School of Social Sciences

"One Thing at a Time, One Thing After Another": An Inquiry into Time in the Domestic Sphere

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CONTENTS

Figures

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to Rosemary McLean Morgan

and in memory of
Harry Bleasdale
1923-1999

INTRODUCTION

This is a thesis about time. It is sited in Perth, Western Australia. Like other Australian states, Western Australia has a modern market system economy and enjoys, comparative to other countries with a market system economy, well developed social welfare and public education systems. The thesis shows how a set of fifteen people from Perth, Western Australia, who had all experienced a change in their domestic arrangements, understood time in the domestic sphere. Drawing upon their representations and constructions of their lives, and focusing on the concept of caring, this work demonstrates how temporal concepts can be utilised to control and limit choices these people have made in their lives.

The evidence, collected through a series of open-ended and on-going discussions, is synthesized with theory, particularly the work of Barbara Adam. To Adam, an understanding of time involves appreciating the complexity of time. To gain such an understanding requires a research paradigm that allows this. Such an understanding requires stepping outside Cartesian dualistic thinking, including entrenched notions such as gendered time, and, an appreciation of the part played by metaphor in understandings of time is required. Opening up the field of inquiry into time in this way allows for an appreciation that differing temporal concepts exist and are utilised as mechanisms of control.

<u>Genesis</u>

The subject of time is one that has fascinated me for as long as I can remember. As a thirteen and a half year old schoolgirl I was once told to write a story on myself as an inanimate object and, somewhat to my English teacher's surprise, I handed in a work entitled 'I am Time'[1]. Various experiences throughout my life continued to nudge at this early germ of an idea that there was more to time than was apparent. As a child,

I remember my mother doing the housework. She would have the dishes soaking in the sink, a load of washing in the machine, the beds stripped, and be herself vacuuming while directing her children to dust and tidy. Occasionally my father would walk into this scene of activity and energy. He would stop, look, and then ask in an exasperated manner, 'Freda, why can't you do one thing at a time?' Later I learned that, for many people, not only were things often supposed to be done 'one at time', but, they were to be done in a particular sequence, with one thing following after another.

When I needed to choose a subject for my research, time was easily the logical choice. Time is a subject that has fascinated people in the West from the Ancient Greeks to the present day[2]. Consequently the body of literature existing on this subject is vast and covers a broad spectrum of disciplines from physics (P. Davies 1983, 1995; S. Hawkins 1998) to philosophy (Bergson 1910, Whitehead 1933; Elias 1992). In the social sciences some have written on the nature of time (Mead 1932; Fraser 1989, 1990; Gell, 1992) while many have examined the connections between the subject of time and anthropological and social theory, (Giddens 1979; Ingold 1986; Thomas 1989; Fabian 1991; Munn 1992). Social scientists have also investigated the relationships between time and other aspects of life, such as the relationship between the introduction of clock-time and the industrial state (Thompson 1965; Nguyen 1992; Smith 1994). The relationship of time to the field of politics has drawn attention (Maier 1987; Miller 1993) as has, more recently, the relationship between time and the environment (Adam 1996; Grove-White, 1997) and time and postmodernity (Harvey 1980; Hernadi 1992; Nowotny 1992; Lash & Urry 1994). Time has even found its way into explanations of food and lifestyles (Schneider 1997).Within Australia, much work on time has also been carried out (Davison 1993; Donaldson 1996a, 1996b; Kapferer 1996).

Fagg describes this body of literature as "vast, awesome, and bewildering" (Fagg 1995, pxi) and, like Fagg, I found that these qualities made it difficult to establish a starting point for an inquiry on time. However, I consider that the works of Barbara Adam provide a sound foundation for my inquiry. Adam is a social scientist who has over the last twenty years made a significant contribution to the field of time studies[3]. She has adopted an interdisciplinary approach to her work and consequently has incorporated time into a wide range of areas within the social sciences. Three of her works, 'Perceptions of Time' in Tim Ingold's, *Humanity, Culture and Social Life, Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology* (1994), her books *Time and Social Theory* (1990), and *Timewatch: The Social Analysis of Time* (1995) are particularly relevant to my work.

In 'Perceptions of Time'(1994), Adam argues that time needs to be seen as more than clock-, or chronological-time, which she describes as "the measure for...events and processes" (Adam 1990, p7). While clock-time is the dominant manner in which time is constructed in Western society, and as such deserves attention from those working in the social sciences, it is not the sole construct of time. Focusing solely on clock-time not only ignores other constructions and the inter-relationship between these constructs but reinforces the primacy of clock-time. As a result, time has a taken for granted nature not only in the manner in "which Western anthropologists[4] construct their images of 'traditional societies'" (Adam 1994, p512) but also in works on contemporary Western societies. Moreover, by not problematising the constructs of time that form our basis of understanding the world, the ideas about the nature of time that are emerging from other disciplines, such as quantum physics and molecular biology, are ignored by some in the social sciences. As Adam argues:

> ...[w]ithout a better understanding of the complexity of time in its
> general and particular expressions, anthropological studies of time will
> stay locked in a kind of science that leading contemporary natural
> scientists have already left behind (Adam 1994, p523).

In *Time and Social Theory*, these ideas are explicated in greater detail.
Adam begins from a position that:

> ...academics in general, and social scientists in particular...[in]
> observ[ing] and contemplat[ing] our social reality...find it to be
> immensely complex and...consequently set out to simplify it until...[it]
> is reduced...to choices of single or paired aspects (Adam 1990, p4).

She sees this as the legacy of classical Greek philosophers and Cartesian
dualisms. As a result, life is explained in terms of binary oppositions, such
as structure/agency, free will/determinism, mind/matter, and nature/
culture. When she turns to the physical sciences, she argues that 20th
century developments in physics have shown that an understanding
cannot be gained solely from atoms or particles but must include action.
Likewise in biology the movement in understanding is "from structure to
rhythm" (Adam 1990, p87). However, it is not simply a matter of adding
time to the equation and stirring well. Saying that life is, for example,
both structure and change, "merely shifts the focus from dichotomies to
isolated pairs" (Adam 1990, p153). More importantly, doing this
"provides no means for a conceptualisation of the connections between
multiple pairs, their continuity and discontinuity, or their mutual
implication" (Adam 1990, p153). In other words, the "conceptual tools"
(Adam 1990, p153) need to change for a greater understanding to occur.

Adam shows how the dualism of nature/culture has led to understandings
of time as being either natural or social. She argues that the 'traditional'
definitions of social time imply a means of synchronisation and co-
ordination of groups and activities, a consciousness of action and
purposive action, and communication. But, as she points out, this is not
'social' as opposed to 'natural'. Instead, it is all 'natural'. In other words,

quantum physicists and molecular biologists have demonstrated all these aspects in the 'natural' world. Moreover, we are part and parcel of the 'natural' world. Therefore, while "[w]e live Newtonian and thermodynamic theory... we are biological clocks and organic beings" (Adam 1990, p89). The varying concepts of time then, that are seen as 'social', and are, given that "human culture is a pre-requisite to the development of concepts" (Adam 1990, p89), owe their existence to 'nature'. Thus "sense, experience, and knowledge of temporality... are existential to being" (Adam 1990, p89). We are, therefore, time. Somewhat ironically, the specific concept of time, i.e., Newtonian time, that is seen as 'natural', is thus 'social'.

In *Timewatch: The Social Analysis of Time* (1995), Adam expounds on her previous work at both a substantive as well as theoretical level. She shows how focusing solely on clock-time limits an appreciation of other temporal dynamics operating in specific situations such as the classroom, issues of life and death, and aspects of globalisation. In this way she demonstrates the intrinsic nature of time to all areas of social research. Again, throughout this account she calls for a research approach that reflects not only her understanding of time but steps outside Cartesian dualisms.

Adam's work is the basis of my inquiry. I begin from a position of acknowledging the complexity of time, thus accepting her challenge to adopt an appropriate research paradigm.. Moreover, avoiding Cartesian dualistic thinking requires a re-examination of notions such as 'gendered time'. Additionally, one needs to be aware of the role played by metaphors in contemporary understandings of time allowing "a better understanding of the complexity of time" (Adam 1994, p523). My response to the challenge is to suggest that the ongoing and developing research principles advocated under the general umbric of post positivist

research[5] (Reason & Rowan 1981; Haworth 1984; Lincoln & Guba 1985,) provide one set of 'conceptual tools' necessary for this understanding.

I agree with Adam that Cartesian dualisms are unhelpful in explaining social life and I suggest that a new paradigm approach presents a way to step outside dualisms. Descartes' ideas have to be seen as embedded in Aristotelian philosophy and that two of Aristotle's tenets – the 'Law of Contradiction' and the 'Law of the Excluded Middle' have an equally persuasive hold today. In other words, it is the principles underlying Descartes dualisms that are problematic as they mistake our categories about the world for the world. The world is not divided into either/or categories simply because of Cartesian dualisms.

My inquiry focuses on time within the domestic sphere and this entails gender. Adam acknowledges that "studies on women's time...[do] not apply to *all* women at *all* times of their lives" (Adam 1995, p94) and that further, concepts such as women's time and men's time are merely adding to the number of dualisms already existing. My work shows that we need to "appreciate that the complexity of times applies...to women and men" (Adam 1995, p99). With this recognition I expand on Adam's argument that the use of metaphors in relation to time is problematic. Adam links metaphors of time with a Newtonian understanding of the world as a machine and argues that this is "a particularly unsuitable metaphor for an understanding [of time]" (Adam 1990, p158). Moreover, she argues that in using metaphor there is always a problem that, "the distinction between the metaphor, its source, and its name gets blurred or lost" (Adam 1990, p158). There are echoes of the work of Turbayne (1970) in Adam's work for he argues that not recognising a metaphor as a metaphor makes one a victim of the metaphor (Turbayne 1970). I do not disagree with Adam's argument that social scientists need to be aware that "metaphors play such a central role in our theories" (Adam 1990, p158), but I suggest that

recognising that time is characterised through various metaphor(s) helps to explain in greater clarity many of the tensions arising from concepts of time in everyday life. In other words, rather than discounting or rejecting metaphor I suggest they can provide insights into various understandings of time.

Collectively, these points enable me to examine the relationships between various concepts of time and allows one to draw out further the implications in Adam's argument that we need to understand the relationships between the various concepts of time (Adam 1990). More specifically, I show not only the tensions arising from apparently contradictory ideas about time, such as linear/cyclical or being/becoming, but also how temporal concepts can be utilised to control and limit choice. In this manner I demonstrate that time, is as Ermath states, not "neutral" (Ermath 1995, p105).

In this inquiry, then, I incorporate Adam's theoretical understanding of time and unite it with post-positivist research principles. In so doing I show, by way of substantive ethnographic evidence, that all people are subject to the complexities of time. Moreover, the use of metaphors in relation to time explains many of the situations in which people define themselves as 'victims of time' and specifically, the metaphor that time is some 'thing' that can be given, exchanged, bought or sold; time is not embedded in a person but exists separate to the person. This separation, in turn, is embedded in Cartesian dualisms of mind/body and nature/culture and these dualisms are supported by a logic which argues that a situation in practice and in everyday life is either/or. As a result, seeing time in these terms allows for the establishment of some temporal concepts to dominate over others to the extent that time is seen, not in its complexity but as a singular and simplistic concept.

The Inquiry

The story about my parents epitomises the main ideas that inform this thesis. There is an implicit understanding by both my parents in this story that time is something that is regimented; that there is a correct or right way to do things in relation to time. In this instance, to my father, one thing at a time is the most efficient manner of doing things while my mother has learnt from her experiences that more than the one thing can be done at a time and to her, this was the most efficient way to do what she had to do. Thus, there is a lack of shared understanding[6] as to how time is used and this lack of shared understanding partially explains my father's exasperation with my mother's actions. But, it does not fully satisfy as an explanation. My father believed that my mother was an excellent housekeeper. The question that arises then, is why it mattered so much to him, not what she did but the order in which she did it. There is an inference that his way of understanding and using time is the only way. There is also an inference that he was in a position to assert this understanding. This raises questions of control and choice. Moreover, given the socio-historical context in which these exchanges occurred, there is as well a suggestion that 'gendering' (Flax 1993)[7] is involved in some way[8].

Informal discussions with other people likewise indicated that there seemed to be a relationship between time and gendering. Consequently, I decided to focus upon this relationship. However, a reading of the relevant literature left me no wiser. In particular, I was unhappy with some of the positivist research that had been carried out[9] and I was puzzled by the lack of evidence relating men's experiences in the domestic sphere. While women still dominate this area, I considered that the changes in child caring arrangements that are occurring in society, such as divorced males gaining custody and the phenomenon of 'house-husbands', warranted another look at time in the domestic sphere.

However, as Goodnow and Bowes' research shows, perceptions about who does what and how often, are sometimes not equally shared by both the parties involved (Goodnow & Bowes 1994). Consequently, I chose to work with individuals and not couples. The field work for this inquiry then occurred in the domestic sphere with people who had initially begun raising their children in a relationship but were now, for whatever reason, raising their children on their own.

Themes

There are four key themes that run through this thesis in relation to time; caring, change, control and choice.

My evidence identifies the key process occurring in the domestic sphere as caring with the process operating along two axes – caring for children and caring for adults. However, although adults and children can be seen as two distinct groups, my evidence indicates that caring for one can become conflated with caring for the other. In other words, the process of caring becomes the same whether it is for an adult or for a child. Moreover, caring is entangled with ideas of time, gendering and exchange.

The people who participated in this inquiry had all experienced a change in their situations. Change had resulted in them having to re-negotiate many of their understandings about aspects of life. In particular, these changes were reflected in their views on caring, gendering and some aspects of their understanding of time.

In relation to time, the people shared an understanding that time was a reified and commodified external reality. Consequently, they saw time as something that was finite, that was possessed and that was dispensed. My

evidence shows that how they dispensed time was mediated by their understandings of other facets of social life such as gendering and caring. In other words, the choices that they made in dispensing their time reflected their understandings of how they enacted gendering and caring through the social roles of wife/husband and parent. Changes in their understandings of these roles relating from the changes in their situations resulted in changes in their choices about time and vice versa.

Lastly, the changes in their situation had made many of them aware of issues of control in relation to their understanding of time. In turn, issues of control reflected understandings of gendering and caring. However, the changes were not consistent in that while they could identify issues of control in adult/adult relationships they did not identify these issues in adult/child relationships.

Key Findings

There are nine key findings in this thesis about time in the domestic sphere.

1. The complex nature of time raises questions about the methodology used in positivist research on time in the domestic sphere.
2. While there is a link between time and gendering the connections are more complicated than simplistic notions of gendered time would indicate.
3. Time is understood by and large by the people in this inquiry as a reified external finite commodity[10]. As a result they dispense time and this is mediated by their understandings of gendering and caring and the relationship between caring and responsibility.
4. The choices they make about dispensing time can be understood as exchanges of time thus incorporating aspects of reciprocity and obligation.

5. The changes in their lives have resulted in changes in their understandings of time, gendering and caring and responsibility.

6. Consequently, the choices they make in relation to time and exchanges of time, change.

7. Additionally, their perceptions of issues relating to control and time change.

8. However, while these changes are interrelated and cannot be separated easily into cause and effect relationships (not that I would want to do so) they are uneven in that only some aspects of choice and control are altered. This is most noticed in a comparison between adult/adult relationships and child/adult relationships.

9. Finally, while their understanding of gendering, caring and responsibility change, their understanding of time does not.

This inquiry then, uses caring as a vehicle to illustrate aspects of change, control and choice in relation to time in the domestic sphere.

Chapter Contents

Throughout the writing of this work I have struggled to reduce my experience of a four dimensional world into a two dimensional lineal piece of writing of some 90,000 words[11]. The complexities of human life do not allow for neat categorisations and the parceling of ideas and evidence into tidy bundles. Consequently, the chapters are organized in a thematic manner with the caveat that the division of evidence to particular chapters does not imply a division of themes. Time, caring, change, control and choice run through all the chapters and do not just appear in the chapters so labelled. Thus while each chapter focuses on one theme, the others are always present as sub themes playing in the background.

Chapter 1, *Time and Change*, focuses upon Adam's arguments that the complexities of time need to be incorporated into social analysis and that

a research paradigm is required that acknowledges and incorporates these complexities. An understanding of the complexities of time requires far more than an understanding of the two dominant temporal concepts in our society, i.e., Newtonian time and clock-time. I suggest that rather than these two concepts being seen as time, they are better seen as reifications and metaphors of time. This then allows for other meanings associated with time, such as cyclical, being and becoming, and process, to be more fully appreciated for the part they play in how we structure and understand our lives and our world. This has two results. First, it allows for an appreciation that Newtonian time and/or clock-time, rather than being time *per se* are competing conceptualisations opening up a field of inquiry into the interactions and relationships between the differing temporal concepts. In other words, how these concepts are utilised to reinforce and reproduce various ideological positions within society. Secondly, it entails a recognition that a research paradigm is required that will enable an appreciation of the complexities of time. I suggest that the post-positivist paradigm allows this to occur and I therefore introduce the principles of this paradigm.

In Chapter 2, *Time and Research*, the focus shifts to a description of how I conducted my field work using these principles as a guide. Thus the first two chapters collectively lay out the framework for the substantive ethnographic evidence to follow. However, this is not to argue for a separation between theory and evidence. For theory to have a demonstrated value it is best developed in the course of the study of substantive evidence and this can be seen in the emphasis on ethnography in the field of Anthropology. Moreover, the sum is greater than the parts but the parts cannot be separated as neatly as I am suggesting by the manner in which I am presenting this work. The division into what appears as a theory/evidence dualism is merely a literary device.

Chapter 3, *Time in the Domestic Sphere,* can be seen as a bridge between theory, literature and evidence. I begin this chapter by discussing the literature on time in the domestic sphere resulting from a positivist approach to time. While this literature may detail what people do and how long they do things for, i.e., to examine quantitative aspects of time, it does not address issues of why, the qualitative questions. In other words, it does not offer an understanding of why and how people have made the choices about time they have. Neither does it show the context of controls existing in which these choices are made. Thus I suggest the positivist approach is flawed and I suggest that the conclusions drawn from taking the positivist approach are used to reinforce and reproduce ideological positions. In other words, it is an example of temporal concepts being used to reproduce and reinforce ideologies. In particular, I look at the notion of 'women's time'. I suggest, therefore, that rather than time being seen as gendered, it is in the utilisation of temporal concepts to reinforce and reproduce concepts of gendering that the relationship between time and gendering occurs. The fieldwork evidence introduced in this chapter opens up the field of inquiry. First, the evidence indicates that caring is far more complex than some existing literature would suggest and that caring, rather than being seen as activities, is better understood as an orientation to activities. In other words, a qualitative approach is essential to understanding the 'why' and 'how' of activities. In turn this understanding of caring leads to a new understanding of the relationship between time and caring. Secondly, the evidence shows that to the people in this inquiry time was understood as something external to themselves, a commodified reality that they could dispense. Finally, my evidence indicates that issues of control and choice are significant in discussions on time and this is particularly clear in the discussion on leisure.

Chapter 4, *Time and Control,* focuses on issues of control which result from the people understanding time as a commodified reality and caring is

the vehicle that I use to show this. Time in the domestic sphere was given and the giving was underlaid by notions of caring and reciprocity. In other words, people gave their time because they cared but they expected a return on this giving. Sahlins' (1974) model of reciprocity is useful in understanding that although people expected a return on their time they did differentiate between giving time to an adult and giving time to a child. In other words, in relation to the exchange occurring in regards to caring, what was perceived as being exchanged was time. Thus the discussions were peppered with references to time in relation to caring – 'she/he never gave me/us any time', 'I took back my time for myself', 'I never had any time for myself, it was all his/hers/the children's'. In adult/adult exchanges there was a definite expectation of some kind of return for the time they considered they had given and when the exchange was perceived as being unbalanced, the relationships broke down. However, I suggest that the situation is more complex than a direct exchange of time would indicate and that another way of understanding these exchanges is in terms of prioritising choice. In other words, the situation can be understood as one in which there was no shared understanding. In extreme cases, the giving of their time was perceived by some as having become involuntary, i.e., they considered they had no control. However, many of the people in this inquiry considered that they had regained their time and in this chapter I also show how they conceptualised their ideas regarding their ownership and control (or lack of) time.

Chapter 5, *Time and Choice*, continues the discussion from Chapter 4. Again, caring is the vehicle but in this chapter the focus is on caring and children. I show how caring for children differs from caring for adults. When time is seen as being separate from a person and therefore able to be used or not used, both the adult and the child's choices about time are constrained by the parenting relationship. However, both the adult and the

child's choices about time are also constrained by temporal concepts originating outside the domestic sphere. Thus, I introduce evidence to suggest that the socialisation to temporal concepts results in a perceived loss of autonomy. This chapter also shows how caring for children can become conflated with caring for adults. However, changes in the lives of the people in this inquiry can result in changes in how they understood caring. As caring to them was synonymous with the giving or taking of their time, the experience of a change in their adult caring relationships led to a different understanding of their control of time and their choices.

The three substantive chapters collectively illustrate that time appears, as Adam argues, far more complex than has often been appreciated in social science writings. Moreover, they show that while Adam recognises the importance of the use of metaphors in relation to time, this importance is intrinsic to an understanding of the complexities of time. For, it is through the use of metaphors which are based upon a positivist understanding of time coupled with a Aristotelian logic and Cartesian dualisms, that concepts of time are utilised to reinforce and reproduce ideologies in society.

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[1] Given what I am now writing about time, the school girl was closer to the mark than she ever appreciated.

[2] While I am not comfortable with a west/east division, I am restricting my discussion to what is known as the 'Western tradition'. It is highly probable that time attracts as much attention in all societies. See, for example, F. Capra (1992), *The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern mysticism*, 3rd edition, the collected works of Joseph Campbell (full details in my reference list) and L. Fagg (1995) for a fuller discussion of the importance of time in cultures other than those loosely referred to as 'Western'.

[3] Her first book, *Time and Social Theory*, was awarded the Philip Abrams Memorial Prize and her second book, *Timewatch: The Social Analysis of Time*, was awarded the J.T. Fraser Prize for 'A Book of Excellence in Time Studies'. In addition Adam founded the journal *Time and Society* in 1992 and edited it from this date till the end of 1998.

[4] Durkheim, Evans-Pritchard, and Leach have been among the most influential social theorists in examining time within anthropology (Ingold 1980; Adam 1990; Gell 1992). However, there is no general agreement between them as to what constitutes their subject

matter, i.e., what time is. Durkheim (1915), for example, argued that time was a social construction and was found and founded in collective social life. In Chapter 1, I will be showing that research work in the field of biology has shown that the organisational aspects of time, such as sequence and synchronisation, are not, as Durkheim argued, the sole prerogative of humans. Moreover, Durkheim saw people as biological entities upon whom society acted (Ingold 1986) and through whom society existed. Consequently, Durkheim ignored the individual to the extent of arguing that the continuity of individual human life and the duration of this life was a private matter and not therefore, time (Ingold 1986).

