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Rites of passage among reentry women: From the perspective of adult education

Redding, Nancy P., Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1990

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RITES OF PASSAGE AMONG REENTRY WOMEN:
FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ADULT EDUCATION

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Nancy P. Redding, B.S., M.Ed.

*****

The Ohio State University, 1990

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For Tom, Anne, and May

who are my family and friends
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Chapter I

The Problem

Introduction

A reentry woman who is both spouse and mother undergoes a passage in role and status as she seeks a bachelor's degree. Typically in contemporary society significant changes are marked by ceremonies, affirmations and frequently give rise to new taboos, e.g., baby showers, promotions, proliferation of no smoking signs. Such ceremonies and sanctions appear to be missing for the reentry woman who assumes the student role while yet maintaining spousal and maternal roles. In this chapter questions are addressed regarding the ceremonial processes offered by the two significant societies of the reentry woman, viz., family and university, in her passage from the non-degreed status to the degreed. Inquiry into the presence or absence of rites of passage, symbols and taboos among reentry women is worthwhile in itself. It becomes all the more important when the administrators of higher education take cognizance of increasing female enrollment.

The practical purpose of this research is to determine which family actions and which university policies together help or hinder the reentry woman in achieving her goal. The making of these determinations was guided by the insights of educators who have used anthropological approaches and theories.
Thus use was made of qualitative research which gathered information, observations and descriptions from the perspective of reentry women. Subsequent analysis identified such rites of passage, symbols and taboos as appeared to be emergent within the target group. The problem and its elements are presented in this chapter, the precise research questions are identified and the terms explained.

The Problem and Its Elements

American colleges and universities are experiencing an influx of older women students unique in its scope and impact. Similar to the surge of males after World War II this wave of older females presents a fresh set of challenges, problems and opportunities to educational institutions (Boyer & Levine, 1981; Suchinsky, 1982). Nationally more than 55% of all college undergraduate students of whatever age are women (Bureau of the Census of the U.S. Department of Commerce, 1988). Recent research has devoted considerable attention to the impact of the family environment on married women returning to college (Ballmer & Cozby, 1981; Beutell & Greenhaus, 1982; Beutell & O'Hare, 1987; Gilbert, 1982; Hooper, 1979; Kahnweiler & Johnson, 1980; Roehl & Okun, 1984; Scott & King, 1985; Smith, 1980). Higher education has responded with an abundance of programs specifically designed for the returning woman (Holt, 1982; McGraw, 1982; Simpkins & Ray, 1983; Wheaton & Robinson, 1983). Programmatic responses of the colleges or universities have been general with little attention to student status, i.e., undergraduate, graduate
or professional students, nor with distinctions regarding lifestyle, i.e., married, divorced, or single.

In order for the university to continue its historic commitment to providing quality academic and support services for its students, it must examine the interrelationship of institutional and student expectations, particularly among reentry women populations (Blanshan, Burns, Geib, 1984; Tittle & Denker, 1980). A logical approach to this challenge involves a general overview of the reentry female as an adult within society, then focusing upon specific subgroups of women students reentering the educational system.

In the rapidly changing society of the contemporary United States, women are seeking their roles in bringing about that change as well as searching for ways to cope with change. Reentry women have turned to colleges and universities to help meet and take advantage of the new opportunities. The phenomenon of the reentry female is related both to increased prosperity in the general population (Glass & Harshberger, 1974; O'Conner & Aasheim, 1985; Suchinsky, 1982) and decreased prosperity (Scott, 1980; Simpkins & Ray, 1983).

Either analysis is based on materialistic considerations. It is reasonable, therefore, to assume that fresh consumer and investment patterns will develop among female students in purchasing education. Moreover, as taxpayers women students may be looking for a return on their contributions and may complain that they are not receiving a fair share.
Not to be ignored is the increasing competition for students from educational divisions of unions, corporations and private enterprises, making more choices available for the consumer of education (Glass & Harshberger, 1974; O'Connor & Aasheim, 1985; Patterson & Blank, 1985). Advertisements through newspaper, television and radio attest to the competition for enrollees. Anthony P. Carnevale (1986) reported in the January, 1986, Training and Development Journal, "Workplace training and development is roughly equivalent in size to the elementary, secondary, and higher education systems." A second system of education is now well established. Carnevale continues: "There are signs that workplace learning systems will no longer be the silent partner in the nation's learning enterprise." One may choose to debate differences between education and training. For good or for ill, however, North American society has reached a point where industry, business and government have begun to offer what they call "education" within their units.

The traditional role of the university has been to offer a student academic choice and exposure to the spectrum of western culture with emphasis on the student's realization of his/her full potential, body and soul. The intrusion of the profit motive narrows the focus to production of goods and services. With increasing insistence private industry dictates not only the area of study but the very content. The reentry woman in this emerging society is faced with a plethora of choices but often with limited income and time because of her age, financial circumstances and other role demands. If the university
does not address itself to the educational needs of this significant student, others will draw her away (see Time Magazine, February 11, 1985).

Federal guidelines were promulgated in 1970 which extended beyond non-discrimination to requirements for affirmative action. Since that time the academic value of affirmative action as a good in itself has been demonstrated on campuses across the nation (Apps, 1981 Blanshan, et al., 1984; Glass, et al., 1974; Holt, 1982; Lance, Lourie, & May, 1979; Marienau & Chickering, 1982; Menson, 1982; Scott, 1980; Tittle & Denker, 1980). Reentry women challenge colleges to expand their repertoire of academic and support activities so as to meet their needs as a protected class in a pluralistic society.

Only 17% of the American population 25 years of age and older hold a baccalaureate degree (Parnell, 1985). The average adult over the age of 25 in 1980 had 12.3 years of schooling as compared with 9.3 years just one generation ago (Cross, 1982, Golladay, 1977). Cross (1982) suggests that past level of educational attainment may be the single most important predictor of whether a person seeks reentry. If Cross is right, more people will seek reentry, a large portion will be women. Meeting the needs of this major constituency, including growing numbers of married females with children, will enable both the reentry student and the university to make important contributions to society.

The Research Question

A study of the cultural dimensions -- patterns of adjustment, rituals and taboos -- which surround the spouse and mother who is assuming a new role as
student would be quite worthwhile to the institutions of higher learning. It
would offer guidance both in meeting their responsibilities to an important
increasing student population and in answering the challenges presented to
them by the educational divisions of the workplace.

The fundamental question, therefore, is:

What is the nature of rites of passage, symbols and taboos (if any
exist) operant among reentry female students in intact marriages
with children?

The fundamental hypothesis or question necessarily must be approached
through many subsidiary questions:

Do the family members including the subject fear that the adoption of a
new status by the wife/mother will result in the extinction or diminution of her
existing status?

Is there an identifiable subculture among reentry female undergraduate
students emerging?

Are the adjustment attempts of the family and the university giving rise
to phenomena which may be characterized as rites of passage, symbols and	abooos?

Does the subject population pass through stages of adjustment which may
be described as related to separation, liminality, communitas and
incorporation?
University Environment:

What has the reentry student experienced from representatives of the institution in regard to her attempts to combine her role as wife, mother and student?

Has advice and support been offered in her attempts to integrate these roles? By whom? What was it like?

Can she identify rites of passage, symbols or taboos coming from the administration within the university which facilitate or impede her transition?

What has the reentry student experienced from fellow members in her student subculture which support or deter her in her efforts to succeed as a student yet remain a faithful wife and mother?

Have her formal and informal associations with students increased or decreased her sense of isolation?

Have she and her colleagues experienced rites of passage, symbols and taboos in their common transition?

Home Environment:

Do the husband and/or the children support or impede the efforts of the wife and mother to return to higher education and if so how?

Has there been a disinvestment or reinvestment in the former paradigms of spouse and mother? By whom?

Are new norms for combining the role of student with wife and mother being developed?
Do new family rites reflect changes in the relationships among members? Have objects and actions taken on new meanings as symbols of the transition?

Have traditional family taboos been affected and have new taboos taken form as a result of the wife's and mother's reentry?

**Explanation of Terms**

The **subjects** in this study were reentry female students, who had been absent from the formal education system for five or more years, after high school graduation. Age parameters of this research were 23-60 years. Subjects selected lived within an intact marriage, i.e., a socially approved sexual union of some permanence with shared economic and household responsibilities. The subjects were mothers of at least one child, dependent within the family unit or of majority age and residing dependently or independently outside the family unit. In short, the subjects were simultaneously fulfilling three roles: spouse, mother, and student enrolled in an undergraduate program leading to a bachelor's degree.

**Environments** were limited to two: the reentry student's household and the university "society" from which she sought the undergraduate degree with all the conditions, circumstances and influences surrounding and affecting her development.
**Culture** signified all that which is non-biological and socially transmitted in a society, including artistic, social, ideological and religious patterns of behavior and the techniques for mastering the environment (Winick, 1977).

"Subculture" was taken to mean the patterns of behavior and techniques for mastering the environment currently being developed by the subgroup in question, i.e., married women returning to college with children. At this point the patterns and techniques were presumed to be still in development on an individual basis and were not regarded as specifically transmitted.

"Definitions" in the strict sense are difficult to find in the seminal text of Arnold van Gennep (1960/1908) who first identified Rites of Passage. He contented himself with general descriptions and reflections, leaving it to later scholars to draw abstractions from the ethnographic reports. Additional insights into the data were provided in essays by Gluckman (1962) and by Fortes (1962), who criticized van Gennep's theories and methodology. Subsequently, rebuttals by Turner (1982, 1974, 1969) and Myerhoff (1982) added further refinements to explaining rites of passage. It should be noted that Winick's Dictionary of Anthropology (latest edition, 1977) relies solely on van Gennep's description of rites of passage.

**Rites of Passage.** For van Gennep a rite of passage was a traditional prescribed ceremony or series of symbolic acts in which individuals from within or outside a tribal society were neutralized or made benevolent or revitalized by passing from one societal state to another. For example, among certain tribes
strangers, including scientific researchers, were required to encounter a village intermediary before contacting ordinary inhabitants. Particular rites included physical contact such as a slap; exchanging gifts of food or valuables; eating, drinking, smoking a pipe together; sprinkling water or blood; undergoing mutual anointment, attachment or covering. Van Gennep chose to disregard any supernatural considerations and analyzed the ceremonies exclusively as a societal function.

For van Gennep the purpose of rites of passage was to develop an emotional state that facilitated bridging the gap between the old and the new (Winick, 1977). Elements in the rites of passage included representations of three stages: separation, liminality, incorporation. The three stages in any one ceremony could be represented in isolation or in various combinations, simultaneously or successively. Because the rite of passage was sanctioned by society it gave approbation and support to the individual and actually conferred what it symbolized. Van Gennep also observed that the participant was "autonomous," that he or she had to acquiesce voluntarily to the rite for it to be effective.

It should be noted that Turner (1969) later identified another element which occurred at any or all stages, "communitas," in which the participants formed a special bond with others undergoing the same ritual. For example, in some tribes neophytes in puberty rites were disguised as monsters. In other tribes they wore only a strip of clothing or were naked. The purpose apparently
was to demonstrate that in their transitional stage they had no property, insignia
or clothing which would distinguish them from their fellow initiands. In short,
they were all equally neophytes.

**Symbols.** Van Gennep offered some examples: territorial limits at which
a transitional ceremony must be performed are represented by natural
boundaries such as a sacred rock, tree or river or marked by an artificial object,
such as a stake or portal.

Turner (1969) described symbols in the installation rites of a new chief
among the Ndembu in Zambia. The elect was taken from his home to a distant
shelter where he had "to die" from his commoner state. He was led there as if
infirm, then required to sit crouched in a position of weakness while washed
with waters from a river-site where village ancestors dwelled. A fire was built
from fallen wood so that it would be a natural product of the earth and not an
artifact of an ax. Next the chief-elect was reviled and accused of killing the
deceased chieftain. At intervals, the chief-elect was insulted by others who
struck their buttocks against him. The initiand could be ordered to perform
menial tasks. Throughout this ceremony, the individual could not show
resentment. He was ordered not to hold grudges against the perpetrators in the
future when he had the powers of office. All symbols and actions prepared him
to be the Chief who was the servant of the servants whom he would represent.
The symbolic acts expressed the gamut of the culture's values, norms,
relationships and wisdom.
Taboos. Van Gennep described a taboo as a negative act which existed as a counterpart to a positive rite. While it had its own individuality, it was not a ceremony and derived its meaning only in relation to the positive acts with which it coexisted in a ceremony. Example: in many tribes the main door in a house or temple was the site of taboos. Such entrances were consecrated by special rites and frequently were made to face in favorable directions. It was taboo even among thieves (in cultures other than our own) to enter through the main door so they preferred other ways. Corpses were removed by a back door or window. Spitting or stepping on a threshold was prohibited; barriers might be constructed to ensure the sacredness.

