

Using any two chapters from Mary Catherine Bateson's *Peripheral Visions* write an essay of approximately 500 words explaining what "learning along the way" means as a form of inquiry.

"Stories and reflections strung together to suggest a style of learning form experience. Wherever as story comes from, whether it is a familiar myth or a private memory, the retelling exemplifies the making of a connection from one pattern to another."(11) "Learning along the way" as a form of inquiry is shown many times in the first two chapters of Mary Bateson's book *Peripheral Visions*. In chapter one: *Improvisation in a Persian Garden*, Bateson talks about her experience of a traditional Feast of Sacrifice for the Holy Muslim holiday Eyd-e. In this experience, Bateson details both her and her daughter's new experience and what they learn during the course of the meal. Her daughter is very young and has no conception of what is about to take place. Bateson says, "That trip to Iran was not the first time I had entered a strange culture, but it was the first time I had to do so with a child."(2) After the sheep had been sacrificed, and the Gardner was butchering the it, Bateson was attempting to explain to her daughter what each part was, "I had slipped into a teaching role, taking advantage of the visual aids to give a mini lecture about each organ, using a vocabulary appropriate to a two and a half year old."(4) What was also happening at the time was Bateson was learning herself about the actual visual appearance of internal organs, "Because I had an abstracted knowledge of anatomy, distanced from the reality, and because I was preoccupied with Vanni's experience, it was almost impossible to realize that I was encountering something new myself."(4) This learning along the way can best be described by Bateson herself, "I was in that garden as a learner, an outsider, and yet because I was there as a parent, I was simultaneously a teacher and authority."(5)

In chapter Two: *Learning from Strangers*, Bateson this time is living in the Philippines, and in this experience she is learning about the difference between American and Filipinos grieving for lost loved ones. Bateson is not ready for what she encounters at the wake of an older woman who lived down the street. At the wake, "relatives gathered, neighbors were coming and going, expressing condolences and offering money and then standing and gossiping."(18) That is what Bateson expected as this is how most American funerals are conducted. However, it was what was going just outside that was foreign and strange to Bateson, "Boys and girls were playing world games and flirting at the door, and gambling tables and barbecues were set up outside, with General merriment continuing though the warm night,

nosily audible in the room wherever the body was laid out.”(17) For Bateson, even though she had been told what to expect she was still surprised and taken aback, “I now how to act but my feelings were foreign. For an American.....the handling of dearth implies silence and decorum, privacy of the bereaved be respected.”(18) Bateson took the activity in and later after talking to people at the wake was learned that this process was very important for not only the family but for the community as a whole. “ Later I understood that my presence represented an extra honor for the old woman who died. The games and gambling were explained as necessary to keep people awake and to ensure that there would be no solitude....Wakes are important to the young people, the best available opportunity for courting.”(18) Later on in Chapter 2 Bateson also learns that the Filipinos not only treat Wakes differently but also are very straight forward and blunt about asking questions about death. Bateson herself lost a child and after that she explains “ What I learned in the Philippines from Martin’s Birth and death prepared me for living and dying still to come.”(20-21)