

**The School-to-Work Transition:
Voice in the Search for Occupational Identity**

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Abstract

This thesis is the story of a young woman enrolled in a co-operative education program in a Canadian secondary school. It examines the relationship between her school-to-work transition, occupational identity development, and relational voice as she negotiates her emerging role in the adult world of work. In particular, the thesis focuses on the contradictions, struggles, and realities within her personal and professional relationships, school experiences, and part-time work. Data were collected from indepth interviews and periods of observation both in school and at her work placement. The thesis also presents a methodological model with which to conduct critical, reflective life story research. It identifies the need for critical reflection as a regular part of the preparation and implementation of ongoing research activities involving the study of relational voices and related topics.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis focuses on the role of relational voice in the formation of occupational identity during the school-to-work transition. Specifically, it looks at one young woman's story: Jane, a Grade 12 student enrolled in a co-operative education program. It is an examination of the influence of Jane's voice -- how she perceives herself in her world, and how she makes choices based on her perceptions -- on the development of her occupational identity. It offers an interpretation of how her choices have led and are leading her towards a career working with children.

The thesis report is structured as follows. The Introduction begins with a review of the literature on the major themes of the thesis, namely, the school-to-work transition, work education, occupational identity, and voice. Next, it states the problem, purpose, implications, and context of the research study. The methodological strategies are discussed in Chapter 2; these include participant selection, data collection, data management, analysis, adequacy, and limitations, as well as the researcher's model for conducting critical, reflective life story research. Jane, the young woman whose life story is told within the thesis, is introduced briefly in Chapter 3. Chapter 4, the core of the analysis, illuminates the ways in which Jane has silenced her predominant relational voice, ways in which she has resisted that silence, and the influence of both her silence and resistance on her school-to-work transition. The critical, reflective model, originally introduced in Chapter 2, is briefly revisited as praxis in Chapter 5. The final chapter forms the conclusion.

THE SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION

The transition from high school to full-time work has been seen as "the transition from a sheltered and benign world of adolescence to a competitive and harsh world that must be negotiated alone" (Gaskell, 1992, p. 53). It is a critical factor in the lives of adolescents, and Gaskell tells us that it is exacerbated when economic conditions weaken and the number of young adults preparing to enter the world of work increases. Although students may lack sophistication in knowing and understanding important issues about work, they are in the process of preparing themselves for it.

This preparation will impact on their future behaviours in the work force and includes the development of positive attitudes about work and effective communication skills (Alpern, 1991; Barton & Kirsch, 1990; Hazler & Latto, 1987). These attitudes and skills stem from a well-developed internal locus of control, strong family attitudes about work, and school achievement, amongst others (Bond, Stockley & Boak, 1995).

Schools play an integral role in preparing young people for work, yet in doing so are faced with major challenges (Gaskell, 1987; Nikiforuk, 1993). For instance, not all jobs are equally desirable. Some occupations offer more pay, higher prestige, and better working conditions than others. And, since access to attractive occupations depends in large part on successful school completion, schools are in the position of gatekeepers (Walsh, 1993). Yet, schools are the agencies of society as a whole: taxpayers support them, and all children are required by law to attend. Schools are committed to uphold the ideals of our society which include helping all students to achieve their maximum potential.

The economic advantages that are believed to accrue to individuals and to society from schooling have provided the basis for education expansion and have shaped the form that schooling has taken (Walsh, 1993). According to Nikiforuk (1993), children are taught in school that the purpose of education is to facilitate the development of their intelligence, talents, and abilities. Gaskell (1992) adds that schooling is presented as justified by its relationship to the intrinsic values of critical enquiry, the love of knowledge, and participation in the democratic process. Further, education affords students the opportunity to prepare for a career, to advance in life, to succeed, and to enjoy personal fulfillment.

Preparation in school for the world of work takes two forms. In one, students' educational qualifications prepare them for the world of work. School is a place where they work hard and are given a piece of paper that says -- to them, to employers, to universities -- that they have, at the very least, met minimum expectations. The second form of work preparedness is more immediate. It brings the relations and content of

work inside the classroom in the form of work education. School work, in this case, may be seen to be based on knowledge and skills instead of credentials.

Schools play a role in reinforcing the low socio-economic status of women in Canada (Gaskell, 1987, 1992; Gaskell, McLaren & Novogrodsky, 1989). According to Nikiforuk (1993), the view is widely held that Canadian education provides children of all classes, races, religions, and both sexes, with an equal chance to succeed in life. If a child fails, it is assumed to be his or her fault. In a different light, Nikiforuk suggests that the issues surrounding the continuing inequality in our society is evident in the hierarchical school system. Rees' (1990) study on behalf of the Canadian Educational Association indicates that the education system in Canada is still male-dominated in almost all positions other than elementary teachers. Further, Giroux and McLaren (1991) suggest that in addition to institutionalized social and power relations in schools, women's interests are subordinated to the interests of men through the patriarchal wording of texts in classrooms.

What is true for women as a whole is especially true for young women from working class backgrounds. Nikiforuk (1993) suggests that, although all students may benefit from effective instruction within a critically framed curriculum, there is an ever-widening gap between middle-class and working-class students in North American schools. Similarly, in a study of Canadian teenage girls, Kostash (1987) found that, although a majority of girls aspired to postsecondary education, those from wealthier families were likelier both to make this choice and to carry it through. Their parents tended to pay for their education, whereas working class girls had to finance their own.

Along with institutionalized inequality, the individual experiences of girls must be given equal consideration in any discussion of gender issues in school. Family and cultural background may account for some differences in attitudes and beliefs. For instance, some girls may be socialized to be passive, accepting, and nurturing. They may be expected to enjoy quiet games and activities, and not to take risks. Given this, some girls still operate at a tremendous social and economic disadvantage

compared to boys. As these young women make the school-to-work transition, Apter (1993) suggests that they tend to be paid less money at their jobs, receive less attention at school, and are given fewer breaks at home.

Young women have little or no control over the environmental and societal factors that have influenced and continue to influence them (Apter, 1993; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Horner, 1972; Reis, 1987). Our society gives mixed messages to females. Powerful stereotypes are delivered to them about their role in life and their own importance (Garrison, Stronge & Smith, 1986; Weaver & Hill, 1994). In their research, Brown and Gilligan (1992) found strong evidence that many teenage girls seem to lose their vitality, their sense of themselves, their resilience, and their immunity to depression. They also found that adolescent girls tend to use the phrase "I don't know" a lot in their struggle to understand their worlds. They saw adolescent girls who feel they cannot say what they know or feel or have experienced. This silencing affects their feelings about themselves, their relationships with others, and their ability to act in the world.

Clearly, gains have been made in the women's movement. Consciousness of problems is much greater than it was. More women are pursuing higher education. Textbooks have been rewritten. Women's studies programs exist. Canadians have achieved an equal rights provision in the Charter of Rights (Gaskell, McLaren & Novogrodsky, 1989). The Canadian Education Act was amended to require school boards to establish and maintain a policy of affirmative action with respect to the employment and promotion of women (Rees, 1990). But the problems have not disappeared. Women continue to take most of the responsibility for unpaid work in the family. They continue to get paid less than men. The pink collar ghetto persists. Frequently, women enter a career only to remain in "women's jobs," jobs segregated from mainstream promotions and benefits. Or, they enter professions which are thought to promise much, only to find that either promotion eludes them or their desire to advance clashes with a need for balance in their lives. Women are represented

neither equally in proportion to males nor to their own gender representation in our schools (Rees). It would seem that existing work structures tend to reproduce themselves. Accordingly, Apter (1993) suggests that the world of work,

either . . . repeatedly, continuously, and persistently take[s] into account women's domestic roles, and in so doing reinforce[s] those roles, or . . . ignore[s] the work and time of family life, and restrict[s] the work opportunities of anyone who might have to tend to the young, the old, or the ill. (p. 32)

Gaskell (1992) and Gaskell, McLaren and Novogrodsky (1989) emphasize the value of curriculum in confronting gender issues in school. They say that what is taught and how it is received by students is of the utmost importance. These researchers propose that a rejection of traditional stereotypes must be combined with a positive acknowledgement of the experiences of women. They suggest that gender must be recognized as intrinsic to the production and incorporation of knowledge. It must transcend the way it has organized our lives and knowledge in a patriarchal society. They also suggest that we must look beyond the individual to institutions because the structure of these institutions shapes patterns of school achievement and later rewards in the adult world of work. They go on to say that any belief that schools and their programs might be changed quickly is misguided. Change involves the unglamorous day-to-day issues facing every teacher, student, and parent.

The obstacles to equal opportunity for young women bridging the school-to-work transition are generally underrated. Apter (1993) suggests that the social practices underlying prevailing structures of disadvantage which affect girls and women are deeply embedded in social and economic life. She adds that they are strongly reinforced in the household, in the youth and adult labour markets, in the organization of economic life, and in schools. This does not make stagnation inevitable, Apter concludes, but it explains why headway is so slow, and why progress on any one front is insufficient.

As we work towards understanding how women act within their historical and

social structure, how they reinforce it and how they might change it, we should focus, too, on how the structure is not purely oppressive. Apter (1993) suggests that many constraints arise from women's desire to preserve what they have and what they value. She goes on to say that, for many women, young and old alike, offering their domestic and emotional services to others is not oppression but a rewarding fact of life. Thus, the responsibility to change the system becomes a series of questions and negotiations rather than a set of battle plans.

Current trends suggest that young female wage-earners will face increasingly difficult social and economic conditions (Lindgren, 1994). Given all these considerations, can schools effectively prepare young people -- particularly, nonuniversity-bound young women -- for the workforce?

WORK EDUCATION

The education system plays a role in preparing young people for work. School-based work education initiatives constitute one such forum. In-school initiatives include technological studies programs, co-operative education courses or programs, career planning courses, apprenticeship programs, and the like. Out-of-school work initiatives include co-operative education or apprenticeship work placements, job shadowing, paid part-time work, and volunteer jobs (Gray, 1991; Grubb, 1989).

The relationship between school and work has long been a subject of analysis (Borman, 1991; Gaskell, 1992, 1987; Simon, Diplo & Schenke, 1991). These researchers, amongst others, suggest that what is learned in school generally, and work education specifically, is driven by workplace needs. However, there seems to be no consensus in exactly what this means. Some educators argue that schools should provide students with the work skills necessary to function in the world of work (Nikiforuk, 1993). Others argue that work education relegates some students to low-skill, dead-end jobs and runs the risk of perpetuating such historically negative aspects of the workplace as gender bias, class segregation, lack of job security, and devaluation of working class jobs (Apter, 1993; Borman; Gaskell, 1992).

Structural pressures pressure schools to take a narrow view of vocational training and to turn out minimally educated workers able to carry out specific tasks. Yet, job specific vocational preparation alone may be no longer appropriate. Many school leavers are still at the stage of sorting out their ideas and learning about the world of work, as well as discovering their own potential. And in a labour market where jobs are scarce, it is important to keep young people's options open with respect to job choice. Further, technological change is likely to alter the structure of many jobs, and it is those workers with a good initial training in a range of related vocations rather than for a particular job who are likely to be winners.

We are concerned, as educators, with pedagogies that attempt to influence the ways in which youth will survive economically and socially after their required period of schooling. In addressing this concern at a concrete level, Simon (1992) suggests that many work education programs make problematic the issue of enabling students to become successful producers of valuable services through the acquisition of specific attitudes, knowledge, and skills. He goes on to say that if we are interested in education for work and not simply as training for jobs, we must help students "to understand the economic, social, and cultural relations that shape their sense of what is possible and desirable influences the extent to which they are able to define an expanded range of possibilities for the future" (p. 123).

School-workplace linkage initiatives that provide students with opportunities to participate in the workplace and then reflect on their experiences introduce unique pedagogical opportunities and challenges (Ahola-Sidaway & McKinnon, 1993; Simon, Dippo & Schenke, 1991). First-hand experiences in the world of work provide more authentic opportunities for critical examination of issues than contrived school-based settings (Ahola-Sidaway, Simser, Spletzer & McKinnon, 1994). Reflective discussion about workplace experiences provides a forum for examination of gender-related social and occupational issues (Ahola-Sidaway & McKinnon; Simon, Dippo & Schenke). These discussions allow students to examine, for example, alternatives to

the "deficit model" of explaining young women's lack of success at school and work (Gaskell & Novogrodsky, 1989). They can provide insights into how patterns of school achievement and rewards in the labour market can be contextualized within a larger framework of social, historical, cultural, and political issues. At the same time, Rudduck (1994) recognizes the difficulty of addressing issues of gender equality in schools because it may bring to light the contradictions in students' lives.

Social competence, adaptability, and social skills for getting along with others also seem to be important factors in obtaining and holding a job as well as helping the development of occupational identity (Mainquist & Eichorn, 1989; Wheelles, 1991). Work education programs geared to preparing youth for the adult world of work seem likely venues for encouraging positive attitudes about work, enhancing self-esteem, and developing social skills.

Work education is an important factor in coming to a better understanding of young people in general, and young women in particular, poised to enter the world of work directly after secondary school. What is needed now, according to Giroux (1991), is an analysis of how students' identities are shaped in relation to work education. Taking this notion one step further, Simon, Dippo and Schenke (1991) suggest that addressing the development of students' identities in relation to work education is "necessary for developing a pedagogy of work experience that is both concrete and transformative" (p. xiv).

Co-operative education (co-op ed) is an increasingly popular work education initiative in Canadian schools. Recent statistics indicate that an estimated ten percent of secondary students in Ontario participate in the program (Bond, Stockley & Boak, 1995; OMOE, 1989). Offered in Ontario under the Ministry of Education guidelines, co-op ed is an experiential mode of learning that integrates academic study and classroom theory with experiences at the worksite. In a co-op ed program, students are placed in training stations, typically local businesses, government offices, or other institutional settings. The intention of these placements is that students be provided

with challenging responsibilities and learn by doing. In this way, learning and experience can be combined in an educationally beneficial way. The program is intended to promote skill development, career development, and self-awareness in young adults. Both university-bound and nonuniversity-bound students can potentially benefit from co-operative education experiences. The program values all forms of experiential learning. They are seen to maximize students' growth and development, and to complement career development needs (OMOE, 1989).

Co-op ed programs in Ontario are comprised of both in-school and worksite components and may last one or more terms. A typical one-term program amounts to about 250 hours. This includes 20 hours of in-school pre-placement sessions covering instruction in self-assessment and job-readiness skills, as well as information related to health and safety, labour unions, confidentiality, ethics, and school and workplace expectations. Periodic (generally a half-day per month) integration sessions complete the in-school work. The out-of-school component, the worksite placement, comprises the largest segment of the program and amounts to 220 hours per term. Worksite placements provide opportunities for students to develop work-related and problem-solving skills, acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to the in-school segment of the course, and enhance their self-confidence and maturity in an adult environment. Typically, students have one placement per term. Often, though, they enroll in the program for a second term, thus experiencing two placements per year. Through a variety of work settings, students are able to explore multiple career interests and gain more insight into a variety of workplace practices.

OCCUPATIONAL IDENTITY

Adolescents in western society tend to struggle with the transition from childhood to adulthood, and they direct their initiatives toward specific adult endeavours and societal roles that are available to them. They test their aspirations, possible selves, and beliefs of others in ways that allow them to make deliberate choices in various aspects of their lives, including vocation and personal values. A

sense of correspondence between self and roles is most likely to occur in individuals who have clear-cut goals such as a sense of who they want to be or what they want to accomplish. And one's developing identity refers to who or what one is within a cultural context (Adler, Rosenfeld & Towne, 1992; Lefrancois, 1994). In other words, identity emerges from the meanings the culture attaches to the roles the individual inhabits. Who one is, for instance, might be teacher, mother, tourist, and so on. Identity emerges from social interaction and interpersonal relationships and therefore gives the self a highly social face. Identity, then, is the self's most public aspect.

One important aspect of youth identity development is the construction of an occupational (or vocational) identity (Erikson, 1968). Adolescence is the time of life when the question of what work to do when one grows up becomes salient. It has emerged historically as the period in our society when young people must make the transition from childhood dependence to the economic independence of adulthood. This search for occupational identity can be considered a major task of contemporary adolescence. But searching for one's occupational identity is neither easy nor straightforward. It is a lengthy and extraordinarily complex process.

The literature suggests that experiencing various vocational roles are central to successful identity development in late adolescence (Forrest & Mikolaitis, 1986; Vondracek, 1992). And in a highly technological society such as ours, there are literally hundreds of roles for young people to try out, often through part-time jobs. But a young woman may have many roles. She may be a student, co-op participant, part-time worker, daughter, sister, girlfriend, and so on. Our culture demands that certain patterns of behaviour are expected of each of these roles. Moreover, the patterns vary depending on who is doing the expecting. A young woman, too, may have different ideas as to what she considers to be the expectations of her roles. Small wonder that such conflicting expectations can result in young people feeling pretty confused at times as to just who they really are.

Carl Rogers suggests that whether we will change and grow or remain trapped

in the state of awareness that we have carried from childhood depends on our psychological openness: to new life experiences, new ideas, people, and alternative lifestyles (Adler, Rosenfeld & Towne, 1992). Some people may be characterized by a strong personal tendency to avoid personal change. As adolescents, they may have predetermined career goals that they cling to rigidly and that may be based on practical issues such as how much the job might pay rather than on considerations such as whether it would fulfill their interests. Other adolescents may appear to be closed to change because they lack exposure to information, ideas, and different lifestyles. Still others may be committed to self-exploration. Erikson (1968) uses the term "moratorium" to describe their tendency to delay final commitments to people, ideas, or lifestyles during a time of testing and exploring a variety of alternatives.

In secondary school work education classrooms, students' identities are explicitly prepared for the workplace. It is here that the curriculum deals directly with what employers want, what workers need to know, and how students should negotiate the social and technical relations of jobs. Work education teachers concern themselves with preparing their students for jobs. Students' employability dominates curriculum discourse, but its meaning is constructed, just as the meaning of skills is constructed. It is quite unclear what kinds of knowledge, skills, beliefs, and attitudes it entails. But what is needed by the employer to get the work done faster is different from what is needed by the worker to get some control of the work process. And both these sets of needs are different still from what is needed by the consumer of the services that are produced by the company. Whose needs count?

A social pedagogical view of occupational identity development (Stronach, 1984) understands that notions of work preparation and life management are united and that work experience is the principal vehicle. Developing one's occupational identity is a process, not simply a one-time event, and often times appears as one step forward and two steps back. For schools, this means an increased recognition of the need for more systematic career education, enhanced programs of work experience

that are reflective and contextualized, and generally the establishment of better links between schools and the world of work.

The perspective from which a young woman views her world also impacts on her developing occupational identity. Her perspective influences the kinds of choices she makes which, in turn, influence the nature of her relationships. This relational perspective is known as her voice.

VOICE

There has been a conceptual revolution in the idea of what it is to be female. This revolution involves changes in views of how women are focused on others, and hence how far the need to love, and the needs linked to love, shape their identities.

Research has established that people attend to the world according to two moral voices, namely, justice and care (Brown & Gilligan, 1991; Gilligan, 1982). These two voices signal different ways of thinking about what constitutes a problem and how such problems can be addressed or solved. In addition, two voices illustrate that a story can be told from different angles and a situation seen in different lights. Gilligan (1982) suggests that the basic elements of moral judgement -- self, others, and the relationship between them -- can be organized in different ways, depending on how relationship is imagined or construed. More specifically, Gilligan draws our attention to the ways in which this distinction between moral voices enables people to conceive of their problems. Further, she suggests that it reflects their interpretation of possible solutions or outcomes. In other words, the two moral voices of justice and care explain that when people shift the focus of their attention from concerns about equality and justice to concerns about care and attachment, their definition of what constitutes a moral problem changes. Consequently, situations may be seen in different ways.

From the perspective of someone seeking or valuing justice, Gilligan (1982) tells us that relationships are organized in terms of equality. Accordingly, moral concerns focus on problems of oppression or inequality, and the moral ideal is one of reciprocity or equal respect. This perspective represents the need to meet challenges

and solve problems, to develop and test one's skills, to feel oneself as someone able to act in, control and interact with one's environment. The moral rule that governs the justice perspective is not to treat others unfairly.

From the perspective of someone seeking or valuing care, Gilligan (1982) explains that relationships connote responsiveness, engagement, and connection. In this sense, moral concerns focus on problems of detachment, disconnection, abandonment, or indifference, and the moral ideal is one of attention and response. This perspective represents a need for affiliation, since it is a need satisfied by companionship, communication, nurture, care, and love. Although somewhat similar to a need for dependency, a voice of care is less involved with a need to be supported by others, rather, it focuses on a need to be attached and involved with them. The moral rule governing the care perspective is not to turn away from someone in need.

Gilligan suggests that all relationships can be characterized in terms of both equality and attachment or connection. Therefore, all relationships can be seen in two ways and spoken of in two sets of terms. By adopting one voice or the other, people can highlight problems that are associated with different kinds of vulnerability -- to oppression or to abandonment -- and focus attention on different types of concern.

Gilligan suggests that people tend to have difficulty in combining the two perspectives of justice and care. Common practices and habits and images in our society make the division between them especially difficult to bridge. Women, more so than men, may have more difficulty in compartmentalizing their lives. Apter (1993) suggests that they have more trouble than men at switching off their concerns about their personal lives when they are at work, and they are more troubled by impersonality and competitiveness at work than are men. Weaver and Hill (1993) remind us that women's work relationships do not occur in a vacuum; they are in addition to all of the other roles traditionally assigned to women. Simon, Dipbo and Schenke (1991) tell us that people's understanding about work and the ways in which they relate to others in the workplace is intimately and inextricably linked to other

aspects of their lives. Giroux and McLaren (1991) add that both the experiences that students bring to schools as well as the cultural forms out of which they are produced operate within tensions that are never closed or unassailable.

The period of moving from school to work makes possible the reproduction of a sex-segregated labour force and a traditional family structure. The stage has been well set much earlier through the kinds of courses chosen in secondary school, cultural participation throughout adolescence, and part-time work experiences. And to most businesses today, Nikiforuk (1993) suggests that a high school diploma is little more than a paper declaration of a student's reliability and stamina. He further suggests that because the business community discredits the diploma, students with no university ambitions think that it makes little difference whether they learn a lot or a bare minimum in school. And when they leave school and enter the world of work, some make choices to take sex-segregated jobs that reinforce the gender-biased social, economic, and power structures in our society.

Given these influences, how do young people experience and understand the transition from school to work? For a young woman enrolled in a work education program, it is critical for her to explore and examine how her working life is bound up with her pleasures, stresses, and commitments off the job. It is important for us, as critical educators, to recognize how the social, technical, and exchange relations of her workplace influence and are influenced by the realities and desires she produces and confronts outside the workplace. This thesis presents one such examination.

PROBLEM

Young people in general, and young women in particular, are involved in making choices that will affect their future participation in the adult world of work. What kinds of choices are they making? What factors influence these choices? How do their lives beyond the workplace play a role in their choices about work? What impact does their self-esteem and sense of self in relationship have in this regard? Examining factors that may influence young women's choices about work will help us

as educators to more fully understand their school-to-work transition. Recognizing the importance of their experiences both in and out of school as they prepare to enter the work force may allow for a consideration of the influences of identity development as well as those of the society and culture in which young women are coming of age.

Young women represent a large and important segment of the school population, of the youth labour force, and of the future adult labour force. Little research has examined their work experiences at the secondary school level. Further, few links seem to have been made between their school-to-work transition, work education programs, and identity development. In addition, little, if any, available research linking these topics focuses on a critical and reflective study of one subject.

PURPOSE

The main purpose of this thesis is to examine the life of a young woman engaged in making the school-to-work transition. My intention is to tell her story as I see it. I will describe and offer an interpretation of her contradictions, struggles, and realities as she negotiates her role in the world of work. I will explain how her relationships both at and away from the workplace appear to influence her developing occupational identity. I will uncover her predominant relational voice, and I will listen to her as she silences it and struggles to resist that silence.

This research will contribute to the existing knowledge base by providing an examination of the relationship between the school-to-work transition, occupational identity development, and relational voice. It will elucidate one young woman's contradictions, struggles, and realities regarding her current and future participation in the workforce. This story of one young woman does not claim to be generalizable. It is the story of one young woman enrolled in a work education initiative in a Canadian secondary school. In this sense, it may be seen as an example of young Canadian women who participate in work education programs. It may also provide evidence of the impact that such programs may have on the developing occupational identity of young women poised on the edge of the adult work world. Accordingly, it may be of

interest to educators studying, planning, or evaluating co-op ed programs.

The second purpose of this thesis is methodological. It is to present a model with which to conduct critical, reflective life story research. Therefore, it may be useful to other researchers intent on conducting similar research.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The young woman whose life story forms the basis of this thesis was selected from her participation in a research project entitled "Young Women's Perspectives on Work," hereinafter referred to as "Young Women and Work." The purpose of the project was to undertake a three-year qualitative study on young nonuniversity-bound women's perspectives on the world of work. I worked as a research assistant with the project throughout my graduate studies.

Participants in the project were young women in Grade 12 in a secondary school who participated in a co-operative education (co-op ed) program. Participants were observed in their co-op ed classes and worksites. The students were also interviewed both in focus groups and individually. There were 70 students enrolled in the program during the year of this study, 30 females and 40 males.¹

¹ To illustrate general types of worksite placements typically available in a co-op ed program, the students enrolled in Jane's class had first-term placements in the following areas: office work, helping professions, service sector, marketing, science, electronics, trades, medicine, agriculture, and crime/fire prevention. Males and females were not evenly distributed throughout all areas: females' placements were predominantly in the first three areas; while the males were more diverse. In fact, six of the Young Women and Work project participants had first-term placements working with young children in institutional settings; the other two were in retail settings. This thesis report will not touch on the multiple contributory factors to this issue.

Chapter 2: Methodology

From the outset of my graduate studies program, I attempted several strategies to maintain a self-conscious posture towards my research. I maintained a reflective journal, conferenced with professors, co-authored methodological and reflective research papers, and repeatedly questioned my assumptions. Despite suggestions to the contrary from experienced researchers, however, I still imagined that the thesis process would flow smoothly from start to finish and that my topic of inquiry would present itself to me early on in a flash of pure intellectual inspiration. As is often the case, though, particularly in qualitative research, its development was serendipitous. As I look back now, I can see that precisely because I did assume a reflective pose, I was able to be open to new possibilities.

When I was asked to join a qualitative project team in August 1993, it was anticipated that my thesis work would evolve out of it. The focus of the team's research was the world of work perspectives of nonuniversity-bound young women enrolled in school-based work education initiatives. I was interested in several aspects of the research. The first concerned co-operative education, a specific work education program that my son, Cayce, had recently been enrolled in during high school. Second, I had a personal interest in nonuniversity-bound girls because I was one, having finally begun university studies after twenty years in the work force. Third, the team would be employing qualitative research, a paradigm that was new to me. Finally, I desired to work from within a team setting, sensing that I would benefit greatly from the combined expertise of its members.

As part of my preparation for conducting research with the team, I read extensive literature on work education. My reading focused on issues concerning work education programs in Canada, specifically those concerning nonuniversity-bound females. I found little or no research in several areas that were beginning to emerge as areas of interest to me. No links seem to have been made between the psychological constructs of occupational identity and voice in young women, and work

education programs. Also, I could not find any qualitative research on work education programs that focused on an indepth study of one subject.