For the research being reported herein, it was necessary to apply these general descriptions of rites of passage, symbols and taboos to the presumed emerging subculture of reentry women while maintaining as unbiased a mind as possible, remaining open to the possibility that there were, in fact, no such subculture emerging and there were no rites of passage, symbols or taboos proper to the hypothesized subculture extant or evolving.

The application of these anthropological terms was necessarily analogous, i.e., proportional, metaphorical, not univocal. There is literally a world of difference between a primitive tribal society and modern urban society. The contrast is between a culture and a subculture. The comparison was of a traditional authoritatively sanctioned symbol system with what, at best, might prove to be a newly forming and tentatively approved set of rituals and symbols.
It was concluded that important information might be overlooked if definitions were made too restrictive. Acceptable broad definitions and distinctions, however, had to be made to allow comparisons and the reasonable drawing of conclusions. In lieu of definitions, therefore, the following explanations to guide this research and analysis were used.

A **Rite of Passage** means an act or series of acts, carried out once with significant emphasis or repetitiously, in a family or educational institution, which signifies to the reentry woman that she is beginning a new way of existing in society; that her family and educational institution approve and support her; and that she will be reintegrated into society in her new status at the end of the transition.

Van Gennep's and Turner's stages were sought in the rites: celebrations of separation, transition, incorporation, along with communitas, i.e., becoming a member of a special subgroup with students in similar circumstances.

**Symbols** in this study are objects, actions or omissions which have taken on new meaning for the reentry woman, reinforcing her decision and/or conveying the approval of her family and/or the college.

**Taboos** within this context adopt the commonly held notion of prohibited or restricted acts which reflect societal values. "Taboos" were noted which were occasioned by the new circumstances in which the subject found herself as well as any special applications of traditional prohibitions. The restrictive
description of van Gennep relating taboo to ritual could not be used because it was not yet established that rites existed in the target group of this study.

Summary

Married women with children, then, are returning to college in significantly increasing numbers. Institutions of higher education would do well to pay close attention to the needs of this special subgroup. An important need of any subgroup within a society is tangible evidence of support and approval from the dominant group, particularly when the subgroup is undergoing transition from a lower to a higher state of incorporation. Anthropologists generally refer to such signs of affirmation within primitive as well as modern societies as "rites of passage" along with the attendant "symbols" and "taboos." The societies which are most meaningful to reentry women, married and with children, are their families and their college. The purpose of this research is to discover if the families and college of reentry women are developing rites of passage, symbols and taboos to support or deter her all important transition from non-degree to degreed mother, spouse, person.
Chapter II
A Review of Pertinent Literature

Introduction

Academia has not ignored the phenomenon and challenge of reentry women students. Extensive research has been conducted on the target population. At the computer data base, using the key words, "adult education" and "reentry woman," 7,000 articles written from 1960-1986 surfaced. Every discipline of higher education interested in the human development of students and their interaction with the environment has offered its own special insights.

The purpose in Chapter II will be to examine the contributions of each branch of educational science with specific reference to the hypothesis and subquestions of this paper. What have the psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and adult educators discovered to date which leads to an understanding of the symbolic support systems of reentry women who are wives, mothers, and students? A logical approach would be to present this review according to the general categories of disciplines, noting the nature of each academic subspecialty and its perspective. One should not be surprised to find a lack of a general theory relating to reentry women which crosses all disciplines and subspecialties. As H. R. F. Ebaugh (1988) observed, "The social sciences like the natural sciences and professions, have become so specialized into
subdisciplines and, even more so, into very focused topics within subdisciplines, that we have lost sight of general theories, even theories of the middle range."

(Ebaugh, 1988, p. 14.)

This literature review is confined to research publications of four fields: psychology, sociology, anthropology, and adult education. The first two, psychology and sociology, focus upon life transitions per se while the second group, anthropology and adult education, investigate the ritualization of transition.

**Psychology, Sociology, and Social Psychology**

Psychology focuses upon what is going on inside the individual. Sociologists, on the other hand, take as their unit of analysis individuals in groups such as social class, religion, education, the family, or specific subgroups: reentry women or working mothers. A hybrid discipline, social psychology, combines insights from both fields. All three explicate the transitional aspects of changes made by adults personally and through interaction with their group. Research of these disciplines which lend insight on the target population of reentry women is considered here.

Developmental psychologists (Chickering & Havighurst, 1981; Neugarten, 1979; Levinson, et. al., 1978; Loevinger, 1976; Erickson, 1950) have posited various structured stages models. In their view, people adapt to the present by drawing on a foundation of behaviors and structures developed in the past. Although their studies are based largely on male experiences, their findings
have been applied to understanding the motives peculiar to the reentry woman. Levinson (1978), Loevinger (1976), Lowenthal (1975), Erickson (1950) indicate that education may be a device for self-actualization.

Transition has been variously conceptualized for males. Kegan (1982) theorized predictable evolutions which occur in a spiral-like process until the momentum brings the male through a transition. Farrell and Rosenberg (1981) wrote about tasks which upon completion move the male to a higher level of development.

Developmental studies of females suggest different models of transition. Gilligan (1982) insisted that female personality is shaped by social acculturation different from that which shapes males. Therefore, models of male transitions have limited applicability for women. Baruch, Barnett, and Rivers (1983) asserted that females accomplished life transitions by integrating the principles of mastery and pleasure, i.e., struggling from periods of disequilibrium when too much work or meaningless activities are present toward periods of equilibrium when there is a balance of pleasure and mastery. Another transition model developed by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) sought to understand women’s thought processes, associations, and concepts. They concluded that females differ from males in selecting cues from social environments which lead to behavioral or role changes.

Each theory has contributed understanding about life transitions involving psychosocial developments that mark the way to maturity. These authors
provide guidance in making clear the typical development at a given age as well as the internal triggers of change, but they do not specifically address factors outside the individual which affirm or negate the passage.

Sociologists offer views which relate to psychological theories but stress the interaction between persons and their social and cultural environment. Suchinsky (1982), Eisenstadt (1956), Mannheim (1952) explain the social phenomenon of age stratification as developmental change precipitated by age-norms that prevail in a person's culture and society at any given time. Each person is faced with two basic sets of problems, one set environmentally derived, another set from the internal psychological mechanisms with which she deals with events in her life.

Esther Sales (1978), a social psychologist, described female development by emphasizing the importance of roles. She hypothesized that roles identify norms which in turn evoke sequential development. She recognized that roles are conditioned by historical and cultural change. The reader will see Sales' theories applied later to the reentry woman by an adult educator, Pitman (1986).

Anthropology and Adult Education

Whereas psychology, sociology, and social psychology are more theoretical in their analyses of phenomena such as life transitions, anthropology and adult education are more pragmatic. Anthropology, the science of man, embraces a number of disciplines as it investigates the material, social, and cultural
dynamics of life that are learned and shared by people as members of social groups. The anthropologist must be aware of all the forces because no one of them alone can explain man and his activities (Penniman, 1965). Adult educators are interested in the theory, practice, policy, and leadership techniques of their field. Not surprisingly it is in the literature of the first two disciplines that one finds discussion of life passages and in the research of the latter disciplines that one finds analyses of rites of passages, one of the principal means by which a culture approves transition.

Audrey I. Richards (1970) urged other British social anthropologists to initiate cooperative research with psychologists. Richards proposed the study of formal educational systems to determine the mechanisms by which socialization is achieved. She used language strongly reminiscent of ritualization.

This means in effect, the regular inclusion of socialization in schemes for general cultural studies...the use of sanctions, positive and negative mechanisms for teaching skills, decision-making, enforcement, methodical observations of the transmission of values, knowledge of practices, associated ethical codes and the meaning of symbols. (Richards, 1970, p. 9).

Arnold van Gennep first used the term "Rites of Passage" in 1908 to refer to those rituals that mark the passage of the individual through various stages in the life cycle. He discerned a fundamental tripartite structure determined by the necessity for functionally separating the person from one status before incorporating him or her into a new one. In between the departure from the old position and the incorporation into the new one was a
transitional or liminal period (Van Gennep, 1960/1908), now known as liminality (Myerhoff, 1982). One of the implications of van Gennep’s concepts is that the purpose of rites is the integration of the individual in society. Victor Turner (1969, 1974) expanded "liminality" beyond its use in the seminal work. Building on van Gennep’s ideas that stress the importance of transition, Turner developed the concept of "communitas" which he observed that initiands manifested among themselves. Equality, undifferentiated humanness, androgyny, and humility are some of the characteristics of communitas observed throughout the rites.

Solon Kimball in the introduction of his translation of van Gennep (1960) wrote: "There is no evidence that a secularized urban world has lessened the need for ritualized expression of an individual’s transition from one status to another" (Kimball, 1960, p. xvii).

Barbara Myerhoff twenty-five years later made the same observation more emphatically.

Menopause, surgery, "empty nests," retirement are all occasions in life that go largely uncelebrated. All those can be opportunities for rites of passage, transformed from traumatic experiences or disorienting lonely episodes into commemorations that acknowledge change. The spontaneous ritual acts that we do alone -- burning an unfaithful lover’s photograph or returning gifts from one no longer cherished, the cutting of hair or cleaning house to announce to oneself that a new phase of life is beginning. All these are nascent rites of passage that can be enlarged, formalized, made to include important people, memorialized with objects, notes or records that are kept in recognition that the transition was successfully accomplished (Myerhoff, 1982, p. 132).
Myerhoff sees the urgent need to enlarge the nascent rites of passage as arising out of the fragmentation of modern society. After detailing descriptions of rites of passage in tribal societies, she asks,

...what do these rites tell us about ourselves living in a modern world? Where did all of that ceremony go? How do we solve the problems taken up by these rites, of clearly and safely moving from one life stage to another? Even more ambitiously, we may ask, how do we pass through such changes in the company of important others with whom we will henceforth live in our new conditions? ...We have had to develop rituals and employ symbols in increasingly private contexts, living as we do in a diffuse, fragmented world with shattered or shallow consensual structures. This privacy leaves individuals nearly completely on their own when dealing with the subjects previously taken up by ritual...

Sherry B. Ortner (1978) saw the study of cultural performances as providing entree into the workings of a particular culture. Cultural performances are the unstaged living out of life routine, e.g., going to work, buying a car, going to college. "Cultural performances dramatize and embody in some ways one’s visions of reality, basic values, and the moral truths upon which one feels the world rests." Ortner goes on to say that society achieves appropriate shifts in consciousness through ritual.

The reshaping of consciousness or experiences that takes place in ritual is by definition a reorganization of the relationships between the subject and what may for convenience be called reality. Ritual symbolism always operates on both elements, reorganizing (representations of) "reality," and at the same time reorganizing (representations of) self.

(Ortner, 1978, p. 9).

The field of Adult Education has produced an abundance of research investigating reentry women’s experience and strategies for coping with
conflicting life roles (Beutell & O'Hare, 1987; Scott & King, 1985; Beutell & Greenhaus, 1982; Ballmer & Cozby, 1981). Because it is unlikely that role conflict can be totally avoided, especially among married (professional) women with children, it is important to understand the impact of academic and organizational practices and policies on women's use of effective coping strategies (Beutell & O'Hare, 1987; Scott & King, 1985; Beutell & Greenhaus, 1982; Kahnweiler & Johnson, 1980). Family issues are often cited as major factors affecting the success of returning female students (Patterson & Blank, 1985; Roehl & Okun, 1984; Ballmer & Cozby, 1981; Gilbert, 1982; Hooper, 1979). Researchers have examined changes affecting the maternal role (Kahnweiler & Johnson, 1980; Lance, Lourie, & Mayo, 1979; Astin, 1976; Sheehy, 1976; Neugarten, 1968). Other researchers have emphasized concern centered around changes in the role as wife (Patterson & Blank, 1985; Scott & King, 1985; Beutell & Greenhaus, 1982; Scott, 1980; Smith, 1980; Neugarten, 1979; Lowenthal, et al., 1975). Research literature also calls for evaluation of the reentry women's needs and their satisfaction with programs they are attending, counselling interventions and services received (Blanshan, et al., 1984; Roehl, et al., 1984; Simpkins & Ray, 1983; Wheaton & Robinson, 1983; Holt, 1982; Marienau, et al., 1982; McGraw, 1982; DiNuzzo & Tolbert, 1981).

Clayton & Smith (1987) sought to determine whether motives for returning to college among undergraduate women could be grouped into patterns and whether these reentry women could be grouped by motive-types.
Lewis (1983) and Gilbert (1982) investigated the impact of reentry women in graduate education upon marital and family relations. Interviewing the reentry woman and her spouse separately Smith (1980) researched marital consequences of women's educational and career reentry.