Evans-Pritchard's 1940 work in analysing *The Nuer* understanding of time is a comparison of an unreflected notion of Western time and the differences between this notion and what he observed with *The Nuer*. He argued that "the Nuer have no expression equivalent to 'time' in our language, and they cannot, therefore, as we can, speak of time as though it is something actual, which passes, can be wasted, can be saved, and so forth" (Evans-Pritchard 1940, p103). He further stated that *The Nuer* "have a very limited means of reckoning the relative duration of periods of time intervening between events...[and] It is true that their year is divided into twelve lunar units, but Nuer do not reckon in them as fractions of a unit" (Evans-Pritchard 1940, p103). He describes *The Nuer* understanding of time as being either cyclical or linear in nature. However, as I show in Chapter 1, these are equally ways in which time is understood in Western society. Consequently, as Adam argues, his discussion of *The Nuer* understanding of time is "delineated in its difference from the Western use of time and orientation in time" (Adam 1990, p96) and his understanding of Western time and time itself is unquestioned by him.

Unlike Evans-Pritchard, Leach appreciated that there are many meanings associated with the word time in the English language and he questioned how these meanings "link up with our everyday experiences" (1979, p222). His answer was that there are two experiences of time – repetition, where "certain phenomena of nature repeat themselves" (Leach 1979, p222), and non-repetition, where "life change is irreversible" (Leach 1979, p222). These experiences are "logically distinct and even contradictory" (Leach 1979, p222) and from these two experiences, all other experiences and conceptions of time are derived. He contrasted Western explanations, where we use metaphors indicating time as either lineal or cyclical, with "primitive, unsophisticated communit[ies] [where] the metaphors of repetition are likely to be of a more homely nature...[and where] time is experienced as something discontinuous, a repetition of repeated reversal, a sequence of oscillations between polar opposites: night and day, winter and summer...life and death" (Leach 1979, p223). From this point of oscillating polar opposites he argued that during sacred time, the polar reverse themselves and time too goes backwards. However, there are problems with Leach's understanding of time. His argument that there is an " apparently self-evident 'logical difference' between repeating and non-repeating events (Gell 1992, p31) is problematic given my discussion on the possibility of anything repeating in Chapter 1. Likewise, his division into alternating or lineal time is equally tenuous. As Gell argues, the alternating time corresponds with cyclical time (Gell 1992). Moreover, cycles are directional as much as lines are (Ingold 1986), a point I discuss in detail in Chapter 1. Finally, his argument that time is reversible in specific instances. Again, I show in Chapter 1, why this is unlikely. While, there are specific periods in people's lives where role reversals or ritual inversions occur, this does not necessarily result in a reversal in time. As Gell argues, "the presence of notions of backwards-running time [do not] exist in anybody's mind except the anthropologist's" 1992, p33). He supports this claim citing the 1974 work of R. Barnes whose fieldwork amongst the *Kedang* of eastern Indonesia shows that they go to a lot of trouble to ensure the dead stay dead and are not re-born. Consequently, the life-death cycle "does *not* reverse itself" (Gell 1992, p33, emphasis in original).

[5] Throughout this thesis I use the term 'post positivist paradigm' to describe my research methodology and in chapter 1, I detail what I mean by this term.

[6] I am using the term shared understanding as an encapsulation of the ideas of Schutz ,in particular his notion of intersubjectivity in *The Phenomenology of the Social World* (1972), London: Heinmann, *Alfred Schutz on Phenomenology and Social Relations* (1970), edited with an introduction by H. Wagner, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, and *Life Forms and Meaning Structure*, tranlsated and introduced by H. Wagner, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

[7] In Chapter 3 I explain Flax's use of the term 'gendering' in detail. I use the term in place of gender throughout this work.

[8] My brother and sister and I were all 'rostered' for household chores. When I discussed the title of this thesis with them my sister immediately recognised the reference to my father and confirmed my memories of the incident occurring more than once. Somewhat to our bemusement, our brother had no recollection of what I was referring to although he was present on many of the occasions. This strengthened my suspicion that gendering may be somehow related.

[9] See Chapter 3 for a full discussion of this body of literature.

[10] The manner in which the terms 'reification' and 'commodity' are used in the thesis are explained in detail in Chapters 1 and 4.

[11] I am not, of course, suggesting here that I am the only person to have had this problem. See, for examples, B. Sansom (1980), *The Camp at Wallaby Cross: Aboriginal fringe dwellers in Darwin*, and N. Denzin (1997), *Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic practices for the 21st Century*.

1

TIME and CHANGE

Overview

In this chapter I focus upon Adam's arguments that the complexities of time need to be incorporated into social analysis. A research paradigm that more obviously and more thoughtfully acknowledges and incorporates these complexities is required.

Time, Adam (1994) points out, is the most widely used noun in the English language. There are, for example, clock- and chronological- (or calendrical-) times based upon measurements of the relationship of the earth to the sun and/or moon; lineal- and cyclical-times based upon the notion that time moves either in a straight line or in repeating cycles. There is quality time and quantity time. There is 'when' time which can identify a measured point in time (i.e. clock- and /or calendar), or feelings (it was the right time, or wrong, time to do whatever) or physical features. In other words, "[t]he abstract, quantified, spatialized time of clocks and calendars forms *only one aspect* of the complex meanings associated with Western time" (Adam 1994, p509). Time, then, is more than simply clock-time and more than the time encapsulated in Newton's definition of time[1] in both its technical meaning and in everyday use of Newton's definition.

However, these two broad concepts, of clock-time and Newtonian time, dominate contemporary life, so they cannot be ignored. Rather, in order to understand the complexities of time, we need an understanding of how the concepts of Newtonian time and clock-time dominate. This domination occurs to the extent that it is easy to see time as just one or other, or some combination of both, thus ignoring the other ways in which time is

experienced. I explore this in more detail in the first section of the chapter and suggest that it is reification and metaphor(s) that enables this to occur.

In the second section I show that there are alternative ways of understanding time. Specifically, I expand upon the relationship between time and change, as distinct from seeing time in terms of the mechanistic metaphors used by Newton. I will show that when time is seen as change it has implications for other conceptual devices that we utlilise to make sense of our world; devices such as language and the use of dualisms.

Adam also argues that we need to understand not just the other meanings of time but we "need to get to know... the relations between them... [and the] knowledge of their meanings and differences in relation to each other" (Adam 1990, p6). In the third section of this chapter, I introduce some of these other meanings of time. Examining the relationships among these meanings enables me to show how issues of control are closely associated with temporal concepts.

In the fourth section of the chapter, I introduce the principles of the research paradigm that I believe are useful in allowing us to more fully understand the complexities of time. In the final section I show how using these principles has implications for a study on time.

I

The Sands of Time: Metaphor and reification

Lakoff and Johnson argue that "concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities" (Lakoff & Johnson 1979, p3). Newtonian time and clock-time are very much 'everyday realities' and play a central part in our

perception, our actions and our relationships. But everyday Newtonian time and clock-time are not time *per se*. They are concepts which describe phenomena but they are not the phenomena they seek to describe.

Newton's definition of time as an external reality, "simply *there*, fixed once and for all in an absolute and universal way for all observers to share" (P. Davies 1995, p53), has not been substantiated by Einstein and others in the field of quantum physics[2]. Instead of time being a measure of motion, with all events "occur[ing] at unique moments in time" (Adam 1990, p50), Einstein's work has shown that time is "in some sense *malleable*, able to stretch and shrink according to the observer's motion" (P. Davies 1995, p53). Time, then, is not an external reality against which space and mass can be compared. This has important implications for the research process which I discuss in section four. At this point, however, I wish to look more closely at how Newtonian time has come to be seen as time and the relationship between Newtonian time and the concept of clock-time.

In his work, *The Myth of Metaphor* (1970), Turbayne makes the case that metaphors are a device by which we conceptualise the world, an argument echoed by Lakoff and Johnson (1979). But Turbayne also argues that metaphor, rather than being understood as standing for the reality, can become accepted as the unquestioned reality and this leads to a situation whereby a person becomes a victim of metaphor.

> ...[t]he victim of metaphor accepts one way of sorting or bundling or
> allocating the facts as the *only way* to sort, bundle, or allocate them.
> The victim not only has a special view of the world but regards it as the
> *only* view...He has mistaken the mask for the face (Turbayne 1970,
> p 27, emphasis added).

Turbayne argues that both Newton and Descartes (whose legacy I return to in more detail in section two) knowingly used metaphor to explain their ideas. For example, Descartes states in his work *Principles*, that he has

"described the whole world "*as if* it were a machine,"" (Turbayne 1970, p52). Unfortunately though, according to Turbayne, to a greater or lesser extent both Newton and Descartes became victims of their own use of metaphor. As a result, Newton's conceptualisation of time is based not upon demonstrable principles but instead upon a hypothesis of the "physical world… [being] one giant machine" (Turbayne 1970, p52). Turbayne further argues that Newton (and Descartes) "have so imposed their arbitrary allocation of the facts upon us that it has now entered the coenesthesis of the entire Western World" (Turbayne 1970, p5).

Clock-time is closely related to Newtonian time. Adam argues that Newtonian time is "fundamentally conceived as a quantity: invariant, infinitely divisible into space-like units, measurable in length and expressible as number" (Adam 1990, p 50). Clock-time can be seen as one practical, and perhaps dominant, application of this. Initially, as people writing on the history of clock-time[3] have shown, the chimes of the clock indicated when something should occur. It is only later that the clock becomes an instrument of, or means of, measuring duration. Before clocks, duration was noted and measured by various means such as the burning of candles or incense. With the advances in chronological technology, the clock provided the means for duration to be measured more accurately and more uniformly. Thus it incorporated in one mechanical device two ideas, namely, when something occurred and for how long something occurred. And this incorporation coincides with the general acceptance of the Newtonian concept of time. In other words, time is able to be measured, expressed, and seen as uniform and the time that is seen as such, is Newtonian time.

Moreover, in this model time is seen as a singular entity. As Elias argues, "by speaking of 'measuring' time one makes it appear as if time is actually a physical object like a mountain or a river, the dimensions of

which can be measured" (Elias 1992, p46). This results in the illusion that "time is a kind of thing existing 'in time and space'" (Elias 1992, p46). This objectification of time has led to the reification of time and all the attendant problems created as described by Marx's notion of commodification and the fetishism of commodities.

According to Bottomore, self-alienation is the result of a person being alienated from themselves through their activities (Bottomore, 1983). This in turn leads to the process of reification whereby:

> ...human properties, relations and actions...[are transformed] into properties, relations and actions of man-produced things which have become independent (and which are imagined as originally independent) of man and govern his life (Bottomore 1983, p411).

As Hansen points out, this can result in people seeing themselves as passive rather than as active agents (Hansen, 1976). Rather than creating their world, the world is seen as an external reality over which they have no control. The outcome of this is what Marx called 'fetishism' whereby objects are given characteristics and these characteristics are seen as a natural part of the object (Bottomore, 1983). As a consequence, reality is concealed or, as Bottomore puts it "[w]hat is actually social appears natural" (Bottomore 1983, p165). Thus, when Adam claims that what we see as 'social time' is natural, she is describing an example of the process of fetishism.

Taussig is one anthropologist who clearly draws the link between time and commodity fetishism. He points out that time is as much a "social product... [as are] tools" (Taussig 1980, p4). However, as a result of "no longer... [appearing as] an abstraction, it appears to be something natural and immutable, even though it is nothing more than a convention or a social construction" (Taussig 1980, p4). This immutable connection results in the underlying social relations being obscured as my evidence will show[4].

It is important to note here that it is not the measuring of time itself that is problematic. As Adam and others point out, many societies have measured and reckoned time using highly complex measures (Adam 1995; Greenhouse 1996; Glucksman 1998). What is different between the measurement of time in other societies compared to Western clock-time, is the manner in which this time has been "abstracted from its natural source... [and become] an independent, decontextualized, rationalized time" (Adam 1995, p27). It has become a thing that can be bought, sold, exchanged, used and saved. Moreover, this process of privileging clock-time through decontextualisation and reification has resulted in other concepts of times being sidelined.

While metaphor and reification are not the same, some aspects of one are consistent with aspects of the other. Thus time, or at least a specific meaning of time, becomes reified. But time is also a metaphor. Lakoff and Johnson argue that "in our society money is a limited resource and limited resources are valuable commodities" (Lakoff & Johnson 1979, p 9). By seeing time as a resource, time becomes commodified and a parallel is drawn between the two, i.e., time and money. This then becomes subject to metaphorical elaboration with the metaphor, time is money[5]. The parallel is reinforced by the practice of using money to pay for work done. Time, like money, then becomes something to be saved, spent, used, wasted, and so forth. However, the metaphor breaks down in some situations. An unemployed person for example, may very well be rich in time, but being in receipt of an unemployment benefit does not make one rich in money. Time is not always money

Newtonian time and clock-time can thus be seen both as metaphorical and as reified concepts. They are not, in themselves, time, but the

meanings associated with these two concepts strongly determine how time is seen in contemporary society.

II

Shifting Sands: Change and process

It is not just the work being done in quantum physics that has affected how time is perceived at the beginning of the 21st century. Newton's definition of time has been problematic since he wrote it. In his conceptualisation of time, motion could occur in either a forward or a backward direction. However, this goes against experiential knowledge of life. Things and events cannot happen in reverse. To use a cliché, one cannot unmake an omelet; to put it in more academic terms, human life appears to be as subject to the laws of thermodynamics as does everything else on the planet. This leads this discussion not just into the world of natural sciences but also into philosophy.

Turbayne, as I showed above, argues that the work of Descartes is as influential on how we conceptualise the world as the work of Newton. This is a point also made by Adam. She argues that a "philosophical approach... dominated by Cartesian dualism" (Adam 1990, p152) is unhelpful in understanding the nature of time. However, Cartesian philosophy needs to be contextualised as it is based upon Aristotelian logic and particularly Aristotle's 'Law of Contradiction' – no proposition can be both true and false at the same time, and his 'Law of the Excluded Middle' – every proposition must be either true or false'. In other words, it is not dualisms *per se* that are problematic but the manner in which they are used following Aristotelian logic. Both of Aristotle's Laws have been maintained by subsequent generations of positivist philosophers and scientists. Moreover, they frame our understanding of the world, i.e., we have come to see the world in either/or dichotomies. We see both black

and white. The problems begin when we decide that there is only black and white, that all things must be either black or white, and that there is no intermediate stages between black and white. In relation to the literature on time this can be evidenced in the being/becoming debate that has occupied philosophers of time throughout the centuries[6]. Moreover, dualistic thinking informs general understandings of people's every day lives.

But polar opposites are not necessarily discrete and definitive entities in their own right. Reason and Rowan[7] show this in three ways. First, opposites are interdependent. As they point out, it "wouldn't make sense to talk about darkness if there was no such thing as light" (Reason & Rowan 1981, p130). But opposites also exist within each other or, to use Reason and Rowan's term, they are not just interdependent but interpenetrate. As a result, there is some light in darkness and some darkness in light[8]. Finally, if an opposite is taken "to its very ultimate extreme, if we make it absolute, it actually *turns* into its opposite" (Reason & Rowan 1981, p 131), a process they describe as the "unity of opposites" (Reason & Rowan 1981, p131). As a result, total love and total hate have the same result that is "morbid dependence... counter dependence, where our whole existence...depends on the other person" (Reason & Rowan 1981, p131). It is difficult then to sustain dichotomous thinking, and this has implications for my discussion of gender in Chapter 3.

To Adam, a Cartesian approach, "separates not just mind from body, but repetition from process" (Adam 1990, p152). Much has been written on the relationship between structure and process in the social sciences[9]. S. Moore, for example, argues that the term "process conveys an analytic emphasis on continuous production and construction without differentiating in that respect between repetition and innovation" (S.F.

Moore 1987, p729). In other words, she is acknowledging the relationship between time and not only events but also structure. Thus process "is simply a time-oriented perspective on both continuity and change" (S.F. Moore 1987, p729). However, this a debate that I do not wish to join as it is predicated upon the dualism being/becoming and I have already suggested that dualistic thinking is not helpful. Moreover, if, as Lincoln and Guba suggest, "[a]ll entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p37), there can be only change or process.

However, this is not to deny what appears as continuity or sameness. As Adam explains, "[n]othing within our body, for example, is preserved. Yet, we are recognisably the same person despite the fact that every cell in our body and nearly all the protein in our brain is replaced in less than a month" (Adam 1990, p78). To understand this apparent paradox between constant change and constancy it is necessary to step out side aspects of the positivist paradigm. Additionally, we need to look more closely at the terms 'same' and 'repetition'. According to Adam, physicists have calculated that "the likelihood for just one cubic centimeter of air to recur in exactly the same composition... as a chance of 10 to the power of 10 trillion" (Eigen 1983, cited in Adam 1995, p40). This, she argues, makes the chance of it happening again "'as good as never'" (Adam 1990, p 168). Sameness, then, is a mathematical improbability. Thus, while actions are repeated, they are not the 'same'. The person carrying out the action is not the same, and the components are not the same. As a result, repetition is not sameness and this has implications for an understanding of social life. What looks the same, that is structure, is a perceptual and cognitive repetition but "[e]verything involved in it has irrevocably changed in the intervening period" (Adam 1990, p168).

Adam too argues that we understand the world through the use of metaphors, and, in particular, our choice of metaphor relates to differing technologies[10]. Thus the invention of clocks and their gradual dominance in social life led to the metaphor of a clock work universe with God as the clock maker. However, while seeing organisms as machines may be helpful in some situations, it is unhelpful in others (Adam 1990). In particular, it creates a distinction between change (or process) and structure. For, "[i]n contrast to machines... the replacement of the 'parts' is achieved by the organism in an incessant [internal] process of balancing decay with renewal. The resultant stability is *fundamentally dynamic*" (Adam 1990, p78, emphasis added). In other words, it is process or change that gives sameness. Moreover, there is an "interplay of processes... multiple interconnections within the organism and between the organism and the environment" (Adam 1990, p78). As a result, understanding " 'wholes' and their 'structure' is... synonymous with the idea of being temporally organised in such a way that all aspects are existentially dependent upon one another" (Adam 1990, p79). As a result, all is change; all is process; all is time.

Bender and Wellbery argue too for the relationship between time and process. To them, time "is not given but... fabricated in an ongoing process" (Bender & Wellbery 1991, p4). Recognising this allows time to be seen, not as a reified external reality, but as a multiplicity with each of the temporal concepts explaining differing aspects of a constantly changing world. To understand the complexities of time it is therefore necessary to return it to process. In so doing, the division of the world, and the people in it, into discrete static entities is no longer sustainable. Reanney, for example, argues that "we speak of ourselves as 'human beings' despite the image that word 'being' conjures up – a fixed thing, a stable state... It would surely be better if we abandoned the term 'human being' and replaced it with 'human becoming'" (Reanney 1991, p*vii*). In

this way the dynamics of living recognises people as performing practice in dynamic structures that both shape and are in turn shaped by the process.

Seeing life as a process requires a careful attention to language. Given that language at least partially constructs our world, our choice of words by default partially chooses our construction of the world. This is clearly seen in the difference between the two categories of words in the English language,[11] i.e., nouns and verbs. Nouns imply a static, unchanging state or definitive category. Verbs, on the other hand, imply an active, changing process. As a result verbs incorporate or describe time particularly with the use of their accompanying tenses. Thus there is a vast difference between, for example, stating 'Janet is a parent' and 'Janet is parenting'. The former can imply that Janet's existence is and will be solely that of parent while the latter allows 'Janet' a more multi-dimensional existence. In other words, in the first instance 'Janet' has been categorised rather than being described in terms of an activity[12]. In my work, I give analytical priority to verbs and not nouns, opening up an inquiry into what parenting involves.

Ignoring the diachronic, as nouns tend to do, allows processes to themselves become nouns such as, for example, 'marriage'. As R. Morgan argues, "women and men both have for so long viewed marriage as a static, not dynamic, state, an institution defined and proscribed" (R. Morgan 1994, p174). As a result, "[a]gain and again the *process* is lost sight of, and the temporary present is viewed as the goal, the end, the solution" (R. Morgan 1994, p154). Her argument applies equally to the processes of separation and divorce. I understand the people who populate this thesis as people 'doing' process rather than being described as the process. Conceptually, I wish to show that there are no parents, wives, husbands, ex-partners and the like. But there are people who are

parenting, have been married, are working through the process of separation or divorce and are subjected to the process of gendering. They are people both being and becoming, they are living their lives[13].

III

Change, Control and Choice

For Adam, we make an "effort to fix the transient world into knowable stability and permanence...[and this] is a general human endeavor " (Adam 1995, p40). As a result, in order to make sense of an ever changing universe we use concepts in constructing our realities. Thus, elaborating the argument of Berger and Luckman (1966), we would be better to emphasise the social constructing of reality, rather than 'the social construction of reality'. The use of concepts then, is an attempt to impose order and this in turn implies control. In other words, concepts are the means of converting a transient universe to one that is understood as stable and permanent (Adam 1995). In so doing the concepts can be seen as a way of imposing control on a disorderly universe. Temporal concepts are, however, in a class of their own. They are constructed to impose order upon change itself and this can therefore be seen as implying control of change. Concepts of time then deliver a 'double whammy' because they are used to attempt control of change itself. The use of temporal concepts therefore delimits the possibilities of change; which is another way of saying they have the potential to be used, disable and/or enable choice.

How do temporal concepts do this? They are reifications and, as Elias (1992) points out, this allows for observations to be made and for

dimensions to be measured. It is in the manipulation of the observations and dimensions that the aspects of control are most clearly seen.

Duration and Terminal Points

Given that change equates to time, the observation of change implies duration. Ingold, for example, argues that time:

> ...is nothing more than an *idea*, which stands to the reality of our
> duration in the same way that temperature stands to heat. For the notion
> of temperature, like the idea of time, is a product of the intellect and
> connotes a system of divisions on an abstract scale. What it gives us,
> then, is not heat but a set of categories for talking about it (Ingold 1986,
> pp 166).

Duration implies a period between two terminal points for there must be a change of some description occurring for duration to be observed. This implies that the reference point against which the observation of change is noted is crucial. As Adam argues, "what is generally conceptualized as 'timeless' refers mostly to rates of change that are very much slower than those of the observers' frames of reference" (Adam 1995, p40). Further, if the terminal points are not noted, the period of duration cannot be determined by measurement and if only one terminal point is recognised then duration is considered ongoing. As a result, the establishment of, and agreement upon, the terminal points is critical to a construction of events, as the evidence in Chapter 3 will show. A failure to do this can result in conflicting conclusions being drawn. Because they are critical to a construction of events, the establishment of selected terminal points is a means of control[14].

Without the establishment of terminal points it would also not be possible to have the categories of past, present and future. Western constructions of the past, present and future are linked to Newtonian time. Newton's time was linked to motion and because motion is reversible, time was reversible[15]. Thus, the past and future become features of space, that is,

somewhere. However, Einstein's Theory of Relativity precludes time travel for, wherever you are, it is always the present. As a result, the 'past' and the 'future' do not exist 'somewhere out there'. Moreover, Newton's reversible conception of time does not fit with other guiding principles in the natural sciences and in particular, theories revolving around thermodynamics and entropy. Here, "energy is conserved but cannot be reversed [and] [t]his knowledge allows an observer to distinguish processes on a before and after basis" (Adam 1990, p61)[16]. Thus, it is not possible, for example, to un-boil an egg, or unmake an omelet.

But the categories of past, present and future are very much a part of constructing our lives. They can be seen as conceptual, they are metaphorical and reified. We make our past and we make our future and they are intimately linked to our conception of the present. As Whitrow argues:

> ...[o]ur direct experience of time is always of the present, and our idea of time comes from reflecting on this experience... A 'sense of time' involves some feeling or awareness of duration... [which] We experience... whenever the present situation is related by us either to our past experiences or to our future expectations and desires (Whitrow 1988, p5).