Before joining the project team, I had not considered conducting gender-based research. In retrospect, I find this peculiar, since I am a woman. In any event, the team leaders were critical feminist researchers, and the thrust of the project was aimed directly at young women. I recognized the importance of expanding my knowledge base in this area and undertook readings centred on gender issues at school and work.

As my graduate coursework progressed, it became clearer to me that the world of work perspectives of a young woman could not be measured with quantitative instruments. Her story would require a qualitative approach. I seemed to know intuitively that story would be my vehicle, yet I did not know what form that vehicle would take. My next task was to find a way in which I could tell a story -- her story -- consistent with my burgeoning philosophies. I wanted to provide a framework rich with inter-subjectivity, reflexivity, and empowerment. Although I poured over the literature, I was unable to find exactly what I was looking for. I knew then that if I wanted a model of storytelling that was effective and critical, I would have to develop my own. (See pp. 28-42 for a description of the model.)

The remainder of this chapter examines the particular methodological strategies and techniques I employed during this thesis study. First is a discussion of the selection procedures used to identify a participant. The next section outlines the data collection strategies and data management techniques. In the third section, the analytical strategies are presented. And, the last section discusses the adequacy and limitations of the study.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION

The parameters of my thesis proposal indicated that my participant would be selected from the Young Women and Work sample. The rationale behind this decision was based on the overlapping features of the two projects. Nested within the school-

based work initiative context of the larger project, my study would involve an indepth examination of the school-to-work transition of one young woman.

Selecting one young woman from the project sample of eight was a time-consuming process. I began by making careful observations during the preplacement sessions and the first focus group. During these first few weeks, one young woman in particular, Jane, began to stand out from the rest as my possible collaborator. Something about Jane caught my attention early on in the preplacement session.

Jane usually sat by herself in the classroom. She seemed to be the only young woman in the co-op ed class without friends. Sometimes she went the entire afternoon without speaking to anyone. Jane seemed lonely to me. She fidgetted incessantly, looked uneasy, acted shy, and I was drawn to her. I found myself sitting near her on more than one occasion, striking up a conversation whenever I could and taking particular interest in whatever she had to say. As the days passed, Jane began to seek out a seat near me, sometimes offering me candy that she would buy at breaktime.

As Jane and I got acquainted, and I learned more about her, I became quite sure that it was her life story I wanted to write. I surmised that she came from a broken, dysfunctional family environment when she told me that she lived with her dad whom she rarely saw and with whom she communicated mostly by messages posted to the bathroom door. The fact that she was from out-of-town accounted for, at least in part, her seeming lack of friends in the classroom. In the first focus group, Jane was called "brainy" by at least one other participant: she was the only one of the eight young women who was "smart enough" to be a peer tutor and to know about various career initiatives being offered at school. She also had several years of part-time work experience. Jane told me that she had no intention of going to university or even finishing her OACs (Ontario Academic Credits). Paradoxically, her co-op placement was to be in a kindergarden classroom, a career requiring four years of university, and one in which she was interested.

Jane was a bright young woman preparing to make the school-to-work transition. At first glance, she seemed to be alone, ill-at-ease, and with little or no guidance. I wondered how she came to this point in her life. And I wondered what kinds of career choices she would make. I would ask to write her story.

I approached Jane with an offer of participating in my thesis research. She agreed. Because she was just turning 18, she did not require parental permission to participate. She did fill out, sign, and return the informed consent form as required by the school board. (See Appendix I.) Jane's co-op ed teacher, the co-op ed coordinator, and the principal were advised of her decision to participate.

DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

Typically, a year-long co-op placement is divided into two terms, with the student placed at a second work site during the second term. I intended to focus primarily on Jane's first term experience of the year-long program. Data were collected from several sources; observations, interviews, focus group transcripts from the Young Women and Work project, and a reflective journal. This section discusses these strategies and an interview exercise involving the use of fables.

Observation

Periods of observation took place in co-op ed settings that included in-school classes and the worksite itself. While observing Jane in the classroom setting, I was acting in a dual role. I was conducting participant observation for my thesis research as well as for the larger project. Accordingly, I was observing all eight participants, with special emphasis on Jane. During most of these observation periods, I was accompanied by one or two other members of the project team. We had all been introduced to the entire class as "researchers from the university who were here to learn about co-op ed." None of the students knew of Jane's "special" situation as a participant in two studies. Within this context, then, Jane was not seen to be receiving undue attention through observation.

I conducted periods of observation at Jane's worksite, accompanying her co-op

ed teacher. I made two visits to her placement over the course of the year, each lasting about 15-20 minutes. These visits also had a dual purpose: they served the needs of both my investigation and that of the larger project. Accordingly, all eight participants were visited at their worksite placements. I made all visits with their respective co-op ed teachers.

I selected participant observation as a data collection strategy because of McCracken's (1988) suggestion that it is able to deliver data beyond the conscious understanding or implicit grasp of even the best intentioned collaborator. In preparation for my periods of observation, I studied Spradley's (1980) Participant Observation. Accordingly, I observed the activities, people, and physical aspects of the situation. I attempted to increase my awareness of all aspects of the situation and to overcome selective inattention. I made broad observations that might seem irrelevant to the ordinary observer. I examined my feelings about the experience, and I kept detailed records of both objective observations and subjective feelings.

Interviews

Jane and I had five indepth interviews that each lasted from 45 minutes to one hour and were tape-recorded (with Jane's permission). Interview times were organized outside of school hours in order to minimize interference with her daily routines. Three interviews were held during the evening in a convenient donut shop. The remaining two occurred at Jane's home. Jane was also interviewed by me twice for the Young Women and Work project.

I chose the indepth interview as a data collection strategy to discover how Jane perceived her world. With this type of interview, it was essential that her story be elicited in as unobtrusive and nondirective a manner as possible. It was equally important, though, that I exercise some measure of control during the interviews so that I did not become "the hapless victim of a shapeless inquiry" (McCracken, 1988, p. 22). I used prompts and developed emergent interview questions, both of which provided order and structure to the data collection. General interview questions which guided

the interviews are attached as Appendix II. More specific questions emerged as the interviews progressed. (See Appendix III.)

During our first interview, I asked Jane if she was interested in keeping a diary of her thoughts and feelings about the research study. According to Wiener and Rosenwald (1993), a diary is simultaneously an object, a place, and an activity. It plays a role in defining and manipulating boundaries among aspects of the self, among points in time, and between self and others. Rather than pursuing an investigation of the content of her diary, my aim was to learn what psychological possibilities a diary could offer her. Any possibilities in this direction, however, did not materialize. Jane was interested in the idea, and I presented her with an attractively bound book to use. However, she never got around to writing in it. She said that she just never seemed to have the time. Perhaps this was the case. Perhaps, on the other hand, she just did not want to but felt unable to say so.

Focus Groups

As a participant in the larger project, Jane took part in focus group discussions throughout the school year. This type of group discussion can be useful for eliciting information that promises to be more forthcoming within the safety of a group of fellow participants (Kreuger, 1988). Focus groups are relaxed, comfortable, and enjoyable as group members share their ideas and perceptions on a topic. There were four focus groups in total; each one lasted 45 minutes and was tape recorded (with the participants' permission). I attended all four discussions, usually accompanied by one or two other project members. (For a list of focus group questions, see Appendix IV.)

Fables as Vehicles for Uncovering Voice

Johnston (1988) has produced a standard method for talking about moral problem-solving in an interview setting through the use of Aesop's fables. Brown and Gilligan (1992) concur with Johnston that this technique is particularly helpful in finding out how young people contextualize their problems and make choices based on those beliefs. During our final interview, I used Johnston's method as a means

through which to identify Jane's predominant relational voice and her problem solving strategies.

Johnston's method is similar to that used in eliciting real-life dilemmas in that it engages a person in discussing a moral problem. It differs, though, in several ways. First, fables are not a reconstruction of someone's difficult moral problem. Because they are not personal, it is less threatening to challenge the interviewee's construction of the problem and to make counter-suggestions for solving the problem. As well, using fables, the interviewee is asked to construct both the problem and the solution.

In following Johnston's method, I decided to use two of Aesop's fables, "The Porcupine and the Moles" and "The Dog in the Manger." (See Appendix V for the fables and a list of related questions.) The interview was to take the following form. Jane would begin by reading one fable, following which I would ask a series of questions. Then she would read the second fable, and I would repeat the questions. The first question would be, "What is the problem?" followed by questions (or probes) to clarify her definition. The next question would be, "How would you solve it?" During this part of the interview, I would make counter-suggestions in order to examine Jane's commitment to her initial solution. I would also ask questions to clarify the solution she had in mind and strategies she used to reach that solution.

Next, I would examine two solutions to each fable; namely, the first or spontaneous solution, and the preferred or best solution. Each would be examined (or read) for evidence of the two moral voices of justice and/or care. (See pp. 26-28 for the reading-for-voice technique used.) The voice of justice would be interpreted as being evident if Jane "invoke[d] impartial rules, principles, or standards which consider one's obligations, duty, or commitment; or standards, rules, or principles for self, others, and society" (Johnston, 1988, p. 52). The voice of care would be interpreted as being evident if Jane "construe[d] problems as issues of how to respond to others in their situations, maintain relationships, promote the welfare of others, prevent them harm, or relieve their burdens, hurt, or suffering be it physical or psychological" (p. 52).

If morality serves as a guide to solving problems in relationships, then fables may be interpreted as a cognitive exercise in resolving these kinds of conflicts. If this assumption is correct, can it be extended beyond a problem in a fable to include real-life relationships? In other words, would a person's fable problem-solving voice, be it care or justice, be representative of that person's real-world relational voice? Or, to flip the issue around, if a person's experience of relationships is characterized by attachment and connection, would the influence of that experience extend to influence make-believe conflict negotiation? Similarly, would real-life relationships characterized by isolation and abandonment have a parallel influence?

Journal

Throughout the research process, I kept a reflective journal in which I struggled with research problems and dilemmas. Using Spradley's (1979) Participant Observation as a guide, I tried to maintain a journal that contained "a record of experiences, ideas, fears, mistakes, confusions, breakthroughs, and problems" (p. 71). For the most part, these tended to be the kinds of things that I generally did write about in my journal. In discovering their value as an aid to producing a critical and reflective thesis, though, I gained confidence to continue on the same track as well as to forge ahead into deeper realms of thought. With the aid of my journal writing, I was able to return again and again to examine my positions on the five life story continua. (See pp. 30-42.) In this way, my data collection was both critical and conscious.

After I had written Jane's biographical sketch (see Chapter 3), I shared it with her so that she could have the opportunity to expand and refine my interpretation. My intention in this regard was two-fold. On one hand, I wanted to follow up on any contradictory or incomplete information in my telling of Jane's life. At the same time, though, I also wanted to offer her an opportunity to be present, or embodied, in my writing through her opinions about it.

DATA MANAGEMENT

Both during the data collection phase and for the final analysis, data from all

sources (i.e., observational notes, interview transcripts, focus group interview transcripts, and journal entries) were entered into Folio Views, a computer software program that can serve as a qualitative data analysis tool (Weitzman & Miles, 1995). The program enabled me to implement complex searching and grouping strategies. These strategies facilitated the development of emergent themes which I used to help guide successive interviews.

ANALYTICAL STRATEGIES

Throughout the data collection period (which spanned approximately six months), I attempted to follow Bogdan and Biklen's (1992) suggestions for conducting effective qualitative data analysis. I forced myself to make decisions that narrowed the study, developed analytic questions, planned data collection sessions in light of what I found in previous observations, wrote many observer comments in my journal about ideas I generated, wrote notes about what I was learning, tried out ideas and themes on my collaborator, continued exploring the literature, played with concepts, and speculated.

In the end, however, the material I recorded in my journal, my transcripts, and even the literature became only a guide towards my final analysis. I found that I drew on the totality of my experience, the parts of which combined the action of fieldwork with its contemplation. My interpretations were developed through the scrutiny of my notes, crossreferencing of data from all sources, and revisiting of the literature, but also through my memories of my time with Jane. In the end, my interpretations were intuitive, creative, and continuing. I arrived at them in partial response to other theories and ideas as well as to the reliving and reworking of the material both during and after data collection had ended. My natural tendency towards logical, step-by-step thinking did not permit me to entertain thoughts about the true complexity of qualitative data analysis before I began this study. Yet, as the months tumbled one into the other, I found myself in wholehearted agreement with Bryman and Burgess' (1994) statement that "research design, data collection and analysis are simultaneous and continuous

processes" (p. 217).

On the upside of this analytical messiness, the time I spent re-reading my notes and transcripts and contemplating my field experiences afforded me the opportunity of being open to serendipitous connections and possibilities. In accordance with Hughes' (1994) position, asking myself again and again what the main story was brought together concepts that helped me to develop an analysis that illuminated specific features of Jane's life.

In any discussion of life story analysis, it is important to remember that just as all lives are unique, so too, are all depictions of a life. Accordingly, my analysis was context dependent, arising out of my own experience. It was integral to the questions I posed and the way in which I posed them. It relied on my insights, creativity, and imagination. In the face of these, perhaps, apparent shortcomings in life story research -- and precisely because of the scrupulousness to which they led me -- the conceptual framework I chose was grounded in both the data and the literature, and provided an analysis that goes beyond simple story-telling.

Next, I highlight two main strategies which were integral to my analysis of this thesis research. The first strategy concerns a technique for distinguishing an individual's psychological voice from stories or narratives involving dilemmas. The second strategy details a model for conducting critical, reflective life story research, a model which I developed during the course of preparing for and conducting the study.

Reading for Voice

In my analysis of the data, I implemented a procedure developed by Brown, Tappan, Gilligan, Miller & Argyris (1989) that helped me to distinguish between Jane's two moral voices of justice and care. Following this procedure, I was to read her narratives or stories a total of four different times. Each reading would approach each narrative from a different standpoint and would identify particular aspects relevant to locating Jane's self and moral voice within it. The first reading would simply establish the story. In the second reading, I would read for Jane's active self, in other words, as

a person telling a story in which she would appear as an actor in a drama about moral conflict and choice. The third reading would track the care voice, and the fourth reading would track the justice voice.

As a researcher/interpreter/reader, I would read for Jane's justice and care voices by identifying her telling of different aspects of relationship. Her care voice would describe relationships in terms of attachment, detachment, connection, or disconnection. In this case, she would focus on the vulnerability of people to isolation and abandonment, and would be concerned with the complexities of creating and maintaining connection with people. Jane's justice voice would describe relationships in terms of equality, inequality, reciprocity, or lack of respect. In this case, she would focus on the vulnerability of people to oppression, and would be concerned with issues of fairness.

The development of this procedure proceeded from earlier evidence (Gilligan, 1982; Johnston, 1988) that persons know and can represent two moral voices in discussing moral conflict, although they tend to prefer one voice over the other. Johnston also suggests that the "narrative self" or "moral agent" is actively involved in the choices made concerning what standpoint is taken and which concerns are either voiced or kept silent. She goes on to emphasize that she does not see justice and care as mutually exclusive moral voices.

Gilligan (1982) and Johnston (1988) suggest that narratives about moral conflict can be used to explore the complexities involved in either real-life or hypothetical situations. Accordingly, the way in which Jane constructed a moral problem would depend on the context within which the story about the problem was told. Further, the context would concern issues such as who was listening to the story, the relationship between Jane and the listener, the power dynamics and strength of the connection between them, where the story was being told, what role Jane played in the story, as well as her personal and cultural history. When different elements of context and relationship shift, Gilligan and Johnston have seen that the central moral issue in a

situation may shift along with it, and different actions may be defined as right or wrong. Thus, the recognition of the context-dependency inherent in the telling of stories involving moral conflict is important.

Moral action does not occur in a vacuum. Rather, people function within the everyday context of relationships. And within the complexity of relationships, both voices of justice and care can be heard. Each voice is psychologically legitimate and organized, and its organization and orchestration can be followed in narratives about moral conflict. As I read and reread Jane's stories, I listened for her voice of justice and her voice of care. I wanted to recognize the complexity of her relationships and the complex, difficult choices she faced.

A Critical Model

The use of story as a means of understanding our social and cultural world has a long history and is evidenced in a considerable number of fields (Josselman, 1993; McKinnon, Ahola-Sidaway & Simser, 1995). It appears in the research of sociology and psychology (Smith, 1994; Tesch, 1990), history and literature (Davies, 1992; Jelinek, 1980; Quinby, 1992; Smith; Spacks, 1980), and anthropology (Bruner, 1986; Cruikshank, 1990; Dollard, 1971; Smith). Although Cruikshank refers to storytelling as perhaps the oldest of the arts, more recently, educators and feminist researchers are employing the genre as a rich framework for various sorts of life writing (Billson & Smith, 1980; Davies; Kaplan, 1992; Patton, 1980; Smith; Watson & Smith, 1992; Wolcott, 1992).

Despite its widespread use and increasing popularity, story continues to remain a much suspected research methodology (Brodkey, 1987; Litner, 1994). The question remains: what does an adequate life story document look like? Is it an account of a life, or part thereof, with events separately strung out like beads on a string? Is it a fairy story built out of the imagination of the storyteller? Should a researcher move it beyond storytelling into abstract conceptualizations and scientific explanations?

In reviewing the available literature, I could not find adequate answers to these

questions. As I pondered the issues further, I came to believe that, just as each research endeavour is a unique experience, so, too, must each attempt at representing someone's life in a document be unique. No two people are the same; no two phenomena are the same; no two sets of life experiences are the same. Each coming together of researcher and 'subject' to study a phenomenon is original and non-duplicative. The written expression of such research must be, therefore, context-dependent, arising out of the experience.

The Importance of Critical Reflection

Denzin (1994) suggests that critical evaluation of story stems from its ability to illuminate a phenomenon as lived experience. In this sense, story writing is based on thickly contextualized data within which personal experiences are connected to larger institutional, group, and cultural contexts. Further, moral biases and opposing perspectives are revealed. And illuminating stories are presented in the language, feelings, emotions, and actions of the storyteller (pp. 510-511).

Critical reflection upon stories can allow for an indepth examination of issues of equity, power, social structure, agency, and self-definition of the lives of all kinds of women (Smith, 1994, p. 299). Richardson (1994) suggests that the use of story allows us as researchers "to understand ourselves reflexively as persons writing from particular positions at specific times, and it frees us from trying to write a single text in which everything is said to everyone" (p. 518).

Within a critical framework, story can emphasize reflection, introspection, inter-subjectivity, and empowerment. In addition, these characteristics can be used to turn a lens toward the unfolding research project itself. What is more, critical narrative writing provides the opportunity for the researcher to become embodied within the text. In other words, the researcher is able to tell the story by narrating from the first person "I." In this sense, the narrator's point of view, personal biases, and ideological positioning are purposely shared with the reader. In reflecting on her decision to embody herself within her doctoral thesis, Litner (1994) offers these words,

For me, notwithstanding the tensions, worries and difficulties that writing embodied has caused me, it feels as if I have taken hold of my own narrative rather than having fitted a displaced "I" into a neutered (since the body disappears), impersonal, . . . discourse. This form of writing, reified for its supposed neutrality and therefore objectivity, is informed by a misleading faulty ideology, for it covers over the fact that *somebody* initially selected disembodiment over embodiment; that is, that the very concept of discursive form, of method, assumes choice over other forms, other methods. (p. 12)

As I struggled with the construction of this thesis, and these issues came to light, I decided to insert myself into the text. I realized that I could not remain outside the text, engaging with my participant as if that engagement were a process "out there." I was the observed, the other, as well as being the subject viewing the other. As I questioned my assumptions of what was the right way to write a thesis, my commitment to view thesis work and research as a dynamic process of inquiry strengthened -- dynamics not only between researcher and participant but also between writer and reader. For I hope that writing this thesis as an embodied critical narrative will challenge my readers to join me in contemplating the lived experiences herein and also to reflect critically on their own.

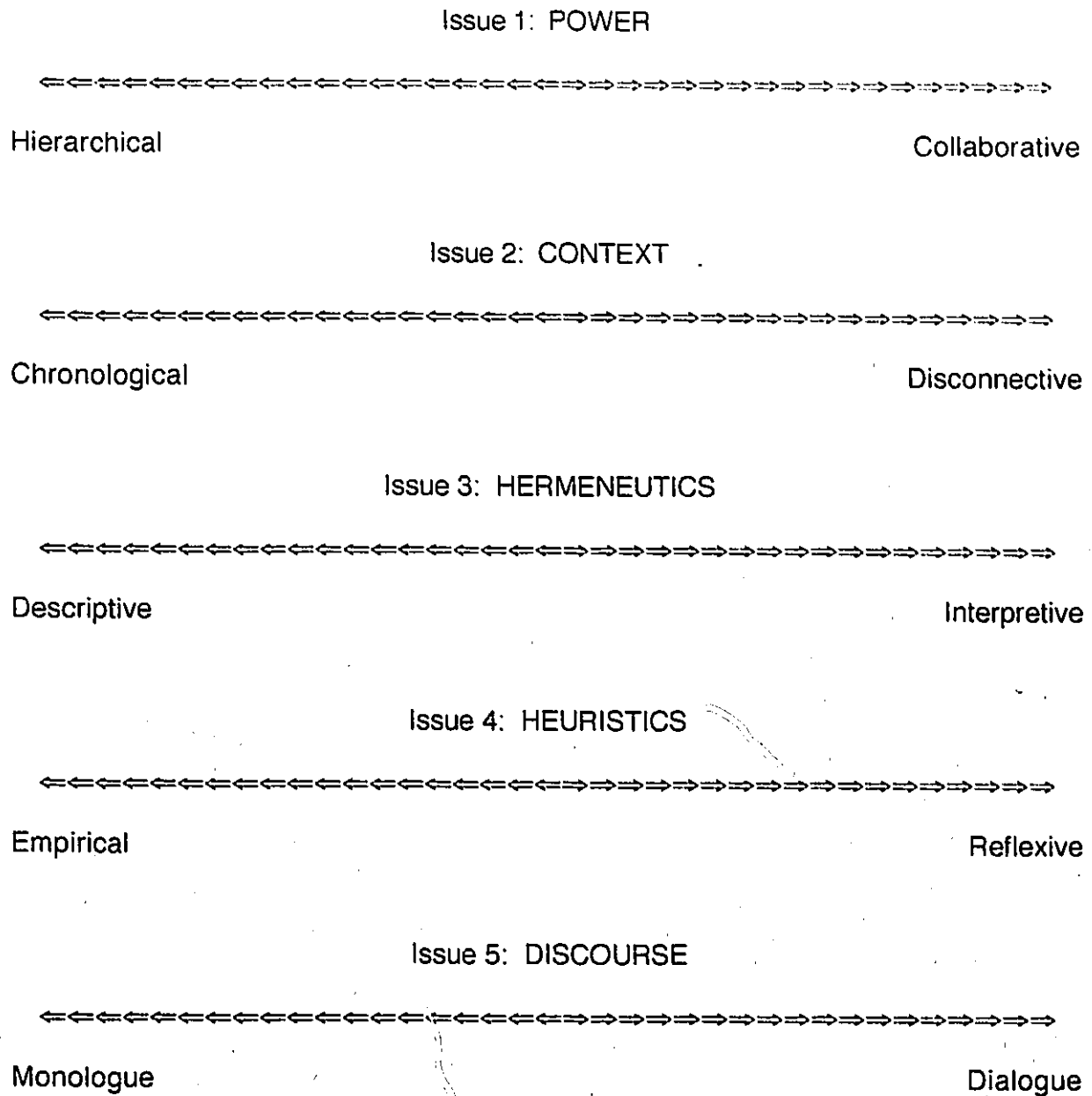
A life story is not a genre like other genres of narrative. It is a complex ceremony in miniature. It is more than just the spontaneous product of an encounter between two people; it is a reflection of continuity with the past and hope for the future. As I embarked upon this life story thesis research, I was reminded of Foucault's (1984) observation that "the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them" (p. 50).

The Continua

I considered my needs in developing an effective life story model. I required a model that would be critical in order to be considered scholarly. At the same time, it

Figure 1.

Continua of the Five Issues Inherent in Life Story Research



had to be flexible enough to suit the original nature of life itself. In attempting to meet these criteria, I identified five key issues: power, context, hermeneutics, heuristics, and discourse. (See Figure 1.) Each exists along a continuum. A researcher should examine and reflect upon them and select a comfortable point of reference along each

continuum before beginning data collection. In this section, I examine these five issues and pinpoint my initial reference point along each continuum.

Power

Distinct from autobiography, a life story that is narrated by one person and transferred to print by someone else is wrought with power dynamics in its production, distribution, and reception. At one end of the power continuum lies hierarchy; at the other end lies collaboration.

The Western view of life story tends to be hierarchical. It is steeped in preconceptions about what constitutes an adequate account of a life. The familiar model comes from written autobiography -- an author's reflections about individual growth and development, often presented as a passage from darkness to light. This hierarchical model has become so structured by convention that it has come to seem natural to readers as a form not requiring explanation (Cruikshank, 1990).

Collaborative life story research, on the other hand, makes use of procedures that supercede the power differences among the participants involved. Kaplan (1992) suggests that feminist life stories tend to favour such a collaborative balance of power. In asking someone to participate in a life story research study, an investigator is extending an invitation to conversation. Invitations, however, are not created equal. An investigator must ask herself what role she wants the respondent to play and at the same time be aware that there is risk involved for both parties. Power over the risk of exposure lies in the hands of the researcher (Weber, 1986). She makes the decisions. However, a researcher also runs the risk that full collaboration may lead to overrapport that, in turn, may lead to overly helpful answers (McCracken, 1988).

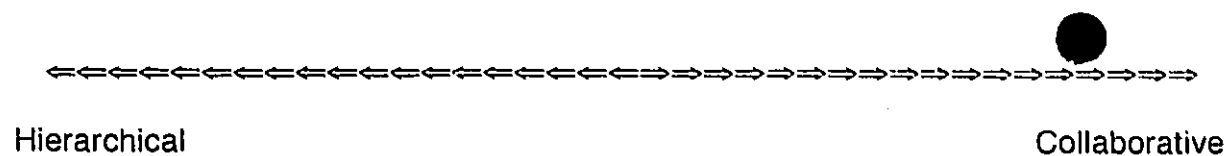
All life stories involve some collaboration. The degree of collaboration, however, varies. Life stories exist in the space between public and private, between oral and written. They are open-ended, dialogic, and can function as a facilitator of empowerment for women who historically have been silenced. Commenting on life story empowerment, Davies (1992) notes that the narrator

often becomes conscious of her personal epic as she tells her story. Often this is the first time she has engaged in a dialogue with the world and become a proactive subject in her own life. By narrating her story, she enters history, names themes for the future, and seizes the authority of the teller of experience. (pp. 15-16)

In addressing the issue of power at the outset of thesis research, my intention was to extend a genuine invitation of collaboration. (See Figure 2.) My hope was that

Figure 2.

Power



this would lay the foundation for the development of a sincere, open, trusting relationship. I hoped to learn as much from her as she from me. I did realize, however, that at the point of writing, the dominant/subordinate relationship between us would be enforced: writing another person's life can become an act of power and control (Davies, 1992).