Of particular interest to this study are the research findings of three adult educators, Pitman (1986), Leemon (1972), and Eddy (1969), who analyzed the changing roles of individuals or groups by using the "rites of passage" theory. Eddy (1969) focused upon the transition of recent female education graduates who went into classrooms for the first time to begin acting out their new role as teachers. Similarly Leemon (1972) as participant-observer studied the process of recruitment, training, and induction of a group of men into a Greek letter social fraternity. Approaching the subject from the negative side, Pitman (1986) deplored the lack or rites of passage in continuing education programs. Pitman theorized that women had taken a tentative step towards role transition by coming to the university, but unfortunately were not assisted to make the passage by appropriate ceremonies or symbols of successes.

This study suggests that the continuing education programs were designed by a previous generation with the purpose of assisting women by creating more role options. More important, it may suggest that the social institutions, especially the educational institutions of complex urban societies, should provide the ceremonial processes that facilitate role and status passage. By eliminating all elements of ceremony, the Center became static.

...Rigorous entrance requirements and specified course requirements, common only to a group of peers who have entered into that setting [higher education] lead to graduation into a new social state. This process replicates the rites of passage. Even these, however, were eliminated for continuing education
participants...—exactly the milestones necessary to accomplish transition. (Pitman, 1986, p. 125-126).

Summary

The research question addressed in this survey of literature asks:

What is the nature of rites of passage symbols and taboos (if any exist) operant among reentry female students in intact marriages with children?

In the introduction it was not anticipated that the review would yield a general theory about reentry women. A consistency and continuity in the data, however, emerged out of the four areas of research which in the end suggest the outlines of a general theory. The basic theory is van Gennep’s and Turner’s: role changes occur in a culture and are facilitated by the culture through ritual.

Significant numbers of women, wives and mothers in intact marriages, in our culture are undergoing role change by reentering college. Psychologists explain the phenomenon in terms of internal drives. Sociologists analyze it as a response to societal expectations or role demands. Anthropologists and adult educators both declare that if the transition of reentry women is not undergoing ritualization it ought to be. If there is a general theory emerging from contemporary research succinctly stated it is: married women with children today are being driven both by the dynamics of their personal development and by the demands of their culture to return to college; they need to be guided and supported in responding to these impulses by rites of passage, symbols, and taboos.
Sherry Ortner said that the way to know what is evolving in a culture is to examine the cultural performance, i.e., to observe the subjects in their daily routine. The general theory appears sufficiently supported by the research to date to justify an indepth study of the cultural performances of reentry women.
Chapter III

Research Procedure

Introduction

The conceptual framework and the methodology used to study the "cultural performances" (Ortner, 1978) of reentry women in intact marriages with children will be explained in this chapter. The pilot study will be described briefly. Then for the main study, how the sample was selected will be detailed along with the settings, procedures, and the recording modes for data collection. The steps followed in data analysis and organization of findings will be presented. Finally, the trustworthiness of the data and interpretation will be discussed.

Conceptual Framework

The "cluster of interrelated concepts used to describe and classify phenomena" (Eshleman, 1985) relating to reentry women in this study is diagramed in Table 1.

The concept of reentry women in intact marriages with children was described in Chapter I. The motivations of internal drives for self-development and of societal expectations were examined in the Review of Literature, Chapter II. The four environments -- home, university, work, and society at large -- with which the reentry woman interacts are self-explanatory.

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Table 1

Conceptual Framework

Reentry female (intact marriage with children)

Motivations
  Internal
  Societal

Environments
  Home
    Self
    Husband
    Children
    Extended family

  University
    Administration
    Students
      Self
      Nontraditional students
      Traditional students

Work

Society-at-large

Roles (paradigms, norms, relationships, status)
  Wife
  Mother
  Student

Passage (non-degreed to degreed)
  Stages (separation, liminality, communitas, incorporation)
  Rites of passage
  Symbols
  Taboos
  Subculture
In the course of the pilot study and continuing through the major study, the interviewer became aware that the respondents perceived themselves as performing three roles--wife, mother, student--and in most cases a fourth, employee. The researcher sought to understand how the subjects managed these multiple roles and whether it involved, on their part and on the part of others, any changes in role expectations. In the analysis the reader will find discussion of changes in "paradigms, norms, relationships and status." In accordance with the standard definitions offered by Eshleman (1985) "role" will mean the social expectations or behaviors that accompany a particular status; "status" will signify a socially defined position that a person occupies which may be ascribed or achieved; "norm" will indicate a rule that tells members of a society how to behave in a particular situation and "paradigm" will represent a distillation of what society believes about the role but cannot prove (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Here is noted the obvious difference between the passage which the reentry woman is making and the "rites of passage." The remainder of the terms have been described in Chapter I. The above concepts are closely linked existentially and logically, thus delineating a multidimensional self-contained manageable field of study.

Methodology

There are basically two approaches which can be used to discover the answer to a major hypothetical question and its subquestions: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative research assumes that phenomena investigated are
ordered, i.e., under specified conditions certain events will occur. Related is the assumption that this order and regularity can be discovered through the scientific method. A second assumption is that truth can be derived only from direct observation studying empirical evidence. In the social sciences, however, the complexity of subject matter, difficulties in observation, impediments in replication, interaction of observer and subject, obstacles in control, and problems of measurement limit the viability of the quantitative approach (Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh, 1985).

As Filestead (1970) has noted:

\[\text{Qualitative methodology refers to those research strategies, such as participant observation, in-depth interviewing, total participation in the activity being investigated, field work, etc., which allow the researcher to obtain first-hand knowledge about the empirical social world in question. Qualitative methodology allows the researcher to "get close to the data," thereby developing the analytical, conceptual, and categorical components of explanation from the data itself.}\]

(Filestead, 1970, p 6.)

The focus of the research was rites of passage, symbols and taboos among reentry women in intact marriages with children. Because the examination was of a cultural phenomenon presumed to be evolving, the qualitative method of research was chosen over the quantitative. Myerhoff, Ortner, Turner and van Gennep developed their theories exclusively through the qualitative method. The questions posed in this research are still at a stage which demands naturalistic inquiry.
**Pilot Study**

For the purpose of testing various interrogation skills and refining the investigatory guidelines the 11 interviews were conducted on a regional campus of the main university where the actual study later occurred. None of the data from the pilot study was incorporated into the present account. A social psychology professor from the regional campus was consulted for assistance in honing interview skills only during the pilot study. In addition, both throughout the pilot study and the actual research project reported herein, the researcher conferred with a peer who is a sociologist familiar with qualitative research and the theories of Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner. This peer-consultation was instituted before the first interview and maintained until the completion of the study. Analysis after data collection includes speculation, i.e., thinking with the data, attempting to gain ideas grounded in findings. Glaser (1967) suggests that data analysis includes a minimum of venting, just enough to avoid dilution of analysis and reduction of energy needed to complete the analysis. Approximately 1200 pages of transcripts of taped interviews and field notes constituted the data. The peer debriefing sessions facilitated the synthesis of information, the search for patterns, and the sharpening of direction for further interviews -- debriefing functions suggested by Bogden and Biklen (1982).

Appropriate clearance for privileged access to the reentry women students was granted from both the regional and the main campuses. The Behavioral and Social Sciences Human Subject Review Committee approved the research,
solicitation methods and interviewee consent forms designed for both campuses. Signed consent forms were received from participants in the pilot study as well as in the main project.

**Subject Selection: Final Study**

Upon moving to the main campus, the researcher was assigned a liaison, the coordinator of nontraditional students, who assisted in subject solicitation. The coordinator invited the researcher to describe the study briefly to each of three sections of the required new student orientation sessions and to solicit participation by students meeting the criteria. Eligible were women in intact marriages with children pursuing a baccalaureate degree, five or more years beyond typical high school graduation. In addition, the coordinator referred the researcher to the department chairperson of a college which had a high number of non-traditional female students. The chairperson suggested that the investigator prepare an article for the college newsletter, write a letter soliciting subjects which was distributed by the college to each nontraditional female student enrolled there, and to place flyers describing the research in the student lounges. Through telephone follow-up of the written responses the investigator garnered 24 actual interviews. The telephone follow-up guide is presented in Table 2.

Seven of the volunteers identified themselves with the target group, but during the interviews it became apparent that they lacked one or another of the characteristics. The investigator, nevertheless, proceeded with the interviews,
welcoming the opportunity for insights into differences or similarities. Five of
the seven aberrant interviews were not included in the analysis presented in this
paper. One respondent had not been away from high school graduation for five
years; two were not in intact marriages; one had no children; one had a four-
year degree. Two of the interviewees were retained: in the one case, although
recently separated from her husband, the volunteer was still in communication
with him and not divorced; in the other case, although the subject had no
children, she was pregnant and thought of herself as a mother.
Table 2

Revision 1, January 29, 1989

Returning to College
Telephone Follow-up

Telephone follow-up letter soliciting participation in research

1. Introduce myself.

2. I communicated with you recently to ask your participation in a research project involving reentry college women.

3. Do you have any questions about my communication?

4. Do you think you might be interested in helping me?

5. It requires approximately an hour for a taped interview session at a place and time convenient for you. There is a slight possibility that you may be asked to complete a second interview.

6. Tapes will be destroyed after a typed transcript not using your name has been made. You may choose to be present when the tape is erased.

7. I assure you of complete anonymity, although the general findings will be published. Your interview will be one of many.

8. The interview questions are very general. You may decline to discuss particular issues.

9. Would you propose a time and place?

10. You will receive a follow-up letter confirming our appointment. Please bring my original letter with you.

11. Thank you.

For use by the participant before the interview:

I have read the above summary and affirm that it reflects substantially what was said to me and made clear to me before the interview.

____________________  ____________________
    date                     Participant

____________________  ____________________
    date                     Interviewer
The Settings

Interviewees were drawn from the campus of a major midwestern university which enrolls in excess of 50,000 students, offers 7,000 courses, stretches across more than 3,000 acres of land and encompasses nearly 400 buildings. Sessions were conducted in available classrooms, student lounges, restaurants, the campus green, subjects’ homes, places of employment or hotel facilities. Sites were selected by the subjects and agreed to by the investigator for two reasons. First, the selection of the site by the subject rather than by the observer "opens a culture to readers, unfolding it, revealing it, providing not only a sense of surface form and rhythm but also a sense of inner connections and interactions" (Ortner, 1978). Secondly, Lincoln and Guba (1985) stress that multiple sites should be selected to be maximally contrastive and thereby to provide as much different information as possible.

Data Collection and Recording Modes

The investigator, who in qualitative research is the instrument, employed open-ended questions, avoiding the technical language of Rites of Passage theory, and invited spontaneous response. Topical guides were followed assuring that the major areas of the hypothesis were explored. The interview guides are presented in Table 3 and Table 4. The semistructured interviews were conducted over a twelve week period to accommodate the busy schedules of women who simultaneously fulfilled three to four roles. Initial comments by
the interviewer recalled briefly the nature and purpose of the session.
Respondents were assured that descriptions of their personal experiences were
highly valued. In the process subjects were told that they were free to "pass" on
any question, but in fact no one did. The researcher described herself as a
fellow-student attempting to learn about the adjustment process of reentry
women. For the purpose of masking identification each participant was invited
to assume a different name. The need and the mechanics of recording the
interview and taking notes were presented. Signed consent forms were received
from participants.