As a result, the past and the future are concepts. They are as multiple as our experiences and in a continuous stage of construction and reconstruction. For example, the people in this inquiry realised that they could construct/reconstruct their understandings of their pasts and futures and this showed some that they had more control and choices than they had previously seen[17].

The establishment of terminal points and thus the ordering of life into past, present and future are context dependent. Similarly, the terminal points that are noted will decree what constitutes the past, present and future. As a result, concepts of the past, present and future, which are

devices to enable one to make sense of, and order, one's world, need to be seen in a culturally and historically specific context, thus demonstrating that while concepts of time are found universally, no one concept of time is a universal.

Control

Perceiving time as singular and naturally occurring leads to what Raja calls 'tempocentrism', "a tendency to assume, consciously or unconsciously, that how one perceives time is either universal or the only appropriate mode of thinking" (Raja 2000, p51)[18]. Moreover, tempocentrism does not allow for the political nature of temporal concepts to be seen. For example, in relation to clock-time, Glucksman argues that, "[i]t is one thing to consider chronometric time as a frame within which events occur according to different temporalities, but it would be quite another to treat it as a universal standard for measurement and conversion" (Glucksman 1998, p244). This raises issues of control and choice in relation to time.

There are many ways in which control is demonstrated. For example, the measurement of 'official times' within western cultures is regarded as 'natural', as a statement of unchanging, objective fact. 'Official time' measurement within western cultures is denoted by seconds, hours, days, weeks, months and years. The terms are so familiar they can be described as being a part of 'every day life'. But as people writing on the history of time have shown (Duncan 1998; Whitrow 1988; Zerubavel 1981), this has not always been the case; nor has there been general acceptance as to what is meant by one second, one day, one month or one year[19].

But even allowing for the mathematical precision with which 'official time' is measured, at a more mundane level, how long a second, minute, hour or even a week is, is much more fluid and thus a frequent source of conflict in the lives of people. The question of when something will happen or how long something will be, or should be, is often subject to competing views. In this manner 'time' as a measurement is in practice constantly being negotiated and renegotiated and, as such, highlights experiences of control.

The history of the different ways in which time has been measured in Europe alone also highlights differing explanations and controls, and the competing nature of these concepts. It also highlights the conflict between western calendars and calendars of other cultures (Pandey 1984; Spivak 1991). There is little doubt that establishing a calendar and being able to have it followed enhances one's control upon people. As Pasero notes, "[t]he uniform synchronization of time was a source of conflict for centuries in Europe. The definition of the calendar was a question to be decided exclusively by those in positions of power" (Pasero 1994, p181).

Although the concepts of clock-time and Newtonian time dominate western society, they are not the only concepts. As a result, tensions arise between alternative concepts of time. This can be illustrated by what K. Davies refers to as 'clock time' versus 'process time' (K. Davies, 1994). Here there is an acknowledgment that certain processes have an inherent period of duration and this period of duration may or may not coincide with the artificial periods of duration resulting from the measurement of 'time' by clocks and calendars. Trying to reconcile processes into a preordained 'clock time' framework results in tensions (K. Davies 1994; Fox 1989; Kahn 1989; Tobler 1996). Moreover, the duration, or how long something should be, becomes the subject of disputation. This particular example features heavily in the temporal experiences recounted to me by

the people in this project. Accordingly, it is one to which I shall be returning in more detail in subsequent chapters.

A further example of the tensions in competing concepts is evidenced in the linear/cyclical time debate. As Elias (1992) has argued, not only does objectification allow for dimensions to be measured but for observations of other aspects of the object. As a result the objectification of time has given rise to the metaphors that time itself moves, for example, fast, slowly, or not at all. Further the direction in which it moves is contentious. It can go forwards or backwards, in a straight line (linear), or round in circles (cyclical). But, as Adam observes, "cycles and lines are artefacts of observation" (Adam 1990, p167), thus neither is intrinsically 'natural' and neither is capable on their own of fully describing people's temporal experiences.

However, arguing that 'time' is either linear or cyclical can be seen as a means of control. For example, Greenhouse argues that:

> ...linear time dominates public life in the West... because its primary efficacy is in the construction and management of dominant social institutions, not because it is the only "kind" of time that is culturally available (Greenhouse 1996, p23).

The concept of linear time is a measurement of duration between two definitive terminal points, although as argued above the establishment of the terminal points themselves is often contentious. In this way, events have a start and a finish allowing for regulation and control. But as Greenhouse shows, the terminal events, that is birth and death, on an individual's 'time' (or life) line are by no means fixed and are matters of political debate about control and choice, as the current debates regarding abortion and euthanasia demonstrate quite clearly (Greenhouse 1996, pp35-36).

While the concept of linear time is dominant in our society, its domination does not exclude other forms of time. Specifically, the concept of cyclical time co-exists with the concept of linear time in a sometimes discordant manner. Moreover, the concept of cyclical time is also an explanation as well as a form of regulation and control. To Greenhouse, "[l]inear time did not displace these [alternative concepts], except in specific institutional contexts that required their suspension or where their suspension could be achieved" (Greenhouse 1996, p23). Thus, although the concept of linear time is the official temporal concept, it co-exists with the equally strong cyclical concept but, given their differing natures, tensions arise. According to Greenhouse:

> ...[t]he clearest formal competition between linear and cyclical time in
> the West is in the cultural domain of the individual life... Whereas
> linear time makes a person's life a private segment or personal "space"
> in the larger progress of time toward eternity... cyclical time
> emphasizes the substantiation of life forms in constant alternation
> between opposed and reciprocal states (for example, living and dead,
> youth and age) (Greenhouse 1996, pp23-24).

Explaining change changes as new concepts of temporal measurement emerge. For example, Rifkin argues that "[t]he new computer technology is already changing the way we conceptualize time... We are entering a new time zone radically different from anything we have experienced in the past" (Rifkin 1987, p13). Rifkin believes computers in the late 20th century are altering temporal concepts as radically as the emergence of clocks in the 13th century did. Like clocks, he argues that "[c]omputer time bears no relationship to the rhythms of nature. It is an arbitrary temporal marker willed into existence by human ingenuity" (Rifkin 1987, p119).

While computer time is similar to the concept of clock time there are two notable differences. First, while the divisions on a clock, i.e., the hours, minutes and seconds, are arbitrary, the movement of the hands denoting

these divisions can be seen on a circular face and with a consistent continuity. The visual effect of a clock reinforces pre-existing notions of 'cyclical time'. But 'computer time' on digital clocks is disjointed, intermittent, and instant in that only the 'now' is graphically depicted. A mechanical clock shows all three states, i.e., past, present and future, simultaneously. The sweeping hands on a clock face depict 'time' flowing; the staccato movements of a digital timepiece portray 'time' as a series of unconnected moments.

Secondly, 'clock time', as Lash and Urry argue, is a time which occupies "the middle ground, between the imperceptibly fast changes of quantum physics, on the one hand, and the unimaginably slow investigations of astronomy or biological evolution, on the other" (Lash & Urry 1994, p241). The changes that 'clock time' depict can be seen. But 'computer time' operates at a level that cannot be seen. As a result, time has "been organized at a speed beyond the realm of human consciousness" (Lash & Urry 1994, p242). Given that 'clock time' "has been the organizing principle of modernity" (Lash & Urry 1994, p242), it follows that the gradual introduction of a temporal concept associated with computers will likely gradually alter how society is organized. Moreover, 'computer time' subtly alters perceptions of past, present, and future.

Because competing historic and cultural explanations of 'time', such as lineal, cyclical, or computer, can be, and are, used to control, 'time' cannot ever be seen as neutral. Ermath argues that:

> ... [w]e are so accustomed to thinking, because we assume time to be neutral, that we can translate or generalize the laws and processes we observe locally. Humanism and history have rested on the assumption that such translation is possible (Ermath 1995, p105).

Ermath credits postmodernism with showing the fragmentary and disconnected nature of time. However, one could equally argue that Einstein's Theory of Relativity breaks down the monolithic nature of

concepts of 'time' (Adam 1990; Lash & Urry 1994). Thus, while Ermath states that there is "no longer a common time 'in' which we all live" (Ermath 1995, p94), the idea of the relativity of 'time' is not new in the West.

Glucksman (1998) provides another example of the ways in which concepts of temporality are constructed and then measured and used as control mechanisms. For example, Glucksman argues that although two diverse activities *"can* be measured by linear time they cannot be equated since no medium exists for equivalence" (Glucksman 1998, p244). This is an argument about equivalence that I shall be developing in greater detail[20]. At this stage, my intention is to note that if time is not problematised, the inherently political nature of temporal concepts is overlooked.

Competing temporal concepts result in tensions which are often experienced as matters of control. For example, the establishment of dualistic relationships, such as adult/child, husband/wife, teacher/student, doctor/patient, and employer/employee, coupled with the reification of time results in one party's time being considered more important than the other's. Moreover, the reification of time can easily lead to the belief that the time (either in the form of the clock or as an entity in its own right) has control/power over people. In this way, the person so affected can not appreciate the manner in which their ability to do and act is being curtailed by another person(s) with the result that they see themselves as the victim of time with the clock as gaoler rather than as the victim of a situation with another person as the gaoler who is using a concept of 'time' to constrain. This then leads to people seeing their world as an external reality over which they have no control. These are issue that I develop in detail in subsequent chapters.

Much has been written on the relationship between the concept of clock time and industrialisation detailing both the resistance to the imposition of clock time as a means of control and, more importantly, the process of socialisation allowing for people to accept the dictates of 'clock time' (Thompson 1965; Lash & Urry 1994; Nguyen 1992; O'Malley 1992). A western capitalist society, such as the one in which the ethnographic evidence was gathered, is predicated upon a standardised concept of 'clock time'. Conforming to the dictates of the clock enables people to participate in this society and to gain the benefits of participation such as an income to supply the necessities of life. But, simultaneously, conforming to the clock circumscribes peoples' abilities to be able to do and act. Sleeping, eating and participating in social relationships can all be required to occur at a point of clock time that is not of the person's choosing (Donaldson, 1996a)[21]. As a result, temporal concepts can circumscribe people's ability to act or, their perceptions of their choices.

The dominance of specific temporal concepts is both circumscribing of choice and enabling. For example, the notion of waiting. Here, the idea that someone else's time is more or less important than another's is brought into focus. Shaw (1994) suggests that understanding who waits for who highlights power relationships. She argues that "in social situations where power is unequal" (Shaw 1994, p92) one party is perceived as being allowed to keep another party waiting whereas punctuality as a "norm is an institution that underpins a range of other institutions" (Shaw 1994, p94). The ability to be unpunctual can be seen as a resistance to control for being deliberately late redefines the power differential in that the unpunctual party in effect takes control[22]. Thus a temporal concept can be used to both reinforce and reproduce a power differential as well as being used to resist, or, subvert it.

Like the concept of clock time, the concept of chronological time likewise circumscribes and enables the ability of people to do and to act, and highlights power differentials in relationships. In particular, it illuminates the question of who owns whose time[23]. Moreover, the specific concept of time, in this instance age (either too young or too old), is seen as the 'enemy'. In other words, it is not recognised that the concept of chronological time is being used to reproduce and reinforce power differentials.

Much literature exists on the process of socialisation to the concept of clock time (Thompson 1965; Davison 1993; Donaldson 1996a; Adam 1995) in relation to the dictates of industrialism and capitalism. An examination of temporal concepts within the domestic sphere as presented in this inquiry, indicates that the process of socialisation to accepting the constraints of temporal concepts begins in the home. This process involves children learning to cede autonomy over themselves to others and to accept what autonomy is allowed to them. And because it occurs within the domestic sphere, it is predicated historically (but not necessarily logically) upon the concept of gendering. It is this mediation of choice along gender and age dimensions that is seen in my evidence on parenting and gendering relations.

Choice

Human consciousness implies human choice. While writers, such as Reanney, argue that some human behaviour is instinctual (specifically, feeding, flight, fight and reproduction), all behaviour arising from biological drives is mediated through the processes of consciousness and enculturation. Hunger may be a drive but how we satisfy the hunger needs to be situated in a socio-cultural context and allow for human consciousness and choice. As a result, Ortner argues that, "human action is constrained by the given social and cultural order (often condensed in

the term "structure")" (Ortner 1996, p2). However, one also has to recognise "that human action *makes* "structure" – reproduces or transforms it, or both" (Ortner 1996, p2).

A recognition of this iterative nature of human actions and social order, allows one to step outside the dualisms that haunt much Western discussion of choice, in particular the free will/determinist and the subject/agency debates. Ortner argues that it is not necessary to take a position on either side in either debate if one begins with:

> ...a model of practice that embodies agency but does not begin with, or
> pivot upon, the agent, actor, or individual. While there are very
> definitely in this view actors and agents, desires and intentions, plans
> and plots, these are embedded within... motivated, organized, and
> socially complex ways of going about life in particular times and places
> (Ortner 1996, p12).

Thus people are creating their social world while, simultaneously, being created by it. As a result, choice has to be seen as problematic leading to contradictions and, for Reason and Rowan, contradictions are the place to begin human inquiry (Reason & Rowan 1981). This recognition is one factor that has led me to espouse what I identify here as the principles of the post-positivist paradigm in my research

IV

The Principles of the Post-positivist Paradigm

According to Reason and Rowan, a new paradigm for research emerged from the body of literature existing in the behavioral sciences contributed to by "researchers who have been developing and using alternative approaches for many years" (Reason & Rowan 1981, pxvi). For example, they cite the work of the humanistic psychologists, phenomenologists, participant observation, applied behavioral science, existentialism and the

Hegelian tradition (Reason & Rowan 1981). New paradigm research therefore is hardly entirely 'new'. But, as Reason and Rowan argue, these approaches are seen as alternatives to the dominant positivist paradigm and they both challenge and complement the positivist paradigm[24]. Similarly, Reinharz argues that "[d]espite the dominance of the positivist model, there has always been a fringe of discontent and experimentation with alternative definitions of social research" (Reinharz 1981, p416). What appears to be 'new' is the synthesis of a variety of differing approaches into a systematic alternative paradigm rather than these alternative approaches remaining isolated and disconnected critiques.

Haworth (1984) and Lincoln and Guba (1985), whilst not denying the alternative pre-existing approaches, link the development of the new paradigm more directly to the move in the physical sciences away from positivist physics (Newtonian physics firmly based on Euclidean geometry principles) to post-positivist physics (new, or quantum physics underpinned by the work of Einstein). Haworth, for example, argues that as a result of this shift, there is now "an inescapable conclusion that human consciousness is not an objective mechanism contemplating nature, but is central to defining (many say, creating) nature" (Haworth 1984, p346).

In their initial writings, Lincoln and Guba argued for the emergence of a post-positive paradigm in which the "basic tenets are virtually the reverse of those that characterised positivism" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p29). In subsequent publications they refined their argument in that post-positivism now "represent[ed] efforts... to respond in a limited way... to the most problematic criticisms of positivism" (Guba & Lincoln 1998, p202). The features that they had originally refered to as post-positivist now, by and large, they referred to as critical theory, which included "neo-Marxism, feminism, materialism, and participatory inquiry" (Guba

& Lincoln 1998, p202). I use the term 'post-positivism' throughout this work consistent with my understanding of their initial definition (Lincoln & Guba 1985), that is as an umbrella term that incorporates both their initial and subsequent critiques of positivism. Thus I follow their argument that there were five assumptions that could be seen as common to the various definitions of positivism and the move from positivism to post-positivism, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), had resulted in a change in the axioms, upon which research inquiry was predicated, i.e., that it is the ontology, epistemology, generalization, causality and values that shape the research process.

Ontology:- Lincoln and Guba argue that in relation to ontology, or the nature of reality, the move has been from understanding reality as "single, tangible' and fragmentable" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p37) with the whole being the sum of the parts, to one where there are realities, which are "multiple, constructed, and holistic" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p37) and the whole is more than the sum of the parts. In other words, people are more than the sum of independent variables such as age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, education, and marital status. As a result, selecting a population of people by matching several of these variables does not allow for an understanding of the complexities in their lives. Moreover, it ignores the construction of multiple realities. Further, acknowledging the holistic nature of reality excludes practices of reductionism and results in, for example, these five principles of post-positivism having to be seen as more than the sum of their five parts.

Epistemology:- the relationship of the knower to the known, therefore shifts from being a situation where the "[k]nower and known are independent" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p37)), to one where the "[k]nower and known are interactive [and] inseparable" (ibid). Reality is not somewhere 'out there' to be examined. Instead, it is constructed by the

process of inquiry. The presence of the person researching in itself partially constructs the situation being researched. As a result, an unbiased or totally objective perspective is not possible.

Generalization:- "nomothetic statements... [that is] time and context free generalizations... are [not] possible; [instead], [o]nly... idiographic statements" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p37)' can be made. Research projects can not be repeated exactly as they were the first time, for although it is possible to control some variables (such as temperature or quantity) the person researching is not the same at the subsequent experiments. As a result, repetition of research conditions is not the same as identical research conditions[25]. Events may appear very similar thus allowing generalisations and predictions of future occurrences but, as Adam argues, "repetition can be the 'same' only in abstraction, by artificially excluding contexts and effects" (Adam 1990, p29). This has the result that each and every piece of research has to stand on its own. Never the less, insights and understandings can still be drawn from other pieces of research.

Causality:- Given that "[a]ll entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p37), it is not possible to separate out cause from effect and this has important implications in social science research. Explanations for behaviour are time and context bound as realities are multiple and constantly being constructed and, in the case of the research process, are directly affected by the presence of the person researching. Additionally, this too has implications for an understanding of process. Research then, can only be descriptive and not prescriptive.

Values:- It follows that inquiry must therefore be seen as "value-bound" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p37) as opposed to "value-free" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p37). If realities are constructed by both the knower and the known then the values of each play a role. In particular, the values that the person

researching brings to the research process influence the process. A particular topic and methodology are selected based upon the values held by the person researching. The research process then, is not neutral.

The influences from the new physics[26] are seen in these points for their discoveries have made it clear that the universe and all things and people in it are interrelated and that this is a dynamic process. This means that observation is dependent entirely upon the relationship between the observer and the observed and answers are dependent entirely on questions. It also means that while it is possible to know some thing, it can never be the whole answer.

Simultaneously, it needs to be understood that these five principles are not rules or laws to be slavishly adhered to. Indeed, this would negate their very meaning. Instead they need to be seen as "an *explanation* which will help account for the things we see" (Reason & Rowan 1981, p243, emphasis in the original). But, as Reason and Rowan warn, "we must remember above all that 'the map is not the territory', that our explanation of a thing is not the thing itself" (Reason & Rowan 1981, p243). As used in this inquiry then, post-positivist principles are signposts to help and inform an understanding of time.

V

Time and Post-positivist Principles

The positivist paradigm is based upon a Newtonian understanding of time, where time is perceived as a singular, tangible reality that could be divided. But when realities are seen as multiple and constructed, time too becomes multiple and constructed. Time, as Einstein is often quoted as saying, is relative, thus reinforcing the epistemological principle that the "[k]nower and known are interactive [and] interdependent" (Lincoln &

Guba 1985, p37). To Einstein, time (and space) "are in some sense malleable, able to stretch and shrink according to the observer's motion" (P. Davies 1995, p53). As a result, 'time' is not independent of people or, as Lash and Urry argue, "[p]eople should be viewed as temporal rather than time being thought of as some discrete element or presence. Time and body are inextricably intertwined – people do not think real time but they live it" (Lash & Urry 1994, p239). This has led to debate as to whether it is the concept of time that gives rise to the concept of self (Wagner, 1981) or the concept of self that gives rise to the concept of time (Reanney, 1991). Given my views, particularly on causality, I consider that both mutually shape each other. What is more important is that the relationship between self and time is recognised. The result will always be temporally based and culturally and historically specific.

Acknowledging that time is "multiple, constructed, and holistic" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p37), as well as relative to people extirpates the notion that nomothetic statements are possible. In other words, time free generalisations depend upon a concept of time as a singular, external reality that has little or no effect on material or subjects. Clearly, adopting a post-positivist position begins with the assumption that all statements are time dependent. In particular, this relates to the concept of change. Time free statements ignore change. As Reanney reminds us, "we live in and are part of a universe that is endlessly fecund, inventive, ever-changing, ever transforming itself" (Reanney 1991, pvii). The change can be micro and unobservable by the human eye, such as the erosion of a mountain, or it can be dramatic and easily noted. In a similar manner, the human body changes constantly. Again, this can be at the microscopic level with the replacement of cells for example, with the cumulative effects suddenly being noticed with the discovery of gray hairs, or it can be more obvious with the change in a hairstyle.

The principle of cause and effect relies upon a concept of time. More specifically, it relies upon a particular concept of time where 'time' is singular, one dimensional and linear. It thus precludes multiple constructed realities. But the relationship between self and time does generate multiple, constructed realities. Reanney, for example, argues that "[o]ur sense of self is inextricably linked to our sense of time... [as] the self is partly defined by its ability to project forward in time, [and] it is equally defined by its ability to project backwards in time (Reanney 1991, pp77-78)", while to Gabel, this ability to reflect and bring the past and future into the present "is the unique quality of human existence" (Gabel 1975, pxi). The past and future are therefore conceptual; we make our past and we make our future. And in so doing, we construct causal relationships to match. In particular, explanations as to why we did what we did (causes) are dependent upon how the effects are judged at a later (chronological) time. This is a point that is highly relevant for the interpretation of my evidence for, as I will show in subsequent chapters, explanations for why people married, separated and divorced (along with other aspects of their lives) are time and context dependent. Once again, then, nomothetic statements are not possible for people's interpretations alter as their present situation changes.

Supposedly value-free inquiry[27] also relies upon a specific concept of time. It requires a belief that that the person conducting the research is not bound by the relationship between time and self and thus by ignoring time it ignores change and this includes one's perception(s) of time. As Raja argues, one can not "ignore that one's perception of time can alter and is influenced by culture, age, life events and the historical eras which have been part of one's life experiences" (Raja 2000, p52). Conducting a value-free inquiry further requires an ignoring of the relationship between knower and known and the resulting "state of mutual simultaneous shaping" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p37) and implies that time and context

free generalizations are possible because the time and context are unchanging therefore the values predicating the research remain timeless. Moreover, time itself is seen as a neutral universal (Adam 1990, 1994; Ermath 1995).

The principles of the post-positivist research paradigm then, have critical implications for an understanding of 'time'. In turn, as I have shown, an understanding of the complexity of and inter-relationships between the concept(s) of time strengthen the post-positivist principles.

Review

In this chapter I have shown that time reflects the multi-faceted nature of life. Consequently, the ways of conceptualising time are equally varied with a phalanx of metaphors and reifications used. The belief, based upon Newtonian time, that time is a singular external reality obfuscates the multi-faceted nature of time and has facilitated dualistic debates as to what form time takes - being/becoming, cyclical/linear. I have shown that these debates owe their existence to the practice of dualistic thinking which has its origins in Aristotelian logic.

An awareness that time is more than a singular external reality also allows for an appreciation of the relationships between the differing temporal conceptualisations. In this way, I have shown that time is not a neutral facet of life, rather the concepts of time have been used to reinforce and reproduce power differentials within society. Moreover, the use of metaphor and the reification of time leads to concepts of time being utilised to control and people's perceptions that their choices are limited.