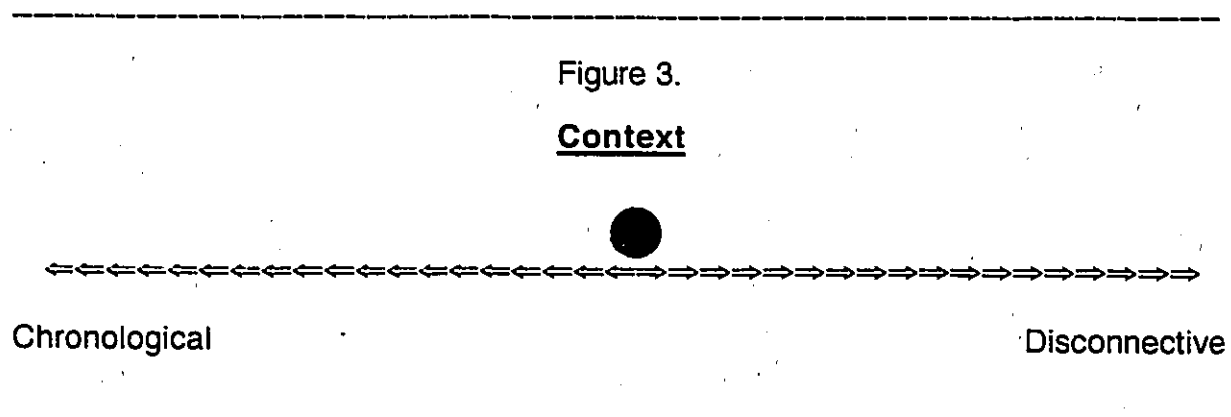
Context

At one end of the context continuum, a life story is chronological. The subject is seen as a link in a chain of social transmission (Dollard, 1971). According to this model, the culture existed before any particular individual within it: it is organized, systematized, and exercises tremendous influence. This view of a life story is a record of the way a new person is added to the group. Life begins at zero, and the emphasis is on a chronological presentation of events. According to Jelinek (1980), men are easily able to consciously shape the events of their lives into this kind of chronological, linear narrative. Their social conditioning to pursue the single goal of a successful

career enables them to represent their life stories with harmony and orderliness.

A life story that represents the other end of the context continuum is disconnective. In this instance, emphasis is placed on the impossibility of gaining a full understanding of the total social and cultural context of someone's life (Stainback & Stainback, 1988). Individual experiences are presented as embedded in a coherent, meaningful context that form part of the overall pattern of thematic and temporal relationships that make up a life. Events, actions, and experiences are connected with other events, actions, and experiences according to patterns that do not necessarily follow the linear sequence of time, but rather conform to a perspective (Rosenthal, 1993). Jelinek (1980) suggests that women's stories tend to be of this nature: characterized by fragmentation and self-contained units. She sees this as representative of women's socially conditioned roles of diversity and diffusion. Important, though, is Bruner's (1986) reminder that researcher focus on isolated elements out of context may appear to point the data in a desired direction.

For my thesis research, I did not set out to use a model that would shape life stories around orderliness, wholeness, and harmony. I believed, and I still do, that my collaborator would visualize her world, and hence herself, through her unique and subjective lens of perception. Just as her stories would have a beginning, a middle, and an end, so, too, would they be situated in a culture with a past, a present, and a future. They would give meaning to her present in terms of their location in an ordered sequence. My intention was to use her various forms of speaking and writing, be they



chronological or disconnective, as appropriate vehicles for rendering her stories. (See Figure 3.)

Hermeneutics

This third continuum depicts life stories that range from being entirely descriptive to entirely interpretive. Dollard (1971) supports the view that the organization and conceptualization of life history material are essential criteria of the genre. To him, the worth of a study is seen to be based on the adequacy of the concepts, how well they "govern, relate, and integrate the material observed" (p. 35). Smith (1994) also argues that, particularly in the social sciences, life story should move beyond storytelling into more abstract conceptualizations, interpretations, and explanations.

In a discussion of finding balance between description and analysis, Patton (1980) sees description as an essential ingredient, but one that must be carefully controlled. To him, description run rampant leads to a life story that is trivial and mundane. Accordingly, Patton views an ideal life story as including a descriptive, analytic, interpretive, and evaluative treatment of the raw data.

To Wertz and van Zuuren (1987), the description-interpretation dilemma does not exist because both are always present. They suggest that,

all qualitative research attempts in one way or another to be 'descriptive
[However,] the best . . . involves the adoption of a point of view that seeks
'insight' into the meaning of the subject matter rather than a merely passive
stock-taking of its pertinent facts. (p. 4)

Adopting this approach, a researcher suspends preconceptions and engages in understanding the situation in its meanings for his or her subject, then in the origins of those meanings, their relations, and overall structure. A subject's hidden assumptions, subtly expressed emotional connotations, unacknowledged goals or aims, and feelings towards both researcher and project are explored.

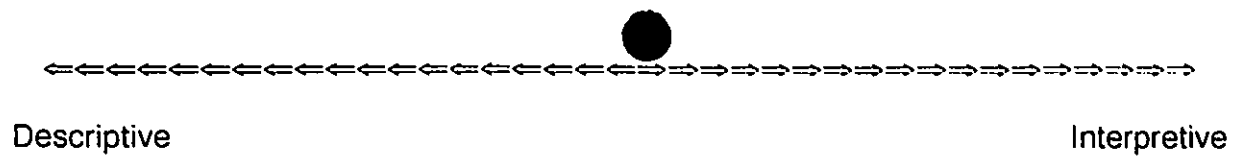
Bruner (1986) explains that as researchers we begin with experience, turn it

into discourse, and then into history. These transformations occur during three tellings of our fieldwork. First, we tell the people we are studying why we are there. In the second telling, we take the verbal and visual information we have collected and process it. In the third telling, our audience consists of our colleagues, who provide us with feedback as we prepare our material for publication. According to Bruner, we all retell the same stories. These retellings never cease, thus we go from experience to discourse to history. Yet all stories are partial, all meanings incomplete. There is no fixed meaning: with each new telling, the context varies, the audience differs, and the story is modified. Thus, we continually discover new meanings in our stories.

The events that constitute someone's life are given. They exist prior to the narrative about that life. How, then, are these real, lived events organized into sequences of meaning and not just sequences of happening? This transformation involves making up stories. Storytelling allows us to give meaning to our personal and social experiences. Understanding someone's life as a story, then, precludes the perception of that life as making sense (Spacks, 1980). The relation between life and story is hermeneutic: a story about life presents us life as it is lived, and as such life is the foundation of the story. Simultaneously, in presenting an account of life, the story gives life a specific sense, and makes clear what it is about. Life and story are part of the same fabric, in that life informs and is formed by stories (Widdershoven, 1993).

As I prepared to embark on life story research, my intention was to attempt to organize and record my collaborator's stories according to the sense they made for her. (See Figure 4.) I would be the vehicle to transmit her spoken meanings of her life into written form. I decided that I would not try to "smooth out contradictions in an effort to present a comprehensive picture" (Cruikshank, 1990, p. 4). At the same time, I recognized the importance of interpretation, and would endeavour to situate my research within a theoretical framework.

Figure 4.

Hermeneutics**Heuristics**

The phenomenological philosophy governing qualitative research in psychology is further divided into reflexive and empirical philosophies (Tesch, 1990). As opposing philosophies, they exist along a heuristic continuum that extends from empirical to reflexive.

At the empirical extreme, a researcher's focus is on the experience of her subject. A common qualitative tool used to understand someone's experience is the ethnographic interview. Spradley (1979) discusses specific elements of this type of interview that render it decidedly empirical in nature. For instance, it has an explicit purpose of which a researcher is aware, but an informant is not. A researcher's responsibility is to gradually take more control of the talking as the interview progresses. As the study progresses, the nature of the interviews change: in eliciting more specific information, a researcher encourages more formality and less friendly conversation.

In undertaking empirical life story research, an investigator would attempt to be controlled in her reaction to information that is being shared (Stainback & Stainback, 1988). But these guidelines do not lend themselves to a researcher sharing her experience of the phenomenon. How relevant, then, is manufactured distance between oneself as researcher and one's collaborator? As Patton (1980) so succinctly puts it, "distance does not guarantee objectivity; it merely guarantees distance" (p. 337).

As a researcher, I am not neutral collectors of information. I come with my own

experiences, imagination, and intellectual baggage that cannot be separated out or left behind. Acknowledging them enables me to make a conscious and critical account of their existence and influence. McCracken (1988) suggests that using the self as instrument is most easily accomplished when an investigator searches for a match between her own experience and the ideas and actions of her collaborator. At the same time, though, such a straightforward match is not easily made. For instance, researcher interpretation may break down when presented with cultural unfamiliarity (Cruikshank, 1990). As researchers, we must remember that experience cannot be transferred. We can only try to imagine the world from other perspectives.

Every researcher has specific and personal aims and styles that cannot be preprogrammed. Free exploration, innovation, creative insight, and critical self-reflection can provide the desired attitude and mental operations necessary to allow spontaneous expression in life story writing (Wertz & van Zuuren, 1987). Reflection on one's own experience, internal dialoging to create meaning, and dialoging with the other form effective qualitative research (Tesch, 1990). Thus, in assuming a stance somewhat closer to the reflexive end of the heuristic continuum, a researcher and subject become co-researchers. Research begins with self-discovery, following which the other is listened to. Both learn and grow from the research experience. There is a synergistic effect to this learning and growth because they effect mutual change in each other.

At the very reflexive extreme of the heuristic continuum, a researcher would critically self-reflect on his or her own understanding and experience of the phenomenon under investigation as well as those of her collaborator. Moustakas (1990) provides an indepth examination of what is involved when striking such a reflexive pose. First, a researcher must identify with the topic of inquiry. Then, there must be a conscious exploration of one's own tacit knowledge and intuition as well as an intense focus on all thoughts and feelings concerning the phenomenon. Moustakas emphasizes the importance of self-disclosure in reflexive research in order

to derive understanding from conversations and interviews during data collection. Heuristic research is, thus, both subjective and personal.

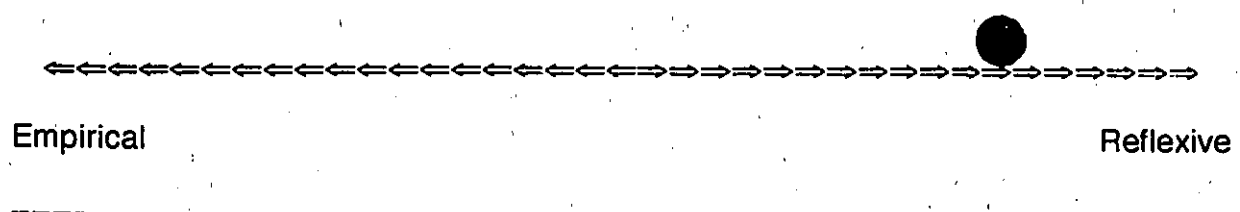
In considering the heuristics issue, a researcher should remember that qualitative research involves risk-taking for both parties, as is the case in all human encounters. As either the researcher or the researched, one may reveal more than was intended. Or, on the positive side, one runs the risk of gaining more valuable insight than one thought possible. Weber (1986) reminds us that dialogue is like a mirror,

[T]he conversation within the interview . . . is . . . evocative of lived experience The rapid outpouring of our words escapes the track we set it, revealing ambiguities, confusion, variety, and paradox, offering an authentic mosaic of perceptions and thoughts, and providing a sort of window to consciousness. (p. 70)

Undertaking life story research from a reflexive perspective is most easily accomplished when the phenomenon under investigation has been experienced by the researcher (Tesch, 1990). In my present research, this was to be the case: I was a bright young woman who opted out of post-secondary studies after high school graduation. Consequently, I was able to recognize that my thoughts and feelings about the topic would be integral to my understanding of the young woman whose life story I had set out to write. I knew that any attempt I made to ignore my own experience would, at best, be a cover-up of an essential ingredient, and at worst, a

Figure 5.

Heuristics



caricature of compensatory objectification. Accordingly, my intention at the outset of my research was to adopt a self-reflective, heuristic approach. (See Figure 5.)

Discourse

Life story dialogue is an understanding of the differences between the worlds of people who were different in many ways when they started their conversations. This "betweenness" of the field situation in life story research contrasts with the "situation of the armchair" where the researcher prepares for publication (Tedlock, 1983). In preparing to write it up, a life story researcher must address the issue of discourse. The discourse continuum is represented by researcher monologue at one extreme through to shared collaborator/researcher discourse at the other.

At the former end of the continuum rests the classic ethnography, exhibiting what Tedlock (1983) refers to as the

law of analogical anthropology [in which a] researcher and . . . subject must never be articulate between the same two covers [O]ther[s] may be quoted at length, but no native ever utters a complete sentence. (p. 324)

When a researcher assumes such a stance, Tedlock suggests that the data are "presented as if the researcher who collected them had had a tracheotomy prior to entering the field" (p. 325).

Assuming a slightly less extreme stance along the discourse continuum has individual experiences interspersed with an extended discursive analysis of the researcher. The storyteller's life, in this instance, becomes an illustration of explicitly defined theoretical positions. This type of life story may provide only anecdotal snapshots to support specific issues (Davies, 1992). When the original dialogue plays such a small role, the theoretical analogical discourse -- the created object that comes after and rises above -- may claim to describe rules or laws that lie under or come before what was actually done and said in the field (Tedlock, 1983).

Indicative of a more 'middle' stance on the discourse continuum, Dollard (1971) suggests that life story must account for both descriptions of a situation: as defined by

the individual and by others. With this approach, the researcher must keep both in mind simultaneously. A danger that could arise here may be an implicit assumption on the part of the researcher of the possession of special insight into the one, true, objective reality, while her collaborator is limited to reacting only to his or her own subjective reality. Patton (1980) could be said to support this position when he suggests that the researcher "must make judgements . . . about variations in the credibility of different findings . . . ; [researcher] opinions and speculations . . . deserve to be reported" (p. 343).

At the other end of the continuum, the words of the storyteller and researcher are kept separate. Van Maanen (1988) refers to this increasingly popular mode of life story writing as the "jointly told tale" (p. 136). Within this type of representation, the researcher provides space for her collaborator to tell her own stories without undue interference and translation. As well, the storyteller would be free to reinterpret her stories and flesh them out with the same degree of footnotes, apologies, and explanations accorded the researcher. Consequently, jointly told tales may mean ambiguous and difficult-to-read texts. Nevertheless, Van Maanen suggests that this type of life story respects the authority of both the researched and the researcher and "attempts to bridge the gap between two meaning systems of equal validity (but not always with equal power)" (pp. 137-138). This negotiation of the final representation is, after all, unbalanced: the researcher holds the editorial and publishing keys.

As I contemplated this issue at the outset of my thesis investigation, my intention was to remember my commitment and responsibility to my collaborator. I did not want to turn a young woman's life into written data while ignoring her spoken words. By the same token, I did not want to ignore my own words, as if they had nothing to reveal. (See Figure 6.) I did not intend to refine and polish a written account so as to blur anyone's meanings and intentions. Moustakas' (1990) words echoed the power I wielded in this respect:

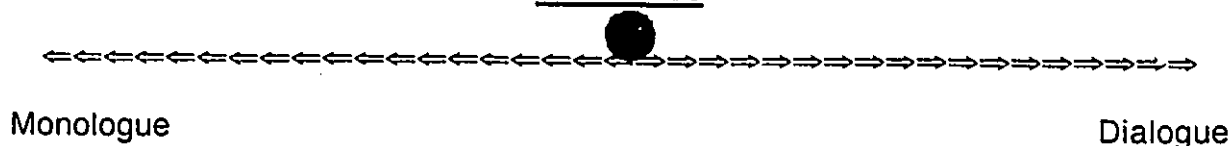
The synthesis of essences and meanings inherent in any human experience is

a reflection and outcome of the researcher's pursuit of knowledge. What is presented as truth and what is removed as implausible or idiosyncratic ultimately can be accredited only on the grounds of personal knowledge and judgement. (p. 33)

Thus, although I can return to the data again and again to check and recheck it, the final judgements lie with me.

Figure 6.

Discourse



To undertake conscious constructive life story research, I knew that I must take the time to reflect repeatedly on all five key issues within this critical model. In this way, I would be aware of my shifting views, examine possible reasons for them, and be able to consider how they would get played out. In the end, the only way that I would be able to describe how I got to where I ended up is if I knew from whence I came.

ADEQUACY AND LIMITATIONS

There is no interpretive method that would lead to a universally acceptable account. According to Packer and Addison (1989), "there is no technique, interpretation-free algorithm or procedure with which we can evaluate an interpretation" (p. 290). They offer an analogy which I find particularly helpful:

An interpretive account resembles in some respects a hammer in a workshop. The traditional approach to validation involves a misunderstanding that is like thinking the question, 'How good is the hammer?' is similar to 'How heavy is the hammer?' Two things are overlooked: the task in which the hammer will be employed, and its place among the other tools [Although] the hammer's

weight can be established . . . the hammer is good only if it advances the current task and only if it works well with its companion tools. This choice is not a fixed one, it will change as new phases of the task arise In the same way, a good interpretive account is one that advances the practical concerns with which we undertake an interpretive inquiry, and one that works well with the other activities we are engaged in. (p. 291)

Packer and Addison go on to suggest four approaches to assessing an interpretive account, approaches that are based on reasoning we engage in in our everyday lives. If, for instance, we are unsure how to understand someone's action, we can ask ourselves if our interpretation makes sense; we can ask her what she meant; we can talk with others; and we can look to see what happens when we tell her our interpretation. Even if these checks pan out, Packer and Addison caution us against a confidence that we have got to the bottom of the matter. They suggest, instead, that interpretive researchers spend time "debunking our own perspectives: pointing out their flaws and shortcomings; documenting the anomalies and oddities that remain puzzling and unexplained, the fish that have escaped our nets" (p. 292).

Much of this life story research undertaking has depended on my perspective. All researchers (like the rest of us) have biases and see certain things more clearly than others. I have used a number of techniques to check my perceptions -- to ensure as much as possible that I have heard and seen what I think I did. These procedures have enhanced the adequacy of my research. Nevertheless, as a hermeneutical investigator, I do not lay claim to realizing the one, true reality.

First, I used a number of techniques for data collection: observation, focus group transcripts, journal notes, and interviews. This kind of cross-checking is often referred to as triangulation, though I prefer Richardson's (1994) alternate view of crystallization,

I propose that the central image for 'validity' for postmodernist texts is not the triangle -- a rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object. Rather, the central image is the

crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, alter, but are not amorphous. (p. 522)

A second procedure I used to enhance the adequacy of this research was to interview Jane more than once. I interviewed her five times as my collaborator and twice more as a participant in the Young Women and Work research project. Further, Jane attended all four focus group discussions. With this wealth of interview data, all of which were audiotaped and transcribed, I was able to isolate inconsistencies over time in the kinds of things Jane said and to follow them up with her.

I also observed Jane in her co-operative education settings over her entire school year. These observations included preplacement, integration, and worksite settings, and provided me with opportunities to observe her both with and without her classmates. The length of time over which these observations occurred allowed me to be more confident in assessing the validity and reliability of what I saw and heard. Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) suggest that the passing of time is necessary for a sufficient level of familiarity with and willingness to trust a researcher to be reached before much begins to emerge.

Another factor that enhanced the adequacy of this research was my connection to the larger project. This connection allowed me access to project data that were relevant to both Jane and to her co-operative education program. In addition, I was able to 'bounce' my ideas and perceptions off colleagues (project team members) who had also come to know her.

A further consideration towards adequacy was my decision to write reflexively. Clandinin and Connelly (1994) suggest that the interrelations inherent in reflexive story writing are simultaneously focused in four directions: inward, outward, backward, and forward. The inward focus refers to the internal conditions of feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, and moral dispositions. The outward focus is the environment. Backward and forward refer to temporality, past, present, and future. These

researchers further suggest that to "experience an experience," or to be conscious of one's experience as a narrative researcher, involves simultaneous experiencing in all four directions and to ask directions pointing each way (p. 417). My decision to experience my experience involved my telling of another kind of story: the story of this research project. In acknowledging the centrality of my own experience, I have attempted to deal with questions of who I have been both in the field and as the author of that field experience. At the same time, by providing Jane with her own discursive voice in this text, I muddied my own waters further, so-to-speak. But no qualitative manuscript can truly be clean. In writing reflexively, I attempted to be conscious of the facts that who I wrote for, the historical time and particular genre I wrote in, political and social forces, and my own biography all entered into the construction of this text (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

This chapter has discussed the methodological issues and strategies which I endeavoured to set in place during this research study. The next chapter will introduce Jane through a short story and provide a glimpse of her relational voice through the make-believe dilemmas of fables.

Chapter 3: Life in Story

This brief chapter presents two facets of Jane's life that are story-related. It begins with a story that takes the form of a short biography. Its purpose is to provide a context -- to set the stage, so-to-speak -- for the disconnective stories located throughout subsequent chapters. It provides a description of the kinds of struggles Jane was facing during the study and that will be further developed in Chapter 4. The second section of this chapter discusses Jane's exercise with the two Aesop's fables first presented in Chapter 2. I will attempt to identify her relational voice as she faces these make-believe moral dilemmas, an exercise designed as a jumping off point for a subsequent analysis of Jane's voice as she prepares for the adult world of work.

JANE: A STORY

The first thing that struck me about Jane was her gracefulness. She was a tall, slender young woman who tended towards shyness, and she had a nervous habit of flicking her long, blond hair so that it fell forward, concealing her face. Presenting to me as quiet, yet determined, Jane described herself first and foremost as "nice." During my weeks of observation in her co-op ed class, Jane tended to sit by herself and socialized little with her classmates. Similarly, our first one-on-one encounters were somewhat strained as Jane was quite withdrawn. As the months passed, though, we got to know each other a little better, and Jane began to feel more comfortable with our conversations. Increasingly, the intelligence and sensitivity of this lovely, young woman became apparent as she opened herself up to me in the revelation of her life story.

Personal Relationships

Jane lived with her father, Jeff, and his girlfriend, Mona. Their house was in a new subdivision very close to Jane's school. On the two occasions that I visited Jane at home, the drapes were drawn, and the house was dark. Smoke from her father's cigarettes filled the air. Although everything was neat and tidy, there seemed to me to be a certain coldness about it all; no photographs or personal mementos, no

freshness, no light.

Jane did not get along well with either her father or Mona, and she tried to avoid them as much as possible. For the most part, she and Mona did not speak, and Jane and her father tended to communicate through messages posted on the bathroom door. Jane tried not to be home when they were. During the infrequent occasions when they were in the house at the same time, she retreated to her bedroom upstairs. Jane wanted no part of the relentless yelling that flew between Mona and her father. A part of her was glad to hear it, though. It may have meant that Mona would move out. Maybe, then, she would have her "old" father back again.

Life was not always like this for Jane. In a town about an hour's drive from where she lived, she was the youngest of two daughters born to her parents, Jeff and Rosemary. Both of Jane's parents' families lived in the area, and she grew up amidst a large, extended family. Her mother went back to school to study occupational therapy when her children were quite young. Although Jane did not remember much about that time, she did remember that "sometimes she'd be gone for, like, weeks at a time." When she completed her schooling, she spent several years working in local area hospitals. Jane recalled that,

Once we moved here, she was offered a job at [a] hospital, but she'd worked at so many hospitals, so she started working in clinics. But she had a [health] problem, and she got really sick, and so she ended up losing her job. Then she was out of work for a year and a half, but now she's back to work again.

Jane's childhood was filled with family discord. Although she remembered getting along fairly well with her older sister, Donna, it seemed as though her parents frequently shouted at each other in argument. Jane recalled, "I don't remember one time when they weren't fighting." When Jane was thirteen, her parents separated for the first time. She and Donna moved to another town with their mother. This was the beginning of the upheaval of Jane's family, one that finally ended, five years later, in the divorce of her parents. Following their first separation, however, they made

several attempts at reconciliation. Each attempt meant a new move for Jane and her sister, almost always to a different town, and definitely to a different school. All told, Jane moved over five times and attended at least eight schools in the process.

A few years ago, Jane's mother sat her and Donna down and told them that they had a half-sister. Apparently, she had had a baby before she was married and put her up for adoption. Rosemary had spent years trying to find her, to no avail. But as she had turned nineteen, the adoption records had been made available and she had located her first child. Her name was Kim, and she was still living in the family's hometown. Kim had been on her own for a few years, remaining in the family's hometown where she started her own family, and had a young son. Jane and Donna met their elder sister, and all three had been trying to get to know each other. Jane adored her little nephew, and she loved to shop for gifts for him. Whenever her busy schedule allowed, she tried to squeeze in a short visit.

In 1993, Jane's parents separated for the last time and subsequently divorced. For the first time, Jane moved in with her father, while Donna stayed with her mother,

Me and my sister were at each other's throats, and . . . I was going to live with my mom [but she did.] So I said, 'Okay, well, I'll live with dad.' And then I go and move in with my dad, and then she moves in. I'm like, 'I'm going to go live with my mom,' and I tell my mom, she moves down here, she got an apartment and everything, and then Donna went and lived with her. So, that's it, okay, I'll stay here.

One night, about a month after her parents' final separation, Jane arrived home to find that Mona, her dad's girlfriend, had moved in.

I went to put the dog in my dad's room, and a mattress is on the floor. She slept over on the first night she was there, and then moved in. So . . . it makes me wonder . . . could they be that close other than lovers to move in, just like, you know, not even a month after my dad and mom separated.

Jane was shocked and confused. Her father had met Mona at work, but Jane did not

think that they had developed a relationship serious enough to warrant Mona's moving in -- not in a mere month since her parents' final separation. This event marked the beginning of the end of the close relationship between Jane and her father.

Jane believed that Mona changed her father, that she bore responsibility for his withdrawing his affection for and his attention to his daughter and lavishing it on his new partner. He did not spend the time he once had with Jane, and whenever they were together, he was not the loving father he once was. Jane attributed complete responsibility for this change to Mona, whom she believed had some sort of power or control over him. This power extended to the governing of the entire household, too. Mona rearranged the furnishings, changing the livingroom into the diningroom and vice versa. She dictated a new level of cleanliness and orderliness to both Jane and her father, admonishing them for their earlier style of living, and setting out new house rules such as: "everything has to be perfect". Mona decided that Jane's mother must not contact Jane at the house. She was neither welcome to visit nor telephone Jane. Mona also made Jane get rid of her dog, Honi, a one-year-old terrier. Jane was furious that Mona should be able to make such determinations, and more furious still that her father allowed it.

She's kind of got my dad wrapped around her little finger right now. So, he's kind of, I don't know, getting down to her level. She's kind of changed my dad completely. He's down to her level almost now.

Before long, Mona and Jeff began arguing. As the frequency and intensity of their arguments grew, Jane's elation grew as well. She hoped that, with any luck, Mona would move out. Only then, she believed, would she and her father be able to be close once again. In the meantime, however, Jane avoided being home when they were and tried her best to tolerate the emotional turmoil inherent in her living conditions.

JANE: I usually see them . . . if I'm unlucky, then I'll see them for about ten minutes a week.

CHERYL: If you're unlucky. And if you're lucky?

JANE: Zero.