Interviews ranged in length from one hour to one hour and a half. As soon
as possible after the interview the researcher reflected upon the process and
content of the encounter. Next, were written field notes using thick description
which recorded what the researcher heard, saw, experienced and thought in the
course of collecting and reflecting on the data as recommended by Bogden and
Biklen (1982). The tape-recorded interviews were transcribed and coded with a
number replacing the respondents's pseudonym. Transcripts and field notes
comprise the data.
Table 3

Interview Guide: Relating to the Family

1. How are you personally responding to your return to school?
2. How is your husband responding to your return to school?
3. Picture for me how the combination of your roles as spouse and student is working out.
4. Have there been recognizable milestones in your relationship with your husband since returning to college?
5. Have routines developed between you and your husband since returning to school?
6. Have there been any episodes with your husband which have a lot of meaning for you as a wife pursuing a degree?
7. Tell me about your children. How are they responding individually and collectively to Mom's returning to school?
8. Describe how mothering and studying get along together.
9. Are there recognizable milestones in your relationships with your children since returning to college?
10. Have routines developed between you and your children?
11. Have there been episodes with your children which have a lot of meaning for you?
12. Are there any physical items, places or persons which have taken on or lost relevancy because of your student role? Think first in terms of your husband.
14. What kinds of "do's and don'ts, minding your p's and q's" have arisen for your personally since you've become a college student?
15. Are there similar "do's and don'ts" for your husband? How did they come about?
16. Are there similar "do's and don'ts" for your children? How did that happen?
17. What more can your husband and children do for you to help you get your degree?
Table 4

Interview Guide: Relating to the University

1. Tell me about the friends you have made on campus.
2. Are any of these friends wives and mothers? Why or why not?
3. How do those friends who are not in similar circumstances support or distract you as a student?
4. How do these same friends support or distract you in your family roles?
5. How do friends who are wives and mothers support or distract you as a student?
6. How do these friends support or distract you in your home life?
7. Are there any campus programs, groups, specific classes, professors or counselors who are particularly helpful in balancing your roles as student/spouse/mother?
8. Do you have a sense of being at home on campus? What or who makes you feel this way?
9. Do you recall any turning points in your attitude about college life or your hope of getting a degree?
10. Has the university or any of its representatives provided events, recognitions or confirmations which indicate that attaining your degree is a real possibility?
11. If so, have any of these taken into account your specific circumstances as student/wife/mother?
12. Describe any occasions when your fellow students celebrated or commiserated with you.
13. Did any of these occasions relate to your family life?
14. How would I know you are a student of this University? Do any of the traditional symbols have special meaning for you?
15. Have any times, places or persons on campus taken on particular significance for you as a student?
16. How about for you as student/spouse/parent?
17. Discuss University regulations and customs which strike you as appropriate or inappropriate for a student who is also wife and mother.
18. Have any subtle, unwritten, unspoken rules arisen which appear to be peculiar to you as a wife and mother?
19. What more could your fellow students and the University do to help you achieve your goal?
Data Analysis

Data analysis actually began with the completion of the first interview of the 19 which provide the material on which the research is based. The interview guides were designed to elicit information which would contribute to answering the hypothetical question and its subsidiaries. Points raised by each respondent out of her experience were tested by the investigator in subsequent interviews. By the time of the third session, transcripts of the first two interviews arrived which the researcher examined for patterns, trends, gaps, contradictions. This process continued through the data gathering. Natural categories for organizing information began to take shape.

The categories used to marshal the data are displayed in Table 5. The first 24 categories were drawn out of the hypothetical questions. The categories of health, work as helpful, work as hindrance, and self-image were added, reacting to the spontaneous replies of participants. Religion and sexual intimacy with the spouse were categories volunteered by some subjects and subsequently tested with other participants by the researcher. Because, however, no subject, including those who brought up the topics, reported any change in those areas of her life, the categories were omitted in the final analysis.

Each page of the interview transcripts was systematically scrutinized and the code number of the pertinent category was noted in the margins alongside the participants' actual words. Often as many as four categories applied to a single quotation. Next following the marginal notations, 28 compendia were compiled
corresponding to the categories. The compendia listed quotations from the subjects with citations of interview and page numbers. An initial outline was drawn up for a logical presentation of findings in response to the research questions. The compendia were arranged according to the outline and provided the basis for writing the analysis. As far as possible exact wording of the subjects was used. Generally, subjects' comments were ordered from most frequently mentioned to least. Care was taken to retain divergent views and to examine them fully. At the conclusion of the analysis the findings were applied in direct response to the hypothetical questions.
Table 5
Categories for Analysis of Data

1. Identifiable subculture
2. Family fears about the impact of the student role.
3. Societal compulsion to get degree
4. Internal compulsion to get degree
5. Family: husband/children impeding/helping
6. Family: disinvestment/reinvestment in paradigms of spouse/mother
7. Family: new norms for combining roles
8. Family: changes in relationships
9. University: administration helping/hindering
10. University: professors/advisors helping/hindering
11. University: fellow students helping/hindering
12. Separation stage
13. Liminality stage
14. Communitas stage
15. Incorporation stage
16. Rites of passage: family
17. Rites of passage: university
18. Degree getting as ritual
19. Symbols: family
20. Family: objects/actions new meaning
21. Symbols: university
22. The degree as symbol
23. Taboos: family
24. Taboos: university
25. Subject: employment as helpful
26. Subject: employment as pressure
27. Subject: health
28. Subject: self-image
Trustworthiness of Data

Egon G. Guba (1981) maintains that there are four major criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of the data: truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality. In qualitative research he prefers to describe these criteria as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The credibility of the data herein presented was established by prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing, triangulation and the collection of adequate referential materials. The researcher worked on site for twelve weeks, interviewed 24 subjects, kept detailed field notes on each encounter, recorded and transcribed each interview and underwent ten peer debriefings in the course of the data collection and analysis. Triangulation occurs, according to Denzin (1978) when "a variety of data sources, . . . different perspectives (theories), and different methods are pitted against one another to cross-check data and interpretations." The variety of data sources for triangulation were 35 subjects (although only 19 were cited in the final study). The variety of perspectives employed were the anthropological theories of van Gennep and of Turner regarding rites of passage, along with the theories of psychologists, sociologist, social psychologists and adult educators cited in the review of literature.

The transferability of the data was assured by the thick description in the field notes which would enable sound judgments to be made about "fittingness" with other contexts. For some, however, the absence of random sampling and the reliance solely on volunteers may limit transferability in that possibly the
responses of target group members who are not disposed to volunteer will be missing in the resultant data. The dependability was guaranteed by the careful laying of an "audit trail" through the preservation of all documents used at every stage in preparing the research. An experienced auditor was engaged, by contract for remuneration, to conduct a dependability audit attending particularly to the process of the inquiry.

In order to provide confirmability and to guard against investigator bias, the observer comments were carefully separated from description in the field notes. The social psychology professor assigned as liaison at the regional campus and the peer debriefer tested for bias in every session with the investigator. The debriefer actually interviewed the researcher as if she were a subject in the research, following the prepared interview guidelines, for the purpose of identifying personal viewpoints. A transcript was made and included in the materials sent to the auditor. A copy of the auditor's report is found in the appendix D.

Summary

In Chapter III the conceptual framework and the methodology used in the study along with a rationale for selecting naturalistic inquiry were presented. The pilot study and the major research were described, detailing sample selection, settings, procedures and recording modes. The steps followed in collecting, analyzing and organizing the data were explained. In conclusion a defense of the trustworthiness of the methodology was offered.
Chapter IV

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

**Introduction**

The purpose of the research is to discover from in-depth interviews the nature of rites of passage, symbols and taboos (if any exist) operant among reentry female students in intact marriages with children. First in this chapter the participants will be described and their motivation for returning to college discussed. The passage itself from non-degreed to degreed status will be detailed as it takes place on the campus, in the home and at the job site. An analysis will follow of the stages in the passage under the light of Arnold van Gennep's and Victor Turner's theories. The rites of passage, symbols and taboos which are to be found in the transition of the reentry woman at the university and in the family will be identified. Finally, whether the target group constitutes an emerging identifiable subculture will be answered.

**Participants**

As explained in Chapter III, the participants were 19 women, volunteers from the main campus of a major midwestern state-sponsored university. After the interviews a code name was assigned to each. The initial letter of the pseudonym indicates the transition stage generally suggested by the interviewee's account of her passage from non-degreed toward degreed status: "S" for
separation, "L" for liminality, "C" for communitas and "I" for incorporation. The reader is reminded that elements of the stages can be found in isolation or in various combinations, simultaneously or successively.

SARAH earned her GED after marriage. She began working on an associate degree in business management six years ago, accumulating 28 credits which transferred to the present university. She had just finished her first quarter at the time of the interview and was on her way to becoming a teacher. Her husband urged her to return to college when the younger of their two sons entered preschool. She babysits full-time in her home.

SONYA is a hardworking mother of two college students. When interviewed she was in her first quarter after an absence of 24 years from formal education. Because she doesn’t have a degree, she feels belittled by her employer and troubled by the memory of her mother's attitudes. Nobody is helping her assume her student role.

SHARON is a full-time secretary enabled to return to college ten years after high school because her boss paid first quarter tuition and fees. This was her first quarter. She has a husband, a ten year old daughter and a three year old son. Her daughter and father are supportive of her college efforts. Her husband focuses on making the marriage work.

SUE was deserted by her husband of 18 years in October of 1988, leaving her with a son, 14, and daughters, 7 and 13. She feels she has no choice but to return to college and complete the fourth year left unfinished when she got
married. She believes her common sense is useless without a degree. She had just reentered college a few weeks before the interview. At the time of the interview she was separated from her husband, but in communication with him. She did not want the divorce but felt she could not force another adult to do what she wanted.

STACY is a full-time librarian returning to college after 21 years. She wants to prove to herself that she can do it. She had previously completed two and a half years, had recently added another year and was counting down the last 90 hours. She is somewhat resentful that she had to put her husband through graduate school and launch her 19 year old son's college education before she could start back.

SABRINA was in her first quarter after a 30 year absence. She had been discouraged by the rejection of her portfolio during a job application as well as by the rejection of her previous college credits by the present university. Her husband and the one child still at home are neutral.

STEPHANIE had been back for a year after earning an associate degree two and a half years ago. Her husband fluctuates in his support even though he first urged her to return to college. She is bringing home low grades and feels like a dummy.

SALLY was ecstatic to be entering her first quarter after an absence of 16 years. She had just weathered a traumatic job loss. With the help of a loving
husband she can now pursue her dream of a degree in art. Her sons, 18 and 20, are all but gone from the nest.

LOIS attained an associate degree in office administration 13 years ago. She had just finished her first quarter. She has been married 14 years and has two girls, 3 and 7. She grew up wanting to be a secretary, loves being around people, needed and productive. She sees the degree as necessary for advancement in management. Her job helps pay for her course work. Her husband and live-in mother-in-law accept child care roles.

LAURA is the mother of two small boys, 3 and 5, with a very supportive husband who himself has a degree. They had planned since before marriage that she would begin working toward a degree as soon as the children were old enough. She was not to start working without a degree. She had been away for 11 years and was in her third quarter.

LYDIA has an associate degree in nursing and practices two evenings a week and every other weekend. She has always wanted to complete her education. She had just finished her first quarter after an absence of nine years. Her husband and two little girls, 6 and 8, give her full support, as also does her mother who years earlier achieved her M.A. degree despite an indifferent husband. Working as a nurse, her degree field, seems to have hastened Lydia’s adjustment in college.

LOU was at the time pregnant with her first child and in her beginning quarter as a reentry student, after graduating from a technical college ten years
ago. Her boring job as a manager of a fast food restaurant drives her to seek a
degree which will enable her to switch to teaching. She doesn't know what her
husband thinks.

LEONA is responsible for "four big ones" -- administrative assistant, wife,
mother of two boys, 14 and 15, and student. She had been back six quarters
after an absence of 15 years. She has gone as high as a secretary can go and
wants more.

CONNIE is a burned-out volunteer, seeking a deeper relationship with her
husband and greater insights into her children. On the occasion of the
interview, one son, a college graduate and three daughters, all college students,
were living out of State. After 29 years she has started building again on her 2
1/2 years of higher education.

CAROLYN, wife of a university employee, had returned after 33 years to
finish the missing three quarters of her B.A. She was taking some refresher
courses and had been back on campus one academic year. All but one of four
children has gone from the household.

CLAIRE was five quarters down and seven to go in her effort to regain the
strength and independence of her youth. It had been 17 years since she
graduated from business college with a certificate in secretarial science. Her
mother, husband, two children, 6 and 8, and 18 year old stepson help her on
her journey toward the degree.
IDA had finished three years with the help of her husband and two sons, 12 and 10, after a delay of 13 years. She had always wanted to go back and get her degree in education. When her younger boy entered school she saw her chance. The end is in sight.

ISABEL is a model, the mother of a two year old child. She had one year till graduation. She had completed two years after a four year break from previous college experience. Her husband has been understanding, himself a Master’s degree student.

IRENE is a licensed practical nurse who is tired of giving pills to people who don’t want them. She had been back for four years after an absence of 15. She had just two quarters to complete. Her husband, son, 15, and daughter, 12, have learned to shift for themselves.

All subjects, as intended, were wife, mother, and student. It should be noted that Lou at the time was pregnant with her first child and Sue had just separated from her husband three months previously. Nevertheless, these two were retained in the study because they thought of themselves as meeting the characteristics sought in the volunteers for the study. Also it should be indicated that 11 of the 19 were employed outside the home, which turned out to be an unexpected but significant factor.

**Motivations for Returning to College**

At the end of Chapter II, The Review of Literature, the author suggested that a general theory explaining the phenomenon of reentry women seemed to
be converging from the research of the psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and adult educators. Succinctly stated, the theory holds that women are returning to college in significant numbers, driven both by developmental and societal forces; societies normally assist members in transition with ceremonials which in this case, however, appear to be lacking.

Without exception the subjects' descriptions of their reentries resonate with the observations of the scientists. Leona, Sally, Sabrina seem to quote one another: they "always wanted to return." Ida said, "It was a line in my life I had clearly started before I had met my husband." Isabel named the drive "a gnawing in the back of my mind;" for Connie it was a "burning desire." The urge to reenter became an iron determination to persevere. "I'm going to make it, I'm going to survive," declares Sharon. Connie stated emotionally, "If I have to go 95 times I will get it."