Further, a failure to problematise time ignores the relationship between time and change. In other words, accepting time as a given in social

analysis is, in effect, aiding and abetting the use of temporal concepts as agents of control. Ignoring, or overlooking, the diachronic and holistic nature of life results in process being similarly ignored. Consequently, people and processes are reduced to static, unchanging nouns. While there is an appreciation in much work in the social sciences that people and situations change, change tends to be seen as the exception rather than the rule. As a result, explanations for change are sought rather than an appreciation that, if as I show, change is the constant, the focus should be on how a convention of continuity is maintained.

Finally, much work in the social sciences was based upon the scientific paradigm that underlies work in the classical physical sciences and I demonstrated that the work of Newton and Descartes not only forms a significant part of this paradigm but has greatly influenced everyday understandings of life. However, this paradigm is no longer accepted unquestioningly by those working in the field of physical sciences and their understanding of life has implications not just for the research process *per se* but also for a project, such as mine, focusing upon time. An appreciation that the nature of time is far broader and complex than a Newtonian definition allows, raises questions about the nature of research methodology. Thus, in response to Adam's argument that new conceptual tools were required for an understanding of time, I introduced the principles of the post-positivist paradigm and in the following chapter I detail the process of conducting research using these principles as guides.

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[1] Newton's definition of time occurs in his work *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. This work was written in Latin and as a result I am relying upon the translations of others as to his definition. I give two definitions to show that there appears to be a general acceptance of what it was that he wrote.

According to P. Davies, Newton argued for "absolute, true and mathematical time [which] of itself, and from its own nature, flows equably and without relation to anything external" (P. Davies 1995, p31).

Adam's definition, based upon the 1983 work of M. Shallis, begins with the same words used by P Davies, then alters one word and is a little longer. "Absolute, true and mathematical time, of itself, and from its own nature, flows equably without relation to anything eternal, and by another name is called duration...All motions may be accelerated or retarded, but the flowing of absolute time is not liable to change" (Adam 1990, p50).

I do not consider the difference in the use of the words external and eternal as significant to a general understanding of Newton's definition, particularly given that in Adam's extended translation the phrase 'not liable to change' seems to me to equate with the phrase 'without relation to anything external'.

[2] I use the terms quantum physics and new physics interchangeably.

[3] For example, see D. Landes (1983), *Revolution in Time: Clocks and the Making of the Modern World*, and C. Cipolla (1967) *Clocks and Culture, 1300-1700*, for a more detailed discussion of the introduction and development of clocks.

[4] In particular, see Anne's story in Chapter 4.

[5] Adam attributes the origin of the metaphor time is money to Benjamin Franklin and Max Weber. She argues that Weber was impressed with Franklin's work and utilised many of Franklin's ideas in his own work. Consequently, Franklin's idea that time is money was used by Weber in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Adam 1995, p87).

[6] For examples of this debate see:
N. Munn, (1992), 'The Cultural Anthropology of Time: A critical essay', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 21, pp93-123, and A. Gell (1992), *The Anthropology of Time: Cultural Constructions of Temporal Maps and Images*.

[7] Reason & Rowan are not the only people who argue these points. For example, see the work of Frtjof Capra for an interesting discussion on the parallels between the 'new' paradigm and the 'old' writings of what he refers to as "Eastern mysticism".

[8] This can be demonstrated easily. If a person closes their eyes as tightly as possible thereby excluding all external light, they do not get total darkness. Instead minute 'white' dots appear.

[9] See also Ortner (1989), Ortner & Whitehead (1981), Bourdieu (1977) for a more detailed account of the structure v process debate.

[10] In this Adam is arguing that metaphors need to be seen in an historical context. Lakoff and Johnson argue that metaphors need to understood within a social context. Thus metaphors are historically and socially contextualised.

[11] This discussion is limited to the English language. As Whitrow points out, "it is only in Indo-European languages that distinctions between past, present, and future have been fully developed" (Whitrow 1988, p13). What is true of one language, or group of languages, does not of course necessarily hold for another. For example, see J. Carroll (ed) (1956), *Language, Thought and Reality: Selected writings of B. L. Whorf*, and D. Mandelbaum (ed) (1949), *Selected Writings of Edward Sapir*.

[12] See Lakoff and Johnson for an extended argument regarding the part played by categorisation in our understanding of the world. (Lakoff & Johnson 1979, pp162-166).

[13] It needs to be made clear that the people in this project do not necessarily refer to themselves in these terms. Rather, this is my analytical position which I have imposed upon them and their lives.

[14] See Chapter 3 for a full discussion of the effects of indeterminate end points within the domestic sphere and the manner in which the establishment of terminal points is used as means of control.

[15] Newton's time was inseparably linked with motion. Adam argues that time was "used purely operationally as the measure of things and events" (Adam 1990, p50). Because motion can occur either forward or backwards, time too, as the measurer, could go forwards or backwards.

[16] See P Davies (1983), *God and the New Physics*, (1995), *About Time: Einstein's Unfinished Revolution*, and F. Capra (1991), *The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism*, for a more detailed discussion of this.

[17] The implications of this are discussed in Chapter 6.

[18] There are some interesting parallels here between Raja's definition of tempocentrism and Turbayne's (earlier) description of a victim of metaphor.

[19] Historically, it has been either the relationship of the earth to the moon, or the earth to the sun, or a combination of both, that has resulted in these arbitrary divisions. However, as Duncan points out, "official time is no longer really measured this way, using antiquated seconds and years" (Duncan 1998, p321). Instead, a second is now calculated by the oscillations of the cesium atom, with the result that a second, which at the last computation used to equal "1/31556925.9747" of a tropical year, now equals "9,192,631,770 oscillations" of an atom of cesium (Duncan 1998, p322). A year which, again at the latest computation, equalled "365.242199 days" (based upon a tropical year and not, for example, a sidereal year) now equals "290,091,200,500,000,000 oscillations" of the cesium atom (Duncan 1998, p322). This though is not completely accurate either as "the plain reality [is] that nothing is perfect, particularly nature" (Duncan 1998, p323) an argument also made by Adam (1995) and Gleick (1988). As he points out, the argument that 'nature' is in some way perfect underlies Classical (or Newtonian) physics. However, he argues that 20th century work in the physical sciences has "eliminated the Newtonian illusion of absolute space and time...the Newtonian dream of a controllable measurable process...and the Laplacian fantasy of deterministic predictability" (Gleick 1988, p6).

[20] See Chapter 3.

[21] Donaldson also argues that the clash between Australian Aboriginals and Western culture highlights this circumscribing of people's ability to do and act (Donaldson 1996a, 1996b).

[22] The contradiction between the desirability of punctuality and the ability to be unpunctual is described in Chapter 4. See also Hall, E. *The Silent Language*.

[23] See Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion

[24] 1 am not arguing that there is no place at all for the positivist paradigm. Instead I suggest that this paradigm has its place in a holistic universe. However it becomes problematic when it is not appreciated that positivist measurements can only ever be approximations and not exact. See J. Gleick (1988) *Chaos* , and F. Capra (1992) for a further discussion of this point.

[25] Adam, for example, argues that even something as repetitive as washing the tea dishes is not the same each time it occurs. The person is a different person allowing for physical and psychological changes over the twenty four hour period between the two events, the water in the sink is not the same water as the day before, the dishes have differing degrees of dirtiness and so forth. (Adam, 1990).

[26] New physics is not an obscure branch of the physical sciences with no real relevance to social life. Instead it is responsible for many aspects of our day to day existence such as microwave ovens and lasers (Capra, 1992). Additionally, while not claiming any academic expertise in this field, I support Adam's position that given the large number of books available which explain the subject area to people with no formal education in that field, coupled with her argument that it is not necessary to be able to write a symphony to be able to understand one and appreciate one (Adam 1990, p49), it is possible for people other than new physicists to understand in general terms their principles and significances.

[27] The notion of value-free inquiry or research is in itself a misnomer for arguing that research is value-free is to imply that this state i.e., value-free, has itself value.The point with post-positivist priniciples is to acknowledge that values are part and parcel of the research process.

2

TIME and RESEARCH

Overview

In this chapter I describe how I conducted my field work using the principles of post-positivism as a guide. Adopting a post-positivist approach has obvious implications for a person engaged in the research process. As Lincoln and Guba point out, it means that "design cannot be given a priori [sic] but must emerge as the study proceeds" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p11). But, equally, there are implications for the relationship between the 'researcher' and the 'researched'. In the first section of this chapter I discuss this relationship. In the second section the people whose experiences provide the basis of my evidence are introduced while the third section is a discussion of the research process, with the caveat that the 'division' into 'people' and 'process' is very much a literary device. The research process should be one of continual reflection (Reason & Rowan 1981, Stringer, 1996), thus I have woven my reflections in throughout this narration of 'what I did', and 'who I did it with'.

I

Who's Who in the Research Process?: The relationship between 'researcher' and 'researched'

In chapter 1, I discussed the difficulties that can arise by the use of dualisms and an either/or philosophical approach. The division between 'researcher' and 'researched' highlights these difficulties and problems, for, given Lincoln & Guba's argument that the "[k]nower and known are interactive [and] inseparable" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p37), who, in my project was the 'researcher' and who was the 'researched'?

To some, such as Stringer (1996), all the people involved in a research project can be seen as the researchers. He argues that what is required is "a collaborative approach to investigation that seeks to engage "subjects" as equal and full participants in the research process" (Stringer 1996, p9)[1]. The research process then becomes one of collaboration. To Reason and Rowan:

> ...human inquiry needs to be firmly based in the experience of those it purports to understand, to involve a collaboration between 'researcher' and 'subjects' so that they may work together as co-researchers, and to be intimately involved in the lives and praxis of these co-researchers (Reason & Rowan 1981, p113).

To Heron, this recognition of the importance of the inter-relationship between 'self' and 'other' can go as far as the researcher "interact[ing] with the subjects so that they do contribute directly both to hypothesis-making, to formulating the final conclusions, and to what goes in between" (Heron 1981, p19). As a result, "[i]n the complete form of this approach, not only will the subject be fully fledged co-researcher, but the researcher will also be co-subject, participating fully in the action and experience to be researched" (Heron 1981, p20).

Heron does appreciate that this ideal situation may not always be obtainable, as was the case with my project. The requirements I needed to fulfill as part of the PhD process meant that in the first instance, I had set the general subject to be researched. It was not therefore necessarily one that the various people who participated would have identified as important to them in understanding their lives[2]. Moreover, I was not always able to involve the other people in this inquiry as fully as I would have liked[3]. However, in so far as I could, I did. In the following sections I will detail how the evidence collection and analysis was very much a co-operative effort. Further, while it was a requirement that I write the process up, I have given all the people the opportunity to read and comment on this work before it is submitted for examination. I have taken

the collaborative approach to mean that a work which is based upon both their experiences and our joint experiences in the examination of their experiences, needs to also make sense to them in its final form.

To date, I have been using the expression 'the people who participated in this project' as if there was a discrete set of people who could be separated out from the population at large. By this term I refer to the people with whom I had a series of ongoing discussions which were taped, transcribed and formed the basis of my evidence (and I return to how this set was established shortly). However, they were not the only people that participated in this project. Also involved were the two people initially employed to type the discussion transcripts, but who later came to play a much more involved role in the project. Additionally there were the various people working at the University, friends and family. There were also the friends of and family of the people I identify as participating in this project. To suggest that these people did not discuss their involvement with others and bring aspects of their discussions back to their discussions with me is to disregard their involvement in a wider community. Consequently, dividing people up into categories, following a dualism of researcher/researched, has been problematic and for my purposes, mostly unnecessary.

Furthermore, if the process is looked at from a chronological perspective, and this assumes it has a discrete start and end point in time and thus duration, the degree of involvement of various people alters. For example, some of the people who participated in the discussions have continued their involvement in the project by, for example, commenting upon chapter drafts and assisting with reference checks and proof reading. Thus establishing who is who, has not been easy and the difficulties have been compounded by my attempts to, as far as possible, share the control of the

subject matter coupled with my understanding that theory and process emerge together.

My preliminary readings on the topic of time indicated to me that I was dealing with an amorphous topic. 'Time' is a subject that has occupied the attentions of many at least as far back as the Ancient Greeks[4]. A great number of the writers on the subject use St Augustine's words to demonstrate the difficulties in verbalising something we know so well but can not describe. Given the difficulties of discussing such a subject with native language speakers and my relative inexperience in the research process I considered that I should not handicap myself by attempting to work in a field where I did not speak the language. As a result, I stayed 'at home' and, as I shall shortly be demonstrating, my concerns regarding the expression of ideas relating to time was well justified. However, staying 'at home' is also problematic in that the distinction between the field of study and other aspects of my life is not clearly defined.

The story of my mother and father, which I recounted in the introduction, led me to the domestic sphere. Given my questions regarding comparisons of the temporal experiences of men in the domestic sphere *vis-a-vis* women, I had initially thought to work with men and women who shared the responsibilities of the domestic sphere. However, this proved complex[5], and, given the time constraints of the PhD and, again, my inexperience, I decided to simplify my choice of 'research population'. As a result, for the men and women to have some essential similarity, I chose to work with people who quite clearly had responsibility for the domestic sphere, i.e., people parenting without another adult in the house to blur the boundaries or division of responsibility.

This choice of 'research population' created difficulties. It is estimated that men gain custody of their children in only 10% of custody cases,

although this percentage is rising. As a result, the men in the situation I wanted to work in were a very small number and to keep my sample ratio in line with the community I therefore needed nine women for each man. This though, would have left me with too large a number of people to work with in the time frame allowed for the PhD. Consequently, the ratio of men to women in the thesis does not represent the ratio in the wider community. I 'found' these people initially in my world, that is through pre-existing friendships and on the campus at university. Later, they put me in touch with others they knew of in similar situations[6]. These, then are the people[7] that I refer to as 'the people who participated in this project'.

II

The People

My views on the collaborative nature of the research process, and my equally strong conviction that the integrity of the people in the project was paramount, resulted in me leaving it to the people who participated to describe themselves in the discussions. This had several consequences which I will attend to in the following discussion. However, before they introduce themselves, so to speak, a note about names. Each of these people signed a consent form agreeing to participate in this project and each of them was given the choice of using their own names or adopting a pseudonym. Initially, many chose another name but as the discussion process unfolded many then changed their minds and reverted back to their own names. To protect their anomnity[8] I do not differentiate between actual names and adopted names. However, the names of all other people mentioned by them have been changed. In addition, any details that could identify people, such as employment or previous locations, have generally been altered.

Here then, in alphabetical order[9], are the people who are as much a part of this research project as myself[10].

Anne

I've been in Australia for eleven years come Boxing Day. We came out from Glasgow as a family – husband and two children. The family unit lasted about three years so for the past eight years I have lived here with the kids [Paul age19, and Derek age15][11] on my own....After the marriage broke up and I started to pull myself together, and I realised what was out there for women on their own, I've never really looked back. Financially it's been a struggle but I've always paid my rent and I've never had the electricity or the phone cut off, and there's always food on the table so I think we've made it...The only time I didn't work was when I had the kids. Paul was 18 months and Derek was 5 months when I went back to work...I've always worked. It was part time after I had the kids and when we came to Australia...the person I am [currently] job sharing with...is leaving...so I don't know whether I will go full time or what. I don't mind going up to about 30 hours a week...[as long as] it fits in with me being here in the mornings, we all leave together...and in the afternoons and nights. It's important to me to be here for them....I get a part pension. Most of the income has been my earnings...I am also studying part time...I could live on the maintenance with what I earn and the pension.

Chris

I just turned 40 [pause] I started my working life, joining the services when I was 16, that's where I learned all my engineering...spent 12 years in the services...at that stage I was married with a child and we spent too long away from home...I just didn't cope too well with coming home and my child not knowing me...I then worked in civvy street for the next five and a half years on shift...Coming straight from the services...the job was a bit of a shock...the marriage split up...my daughter lives with my ex.

Brett [age 13] just didn't want to go...he wanted to come with me and we've been together for going on six years now...I had a period of about six months when I was on the pension...I got another job but I am back on the pension now...Brett's gone a little bit wayward with his school work...I've got to spend more time here at home...the pension's not enough [to live on] but I do have to spend more time at home...I call myself a single parent because that's what the system calls you...[raising Brett] would never be a problem for me because I did most of it any way [when married]. I cooked a lot, and did the baby things and stuff, I did a hell of a lot of it...[when married] I would cook dinner, and shop and clean the house when I got home and that sort of thing...I guess it comes from the service training too...I am still paying off this house [initially the family home]...money is becoming a real problem. I can't survive just on the pension given my current amount of debt that is the house mortgage.

Christine

My husband and I separated three months ago and now I'm at home with four kids by myself. My baby Nina is six months, my little girl, Angela, is three and a half, I've got a five year old, Thomas, and one nearly seven, Joseph...I'm lucky that I have a family, my mum and my nana both live close by, so they are there to help me out, but it's still pretty full on sometimes...[in the marriage] I was the main caregiver...he was a shift worker...some shifts he wouldn't see the kids at all...I get the pension and family payments and he gives me maintenance...I am living in Homeswest rental accommodation...I am studying to be a teacher, part time, just doing one unit.

Don

We were living together, we had the kids [Al, age 10 and Jack, age 12]...from the word go we shared responsibility for the children, I did what I called the night shift...I cooked tea, bottles at night, changing

nappies and so on...I moved up North to work but I didn't see the kids nearly enough...so I called it quits...We separated and I took over the children...for about three weeks and then they went to her...about five years ago I took over the full time care of the children...we are living in rented accommodation and I am on the pension but I work part time...I need to be home for the boys.

Graeme

How to describe myself? [pause]. There hasn't been one steady consistent job since I left school...I'm Graeme and I talk to people and I write things down, that's what I do...I've given up describing myself through occupation. I am in the habit now of actually saying that I am a father...you could say something like 'it is difficult to assign an occupation to this person' [laughs]...maybe a lengthy footnote will do it[12]

Helen

I left school when I was fifteen. I wanted to be a journalist but I had to leave school because of money problems in the family. So I started working in television [where I met] my first husband [pause] I've actually had two...This is something that I haven't really come to terms with...[my first husband and I] were together quite a lot of years before we had children then we had Shane [age 12], then the marriage fell apart pretty well straight away...my mother helped me a lot...I was working full time and I think that she almost took on the role of being the at home parent while I was out at work...I met my second husband [Bevan] when Shane was about four...We decided to get married fairly quickly and did and then I got pregnant which was a very happy situation...I haven't worked full time since then. My daughter, Samantha, is now six...We moved as a family to another country...[but Bevan's] business was not doing well...The children and I came back to Perth with just the clothes on our back and a few bits of furniture in storage...I tried to get into

university to do courses in journalism and photography... it's been very hard for me to realise that really the marriage is over. He's not really suportive [pause] we've survived on Austudy and bits of part time work. I joke... that I haven't recovered from my first divorce yet, I'm not ready for the second one... Currently I am studying part time at Uni... this house [we are renting] has only two bedrooms and I feel I am going to have to move soon... I want to stay in this area though because it is very close to their schools so should lessen the disruption for them.

Jeanette

I first married my first husband when I was twenty. That broke up a few years later. Then I met my second husband and we lived together for six years and I've never wanted children at all. I've never liked kids, still don't like kids, but he decided he wanted a child and I thought maybe it wouldn't be so bad. I could get used to the idea as I thought it would take me a few years to get pregnant. So we got married with the intention that I would later have a baby, but I got pregnant straight away [pause] the marriage broke up five years later when Liam was four. So it's been just over nine years now. We only got around to getting divorced last year. It was very amicable. He and I are really good friends and he's the best sort of ex-husband you could ever wish for. I've never had any problems with maintenance... Liam doesn't see as much of his father as either of them, and myself included, would like because of the vast distances [he works out of Perth]... my father and my step mother, who I refer to as my mother, are here [from England]... I have lots of friends, I'd die without my friends. Oh God, that sounds a bit dramatic. But... it's just nice knowing they are there... if I had to describe myself it would probably be a s a librarian who has a son... I spent four years with just the pension and my maintenance and we managed... I am now working full time and I have finished my studies.

John

I have been unemployed for a while because of my marriage breakup I quit my job to try and save the marriage which was a foolish thing to do…I've got a job now, I'm a purchasing officer with a large company…I have been separated nearly two years, there is one child [Bob] and he's thirteen and a half…[his mother] and I actually share child care, week about…part of my gripe is that I had no say in the separation. My wife made the decision that she did not want to lead a life of a lie any more, and although she loved me she had no love for me…it was really devastating…one of the problems that we had was financial…my credit card was to the limit and so was her's. So as a solution I suggested we re-finance the house, and I did that and got rid of all the debts and then she left. So I had no job, the income was a sole parent income so that wasn't very much and a family allowance…plus whatever I could make on the side…so that was my existence for 18 months…she doesn't live far from here. We allow Bob free access. If he decides that he wants to stay here tonight [the family home but up for sale], then that is fine…so where we have failed as a family unit, we try to maintain the normality as best we can.

Kirsten

We've been separated for seven months now. Economically it went down, crashingly down. My husband and I earned about the same, he earned slightly more than me. So our income as a family unit basically halved, which is a big drop, a bloody big drop I really came out of the relationship with nothing. There was nothing to come out with. I have my car which was relatively new and paid off and that's great. And there was some household furniture. This place is rented. It wasn't an option for me to keep the family home. We couldn't have afforded for one of us to buy the other out…At the moment we have the children [Emily, age 13 and Wayne, age 9] fifty/fifty. They spend a week with me and a week with

him. Saturday is change over day...it's disruptive for them I think but I feel that disruptiveness is outweighed, I hope that it's outweighed, by the knowledge that both their parents love them dearly and they don't have to feel guilty about spending time with one or the other....He lives very close to here so the children still walk to school as normal every morning and walk home after school.

Maureen

I'm a single parent, I'm separated, I've got two children [Mathew, age 13 and Mary, age 15] living here [with me]. Kylie, who is 24, actually lives here too, but she comes and goes. She's generally here two or three nights a week. Paul [age 22] lives with his girlfriend now. I've lived in Perth since 1994 [3 years]. Before that I lived in a country town for thirteen years and before that I lived ten years in Perth. These days I go to university full time and take care of the kids and work in paid employment as well...When I came to Perth I bought this house. I'm still going through the courts with the property settlement...this is my house and it's fully paid out. If it wasn't, I don't think I'd be able to go to Uni. I get maintenance but...financially it's been very, very tight...financially when I separated I went to the bottom of the pit. We were earning up to $50,000 a year...it's getting easier but that's because my dad is helping me out...I wanted to go to Uni when I was a kid...but the attitude in those days was that the female was only going to get married and have kids...We came out from Ireland in 1972, we were engaged at the time. We're both from the South but I met him in England where I used to live and work. I was actually brought up in England but my parents were both Irish and we went through the convent school system and that was all Irish.

