife with “...negative images (crime, violence, welfare dependency, drugs, vacant land and buildings) that often convey part of the truth about the actual conditions of a troubled community. But they are not regarded as part of the truth but the whole truth” (Kretzman and McKnight 1993:2). There were dangers of overdosing, dangers of arrest, and an implied danger of society’s perception of an area where only the ‘dregs’ of society gravitate. These dangers existed in my day, they were mediated by the knowledge of how not to overdose, how not to be arrested. Society’s perception did not take up any space in the minds and hearts of heroin addicts in 1968-1972. This is spoken of today but in the years of 1969-1972 the same dialogue was happening but that itself is another paper. The problems are different but are separated by years and have evolved into like – ones and spoken to in – like – discussions. This is my truth, partial, delimited.

I have added another voice to the reams of literature coming out of the DTES. The lived life of a heroin addict between the years of 1968-1972 prepared me for the next years. The years where I was enclosed in one square block, the years that were to add experience, and years of lived knowledge of a media – interpreted life and of a law – encrusted existence. A heroin addiction that would eventually take me to places I never imagined, serious crimes that were dealt with due process and finally after twenty-seven years, I left.

I have used various drugs like heroin, methadone, Valium, Fiorinal, and cocaine and a cocktail of many of the ones mentioned and some I cannot spell. And sometimes I took too much and overdosed, and sometimes when I mixed Valium and alcohol or barbiturates, my mind became blank. All this means is I had no memory of the actions that followed, but I recalled the taking and eventual coming to or consciousness. Many would say and have said that my recall is in question and unreliable. But I speak of events that happened while I was doing illegal drugs, and legal drugs. I did drugs for twenty-seven years and they had adverse effects such as withdrawal from them all, such as seizures from benzodiazepams and Fiorinal, or from lack of them. I have had only one hospital stay when my blood became poisoned from the injection of cocaine, and have the scar where they attempted to cut the infection out. I do not have Hepatitis C or HIV. Looking at the time frame of my life, I concede that I have been high from some sort of drug, longer than I have been straight.

I left and have not touched a drug for over nine years. I returned to school in 1995 when most of the drugs had left my system. Because I had ingested Valium, along with a variety of other drugs, for almost twenty-years this was the withdrawal that left me wondering if I would ever be 'normal.' Its residue stayed in my system for many months after I withdrew from the heroin. I could not maintain a thought, and thought I had finally destroyed any kind of sanity I had. I received my General Education Development Diploma in 1997. I went to jobSTART; a pre – employment program and recall being asked what I wanted to be? I said a

professional student. After the program ended, I attended Langara College and then transferred to the University of British Columbia. After my interview at the Anthropology and Sociology Department, I walked from the bus to the department that is down towards the mountains. I had reached another juncture in my life. This was a place I had only dreamed of and I was becoming, rather than being. I graduated in 2001. I dressed in a cap and gown. While I was at UBC I began to work, something I had never done before; with a research team from Simon Fraser University as a researcher of women in the DTES, and a participant of that same research. I returned to jobSTART and worked as an instructor of English and Literature. I have also written for a pardon.

Anthropology has always piqued my interest and it was not until I came to the hallowed halls of academia that this was where I wanted to be. But I did not want to do the Indian phenomenon; I wanted to investigate the life of a heroin addict, me. I believed that there was a chemical solution to my position, my situation and now I know that an education is one of the solutions to make my life and the vehicle to broaden my horizons. This has been my guise, a short distance, but anthropology,

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