Jane's mother, Rosemary, lived close by. Rosemary worked for the federal government. She had a new partner, Gilles, whom she met at a singles' dance. Jane thought that her mother and Gilles got along fine. Said Jane, "I don't mind Gilles. He's nice." Jane thought that she and her mother were alike:

I can get upset very easy, like, cry very easy, and we both care more about schooling and work and stuff like that, than going off partying, you know, . . . going out to parties instead of working is more like Donna and my dad. I don't know, we're just kind of the same, which is really weird, because now Donna is with my mom, and I'm with my dad. So it's kind of opposite to each of us. Like, my mom and my sister are at each other's throats every day. And then when I go over there, me and my mom get along. So it would make more sense, you know, if we were switched. But Donna doesn't like my dad anymore either.

Jane did not understand her sister, Donna. She described Donna as someone who did not have a strong work ethic, and to Jane this was a definite shortcoming. Donna was twenty years old and had yet to have a job. She had been a consistently poor student; she dropped out of high school, returned, but had not yet graduated. Jane said that Donna took after their father. Donna liked to "drink and party like my dad who is an alcoholic." Like him, too, she was "infant-like" because she did not care if she hurt someone else's feelings. And, just as Jane's father was charged with abuse by her mother, Donna had become involved with a violent man:

Donna's dating Mike, who's a lot like my dad He's not so nice. He's hit her before and, you know, she's like, crying. She'd get in a rage and complain about it and scream, and then next day she's glad to be back with him. He's just a real low-life. He's already cheated on her. He's made passes at all my friends, which is kind of embarrassing because he used to live with us . . . [and] he'd keep drinking, and there'd be beer bottles all over the house. He's also a

drop-out.

All-in-all, Jane described her relationship with Donna as "not that bad." Their arguments were frequent and intense, but short-lived. And because Jane spent a lot of time at her mother's, she said that she and Donna saw each other "all the time."

Jane would like to be living with her mother right now. Circumstances, however, seem to make it impossible. There was not enough space at her mother's apartment for both Jane and Donna, and Donna would not "switch." Consequently, Jane resigned herself to "toughing it out" for the next year and a half until she and her boyfriend could get a place of their own.

Jane was madly in love. Her boyfriend, Joseph, was the most important person in her life. They had been going out together for two and a half years. Joseph lived with his parents, about a ten-minute drive from Jane's house. Joseph was completing his third year of university studies in business and held down two part-time jobs. He was a serious student and devoted a good deal of his time to studying so that he could achieve well academically. Jane called Joseph "a little smart person," and then qualified her comment by adding,

But it's good, because if I'm stuck with a math question, he helps me with it

And then any time I do an essay or something like that, he always proof-reads it for me. Like, when I'm finished, he'll go through it for spelling mistakes and stuff like that.

Joseph was supportive towards Jane's schooling. Besides helping her with her math and proofreading her essays, Joseph financed the purchase of her car so that she would have reliable transportation to and from her co-op placement.

Jane spent every free moment with Joseph. Mostly, she would go to his house. She made a point of seeing him every day and calling him each morning before she headed off to school. Jane joked about this, knowing that Joseph's first class was much later than hers and that she woke him with her early telephone call. And every night that she worked late, Joseph followed her home to be sure she arrived safely.

School Experiences

With all of the moves that Jane made over the years, she had attended, to the best of her recollection, four or five elementary schools plus four secondary schools. She had only vague memories of her early school years, but she was more consciously aware of high school and was able to talk with me about it at length. Jane was an above-average student, consistently achieving grades from the high 70's through 80's. In Grade 10, she won an award in mathematics which was presented to her in a school assembly.

The year of the study, Jane was in Grade 12. She maintained a full courseload in the mornings that consisted of classes in English, Math, Gym, and Peer Tutoring.¹ At 11:35 a.m., Jane headed off to her co-op placement, where she remained until around 3:30 p.m.

Jane did not apply herself diligently in her school work. With her busy schedule, studying hard was not at the top of her priority list. Each week day, Jane had classes all morning, and her co-op placement all afternoon. Then she squeezed in a visit with Joseph before she headed off to work. After work, she usually headed back to Joseph's before going home to do her homework, not falling into bed until the early morning.

Sometimes, if I have a lot of homework, me and Joseph stay up studying until, like 3:00 in the morning. Then I have to go to school the next morning, so I don't sleep that much.

¹ In Peer Tutoring, Jane worked as a teacher's aide in a Grade 9 math class, a position for which she had to apply and, upon acceptance, undergo training in teaching methodology at the start of the school year. In the class, Jane was responsible for both one-on-one and small group work as well as the marking of assignments. Peer Tutoring was offered as a one-credit course to Grade 12 students at Jane's school.

Although Jane said that she and Joseph were "night people," she admitted that her grades would be better if she went to bed a little earlier. Although her marks were high, Jane seemed content to comment that she was "managing" to pass everything. Sometimes, though, she ran into difficulty,

Whenever we get major assignments, it's kind of 'Oh, God!' . . . I don't really have too, too much time. I do some of it, put it away and forget about it until the night before, . . . and Joseph doesn't like it when I do that.

Jane's co-op placement was in a French Immersion senior kindergarten classroom at an elementary school about a ten-minute drive from her high school. She drove to her placement, arriving just before noon. Sandra, the classroom teacher, was Jane's worksite supervisor. Sandra was a kindly, fortyish woman who, on the day of my visit to her classroom, wore a full, flounced apron over her Laura Ashley blouse and jumper. Her pleasure with Jane was apparent: she spoke highly of her and her ability with the children. When asked to pose for a photograph by Jane's co-op teacher (whom I accompanied on the visit), Sandra enthusiastically obliged by smiling and embracing Jane, referring to them as "the team."

During one of our interviews, Jane walked me through a typical afternoon at her placement. The children were playing in the school yard when Jane arrived, and she would either stay outside to help Sandra supervise them or go into the classroom and take care of any unfinished "paperwork." The children would come in at 12:15, and Jane would help them to remove their outerwear. The first activity of the afternoon was circle time, which the children experienced with Sandra. Jane, meanwhile, would be doing administrative work that might include labelling and folding newsletters or placing childrens' letters and poems into folders. Then she would set up the materials for the afternoon's craft activity

Jane was also responsible for creating new bulletin boards in the classroom, and she liked to enlist the help of the children. In this way, the displays became a joint effort. Sandra provided Jane with a binder in which she recorded anecdotal

Jane said that these notes were both to help Sandra in her student evaluations and to help Jane "to get used to the things that I have to do as a teacher." Other weekly activities in the classroom included excursions to the library and gym time. At 2:40, five minutes before the bell would ring, Sandra and Jane would take the children out to the buses "before the bigger kids start running outside and trampling over them." Then they would return to the classroom where Jane would stay until 3:15 or 3:30, helping Sandra clean up and prepare for the next day.

The normal procedure for the co-op program in which Jane was enrolled was to begin a second placement in the second term. Jane's second placement was to be in a daycare. In consultation with both her co-op teacher and worksite supervisor, though, Jane had arranged to remain at her first placement for the entire year. She anticipated that her teaching responsibilities would increase during the second term.

Part-Time Work

Jane first started working at the age of 13 as a babysitter. Then she got a job at a fast food restaurant, but,

. . . that was a little bit difficult because it stayed open till midnight, so sometimes I wouldn't get off till, like, two in the morning. So, my dad would have to come pick me up because buses weren't running anymore.

About a year later, Jane worked as a waitress in a motel restaurant that was some distance out of town. Although she wanted to keep that job, it was just too far to travel every day, and she would have to stay in the motel when she worked late nights.

Throughout the study, Jane worked part-time at a fast food take-out restaurant in the food court of a nearby shopping centre. She began working there when it opened, about two and a half years ago, and she was the longest-standing employee, besides Bill, the manager. It was a small operation, with an off-site owner, Bill, two full-time employees, Jane, and two other part-time employees. Jane's responsibilities included "the cash, the cooking, the serving, the cleaning, the . . . everything." She worked very long hours, sometimes 12-hour shifts on weekends and holidays, and usually for five

long hours, sometimes 12-hour shifts on weekends and holidays, and usually for five or six days a week.

Jane and Bill became good friends. "My boss loves me," she said, "I could dump water over his head, and he wouldn't do anything." Jane attributed this to the fact that they both had been working at the take-out for the same length of time. But Jane had extended their relationship beyond the confines of work. She went on to say, "The Sunday just past, I took him down to the flea market, so it's not like boss and employee."

Jane's future career interest centred around working with children, although, at the time of this writing, she was still undecided as to what form that interest might take. Neither was she sure of her plans for next year. She had been considering two options. On the one hand, she might complete her OACs in anticipation of a possible teaching degree, or she might apply for an early childhood education program at a local college.

JANE'S VOICE IN FABLES

I decided to use Johnston's (1988) fable exercise as part of my moral problem-solving interview with Jane. In fact, this was to be our last interview, and I wanted it to be somewhat different than the others -- lighter and more upbeat. I familiarized myself with the fables and related questions, and practiced them with a few friends and family members. The exercise proved to be both fun and informative. Jane, too, seemed to enjoy them. Most importantly, though, the fable exercise added another dimension to the "crystallization" (see pp. 43-44) of the adequacy of my perceptions about Jane.

The Porcupine and the Moles

It was growing cold, and a porcupine was looking for a home. He found a most desirable cave but saw it was occupied by a family of moles.

"Would you mind if I shared your home for the winter?" the porcupine asked the moles.

The generous moles consented and the porcupine moved in. But the cave was

sharp quills. The moles endured this discomfort as long as they could. Then at last they gathered courage to approach their visitor. "Pray leave," they said, "and let us have our cave to ourselves once again."

"Oh no!" said the porcupine. "This place suits me very well."

In this first fable, Jane defined the problem as follows: "the cave was very small, and the porcupine was big and had prickly things, and every time the moles tried to move . . . it's their house, and . . . like, the mole is causing problems." Her first, or spontaneous solution was in three parts: "either make the cave bigger, or ask the porcupine to leave, or shave him." The first and third suggestions responded to the needs of both animals in the dilemma, evidence of Jane's voice of care. Asking the porcupine to leave represented her voice of justice.

Jane's best, or preferred solution to the dilemma was, "with the moles' help, the porcupine finding another place to live." This answer represents both voices of care and justice because it integrates an idea that relies on a principle (the right to own property) with the idea that the needs of all participants must somehow be met. Immediately, though, she added, "I know I'm not being very sensitive." I assured her that there were no right or wrong answers, just different ideas about possible solutions. Then I asked her why she thought that this was the best solution, and she replied that then everybody would be "happy" because they would be helping each other to have a comfortable home. She thought that this was important because then they would still be friends. Interestingly, the fable made no mention of any previous or existing friendship between the porcupine and the moles. Jane, on the other hand, assumed there was one.

Both Jane's spontaneous and best solutions for solving the problem in "The Porcupine and the Moles" fable incorporate the two perspectives of care and justice. As well, her assumption of an existing relationship between the animals supports Johnston's (1988) research findings. What follows from this tendency to assume that a relationship both exists and can continue is the adoption of a caring perspective. And

for Jane, it may suggest the importance with which she views relationships, and the difficulty she has in being perceived as insensitive to the needs of others. At the same time, though, the fable seems to suggest that Jane's problem-solving can be balanced with a voice of justice able to recognize the importance of individual rights.

The Dog in the Manger

A dog, looking for a comfortable place to nap, came upon the empty stall of an ox. There it was quiet and cool and the hay was soft. The dog, who was very tired, curled up on the hay and was soon fast asleep.

A few hours later the ox lumbered in from the fields. He had worked hard and was looking forward to his dinner of hay. His heavy steps woke the dog who jumped up in a great temper. As the ox came near the stall the dog snapped angrily, as if to bite him. Again and again the ox tried to reach his food but each time he tried the dog stopped him.

In this second fable, Jane clearly stated the problem: the dog was trespassing. Her first, or spontaneous solution was that "the dog could just move over a little bit, and then the ox can get to his hay." This solution relies on caring logic because with it the needs of both animals would be met. I pursued Jane's line of reasoning here to see if she would offer a solution that incorporated a voice of justice. She said that the ox was being "generous" in letting the dog be in his stall. The dog had "no right" to be there in the first place, and he "shouldn't complain" and "shouldn't get in the way" if the ox wants to get his hay "because it's his food." Indeed, Jane was able to problem-solve from a justice perspective. As it turned out, though, that was not her best solution to the dilemma.

Jane's preferred solution involved having both animals "talk it out . . . because they're not really getting anywhere." She thought that if they discussed the problem, both animals "could come up some arrangement where the ox can eat and the dog can sleep." This is a caring solution.

Jane's initial and best solution for the dilemma in "The Dog in the Manger" fable

Jane's initial and best solution for the dilemma in "The Dog in the Manger" fable both involve a caring orientation. It seemed less important to her that the dog was infringing on the ox's right to own property than it did to try to please them both in the end. Although Jane was able to verbalize issues of rights in discussing possible solutions, she preferred a solution that responded to the needs of both animals in their situation.

In both fables, Jane's predominant voice was one of caring. In neither one did she offer a truly justice-based solution such as "just kick him out and make him find his own place." And in considering her best solutions, the moles and the ox would become worse off than they were before. The moles would have to leave their warm home in the middle of the winter to help the porcupine find a home. The ox would have to share part of his stall with the dog. I wonder just how long Jane would have the moles search or how much space she would have the ox give up. When would enough become enough? Johnston (1988) suggests that an individual's preferred voice (or orientation) exhibited in a fable dilemma could be a potential reflection of that individual's preferred voice in real-life relationships. I accept Johnston's suggestion as representative of a valid interpretation of the voice issue.

In Jane's case, what did this transferability of voice mean? How much did she silence herself in her attempts to be "nice" or "good" to others? Did she know, and could she say that she was important, too? The next chapter looks at Jane's voice in her real-life relationships. In particular, it examines the ways in which she silences her voice, resists that silence, and the effects of both on her school-to-work transition.

Chapter 4: Stories in Life

Brown and Gilligan (1992) state that connection and responsive relationships are crucial to the development of a healthy identity. What is more, if occupational identity is one aspect of a person's total identity (Erikson, 1968), then relationships are also important in this regard. The perspective or voice with which a person views and acts upon the world influences that person's choices, relationships, and identity. For women, in particular, Brown and Gilligan suggest that the development of a healthy identity may be particularly problematic. They tell us, for instance, that women, young and old, often speak indirectly in voices that are deeply encoded, deliberately or unwittingly opaque. And as researchers, we may hear their voices in stories that reveal strategies of silence and resistance in their struggle to understand the world and act in it.

Jane's voice was indicative of the kinds of struggles Brown and Gilligan talk about. Her stories characterized the contradictions of her reality -- a reality that included the kinds of choices she made as she emerged into the adult world of work. This chapter examines Jane's stories of silence, resistance, and transition from school to work. In the following three sections, her relational voice is identified and discussed in her personal relationships, school experiences, and part-time work, respectively.

A STORY OF SILENCE

Women, young and old alike, often silence themselves rather than risk conflict that might lead to isolation or violence. Bernardez (1991) and Brown and Gilligan (1992) suggest that, paradoxically, while we seem on one hand to be aware of what we are doing, in another sense, we do not. They suggest further that at a young age we learn to anticipate what others will say or think if we express strong feelings and to narrow our visions of ourselves into nice and kind, good and perfect. We learn that in order to be liked, accepted, or included by others, we must be nice girls who wait our turn, heed the advice of adults, are patient and polite. But the demand for niceness is oppressive; it is a way of controlling and being controlled.

Although silence is often seen as the sign of woman's submission to patriarchal authority, it may also be seen as a form of resistance to submission (Ellsworth, 1989). Women may decline or refuse to talk at all because what we say, to whom, in what context, depending on the energy we have for a particular struggle, is the result of the conscious and unconscious assessments of the power relations and safety of the situation. Speech gives up the safety of silence. More than that, things may be left unsaid or be encoded on the basis of the speaker's assessments of the risks and costs of disclosing their understandings of themselves to others. It is in this dual realm of silence that I next visit Jane to try to understand her struggles and their influence -- present and future -- on her work-related choices.

Personal Relationships

Eliciting self-descriptive talk from Jane proved to be the most difficult of all the topics of conversation we covered throughout our interviews together. Jane had a very difficult time talking about herself. She was uncomfortable and repeatedly redirected the conversation. However, because I felt that having an understanding of who Jane thought she was was integral to my being able to write her story, I was just as determined to stay on topic as she was to avoid it.

One interview in particular was devoted to providing time for Jane to explore her thoughts and feelings about herself. She seemed uncomfortable with self-talk and flippantly responded, "I'm Jane." An important point to remember here, though, is researcher-collaborator rapport. Jane could have felt a high level of discomfort because I was a complete and perhaps threatening stranger to her. As we talked, I tried to make her feel more comfortable, and with time, she found a safe and non-threatening route towards self-talk. It seemed that, on the surface at least, Jane's self-perception was directly linked to her relationships with others. She began to talk about herself in terms of externals, specifically as a lover of animals and children. She began by telling me a long story about her dog, Honi, whom she had been forced to give up. When she had finished her story, I tried to redirect the conversation back

towards further self-descriptive talk. Jane again attempted to redirect it away from herself, this time towards a discussion of children.

Jane was avoiding talk that centred on herself. In an attempt to create a safer atmosphere in which she would feel more comfortable to describe herself to me, I suggested that she might like to use some adjectives to describe herself. Without hesitation, she responded, "nice." I interpreted this over-used word as a vague adjective that did not really convey anything of importance. I thought that through this vagueness, she was still evading truly descriptive language.¹ I asked her to tell me how her boyfriend, Joseph, would describe her to someone who did not know her. Still, Jane hesitated, saying that she did not know who she was. She struggled with speaking about herself in the sense of being an individual, separate and complete in herself. Her words could frame herself only in terms of her relationship to others,

I don't know. Ummm Well, I'm giving. I give a lot. Like when I went to work one day, and I brought two MacDonald's breakfasts [one for her and one for Bill] . . . and it turned out the big boss was there, and so I just told him that I already ate I don't know

It seemed to me that Jane was agonizing over what I had thought would be something simple and straightforward, a self-description. By now, it was clear that if I did not let her off the hook, I might be jeopardizing the development of our relationship altogether. Hence, I let her steer the conversation towards topics of her choice for most of the remainder of this particular interview. Only towards its closing did I again attempt to elicit further Who-am-I talk. By now, she was more relaxed and open to the idea of talking about herself. She offered that she liked to work and talked about some

¹ Upon later reflection of this conversation, I realized that a more useful line of questioning at this point would have been to pursue the possible meanings she attributed to "nice." However, this was fairly early in the interview process, and I was as yet unaware of the frequency with which Jane would use "nice" in talking about both herself and others.

of her accomplishments in her various jobs. Fearing, though, that she would once again redirect the conversation outwards, I decided to profer several adjectives which might prove useful as jumping off points for self-reflection.

CHERYL: Would you say that you are determined?

JANE: I don't know. Sure, I guess.

CHERYL: Are you stubborn?

JANE: Well, I wouldn't go that far, but . . . ummm . . . I'm really naive sometimes. I won't really see something about some situation someone else will. Like, I won't pick out something, like, Joseph is always . . . he'll always pick out something bad; I'll just . . . you know, I can miss it.

Although I had hoped that these adjectives would elicit storytelling self-talk, Jane used them to compare herself negatively with her boyfriend. Our previous conversation had centred around Jane's strongly developed work ethic, and I thought that words such as "determined" and "stubborn" might be helpful in terms of her maintaining the same frame of mind while bridging topics. It may have turned out, though, that my suggested adjectives created in Jane a negative and self-doubting mindset. On the other hand, and what I think more likely, was that by refocusing the conversation, her reluctance towards positive self-talk emerged once again.

Still hopeful that I could somehow encourage Jane to tell me positive things about herself, I tried another tack. During an earlier interview, while comparing herself with her mother, Jane had used the term "sensitive." I repeated it here,

CHERYL: And you're sensitive . . .

JANE: Pretty much, yeah. I cry a lot I cry very easily. Like, if Joseph doesn't let me see Honi . . . I get really mad . . . and I start yelling at him, start crying

CHERYL: What's the connection between you not seeing Honi and Joseph?

JANE: Well, I don't know . . . not just 'doesn't let me,' but we don't go see her. You know, we end up not going. It's, 'Joseph, let's go see Honi,' and he'll say,

'Oh, but I have to go to school, I have to do that.'

Jane's interpretation of being a sensitive person has negative connotations. She believes that she is sensitive because she cries a lot. And she tells me a story about how her crying led to anger and yelling. Further, not only did she once again frame herself negatively, she also linked her existence inexorably to someone else. In so doing, she confirmed her unequal partnership with Joseph. For, although Honi is her dog, and she has her own car, Jane has placed herself in a position of dependence upon her boyfriend for an aspect of her life that belongs solely to her.

I made one final attempt to elicit self-talk from Jane. I thought that I would ask her straight out how she felt about herself and then drop the subject once and for all. She responded that she liked herself "sometimes." What she liked best was her work ethic, ". . . because in the future, if you just keep going out and partying, not working, you'll end up, like, being a burn or something." What Jane said that she would like to change about herself was her tendency to "get jealous," a tendency that caused arguments between her and Joseph.

Through repeated and varied endeavours on my part to elicit positive self-talk from Jane, she steadfastly held herself in a place of silence. Her self-knowledge and understanding seemed uncertain and self-critical. Although Jane saw herself as someone in relationship, she seemed to play a submissive role. Alternatively, her silence could have been a strategy she employed because she saw me as someone very threatening. Nevertheless, Jane's voice was silenced. Her strategy of silence successfully kept me at bay, yet I feared the possibility that it might also keep her from herself.

Jane tended to silence herself in her personal relationships. For the most part, she avoided talk that concerned her emotions. If I asked her directly how she felt about a particular person or incident, she would usually respond by telling me her thoughts about the matter. It did not seem to matter whether the tone of the conversation suggested a positive or negative emotional state on Jane's part, her

reaction was fairly consistent: avoidance. Not avoidance by denial because she had no difficulty in telling me straight out if a particular emotional label that I had suggested did not fit. Rather, her avoidance was to any emotional connection whatsoever.

Jane was skilled in avoiding affective connection. Sometimes, she bypassed the emotional component of a question and provided an intellectually-based response. To illustrate this "when feeling = thinking" phenomenon, below is an excerpt from a story Jane told me about an old and dear friend with whom she had lost contact over the years. When I asked her how she felt about that, she replied,

I *think* me and my sister both want to try and find some way to get her phone number. We're *thinking* about going to the hotel that her dad used to own because we *figure* the people there might have the address or the phone number where the old owner lives. [italics mine]

Jane's response to my question about how she felt about losing touch with her friend was an accounting of her problem-solving strategies to locate her whereabouts. This is a clear example of how Jane was able to silence her emotional voice by making a smooth transition from feeling to thinking.

There were times when Jane could not deny her feelings. However, even though she was sometimes willing to express her emotions, she usually could not let them stand on their own merit. A prime illustration of this occurred when Jane was talking about the relationship between her father and his girlfriend. I asked her how they were getting along,

JANE: Actually, I'm pretty glad because for, like, the last month they've been fighting a lot, so

CHERYL: So, you're glad about this.

JANE. Well, it sounds mean.

CHERYL: You look like you do, but you feel guilty because you do.

JANE: Well, because my dad now is just not the dad he used to be. He used to really want me to live there, and when we first moved into this house here and,

you know, he was making an effort, you know, we, me and Joseph, we were there all the time.

Jane thought that I interpreted her emotional response of "gladness" to the fighting between her father and Mona as "mean." I was paraphrasing her words to show her that I was listening in the hope that she would delve deeper and reveal more. In any event, Jane seemed to feel that it was important to explain herself to me. This need to explain may have been due to the authority I represented as both an adult and a researcher. On the other hand, it may have been related to her need to be seen as nice.

Jane's classification of people seemed to fall into two categories: those who were nice; and those who were not. In our six hours of taped interviews, she used nice to refer to both herself and various people in her life a total of 22 times. In fact, nice was the only descriptor that Jane used to any significant degree whatsoever.

Nice was the first adjective that Jane used to describe herself. Interestingly, she spoke it with a raised inflection at the end of the word, indicating an interrogative. Although it could be interpreted as uptalk rather than an interrogative, I sensed that Jane was expressing uncertainty. Did she think that I would not accept it as a valid word in its own right, or was she unsure of its validity in aptly describing herself? I lend more credence to the latter interpretation since Jane freely offered nice to descriptively refer to other people. And the importance Jane seemed to give to people's ability to be nice would indicate this as a characteristic to which her ideal self aspired. Her interrogative tone when using the word as a self-descriptor, then, would seem to be a question of whether she was, in fact, nice enough to warrant its use. And indeed, throughout the months of field time I spent with Jane, she did her utmost to be nice to me. Although it was my routine to bring coffee, juice, and muffins to interviews to help participants feel more relaxed, Jane insisted on bringing food treats for me. When we met at her house, she was the perfect hostess, offering me food and drink and settling me in comfortably before we began. On several days while I was engaged in

participant observation in her co-op ed classroom, she offered me candy. As all nice girls should, Jane tried to keep her emotions in check, did as she was told, and consistently deferred to authority. Truly, she was nice.

Jane described her three best friends as nice. Her further descriptions of them, however, varied tremendously and sometimes contradicted her initial assessment. Besides being nice, Trish, Jane's best friend, was also spoken of as being "very quiet, actually" and "a little bit . . . small." Jane had known Trish for about two years, having met her at school. Although they were not sharing any classes together this year, Jane said that she and Trish did a lot of things together, including shopping and skiing.

Barbara, another of Jane's friends, was described by her as "very loud at times. She's got one of those very loud voices Sometimes she can even get annoying. She's a sore loser. She's . . . she's . . . she's nice. She's different. She's nice." Jane recounted a story in which she and Barbara were playing Monopoly,

JANE: . . . just because I had more properties than her, she was all complaining, you know, and she ended up, like So I ended up giving her two. She doesn't like to lose at anything.

CHERYL: How come you gave her two?

JANE: Because she was complaining so much. It was just so annoying, I just gave it to her.

CHERYL: Did it work?

JANE: No, then she creamed me because the two I gave her were . . . she wanted the two most expensive ones on the board, but she had the other pairs, too And then the next turn she landed on "Free Parking," got all the money, put hotels on all of them, and I died.

Although I did not probe, Jane did not offer any positive anecdotes about her friend, Barbara. Rather, she focused on telling me about what she considered the more undesirable aspects of Barbara's personality. It seemed that Jane used the Monopoly story as an illustration of her own niceness in the face of Barbara's being a "sore

loser." Nevertheless, Jane made sure that I understood that she thought of Barbara as nice. My understanding, though, was that Jane really did not like Barbara very much. This said, she struggled with the contradiction of considering Barbara her friend yet not really liking her. Perhaps by describing Barbara's not-so-nice side, while insisting on their friendship, Jane hoped that I would be convinced of her own niceness.

Jane met Amy, another of her friends, in the mall in which Jane worked. Amy held a job as a security guard for the mall authority. Although Amy was the only one of Jane's friends who had had a boyfriend for longer than she, and therefore "beat" her, Jane still considered Amy nice. Other than the long-term boyfriend, however, Jane did not think that she and Amy had much in common, saying that "she's more of the type that likes to go out and party."

Other people in Jane's life were nice, too. When she was younger, her parents were nice. Similarly, her favourite teacher, from elementary school, "was more nice" and did not "yell, you know, and stuff." And Jane did not mind her mother's new boyfriend, Gilles, because he was nice.