Nicole

I was born in Scotland and we came to Australia. I lived in the same suburb all my life, got two older brothers. I celebrated my first birthday on the boat... I've been in three relationships [pause] and that's about it [long pause]... I have three children... my eldest [Andy, age 9] is from my first relationship, and then Craig who's six and Julia who's five are from my marriage and then Jeremy who's three is from my last relationship... [I was married] eleven months before we split... I was with Andy's father all up 18 months to 2 years... then with Jeremy's father, all up it would have been five years... [I've been separated from Jeremy's dad] about five months... I've been in this house for a month [and I chose it in this suburb] because my kids went to primary school here. I had spent the last four years here and I had just made friends within the last 18 months... Andy hasn't seen his father since he was (pause) Andy's father hasn't been on the scene for about 8 years. Craig and Julia's father has just come back on the scene after a year's absence and Jeremy's father sees him once every six weeks because he works [out of Perth]. Financially, Christmas is hard but other than that, it's fine... I'm on the pension and I have received [some money in the past] from Craig and Julia's father... and Jeremy's father... he pays weekly for him.

Ronice

I'm a single mother since 1989 [nine years]. Prior to that I was nice little wife. When I left [the marriage] my youngest child, Shannon was about four, Charles was about 14 and Stephen was 19. I've got him through uni, got the other one through high school, and Shannon is in second year and she's a girl. She lives at home with me in this rented Homeswest duplex... I did a course [after separating] which was designed to prepare women to get back into the workforce... [eventually] I got a job, twenty hours a week... but I found that with three children at home, a lot of the shifts were night shifts and weekends and I found my family were

suffering. So I quit and did my TEE, got another job... the company went bankrupt... did some more courses, had more temporary jobs... now I'm back on the pension and looking for work. I didn't know anyone when I came to Perth [after the separation]... now I've got one or two good friends.

Simon

I'm normally a very shy person and I don't like to talk about myself very much... I've been separated for about two and a half years. Before I separated from my wife, I was the primary care giver for about a year. She had gone back to Uni and I deferred my University course because Melanie [age10], as she has already told you, had leukemia about five years ago. I was at uni doing a business degree and when she got that my priorities changed a little bit [smiling]. I thought, this is what it's all about, being with your family... I just want to stay home with my kids. So I've been with them [Angie, age 7 and Jimmy, age 6] ever since. I've probably been the primary care giver in their lives for at least four and a half years... Financially, it's the pension, family allowance and whatever casual work I can get... To get everything into context: as a kid, I probably came from what they would call upper middle class. Dad was always working, he ran his own business. As soon as I got old enough, I'm the youngest of five kids, my mother went back to work so there was always money but we weren't mega-rich.

Tabitha

I'm thirty years old and I've been separated for just over a year now with two children [Simon, age 6 and Samuel, age 2]. I'm studying full time and working casually. I'm trying to survive financially, living from day to day a lot of the time. I'm on the pension and I can earn up to $100 a week without my pension being affected. I get maintenance, child support, not spouse support. I'm trying to maintain my mortgage and not sell this

house and that's what makes it difficult, trying to keep the mortgage payments up. We've been living in this house for seven years. I am worse off financially since the separation [laughs], a lot worse off. I haven't been this poor since I went to England after high school on a working holiday when I was really poor... now I am in that situation again with two children and that's what's frightening about it. It doesn't matter if it's just you, but you don't want to really put your children in that situation... Samuel is in day care two days a week. The rest of the time [when I am at work or uni] my mum has him.

Vicky[13]

Vicky is a [pause] caucasian 38 to 40 year old incest survivor who's been separated for two years and weighs 64 kilos and is four and a half feet tall.[14]

III

Reflections

There are two insights that can be drawn from these individual introductions. One concerns the exercise of reduction to allow labeling and the representation of a complex, whole person in just a few words. The second insight emerges from the diversity in their introductions

Labeling

In Chapter 1, I suggested that labeling people by using nouns reduced them to one dimensional figures and that this contradicted the tenet that people were more than the sum of their parts. Moreover, I suggested that the use of the term 'same' was problematic. The above introductions demonstrate this clearly. Whilst it would be possible to label them as 'parents' (or some variation on this theme, such as 'single parents' or sole parents'), it is quite clear that while there is a similarity in their situations,

they are not all the same. There are differences in their ages, the ages of their children, the number of children, the number of years since their separation, their relationships with the other person, their financial positions, their employment and employment histories and so on. As Fincher and Jacobs argue, the "conceptualization of identity as reducible to one attribute is contrary to our current understanding of identity as multiple and variably positioned" (Fincher & Jacobs 1989, p.5). In other words, the people in this thesis are not an homogenous whole.

Having said this though, there are three commonalties. First, there is a convergence of time and space. They all lived in Perth during the period that I was carrying out the evidence collection process[15]. Some indicate that they came to Perth as a result of their separations, some indicate that they came at earlier points in their lives, and there is an assumption that the remainder were born here[16]. Further, some have since left Perth. As a result, their geographical location, i.e., space, depended upon time, or at least clock-time. Thus, as Gupta and Ferguson (1992, 1997) argue, the idea of seeing culture as occurring in a space, however much the space is culturally constructed, needs to be re-examined. While they argue that the whole notion of how anthropologists use space needs to problematised, I would maintain that the temporal dimension needs to be considered simultaneously.

The second commonality is the process of caring for their children and the particular situation in which they are doing it. However, this does not make them a community or some form of a sub-culture. While some knew others in this particular set, they did not all know each other nor did they necessarily know of others in the same situation as them – a point I will shortly be returning to. In other words, I am working with a set of people that can not be bounded by either geographical location nor by 'culture' except in the loosest of terms.

Further, trying to find a label that described them all by this process and situation was extremely difficult particularly given the very strong views many of them held on this subject of labeling. Initially, in my application for candidacy I had referred to them as 'single parents'. But many objected to this.

> I was talking to a young woman that I knew once and she was unmarried and pregnant and told me that we were both single mums. And I said, hang on a minute, I think there is a difference. We are both bringing up children on our own but I've been married and had my children in that family environment to bring them up. You on the other hand, decided that you were going to have this baby even though you didn't have anybody to support you and you chose to have this baby and live on the pension which I don't choose to do. I chose to work to support myself and my children. So I don't consider myself a single mum. I am a supporting parent. So although the children have got a father, he does nothing for them. I am the parent that is supporting them.
>
> > Anne

> There is no description of my situation that I am comfortable with. I hate all the terms, single, sole, supporting, parent without [pause] I'm not comfortable with any of them
>
> > Helen

> I don't introduce myself as a single mother because I don't think that I am. I'm a parent, but I am part of two parents that created the children. And I am but one of those two...I live with my children part of the time and without my children part of the time. So I am not comfortable with single mother...I am a mother, but it's not necessarily how I'd describe myself...you are prioritising that process [mothering] by saying if you are a mother then it is the most important thing about you.
>
> > Kirsten

Given the strength of these views, referring to them collectively along the lines of their situation is impossible. Moreover, labeling them in this way reduces the complexities of their life to a singular point of focus, as Kirsten points out. In other words, the other aspects of their life, for example, occupation, that they considered important were ignored. Reinharz, in her critique of positivist research practices, argues that the "particularity [of people] is eliminated... [and as a result, people become] "trivializ[ed]" (Reinharz 1981, p422). The fifteen introductions show quite clearly that labeling the fifteen people by one common identifier eliminates their individual particularities.

The last point they held in common was their link to me and, through me, to each other. In other words, this is a population that I have created. They were very interested in what others in the project told me and they wanted to see how their experiences had compared to others. For example, at one stage I had prepared a paper for a conference and, following the principles of collaborative research, I discussed the paper with the seven people who featured in it along with several others. While they were interested in what I had to say, what got their attention was what the others had said. In subsequent discussions they would refer back to various individual comments that had been made in the paper. Additionally, I would introduce a comment from another into discussions[17]. As a result, they began to communicate with each other through me. I discuss this interchange of ideas again in the next section.

Somewhat ironically then, their second commonality, i.e., the process of caring for children, in effect had alienated them from what they saw as the community to which they belonged but the third commonality, i.e., their link through this research, helped to create an 'imagined' community[18]. As a result, I refer to these people throughout this work as the people who participated in this project or, the people in this project. Thus I am

privileging their part in the process as well as emphasizing that it is a process. Further, by using the noun 'people' and the verb 'participate' I am emphasising that they are people with particularities and not just 'participants'. Finally, this form of collectivising reinforces the collaborative process. We all participated, or are participating, in this project.

Diversity

Each of the above introductions varies in form and content. Some have started at the beginning of their lives, others have started with the factor of their lives that was the most important to them at the time the discussion was held. For example, John begins with stating he has been unemployed. The week before the discussion, John had gained a job after nearly a year of applying for positions. Thus he framed his narrative around this feature of his life. Kirsten and Christine had only recently, relative to the discussion, separated and their narratives begin at this point. Several began with their marriages (Jeanette and Ronice for example), while others, such as Anne, began with their employment history. Thus their reference points vary. Further, all were aware that these discussions had a focus, that is my PhD. As a result, in the initial discussions, several tried to answer in a form they believed would be the most beneficial to me. For example, Tabitha's recount at the beginning sounds like an almost perfect text book review of her life. Consequently, and especially in comparison to some of the others, we learn a lot about her life but not much about her. It is only when she begins to relax that she becomes more reflexive and starts to supply details about her, that is, how she feels about things.

Given that I asked them to tell me what they wanted me to know about themselves and not their lives there are three points that need to be made in relation to this form of research inquiry. First, the relationship between

knower and known is inter-connected, and integral to the research process. My aim, therefore, was, as far as possible, to avoid framing answers by the manner in which I asked questions, although in itself, this still resulted in me framing the discussion process while giving them the right to reframe by their responses. However, I mistakenly overlooked the people themselves having pre-determined ideas about what a research process involved, and their position in the process and the relationship between themselves and me. As a result, initially, some answered in the way they thought I wanted and ironically, this was exactly what I didn't want. Furthermore, their preconceptions of research affected how they viewed the transcripts and I return to this point shortly.

Secondly, the introductions above (with the exception of Graeme and Vicky) occurred in the first discussion. As the discussions moved on, the degree to which people relaxed with both me and the process changed. Consequently, it was in later discussions that they revealed significant details about themselves. Sometimes these details contradicted their initial comments. At other times, the details completely altered the context in which their comments on other points had to be seen. For example, Maureen was one who, in a later discussion, revealed she had been in counselling and that it "has been marvelous. It has completely changed my whole view point about everything". And Maureen was not, as I was to discover, the only one who had experienced some form of counselling. This can be seen as the "continuous mutual shaping" that Lincoln and Guba refer to that I detailed in Chapter 1. Thus the research process changed, or in this instance the discussions, reflecting the changes in the relationship between myself and the individual persons.

Finally, each of these people was in the process of working through the various aspects of their life. The discussion process occurred over a two to

three year period[19] and as a result, the answers to a question depended upon where they were in this 'working out' process[20].

IV

The Process

Writing is a process and occurs in a four-dimensional environment. But it is a process that attempts to reduce the multi-faceted dimension of life to a two dimensional representation of life[21]. Various artifices are employed to enable this. For example, events are treated as separate entities but only some events, incidences and so forth that occur are noted. The events are then arranged into some sort of sequential order (usually chronological) or bundled together under various headings. Thus, when writing, I have already separated people out from process and principles as though they are not one and the same thing. In this section I am going to further reduce by separating the research process into evidence collection, and evidence analysis and thus put 'on hold' the holistic nature of the process. The 'parts' of the process, i.e., the discussions, and the analysis, and the writing, did not happen separately or in a particular sort of chronological order , that is 'one thing at a time, one thing after another'. Instead, at any particular point of clock-time, with any individual person, discussions would be occurring with analysis happening both through the discussion and following the discussion, and I was continuously writing. Moreover, at all times the sum of these parts does not equal the whole; that is, evidence collection plus evidence analysis plus writing does not equal the research process or project.

Making Evidence

At its most simple making evidence consisted of me having a series of individual taped ongoing discussions over a period of two to three years with a selected set of people. The discussions were then transcribed and

each person reviewed their particular transcript(s) at subsequent discussions. This resulted in some 100 hours of taped conversations. The minimum number of taped hours of discussion for each person was five. Not all the people in the project participated for the full three years. As a result, the longer they were participating the more discussions were held. Moreover, the discussions were not equally spaced. They could occur months, weeks or days apart. The spacing depended upon first, the requirement that I needed to fit into their lives, secondly my preference to have the transcripts before each subsequent discussion (although this was not always possible), and lastly the needs of any of us to discuss things.

The discussions generally occurred in their homes although some, such as Christine, preferred to come to my home as she saw this a break from her routine. Some discussions also occurred in coffee shops. Again, the rationale was to escape from the home. Finally, a great deal of discussing took place on the phone. Generally I would make notes of these discussions and then we would either repeat them for the tape or they would be incorporated into the transcripts as an addendum.

I quite deliberately used the term 'discussion' both throughout the process and in my writing. Given a collaborative approach , 'interview' seemed to me to be too formal a term to describe what I saw as a free flowing exchange of experiences and ideas. On the other hand, 'conversation' did not seem to encompass adequately the purposive aspect of the communications. While, on many occasions, we did sit and chat, the discussions did have a purpose. In other words, I had not been invited to their homes for a purely social event, although this was the environment that I sought. Some were reluctant to partake in what they saw as a 'university project' far beyond their perceived intellectual and/or educational level. To overcome this, I would quite deliberately tell them that all we were going to do was sit around the table and talk. As a result,

the first discussion (barring Graeme and Vicky) would consist of me chatting about myself and, in very loose terms, my project. These were what I referred to as 'getting to know each other' discussions.

Collaborative research requires some sense of shared understandings and a move from treating the others involved as contemporaries to recognising them as consociates. To achieve this, I considered it only fair that I revealed as much about myself as I hoped they would reveal about themselves. For example, there was one discussion where I was asked to turn off the tape recorder, which I did. The person concerned then told me of an incident that had occurred in her life. Something similar had happened to me as well so I told her of it. After we had both had a good laugh at what we jointly perceived as our foolishness, she asked for the recorder to be turned back on and the incident recorded. There were situations when I felt embarrassed about answering some questions[22] but, equally, I appreciated the embarrassments felt by the other person. As a result I agree with what Bott states in relation to her own work with families in the United Kingdom, "[i]t is obvious that neither the research couples nor the field workers were 'objective' about the research in the sense of not being emotionally involved in it and with each other" (Bott 1957, p41). Like my work, her project took place over several years and I likewise agree with her argument that the "research relationship could not have been maintained over...[this period] without serious emotional involvement on both sides" (Bott 1957, p41). Again, this acknowledges the intimate relationship between the knower and the known as well as the effect both have on the shaping of the project. In the other words, my actions in this process could not be described as one of disinterested observer, objective or value free.

The discussions were also deliberately open ended. Although I had some general topics which I wanted to discuss I stressed that whatever they

wanted to talk about was equally relevant. In many instances topics raised by the others and not me gave me the keys to understanding time in people's lives. My specific interest which forms the basis of chapter three arose out of my preliminary reading of the literature. However, I also learnt very quickly that it was not possible to walk up to some one and ask them to tell me about time. Several, such as Maureen for example, told me at our first discussion that though they wanted to help they didn't think they could as they knew nothing about time. However as the discussions progressed, they generally came to see how time was an integral part of life. In this way they started to observe reflexively and problematise social reality – they were 'doing research'.

> The first time you came here, I really felt off track. I didn't really understand what you were doing...and I thought at one stage that we're prattling on about my life here, how's this relevant to anything? But the last time you came I realised how many expressions I use about time and don't think what they mean. And I don't think I'd realised either how much of my marriage was taken up with looking at the clock[23]
>
> Anne

Anne's comments also highlight the difficulties some people had in understanding collaborative research. However, the unanimous response at the end of the discussion process was one of having enjoyed the process. Several had taken part in other research and they told me they much preferred the approach used here.

I much preferred the use of the tape recorder. In this I agree with Marshall who "always tape[s] interviews because so much happens that I'm not able to attend to at the time, and I find that listening to it again brings all sorts of new things up" (Marshall 1981, pp395-396). Although I did jot points down throughout the discussions I found it easier to concentrate on each person and thus reproduce a more 'natural' environment, as opposed to a formal interview situation, if I did not have my head buried in paper.

The tape recorder initially was a problem for many of the people. I always placed it between us, showed them the stop button and told them that they could, or I would, stop it at any point if they wished. However, as the discussions progressed, and particularly once they began to see the transcripts (a point I return to shortly) they either tended to forget it was there or began to address it directly[24]. Thus although the tape recorder could be inhibiting at the first discussion, its advantages, given the on-going nature of the discussions, outweighed the disadvantages.

Each discussion was transcribed from the tapes. Initially I did this myself but early in the process I began to employ others to do it for me. I asked all the people individually if they had any objections to a third party listening to the tapes of what was a confidential discussion. None did and as the discussions progressed both myself and the people would sometimes address the tape recorder with a message for whoever was typing the transcript[25]. As a result, a two way discussion sometimes became three way. Initially the tapes were transcribed verbatim. This, however, caused many of the people concern as spoken English varies considerably from written English. As a result, the 'um's', and 'er's' were not typed as such. Instead it would be indicated by using the notation [pause]. Moreover, sentences in spoken English ramble. To make sense of the transcripts, grammatical devices, such as commas and full stops, were inserted. However, we tried to stay true to expressions and meanings thus we did not overly 'tidy up' their English. In this way transcribing of the tapes can be seen as a collaborative exercise and not an exercise in technical sociolinguistics or ethnomethodology.

Again, the earlier mentioned preconceived ideas about what was required from them played a part in how some initially approached the transcripts. Knowing that I was going to be using extracts from the discussions in a thesis for examination, several people were concerned that what they said

had to be 'absolutely right', grammatically; the implication being that I would be marked down if their words were not up to standard. This resulted in one instance where the discussion of the transcript from the first discussion took longer than the initial discussion itself. This initially caused me problems. On the one hand, I appreciated how much trouble this individual was going to in an endeavor to ensure that nothing he did would, as he perceived it, penalise me. Moreover, I was the one who had stated that they were in control of how they presented themselves to the world. On the other hand, I considered that altering the transcript greatly was moving too far from the nature of the discussion and thus the project. It took several discussions before the two of us could reach a position where we were both comfortable with the resulting transcripts.

After the discussions were transcribed, I would then check the transcriptions against the tapes. This had several advantages. First, though I had participated in the discussion, listened to it as I transcribed and then checked it, I still made mistakes in the transcript. Checking a transcription, particularly when several days, sometimes weeks, had passed between the discussion and the checking allowed me to see the evidence as fresh. Secondly, the bulk of the transcribing was done by Amy and Jess. I had met Amy on campus where she was studying for an undergraduate degree and she later introduced me to Jess whom she had met while studying. Both Amy and Jess were interested in my research and liked the idea of participating in a research project as well as earning some money. As a result, they would listen critically to the tapes and then comment to me on points that had taken their interest or points they had not understood. I found this of immense benefit to me, particularly when they had picked up something that I had not necessarily noticed during the discussion. An understanding of the content of the discussions then, was not my exclusive preserve as Amy and Jess too were bringing everyday

theory to the project as they tried to understand how the discussions made sense.

A further advantage to me was a result of the difference between me seeing as well as hearing the discussion and Amy or Jess only hearing it. There were times when it would sound to them as though the person (or myself) was serious whereas, with the benefit of body language and a whole range of other contextual clues, we were anything but serious. This was a salutary reminder to me that indications of context needed to be inserted into the transcripts along with the words.

Finally, being able to discuss the tapes with Amy and Jess helped to eliminate my feelings of isolation. They too had heard (if not seen) what I had heard and, like me, they were disturbed by some of what they heard. Many of the discussions included intimate details about people and they could become extremely emotional. It was never my intention to cause distress through the discussion process and it concerned me that people were obviously upset. As a result, I found myself avoiding mention of various topics if they had previously caused distress. However, this did not stop distress occurring[26], nor did it stop some of these topics arising. In other words, where distress occurred it resulted from other people leading me there rather than me taking them there. Being able to talk with Amy and/or Jess assisted me in coming to terms with evidence collection. Moreover, I would often be told at a subsequent discussion with the people concerned, how much they had appreciated the opportunity to be able to say some of the things they had said, and express some of the emotions they had felt.

Apart from the practical value of the transcripts, they were conceptually important given the research principles I had adopted. The integrity and confidentiality of the people in this project was of paramount importance

to me and I believe that they needed to be able to control what was done with their words, in so far as the university requirements allowed. Therefore, I decided at the beginning of the evidence collection process that I would work from the transcripts as opposed to the tapes. This necessitated giving the transcripts to each person to confirm how they wanted their words written[27]. In other words, up until they had agreed with the transcripts, they in effect owned the process. It was not until, as Graeme commented, they "had signed off on the green pages"[28], that I was free to use their words.

Notwithstanding the above comments, giving them control of the transcripts I believe had more advantages than disadvantages. First, the discussions became more spontaneous when they realised that I wasn't going to be working directly from what they said and they could edit out later anything they did not want me to use, although this rarely happened. When it did, it generally related to obscenities as noted in endnote #21. There were instances when I would remind them that their words were going into the public domain and were they happy with their mother/ father/son/daughter/whoever reading their comments about that person. On occasions, this would result in them tempering their comments but as often as not, they would let the comments stand unabridged.

Secondly, it gave us all an opportunity to reflect on what had been said and to ensure that their meanings were as clear as possible. It was quite common for me to be told at a subsequent discussion that they wanted to make a point (or points) more clearly than they felt they had originally.

Thirdly, re-visiting the transcripts after a period of one or two years, made both me and them realise how much of what people say is historically contextualised. For example, Helen's comments when she re-read all her transcripts two and half years after she began the discussions.

> Such a long time has elapsed since the first lot [of discussions], it really
> struck me reading them (pause) and the first thing that struck me, and
> I'm sure you'll be glad to know, is that I've taken the hair shirt off
> [both laugh] and I'm not beating myself quite as much as I used to.

One can only wonder how Helen would introduce herself today in comparison to her introduction then.

Finally, it reassured them that I wasn't going to be writing things about them that they may not like. In other words, I wasn't going to be describing them. I preferred to leave the transcript (if possible) with them a couple of days before the next discussion and I would often get them back with comments in the transcript margins for points they had thought about after I had left and wanted to return to, to either discuss in more detail or clarify what they had said[29].

Making Sense of the Evidence

To Reason and Rowan, while "[g]rounded theory is an excellent example of a qualitative research approach" (Reason & Rowan 1981, pxx) it also has drawbacks as it "stays firmly within the old paradigm" (Reason & Rowan 1981, pxx). However, I found that parts of the theory helped me in making sense of my evidence and, in particular, Strauss and Corbin's argument that evidence needs to be questioned[30]. This links with the problem of doing research in your own language. As Burawoy argues, the "practical consciousness of everyday life – whether of oneself as social scientist or of those one studies [sic] – contains a great deal that is tacit, what Peter Winch calls nondiscursive, and therefore not explicitly articulated" (Burawoy 1991, pp4-5). As a result, I would continuously ask people during the discussions what they meant when they used a particular term and/or why they had used that term and not another. This caused them problems initially because they had not reflected upon the words. Later in the discussion process they began to see me coming. They would make a comment and then quickly add, 'yes, I know, what do I

mean by that'. On occasions, they would ask to leave it to the next discussion to give them time to think about it.

Strauss and Corbin argue that the "purpose behind the use of questioning is to open up the data... [and] Each question is likely to stimulate a series of more specific and related questions" (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p77).To a certain extent this occurred through the discussion process. What did this person mean when they used a particular term? Why did they use that term and not another? Moreover, certain terms or ideas had become noticeable throughout the discussion process and I began to introduce them into discussions. As a result, sitting down to interpret the evidence was not as difficult as I had imagined.