As the researcher progressed through the interviews, over and over again she heard the subjects tell how they reached a crisis point in the homelife or employment. Lois told her husband she needed "ILF (Intelligent Life Form)." Sue had "stagnated" in her house, while Connie became "stifled." Lydia found herself "stuck in a dead end at work." Sabrina's situation actually made her ill: "I couldn't keep doing this to myself."

When asked how they came to make the decision to return to higher education, more internal motives were offered than societal. Usually the participants began by making "we" statements, "my husband and I." But when
the interviewer asked, "What will the degree mean to you," the subject typically responded in the first person and most often gave self-satisfaction as the primary motive. "Just for me," Stephanie, Claire and Lou chorused unbeknownst to each other. Claire needed to prove to herself that she could get A's; Ida was going for a 4 point GPA. Carolyn felt that she had already proved to herself that she could "finish the unfinished." Besides self-fulfillment, the researcher heard repeated themes of self-development. The joy of learning was voiced by Sharon and Sabrina. Lou declared, "I can just taste it." Sally says, "It feels so good." Lydia described herself as a sponge soaking up knowledge. Ida declared, "A job wasn't the point." Gaining and enhancing career skills provided the primary motivation for Lois who "enjoys working" and wants "to go up the ladder." A degree was seen as a necessary tool "to get ahead" by Irene, a conviction repeated by Sue and Sally.

The social drive most frequently mentioned was economic need, which connects with the internal drive of career development. Ordinarily, the need was expressed with regard to children "in case something would happen" (Isabel). "Insurance," Sarah termed it. Likewise, being a good role model for their children was commonly mentioned. "What kind of example do I give if I quit?" wonders Claire. "I want them to be as proud of me as I am of them," announces Carolyn. The expectations of others influenced the target group. Isabel's lack of a degree was a "cloud" over her. For 33 years Connie sensed "vague putdowns, at times from my children." Sally "never fit in" with her
husband's lawyer friends. Stephanie felt compelled to prove to others that she was not a "fat and lazy" Latin American. Sonya was haunted by the ghost of her mother looking down her nose at people without a degree; "I look down my nose at myself." Lois bluntly summed it up: "having a degree is the norm these days."

When Sharon, Sabrina, Lois, Sally, Lydia and Ida exult about the self-fulfillment arising out of their learning, one hears them affirm Erickson's insight that education is a device for self-actualization. Carolyn needing to "finish the unfinished" reflects Farrell and Rosenberg's theory that life tasks must be completed. Eisenstadt and Mannheim hypothesized that roles change not only in response to internal urges but also are dictated by the environment. Isabel, Connie, Sally, Stephanie and Sonya concur that they have to have a degree in today's world.

The Passage

While the focus of this study is rites of passage, the researcher believes that first it is necessary to examine the passage itself which the rites would facilitate. The concept of "cultural performance," i.e., observing the subjects in their daily routine, developed by Sherry Ortner will be employed. The women of this study are undergoing a passage from non-degreed to degreed status. As in a trip overland from one place to another, they meet officials, need documentation, measure progress, encounter landmarks, undergo adventures, learn to rely on or avoid fellow travelers -- all the time lugging their baggage and accumulating
souvenirs. The traditional student leaves his or her family behind and travels this well worn road alone. Each of the reentry women in this research project travels this same road, a road designed for the youthful solitary, but accompanied by her husband and children, who may or may not wish to be brought along.

The path is well worn. Since the middle ages universities have institutionalized the process, creating officialdom, markers of progress, methods of weeding out the unsuitable, ceremonial documentation. The present subjects have, after a considerable delay, set forth on their passage towards a baccalaureate. In most cases they find the traditional ways and trappings helpful, but sometimes hindering. Often the university shows a willingness to accommodate their special circumstances, but occasionally they meet inflexibility. The passage is described below in the interviewees' own words: first as they experience it on campus, then as they go through it in their homes.

University

For example, in regard to the application of policy, Laura was admitted without having to meet the high school essentials required of traditional students. Sue, Sonya and Irene were grateful for the "fresh start" or "forgiveness rule" which allowed them to disregard any previous college grades below a C. The nursing student, Lydia, was able "to proficiency," i.e., to test after a year's work to a senior level, thus omitting her junior year. Because of her RN diploma, she could contract with her professor to complete nursing clinicals at
her place of employment. Isabel and Carolyn benefited from refresher math courses designed for reentry students. On the other hand, the orientation course required of all students was criticized by Lois and Sarah as not meeting their needs, costly in dollars and time. Lois and Leona found class schedules are for the most part geared to day students, observing that you can’t get a degree in their field without quitting work. Sally received conflicting policy information from her college advisor and the generic freshman student advisors. Lou and Sarah experienced running all over the campus for I D cards, parking decals or registration signatures as extremely difficult, a matter which in their opinion inconveniences younger students very little.

As to university personnel, Stacy’s counselor went out of her way to encourage the librarian to apply for a scholarship. Carolyn’s advisor spent two hours charting quarter by quarter class schedules. Ida’s professor took the trouble to explain timeslots for higher level classes. Late class hours meant Ida had to leave her sons alone for a few hours until her husband arrived home from his job. Lois and Claire had professors who shifted test times to accommodate their needs. Carolyn was pleased when her professor stated that Carolyn’s age would add depth to the class. Similarly Connie found that professors would call on non-traditional students to give insights from their experiences. Negatively, as an older student Sharon found reprehensible a professor’s remark to students, "That’s tough, we’ve all got problems." Ida felt that a professor talked down to the class, a judgment that she said, "I never
would have made as a younger student." Isabel believed that an instructor was handing out busy work, something she would merely have accepted as a traditional student.

In respect to fellow students, for the most part the women acted no differently than any other students: inquiring about professors, sharing class notes, exchanging phone numbers, meeting at homes to study.

Family

Unlike young and free college youths, the respondents were making their passage with a retinue of spouse, children and, in some cases, extended family. The researcher invited the women to describe their journey by recounting how their spouses and children help or hinder them. The writer marked progress by noting how much the family members had disinvested in traditional paradigms of wife and mother and by identifying changed relationships among family members.

Helping or Hindering

Husbands were recognized for helping with child care, assisting with housework, then equally for washing dishes, adjusting their schedules and cooking. Very important to the interviewees was emotional support. Sabrina’s husband said, "You’re just as important to me with or without the degree." Isabel’s mate told her that she is "intelligent and his feelings haven’t changed regardless of what grades she gets." Spouses assisted with actual studying or provided quiet by distracting the children or withdrawing personally for a while.
Laura and her husband had saved for eight years for her to go to college. Sally's partner "umped" games on the side to help pay her fees.

Not all husbands were positive all the time. Sharon lamented, "He regards school as a waste." Sue's mate inquired, "How will you pay for this?" She added to the interviewer, "And I wanted him to be proud of me." Stephanie's partner complained about the dirty house and longed for a "normal stable life." Irene's husband thinks "the wife should be home with the children whether the kids are there or not."

An analysis of the children's impact on their mother's return to higher education can best be approached by age category. Laura's preschooler, fearing that his mother was going to college just like his aunt had, blocked the door the first time she tried to leave. Sharon's three year old son would not go to bed before her return. Sarah's smallest child cried every time she left for campus during the first quarter. On the other hand, Laura's five year old proudly called her "awesome." Lydia overheard her daughters, 5 and 7, boast to their friends that their mom went to the "U."

Sue's school age son, "Mr. Bubbly," got into a pretend fight with his friend and won by declaring, "My mom is better because she goes to college." Sharon's fifth grade daughter filled in for her step-father's failure to share household tasks: "If anything is done, the ten year old does it." Stephanie's eight year old relates grammar school to the university so much that she thinks her mom should be a college cheerleader. A heartache associated with the reentry
frequently voiced by the subjects is the need to place attendance at school over presence at family events. Both Sharon and Claire had to miss a child's birthday party. Claire explained that "Gramma and daddy would be there," but her son replied, "That's not good enough." Sarah felt guilty when she had to turn her children away so that she could study. Sue left an evening class in a panic to check on her children.

Sue's teenage girl puts the youngest child to bed on a sofa downstairs. Leona was pleased that her teenage son found her psychology book "fascinating." Ida's thirteen year old explained to would-be company that his mother had to do "projects." Irene's fifteen year old daughter, however, who has won many 4H ribbons, "could pull a meal together if she wanted," but won't unless her mother leaves explicit instructions.

Carolyn consulted her adult children about classes they had taken. Her coed daughter bought her a Liz Claibourne bookbag; when Carolyn complained that the strap dug into her shoulder, her daughter advised her not to put books in it. Carolyn's children helped her read campus maps. Her lawyer son called to ask, "Hey, Mom, did you ace that test?" Connie's daughter, who attends another college, told her mother that she had made friends with a non-traditional student and added in a whisper, "She's real nice."

The extended family also is reported as helping or hindering. Lois resents her live-in mother-in-law, labeling their relationship a "mutual strain." Laura's father and mother-in-law accuse her of neglecting the children. Stacy's family
have "a why-bother-at-your-age attitude." More positively, Claire's mother encouraged her to go back and watched the children as needed. Lydia's parents on both sides inquired about school when they telephoned. Sharon had a growing feeling that her father, a retired police chief, understands her efforts. Carolyn, at age 56, reminisced, "If I tell you this I might cry... My father watched this University grow and said, 'I would be happy if just one of my children got through that University.' And I thought, 'Dad, I'm going to be that kid.'" Stephanie received her first inspiration to return to college when she was a spectator at her brother's participation in Special Olympics on campus: "If he can come here, then maybe I can come here."

Changes

The journey of the reentry woman is not from one place to another but from one condition to another, from a non-degreed spouse and mother, to a degreed. To travel the passage toward a degree a woman had to disinvest the time and energy which she had centered on her husband and children and had to reinvest the coin of herself in herself. Sally, after recounting how she had put her husband through law school and raised her two sons, declared, "I wouldn't repeat it; there is a me and I am important too." Leona said, "Look, I have to be number one in a couple of things." Lydia found out a career is real important to her; she needed to do things to make herself happy. "I'm trying to put myself a little higher now." Claire described herself after staying home for eight years as becoming "very dependent. I hated it. That really was not me."
The student/wife/mother, investing in herself, must now disinvest in housekeeping and child care. She not only spends less time but reevaluates how much time she devoted to them in the past. Ida reflected: "I hadn't realized how crippled I had made my kids." Connie had cleaned up after the children when they were young: "That wasn't too swift of me." Stacy is learning to live with the philosophy, "If it doesn't get done, it doesn't get done." The non-traditional student is also becoming a non-traditional mother. Lydia explained: "I want (my daughters) to see (in my example) all of the possibilities and not feel limited." Stephanie couldn't drive her children to their events any more. Claire has to send her children off to do their homework alone or to help each other. Ida sums up the results of her taking the student role: "I have to rely on other people and so do the kids."

Some of the wives began to doubt the wisdom of getting married when they did. Isabel wondered, "Why did I ever get married and have that baby?" Sometimes the pressure was so great that she felt like leaving. Carolyn, married 33 years, if she had to do it over, would have postponed her marriage a year. Sabrina believed that if she had finished her education 20 years ago, no one would be less happy today.

Just as the reentry women of this study have become non-traditional students, their husbands and children correspondingly are called upon to become non-traditional. Time and energy that husbands previously invested in their work and leisure interests must now be diverted to housekeeping and
childcare. Lois reported that her husband assists with cooking and housework and spends 50% or more time with the kids than before. Sarah, Laura and Lydia depend on their mates to come home early in order for them to make classes. Carolyn's husband picks up the house and never questions if dinner is not there. On nights when Leona is at school her partner prepares food which he and the boys enjoy (not salad). Irene finds her mate more understanding of the traditional wifely role now that he has more responsibility with the home and the children; "He even thinks he can bake."

Not only have the men had to devote more time to domestic duties, but they find their wives have less time for companionship with them. Lydia's husband brings home office work which he does while she studies. "We mix talk about his work and my class." Ida's husband turns down the TV while she reads. "If it's a question of whether I will go to bed at 2:00 a.m. or midnight, he will read one of my articles and summarize." Ida's spouse is also learning to check her schedule; she never had one before. Stacy's mate has to "ask ahead of time or stand in line for her time, because school work comes first."

The change for many of our subjects' families goes beyond reinvestments of time and energy and reaches even to the rejection of the traditional paradigm to role reversal. Stacy, for example, is wrestling with complete independence. She declared, "I am the one who is different. I don't think like my husband and son. I can't change them. Maybe my husband and I should do more independently." Lou is more willing to assert her opinion; her mate doesn't
care for her new self-confidence. A rise in the husbands' "complaining and whining level" has taken place in the two-student family of Isabel and her spouse who share the stresses of school, the burdens of housework, and childcare. It is Sharon's partner who has come to count on her financial contributions and worries that school will cause her to quit work. Stephanie's husband, seeing how hard she works at school, is now the one to ask, "Why are you doing this to yourself?" Leona's mate, responsible for providing the family meals, inquires if they can get a microwave.