On the other hand, Jane viewed some people in her life as quite the opposite. For instance, both Donna and her boyfriend were "not so nice"; he abused her, and she stayed in relationship with him. This statement about Donna contradicts Jane's earlier one in which she says that she and Donna get along. Perhaps Jane sees herself as being able to sustain relationships in the face of disparity. If this is so, it would account, in part, for her contradictory expressions of feeling about her friends Barbara and Amy. Similarly, Jane said that she would not mind Mona, her father's girlfriend, were she "nice, but she's a snob." And serving nice customers at work was "not bad," but Jane had difficulty with some who were "just not nice people" and who thought that "we're just there to serve, you know, like, we're nothing . . . but that's not true."

Nice was definitely a characteristic to which Jane aspired. It was also a trait she found desirable in others. However, as she measured both herself and those around

her on the nice scale, Jane seemed to be denying the complexity of people and their relationships. This denial could be seen as a refusal to acknowledge any not-so-nice feelings she might have. Unacknowledged or denied feelings are a manifestation of the silencing of some part of the complex voice. And Jane's expressed ambivalence is not easily accounted for by accepting that she is just a nice person. Rather, examining the term more closely could present clues about the significance of Jane's reliance on it. Being nice could not be a means in itself. The term suggests, in fact demands, a referent -- another to whom one acts in a nice manner. In other words, if one acts nice enough, the other is pleased, though it would seem obvious -- on an intellectual level at least -- that pleasing others is neither always possible nor even desirable. This knowledge must be internalized in order for healthy relationships to develop and prosper. Frequently, though, it is not. In such instances, young women like Jane attempt to order their worlds on the niceness scale. In so doing, they try very hard to please everyone around them and, in the process, may downplay or even deny their own worth.

In this place of silence, where nice reigns supreme, how does one measure one's own worthiness? Jane hesitated in bestowing the accolade upon herself. How, then, could she decide if she were good enough to warrant it? I suggest that her efforts pointed towards trying very hard to be a "good" person. Considering the high level of discord she described in her familial relationships, being good was a strain. She attempted to disengage herself from the bickering that surrounded her. In the midst of a disagreement, however, Jane's father would sometimes just get up and walk out of the house, often not to return for hours. Attempting to seek harmony or balance within a very disturbing situation, Jane would then assign herself the good daughter role. She would attempt to put things right by finding her father and bringing him home. For instance, last Christmas at her grandmother's wake, Jane's father and Mona had gotten into an argument and off he stormed into a blizzard. Jane went in search for him,

. . . for, like, an hour and a half that night, and that was, you know, it was blurry and, like, it was snowing, and it was so cold out, and he was out there walking I finally found him. His hair was white, his glasses were all fogged, like, all steamed up, and he's got, like, a snow moustache.

I asked Jane why she bothered to look for him, and she said, "Because it was on a wake," and people started to become "hysterical" knowing that he was out in a storm with "no hat, no gloves, no nothing." When conflict enters the public sphere, it takes on additional ramifications. Jane was fully convinced that her father would "take off" to lay "a guilt trip" on the person with whom he was arguing. And, apparently, the worse the weather, the more likely he would leave "to make the other person feel even worse, knowing that he's out there." With this understanding of her father's modus operandi, Jane still felt obliged to play the role of good daughter by scouring the countryside in pursuit. And throughout these episodes, she would "kind of stay quiet because I'm the type of person . . . I don't want to say something that I'll regret the next day, you know." The only way Jane could manage to be good was to be silent. It is not my intent here to take the stand of blaming the victim. Jane's silence served to get her through these situations. After all, she was only a teenager who was taking on a very adult role.

Jane also tried to be a good daughter to her mother. She really wanted to be living with her, and in spite of her sister's refusal to "switch" living arrangements with her, Jane contemplated another alternative,

I'd move in there, and we'd get a bigger place . . . [because] she would get child support from my dad . . . [but] if I moved in there and then later I'd move out, and my mom's not getting that child support, then she'd be stuck in a bigger house that she can't afford without that child support. So, I don't want to do that to her, you know?

Jane was certainly being a good daughter. She was living in a very discordant atmosphere. She was also aware that it would "make more sense" for her to live with

her mother because they got on well together. Despite these facts, Jane was willing to "tough it out" at her dad's until she was ready to be on her own. Only by so doing, could she prevent her mother from experiencing potential difficulties down the road.

Jane's efforts to be good extended beyond her family to include her boyfriend, Joseph. One particularly troubling aspect of their relationship involved trust. Joseph had told her that he had "cheated" on his previous girlfriends, and he had lied to her about his age (saying that he was several years younger than he really was) for almost two years into their relationship. Nevertheless, Jane felt that she should trust him,

We get into arguments sometimes, and usually I cause it sometimes by being jealous Not jealous, just not as trusting, I guess. I don't trust him as much as I should trust him. I have a problem with trusting him. Like, if he goes out somewhere, I always, like, ask him a million questions, and maybe I'd call and check up on him and . . . I don't know, it's almost like being paranoid or something, you know, I don't trust him when I should trust him and let him go.

Jane thought that Joseph was unworthy of her trust, and she struggled with her ability to trust him. But her struggle placed her in contradiction with her need to be a good young woman who trusted her boyfriend completely. And the manifestation of Jane's struggle turned into self-doubt.

School Experiences

Jane also silenced her relational voice at school. One strategy she employed here involved the dismissal of the relevance of her feelings through compliance to authority. For instance, while discussing discipline as a potential problem in her co-op placement, Jane said that she had learned from the Sandra to "just yell" at the children. I asked her if she felt comfortable with that approach,

JANE: Before, if someone would [do something inappropriate], a kid would have come up to me and said whatever, "Marian hit me" or something like that, you know. I would think that you're supposed to go over there and ask, you know, why she hit him and all that stuff, but you don't. You just tell them to tell

whatever, tell Marian that you don't like being hit. And that's it. That's the whole thing, I guess, I don't know. It's different, [but] you get used to it.

Jane did not mention her comfort level in this particular instance. Neither did she talk about her comfort level, in general, with the teacher's discipline strategy in the classroom. Instead, she explained in detail, and by example, exactly what it was that she was supposed to do. Then she summed it up by saying that that was just the way it was. Jane was ready to go along with something with which she appeared to experience some discomfort. It was Jane, after all, who had begun to talk about her difficulties with disciplining the children. Perhaps because of the authority that Sandra represented, Jane did not feel comfortable enough to ask questions that would increase her understanding of the teacher's approach. Instead, Jane chose acquiescence with something that she defined to me as problematic with the belief that, eventually, she would "get used to it." She may have tried to appease her cognitive dissonance concerning the discipline strategy by dissociating any feelings of discomfort she may have had about it.

Alternatively, Jane may have wanted to tell me about her discomfort with discipline in the classroom but then changed her mind. She had felt free to talk to me about conflict situations with her father and her feelings in that regard. It seemed, though, that in her co-op placement, Jane was developing a responsive and connective relationship with Sandra. Perhaps it was this connection that prevented Jane from saying something that might be interpreted as portraying Sandra in a less than flattering light.

As I read and reread this story according to Brown, Tappan, Gilligan, Miller and Argyris' (1989) method for distinguishing voice, I could hear Jane express justice concerns. She thought that the preferred solution would be to find out "why she hit him and all that stuff." Yet, she did not address these concerns by asking the teacher to explain her strategy in order that she may come to understand it. Rather, Jane seemed willing to silence her justice concerns about what she may have perceived to

be unfairness or inequality. It would appear, as well, that Jane's voice in this real-life dilemma reflected her preferred voice in the make-believe dilemmas of the fable exercise.

Another way in which Jane silenced her relational voice at school was by trying to rationalize another's behavior as justifiable. For example, she told me about a previous teacher who had refused to allow her to re-take a test that was given to the class on a day when Jane was absent due to illness,

CHERYL: Boy, how did it make you feel when she wouldn't let you re-do it or take a make-up test?

JANE: Well, she was pregnant, though. She was pregnant, she was, like, in her eighth month, so maybe that's why she was so crabby. But she wouldn't let me.

Rather than expressing her feelings about what had happened, Jane talked about why she thought the teacher did what she did. And through her justification of the teacher's actions, she could make sense out of the situation. Yet, although she could intellectually understand her teacher's "crabbiness," Jane's emotional state remained unaddressed. This could clearly be seen in her lament, "But she wouldn't let me . . ." Instead of talking about it, she dismissed it. On the other hand, Jane exclaimed "So when she left, I was just so happy." She seemed much more able to express her positive feelings about the teacher's departure than she was able to address her negative feelings about the injustice she sustained.

Academically, Jane had achieved above average marks overall. Her grades tended to range from the 70s through to the 80s. Mathematics was Jane's favourite subject, and when she was in Grade 10, she received an award for her efforts. I asked her about her mark,

JANE: I think it was only an 88. It was only, like, an 89.

CHERYL: Only?

JANE: No, but I mean, there was still . . . like 95, 96, 97, you know? So, I don't

know how . . . I don't know how I got it, but I got it.

Jane had difficulty understanding how such an honour could have been bestowed upon her. She did not seem to think that she warranted it. Her confusion was understandable, though. If she had not achieved a perfect grade, she might very well have thought that someone else did. Although Jane could recall specific marks that she achieved in specific courses during her years in high school, she struggled with her response when I asked her if she had ever failed a subject,

Ummm, I think I failed . . . I don't know what class it was . . . I know I failed one class in grade nine, but I just can't . . . I think it was Science, I'm not sure. But . . . I don't know."

As we talked more about her marks, Jane's hesitancy in believing that she was good enough became more apparent. Although her average was "around 79 or 80," she felt compelled to add, "But I'm trying!"

Jane was the only member of the group of eight young women participating in the Young Women and Work project who had undertaken any school-based work initiatives prior to enrolling in co-op ed. The previous year, she had done one day of job shadowing. The summer before, although not school-connected, she sought a volunteer placement with disabled children. And this year, Jane was enrolled in a Peer Tutoring course in which she acted as a teacher's aide in a grade nine math class. All of these work initiatives introduced Jane to a variety of possible roles in which to work with children. Jane, however, thought that her endeavours were neither indicative of her initiative nor even noteworthy.

Part-Time Work

Jane's silencing of her relational voice extended beyond her personal relationships and school experiences to include her part-time work. In her work setting, she was good almost to the point of being self-sacrificial. She unquestioningly worked extremely long hours, often five or six days a week that included 12-hour shifts on weekends. She worked whenever Bill needed her, irrespective of her exhaustion.

Jane and I talked at length about the prevalence of part-time jobs for youth in fast food restaurants. "Unless you get a paper route," explained Jane, "you don't really have enough qualifications to get, you know, a different type of job." She conceded that sometimes employers take advantage of their young, inexperienced employees,

JANE: We're supposed to be paid . . . if someone works over eight hours, you get time-and-a-half or something like that.

CHERYL: And does that happen?

JANE: I don't think they'd pay . . . they don't pay time-and-a-half after eight hours.

CHERYL: No?

JANE: I worked 12 1/2 hours yesterday. I should know!

CHERYL: And you just got regular time?

JANE: Yeah.

Up until then, Jane had spoken about young workers in the third person. Knowing that she had been working extremely long hours, I was beginning to think that she received all the compensation due her. Suddenly, however, she switched to the first person, and I began to think that perhaps, Jane, too, felt somewhat victimized. But just as quickly, she reverted to the third person, exclaiming in explanation, "they don't complain because they like their paycheques."

Sometimes, Jane would deny the emotional content of a work situation. She would prefer to stick to the facts, as if actions and reactions occurred in an emotional void. A clear illustration of her affective silencing can be seen in a conversation that we had about her current part-time job. She was discussing her role in the business's hiring practices. Jane would recruit and recommend people for jobs that came available, and only if she were unable to find someone would Bill ask for another employee's assistance.

CHERYL: It sounds like you feel good about . . .

JANE: What?

CHERYL: You have got some preferred status . . .

JANE: No, well, he's just . . .

CHERYL: . . . there, like, over other employees.

JANE: Oh, no! He's the manager.

In denying that Bill accorded her preferential treatment over his other employees, Jane was possibly trying to keep herself separate from any emotions that such special status might evoke. In refusing to acknowledge the affective component of the situation, Jane might have been participating in silencing her own voice. Alternatively, my comment about her "preferred status" might have been too emotionally charged. She might not have felt comfortable in revealing to me ways in which the formal and informal organizational structure of her workplace were glaringly different. Employees are not supposed to acknowledge this preferred status in public. As a relative stranger to Jane, why should she have told me?

For whatever reason, Jane seemed not to want to acknowledge her worth that would emanate from any special status she might have at work. This disavowal of herself, however, did not extend to her employer. On the contrary, Jane could not seem to praise Bill enough. Jane described Bill, her employer, as being nice a total of eight times throughout our interviews. He was, in fact, the only person for whom she used the term as more than a casual reference. Jane's feelings about Bill were apparent in the way she spoke about him. She considered them to be good friends. She said that Bill was kind and considerate towards his employees, not letting them work if they were tired, sick, or injured. If they needed a rest, he would tell them to "go sit in the back" or "go lie down." Bill was definitely the "nicest" person in Jane's life. And she was sure to point out to me that others agreed with her evaluation: "Everyone, like, everyone who's kind of gotten a job there is, like, "He's so nice!" Jane also believed that niceness was a quality that Bill looked for when considering potential new employees, saying that he would interview them to "make sure they're nice and everything."

If Jane considered herself to be a nice employee, she strove to be a good one. And perhaps it was in trying to achieve this goal, that she downplayed her needs in the workplace. Jane talked about how work in the food industry meant a great number and variety of injuries that she, and others like her, suffered. Nonplussed, she brushed off cuts and burns as "just part of the job." In fact, several times over the course of our interviews together, she wore bandages on her hands. On one particular day, Jane recounted a story that epitomized to me the extent to which she was willing to go to be considered a good employee by her boss -- injured though she may be. A note of importance here is that Jane's injury was not work-related. Its serious nature and her immediate return to work are. She began,

I never told you I burned my hand? My dad always makes bacon with a lot of grease, and it was, like, boiling, and I went to take it off the stove. And, like, Honi was really young, she was on my foot, and I poured it all over my hand. Boiling grease. By the time I got to the hospital, it was, like, this high up, my hand, all my fingers were like this [indicating that the skin on her hand had expanded in a blister about three inches high] It was third degree burns. And I couldn't move any of my fingers because they were . . . the cast was, like, just like a big ball . . . and they didn't think . . . they were talking about skin grafting and all that stuff . . . they didn't think I was going to get my skin back. All the nerves were damaged.

After spending several hours in the hospital emergency ward, Jane finally was able to return home. It was late at night. Her story continued,

I called Bill. I'm like, 'Bill, you might want to bring someone else in.'" But actually, I went to work the next day I was on pills for the pain . . . [but] I took them for one day, and then I stopped taking them because they were making me drowsy. I can't work when I'm drowsy.

Jane's injury was very serious. Her recovery took months. For the first week, she had to go to the hospital each day to have her bandages changed. Then, throughout the

entire summer, a nurse visited her daily to redress her hand. Despite this traumatic experience, Jane went to work the next day and every scheduled day thereafter.

Jane strove diligently to be a good employee. The question implicit in her striving is what she thought would constitute a full measure of complete goodness. How did she know where she stood at any given time along this measure? And what criteria did she employ in judging herself? At the same time, I do not presume to suggest that Jane always failed to acknowledge or accept her feelings. Nor do I believe that Jane consciously or deliberately denied her own affective nature. I do, however, propose that unconscious processes (defence mechanisms) that helped Jane to disengage from her feelings were at work. At times when she sustained no cognitive dissonance over supposedly (to her) unjustifiable or irrational emotions that might be construed to put her in a bad light, Jane was more acknowledging of her feelings. For instance, she was able to acknowledge her upset over having to find a new home for Honi, her cocker spaniel. She seemed justified in feeling angry with rude customers at work and in being mad at Joseph for lying to her about his true age. In these situations, Jane listened to her feelings, acknowledged them as legitimate, and openly expressed them.

I would suggest that in her personal relationships, at school, and at work, Jane's measure of worthiness played out in the expectations she had of herself. Her expectations were to be good to the people in her life by giving to them, doing for them, trusting and believing in them. For the most part, I believe that these expectations were unrealistic, extreme, and unhealthy for her. It seems to me that her attempts to fulfill them contributed to the silencing of her relational voice. The oppression borne of silence encouraged her to make decisions that were best for others.

The human psyche resists its own oppression. And for Jane, this resistance marked the flip-side of her reality as a young woman emerging into the adult world of work. The next section looks more closely at her resistance to the silencing of her

voice as she moved towards becoming a future member of the adult workforce.

A STORY OF RESISTANCE

Brown and Gilligan (1992) suggest that a relational psychology of women needs to be voiced, resonant, and resistant. Informed by literary theory, by the insights of feminist literary critics, and by clinical insights about psychodynamic processes, such a psychology "offers an opening, a way of voicing the relational nature of human life" (p. 41). Relationships, by their very nature, involve an ongoing give and take, push and pull, or silence and resistance, between those involved. These researchers indicate that while girls and women may tend to succumb to silence, we also struggle against that silencing. We fight to hold on to what we know and understand about our world and to speak about it. We struggle to resist authorities, conventions, and relational conflicts that would lead us to muffle ourselves and the choices we make about our own lives.

In this section, I visit Jane in her realm of resistance against silence in her personal relationships, school experiences, and part-time work. In each area, she struggled to find her own voice and forge ahead on a healthy road into the adult world of work.

Personal Relationships

Jane had not succumbed to silence. She recognized her ability to make choices that would give her back some measure of control over her own life. She was aware of how important it was that she manufacture distance between herself and the conflict inherent in her home environment. Although she was fully aware that she was "stuck" in her living arrangements with her father and his girlfriend, Jane found ways to resist the psychological destruction around her. She organized her schedule so that she was home as little as possible when they were, seeking, instead, the company of her boyfriend or her mother. Times when she could not avoid them, Jane would retreat to her room.

Ironically, the conflict that had surrounded Jane all of her life had its upside. It

had taught her of the destruction that accompanies it. Jane knew she wanted no part of this destruction and resolved not to succumb to it. When I asked her how she dealt with her anger, she replied that she would try to think things through and try not to say something that she would regret the next day. Jane was aware of her capacity and tendency to think about and express her emotions. And if her father stormed out of the house, Jane would take a bath or perhaps go to Joseph's house. She had been determined not to search for him because she realized that he would return when he was ready. One such time,

. . . he did it, and he left his car key, or I saw the keys were there, and I had to go to Joseph's for a little bit, so I locked the door when I left. So, he went and when I came back about two and a half hours later, he's sitting on the front steps. I kind of felt that was good enough for me. So I let him in. Especially seeing as it was in winter. I felt better. I went, 'Oh, I'm sorry, you didn't have your house keys?' and, I don't know . . . I taught him a lesson.

Jane had been able to develop a healthy response to her father's "guilt trips." Although she was saddened by the reality of her home life and longed for her "old" dad to return, she was equally aware of the necessity of resistance.

Jane's resistance to engaging in destructive conflict extended to her relationship with her boyfriend. Jane said that they both took the time to think things through, and neither was opposed to apologizing. Their arguments were infrequent and short-lived.

We've never gotten into one of those big fights that last days [like] my dad and Mona, you know. Me and Joseph just can't do that. We've both got busy lives, and we can't just put away, you know, waste two days for arguing. Besides, we don't like arguing.

Jane was well aware of the waste of time, energy, and self-esteem inherent in destructive conflict. By refusing to allow this kind of negativity to permeate her life, she was resisting its consequences of lessened dignity and weakened sense of self.

In trying to make sense of her world, Jane listened to the part of her voice that, unheeded, remained silenced. She struggled to resist her unquestioning compliance. An illustration of her struggle towards resistance was evident in her ambivalence in trusting Joseph. Jane felt that if she were good, then she should trust him. She was afraid that their relationship was a fairytale "too good to be true" and that something bad would inevitably happen to end it. These feelings contributed to Jane's inner struggle to voice her ambivalent feelings. She was aware of Joseph's history of unfaithfulness and dishonesty. He had a reputation, she said. "It's a fact that he's cheated on all his other girl friends." As she talked more, it seemed that Jane came to more clearly understand her contradictory feelings and was able to say what she knew to be true. If Joseph had been unfaithful to his previous girlfriends, she, too, was at risk. "What would make me any different?" she wondered. And if he would lie to her about one thing -- his age -- he could just as easily lie about anything. Jane was justified in her inability to trust him completely. Her ambivalence both silenced her and provided her with a voice of resistance.

Jane told me a story about a personal dilemma she experienced when she was fifteen. The dilemma was whether she should succumb to silencing her voice or listen to and act upon the resistance that was also present. Jane, her previous boyfriend, and another friend conspired to steal Jane's mother's car, drive to Toronto to pick up yet another friend, then head south to Florida. They took four days to get to Toronto because none of them knew how to drive nor where, exactly, Toronto was. By this time, Jane thought that her mother was going to "shoot" her. She phoned home to let her mother know she was okay, and "she was all crying and everything, and my dad was there, and I felt really bad." Jane decided that she had had enough and decided to go home. The three remaining runaways returned her home and headed for the border. They did not get far. Apparently, they had been drinking, drove the car into a tree, and limped back home where they gave themselves up to the police. A most fascinating aspect of this story was Jane's dilemma itself,

. . . because the girl that lived in Toronto, like, was my boyfriend's ex-girlfriend, and she still liked him, and she wanted him back. And I knew that if I left, well, like, it's basically deciding to break up with my boyfriend. That's his ex-girlfriend there, and they're going to head to Florida together. Like, I was really . . . I didn't know what to do . . . whether I should stay with them or go home.

Jane had conspired in the theft of her mother's car. With her friends, she had driven the car without a driver's licence on a jaunt lasting four days and covering hundreds of kilometres. She had willingly let them carry on without her after they returned her home. They were drinking (under-age) and driving (a stolen car) which they destroyed beyond repair. Luckily, no one was hurt. Yet, through this entire escapade, Jane's main worry was whether she would lose her boyfriend by going home. I was amazed yet thankful that her voice of resistance was loud. Jane pulled herself out of the submissive stance she had taken in her relationship with her boyfriend and overcame the urge to silence what she knew to be right. Assuming a reflective stance, Jane pondered, "If I had stayed with them, who knows what would have happened. But I went home."

Jane forged places of resistance within her relationships wherein she was able to make sense of her world. This resistance enabled her to recognize her worthiness and to make choices that would be good for her. And her resistance to silence extended beyond her personal relationships to include her experiences at school and work.

School Experiences

Jane had several major decisions to make that she was aware would have important ramifications on her life. Her most immediate decision concerned her co-op placement. Usually, a placement lasted one term and, combined with the in-school component of the program, was worth two credits. Most students opted for a second placement during the second term. In this way, a full year of co-op would give them four credits. The co-op teachers strongly suggested that students change placements

for the second term (if they were electing to take a full year of co-op) and, in the vast majority of cases, disallowed them to remain in the first placement for the entire year. Some students, in fact, had three or even four placements throughout the year. The rationale behind this guideline was to ensure that students experienced different kinds of work experiences to enable them to make more informed choices about their futures in the world of work.

In Jane's case, she had originally chosen a placement in a day care for her second term. However, as the months progressed, things began to change. Jane's co-op teacher said she could see evidence that Jane's self-esteem and confidence were improving. Her body posture had improved; she was not hiding her face and playing with her hair as much; and she was more inclined to make direct eye contact. Moreover, she seemed to enjoy being with Sandra and the little children. Sandra treated Jane as a peer, soliciting her input, providing her with skills such as problem-solving in the classroom and student evaluation, and giving her responsibilities and then standing back to allow her to carry them out. Jane's co-op teacher pondered the question of whether to allow her to remain in the placement for the second term. She said that she recognized the benefits that Jane was receiving in her placement and was aware that Sandra wanted Jane to stay, yet knew the benefits of gaining experience in two different placements. In the end, she offered Jane the choice of remaining with Sandra for the second term as well. Jane accepted.

Jane did not know how to decide what to do. As the months rolled by, she began to grow comfortable in her placement. She knew that once she made her final decision, she had to stick with it. And she was worried that if she decided to change, she might not like it. At the same time, though, Jane knew that if she stayed in the kindergarten, she would have no way of knowing what working in a day care was like. In fact, not until early January, just weeks before the end of the term, did she finally make a choice -- to stay. I asked her how she came to her decision,

My sister was in a day care [co-op placement] before, and she didn't like it . . .

because you're dealing with, you know, six other teachers, not just one, so you have to get along with all of them. Whereas, right now, all you have to get along with is Sandra, and I do, so She just didn't enjoy it that much. And I was thinking, well, why risk it? if I'm happy now, I might as well stay.

Jane knew that she was happy in Sandra's classroom and that Sandra would like her to stay for the second term. She also knew that her co-op teacher was in favour of her staying.² Nevertheless, Jane actively sought input to help her with her decision. She spoke with her sister, Donna, who had taken co-op the year before. One of Donna's work placements had been in the very day care in which Jane's second placement was scheduled. Jane incorporated the experience of her sister's previous co-op placement into her decision-making process. She combined her feelings about her experience, the significance of the offer presented to her, and the opinion of an informed other to make a choice that she believed was best for her.

Jane had to make a second and larger decision: what was she going to do next year? Although she thought that she wanted a career working with children, she was unsure as to what form such a career would take. With interests that lay more in working with younger children, Jane thought that she might like to explore teaching at either the preschool or kindergarten level. She did not, however, understand the educational requirements necessary for either type of job. She was confused as to whether kindergarten "fell under" Early Childhood Education (ECE) training at the college level. What is more, she understood from misinformed friends that universities offered credit for previous studies at the college level. Jane thought she might be able to make use of this option if she were to decide to obtain a teaching degree. Through our conversations, Jane came to understand that, in addition to my (to her) vague association with a university, I also had a degree in teaching. She used this piece of

² An important note here is that neither Jane's co-op teacher nor Sandra suggested to Jane that she remain in her placement for the second term. The offer was made, but the opportunity to choose was Jane's alone.

knowledge to extract further information from me that could help her become more informed. She asked me if someone could become a kindergarten teacher with an ECE diploma only, if OACs were necessary to obtain entrance to university, what universities "around here" offered teaching degrees, what was involved in a B.Ed. program (eg., length, entrance requirements), and about university credit for college courses. I told Jane what I could. I also suggested that she should obtain more accurate and detailed information from the Guidance Department in her school. At the time of this writing, Jane had still not decided what to do. Even though she had decided to forgo a co-op placement in a day care setting, she was not willing to immediately set aside college as a post-secondary option. On the other hand, even though she did not like high school and would prefer this to be her last year, she was not willing to discard university as an option because of unfinished OACs. Jane understood the importance of making the best choice she could, in this instance, by becoming informed and taking the time to listen to her own voice.

Jane thought long and hard about the pros and cons of the major school-related decisions facing her. She resisted making hasty choices. Knowing that she did not possess sufficient information to make the best choices possible, she actively sought input from others. Jane's resistance was clear. In forgoing the ease of "quick fix" solutions, Jane elected instead to take the more difficult but more empowering route. She chose to make informed decisions about events that could alter the course of her life.