Strauss and Corbin describe open coding as a "process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data" (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p61) and this was what I did. However, it is a 'muddlely' process. I began with a few general categories, such as biographical details, time, gender, parenting, and comparisons between their previous situation and their present one. I then started to work through each transcript sub-dividing these categories as other key words and ideas became apparent. This resulted in further sub-divisions in the existing categories and the creation of new categories and sub-divisions. For example, my initial category of 'time' expanded to become three – 'time', 'past, present and future', and 'age'. 'Time' ended up with 28 sub-categories, 'past, present and future' had 11 sub-categories and 'age' gave me 8 sub categories. The category of 'time' also generated the category of reciprocity with 8 sub-divisions in itself. Simultaneously, my initial category of 'comparisons' also fed into the newer category of reciprocity. Eventually I ended up with 12 categories and 105 sub- categories. I then went back to the beginning and re-coded the first transcripts[31]. Eventually

I was satisfied[32] I had examined and questioned the evidence sufficiently to be able to make some sense of it[33].

The process of coding also served to show me areas that I had not realised the significance of during the discussion process and thus allowed me to go back to some of the people with specific points for discussion[34]. However, I did not tie up each loose end[35]. Two of the people had left Perth, while another was experiencing major problems in her life and consequently could no longer make herself available. Further, re-reading the transcripts of people who had not specifically mentioned various points indicated explanations for why a certain point had not been mentioned. However, the majority of the topics were covered by at least seventy five per cent[36] of the people.

V

Reflections

I have described above why I adopted the principles of the post-positivist research paradigm. I return here to Lincoln and Guba's five points of ontology, epistemology, generalization, causation and values, using the above evidence to substantiate them. The reality of these people and their lives is "multiple, constructed, and holistic" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p 37). They are, as some of them pointed out, more than the sum of their parts. They live in multiple realities and they were actively engaged, to a greater or lesser conscious extent, in constructing them.

Neither the people nor I were entirely independent. Instead we were 'interactive' and 'inseparable'. In many instances it was my presence and my questions throughout the discussion process that aided them in the process of constructing their realities as I evidenced above in my discussion of the part played by my use of the transcripts. Asking

someone what they meant when they used a term, or why they used that term and not another, forces them to move from an unreflective use of language to a reflective one. Therefore, I was not, and could not be, an impartial objective observer of them. Nor did I try to be. In other words, as the theory and evidence jointly emerged, we went where we were taken rather than going where we may have thought we were heading.

The ongoing nature of the discussion process highlights the manner in which it is not possible to produce time- and context-free generalisations. What they said depended on what time (in a chronological sense) it was, as well as how they felt at the specific time of the discussion and how they perceived the manner in which I wanted a response. Consequently, they contradicted earlier statements and, upon having their attention drawn to that, they would reply that was how they felt at the time. But they were also aware that when they recounted events to me, such as the actual separation, how they told me the story could be different from how they had felt when it occurred. Anne, for example, told me that "if you had asked me then I would have said he left us, but now I see that I threw him out". Neither version is necessarily incorrect, both are equally applicable, it just depends upon how the cause and effect relationship is established. Thus, as Lincoln and Guba argue, it is not possible to separate out cause from effect for "[a]ll entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p37). In Anne's case she had re-shaped her self image from that of passive to active.

Thus inquiry is, as Lincoln and Guba argue, "value-bound" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p37). Moreover it is not just my values, as the person working through the research process, but the values of the other people participating as well. Research then, as Reason and Rowan argue, "can never be neutral" (Reason & Rowan 1981, p489). Rather than searching

for methods of neutralizing values, I have accepted them as central to the process of understanding social worlds.

Review

In this chapter I have detailed the research process of this project. I have shown that neither a definition of the terms 'researcher' and 'researched' nor the relationship between them is as simplistic as the dualism implies. Instead it is complex and the balance between the two is constantly changing. In my project I endeavored to maintain as far as possible a balance between these 'roles' and I acknowledge that this was not always as I would have liked. I have also shown how theory and evidence emerge together from a research process and the necessity of reflection.

It has been through the process of the research that the themes of change, choice and control that frame this writing emerged. I can not argue the negative, that is I would not have 'discovered' these themes if I had approached the research following a positivist, or more orthodox approach. But then, neither can I argue the opposite. All I can state is this is what I have done, this is how I have done it, this is what emerged, and finally, but most importantly, that this all occurred without me overly impinging upon the integrity of the people who worked through this process with me.

---

[1] Stringer's views (like my own) are influenced by the various works of Y. Lincoln and E. Guba. See, Stringer (1996), *Action Research: A handbook for practitioners*, for a full discussion of this.

[2] See Maruyama (1981) for a discussion on where a set of people were given free rein to decide on their own research project.

[3] This is not a situation unique to myself. Burawoy, for example, when discussing issues of power between "participant and observer" argues that "being sensitive to power inequality doesn't remove it. Although many of us [the writers in *Ethnography Unbound*] had considerable loyalty to the people we studied, and revised our papers in

the light of their comments, nevertheless in the final analysis what we wrote was outside their control" (Burawoy 1991, p5).

[4] There is little doubt that 'time' has occupied the attentions of others particularly those in what could be referred to as the 'Eastern Philosophical Traditions'. I do not particularly like this dualism ie East/West and I do not consider that the particular traditions have existed in 'splendid isolation' from each other. There is, for example, evidence that Heraclites was much influenced by Hindu philosophies and the interaction between the two continues from his day to ours. Instead I am restricting my discussion, at this point, to the writers who could be said to emerge from, in very general terms, the western philosophical tradition.

[5] See Goodnow and Bowes (1994) for an interesting discussion of the pros and cons of working with couples in the domestic sphere.

[6] I did not consider whether the initial nuclear family had been 'legitimised' by wedlock or not to be of importance to this project. Neither did I discriminate between divorce or separation. Consequently, I use the terms 'marriage' 'divorce' and 'separation' inclusively unless other wise noted.

[7] To begin my fieldwork I approached two friends I knew had recently separated from their partners. Having gained some confidence in the discussion process I then asked students in six tutorial groups on campus if they knew of people in this situation. Four people volunteered. I approached various singles organisations in Perth but only one person volunteered. Four people were introduced to me by other people already participating in the project. The remaining four people were introduced to me by other people who knew of my project. Thus, at the start of the discussion processes I knew two people well and four people slightly well. The remaining nine people were strangers to me. In the literature this approach to the aggregation of participants is known as a 'snowballing technique'. It is the most appropriate for the theoretical approach I develop in the thesis, where the depth of understanding and insight into the concept of time is sought rather than some more positivist notion of statistical representativity.

[8] In some cases this was essential given the problems some were having with ongoing abusive relationships.

[9] I did consider other forms of organising this section, such as letting them speak in the order I met them. However, to add clarity for the reader(s) I decided alphabetical order may be easier.

[10] I have followed standard referencing procedures when citing from the discussion transcripts. Thus the notation ... equals a deletion and [ ] signifies an addition I have made to the quote to make it make sense and/or to indicate emotion. I will refer more thoroughly to the transcript process later in this chapter.

[11] The children's ages given are their ages at the beginning of the discussion process.

[12] The 'problem' with Graeme is that he and I have known each other for about twenty years. As a result, we both know a great deal about each other and each other's lives and we did not go through the usual two way process of 'getting to know each other'. When I was analysing the evidence I realised that this had been omitted and the excerpt above is the closest I came when I returned to discuss it with him. However, he was happy for me to write that he lives in his own home with his two children, Benjamin (2) and Daniel (6 and a half), he had taken over full time care of the children two months before I began the discussion process and that while money was tight, it was not a problem.

[13] Like Graeme, I had also known Vicky before I began the research process, although admittedly not as well as I knew Graeme. But, like the situation with Graeme, the 'getting to know you' ritual had already been done. As a result, when I went back to ask Vicky to fill in the details, we struck a similar impasse to the one I met with Graeme.

[14] Vicky also has three children, Bobby, age17, who lived in a country town with relatives, and Louise, age 15 and Billy, age 14 who lived with her in the family home. She worked full time and was paying off the mortgage on the house.

[15] Not all remained in Perth for the duration of the research process.

[16] However, I will be making the point in the next section on process that this is an assumption based upon the evidence from the initial discussions and could not always be sustained as subsequent discussions revealed.

[17] At all times I preserved the anomnity of people. Occasionally, when one knew of the identity of others, they would remark 'I bet X [the person they knew] said that'. I would always reply that they had to understand I could neither confirm or deny. What intrigued me was that sometimes they were right, other times they were wrong and their friend had actually said the opposite.

[18] It was not just me who saw the emergence of an 'imagined community'. As the discussion process progressed I was often asked if I could arrange some form of social gathering where they could all meet each other. In one instance Maureen invited me to her birthday party. Also at the party were Jeanette and John. Neither Jeanette nor John knew of the other's participation in my project which initially caused me some difficulties as we were all sitting at the same table and they both wanted to discuss with me where I was in the writing process. Eventually, to my relief, they made it known to each other. Later Maureen joined us and the four of us sat and talked. To date, this is the only occasion where I have been with more than one other person.

[19] As noted, some of the people were part of the process for the full three years, others for parts of the three years.

[20] This point with examples is described in detail in Chapter 4.

[21] As P. Davies (1985) notes, removing any one of the dimensions results in the disappearance of the others. This is easily demonstrated by taking a piece of cheese and a knife. Select any one of the dimensions of height, breadth or depth and use the knife to reduce that specific dimension (for example height) by half. The other two dimensions are not effected but the shape of the cheese has changed. Now, continue cutting the cheese until it no longer has any height. At this point the other two dimensions also vanish. Given the physicists argument that the world is four-dimensional it follows that removing the time dimension also removes the other three.

[22] Although these situations could have their humorous moments such as when Don and I were discussing the laundry. He had commented as to how silly he considered people to be who hung out their washing with matching clothes pegs. To my intense discomfort he noticed my body language and fired the obvious question at me 'don't tell me you do'. After much squirming from me and laughter from him, I confessed in the affirmative.

[23] The evidence that resulted from Anne's insight is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

[24] On one occasion I arrived for the third discussion with this person. After the preliminaries, she told me there was something she wanted to say and she began talking. She talked for some forty minutes directly to the tape recorder as though I was not in the room. I sat quietly and watched and listened. When she finished, she told me she had never told any one before what she had just said. She wanted to tell her story but not to a person and she had realised that in talking to a machine she could verbalise but not need to necessarily interact with her listener.

[25] For example, on one occasion the person swore and then turned to the tape recorder and said 'to whoever is typing this, delete it now to save me editing it out later'. On another occasion, neither Vicky not myself could think of the word she was trying for, so she addressed the tape recorder and said 'if you know what I am trying to say, just put it in'.

[26] It was usual for me to turn the tape recorder off when someone became upset.

[27] I used to explain that I was according them the same rights as I had for I have written and rewritten these words and I have had the opportunity to reflect upon my ideas.

[28] To simplify my filing system, all the transcripts were printed on green paper.

[29] The incident mentioned in endnote #24 also relates to this section. The person concerned had also realised that what she said to the tape recorder would come back to her in a written form. She could thus use the transcript, again with out involving another person, to begin to come to terms with the incident.

[30] Strauss and Corbin actually use the word data but I simply substituted evidence for data.

[31] I did not use a computer program for this process. I have done coding before and felt comfortable doing it manually. Although it no doubt was the long way to go about things I felt the time involved was equalled by the time it would have taken me, as computer illiterate, to master a new computer program.

[32] In theory, the practice of coding has the potential to be never-ending. My point of satisfaction was the result of a balance being struck between the need to interrogate the transcripts to make sense of them in relation to understandings of time and the need to have sufficient codified material to enable me to fulfill the requirements of the PhD process.

[33] See appendix I for a full list of the categories and an example of part of a coded transcript.

[34] It was here that I, for example, realised I had 'missed' Graeme and Vicky's biographical details.

[35] Indeed, this would be an impossibility. See Garfinkel (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology* for a detailed discussion on this point.

[36] I appreciate the irony of my use of numbers in this section. I was originally trained in the positivist school and I dare say that this indicates that old habits die hard.

3

TIME in the DOMESTIC SPHERE

What's caring, leisure, work and housework? They interchange
dramatically depending on what's going down at the time.

Don

I think it all runs concurrently. You can be caring, house working and
working and doing everything all at the same time.

Ronice

Overview

Time in relation to the domestic sphere has normally been studied in a
positivist manner, where time is understood as being an objectified external
reality that can be utilised, i.e., given, exchanged, sold and used and, through
the clock, measured. As a result, activities are categorised and measured.
However, this practice of categorizing and measuring activities has obfuscated
an appreciation of the notion of caring and, furthermore, contributed to the
elaboration of a literature exploring the notion of 'women's time'[1].

Irrespective of my commitment to understand the complexities of time, time is
also understood by the people in this project as being an objectified
commodity. This has consequences for what they do with time as underlying
how they dispense[2] their time is the notion of caring. However, when post-
positivist principles of research are followed a more complex picture emerges
and, in particular, caring becomes seen as an orientation to activities rather
than a category of activities in itself. Thus their understanding of caring
underlies how they dispense their time.

In section I of this chapter I show how time in the domestic sphere has been
examined in a positivist manner. The results of seeing time as an external
reality are evident. Time is primarily used as a measurement of activity which
necessitates the formatting of categories to measure. I discuss three exemplary

cases from the literature to demonstrate how time in the domestic sphere has traditionally been examined and I show that as a result of an unquestioning acceptance of time being objectified, activities are then categorised and measured and arguments about time use proffered. I also consider this approach to research flawed in regards to the use of categorisation. There is an implicit and mistaken understanding that activities can be defined in such a manner as to make them discrete, singular and mutually exclusive with clear terminal points between activities that allow measurement. The results from these acts of categorisation and measurement can then be used as explanations of behaviour and so used to reinforce and reproduce ideological positions[3].

In section II, I show that when the people in the domestic sphere are allowed to define the categories themselves, many of the activities they undertake in the domestic sphere are shown to be interconnected in complex ways with the demarcation lines and points not being so obvious. Moreover, caring as an aspect of domestic activity is seen here as an orientation to activity, and not as a discrete activity in itself.

In section III, I look more closely at the notion of 'women's time' and I suggest that there is an assumption in the literature that there is a special category of 'women's time' that structures domestic activities. I suggest that it is the activity of caring, rather than gendering, which needs closer scrutiny, a proposition analysed with my evidence in later chapters.

This chapter, then, demonstrates that when time is problematised an examination of time in the domestic sphere reveals that the situation is more complex than positivist research has indicated and that research of a different sort is called for. However, although the people in this project may have had difficulties with actual categorisations and measurements, they still saw time as an objectified reality and their dispensing of time was underlaid by their understanding of caring. The implications of them doing this are discussed in subsequent chapters.

I

Time-use Surveys

Many writers (Giddens 1984; Adam 1990, 1994; Hornil & Zakay 1996; Bender & Wellbery 1991) have recognised that concepts of time form an integral part of human life. An appreciation of the significance of an understanding of the intrinsic nature of 'time' in social analysis has often been missed (Adam 1990, 1994; Lash & Urry 1994). The concept of linear clock-time is at the base of most research, especially that which has adopted positivist, quantitative methodologies. The subject of time in the domestic sphere has generated a considerable literature and a naïve realist or tempocentric approach to time is clearly seen in much of this body of literature[4]. Here measurement and categorisation are bound up together. Thus this body of literature identifies discrete activities, quantifies them and then draws conclusions from people's activities in this sphere. However, the experiences of the people who participated in my project, raise questions about such an approach to understanding time in the domestic sphere.

Domestic sphere research arose out of broader studies on industrial society. By the beginning of the 20th century, the process of capitalist industrialization had led to the growth of the factory system, an emerging Fordist industrial regime, and the commodification of labour. Part of this process involved the emergence a scientific approach to management characterised by time and motion experts (Adam 1990; Nguyen 1992), with the work of Taylor the most obvious staring point. Taylor argued for a system of scientific management under which work could be subject to control through rigorous time-and-motion studies, the ultimate result of which was increased productivity[5]. Gilbreth continued this approach by breaking down each individual task into motions and then "recompos[ing] them in such a manner as to eliminate all useless movement" (Nguyen 1992, p39). This resulted in the disciplining of the work-force through time-and –motion procedures.

Growing industrial pressures led to a response by the trade union movement
formulated as a demand for an eight hour working day, eight hours of leisure
and eight hours of rest (Deem 1996). However, as Nguyen argues, it became:

> ...imperative...to extend the time-discipline of industrial capitalism
> beyond the walls of the factory to encompass the home and the
> hearth... What was true for labour-time or the work-space soon came to
> be true for leisure-time or the domestic-space (Nguyen 1992, p45).

In other words, people's life-worlds were invaded by rational planning
techniques associated with modernist ideas of the 'good society'. The need for
"docile workers... [became a need for] docile bodies in general" (Nguyen
1992, p45).

This extension to the domestic sphere resulted in households being subject to
similar notions of efficient time use as in industry (Reiger 1985; Nguyen
1992). For example, Pleck argues that:

> ...[u]sing methods originally developed by home economists in the
> 1920s, a few researchers in the late 1960s began studying the amount of
> time that husbands and wives spend in family tasks (Pleck 1985, p28).

These methods usually consisted of time and motion studies referred to as
time-use surveys, time budget studies and time diary studies. The methods are
based upon linear clock-time or premised upon an understanding of "a
Newtonian view of time – where time is measurable, quantifiable, and
pinpointable" (K. Davies 1996, p583). Typically it was argued that time use
could be divided into four main categories; outside paid employment,
housework, leisure and caring (Douthitt, Zick & McCullough 1990; Hilton
1990; Sullivan 1997).

Contemporary literature abounds with time use studies that state what people
do with their time. For example, in their 1990 study of "The role of economic
and demographic factors in explaining time-use of single and married
mothers", Douthitt, Zick and McCullough argued that there was a difference
in how married and single mothers allocated their time across the four
categories – household production, child care, leisure, and paid work

(Douthitt, Zick & McCullough 1990). They then went on to explore possible reasons for this difference.

However, the work of Douthitt, Zick and McCullough is problematic. Such an approach involves two problems: the imposition of observer categories on people's lived experiences thus ignoring the subjective nature of many activities, and the failure to provide a rationale for such categorisation. For example, their category of child care:

> ...included mother's time spent in the physical and non-physical care of family members... [while] Household Production time included mother's time spent doing cooking, cleaning, laundry, etc (Douthitt, Zick & McCullough 1990, p33).

Leisure time was anything left over once 'Household Production', 'Child Care' and paid work had been accounted for. Douthitt, Zick and McCullough do not explain what physical care is or, alternatively, why cooking, for example, is not classified as physical care. As I will show, most of the people in this project insisted that housework and child care are often indistinguishable, or at least simultaneous. Likewise, all the categories overlapped when the people themselves see themselves as caring.

In 1990, Hilton published the results of her project "Differences in allocation of family time spent on household tasks among single-parents, one earner, and two-earner families". Like Douthitt, Zick and McCullough, Hilton was comparing single parent and two parent families. She more specifically aimed to assess the impact on time spent in household tasks when both parents were in paid work compared to situations where only one parent (in a two parent family) was in paid work, and with single parent families. Hilton subdivided 'Care' into physical and non-physical with physical being defined as:

> ...bathing, feeding, taking family member to the doctor, etc.,..[and non-physical being] playing with a child, helping with homework, sharing social activities, discussing problems, etc. (Hilton 1990, p289).

As with the previous account of Douthitt, Zick and McCullough, Hilton's categories leave much to be explained. It is unclear on what grounds she

divides caring into physical and non-physical. In particular, one wonders how a person playing with a child can be classified as 'non-physical'. Secondly, the time chart that her respondents completed required that the activity take place for a period of five minutes or longer. This excluded all the little bits and pieces of time under five minutes that were spent on activities. Thirdly, although she allowed theoretically for multiple, simultaneous activities she permitted only two in practice. Her respondents therefore had to decide which was the primary and which was the secondary activity. Thus, the person completing the chart was required to privilege one activity over others. Hilton lists the activities with the two caring categories coming eighth and ninth respectively. Management, which she left undefined, was tenth. This raises conceptual and methodological questions as to how much a person, having to choose between the activity being primary or secondary, would be influenced by the positioning of the activity on her list.

Hilton concluded that there is only one significant difference between analysing the primary activities only and analysing the primary plus secondary activities. When the latter was done, the figure that increased was the time spent on non physical care. As a result she argued that "[s]ingle-parent families spend about half as much time on this task [non-physical caring] as two-parent families"(Hilton 1990, p295) and concluded "[t]his difference is probably due to the absence of the spouse" (Hilton 1990, p295). This conclusion is one that my evidence will lead me to interpret differently.

Sullivan's 1997 study, "Time waits for no (wo)man: An investigation of the gendered experience of domestic time", also takes a quantitative approach. She concedes that:

> ...there is much less information available on more complex
> sociologically relevant facets of the experience of time, such as the
> social context of activities, and the common combinations of different
> activities (Sullivan 1997, p221).

Thus she critiques some time use studies as not "emphasis[ing] the importance of understanding aspects of the experience of time such as its duration, rhythms and density" (Sullivan 1997, p221).

However Sullivan's work is also problematic in three respects. First, in how she has established her categories, and therefore how she has measured them. Secondly, although her data allows for multiple simultaneous activities (up to four) no indication was given as to how this was used to give the results. Lastly, given the criticism of Hilton's division of time use into intervals of five minutes or longer, Sullivan's use of fifteen minute intervals results in too much possible data and much important experience being ignored

Sullivan focuses on the gendered nature of tasks. Among her results, she finds that the 'proportion of overall time women spent performing task' for cooking is 6.37 per cent and 4.98 per cent for child care. For men the respective figures are 2.14 per cent and 2.57 per cent. Overall, cooking takes up 8.51 per cent of their time, and child care 7.55 per cent. With both categories, men are more likely than women to be performing the task conjointly. 31.95 per cent and 33.08 per cent compared with 10.49 per cent and 17.75 per cent for women (Sullivan 1997, p226). Sullivan does not explain what she means by 'cooking'. Nor does she detail what 'child care' is. Moreover, in setting them up as options, she seems to accept that they are mutually exclusive.

How terms such as 'cooking' and 'child care' are defined is critical in this type of work. In chapter 1, I argued that duration required clearly established terminal points. Thus to compare the clock time periods two people take to complete a similar activity implies that the start and finish points are the same in both instances. "Cooking' is such an everyday activity that one can be seduced into thinking every one agrees on just what constitutes 'cooking'. As Reinharz argues, this positivist approach "assumes that two instances of the 'same' act have the 'same' meaning for the individuals involve[and as a result] "[b]ehaviour is transformed to allow categorization" (Reinharz 1981, p422).

Further, asking where an action begins and where it finishes shows how problematic these terms are. Does it begin, for example, with the planning of the menu, the trip to the shop to gather the required ingredients, the collecting together of the ingredients and utensils, or some other point? Does it finish when the bell on the oven rings, when the meal is placed on the table, when the cleaning up of the utensils has been done, or, again, some other point? Moreover, 'cooking', as many of the people this project told me, is easy when someone else has made all the decisions and ensured the required ingredients are on hand.

The category of child care is equally problematic. Once again, the establishment of terminal points is hazardous. As a result, using Sullivan's figures (above), one is left wondering who is caring for the child the other 92.45 per cent of the time. Again, establishing the content to be included in this category is not as simple as some of the available literature would suggest.