Work

An unanticipated finding was that work outside the home also plays an important role for many if not most reentry women. Leona was responsible for "four big ones" -- student, mother, wife and administrative assistant. For some, work was a positive factor if only because it made advanced education financially possible. The University's policy of waiving its employee's tuition directly assisted Leona, Stacy, and Connie. Sharon's boss paid for her first quarter, while Laura's former employer gave a raise to her husband who continued to work for the company. Others found in their job the impetus to return to college. Sally saw her employment "go down the tubes" with no place to advance, causing her to return earlier than she had planned. In the Section, Motivations for Returning, the four women were identified whose major drive was to increase their career opportunities through education.
Work, however, also impinged negatively in many cases, mainly because it consumed so much time. Sonya would have to quit work in order to continue college. Lydia could get by if she could cut her employment down to two days. Irene didn’t see her husband very often because of his work and her attendance at school. Sabrina declared bluntly, "If I could quit my job today, I would go for it."

The Stages

In Chapter I it was related that Arnold van Gennep identified elements of three stages in the rites of passage -- separation, liminality and incorporation. Victor Turner later added another element which occurred at any or all stages, communitas. The respondents described passing through phases of adjustment which clearly resemble the four stages.

Separation

In the first stage the intiands begin moving away from their undegreed status. For the target group it is characterized by feelings of letting go, loss and alienation. The effort to return to school was extraordinary for many. It took Stephanie three years to decide she would go back. Sarah had been announcing, "I’m going back to college," to her friends and relatives but failed to register in time. Sabrina regrets having had to wait so long and having to do it on her own. Leona asked, "Why didn’t I do this when the kids were little?" Sarah complained, "When I come home from class, everyone is asleep and I’ve missed an evening." Sharon and Isabel have shut themselves off from their
friends. Stephanie lamented, "Why do I put myself in a situation where I feel like an idiot?" Stacy sensed a loneliness: "No one else is going to be as excited about my grades as me."

**Liminality**

Liminality or, as van Gennep explained it, the state "betwixt and between," was manifested, for the respondents by confusion, learning one's way and a determination to survive.

As Leona expressed it, "I was getting kind of lost here." "Where do I go, where do I go?" is how Isabel remembers her early days on campus. Sue's self-image included ten feet. Sharon swung like a pendulum, juggled to keep everything balanced, but felt that she was breaking into it gradually. Laura saw the period as one of learning the "tricks of the trade." Sabrina knew things would improve when she found out what the instructors wanted. Carolyn declared simply: "The only thing I can do is survive."

**Communitas**

Victor Turner discovered that the initiands formed a special bond with others undergoing the same ritual. For the subjects in this study the special bond was not only with fellow students but with family members. Ida found, "If two or three come together to study you form a bond." Sharon said that seeing other women going through the same thing makes her feel she is not alone. Isabel "sits around and bitches with friends." Claire reported "tons and tons of friends" on campus. Laura related that the family and children help one get
through. Connie had her math class over to her home for pizza. She told them to bring their spouses and children -- "and they came." Ida also invited classmates home to study. Her youngest child even got the idea that a classmate was going on a family vacation with them.

**Incorporation**

The last stage for the respondents involves feelings of finality, empowerment, and planning for the future.

To Ida, "It seems like there is an end." For Irene, "The end is in sight and I can get a job now." Isabel felt she can do whatever she wants to do now, and was working on her resume' in a club. Ida was able to describe the "perfect job if she could write her own ticket." Irene is "thinking about a Master's now."

**Rites of Passage**

In Chapter I van Gennep's description of a rite of passage was presented:

"A traditional prescribed ceremony or series of symbolic acts in which individuals within or outside a tribal society were neutralized or made benevolent or revitalized by passing from one societal state to another."

Winnick (1977) gave as its purpose "to develop an emotional state that facilitated bridging the gap between the old and the new."

**University**

In the college setting there are unquestionably traditional prescribed ceremonies which neutralize (separation), make benevolent (liminality) and revitalize (incorporation) students. The question in this section is, do these
rites produce the intended effects for reentry women in intact marriages with children?

The formalities begin with the procedures of application, acceptance, registration and the opening day of school. For some reentry women, as for Sharon, it was as easy as "shuffling paper." For others like Isabel, who had to telescope the entire process into two weeks, it was a "nightmare." In any case the rituals achieved their objective of separating applicants from their old lifestyle and beginning a new one.

The new student orientation session, designed by the administration to assist the neophytes in adjusting to campus life, is also an important rite of passage. Its form, however, was criticized by the majority of the respondents and no one praised it. Lois's complaint summarized: "I had to take (a ten week orientation course). I don't think it is something that should be forced on somebody. It is a waste of time."

Lou's recitation of the courses which she will be required to take sounded like a page from a book of rubrics. "My plan is to keep taking math, the BERs, humanities, science, social sciences, then electives." Each student gave her own litany. Transferring credits is another rite. But where the traditional student has little difficulty with recently earned credits from other institutions, reentry women, like Sabrina, encounter almost insurmountable problems. "They do not accept any of my credits which means, where do I go from here? Do I want to continue on with this university?" Stephanie complained: "A lot of them
transferred, something like 104 credits, but I had to do two and a half years' work here anyway." On the other hand, the reader will recall that the university has developed the "forgiveness rule," a procedure peculiar to the reentry student. Receiving one's grades and earning a class rank are rituals as significant for returning female students as for the remainder of the student body. The participants, too, marked passage through quarters, cumulative grade averages, amassing of credits. Choosing and being accepted into their college after completing basic requirements likewise carries great meaning for the reentry women and their families. Said Sue: "I found my niche in the College of Home Economics."

The culminating rite of the university, of course, is the graduation ceremony in which the symbol par excellence, the degree, is conferred. College officials, representatives of the community, friends and family call the candidates before the assembly and, with Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstances," lofty oratory and at last the bound "sheepskin," declare them elevated to a new status, that of the degreed. As Ida explained it, "I want both of the kids to come to my graduation. They've seen this so far that I want them to come." Perhaps Isabel best expressed the passage through the university as ritual when she summed up: "It was just a matter of discipline and goals. Set the goals, make plans, then you know the steps, and follow through with it. I don't know where it all came from, but it is all there now."
Family

The university has been developing its liturgies for a thousand years. The family of the reentry woman has only had since the 1960s (Wallis, 1989) to begin ritualizing its modes of support. In order not to miss nascent rites, in Chapter I van Gennep’s description was adapted to encompass "an act or series of acts, carried out once with significant emphasis or repetitiously. . ."

The ceremonials emerging in the subjects’ families appear to cluster around special places and times. The special place of studenthood is the campus which, as the reader shall see in the next Section, is generally perceived as large and frightening at the beginning. A formal visit to the campus in an effort to allay fear and impart ease was initiated by the degreed husbands of Sally and Lois. Sharon brought her nondegreed and merely tolerant mate to the campus one Sunday afternoon to explore the library. Laura, Ida, Isabel, Sue, Stephanie, Sharon, Lydia and Claire reported introducing their children to the campus. Claire, for example, "brought her 18 year old to a couple of classes so he could see what college life was like. I brought my daughter to the library. The little one purchased football tickets and walked around campus with me." Sue and Irene let the children play on campus in summer while the parents attended class "so they would know in winter where I am (Sue)."

Time set aside for undisturbed study is essential for the subjects. In the opinion of the analyst it ritualizes the separation of roles. The functions of wife and mother are so powerfully entrenched in Western culture that without
extraordinary effort the newer role of student would simply be subsumed. In some cases the women carved out the sacred periods for themselves. Irene studied during the long ride from her home to campus; Lou used her two days a week off from work. Laura reserved every afternoon from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. when the children had to sit quietly and color or play puzzles. Sharon waited until her three-year-old had been put to bed, Claire until the entire family, including her husband, was bedded down.

In other cases the husband helped create the time. When Sarah has studying to do, her partner would take the children to the mall. Ida’s spouse would announce, "I can do (laundry and supper). You take your books and go do what you need to do." Claire’s mate entertained the children on Saturday. The researcher takes the position that in these "cultural performances" husband and wife are participating in rituals intended to bridge the gap "between the old and the new behavior."

Unlike the traditional coed who has normally one role, student, these subjects need to dedicate time to preserving their roles also as wives and mothers. Balancing and integrating these triple responsibilities is an unchartered course and requires sensitive and intelligent cooperation of all family members. Where normally the traditional student is forging her independence and preparing to separate from her family, these reentry non-traditional students were struggling to build interdependence and had no intention of leaving. Irene made a point of talking daily on the telephone with
her husband at his work. Connie's spouse did not let a day go by without asking about her classes. Lydia fed the children early so as to allow a quiet supper with her husband every night at 10:00. Isabel made Friday night special. "I would buy wine, get a VCR tape and make a nice meal."

Ida had made a sacred place for study out of the conjugal bed, reverting to her college days when she spread her books out on the covers and prepared for classes. One night her husband came up and put on the record, You Are My Hero, explaining, "I don't get to say this very often." He had two glasses of wine. She put the books away. "It had been a long while since we sat down and talked."

The children also receive their precious moments. Laura and her husband set aside Friday night for their children and keep Saturday night for themselves. Lois kisses her children every night when she comes in from class even if they are asleep. Sue has her oldest daughter leave the little one sleeping downstairs so Sue can carry the child up to her bed after class. Carolyn's sacred family time is the traditional early Sunday afternoon dinner when married children and families gather. Even the most mundane activity can take on special meaning. Sharon said, "We're all home pretty much on Sundays. It sounds funny; we all do the grocery shopping together."

Reentry women in intact marriages with children bring their entire family along through the rites of passage and the stages. Not only is Ida in the stage
of incorporation, but her family is as well. When the interviewer asked, "How does your husband introduce you?" she replied:

Sometimes he will tease me with my friends and call me a coed. I think he is really proud of the effort I do. (He and the kids) take credit for part of my grades because all pitch in and help. I've gotten grades now so many times in the mail that the kids know what the envelope looks like... The driveway is pretty far back from the house. They will get the mail, run up the driveway and say, "Our grades are here, our grades are here!"... I peel my grades back... They are real proud of how it turns out.

Symbols

In Chapter I Victor Turner is cited describing symbols as elements in an initiation of a chief. These symbols express the culture's values, norms, relationships and wisdom. For the purpose of this research the description of symbols was extended to objects, actions or omissions which have taken on special meaning for the reentry women during their passage to a degreed status.

University

The dominant symbol, of course, is the degree itself, the goal toward which the participants are striving, which gives direction and inspiration to them and those who travel with them. In regard to the degree two sets of symbols are operant, i.e., negative and positive, one representing non-degreed status and the other degreed status. Negatively Lois, Sue, Connie, Lydia, and Sabrina had images of their non-degreed selves as "stagnated," "stuck in a dead end," and even "sick." Sarah's husband would taunt her when she was ready to give up: "Are you going to flip hamburgers at White Castle the rest of your life?"

Affirmatively Stephanie, Claire, Lois, Ida, Carolyn, Sharon, Sabrina, Lydia saw
the degree standing for self-satisfaction and fulfillment. Lois, Irene, Sally reckoned it as a necessary tool for career advancement.

The next powerful image frequently invoked by the respondents was the campus itself. The interviewees used striking metaphors to describe it, especially as it appeared during their separation period. It was "a big scary place, a maze, crazy" (Sarah), "strange" (Sharon), "I was afraid to go down there" (Lydia), "a battle ground" (Irene), "a robber" (Ida), "a brick wall" (Isabel), "a bureaucracy" (Sally), "inflexible" (Laura). In van Gennep's theory the rites of passage among other things render the initiand benevolent. At first Carolyn was "scared to death, but found out real soon they don't even know you exist." By the time of the interview Carolyn and Stephanie preferred to do all their studying on campus. Although the campus itself was perceived as awesome, from the beginning certain places seemed benign. Libraries in one's particular college were mentioned as havens by Laura, Irene, Lydia, Sue and Ida.

Grades similarly carried heavy symbolism for the target group. "I like to get A's," said Lou, "B's are okay; C's I don't like." Reentry women have at least three additional reasons not shared by traditional students for scoring highly. First, their sense of duty not to give poor example to their children. Stephanie lamented: "The children just don't understand why I study so much and would get a D for instance." Secondly, their job situation, where they have to perform well in order to be retained, transfers to their school setting where they feel the same pressure to be perfect. Sabrina, Leona and Sally particularly illustrated
this compulsion. Finally, many of these women implied to the investigator that this return to school was their second and last chance.