Part-Time Work

A third realm of resistance can be observed in Jane's part-time work experiences. The issue of belongingness was integral to our discussion, and a brief prelude is necessary for a more clear understanding of the nature of her resistance at work. To begin, Jane made a definite distinction between belonging and acceptance. She suggested that someone would belong to a particular group of people because of their gender or hair colour. "Sometimes you just don't belong somewhere," she

explained, "like if it was a ladies' locker room and a man walks in. You know he doesn't belong there." According to Jane, belonging was a passive state over which one had little or no control and by which one was grouped by commonality. On the other hand, Jane viewed acceptance from an alternate perspective,

Being accepted is a different thing because you can go into a girls' change room and you'll belong there, but there could be girls there that maybe don't like you or, you know, they don't have to necessarily be best buddies with you.

They don't have to accept you as a best friend of something. You're there, you belong there and, you know, that's it.

Jane's understanding of acceptance was framed more actively. It was, to her, a variable state over which people had some measure of control. To further illustrate Jane's distinction between the two terms, she asked me to consider the impossibility of exchanging them in the two sentences, "I accept your apology," and "I belong here." While she believed that acceptance was important and that one "should be accepted", Jane said that it was neither desirable nor possible to be accepted by everyone or in every situation. Rather, one should direct one's efforts towards people and situations that are already present in one's life "and try and be accepted in that." Regarding her own life, Jane felt that she was accepted at work, with Joseph (and at his house), at her mother's house, and at school (with her friends.)

The situation in which Jane felt she belonged most was at her part-time job.³ We spent a great deal of our time together exploring her feelings in this regard. Jane could verbalize quite easily what precisely made her feel so connected. In comparing her previous job at Wendy's with her present one, she talked about each company's style of management,

I think this is my favourite place to work so far, you know, the best place. [At Wendy's] we had, like, floor managers, and they kept going all over the place, I guess because there's so many different Wendy's. Like, the manager would be there for maybe three months and then . . . a new one would come in. Sometimes you'd like them; sometimes you wouldn't . . . You'd get used to them, and then they're gone. So . . . I like it better this way because it's just Bill, Bill, Bill.

The frequent management changes at Jane's previous workplace seemed to contribute to difficulties inherent in the formation of cohesive relationships between management and staff. In contrast, the permanent nature of the position of manager at her present workplace more easily enabled the possibility of relationship-building. And relationships are integral to belonging. Hence, the nature of Jane's workplace was conducive to her being able to belong there.

The second important factor inherent in Jane's feelings of belongingness at

³ Although I devote this section of my analysis to Jane's sense of belongingness as it related to her workplace experiences only, this is not to suggest that its value (to Jane) superceded those other areas mentioned above. It does, however, remain as the focus of my attention here for several reasons. First, it is most central to the topic of this thesis report, namely the school-to-work transition, in general, and the role of part-time work, as one specific component of that transition. Second, Jane's belongingness talk centred first and foremost around her experiences at work. And third, her relationships with her family, friends, and boyfriend were more individual and less situational in nature. For reasons of focus and brevity, then, they are omitted here.

work was Bill, whom she considered a close friend. Her emotional attachment was self-evident in her description of him,

He's, like, really cute, he's . . . not cute in that way . . . but he's like short, he's an old Chinese man. And he wears his hat, like, backwards. And just . . . everyone there just always calls him 'cutie' because he wears his little hat backwards, and he's got this little face, and he's so short. He's nice.

Their relationship had spanned more than two years. They both began their current jobs at the same time, that is, when the business opened. Jane recalled that she "helped serve the first customer . . . so, I guess, me and Bill are not, like, boss and employee anymore. We're just like best friends." Over time, they had come to know each other's families. Although he was in his fifties, Bill still lived with his parents and sister, and Jane thought this was "the Chinese way." He worked from business opening to closing almost every day, but on occasional Sundays, Jane and Joseph would take him to a local flea market. "He would get so excited," Jane giggled, "because he doesn't know anyone, you know, he's got nowhere to go." She remembered one such outing when it began to rain, and Bill bought umbrellas for everyone so they would not have to go home.

Jane's feelings of belongingness extended beyond Bill to encompass everyone at her workplace. It was a small business operation with a mere handful of employees, and over the course of her employment there, several of her friends had been hired as well. Jane thought of everyone at work as a "family," and she enjoyed Saturdays most because everyone was there together.

Jane resisted the silencing of her relational voice. In her resistance, she recognized her ability to make choices that were good for her. Her strategies of resistance included distancing herself from conflict, becoming informed and taking her time to make important decisions, and acknowledging the importance she accorded to responsive and connective relationships in the workplace. The third and final section of this chapter looks at particular choices that Jane was facing that would influence her

future participation in the adult world of work.

A STORY OF TRANSITION

As the previous two sections illustrated, Jane's occupational identity was evolving in part from the silencing of her own voice as well as from her struggle to resist that silence. As part of her continuing development towards becoming an adult woman in the world of work, Jane was faced with choices: choices that revolved around her coming to understand and decide upon "what she wants to be when she grows up." There were specific areas of Jane's life that were impacting on those choices: her personal relationships, her school experiences, and her present work environment. This section examines each of these areas in turn, focusing on the ways in which Jane's voice in her search for an occupational identity impacted on her school-to-work transition.

Personal Relationships

As Jane moved into the world of work, her relational experiences outside of school and work had influenced and continued to influence her choices about work. One of the things that she most admired about her parents was their work ethic -- a value that they imparted to her. When Jane and Donna were thirteen and fifteen, respectively, their parents sent away for their social insurance numbers. Apparently, there was some kind of bureaucratic mix-up, so that while Donna received hers, Jane did not. This frustrated Jane because, although her sister did not want to work, "I wanted to work And my dad just told me, 'Well, use Donna's.' So I kind of used hers for my first job." In this way, Jane's father assisted in providing her initial entry into the world of work.

As Jane began to experience the financial independence that came with earning a paycheque, her desire to work harder grew along with it. At first, she liked having her own spending money. Not having to rely on her parents for an entertainment allowance provided Jane with her first realization that she would be able to take care of herself. She has had five years of work experience throughout

which she learned to manage her money "better than my sister." In fact, several times throughout our conversations together, Jane contrasted herself with her sister on this point,

My sister's always been lazy I don't know how she can do that, living off my parents until she's, you know, nineteen. And even now, she's spending her money, like, very dumbly, so she still has to constantly get money from my mom. I don't think I'd really do that.

Ironically, although it was with her parents' assistance and support that Jane was able to begin working at age thirteen, she continued to work long and hard to achieve the financial means necessary to be independent from them. She figured that in another year and a half, she would be able to afford to move into an apartment with her boyfriend, Joseph. She would most certainly be finished high school by then, and she surmised that Joseph would have completed his degree and be working full-time. At the time of the study, though, Jane's continued striving for financial independence allowed her the freedom she felt she needed to be able to remain living in close quarters with her father.

At the same time as providing her with an insulated existence against her father, Jane's part-time work also provided her with a means to enjoy herself with Joseph. This young couple enjoyed celebrating the anniversaries of their relationship. They spent a week together in Toronto for their first-year anniversary, eight days in Florida for their second, planned on a trip to Hawaii for their third, and have visited Montreal "about ten times" in between, according to Jane. She has had to learn to manage her money in order to finance her share of these excursions. Concurrently, she was able to reimburse Joseph for the purchase price of her car, which he made on her behalf. As well, she was putting aside money for the two of them to set up an apartment together. These experiences were providing Jane with an introduction to successful financial management in the adult world. Although she tended towards financial extravagance, she did not tend to over-exceed her financial limits, and she felt

(perhaps naively) that she would always be able to work extra hours if she needed to.

In addition to her relationships with her family and boyfriend, Jane had developed relationships at her current part-time job. Because of the informal nature that sometimes characterizes small business, Jane came to know both her employer and her fellow employees very well. In addition, she developed a close friendship with Bill, her manager, that extended beyond the confines of the workplace. Perhaps her work family provided her with a measure of support and caring that her biological family did not. When she was at work, Jane was paradoxically at home.

School Experiences

Jane's experiences in school have helped to give shape to her voice as she bridged the school-to-work transition. As a result of her parents' marital difficulties, Jane's school years were chopped up and divided amongst a dozen or so schools. This hopping about precluded her forming any longstanding relationships with either schoolmates or teachers. Every year or so, she had to begin anew to forge friendships as she was thrust into a new school situation. Thus, Jane had no relational roots within the school system. She was likely unable to follow a classmate's growth, share problems and give advice, or watch (and participate in) a classmate's long-term vocational development. Without friendships that were years in the making, Jane was, for all intents and purposes, relationally alone at school.

In addition to missing out on long-time school chums, Jane seemed to have missed out on quality guidance from Guidance staff. Again, this could be as a result of her being an unknown quantity to the Guidance staff at her school because she had only been there for two years.⁴ Jane, for her part, had not turned to the Guidance

⁴ As part of my participant selection for this study, I spoke with guidance counsellors about the several young women I was considering. I was hoping to obtain as much information as I could about each of them in order to make the best choices possible. Interestingly, none of the staff knew anything about Jane; they had not met her or even knew who she was.

Department for vocational information. This became most evident when during our interviews, she queried me about teacher qualifications, university entrance requirements, and the like. I was surprised to realize how little Jane -- standing on the threshold of the school-to-work transition -- knew about these matters.

Jane's lack of career guidance also could be seen in her choice of career path. She anticipated that working with children would provide her with emotional and psychological rewards. Yet a job in this field would not seem to support or further develop her academic subject specialty. At first glance, Jane's math skills, highlighted in her Grade 10 award, would not seem to be a good fit with her plans to become a kindergarten teacher. Closer inspection, though, would reveal that effective teaching of math acquisition skills at the kindergarten level might probably be an academic challenge. At the same time, Jane did not mention an interest in pursuing a career hinged on mathematics and seemed unaware of such an option. Neither did it appear as if alternative career suggestions were presented by the Guidance staff.

Jane's co-operative education experience appeared to have exerted tremendous influence over her choice of career. Her worksite placement was in the classroom of a teacher who was enthusiastic toward both her young charges and Jane alike. Sandra provided Jane with the positive experience necessary to help firm up her ideas about becoming a teacher of young children. She figuratively took Jane under her wing, an act that fostered the development of Jane's confidence of herself and in her ability to teach. Regarding the former, Sandra's interest in and concern for Jane raised her (Jane's) self-esteem. She felt accepted by Sandra and the children, and this acceptance, in turn, nurtured her feelings of belongingness. As regards the latter, Sandra's treatment of Jane as a peer-in-training provided her with excellent teaching experiences. Sandra referred to them as "the team" and treated Jane as such. She involved her at levels deeper than the 'how to' of doing a bulletin board. She took the time to explain her philosophical approach to teaching, the importance of planning, and teaching and learning strategies. These aspects of her co-op

placement provided Jane with a theoretical context for her classroom experience.

Part-Time Work

Jane's work experiences had, for the most part, been positive ones. Her early part-time jobs provided her with her first taste of financial independence and with the satisfaction of knowing that she could do them well. She learned that recognition could come with hard work, as when she was twice awarded "employee of the month."

In addition to the emotional benefits that Jane received from her current part-time job, another aspect of her occupational identity development was influenced there. Jane's length of employment equalled that of Bill, her manager, and, coupled with the development of their friendship, she experienced a position of special status over the other employees. This status could be seen in Bill's reliance on her for recommendations of potential new employees, assistance with their training, and discussions about letting them go. An illustration of Jane's preferred status is evidenced in her story about one particular employee,

Whenever there's an opening, I just bring one of my friends, and they're in I know they'll get the job, but he likes to make sure that he has the final say, so he gives them a little interview, but I know beforehand they're in. So, I got Fran the job; she was [my friend's] girlfriend. But I don't like her; I changed my mind She's not ready to work on her own; she's still on training. She can't even work, like, she can't take over Friday by herself or anything like that. Anyone else, you know, would be working 9 to 9. So, we're going to be bringing someone in to actually replace Fran I'll find someone. [Bill] just counts on me. I know everything that goes on there. I know if someone's going to get fired, I know, like, two weeks before they get fired. And no one else knows. Because Bill always tells me. That's just the way it goes.

For all intents and purposes, Jane was in the position of assistant manager.⁵ Both her responsibilities and benefits exceeded those of the other staff members. Jane was acutely aware of her elite status and said that, along with the family atmosphere, it was the best thing about work "because I get to hire whoever I want . . . and I'm the only one that can take a break whenever I want." At the same time, however, Jane denied that she had any special status. She seemed to account for this contradiction by making sure I understood that Bill made the decisions, not her. She was conscious of the delicate balance of power between them, and she emphasized that, although he was the manager, he counted on her. And what is more, Jane knew that she was rewarded for her efforts. Interestingly, though, she could not seem to openly reconcile this reality.

Jane entered the world of work as a young adolescent. Looking at work from a realistic perspective, she learned early on that typical part-time jobs held by youth were not romantic, yet work for its own sake did have its rewards. Jane was clearly able to differentiate between her present job and her possible future career in this sense. Her current job in a fast-food take-out restaurant, one typical for an adolescent, provided her with money that, in turn, granted her a degree of independence from her family. The unexpected benefits that she obtained from her present job, however, gave Jane some insight into elements of work that she thought would be important in her future career. These elements were represented in her care concerns: a desire to belong, to feel cared about, and to be valued. It would seem that Jane thought she could find a means of voicing these care concerns in a career working with children. It would also seem that her co-op experience in a kindergarten classroom helped to

⁵ Although Jane fulfilled the responsibilities generally associated with that of assistant manager, she received neither the recognition, title, nor pay normally accompanying it. I do not know whether or not she was aware of this unfair and common workplace practice. She was conscious, however, that her additional responsibilities were a trade-off for desirable benefits and status. Yet she openly denied it.

confirm this for her. Ironically, though, Jane did not have postsecondary training plans to achieve them.

Jane's relational voice impacted on the development of her occupational identity as she moved from school to work. Her voice, as identified through the fable exercise and her real-life stories, predominantly expressed care concerns and focused on the importance of responsive and connective relationships. What is more, Jane's personal relationships as well as those at school and work influenced her school-to-work transition. Her struggle for financial independence that she thought would free her from her father and enhance her relationship with her boyfriend also contributed to her sense of self-efficacy in the workplace. Her close connections with her employer and her co-op supervisor enabled her to develop particular and useful skills, but they also helped to foster her recognition of the value she placed on a sense of belongingness at work. It is through these kinds of experiences that Jane has and will continue to weave her sense of occupational self as a future participant in the adult world of work.

The next chapter will provide a slight change of pace. Therein, I will turn once again to the critical, reflective model for conducting life story research that I developed during this thesis undertaking. The chapter will explore the model as praxis.

Chapter 5: The Model as Praxis

The life story research model presented in Chapter 2 accords importance to the identification of one's perspective along the continua of the five key issues. In this way, one is able to adopt a critical, reflective stance at the outset of one's research. Further, in order for a researcher to continue to maintain this critical, reflective stance throughout the research process, it is equally important to make repeated visits to each continua. In writing Jane's life story, I revisited the continua four times. In this chapter, I explain the timing of each revisit and discuss how the process of repeated, critical reflection affected my perspective regarding power, context, hermeneutics, heuristics, and discourse. As I discuss the model as praxis, I consider how critical reflection helped me to exercise the flexibility necessary to conducting quality, qualitative research.

REVISITING THE CONTINUA

Once I had selected Jane as the young woman whose life story I would write, I made my first revisit to the continua. I wondered if, once I knew the identity of my participant, my views on how I would approach the issues of power, context, hermeneutics, heuristics, and voice would shift somewhat from their initial points of reference. I felt unsure of myself during this first revisit. I had not thought that I would shift my perspectives nor question my motives so seriously and so early in the study. I reminded myself, however, that undertaking conscious, constructive, qualitative research would mean repeatedly "shaking things up." And only this way would I be able to keep my awareness as clear as possible.

I revisited the continua a second time when the data were partially collected. Jane had been interviewed twice, and I had spent some time observing her in her co-op ed classroom. During this revisit to the life story continua, I thought was more open to the possibility of my perspectives shifting, even somewhat expecting it. Yet this change came not in the form of movement but of depth of understanding. Through critical reflection of the research process itself, I was beginning to develop insight into

each of the five key issues. At this point, I began to recognize that assuming a conscious constructive stance would also contribute to my knowledge as a researcher.

I revisited the life story issues a third time when the data collection was completed. Jane had been interviewed eight times (six as my collaborator and twice more as a participant in the Young Women and Work project) and had participated in four focus group discussions. I had observed her in her in-school co-op ed classes for ten days, and I had visited her at her worksite placement twice. Overall, the data collection spanned a period of almost six months. During this third revisit, my critical reflection focused on my changing perspectives thus far. And as I was preparing to begin writing, I reflected on further shifts that possibly lay ahead.

As one of my last tasks in the writing process, I revisited the continua a fourth and final time. The purpose of this period of critical reflection was to consider how the five issues had played themselves out throughout the entire research process. I was interested in determining the breadth, depth, and effects of my changing perspectives. In other words, how far had my initial perspectives shifted and how deep had my understanding grown? I also reflected on the ways in which the model, built on a process of critical reflection, had influenced my flexibility as a researcher. (Figures 7 through 11 illustrate my shifts in perspective along the continua of the five key issues throughout the research process.)

Power

I embarked upon this research endeavour with the intention to extend a genuine invitation of collaboration to Jane. I wanted to share the reins of power with her as much as possible. Not long thereafter, I discovered that my intention was just that, an intention, and one not meant to come to fruition. Early into our first interview, in a discussion about potential interview schedules, Jane would not let me know what dates, times, or places would be convenient for her. I tried to explain that I realized that she was a very busy young woman with little free time on her hands, and I did not want to dictate a schedule to her. "Yeah, but . . . I'm not sure . . . like, how . . . when do

you want . . . it's just that . . . ,” were her responses. When I said that it seemed to me that she wanted me to decide, Jane replied, “Exactly.” As our first interview progressed, I became a little flustered by her reticence.

CHERYL: I'm trying to be helpful by not making all sorts of demands on you, but somehow it seems to be backfiring. Tell me to be more specific, if you'd like.

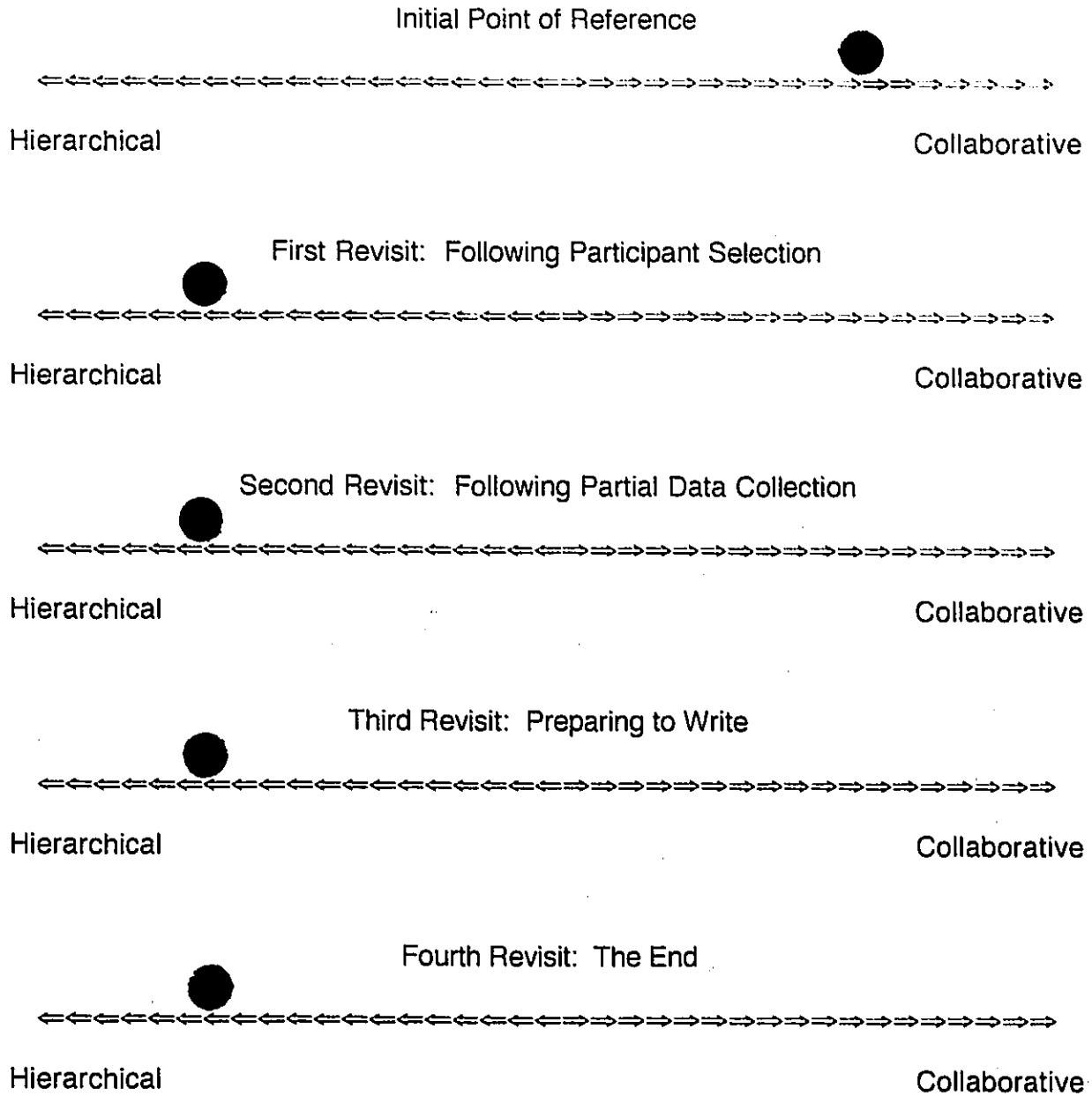
JANE: Be more specific.

I thought that Jane probably perceived me to be in a position of authority. Perhaps this was because I was the adult, perhaps it was because my university connection coded me 'teacher-like.' Jane seemed to want me to make the decisions to which she would defer in an expressed spirit of co-operation. I was also aware that this was just my perception -- one that would probably shift again as I got to know her, and she got to know me. At this time, I moved myself closer towards the hierarchical end of the power continuum. (See Figure 7.)

As the data collection progressed, my reflections on the power relations between Jane and me grew more insightful. I still assumed (and was acutely aware that this was still my assumption) that Jane did not want any power in the research process. I wondered whether this was because she not used to having power offered to her. Perhaps she was unsure of my motives. Although I still considered my intentions to be rather nonthreatening, Jane, of course, could not be certain of any hidden agenda I might have. And we were still relative strangers to each other. I did notice that Jane began to appear increasingly comfortable in my presence. Her body posture was less rigid, and she started to ask me questions. She asked about my background: my education, what kinds of jobs I had held, why I changed jobs, and what my future plans were. Jane also brought up topics of interest to her, sometimes changing the subject to do so. Although I did not think that we were discussing particularly sensitive issues, I could not discern whether this subject-changing was due to discomfort or boredom. In any event, I began to feel that Jane was beginning to assume a position of increasing power, and I was more confident that it would

Figure 7.

Power



continue.

By the end of the six-month data collection period, the power relations between Jane and me had not changed at all. She continued to change the subject often, usually to talk about her dog or her most recent gift from her boyfriend. She asked no

further questions of me. I was somewhat downcast about my perception of our developing relationship. So I accepted my initial assumption that Jane did not want to assume a powerful role in the research process as a fairly accurate one. It seemed to me that her involvement in the study just was not as important to her as I thought it would be. Researcher ego? Probably. By default, I had assumed a more powerful role than I had wanted, so I moved my reference point closer to the hierarchical end of the power continuum. I was still determined, though, to give Jane whatever power I could and thought that it would probably manifest itself in the writing.

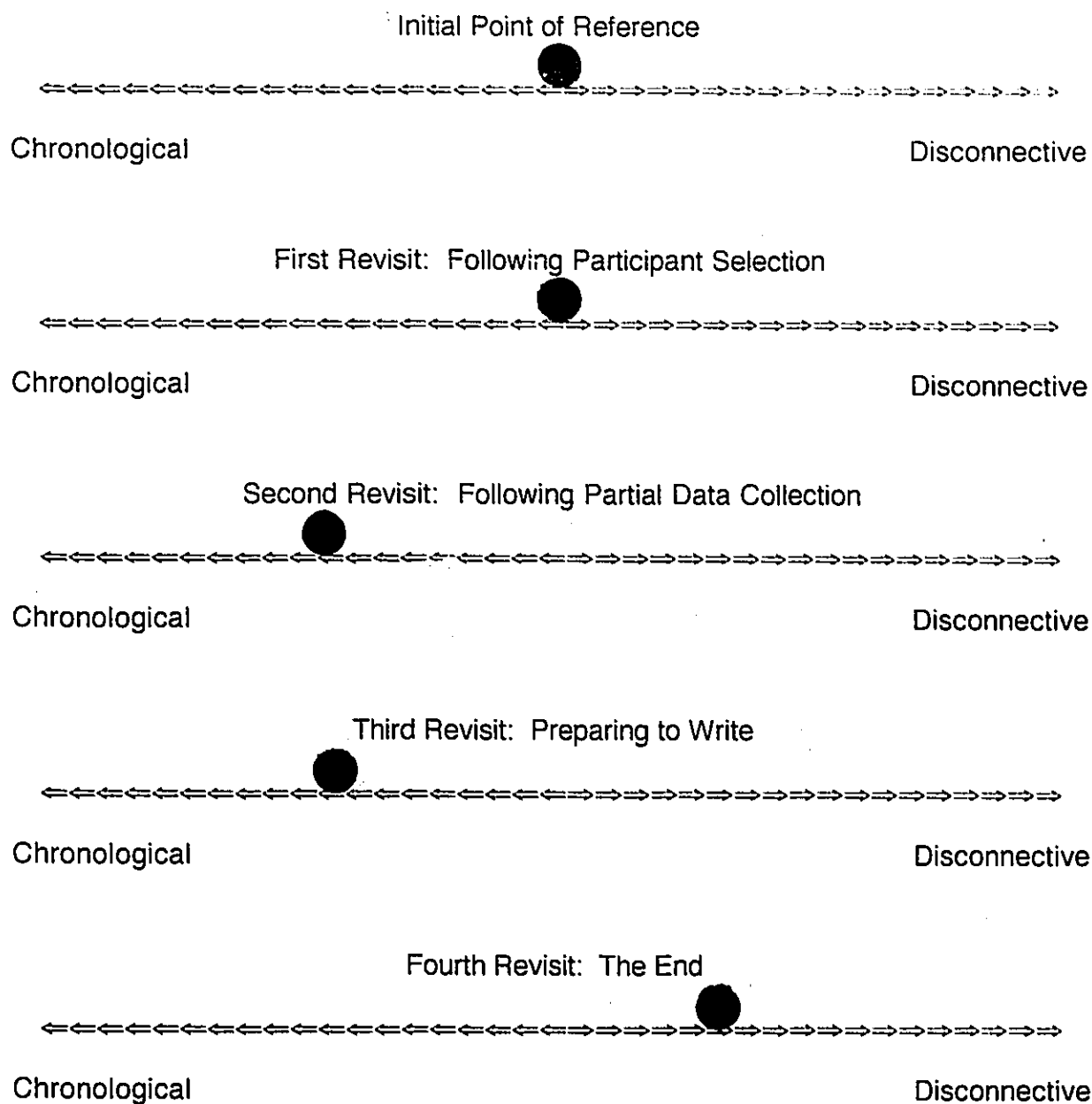
During the writing process, the power within the study was definitely mine. I made all the decisions, including the kind and extent of input Jane would have. My decision to share the reins of power extended only to offering her input into her biographical sketch. (See Chapter 3.) I asked her to clarify any omissions or errors that I might have made, to add anything that she would like, and to express her thoughts and feelings about seeing her story in print. Although Jane admitted that it was "weird" to read about herself, she said that she felt "fine" about it. Other than that, her only input concerned a few factual corrections -- it was particularly important, for instance, that her dog's name be spelled correctly. During this last visit to the power continuum, my point of reference remained well at the hierarchical extreme, just as I imagined it would.