Time-use surveys which are based upon a concept of linear clock- time and require activities to be demarcated to allow for their measurement are inherently problematic. First, in the establishment of the categories. Secondly, there is an assumption that tasks are not simultaneous. Even when multiple occurring tasks are allowed (as in Hilton's work), they were still ranked by the researcher. Luxton states that much research on time use is "complicated by the fact that frequently several tasks are done simultaneously, that tasks overlap" (Luxton 1997, p434). As the above three examples and my own evidence will show, this makes establishing what people 'do' with their time[6] in the domestic sphere difficult.

The value of such studies is further limited in other respects. To Deem:

> ...[t]ime budget studies...have several disadvantages. These include
> their emphasis on tasks rather than time. In addition, time budget
> studies tell us the outcomes of decisions and negotiations over time use
> but they do not offer insights into the processes underlying a particular
> usage of time. Furthermore, time budget studies encourage the use of

notions of commodified and clock time as opposed to other concepts of
time (Deem 1996, p14).

The exclusive recognition of only this particular concept of linear clock time is problematic. It suggests falsely that activities taking comparative periods of lineal clock time equal equivalency of activities (Glucksman 1998). Thus because it takes the same period of clock time for two activities to occur, the activities are considered equal in value. However, the different cultural norms that structure the meaning of activities and the subjective nature of the activity is overlooked and as a result, how much time a person takes to perform a specific activity may vary according to how they feel about, or value, the activity.

This makes establishing the answer to a seemingly straight forward question 'what do you do with your time?' in the domestic sphere difficult and results, as Mauldin and Meeks argue, in the conclusion that the:

> ...[r]esults of time-diary studies...[are] not consistent with regard to time in household work...Findings related to child/family care were inconsistent...[while] Results of time spent in leisure, personal, and recreational time were somewhat inconsistent as well (Mauldin & Meeks 1990, pp55-56).

Time use studies rely upon the comparison of time periods for the various activities. But the multiple, simultaneous nature of activity coupled with the subjective nature of activities results in a difficulty in establishing shared, agreed upon categories. As a result, there is no generally accepted agreement as to what are housework, care, leisure and paid work, and their component parts. As Nickols and Metzen argue:

> ...[t]he very nature of work in the home, its variability and discontinuity, makes it difficult to arrive at a uniform definition. Family members' perceptions regarding what aspects of household functioning are appropriately classified as work, leisure, production, or consumption create measurement problems for researchers who allow respondents to establish the parameters of what to include in the category of housework (Nickols & Metzen 1982, p201).

This makes establishing categories and expecting people to use them efficiently in time-use diaries problematic, leading to major difficulties in comparing experiences based solely upon a time measurement criterion.

The subjective nature of the activities compounds the difficulties. Goodnow and Bowes argue that how questions are posed will in many instances determine the answers given, for example, labeling jobs as leisure or household labour (Goodnow & Bowes 1994, p18). In a similar manner Le Feuvre (1994) and Deem (1986) argue that activities have to be seen in their context for them to be able to be classified. Deem, for example, argues that to women:

> ...leisure often occurs simultaneously with work activities (watching TV whilst ironing, talking to friends at work, walking through a park on the way to the shops) or is indistinguishable from work (knitting, sewing, gardening, cooking are all activities which might be work or might be leisure and may well on occasions be both at the same time) (Deem 1986, p6).

As a result she concludes that:

> ...women's home based leisure and enjoyment is often based on or derives from, the same activities and tasks which form part of their work in the household, or is fitted into those tasks and activities, sometimes simultaneously (Deem 1986, p81).

The value of objectivist, behavioural studies such as time-use studies is therefore limited. Not only do they not accurately depict actions in the domestic sphere but their objectivist approach negates the very real subjective and intersubjective nature of human life. Moroever, they deny agency and reduce process to structure as defined by the observer.

II

Some Evidence

Although I had my doubts about the efficacy of the categorisation of activities in the domestic sphere, I did, following the literature, introduce the subject into the discussion process. However, I left it to the people who participated to

decide how they were going to define each category. My intention was that once they had defined categories they would then be able to determine how much time was apportioned to each. There were three clear results from this process. In the first instance, all had difficulty in establishing, and therefore measuring, the amount of time allocated to each of the four categories of work, housework, caring and leisure. Secondly, a closer examination of their dilemma showed that the reason for their difficulty was the same in each case and the difficulty revolved around the concept of caring. Thirdly, the categories of leisure, paid work and housework are equally problematic, as I shortly show. These observations, examined in detail later, give strength to Garhammer's argument that "it is a must in time research to register the subjective perception of time by means of supplementary qualitative methods" (Garhammer 1995, p181). While I show that caring dominates activities in the domestic sphere and that these activities are more holistic than the classical categorisations would suggest, I do use them as literary devices to facilitate this section of the chapter.

Caring

Unlike the quantitative works noted above, caring dominated and thus dictated how the people saw all their activities. For example, Don.

> I could say I work at my [paid] part time job but at the same time this
> job is very close to where the kids go to school so if the phone rings I
> can be up there at the school in under fifteen minutes. So the job
> depended upon my kids...So it's caring. But then it's work as well but
> it's also leisure because I enjoy what I am doing....I wouldn't have a
> problem saying I spend x number of hours doing housework BUT I am
> still caring at the same time...

While to Chris,

> Caring runs all the time, it overlaps everything...I mean caring actually
> runs into the time when you are not together [paid work and
> leisure]...It would be pretty hard to put a number on that one I reckon.

Caring dominated the lives of the people in this project. It was not an activity that could easily be separated out from their other activities such as paid work or housework. Instead it was the base in many instances for these other activities. Caring then becomes an frame of meaning that encompassed discrete tasks. For example, Kirsten.

> How do you define caring? I don't know that you can separate caring
> out in that way...Because if caring for your children also encompasses
> providing them with school uniforms or packed lunches, that's kind of
> housework to me although I do it in order to care for them.

Henwood[7] argues that "[i]n many ways it is a false distinction to consider household tasks separately from those concerned with child care" (Henwood 1987, p9) a point endorsed by many of the people in this project. For example, Ronice.

> Making sure the child's got broccoli because she loves it is
> caring...making sure Shannon's uniform is washed and ironed and the
> pleats are put in with the squirty stuff so she has nice pleats is caring.

Thus, separating household tasks from caring violates people's own culturally defined views of those activities and the subjective and culturally defined nature of activities within the domestic sphere is unaccounted for. To Luxton, "the boundaries between work and relationships are often unclear" (Luxton 1997, p434). As a result, how a person regards the reason for an activity is very much going to influence whether they see the activity as work or something else, such as pleasure, leisure or love. Further, they may very well understand the same activity differently in different contexts. What this shows then, is the importance of people's own categories and understandings. By the same token, this shapes their notion of timing and their views of how time is spent or used.

As a result, the culturally defined and subjective nature of caring makes categorizing the various activities involved in caring difficult. To Luxton:

> ...Domestic labour involves both work and important social relations,
> and it is often impossible to separate the two aspects. Many domestic
> labour tasks are not recognised as work, especially those that relate to

> care giving...Changing a baby's diaper is work but it can also be a
> moment of intense love and delight (Luxton 1994, p435).

Although Luxton does not specify how she defines work she is right to emphasise that how the activity is determined or understood by the people is valid. Thus, while some of the literature separated caring into physical and non physical it is not so easy to quantify emotions or cultural meanings. Again, without exception, all the people in this project were quite clear that caring involved physical aspects as well as emotional aspects. Thus, one can understand their bewilderment and confusion at being asked to separate caring out as a discrete category and their insistence that caring was continuous. Don, for example, was adamant that

> You have to define caring in terms of the physical, actual things you do
> for them as well as the emotional actions,

Caring was what was done for children, it was part and parcel of having children and as a result, it was difficult to identify caring as a separate entity except in the broadest of terms. And, as I was often told, caring sometimes meant doing things that one would prefer not to. For example, Kristen.

> By caring, I think of going to soccer every Sunday, my son plays soccer
> when it's in season...I don't enjoy it and I'd rather be at home reading
> a book but...I would never dream of not doing it because he likes me to
> be there...they are doing things that they enjoy and I am facilitating
> that. Why do I do it? I do it because it makes me happy...I love to see
> them enjoying themselves. I love to see them growing and developing
> and I think being there for them, even if it means sometimes doing
> things that you would otherwise maybe not do if you had a choice, it's
> important to them. Like standing on the side lines of soccer...I don't
> mean to make the whole thing sound like misery and drudgery.

Surprisingly, the question of why they cared did not generate a rapid response. For example, Don.

> You've got a responsibility and there's some emotional whatever
> [pause] what do we call it? [pause] love?

Anne was another who found this question difficult.

> [pause] (laughs) Why am I doing it? [pause] Because I [long pause] I
> just don't, I just [pause]. I don't know Jeni. It's staring me right in the
> face. I know it is but I just [pause]. I don't know, tell me. [pause] I was
> gonna say that because I love them. I was gonna say that.

Why didn't you say that?

> Because I probably thought this is off the track. That was the first thing
> that came into my head, because I love them. I don't mind doing things
> for them because I love them. But maybe because that was too obvious.
> That's why I never said it...Do you know what I think it is? I think it's
> maybe because we do all these things everyday without thinking about
> it.

The inability to define caring as a discrete activity results in its measurement being problematic. Caring was something that all the people in this project considered to be continuous and continual. To them, it was not an activity that could be measured in percentage terms of clock time. For example, Christine.

> Caring would be [pause] well, caring would be from seven in the
> morning 'till I go to bed. [pause] There's no time that I'm not caring
> [pause] but even when I'm asleep I suppose I am caring because the
> baby wakes me up a few times through the night as well. Yes, you
> never stop being a carer. Housework never seems to stop but I don't do
> my dishes at night, I leave them to the morning.

Caring was also seen as continual which makes it well nigh impossible to establish the terminal points necessary for measuring duration. Caring could begin either before the birth of the child, Ronice gave up smoking while she was pregnant, or at the birth of the child and would continue indefinitely. No person thought they were going to stop caring.

For example, Jeanette.

> I think it is for the rest of my life. I look at my Dad and he still cares
> about me and helps me and I don't think it ever stops...If Liam gets
> married and has kids, I see it carrying on but not in the same way.

And to Ronice, caring might not even stop with her death.

> I will care for them until the day I die. If there's an afterlife I would
> continue to care.

Luxton argues that "child-care responsibilities go on 24 hours a day with certain times of great intensity and other periods of no direct interaction (for example, when the child is asleep)" (Luxton 1994, 434). This is a situation described by Don.

> It would be ridiculous to say I care for the full twenty four hours but
> you have to be there for the full twenty four hours. But I'm not
> constantly thinking of the children [pause] it's more like you've got a
> radar and you do these scans to check that everything is okay, then you
> do your own thing and then you check again. I've found actually,
> probably in the last few years that my radar has gone down a bit but
> you still have to be aware that things do happen and you're responsible
> for what could happen to the children...so if that's caring then you can
> say it's twenty four hours.

In other words, caring is contextual as the nature of and intensity of activity generated by caring changes. Thus, although there was a recognition that caring was constant there was also an appreciation that it constantly changed and had to be seen in the context in which it occurred. For example, Don.

> I wouldn't say that I am totally dominated in terms of caring for two
> children. I do have my own being which is separate and they've got
> their own as well so [pause] change, every day it would change. Jack's
> been home sick for two days from school which means that therefore I
> had to adjust my time around this. I guess you never stop caring, it's
> the way you do it. They change, they're growing up and you've got to
> allocate and change responsibilities as terms of caring. It's very much
> dependent on space and time and it varies to whatever situations come
> up

This evidence demonstrates that time-use studies that seek to gain an understanding of people's own understanding of their lives and depict caring as a discrete and measurable activity are methodologically flawed. In a similar

manner to Luxton, Gregson and Lowe argue that it is not feasible to separate out caring as a discrete category in its own right.

> ...Childcare is a special category of domestic labour. It involves generational, as opposed to daily, social reproduction. Moreover, it includes tasks which range from semi-leisure activities (for example, play and watching TV) through to basic maintenance tasks (for example, nappy changing). To add to the complexity, certain childcare tasks (for instance, cooking, ironing and washing) are, in the majority of households, subsumed within the general household tasks of the same nature. All this suggests that to look at childcare properly within the context of the domestic division of labour requires it to be seen as a range of tasks, and not as one lumpen category (Gregson & Lowe 1993, p480-481).

Because of the specific requirements of their project Gregson and Lowe excluded child care from their categories, something not uncommon in the literature. For example, Shelton argues that "many studies evaluating household labor include childcare in the definition of household labor" (Shelton 1992, p7) but to her "its measurement is more problematic than is the measurement of other household tasks... [thus it] is excluded from... [her] definition of household labor" (Shelton 1992, p7). Likewise, Nickols and Metzen assume that task equals activity and that it has only one dimension.

> ...Child care is not included in the present analysis because it is considered qualitatively different from other household production. Some child-care [sic] time is spent in providing for the physical needs of the child, but a sizeable amount of child-care [sic] time involves social interaction and development of human capital. Thus a significant component of leisure is present in child care (Nickols & Metzen 1982, p201).

Reinharz states that in the positivist tradition, "[q]uestions which cannot be measured are not seen as challenging the notion of measurement, but rather as not worth studying" (Reinharz 1981, p422). But, from a post-positivist perspective, it is not valid to exclude an activity from a time use survey simply because its definition and measurement is problematic. Secondly, excluding

child care is defining it by default in that it is defined as not being whatever activities are incorporated into the remaining categories.

More importantly, child care is the one activity that many maintain is the basis of the domestic sphere. For example, Gregson and Lowe argue that:

> ...much feminist research has shown, it is childcare responsibilities which are often critical to the construction of domestic labour as a predominately female task...as well as to constricting and constraining women's employment and leisure (Gregson & Lowe 1993, p481).

As a result, its non inclusion results in the activity being ignored. In this way the links between concepts of time, control and gendering are demonstrated. The manipulation of time to decree what is important enough to be counted and what is not important enough to be considered can reinforce the dominant values of the wider society (Waring 1988). As a result, establishing what people do with their time is not an impartial action. Further, if caring is not considered important enough to count then the people caring may see themselves as not counting[8]. Moreover, as the majority of people who are excluded are women, concepts of time and power can here be seen to be related to a particular set of gender relations.

The realisation that caring is a significant, if not the dominant, aspect of the domestic sphere opens up other questions, such as Who cares?, and Who do they care for and care about? In answer to the first question, my evidence indicates that both women and men care. This in turn has implications for how they choose to dispense their time and I return to this point in subsequent chapters.

The answer to the question 'Who do men and women care for?', highlights another flaw in the methodology of the time-use surveys. Caring in the time-use literature is very much defined as child-care, even if this is not specified. For example, Hilton used the term 'Care' but on closer examination she was only measuring care of children. But the process of caring in the domestic sphere can be understood as involving more than just children (Henwood

1987). As a result a substantial aspect of domestic activities is left unacknowledged, and thus unaccounted for and unexamined. Again, this too has implications revolving around the exchange of time and I return to this in later chapters.

Leisure

In the same way as establishing what constituted caring was problematic for the people in this project, so too was deciding what was leisure. For example, Don.

> What is leisure? I suppose it depends on how you define it [pause]... something that you enjoy doing?...

Deem argues that "[t]raditional debates around and approaches to male leisure have made much play with the notion of free time (time free from work, that is) and the relationship between (paid) work and leisure" (Deem 1996, p8). This relationship between paid work and leisure leads to a definition of leisure as the absence of paid work, in which case the people in this project who were not in paid employment had 100 per cent leisure. Alternatively, without some time being expended in paid work, there could be no leisure as there is no mirror, i.e., paid work, to reflect the reverse image from so a simple understanding of this relationship between paid work and leisure is difficult.

Further, the idea that time not spent in paid work equals leisure can be seen as having a gendered aspect. For example, several of the men who had left paid employment told me that their paid work male friends now considered their lives as one of endless leisure, sitting around all day drinking coffee and watching soap operas. But to the men in the project, this was far from the reality and that their activities were no longer seen as work irked them. Simon for example, had got around this by calling himself a government employee.

> People say 'what do you do? And I say, 'I work for the government... once every three months, I've got to take a form in [for my benefit] and that's my job'.

I return to this issue shortly.

The relationship between paid work and leisure was one that was often commented upon by the people in this project, such as Graeme and Don, both of whom had left the paid workforce to care for their children. To Don, if he defined leisure as something that he enjoyed doing, then work could be leisure.

> But then that means you can't distinguish between work and leisure. If you are looking after children in your own environment, it's your own environment. That is different from work [paid employment] which is somewhere you go and you have to obey the rules of a set environment that you work in... so therefore I used to work and come home and so I could break it up into work and family. But the [paid] work was still part of leisure because I enjoyed it. At the same time, family is not all leisure because bringing up a family is also partly work.

Graeme's views had changed as a result of his changed situation.

> I don't know [what leisure is]. In a sense you decide that you are going to have a good time looking after the kids (laughing). If you enjoy work does that become leisure? The difficulty with those sort of things is that life does not compartmentalise itself so simply. I think you can to some extent but if you looked at it from some sort of scientific data gathering basis, you'd have to keep compromising and in the end you'd end up with something that was pretty meaningless.

> I guess it goes back to the idea of eight hours work, eight hours play, eight hours sleep. But I've become conscious lately of the extent to which work and paid employment, or going off to paid work is an idea that you are going away and leaving the house and that in some sense is an act of sacrifice, when, in fact, it is actually a bit of an escape from what is a far more difficult situation in the house (laughing).

In the same way as Don, Graeme too commented upon the difference between the structure of the paid work environment and the structure of the domestic work environment.

> Back in the workplace things are nicely structured and ordered and you have a pretty good idea of what it is you are trying to achieve and people are there encouraging you and all this type of thing. And you

don't get any of those sort of things (laughing) in the house unless you
look for them yourself.

So I think there is a bit of a myth about the sacrifice of going off to
work especially if there is another person at home looking after the
domestic front and you don't have to do much of the child caring
yourself. I am inclined to think now that going to work is a very selfish
thing to do unless the other party is very clear that what they want to do
is stay at home.

Unlike Don and Graeme who had left the paid workforce after their
separations, Kirsten had returned to the full time paid workforce shortly
before her separation. Given that every other week, Kirsten's children were
not staying with her and that she was in the full time paid workforce, I
expected that she would be able to distinguish between work, housework,
leisure and caring.

Paid work takes up the vast majority of my time, including traveling
time, something approaching ten hours a day...Leisure [pause] I
suppose it is how you define leisure. My idea of leisure [pause] if I get
half an hour to read a book before I go to bed then that suits me just
fine. If I get a half an hour in the morning which includes ten minutes
in the shower and drying my hair and getting dressed then I suppose
you can call that leisure in a way because I quite enjoy that time. I
don't find it too frantic. And then I try to sleep sometimes as well.
Percentage wise I wouldn't hazard a guess. Leisure is anything that I do
for pleasure.

A lot of what I do for the kids I can honestly say I don't do for fun. If I
never have to cut another [expletive deleted] cut lunch again
(laughing), I won't be losing any sleep over that...There are aspects of
it [caring] that I would rather not do, like I'd rather not cut lunches and
I'd rather not stand on a rainy soccer field for three hours on a Sunday
morning.

*You've told me that leisure equals pleasure, but at the same time that
everything that is pleasure, such as your work or looking after the
children, is not leisure.*

> [Pause] Specifically, what do I consider leisure? Well, I do think leisure
> is doing things for yourself that you do because you enjoy them. I don't
> work entirely just because I enjoy it. I do enjoy my job but I work to
> earn a living. Leisure is the time that I play tennis every Saturday. But I
> don't have any fixed things that fall neatly into the category of leisure
> that I apply my time to regularly. Leisure is what's left I suppose, after
> you've done all the other stuff. (Laughing) Just define the categories
> for me and I'll tell you the answers.

Obviously then, Kirsten did not see leisure as the opposite of full time paid employment. Instead, she saw leisure as time for herself.

Deem argues that it is more useful to see leisure as involving "time, quality, choice within constraints, pleasure and enjoyment, is personally meaningful and is connected to lifestyles and well-being" (Deem 1986, 19). In a later work she further argues that:

> ...the *experience* and *meaning* of leisure are intensely personal to a
> given individual... [and that the] *context* in which activities occur is
> also important and closely linked to the meanings which people
> attribute to their leisure (Deem 1988, p78, emphasis in the original).

She concludes that "[i]t is extremely difficult to understand leisure unless it is treated as part of our life styles as a whole" (Deem 1988, p80). In other words, the category of leisure has a strongly subjective and culturally defined component making it difficult to establish what it is and how to measure it. Viewing leisure in this way then opens up other aspects of leisure.

For example, Deem also argues that "*[c]hoice* is another aspect of leisure" (Deem 1988, p7 emphasis in the original). and most people, like Kirsten, drew some sort of a parallel between leisure and time for one's self. This was described in various ways but the common theme seemed to be a period of clock time which they could use to do something (or nothing) solely for themselves without having to consider any responsibility for any other person. This correlates with Henderson and Allen's argument that leisure contains elements of:

> ...'free from' as well as 'free to', and this provides an important
> dimension for exploring the context in which leisure occurs or does not
> occur... particularly as related to an ethic of care (Henderson & Allen
> 1991, p98).

Thus while asking about leisure was problematic, rephrasing the question to examine the concept of time for themselves was less so

For example Chris.

> Leisure [pause] Couple of hours a week at the gym four days a week,
> that's my leisure. Well that's what keeps me sane. So I look on that as a
> leisure thing, although it's not all that leisurely (laughing). [Pause] I
> don't go out much. Leisure for me at the moment [pause] it is just being
> able to sit down and please myself what I want to do.

> I used to entertain at home a lot [when I was married]. I enjoyed it. I'm
> a reasonable cook, I've been told. I'd do a three or four course meal,
> make an entrée, main course and dessert, or even throw something else
> in. I like making something different. But I've got to the stage where
> since I've been separated I don't enjoy cooking from day to day like I
> used to. It's more of a chore than anything. I guess everybody gets like
> that. I understand how girls think about that now[9].

Like Chris, Don spoke of time to himself.

> It is very important. What I find is I need a break, I'll put it that way,
> just from the normal routine and from the boys which is part of the
> routine. Hopefully over the [forthcoming school] holidays I will get a
> couple of days where I don't have a set routine. I used to have a day
> where I could just go and do things at my own pace and at this stage
> I'm missing that time...I think that if you're doing the same routine you
> want a break, you want to do something different.

> I do have leisure, it depends whether you say leisure for me. I mean
> there are things that I do particularly for myself, only for myself. Or
> leisure that I share with the kids when we go out as a communal type of
> thing. So you have to make the distinction between those. Leisure for
> me could be just going for a walk down the street, playing the guitar,
> whatever.

When Chris and Don talk about using their time for themselves they are understanding time as an objectified external reality that they can use in some way. How people organized this time to themselves gave rise to another contradiction regarding the relationship between the category of leisure and that of paid work. What seems to be important here is not what people do, which appears to be the basis of the category of leisure, but their perception of owning the time in which they do it. But this raises two important questions. Why do they not feel they own all their time? And what happens when other things or people's time conflict with their perception of what is their own time?