**Family**

The researcher did not discover many newly emerging symbols peculiar to the family environment aside from symbols noted in the Section, *Rites of Passage* -- Family. Money, time, housework, and childcare or shortages thereof were commonly mentioned as having acquired new meaning. Sarah, Leona, Lou, Claire and Sharon all find the lack of money a serious concern. Laura was shocked at how many years earning the degree was going to require. Isabel's time was so precious that she confessed that the family was unable to attend church or be neighborly. Housework, undone, symbolized the lack of support shown by Sharon's husband. Sally no longer put pressure on herself to keep an immaculate house. "I will pick it up and throw it in the closet." Stacy had decided to hire a housekeeper twice a month, something Ida already had done "to dig herself out of the hole."

**Taboos**

As noted in Chapter I, van Gennep described a taboo as a negative act which existed as a counterpart to a positive rite. In this study the meaning was adapted to cover prohibited or restricted acts occasioned by the new circumstances in which reentry women find themselves. Since the unique situation of the subjects is constituted by three distinct sets of responsibilities in tension, taboos can arise which are contradictory. For example, her wifely role
tells her that it is taboo not to meet her husband's affectional needs. Her maternal role forbids her to neglect the security of her child. Her student role requires her not to miss assignments or to skip class. How she meets these conflicting demands and how her university and family assist or impede her is the scope of this section.

**University**

Student role taboos seem to fall into two categories for the subjects: "bend" and "blend." Bending includes: "Don't put off returning to college; the longer you delay the harder it gets" (Stephanie and Lydia). "Don't take less than three courses per quarter" (Sabrina); "Don't take more than five courses" (Ida). Taboos can be expressed affirmatively: "Their rules are what you go by" (Laura); "Give the book answer, not common sense or experience" (Ida).

The term "blend" is Connie's. "If there's another non-traditional student, they have come over immediately and sat down beside me like I'm a grandmother or something; I'm trying to blend in." Ida warns: "Don't draw attention to yourself, don't waste class time." Irene, echoed by Claire, admonishes: "Don't bother your fellow students, they have enough to do."

**Family**

In this Section the author will consider taboos which arise because the wife/mother added the student role to the traditional paradigm. Distinctly new taboos affect her as spouse and new taboos affect her husband. Likewise fresh taboos influence the reentry woman as mother/student and fresh taboos
influence her offspring because of the added role dimension in the traditional paradigm. Then a conflicting taboo originating from the modern shifting of a paradigm which favors the personal development of the reentry woman will be analyzed.

As students/wives the interviewees felt bans placed on them which would not be there if they were not students. While Sabrina needs to take more classes, "two courses . . . would probably drive (my husband and me) further apart." Leona can't just "jump in," her spouse demands that she make a serious commitment to education. Isabel's husband, who is a student, chose the university and will chose the future job site, thus restricting her choices.

The husband of a wife/student likewise discovers prohibitions affecting on him. Just as Leona's spouse insisted that she make a serious commitment, Stephanie believes that her husband, having urged her to enroll, should not "hold it against her" that he doesn't have a "normal stable lifestyle."

Without a doubt, the roles most difficult to reconcile and the source of most conflicting taboos are those of mother and student. The societal sanctions against the woman who attends to her own needs at the sacrifice of her children's welfare are substantially accepted by the respondents. Van Gennep, in the opinion of the writer, would style this collective assent to the taboo as a "cultural memory," rising out of human experience from time immemorial, non-biologically but socially transmitted. Laura unhesitatingly declared that her children are more important than school and she will not shirk her
responsibility. Isabel concurred: "We always put the child first." Stephanie put a "seal" upon it: "My family should not suffer because of my studies." Irene believed that she should be available to her family "when I am home."

This conviction inevitably gives rise to conflict with student obligations. Sharon "can't study, cook, and talk to (her) child at the same time." Isabel couldn't cook and hold her child, trying simultaneously to discharge her duties to husband and baby. "My son felt my tension and I felt like a bad mother." Sarah acknowledged: "Even at exam time I feel guilty if my family doesn't get my time." Sue, Stephanie and Ida want "no night classes." Lydia and Ida have to be home for the school bus: "No class before 9:00 a.m." Not only does the subject's maternal function conflict with her student responsibilities, it actually compounds them because of her need to give good example. Claire, Connie, Leona, Sue sternly ordered: "Don't complain." Ida pronounced: "I don't feel I can stamp through the house and say, 'I can't get this; this is too hard . . . (my boys) are going to remember this.'"

The reentry women take both responsibilities of mother and student so seriously that they often express doubt that they can adequately perform both. "Don't get pregnant" is the admonition of Laura, Isabel and Lou. Laura recognized that if she had a career she wouldn't have had children; because she and her husband wanted children, she didn't have a career. Isabel declared herself "almost soured" on more children, but adds, "I have learned never to say
never." Lou returned to college, found herself pregnant, but determined to continue, knowing that the passage would be harder.

A taboo, according to van Gennep, is the negative counterpart of a positive rite. As recounted in a previous Section, the participants reported multiple and striking symbolic acts of support for their return to higher education, both on the part of the university and of the family. Relying on van Gennep's theory, the researcher looked for taboos which might be emerging in response to these nascent rites of passage. The comments are those of the participants, not the spokespersons of their societies, i.e., university and family. The respondents' statements, however, arise out of their reaction to what their communities are saying to them through these rituals.

Thus, we hear Stacy:

I need to develop my own interest and feel good about my own personal achievements and not live my life through my family. I don't think women should get married, give up their education, and help their husbands through. I don't think it is good for the marriage; I don't think it is good for either person.

Sarah advises mothers/students to ignore the complaints of their children about deprivations: "They are kids and kids are selfish." Although she is distressed by feeling of guilt and frustrated by too much on her mind, Sarah again urges, "Don't let anything bother (you), switch into automatic pilot." Ida doesn't let herself look back at what she put her family through. "Don't look back." warns Connie, "you can't feel guilty about the past." Sally asserted: "I started making demands and saying, "Look, I'm here too, we need to do some things for me
too." When Sharon was growing up she was considered as the spoiled one in the family. "I guess that's true; it's again Sharon putting everything else down for what she wants to do."

**Identifiable Subculture**

All but five respondents made comments which suggest a strong sense of being part of a significantly different group of students with characteristics peculiar to themselves. Claire thought of herself as a "returning student," Connie as a "non-traditional student." Isabel defined herself with mathematical precision, "one stage up," from the rest.

The most distinguishing mark of which the subjects were conscious was that of age which they expressed neutrally or negatively. Irene was "not as young," Claire was "getting older." In a negative vain, Stephanie commented that she is "deteriorating." Irene observed that her "brain cells have died." Coupled with feelings of age were complaints about lack of energy. Isabel found "there's not enough of me." Carolyn experienced school work as "very, very hard" and had reached her "limit." Members of the group described themselves as "feeling like a real dummy," (Stephanie), and "feeling dumber, dumber, dumber, because I couldn't get it" (Isabel, who is about to graduate).

Not all the group's self-assessments as older, however, were negative. Irene's pronouncement, "I have been around twenty years more than most of these kids," had a positive ring, as did Lydia's observations that her nursing experience gave her more understanding of her studies now than when she
started college immediately after high school. Despite her discouragement, Stephanie believed that "age should not be a barrier" to going back to college. Claire agreed, "because you’re getting older, don’t lie down and die." She took the obligation even further: "I need to do better than I would have if I was 18."

Not only did the reentry women in this study see themselves as different -- older, less energetic, but more experienced -- they also saw their counterparts as quite other. They are "traditional students" (Leona), "eighteen or nineteen year olds" (Ida), "single and age twenty-three" (Lou). They have "extra advantages" and "their own things to do" (Claire), "different responsibilities (Leona). Leona doubted that "they realize the magnitude of what they’re doing here." Connie agreed: "I don’t think (the younger students) are realizing how important these things are." To Lydia they are simply "giddy."

Opinion was divided about the possibility of forming friendships with traditional students. Lou flatly denied the possibility. Sally, however, got to be "real good friends with two or three of the kids" and received "no unusual treatment." Claire had the same experience: they didn’t treat her as "mom" but as an "equal peer."

In Chapter I, a subculture was defined as a group within a larger society which is recognized as significantly different and has developed its own patterns of behavior and techniques for mastering the environment which it transmits to its members non-biologically. It is clear from the interviews that reentry women do regard themselves as a distinct group in the student body. From the analysis
of rites, symbols and taboos it further appears that these women through interaction with the university and their families are developing specialized mechanisms which allow them to cope with the roles of wife, mother and student. The university itself has provided the "forgiveness rule" for all non-traditional students, a concession much used by the reentry women. A compassionate exercise of discretion on the part of many professors to accommodate their special circumstances is not rare. Advisors who took the time to map out specific directions are mentioned frequently. The openness of the campus to children makes it more hospitable to them as mothers.

In the family the mechanisms are the nascent rites of passage symbols and taboos, based to a large extent on the current shift in the traditional paradigm of spouse and mother. Up to now our culture has decreed that a married woman should find her self-actualization first and foremost in her relationship with her husband and her children in her own well-kept home. Today married women with children are beginning to look at a new model which focuses on personal development. The freedom and joy which come from self-actualization are expected to overflow into their families and communities. It is not without twinges of fear, doubt and guilt that they start this new passage. Husbands and children, too, are coming to share this insight. Setting aside the sacred times and places for study, sharing the duties of housework and childcare, allocating funds, rearranging schedules, discussing her student progress in family conversations constitute the "patterns of behavior and
techniques of managing the environment" which are imparting to reentry women a distinct identity as a subculture.

**Findings**

On the basis of the foregoing analysis the following findings are submitted in response to the hypothetical questions in Chapter I. The answers to the subsidiary questions address the fundamental question and define the nature of the rites of passage, symbols and taboos among reentry female students in intact marriages with children. The answers incorporate the exact language and are presented in the same order employed in the statement of the problem and its elements.

Family members, including the subjects, fear that the adoption of the new student status will result in the extinction or diminution of her existing status as wife and mother. They go to great lengths to protect these roles.

An identifiable subculture among reentry female students is beginning to emerge with specific techniques for mastering their two principal environments.

The adjustment attempts of both the university and the family are giving rise to phenomena which may be characterized as rites of passage, symbols and taboos.

The subject population passes through stages of adjustment which may be described as "separation, liminality, communitas and incorporation."

Representatives of the University advise and support the reentry student in her attempts to integrate higher education with her other roles.
The target group identified rites of passage, symbols and taboos coming from the university administration which facilitate or impede her transition. Most traditional rituals assist her; the new student orientation class and master class does not.

The reentry woman experiences very little from either the traditional or non-traditional students which support or deter her in her efforts to remain a faithful wife and mother.

Associations, formal and informal, with students do not consistently increase or decrease the sense of isolation of the respondents; they depend mostly upon immediate family for support.

She and her colleagues experienced few rites of passage, symbols and taboos in common.

Husband and children significantly support or impede the efforts of the wife and mother who returns to college. They make or fail to make funds, time and space available. They share or fail to share traditional domestic duties. They offer or withhold approval. So important is this support that if husband and children do not meet the reentry woman’s needs, she will find a substitute at work, among friends, or in the extended family.

The major finding in this study is that for a successful transition there must be a notable disinvestment on the part of every member, including the subject, from the former paradigm of spouse and mother which dictates that she find her happiness in self-sacrifice for her family.
The new norm which is developing for combining the role of student, wife, and mother is that the achievement of her educational goal must be given very high, if not primary, importance by the family.

New family rites reflecting changes in the relationships among members have arisen. Husbands are called upon to be more nurturing, children more independent, wives more dedicated to their personal cognitive development. The rituals center around formal visits to the campus, setting aside inviolable places and times at home for study, family celebrations of academic achievement, and providing occasions to renew the bonds of wife and husband, mother and children.

Money, time, place, housework, childcare, and the lack thereof have taken on new meanings as symbols of the transition.

The traditional taboo imposed on the family by society says that a married woman with children may not reenter higher education or any other domain until the needs of her husband and children have been met. A new taboo is arising: a woman must not sacrifice herself for her husband and children. In becoming her best self, she best serves her husband and children.