Context

At the outset of the study, my intention was to present a life story whose context would be expressed in a balance of chronology and disconnection. In other words, I assumed that, while some parts would be presented as a chronological, linear narrative, others would be fragmented units of stories seemingly in meaningless isolation from others. Before I began to interview Jane, I did not know whether the contextual balance that I desired would be possible or even desirable. (See Figure 8.)

As the data collection period continued, I discovered that Jane's stories contained both chronological and disconnective elements. For instance, as she talked

Figure 8.

Context

about the disintegration of her family unit, she recounted -- in chronological order -- times, dates, and places as well as individual stories about her familial relationships.

As I listened to Jane's stories, I was aware that she would most times attempt to contextualize them within the chronological framework which she had already provided

me. Interestingly, when she did not attempt to situate a story chronologically, I found that I would tend to ask her these clarifying time/place questions. Yet my emerging interview questions focused considerably more on specific issues than the sequencing of events. Jane's focus, on the other hand, was to keep me abreast of the latest happenings in her life. As I reflected upon the issue of context during this data collection period, I was aware of the predominance of chronology in the enlarging data base. Further, as chronology was becoming an increasingly important element in Jane's telling of stories, I wanted to be true to its emergence in my retelling of them. Hence, I shifted my position along the context continuum slightly closer to that which would indicate a more chronologically-based study.

When the data were fully collected, my thoughts turned to how I was going to write up Jane's life story. As the data "cooked," I spent considerable time critically reflecting upon how the issue of context would play itself out. I was less sure than ever exactly how to represent both elements of disconnection and chronology in a way that would be true to Jane's preference for one and mine for the other.

During the writing process, I was more aware than ever of the complexity of context. Jane told me stories that were chronological and others that were disconnective. I asked questions that prompted stories in isolation and others in linear sequencing. And at times I asked Jane for chronological clarification because I felt that I could understand issues more clearly within a linear framework. In the end, both entered into my writing. For instance, Chapter 2 captures a biographical sketch of Jane's life in a chronological fashion. Specific stories are presented within a time-place perspective. Overall, though, disconnection somewhat more aptly describes the contextual nature of the written product of this study. Consequently, I shifted my point of reference along the context continuum accordingly.

Hermeneutics

My point of origin along the hermeneutics continuum represented a life story that would be undertaken with an attempt to balance description and interpretation in

its telling. I intended to organize Jane's stories according to the ways in which she told them to me, ways which made sense to her. Accordingly, I was prepared for the study to reflect the contradictions in her life, inherent as they are in all lives. Once Jane and I had become acquainted, and I revisited the continua for the first time, I felt that it was still too early in the research process to effect any change in this area. (See Figure 9.)

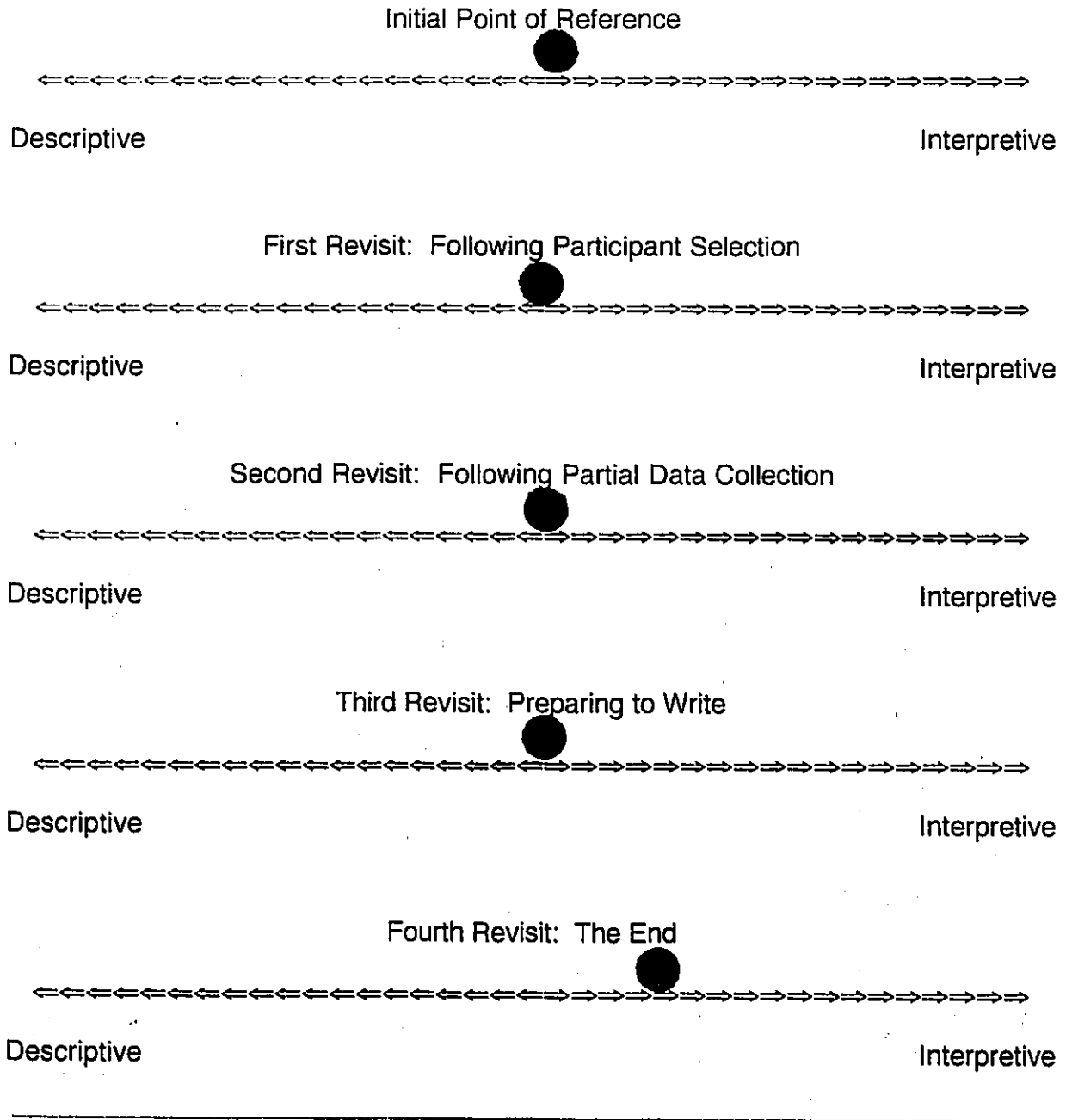
As the data collection progressed, I considered the types of information I was compiling. At this early stage, it consisted mainly of observational notes, a focus group transcript, a few interview transcripts, and my journal entries. Focusing a critical reflection upon hermeneutics, I became overwhelmed. The volume of data was increasing so rapidly! And its contents seemed to be a mish-mash of information that I thought I would never be able to organize into anything intelligible, let alone a coherent and cohesive balance of description and interpretation. Unable to discern how I was going to make sense of this expanding mass, I abandoned any further consideration of hermeneutics until I was prepared to begin writing.

The time between collecting data and writing became a period of mental preparedness for the writing task ahead. After much consideration, I concluded that I still intended to write with a balance of description and interpretation. First, I would tell Jane's story in the form of a descriptive biographical sketch. Then, I would attempt to deconstruct and interpret it within a relevant theoretical framework. By including yet separating the descriptive and interpretive elements, I believed I would be able to achieve a hermeneutical balance of both.

Once the considerable bulk of the writing was finished, I again turned a critical, reflective eye towards a consideration of hermeneutics. To my surprise, I discovered that, my intentions notwithstanding, interpretation outweighed description in my writing. What became apparent was that telling (or retelling) a story or describing an event required far fewer words than an indepth analysis of that same story or event. Considering the final product, then, I shifted my point of reference slightly closer to the interpretive end of the hermeneutics continuum.

Figure 9.

Hermeutics



Heuristics

My initial deliberations concerning the heuristic stance I would assume at the outset of my research ended with my adoption of an intention of reflexivity. I believed that I would be able to identify with my collaborator's school-to-work transition. We

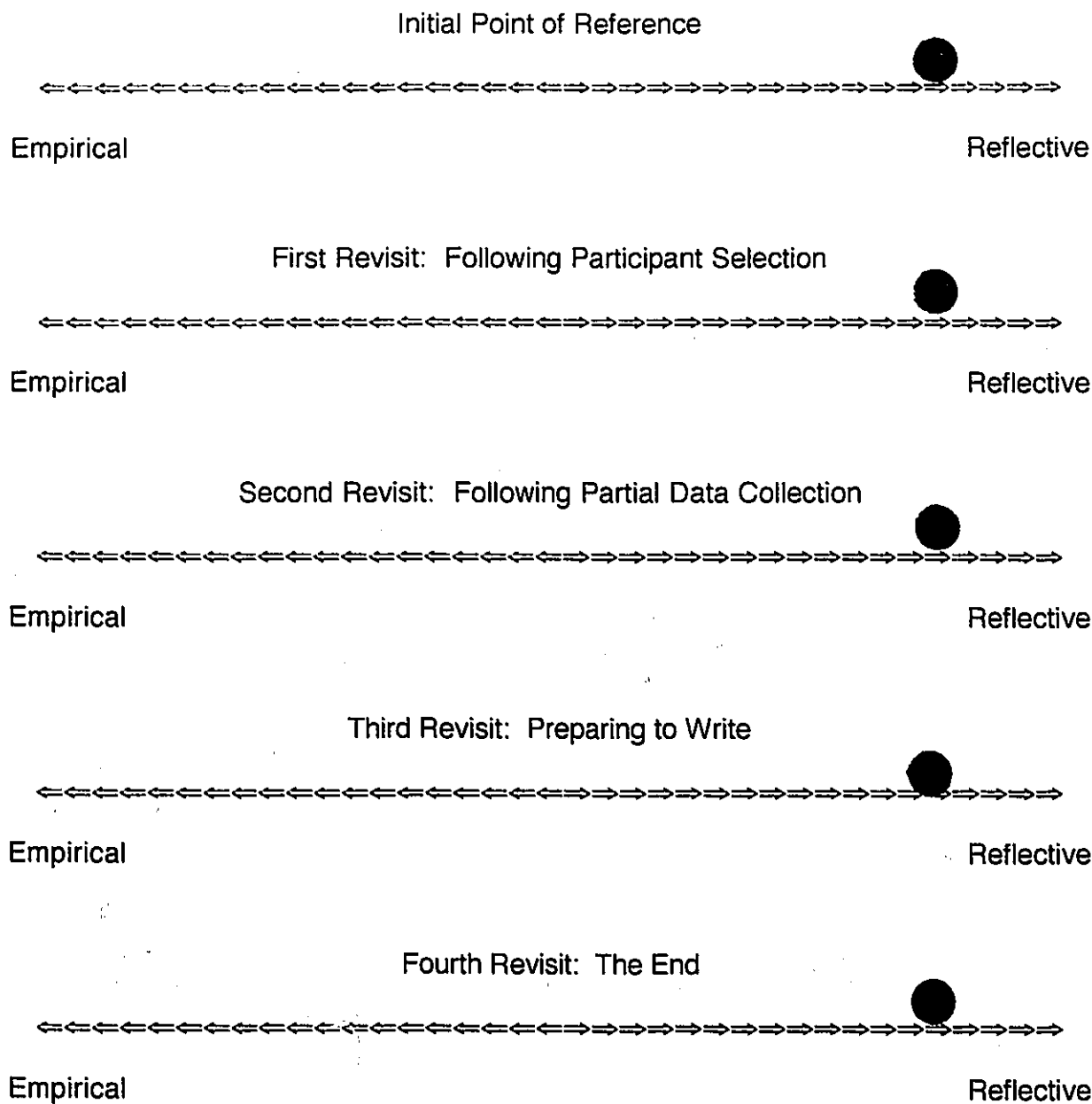
would share a common phenomenon: the passage from high school to the world of work. Admittedly, our individual understanding, knowledge, and experience of this phenomenon would be unique. Nevertheless, the larger umbrella of the transition itself would provide us with a general shared starting point. My initial reaction upon meeting Jane, however, was that she would probably have little, if any, interest in hearing my story. Again, I was aware that this was an assumption based on my initial interpretation of her intent to comply. Yet, I wondered if, were I correct in this assumption, what effects it would have on both the research process and product. In any event, my assumptions were still assumptions, so I did not alter my initial reference point along the heuristics continuum. (See Figure 10.)

I revisited heuristics again through critical reflection when I was part-way through data collection. Examining the issue during this revisit enabled me to dig a little deeper into my views in this area. Close inspection revealed to me that, while some aspects of Jane's life concerning her school-to-work transition paralleled mine, others were quite different. She was, for example, enrolled in a co-op ed program, which I had not. She had extensive part-time work experience; I had little. Jane had some idea about 'what she wanted to be when she grew up,' while I had none. On the other hand, we both were able to achieve academically if we so chose; we both had difficult family situations from which we wanted to escape; and we both had serious romantic relationships. As I contemplated these similarities and differences, I was encouraged to continue to assume a reflexive stance. It seemed to me that ongoing critical reflection would most likely continue to be helpful. Yet, I was not sure how much of my life to share with Jane. Would Jane care to know about my life? Would I feel comfortable in telling her about myself? Would it be relevant to the study if I did? Perhaps, I thought, reflexivity could have a private connotation -- something I could do on my own in order to more effectively interpret and write.

When our interviews were completed, and I was preparing for the task of writing, I turned a critical eye of reflection towards heuristics once again. During this third

Figure 10.

Heuristics



revisit, I realized that it had played itself out differently than I had originally thought (and hoped) it would. At the outset of the study, I assumed that the phenomenon under investigation, namely the school-to-work transition, would situate itself as a topic of interest squarely between Jane and myself. I further assumed that she would be

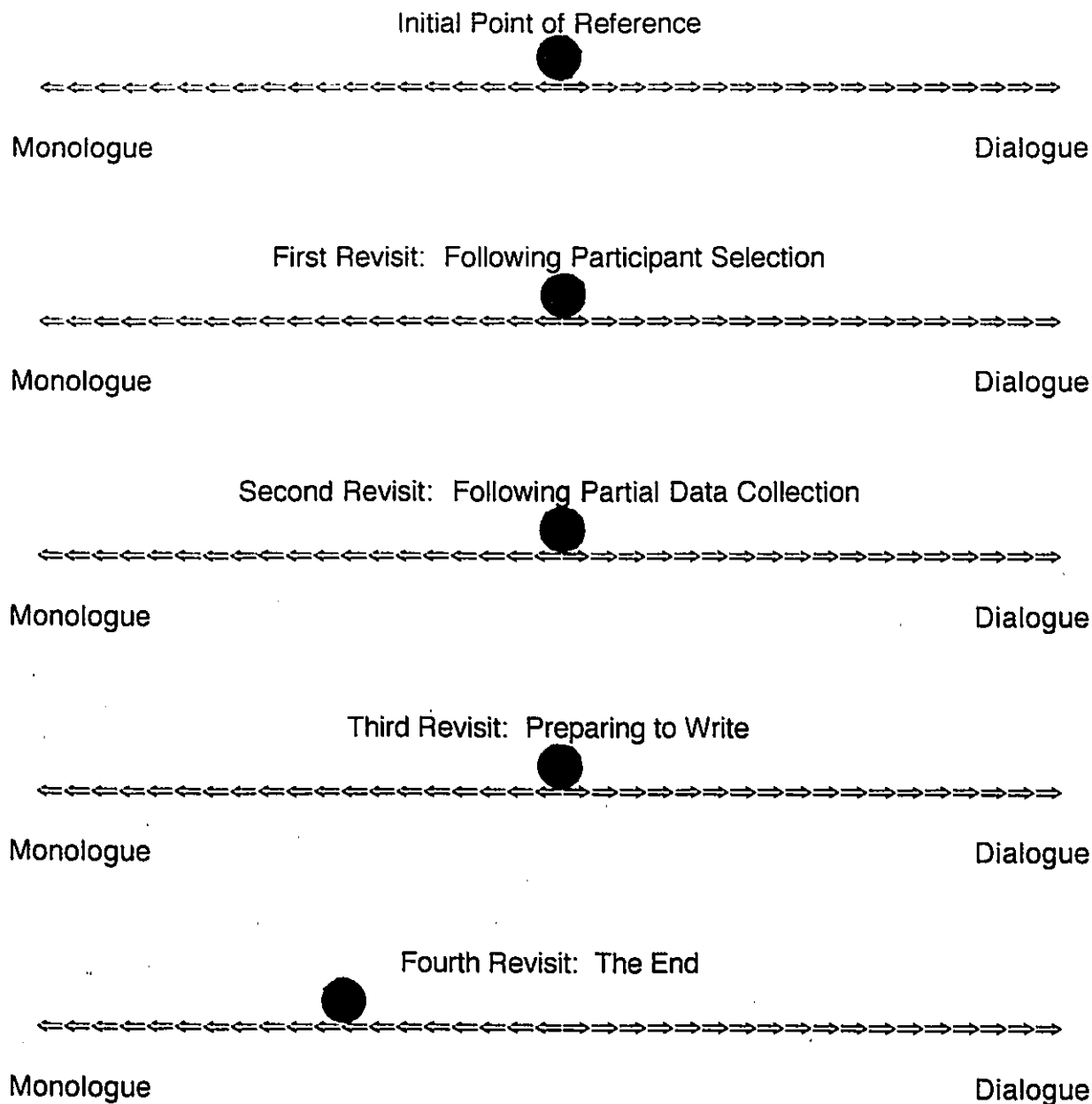
interested in learning from me, just as I would learn from her. However, neither of these assumptions bore themselves out to any substantial degree. While the research process continued to remain privately reflexive to me, the topic under investigation proved to be much less so. On several occasions during our interviews, I attempted to insert stories about my school-to-work experiences to gauge Jane's interest in hearing about my story. She did not ask probing questions, provide encouraging responses, nor give me any other clues that she was interested in hearing more. Only once did Jane ask me about my past: what education I had, what jobs I held, and what plans I had for the future. Although she listened attentively, she did not bring up the subject of my life again. So I let it drop. My reflexivity, then, remained private, not something we shared.

Once the bulk of the writing was complete, I returned to the heuristics continuum for the fourth time. A period of critical reflection brought to light my continued holding as valid the two assumptions I developed during my earlier revisits to this continuum. The first assumption was that my own school-to-work transition was influential -- after all, my past experiences had led me to select it as a topic of inquiry. The second assumption was that, while I conducted research through a process that was reflexive, this reflexivity continued to remain pertinent to me only.

Discourse

The discursive element of a research study remains confined to the activity of writing. Nevertheless, effective life story research includes critically reflecting on this impending issue throughout the research process. At the outset of this study, my intention was to create a written dialogue heavy with both my collaborator's voice and my own. Yet soon after our first meeting, I began to question the viability of my future dialogic intention. My doubts arose from my early assumption of Jane's dismissal of possibly participating in a power-wielding relationship with me. I recalled Moustakas' (1990) words that the written product of a research endeavour is a direct reflection of the power of the researcher. That said, if I was correct in assuming that Jane would

Figure 11.

Discourse

not want any power, I continued to consider how her decision might affect the written story. (See Figure 11.)

As the period devoted to data collection progressed, I continued to reflect on the upcoming issue of discourse. My thoughts and concerns paralleled those surrounding

the issue of power. I still held the assumption that Jane did not wish to accept a powerful role. Yet, I wondered if, despite this, she would want her voice to have power through representation in the written narrative of her life? What is more, I reflected on whether I would or should give such discursive representation to her anyway. And if I did, what would my motives be? I wondered if I would be sincerely trying to empower Jane, or merely want to be able to say that I was? As the time to write drew closer, I continued my reflections, but in the meantime, I decided to retain a central balance point on the discourse continuum. I felt that I still wanted to give Jane her own voice in the final document.

The time I had set aside as preparation for writing consumed me with thoughts of discourse. What would the final written product of this life story research undertaking look like? Lengthy contemplation reconfirmed my steadfast intention to provide Jane with a voice of her own within the discourse itself. Simultaneously, I continued to want my own voice to be heard in those self-same pages. Yet the form with which I would achieve such a balance eluded me still. I put pencil to paper in the hope that ideas would unfold with the words.

With the bulk of the writing completed, I was able to see the manifestations of my intent to write a discursively balanced life story paper. Although I had begun writing with the view that a good fit of voice representation would evolve, I was surprised by what transpired. In the bulk of the writing, both of our voices were clearly heard within its pages, but my words were greater both in number and in force. My "signature" -- to borrow Van Maanen's (1988) term -- was much bolder than Jane's.

This chapter looked at how my critical, reflective model for conducting life story research was implemented as praxis during this thesis study. Specifically, it followed the development of the five key issues throughout the research process. In the next and concluding chapter of the thesis report, I will present my reflections and concluding remarks about the study.

Chapter 6: Reflections and Conclusions

The format of this chapter consists of three sections, each pertaining to a different element of conclusion. In the first section, Jane is visited one last time via a follow-up interview six months after the study. It describes how various aspects of her relationships, school experiences, and part-time work changed while others remained the same. The second section provides another look at the critical, reflective model. Specifically, it examines the outcome of its implementation in this research undertaking. It also offers an assessment of its effectiveness. The chapter concludes with a reiteration of the importance of the school-to-work transition in the lives of young women. It offers evidence of the links between this transition, work education, occupational identity, and voice. In particular, it finds support for these links through Jane's relational experiences both at and away from her workplace.

CODA: JANE, SIX MONTHS LATER

This section provides a snapshot of Jane's progress into the adult world of work six months following the data collection period.¹ She underwent several changes in the interim -- both proactive and reactive -- affecting her relationships, school experiences, and part-time work. These changes represent the kinds of transitional influences that continue to influence the development of her occupational identity.

Personal Relationships

Jane's relationships with her family members are not the same as they were several months ago. Several factors come into play here. First, Jane's living arrangements have changed. She has moved out of her father's house and now lives with her mother and sister. The move was of her own volition but, nevertheless, was not without its trauma. The situation became unbearable for her,

He typed out these rules for me, like, if I call my mom or my sister, the phone will

¹ The information in this section originates from Jane's last interview as a participant in the Young Women and Work project as well as several conversations with me.

be disconnected permanently. If I go over to see my mom or sister, I can't park my car in the driveway [when I return] because it will be contaminated. I can't mention my mom and my sister in the house because they're both dead to him.

Jane decided to leave. She left without telling him she was doing so, and he has not tried to contact her since. When I asked her how she was feeling about it, she replied that she did not like it much there anyway. I observed that she seemed sad, and I said so. "He's weird," was all she said in return. Unfortunately, Jane is experiencing difficulty in her relationship with her father, a situation complicated by the fact that she does not seem to be in touch with her feelings about it. According to Brown and Gilligan (1992), this kind of relational "baggage" is brought with us into adulthood, affecting the kinds of choices we make in our future relationships. And, just as occupational identity is a part of our whole identity, our relationships extend from our personal to our professional lives. In turn, it seems reasonable to argue that they can affect the kinds of career choices we make based on our relational expectations (or fears) of employers and/or co-workers.

The other important change in Jane's relational life was connected to her part-time job. The fast food restaurant where she worked was sold, and all the staff were let go. Jane's substitute family ceased to exist. Although she did not mention any of her co-workers, she talked to me a lot about her former manager, Bill. She said that she was trying to take care of him as much as she could by phoning him frequently, taking him out, and "giving him things to do" like play tennis. Jane was happy that she was able to give Bill some enjoyable moments. But she knew that he was unemployed and experiencing financial difficulties, and there was nothing she could do about that. She was comfortably able to express her feelings of concern for his predicament, show her support for him, yet recognize that she could not solve his problems for him. Just as Jane had dysfunctional relationships in her life, she also had healthy ones. Within both contexts, she was learning to resist the silencing of her own voice. I sense that

her active resistance would lead her to develop a more healthy occupational identity in her transition from school to work.

School Experiences

Jane's recent school experiences have effected change in her school-to-work transition. Primarily, these experiences concern her participation in co-op ed. As her school year was drawing to a close, Jane was able to talk about the effects of her placement. She thought that she knew the children well by that time and was comfortable with disciplining them, teaching them, and being "in charge" if Sandra had to leave the classroom. She said that her understanding of teaching "more or less developed" over the course of the year parallel to the breadth and depth of her responsibilities. Although Jane initially thought that she would only be a "helper" in the classroom, by the end of the year, she said that she thought she had experienced all the responsibilities of a kindergarten teacher. Jane's high comfort level was apparent in her comment that teaching was "not that hard" because if she "messed up, they [the children] don't really know anyway."² Obviously, she had not experienced unresolvable struggles that kindergarten teachers do face.

Jane's experience with co-op had motivated her to enroll in a second co-op ed program during the summer. Now that she had experienced a kindergarten classroom, she had begun to think about other occupations that involved working with children. Specifically, she was interested in learning, through a co-op experience,

² An interesting side note here concerns Jane's relationship with Sandra. From our conversations and my two visits to the classroom, I was of the understanding that she and Sandra had a good working relationship. She told me, though, that at the end of her placement, she was told by her co-op teacher that she "had to write a thank-you note" to Sandra, who began to cry as she read it. Jane said that was really funny. This inappropriate reaction to what should have been a touching moment provides additional evidence to her difficulty in experiencing healthy connection in relationship.

about a potential career as a child psychologist or a child and youth worker. Although these were the occupations of interest that Jane expressed when she registered for the course (which was at a different school from the one she normally attended), she ended up with a placement as a camp counsellor. Whether or not she was disappointed about this turn of events was unclear. All she was willing to say about her placement was that it was "fun."

Part-Time Work

Having a part-time job was very important to Jane. It enabled her to have a degree of financial independence from her parents and to be rather financially extravagant with her boyfriend. It also fulfilled her drive towards hard work. Therefore, when she lost her job, I did not think that it would take her long to find another one. And I was right; she was working elsewhere within the month. She was able to obtain a new part-time job at another fast food restaurant in her neighbourhood. Just like her previous job, Jane worked until the early hours of the morning (even on school nights) several times a week.

Interestingly, Jane did not want to talk much about her job, except to tell me several times that she was very tired. It seemed that this job, much like her previous one(s), was a means to an end. It did not have anything to do with her vision of herself as a member of the adult world of work, one in which she would be working with children.

When we last spoke, Jane still did not know what she would be doing next school year. Much, it seemed, would depend on the outcome of her summer co-op placement. If she decided that she wanted to pursue a career as a child and youth worker, Jane would consider attending a community college in the fall. On the other hand, she might decide to finish her OACs next year, then think about a university program that would direct her towards some sort of work with children. "I'm thinking about it," she said, "I'm still not sure, but I'll decide."

REFLECTIONS ON THE CRITICAL MODEL

The critical, reflective model for conducting life story research presented in this thesis report emanated from my own life story research endeavour. As praxis, this has been its test run, so-to-speak, one that has not been without its difficulties. Initially, I assumed that one period of critical reflection should have been sufficient. My inexperienced researcher ego did not envisage any shifts in perspective. Naively, I thought that, because I had started off on the right track -- why change anything? Sticking with it necessitated, at times, all the willpower I could muster. In the end, my willpower overrode my novice researcher ego, and I revisited the continua again and again. And it was in these revisits that my knowledge of and appreciation for the complexity of this genre grew.

I had hoped to write a life story via a process that was collaborative in nature. And I thought that by being reflective, and critical about those reflections, I could do just that. What escaped me, though, was that power was not something that existed out there, without connection to either Jane or me, that we could discover and share together. Not at all. Weber (1986) was correct: power existed, but it was all mine. I could extend an invitation to Jane to participate in collaborative research, but I could not make her accept that invitation. In a sense, though, her refusal to make decisions or otherwise accept power was, in itself, an act of power. Reflecting on Davies' (1992) suggestion of Jane's potential empowerment through the telling of her own story, I am at a loss to know whether or not this was so. Did Jane choose to be so disengaged with the process that she went away empty-handed? Or, did she, as Davies suggests, enter history as the teller of her own experience and just choose to leave me out of it? If so, this was powerful, indeed.

My interpretation of Jane's forms of silence and resistance reflected the complexities of the power relations between us. Her refusal to engage in meaningful emotional talk may have been a strategy of strong resistance against my position of

power and privilege as a researcher. It may have signalled an unwillingness to give up the safety of silence against the risks of disclosure she may have perceived. On the other hand, her silence may have been borne of a history of submission to authority. Jane may have been so used to silencing what she knew to be true that she lost her emotional connection to that knowledge. I recognize that all claims to legitimate knowledge are partial and contextual, so my understanding of Jane could be nothing more than incomplete. There were times when the data supported her silence as a strategy of resistance, and there were other times when her silence seemed to speak of an acceptance of submission.

The use of empowerment as a strategy also factors into the power dimension. Educational researchers, amongst others who embrace this idea, prescribe various theoretical and practical means for sharing, giving, or redistributing power to those they study. But Ellsworth (1989) reminds us that there is no fundamental truth waiting to be discovered by the dispassionate researcher. People move about in strategies of silence and resistance that say "You know me" on the one hand, while insistently pointing out "You can't know me" on the other. Knowledge and understanding of someone is a highly contextualized, emergent process. It multiplies the complexities that are possible, visible, and legitimate at any given moment.

Given my own position of middle-class privilege and institutionally granted power in my relationship with Jane, it made more sense for me to come to terms with my own power that refused to be transcended or theorized away. I attempted to accept my own implications in the formation of those power relations and the meanings inherent in them.

My repeated deliberations around the issue of context were a learning experience for me. Things did not transpire as the literature would suggest they might. Jelinek (1980) points out that men are drawn to and most easily able to tell the stories of their lives in a linear, chronological fashion. Women's social conditioning of role

diversity and diffusion, she insists, are more indicative of disconnected stories. This research experience did not reflect such a clear division of story-telling style based on issues of gender alone. Jane was more apt than not to present her life to me as a sequence of events, each dependent upon and growing out of the one that came before. And, as the researcher in the study, I wanted and sought chronological information from her. Without it, I felt confused and at times overwhelmed by my inability to situate stories in a way that was meaningful and crucial to my understanding of them. In undertaking this study, I attempted to investigate the relationship between the psychological construct of voice and the development of occupational identity. This investigation would suggest attention to specific issues, exemplified through story, in connection with some form of linear presentation, as the term 'development' denotes. In other words, the strong focus I placed upon connecting the data through dates, times, places, and other forms of sequencing was to help illuminate the material at that stage. Later, as it began to make more sense to me, I could disconnect it again. The final outcome, then, included both elements of chronology and disconnection in a balance that favoured the latter, notwithstanding the importance of the former.

My experience with hermeneutics during this research study supports Wertz and van Zurren's (1987) view that neither description nor interpretation can be stricken from good qualitative research. They remind us that, as researchers, we describe stories from a particular point of view that enables us to gain a fuller understanding of them. I began with a description of Jane's story that was only possible because I attempted to suspend my preconceptions about what that story should have been about. In this way, I tried to understand the relationships and behaviours that constituted her story in the ways that made sense to her. Fuller understanding came through probing for the origins of meanings and searching for relationships between them. Deeper insight still was sought through examining Jane's assumptions,

emotions, attitudes, beliefs, and values. Yet all these levels of interpretation, coupled with much rich description, did not produce for me a total understanding of Jane's life. Although Widdershoven (1993) would have me believe that the hermeneutic flowing of life-to-story-to-life is smooth, I found my hermeneutical road to be a bumpy one. At this final juncture, many contradictions remained to puzzle me, and many questions were left unanswered.

Tesch (1990) suggests that shared experiences between the researcher and the researched regarding the topic of inquiry is amenable to conducting reflexive life story research. The researcher begins by reflecting on her experience, exploring its meanings, then dialoguing with her collaborator. The reflexive process broke down for me when I reached the point of dialoguing with Jane. Although much has been written about reflexivity in research (Moustakas, 1990; Tesch, 1990; Wertz & van Zuuren, 1987), I could find no indication of the possibility that a researcher's story may not be of interest to her collaborator. Only Weber (1986) provides a clue to such an eventuality with the dialogue as mirror metaphor: it is as ambiguous, confusing, and paradoxical as life itself. Faced with this reality, yet determined to remain reflexive, I redefined its parameters as I navigated the heuristic waters of my research.

The wisdom of Tedlock's (1983) differentiation between the period in the field and the period of 'writing it up' struck a note with me that was true and clear. There is no 'betweenness' of researcher and researched during the writing process. All that exists is the researcher who is trying to make sense of the data. As I looked back on my intentions to write a life story that was discursively balanced between Jane and myself, the dimensions of the impact of power seem greater than ever. Power and discourse were inseparable entities (Moustakas, 1990; Van Maanen, 1988). I had critically reflected on the form of my writing repeatedly throughout the research process. Nonetheless, the end result was a partially unconscious spin-off of the power relations between Jane and me. This was because, as the researcher, I held the reins

of power from beginning to end. My very decision to include a substantial number of Jane's own words was a reflection of this power. In retrospect, Dollard's (1971) and Patton's (1980) suggestion that a life story researcher's voice must be heard in the story appear considerably more valid than when I first read them. Their admonition against silencing oneself as researcher affronted my sense of fairness in wanting to produce a non-judgemental piece of research. In actual fact, I had deceived myself about my inability to do any such thing. Power is inseparable from any aspect of the research process. Researcher judgements about credibility, opinions, and speculations, I came to understand, are vital in their accounting. Only through explicit examination are their implicit power assumptions laid bare for full examination.

Overall, I have found this model to be a useful tool. Through it, I have come to understand that writing a life story concerns more than someone's life 'out there.' I became aware, too, of the important roles that I played as both subject and object. As I learned about Jane's school-to-work transition, the object of the research, I was also the subject of my own scrutiny as I identified, reflected upon, and interpreted my role as researcher. Simultaneously, as Jane focused on the subject of her life, I was, if nothing else, the object of her curiosity. She surely wondered about the researcher who wanted to know about her life, and why she was interested. Further, I was aware of the synergism that our developing relationship brought to the research process itself.

Life story is a rich form of inquiry that can serve multiple goals and purposes. Its challenge lies in finding ways that foster one's creative development in life writing, on one hand, while maintaining a critical orientation towards the research process, on the other. Life story could easily suggest an active constructionist undertaking not requiring critical reflection. Focus, in this case, would centre on selecting issues and themes, locating a participant, and writing a final report. Bruner (1986) warns us, however, of the consequences of assuming an unconscious orientation towards our

research,

We go to the [field] with a story already in mind, . . . foregrounded in the final professional product If we stray too far . . . , if we overlook a key reference or fail to mention the work of an important scholar, we are politely corrected Most of the time, . . . the study is new enough to be interesting but familiar enough so that the story remains recognizable. . . . The process is self-reinforcing and reconfirms everyone's view of the world. (pp. 146-147)

If boundaries are areas to be contested, then life stories are boundary-breaking texts. Writing these types of life stories requires continued critical reflection throughout the research process. Consequently, these are stories that expose while they camouflage, negotiate public and private space, challenge and retreat, open up some issues and silence others (Davies, 1992).

CONCLUSIONS

The concept of transition implies both sameness and change in varying proportions. In this thesis report, I attempted to describe and interpret Jane's contradictions, struggles, and realities as she negotiated her own unique transition from school to work. I observed and tried to understand her experiences as she participated in a year-long co-operative education program. In particular, I was concerned with her personal and professional relationships, her school experiences, and her part-time work. I listened to her voice as she silenced it and resisted that silence. And I watched how her relational struggles impacted on her developing identity as an adult worker.

It is not easy to develop an identity when social norms may reinforce an earlier sense of self. Especially, too, when one's own experiences may reinforce that earlier self-concept. The interconnections between different aspects of Jane's life -- her sense of her own needs, the economic conditions in which she lived, the structure of the jobs available to her, the domestic habits she inherited and maintained -- make

any account of her choices, dilemmas, compromises, and gains difficult.

The current research on voice (e.g., Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1991) suggests that, in addition to justice, a morality of care is a systematic, life-long concern of individuals. Accordingly, the self in relation to others is central to self definition. Jane constructed, resolved, and evaluated problems in different ways that seem to reflect these two different perspectives towards others, justice and care. As well, her language of morality in everyday speech may be seen to have different meanings in different situations and may carry different implications. Further, Jane's voice reflects her position as an individual and as a person in relationship. These points serve to remind us of the complexity of voice issues and the reality of such complexities for occupational training and education.

Jane's moral voice predominantly reflected a care perspective in both make-believe and real-life situations. In the fable exercise, she preferred a caring solution to the dilemmas although she recognized that justice solutions were also possible. In fact, she preferred a caring solution even if she were considerably inconvenienced. One question that was left unanswered for me during the exercise was the extent to which Jane would accept to be inconvenienced. In other words, how much would she silence herself in her attempts to be caring (i.e., nice or good) to others. The second question was whether Jane's predominant voice of caring in the fable situation would be a reflection of her preferred voice in real-life relationships.

Through the use of Brown, Tappan, Gilligan, Miller and Argyris' (1989) technique for reading for voice, I was able to establish Jane's predominant voice of care through the stories she told me about her life. She saw and defined herself as someone in relationship. This was evidenced through her repeated reference to her niceness and goodness. As Jane struggled to create her identity as an adult in the world of work, she negotiated her relationships with those people who played central roles in her life. In her personal life, Jane's resistance to silencing her care concerns

enabled her to remove herself from the disturbing relationships with her father and his girlfriend. As well, she was able to recognize the importance of reconnection with her mother by going to live with her.

Jane also negotiated her relationship with her boyfriend. As Apter (1993) suggests, for young women with career plans, a partner must accommodate their goals and honour their ambitions. It would seem that Jane was aware of these attributes in Joseph. She spoke of his encouragement of her academic endeavours, his assistance with her school work, and his financial assistance with the purchase of a car so that she could travel more easily to her co-op placement. At the same time, though, as Jane tried to deal with the complexities and contradictions of her relationship with Joseph, she continued to struggle against the silencing of her voice.

Weaver and Hill (1994) suggest that as we strive to create our professional identities, we naturally enter into relationships with our employers. They say that this relationship might be with a company or organization in the sense that it is an entity with its own culture, personality, and identity. Or it may be with a particular manager who we feel holds the keys to our satisfaction with the organization. Jane's voice of care that was prevalent in her personal relationships was mirrored in her relationship with Bill, her employer. Her tendency to silence her care concerns and her resistance to that silence carried over into her workplace as well. She strove to come to terms with the seeming contradiction of her preferred status in her workplace. Evidence of this struggle can be found in the fact that although Jane could speak about the rewards of her relationship with Bill, she also denied their existence.

I have attempted to address the silencing of Jane's voice and her resistance to that silence through Brown and Gilligan's (1992) explanation of the tendency of people to lose sight of one voice, or one set of moral concerns. The voices of young women such as Jane, who focus on care and struggle with the costs of silencing their care concerns, draw attention to the overriding justice focus of our society. They

reveal the tendency for people to lose sight of connection and to overlook the ways in which people enter and affect one another's lives.

Our society is committed to an ideal of social justice based on a premise of individual equality. Our educational system, in particular, is committed to goals of equal opportunity and individual freedom. These ideals of sameness point to the difficulty of encouraging responsiveness within a framework of a competitive, individualistic culture. Jane's co-op ed experiences provide support for this difficulty. She tried to respond to her care concerns in the kindergarten environment. At the same time, she struggled to comply with justice-focused classroom practices such as conflict resolution based on equality and fairness. It would seem that establishing herself as competent within preferred ways of doing things and within an existing range of social practices was important to Jane, perhaps as important as knowing the daily routines of her workplace.

This point illustrates the importance of Simon, Dippo and Schenke's (1991) conviction that work education programs should attempt to address difficult work-related issues within a critical pedagogical framework. Critical pedagogical practices in co-op ed programs focus on situating workplace dilemmas within larger societal structures. In this way, they are able to examine, for example, the necessity of conforming to existing workplace practices that contradict students' own moral concerns, the circumstances surrounding appropriately challenging workplace authority, negotiating contradictory demands, and legitimating their choices (p. 76).

In Jane's case, her co-op ed experience enabled her to recognize herself as a future teacher. She was encouraged by her supervisor in the preparation and actual teaching of the children. She was informed of the particular philosophies and techniques that were part of her supervisor's teaching practices. Jane felt affirmed through the social relations of her workplace in her ability and desire to work with children. At the same time, though, her sense of accomplishment might preclude other

ways of thinking about what it means to be a teacher.

Certain patterns of social relations at work can either enhance or limit possibilities for taking up particular work identities (Simon, Dipbo & Schenke, 1991). For instance, feeling a part of existing workplace practices, while affirming, can also preclude other ways of thinking about what it means to be just another worker. Existing perceptions of work are situated within wider contexts that reproduce taken-for-granted ideas about what that work is all about. What else is at stake, for example, when Jane says that she must "get used to" teaching techniques that confront her moral sensibilities, multiple management changes that preclude the development of a sense of belonging, or 12-hour shifts at minimum wage? How does her sense of loyalty to her boss affect her understanding of how she is paid? These are concerns about work identities and public perceptions of what groups of people as workers must be like that need to be addressed in work education classes.

By tracing both the career plans young women such as Jane make and the actual paths they follow, we can make some headway in mapping their internal and external aims and constraints. We can see how the ways in which they experience love, school, and work often pressure them into special female compromises which provide both satisfactions and conflicts.

The time has finally come when young women are free to address their individual needs for accomplishment, contribution, growth, respect, and even self-actualization by creating an occupational identity. Apter (1993) and Weaver and Hill (1994) tell us that in the past, young women's dreams were centred around families, mates, and homes. These researchers and others suggest that generations of cultural training taught women that their place was in the home, and that they should be fulfilled by their relationships there. Certainly these relationships remain important, but many young women have sensed a growing need to stretch beyond the homemaker role to explore other aspects of themselves. Young women engaged in the school-to-

work transition today are part of that exciting breakthrough time in history wherein one culture invades the land of another, and it is forever altered. Evidence of the feminization of the workplace is all around us, and so are signs of women's struggle. Every day we witness the impact of choices being made by our contemporaries.

Yet along with these exciting choices comes some confusion. Though young women such as Jane may feel constrained by the circumstances in which they make decisions, or perhaps would prefer their circumstances to be different, they nonetheless do choose. It seems that young women are working harder and harder to gain control and responsibility for their choices. But difficult choices remain difficult.

If my research experience is any indication, young women in the midst of the school-to-work transition do seem to be thinking about work. Yet, although times are certainly changing in our technological society, many young women are still considering such traditional occupations as those that involve working with children. Co-operative education is one avenue of choice through which they may become more knowledgeable about this and other types of work. At the same time, the co-op ed experience is but one context in which a young woman develops a degree of work preparedness. Her personal, school, and work experiences all have an impact as well. What is more, it would seem that her personal and professional relationships within those experiences also influence her developing identity as a future member of the adult work force. As critical educators, we must listen to young women's voices during this transitional period. In this way, we may be able to more fully understand their silence and resistance as they struggle with their concerns of both justice and care. And if we can help them to accept the validity of both perspectives, this information may be useful as they embark on their journey into the adult world of work.

IMPLICATIONS

Young people should be taught about work not just how to do work. This includes situating work within a larger context of social, cultural, political, and historical

issues. Further, just as work is but one aspect of a larger world, so is it but one aspect of a larger self. In order for young people to effectively learn about work, then, it would seem that they must also learn about themselves. This has important implications for the course content of work education programs. Incorporating models of decision-making and personality such as those of Adlerian psychological theory (Gilliland, James, Roberts & Bowman, 1984) would help young people to understand the connection between their personal and professional lives. If adolescents can be provided with these tools before they go out into the world of work, they can more effectively observe and critically reflect upon their work experiences than after-the-fact decontextualized reflecting done without the necessary skills.

How can work education programs do this? Co-op ed curricula could be rewritten so that less class time for both students and teachers is spent maintaining a complex paper trail. In this way, two half-days could be set aside for introduction of the models. Enhanced learning of the material could occur through small discussion groups and/or activities covering, for example, the various levels of meaning in occupational trends, educational requirements, and salaries; the valuing and devaluing of types of jobs, who usually ends up in them and why; perceived birth order, the family constellation, and their impact on career choice; types of life goals of males and females, their relational impact, influence on career choice, etc.

The methodological model that has been developed and presented in this thesis report also contains important findings for future research. In particular, a researcher's critical reflection upon her own voice is of the utmost importance during life story research, or perhaps any research involving the study of relational voices and related topics. It would seem that studying the other without contextualizing the self allows for only a narrow and uni-dimensional view. The inclusion of a critical self-reflection component in a research methods course would be one way of addressing this need.

Appendix I

Informed Consent Form

(University letterhead)

Cheryl Simser
746-1717

Dear Jane:

A project concerned with a young woman's perspectives on work is being conducted by a researcher from the University of _____. The Research Committee of the _____ Board of Education has granted permission to the researcher to request your cooperation in this study.

The purpose of the research study is to examine the world of work perspectives of a nonuniversity-bound adolescent female who is enrolled in a year-long co-operative education course. This student should be planning either to enter employment after graduation or to continue studies at the college level.

Your participation in this study will entail periods of observation and individual interviews. Observation and interviewing times will be organized in consultation with teachers to minimize interference with daily routines. Periods of observation will take place in co-operative education settings such as pre-placement classes, integration sessions, and training stations, as well as any other work education activities such as career fairs. If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed three times during the winter of 1994-95. You will also be asked to participate in a brief follow-up interview shortly thereafter. These individual interviews will last approximately 45 minutes and will be tape-recorded. As well, you will be asked to keep a journal during the research period. This journal will be for you to record your thoughts and feelings about the research process. It will be your private journal which you do not have to share with the researcher if you so choose.

Participation is completely voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw at any point during the process. All information will be kept strictly confidential. All field notes will be transcribed into printed form, and your name will not appear on any transcription, nor be associated with the study or any publication resulting from this research. A copy of the results of the research will be made available to you. No information related to this research will appear in any of your school records.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at the number given at the top of this letter.

Yours truly,

Cheryl Simser

I, _____, hereby agree
 do not agree

to participate in the study concerning a young woman's perspectives on work described above.

Date_____
Signature of Student_____
Date_____
Signature of Researcher

Appendix II

General Interview Questions

1. Why has Jane enrolled in a co-operative education program?
2. To what vocation does she aspire? Why?
3. What factors have influenced and are influencing her aspiration(s)?
4. What influences have her parents, friends, family members, teachers, and others had on her vocational decisions?
5. What connection does she see between her co-op ed placement and her vocational aspirations, if any?
6. To what extent do work-related issues fit into her interests and concerns?
7. What is her paid and unpaid work history?
8. What is she learning and what has she learned about the world of work through her work experiences?
9. Where does waged work fit into her overall view of adult roles?

Appendix III

Emergent Interview Questions

FIRST INTERVIEW

1. Walk me through a typical afternoon in Sandra's kindergarten class.
2. What are some of the things about working with children that you would like to do more of, if you could?
3. What are some of the things about working with children that you would not be interested in doing more of?
4. How did you come to be interested in working with children?
5. Tell me about the kinds of work that you have done in the past.
6. What have you decided about your co-op placement for next term?
7. Do you have any idea what you may be doing next year?
8. Is work important to you? Why or why not?
9. How are you managing to balance work and school and other things going on in your life?
10. What do you see as your strengths?
11. Tell me what you think success is.
12. How does work fit into your ideas about success?
13. If anything were possible, and you could have things anyway that you liked, what would your ideal life be like?

SECOND INTERVIEW

1. Tell me more about your co-op placement.
2. Let's talk about your job.

THIRD INTERVIEW

1. Describe yourself to me.
2. Tell me about your family.

FOURTH INTERVIEW

1. Tell me about the best teacher you have ever had. The worst teacher.
2. Tell me about your best year(s) in school.
3. What do you like best about school? About work?

FIFTH INTERVIEW

1. Tell me about your close friend(s). [Probe for connections to co-op and work.]
2. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about your family?
3. Tell me what you think responsibility is.
4. What do you think dependence is?
5. How important is belonging to you? In what situations do you feel that you belong?
6. Is being accepted important to you? Where do you feel accepted?

SIXTH INTERVIEW

1. Fable exercise. (See Appendix V for fables and questions.)
2. What would you say morals are?
3. What would make something a moral problem?
4. Tell me about a time when you were in a situation of moral conflict where you had to make a decision but weren't sure what was the right thing to do.
5. What were the conflicts for you in that situation?
6. What did you do?
7. Do you think it was the right thing to do? How do you know?
8. What has been happening at co-op? How did you come to decide to stay for the second term? Are your responsibilities changing? In what ways?
9. Is there anything else you would like to talk about?

SEVENTH (FOLLOW-UP) INTERVIEW

1. Walk me through a recent typical day at your placement.
2. When I visited you at your placement last week, I noticed differences from when I visited you earlier in the year. Have you noticed any differences? What kinds of things do you think make you feel different or can account for these differences?
2. Has your experience in the co-op ed program met or not met your expectations/goals/hopes? In what ways?
3. Bring me up-to-date on things, i.e., school, home, work, etc.
4. What are your plans for the summer?
5. What do you think you might be doing next year?
6. What are your thoughts and feelings about having participated in this study? Has it been beneficial for you? In what ways?

Appendix IV

Focus Group Questions

FOCUS GROUP 1

1. Can you tell us about the kinds of things related to the co-op course that you were involved in last spring? How you found out about co-op?
2. What helps people decide to choose co-op?
3. Can you talk a bit about where you'll be working in your placement? Do you have any idea about the kinds of things you might be doing?
4. In co-op you don't get paid; it's part of your school schedule. That's one difference between a co-op student and other workers. Do you suspect there are other differences? Do you think there might be differences between co-op and full-time paid work, co-op and a part-time job, co-op and volunteer work?
5. Sometimes schools have different types of "work" events or activities, for example, job fairs, or guidance counsellors or guest speakers talking about work and careers. Have you participated in any of those things? Did they leave you with any ideas or impressions?

FOCUS GROUP 2

1. We know that young women your age have a lot of interests and concerns. Where does work fit into your life? How important is work to you?
2. How is it that you came to be in your particular co-op placement?
3. Now that you have spent several weeks in your placement, is the world of work what you thought it would be? In what ways is it what you imagined -- or not imagined?
4. Sometimes people begin to feel differently about a job once they have been in it for awhile. Do you see your co-op job differently than when you first arrived or the first few times you were there?
5. In what ways is your work placement different from school? In what ways is it the same?

FOCUS GROUP 3

1. Now that you have begun your second placement, can you tell us about it? What kind of placement is it, and what kinds of things do you do there?
2. Today we're going to tell stories about work (i.e., work practices, organizational structure, relationships, power, hierarchy, harrassment, inequity, etc.) These can be stories of things that happened to you or to somebody you know. They can concern something that happened at a part-time job, at co-op, or as a volunteer. They can be funny, sad, exciting, negative, caring, or unfair.

FOCUS GROUP 4

1. Are you aware of any career-type happenings (besides your co-op program) that have taken place at the school over the year? For instance, career fairs, or guest speakers from the business sector?
2. If you needed to work for a living right now, what would it be like out there? How hard or easy do you think it would be to find a decent paying job? What would you call "a decent paying job" (in terms of \$ per hour and hours per week)? How secure do you think people's jobs are these days? Do you think that there are more full-time or part-time jobs? Pros and cons of part-time vs full-time jobs? Pros and cons of working out of your home? Would you ever consider it?
3. Some people say that these days "a girl can choose any kind of occupation that she wants." Other people say that this may be true in some occupations, but many occupations are still thought of as "women's work" or "men's work." What do you think? Would you say that men's jobs often tend to have more prestige attached to them? Would you say that men often get better pay? Are more likely to get promoted or receive on-the-job training? What do you think it is about some jobs that keep women (or men) from entering them?
4. Do you think that co-op has helped to prepare you for the world of work? In what ways has or hasn't it?

Appendix V

Fables and Questions

THE PORCUPINE AND THE MOLES

It was growing cold, and a porcupine was looking for a home. He found a most desirable cave but saw it was occupied by a family of moles.

"Would you mind if I shared your home for the winter?" the porcupine asked the moles.

The generous moles consented and the porcupine moved in. But the cave was small and every time the moles moved around they were scratched by the porcupine's sharp quills. The moles endured this discomfort as long as they could. Then at last they gathered courage to approach their visitor. "Pray leave," they said, "and let us have our cave to ourselves once again."

"Oh no!" said the porcupine. "This place suits me very well."

THE DOG IN THE MANGER

A dog, looking for a comfortable place to nap, came upon the empty stall of an ox. There it was quiet and cool and the hay was soft. The dog, who was very tired, curled up on the hay and was soon fast asleep.

A few hours later the ox lumbered in from the fields. He had worked hard and was looking forward to his dinner of hay. His heavy steps woke the dog who jumped up in a great temper. As the ox came near the stall the dog snapped angrily, as if to bite him. Again and again the ox tried to reach his food but each time he tried the dog stopped him.

FABLE QUESTIONS

1. What is the problem?
2. How would you solve it?
3. Is there another way to solve the problem?

Rights→Response: (if a rights solution is offered, probe for a response solution)

- a) Is there a way to solve the dilemma so that all of the animals will be satisfied?
- b) Some people would say that you can solve this problem by having the animals talk together and decide on a way in which they could all be happy. What do you think of that?
- c) How do you think someone who solved the problem in that way would think about the problem?

Response→Rights: (if a response solution is offered, probe for a rights solution)

- a) Is there a rule you could use to solve the problem?
 - b) Some people would say that you could solve this problem by using a rule such as "This is the mole's house (or the ox's stable), so the porcupine (or dog) must leave." What do you think of that?
 - c) How do you think someone who solved the problem in that way would think about the problem?
4. Of all the solutions we discussed, which one is best?
 5. If each fable is solved differently, ask: Why do you see a difference in those two problems?

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