A concrete summary of the principal rites of passage, symbols and taboos on the campus and in the home identified by the subjects of this study are presented in Table 6.
Table 6

Rites, Symbols, Taboos Presented Schematically

I. University Environment

A. Rites
1. all traditional rites apply
2. new student orientation not appropriate
3. “forgiveness rule” especially appropriate

B. Symbols
1. all traditional symbols apply
2. non-degree status - state of crisis, flipping hamburgers
3. degree status - fulfilled, empowered, career ready
4. campus - intimidating
5. libraries, colleges - havens

C. Taboos
1. bend - do it their way not your way
2. blend - don’t draw attention to yourself

II. Family Environment

A. Rites
1. visits to campus with husband and children
2. inviolable times and places for study
   -routinely created by wife (commuting, days off from work, afternoon while children play, evening while family sleeps)
   -routinely created by husband (entertaining kids, performing domestic tasks)
3. routine or extraordinary efforts to preserve spousal role
   -daily telephone calls
   -daily discussion of his work and her work
   -late supper without children
   -Friday dinner with wine and video
   -surprise intrusion to study place with record and wine
4. routine or extraordinary efforts to preserve family unity
   -Friday for kids; Saturday for parents
   -nightly kisses for sleeping children
   -traditional Sunday afternoon homecoming dinner
   -Sunday grocery shopping together

B. Symbols
1. Money
   -enormous sacrifice now
   -reward after degree
2. time - how much it takes
3. housework - lesser importance
   -husband and children help
4. children - rely on others (causes some guilt)
   -husband and older children support
5. grades - “our” grades
   -progress and affirmation

C. Taboos
1. RE husband
   -affecting wife; don’t disturb, don’t alienate, don’t step over his decision territory
2. RE children
   -affecting mother; they come first, no night classes, don’t hold child, cook and study at the same time, don’t complain, bad example, don’t cripple them by being too helpful
   -affecting children: learn to take care of yourselves, don’t be selfish, don’t always rely on “mom” for help, don’t expect mother to do your schoolwork
3. RE self
   -There’s a me and I am important too
   -Don’t sacrifice your development
   -Don’t live your life through your husband or children
Chapter V

Summary, Implications for Adult Education,
Recommendations for Further Research

Summary

The purpose of this research was to discover if an investigation of the phenomenon of married women with children returning to college from the perspective of rites of passage theory would afford adult educators fresh insights and practical ideas for assisting reentry women in their transition. In Chapter I a hypothetical research question was framed, "What is the nature of rites of passage, symbols and taboos (if any exist) operant among reentry female students in intact marriages with children?" The fundamental question had to be prefaced by subsidiary questions which recognize that the reentry women of this study are attempting to discharge three roles -- wife, mother and student -- in at least two distinct environments, home and campus. The subsidiary questions were designed to explore the interaction of the subjects within their families, search for changes in role paradigms, and look for evidence of rites of passage, symbols and taboos. Similarly questions were framed to examine how the university administration, faculty and fellow students help or hinder reentry women in fulfilling their combined roles and whether use is made of rites of passage, symbols and taboos. Van Gennep's theory was reviewed and
terminology originally devised to describe tribal societies was adapted to fit the target group.

In Chapter II the writings of psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists about transition in general and the writings of adult educators about the transition of reentry women were reviewed. It was concluded that the outline of a general theory is emerging. Married women with children today are being driven to return to college both by the dynamics of their personal development and by the demands of their culture. They need to be approved and guided with rituals staged by the two most significant societies in their life at this time, family and university.

In Chapter III it was explained that the qualitative research strategy was selected for this study because the phenomena under examination are recent, complex, in flux and at this stage not sufficiently defined to be mathematically measurable. Thereafter were described the selection of the participants, the semi-structured interviews in natural settings and the analysis based on compendia of the subject's own words.

In Chapter IV the findings were presented. The target group exhibits the features of an evolving sub-culture. The reentry women's reports indicated that they were passing through stages parallel to separation, liminality, communitas and incorporation identified by van Gennep and Turner. Rites of passage, symbols and taboos which support the wife/mother in her transition from non-degreed to degreed status are to be found both in the family and in the
university. Most significantly, at the heart of the phenomenon was found a shifting from the traditional paradigm of wife and mother with a correlative shift in the paradigms of husband and child. Where heretofore the culture has dictated that a married woman must first meet the needs of her family, society is now beginning to say that a woman must not sacrifice herself for her husband and children: in becoming her best self, she best serves others. Such is the deepest meaning underlying the new rites, symbols and taboos.

Implications for Adult Education

As noted at the outset of this study "the practical purpose of this research is to determine which family actions and which university policies together help or hinder the reentry woman in achieving her goal." What follows are ten practical determinations derived from the hypothesized findings.

1. The respondents reported that the university's rich tradition of ceremony speaks to them. Adult educators would do well to expand existing rituals or devise new ones which involve her family, the group who accompanies her the most closely through the transition.

2. There is need for each family to devise its own individualized rites of passage. Through manuals, discussions and perhaps the new student orientation course adult educators can offer guidance to reentry women in developing their own family rituals.

3. Accommodations of policy which carry the full force of the university were perceived by the reentry women as helpful. Adult educators might consider more policies designed to meet the needs of this special population, e.g., credit for life experience, independent study, modified attendance requirements.

4. In the family the dominant symbol of reentry is the lack of money. For the middle income group sources of financial aid need to be developed as they have been for those indexed at poverty level.
5. The second dominant family symbol of reentry is the shortage of time. In addition to family duties most subjects have employment obligations. Procedures for the many and diverse tasks associated with matriculation should be brought together in one place at one time.

6. Academic counseling services were criticized for providing erroneous advice causing waste of precious time and money on needless courses and delaying progress. Adult educators should assign reentry women only counselors who are adept at evaluating educational histories and recommending appropriate courses of action.

7. The required new student orientation classes are unanimously disliked as a waste of time and money. Certainly these mandated sessions need to be redesigned for nontraditional students, including reentry women, making use of the insights of this research and similar studies.

8. Just as a family cannot escape the fact that a returning wife and mother is a student, university personnel should at the very least be disposed to understand the reentry woman's multiple responsibilities and develop a flexibility in class procedures. Syllabi should be provided which allow the student to plan around heavy assignments and longterm projects.

9. A major finding of this research is the shift in the target group away from the traditional paradigm of wife and mother. Reentry women are called upon to disinvest time and energy from spouse and children and to reinvest in themselves as students. This disequilibrium creates a tension of taboos which adult educators must understand. It can be anticipated that the student/wife/mother will manifest ambivalent behavior. In the right circumstances an instructor or advisor should consider discussing the phenomenon and offering appropriate encouragement.

10. Awareness of developmental stages in adulthood has helped many to cope with personal crisis. Accordingly knowledge of the stages in the transition from non-degreed to degreed status can be expected to aid reentry women in the interpretation of what is transpiring with a consequent reduction in stress and confusion. It behooves professors and counselors who serve this adult group to become familiar with the stages.

**Implications From Unhypothesized Findings**

In addition to the findings which respond to the hypothetical questions recorded at the end of Chapter IV and examined above, other unhypothesized
findings emerged from the analysis which have implications for adult educators. These observations taken together present a profile of reentry women in intact marriages with children. Those whose duty it is to recruit students for adult education and the instructors who must face them in the classroom should take into account these traits for the benefit of both the university and the reentry women.

The members of this population are powerfully motivated both to return and to persevere. Among four year returning women students the primary motive is self-fulfillment more than career enhancement, although the latter is not missing. The subjects speak of achieving life-long goals, finishing the unfinished. In some cases they have a sense of shame and incompleteness because of their non-degreed status. If they are motivated for economic reasons it is usually for the future security of their children. Typically the impulse to return is sparked by a psychological crisis: She is "stagnated, bored, at a dead end." Occasionally the crisis is provoked by a traumatic event such as loss of job or marital separation.

Educational history is of interest. Six of the 19 returnees had previously earned an associate degree; another had acquired 28 credits toward such a degree. Six had partially fulfilled the requirements of a four year degree. The point is that persons with previous higher educational experiences are likely candidates for further participation in adult education. Again, desire for self-development is the primary motive regardless of educational background.
University marketing experts and adult educators would be well advised to build on the past successes, academic and other life orientations, of the reentry female population.

Two-thirds of the subjects in this research were employed. The positive encouragement and actual financial aid of employers had a significant impact on their reentry. This finding indicates that representatives of four-year degree programs should explore this market. The importance of such encouragement by employers has certainly not escaped the attention of adult educators in areas of continuing education, community service and technical training programs.

Recommendations for Further Research

The boundaries of the conceptual framework for this study were tightly drawn; reentry women, intact marriage, children, rites of passage, symbols, taboos, university, home, paradigms. The qualitative research method encourages the subjects to express themselves fully, thus opening other avenues of inquiry. The author would note in particular the following:

1. Replications of the study of rites of passage from other perspectives.
   a. Husband and children of female reentrant
   b. The male reentry student
   c. Wife and children of male reentrant
   d. Reentry women without children and or spouses

2. Replication of the study from the perspective of reentry women with children not in intact marriages. The role of mother is the most difficult to reconcile with the role of student. The inquiry would examine what bearing the "intactity" of the marriage has on the phenomenon.

3. Replication of the study at institutions of differing character, e.g, two year college, rural campus, private or religious college.
4. A longitudinal study focusing on the stages of the passage for further verification and identification of nuances.

5. Research into the shifting paradigm of wife and mother among reentry women, degrees of the shift, reaction of others, impact on adult education. Perhaps quantitative methodology is appropriate here.

6. An investigation into the effectiveness of reentry student orientation programs among a broad sample of colleges and universities.

7. An examination of the interaction between the returning student and the work place.
APPENDIX A

APPROVAL FROM HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW COMMITTEE
Research Involving Human Subjects

ACTION OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE

With regard to the employment of human subjects in the proposed research protocol:

88B0176 RETURNING TO COLLEGE, MARRIED WOMEN WITH CHILDREN: RITES OF PASSAGE, SYMBOLS AND TABOOS, William D. Dowling, Nancy P. Redding, Educational Policy and Leadership

THE BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES REVIEW COMMITTEE HAS TAKEN THE FOLLOWING ACTION:

____ APPROVED

____ DISAPPROVED

____ APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS* WAIVER OF WRITTEN CONSENT GRANTED

* Conditions stated by the Committee have been met by the Investigator and, therefore, the protocol is APPROVED.

It is the responsibility of the principal investigator to retain a copy of each signed consent form for at least four (4) years beyond the termination of the subject's participation in the proposed activity. Should the principal investigator leave the University, signed consent forms are to be transferred to the Human Subjects Review Committee for the required retention period. This application has been approved for the period of one year. You are reminded that you must promptly report any problems to the Review Committee, and that no procedural changes may be made without prior review and approval. You are also reminded that the identity of the research participants must be kept confidential.

Date: December 2, 1988 Signed: [Signature]

(Chairperson)

HS-025B (Rev. 3/85)
APPENDIX B

APPROVAL FOR PILOT STUDY
January 30, 1989

Ms. Nancy P. Redding
712 South Elizabeth St.
Lima, OH 45804

Dear Nancy:

The Research Committee at Ohio State University at Lima has carefully studied your proposal for a pilot study to be conducted on this campus. The committee has approved your project and granted permission for you to proceed. Walter Earle, Assistant Professor of Psychology, will oversee your compliance with rules for the study of human subjects and serve as an advisor for the project. Please check regularly with Professor Earle, and feel free to contact either of us anytime you need help.

Sincerely,

John W. Hevener, Chairman
Faculty Research Committee
APPENDIX C

APPROVAL FOR MAJOR STUDY
Request To Do Privileged Research
in University College

I. (To Be Filled Out By Applicant):

I hereby request permission to do privileged research on University College students as described in the attached research proposal. The proposed research may be briefly described as follows:

The writer proposes to investigate the rites of passage, symbols, and taboos among women entering marriage with children, who combine the sometimes contradictory roles of wife, mother, student. The author intends to apply insights gained by anthropologists in studies of tribal society, notably Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner, within a modern university subculture. Employing methods of grounded research, the author hopes to gain fresh information which will assist the reentry student and academia in meeting the demands of the phenomenon.

I have read the Guidelines and Procedures for the Approval of Privileged Research in University College, and am willing to abide by all of the conditions stated in that document.

Date November 15, 1985
Signature Nancy D. Redding

II. (To Be Signed By Faculty Member If Applicant is a Graduate Student):

I hereby certify that the above-referenced proposed research involving access to student records and/or students in University College is sound in its design and is worthy of approval.

Date July 15, 1986
Signature
Title

III. Approval or Disapproval

After consultation with appropriate colleagues I have concluded that the above-referenced research request is consistent with the Guidelines for the Approval of Requests to Do Privileged Research in University College, and the request is hereby approved.

Date January 24, 1987
Signature

Dean, University College
March 12, 1990

Dr. William Dowling  
Adult Education Department  
The Ohio State University  
Columbus, Ohio 43210

Re: Audit of Nancy Redding’s dissertation research

Dear Dr. Dowling:

I have examined the audit trail and research report of Nancy Redding’s study of rites of passage, symbols and taboos which affect reentry women. I reviewed the raw data in the form of transcribed interviews, the analyses of those interviews, and other documentation listed in the attached report in accord with audit guidelines recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1982).

I believe that Nancy Redding’s report represents a dependable and confirmable account of the research, conducted in a professional manner in conformity with generally accepted qualitative research principles.

Sincerely,

Ellen D. Beck, Ph.D.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