Paid Employment

At first glance, the category of paid employment seems to be one easily defined and measurable category and, taken on its own, it is. You either have a paid job or you don't, and if you do, the number of hours spent at the paid job can be easily ascertained. However, the category of paid work does not exist in isolation in people's lives and thus when it is included as one category among others, the situation becomes more blurred, as the above section on leisure suggests.

At its most basic level, paid employment is one way of obtaining the material needs of life such as shelter, food and clothing. Finding the means to provide these needs was a major factor with all the people in this project. All experienced a substantial downturn in their financial situation as a result of their separations, a pattern repeated in the literature (Gerner, Montaldo & Bryant 1990). However, the question of whether or not to enter the paid workforce, and for how long each day, was not purely a financial matter. The ages and perceived needs of the children were factors but this issue was also overlaid with questions of identity. Many told me that they did not feel that parenting was valued by the society and as a result they had no, or little, value as people. In several instances the people who had not initiated their separations described their self image shattered by this experience and

entering the paid work force was seen as a way of overcoming this. But, simultaneously, given their worries regarding their children, they had to balance their own need for an identity other than parent, with their views that the children needed their presence.

Helen, for example, was one who was initially confused over her identity and the question of whether she should seek paid employment. When I first met her, she was in "the agonizing death throes" of her second marriage.

> This is something that I am happy to talk about here but in a lot of ways
> I haven't come to terms with it yet. In fact, I haven't come to terms
> with it at all and it's not something that I talk about with people if I can
> avoid it... [most people] have no idea that I've had two husbands and
> that my two children have different fathers.

Thus, when we began the discussions Helen was not only experiencing difficulties in coming to terms with the breakdown of the second marriage but she was also having troubles adjusting to the change in lifestyle and finances. The question of whether she should or should not work therefore dominated a lot of our discussions.

> Bevan was the bread winner and I felt dependent on him especially
> when I first stopped work. It was very difficult taking. Then to come
> here [Perth] and be dependent on the government is still another
> humiliation for me and for my own sake I want to be able to work. I'm
> very grateful for the pension, and the treatment I've had at Social
> Security has been wonderful. They've been enormously helpful and it's
> not as though I've ever felt looked down on. They've treated me with
> respect. They've been really helpful but I want, for my sake, to change
> that dependency.

> But I don't want to go out and work in an office. I'd like to be here in
> the afternoon when my children come home...and in a funny way, if
> they had their father with them, I'd feel that was less important. I'm
> trying to compensate for the fact that they don't have a father, fathers,
> either of them. And I feel that I can't afford to slip up as a mother. I've
> got to be around for them. I must never ever let them down.

Four months later Helen had still not resolved her conflict and the arrival of her step daughter from her second marriage had brought this clearly into focus.

> I'm feeling guilty that I'm not out earning a living and that what I'm
> doing with my time is not worthwhile, and I have been feeling guilty all
> the way through...last Monday was the start of looking for a job...I've
> got to start earning money. The whole lot went out the window because
> Susan[step daughter] arrived...and I was torn the whole week with
> wanting to be with her, and Shane and Samantha just adored her. It was
> just a wonderful time, but I was feeling edgy and irritable with myself
> because I had not started on this schedule that I had given myself, and
> the time is marching on and I'm still not earning a living, but it was a
> very special time...she couldn't talk to her father because he doesn't
> have the time to listen, so I'm sure that valuable things happened and
> certainly for my children, from the three of them, from all of us, it was
> very important from a relationship point of view, but I still feel guilty.

At our next discussion, one month later, the subject arose again.

> It's all about time and people. Working parents will argue quality over
> quantity, but I wonder how important that is for children. I really
> do...I'm not sure that children differentiate between quality and
> quantity...I think that most of us use whichever argument justifies the
> position we're in...But I've noticed that if my children seem to have
> had a good weekend together, where it's been pleasant...they don't
> want Monday morning of course...but they are nicer people for it...the
> week will actually pan out much smoother...anyway, by whose
> definition is it quality time?

The discussions with Helen continued, and slowly, Helen began to resolve her conflicts. After fourteen months I gave her the transcripts of the previous discussions to re-read and comment on if she chose.

> Such a long time has elapsed since the first discussion; it really struck
> me reading the transcripts. And the first thing that struck me, and I'm
> sure you'll be glad to know, is that I've taken the hair shirt off
> [laughter] and I'm not beating myself quite as much as I used to...I've
> relaxed a lot in terms of the procrastinating and the 'I'm not working
> enough', and I seem to have resolved some of those issues.

Helen's conflict involved her reconstructing and renegotiating her identity around the twin issues of paid work and parenting, specifically parenting on her own. To Helen, society did not seem to place any value upon parenting and as a result she felt that she needed paid employment for her own self esteem to be considered a worthwhile member of society. Over the period of our discussions she came to appreciate that just because society didn't seem to place any value on parenting, didn't mean that she had to necessarily follow suit.

> I've been thinking a lot about the importance that society places on
> parenting. But really, often that comes down to mothering rather than
> just parenting...[society] espouses family values by which they mean a
> nuclear family and if you're not part of that you're somehow bludging
> aren't you....

It is easy to see why Helen would consider that parenting had no value in terms of my discussion above regarding the manner in which caring is discussed in some of the literature.

Some of the people in this project were receiving the Supporting Parents Benefit and considered it sufficient to live on provided one had no debts. In most cases they were also receiving maintenance. However, the payment of maintenance was in most instances irregular leading them to view the Benefit as their regular income upon which they lived and the intermittent maintenance payments as extra. Further, as will be detailed in a later chapter, the payment of maintenance was heavily interspersed with issues of control. Returning to the paid workforce for reasons of self esteem became an important factor for others. For example, Jeanette.

> I work for many reasons. One, obviously, finance, although I wouldn't
> say that's the most important. I spent four years just with the pension
> and maintenance and I managed. It was hard but we managed because
> we had no financial commitments other than the usual expenses. So I
> know I could get by without the extra money. But having the extra
> money has meant we could buy the stereo, I could get my son a second
> hand drum kit, I can have more than $2 in my purse. So the money is

great although it's not an absolute necessity. I've become a bit of a materialist (laughing).

I work for self esteem which is probably the most important thing. When I was on the full pension I <u>hated</u> it. I felt lower than the low. When people asked me what I did I let them believe that I was still married and my husband worked away in the mining industry. So working, and studying...it gave me a label.

And although most of the jobs I have had have been only short term contracts I can now say 'I'm a librarian' and that makes me feel good so my self esteem is good. And also before I started studying and working I was lying on the sofa all day reading books, which I loved, but I thought to myself that I am just laying here reading about people's lives...I just feel that I am living a life now rather than just reading it.

In a similar way, Ronice described why she was looking for paid employment.

A bit of extra money, sense of well being, contributing rather than being supported so that I'm supporting myself. And it's so much nicer if you go somewhere and they say 'what do you do?', and you say 'I'm a pensioner', to be able to say 'well, I'm such and such and such', to give yourself a label...I don't think the money is the most important thing. I think being able to say that I am somebody is more important than the actual money.

Although all the people considered that raising their children was terribly important to them and although all agreed that, overall, they would not change that aspect of their situation, none considered it as so important that it was sufficient in itself to be 'just a parent'. Parenting then was only one facet of their identity but it was paid work which many felt was recognised and valued by others. For example, Don.

I'm trying not to be sexist but I make a distinction between being a husband/worker to housewife/ housemanager. In the sense that as a single parent you have to provide those two functions other than what Social Security gives you...I think parenting is divided into caring and providing and the idea is to keep some sort of a balance rather than one dominating the other. In a sense that's why I am a bit against the

> pension because you don't feel as though you are the provider, you've
> got some outside agency that's providing for you. But the thing is to
> remember that they are not providing for me, they are providing for me
> to raise my children.

Like Don, Simon had rationalized his views about receiving a pension.

> being on the pension doesn't affect me though... raising kids is an
> important job and all the rest but going back to being in a perfect world,
> one person's the provider whether it's male or female, and the other
> one minds the children.

> I see it as they're giving money to the family unit rather than giving it
> to me...[but] I've never been comfortable taking money off the
> government, it just sort of sticks in me. Maybe it's the way I was
> brought up or whatever...the values are you've got to work for a living
> and provide...

> I don't see why this doesn't go for women...somebody should be out
> there gathering while the other one does the nurturing...earlier on when
> my youngest was still at home I saw my role as being at home... [but] I
> think it's a very easy thing to just sit back and become a professional
> pensioner and that's the thing I don't like...I want something better
> than just sitting at home thanking the government.

While the women saw parenting as being not valued by the wider society, thus
their decision to seek paid employment, some of the men were more
concerned about their identity as a male. Simon, for example.

> People judge males a lot more by what they do, rather than females and
> ...with the relationship I had in the past while I've been a single
> parent... her friends have said 'why are you going out with him? He's
> got no prospects, he hasn't got a job, he hasn't got a career', but if I
> was female that wouldn't have been an issue but because I was male I
> had to be a provider...

In other words, the gendered division of parenting into fathers provide and
mothers care, caused different problems for some of the men and some of the
women. For Helen, it was the caring aspect of parenting that was not valued.

For Simon, the providing aspect of parenting was tied in with his definition of male.

But other men did not acknowledge this aspect in their discussions. For example Chris.

> I've just gone onto the pension again. I've given up, willingly, my
> job...[I was] carrying two positions [at work], putting in long days...
> I've neglected the home side of things a bit over these last few years to
> a degree, time wise...I just haven't had the time to do a lot of those
> things so I've finished work.

> Brett's gone a little bit wayward with his school work. He started high
> school last year and the high school he's at is a pretty rugged
> environment and he's started to succumb to that in a few areas. So I've
> just got to spend a little more time at home here doing things. Between
> doing that I've got to run around trying to get a bit of extra money
> coming in because I'm paying my house off. The pension's not enough,
> but I do have to spend some more time at home...It had to be done. In
> reality it probably should have been done a little while ago.

Chris then, unlike Helen, found it easier to resolve the tension between his perceived financial needs and his perception of the needs of his children.

The category of paid work then, whilst seeming relatively easy to establish, does not exist as a finite discrete entity in opposition to the other three categories of caring, housework and leisure. Instead, aspects of the other three are incorporated into it, while aspects of paid work are equally incorporated into the other three. Paid work can be perceived as leisure, as housework and as another form of caring. Moreover, given their views that caring is a constant, caring can also occur while in paid work.

Housework

The way in which some of the people in this project equated receiving the pension with being employed highlights another problem with the division into categories of activities in the domestic sphere. Once again, the line demarcating the categories is blurred. This somewhat artificial division

between work that is paid and work that is not paid (generally referred to as housework) has led to the two categories being contrasted. For example, Luxton argues that:

> ...[I]n contrast to paid employment where the divisions of labour and
> the hours of work are clearly (and usually contractually) known,
> domestic labour is task-oriented and the tasks involved can vary
> significantly in the amount of time they take each time they are done
> and in the frequency with which they are done (Luxton 1997, p434).

Although Luxton's view of paid employment exaggerates the degree of homogeneity of work place activities and does not fully allow for the differences in paid work place experiences, her criticism is warranted particularly as several of the people in this project did compare the domestic work place with the paid work place. For example, when discussing housework, Graeme directly related it to paid work.

> If I was paying somebody to come in and do a job so that time was no
> longer a factor and I was no longer factoring in all the other things that
> I judge as important, I would expect them to do it as Mum did.

Here Graeme is highlighting a crucial differences between paid employment and unpaid employment. There is an understanding that in paid work, the task at hand is the most important and other factors are not permitted to interfere. Whereas in the domestic sphere the same task, such as ironing for example, while important, needs to be balanced against competing interests. As a result, in the domestic sphere, it is not usually possible to follow the dictates of scientific management and do one thing at a time, one thing after another.

Caring for their children to a large extent dictated how they used their time. Graeme and Christine for example, both believed that spending time with their children was more important than housework. But they were to differing extents uncomfortable with some of the outcomes of this choice. Graeme, while not completely happy, was more accepting of the situation.

> I'm conscious of the fact that I haven't done the vacuuming and all that
> type of thing (laughter). It keeps popping into my mind. It hasn't

bothered me yet that I haven't done it but if it were to get to the end of next week, I'd say that I probably ought to do the vacuuming...It's a question of priorities. I'm not really happy with the standard that I've maintained...in terms of my standards, of what I regard as being good housekeeping, they're my Mum's standards. Under the circumstances I think I have done as good a job as I could have...

Christine, however, was very concerned about what she saw as her failure at keeping a clean house to the extent that she refused to allow me to visit her at her house.

My house is shocking...It looks like a bomb's hit the place. I think there is a certain level that a house should be at but I would never expect absolute spotlessness...I feel uncomfortable having people in the house the way it is at the moment and if I go and see a friend or someone and their house is always tidy...I guess it is what your expectations are....I've never been tidy but I do feel I get stressed...I get to the stage where I feel uncomfortable sitting in my own house because it's such a mess.

Housework is a problem for me...I mean I force myself to do it, it's just such a [pause] I mean, I feel like I try but it's just feels like it doesn't come naturally to me and I just can't figure out how some people have a knack and I don't have it.

Why do you think it should come naturally?

I'm supposed to say 'because I'm a woman" (laughs), it's my job. That is how I feel. I feel that that's part of a mother's role to do it ...to me that is the normal thing.

Christine's problem with housework led to much stress for her.

I used to be very rushed in the mornings [the period ending with the children arriving at school]...I'm quite proud of my achievement in the mornings...my mornings are like organized chaos now instead of just chaos...I'm not an organized person but as I was saying to a friend 'I have four kids and every morning my kids are at school on time, looking nice in their uniforms', [even though] sometimes I won't have them done in the morning so I have to stick them through the washing

machine and I quick wash and get them dried before school. They're all clean, all fed and it's something I'm proud of.

...what I'm comparing it to is another woman who has two kids who always look a sight and they're never on time and she's always got a clean house (laughs). But I would rather have my kids to school late and have a tidy house...I think the house is just the thing that really bugs me, you might have picked that up (laughs)...I know it's more important to get the children there on time but if I had the choice of having a clean house and having the kids at school on time everyday, I'd have a clean house....I just hate my house being messy.

Establishing identity through housework though can and does change when situations change. For example, Kirsten's comments at our fourth discussion.

When I walked in this evening you said 'if it had been anyone else I would have said please excuse the mess', but when I went to your house the first time you did say that to me and I remember thinking 'what mess?' [both laugh]..

That was the old me, welcome to the new me [laughing]. I'm in a very different position where my responsibilities at work have changed tremendously over the last few months...I think some skills at work have been recognised...that's very positive...[but] it takes more of my time, takes more mental time so I'm not thinking about things at home. And to be honest, if I'm going to work at seven thirty in the morning and I'm not coming home 'till six thirty at night, really, bugger the vacuuming.

Before...my house was bloody pristine and a week wouldn't go by where the bathroom wasn't scrubbed from top to bottom [laughing]. Now it's more like several months before I change the bloody sheets [laughing]. It really is bad but I've realised that the sky won't fall if I don't change my sheets....I suppose your life changes, and your priorities change. My priority is no longer the housewife me, my priority now is the working me and something has to give.

Housework, according to much of the literature discussed, is another category that can be clearly demarcated and measured. But, this interpretation gives a

one dimensional view of life in the home. In the first instance, it is not as easy as some of the literature suggests to define just what is housework. Ronice, for example, believed that a lot of what she did, she did because she cared for her child. Housework therefore was caring. But, like Kirsten, there were certain aspects to caring that she did not enjoy.

> Making Shannon's bed is caring for Shannon, cooking her dinner is caring for Shannon, listening to her silly stories is caring for Shannon, sort of being nice to her Dad is caring for Shannon...but I hate mopping the floor, doing the dishes, washing the front of the cupboards, doing the ironing, wiping dirty marks off the floor, making sure the curtains don't smell dusty, dusting. It's boring...but I have to make sure Shannon's fry pan is washed because I care about her health.

But if housework was seen as one aspect of caring it was not necessarily always seen as a critical component of caring. For example, Jeanette.

> Cleaning I suppose in a way it's caring but I tend to separate the two because he'll get by whether the house is clean or not as we have just demonstrated over the last few weeks (laughter). He's still alive even though the Occupational Health and Safety people have condemned the place...the fridge got so bad that I had to tie it up with a strap because I couldn't close the door because the freezer was that iced up...I like the place clean and tidy but when there are other things that are more important...I think 'I'll leave that, it's gone for a week, another week won't hurt'. And then something else will happen so it's put off again.

Secondly, the argument that housework is a discrete category that can be measured implies that there are terminal points with the result that there must be periods when housework does not occur. But this obfuscates the reality for many people. Deem, for example, argues that when discussing leisure, "*Time* clearly enters into the definition – since leisure is frequently regarded as 'time off'" (Deem1988, p79, emphasis in the original). But 'time off' from what? Thus she argues that women still have to cook, clean and care, even if the family is on holiday.

Summary

My evidence shows that categorising and measuring activities in relation to time in the domestic sphere is problematic. The four categories of caring, paid work, leisure and housework do not exist as discrete categories. Instead they intertwine in such a manner that aspects of all four can be identified in any one category. Consequently, assuming that activities over a day, week, month or year can be broken down into these four categories and measured by clock-time with proportions of time equating to each category is difficult. Allowing people to discuss their activities without imposing definitions and boundaries opens the field of inquiry. To me, the two points of interest are leisure and caring.

It is in the discussion on leisure that issues relating to choices and control in relation to time are particularly apparent. Rather than being seen as the opposite of paid work or as time off, leisure appears as a period of time owned by the person that they can dispose of any way they wish. Consequently, leisure can be seen as going to paid work or spending time with their children. However, it can also be seen as time when neither of these activities occur. Thus it is not what they do that makes it leisure. It is not my intention to enter into the debate as to what leisure is. Instead, in the following chapters, I will pursue the links between understandings of leisure and understandings of control and choice in relation to time.

It is the concept of caring that mainly gives rise to the problems with time-use surveys in the domestic sphere. When caring is seen as orientation resulting in activity and not as an activity in and of itself, other questions relating to caring can be posed; questions such as 'Who cares?' and my evidence shows that men, as well as women, care. However, discussions in the literature about the domestic sphere generally range around the activities of women with the result that traditional studies of time use in the domestic sphere have it given a gendered focus.

III

Time and Gender in the Domestic Sphere

You say, 'well, of course I'm a 'woman' as though that is
sufficient in itself and we all know what that means and I
guess we don't.

<div align="center">Helen</div>

There is more than one type of man and maybe it is only
because there are so many perceptions of what being a man is.
It is like asking someone what is love. You ask ten people and
there will be five or six different answers.

<div align="center">Chris</div>

I have suggested that the literature draws a correlation between time use in the domestic sphere and gender. Additionally, there is a body of literature that suggests there is a concept identified as 'women's time'. In this section I explore ideas about gender and the relationship between gender and time in more detail. I begin with an examination of how the people in the project understood gender. I then propose that gender can be seen as a process before looking more closely at the literature linking time and gender. I suggest that rather than time being gendered in some essential or natural way, concepts of time can be seen as being used to reinforce and reproduce the process of gendering.

<u>Some Evidence – talking gendering</u>

Like time, gender has such a taken for granted nature that 'everyone knows', as Helen indicates, what it is. As the above two quotations from my evidence demonstrate, defining what they meant by the terms men and women and explaining the differences between them was not easy for the people in this project. For some, the difference was in behaviour. For example, Graeme, who had left a managerial role to care for his two children, described how he saw the differences between 'men' and 'women'.

If men try and do something that is boring, they muck it up They have
to reinvent it, they can't leave it alone, they're terrible. They feel they
have to do something with it rather than just leave it alone...the
interesting thing is that most men end up in boring style jobs...
[laughing] and they go round creating trouble [laughing] instead of
making it as simple as possible, they make it very complex. This is how
one gets into management, by making things complex. This is one of
the reasons why more men are in management than women. Men know
how to make things complicated and put a value on it that says, it's so
complicated, I must be important. Whereas many women will say, if
it's so complicated, you're an idiot [laughing].

Here the dualism employed is complex/simple. In Helen's example, the
dualism becomes active/passive. Like Graeme, she saw the difference as
behavioural in that women had a more passive nature than the men.

Men and women in some ways complement each other because of
where they are opposites...Women tend to let nature run its course and
men will tend to want to alter the course of nature.

Ronice thought that biology had a role but, like Graeme and Helen, she
thought that the differences were mostly learned.

How do I see my female role? I think it's just the way it is...some
people are male and some are female with different body bits. I think
there are certain behaviours...I do believe that a lot of our attitudes as
males and females are socially learned...you could probably bring a
child of one gender up to be very much like a child of the other gender
but I think there would still be sort of male and feminine attributes that
they had.

Like Ronice, Maureen acknowledged a slight biological difference between
men and women but she was not prepared to attribute the differences between
men and women to it. Instead she believed all the differences were a result of
socialisation.

There's a 5% physical difference between a male and a female, that's
all there is apparently, but our thought patterns are different, and I think
we've been culturally trained to be different because you associate
male behaviour with certain behaviours and female behaviour with

> certain behaviours...Men come from a different point of view...they
> like facts...whereas women come from a different thought pattern and
> facts are something that we don't always agree with...they reckon
> women are more emotional and I don't agree with that.

Maureen was not the only person to attribute differences in actions to differences in thought patterns. According to Chris

> Males and females aren't necessarily the opposite of each other, they
> are different [pause] just the way they do things, the way they think. I
> mean they must be. I can't see how, if we all thought the same way, we
> would clash so much.

According to Brook, "gender regulations associated with behaviour and appearance are not at all about observing natural divisions between the sexes, but about obliterating the far greater similarities" (Brook 1994, p53). In this respect, both Ronice and Maureen emphasise the similarities and recognise that they are greater than the differences, whereas to Chris the differences appear greater than the similarities.

However, in much the same way as Graeme and Helen, when Chris was asked to describe 'men' and 'women', his definition of 'man' came down to action, while 'woman' equalled being.

> I am sure that there is more than one way to be a man because most
> people are different...their perceptions of what it is to be a male...I
> think just getting through life without having too many adverse
> physical confrontations and doing what you need to do to keep you
> happy and alive is pretty much man enough for me...There is a
> difference between woman and feminine. I've known a lot of women
> who aren't what I'd call feminine...What's feminine? (laughing) I
> guess what all our burnt in images of what a female should be, [pause]
> soft and long hair and bosoms and gentle, nicely dressed....it's the
> image we certainly get bombarded with every day.

While Chris was prepared to concede more than one masculinity, he only allowed for one femininity. He was not prepared to concede that the women he

classified as 'unfeminine' were in fact negotiating their own ideal of femininity (see Ussher 1997, p111)[10].

The variations in behaviours was thus attributed to either biology and/or socialisation. Walby argues that while "[s]ocialization theory is a powerful antidote to suggestions that gender differences are [sic] biologically inherent" (Walby 1990, p93) it is in itself open to debate. In particular it suggests that the process of gendering occurs at "specialized times and places" (Walby 1990, p94) and thus does not allow for changes over a lifetime, nor for people to be active participants "in their acquisition of gender identity" (Walby 1990, p93). Connell likewise argues that gender relations "are inherently historical; and their making and remaking is a political process affecting the balance of interests in society and the direction of social change" (Connell 1995, p44). This is seen in the evidence presented here. Every one of the people in the project were incorporating both parenting roles in themselves[11]. Thus they were performing behaviours that they previously had attributed to the 'other'. Moreover because of their changed situations many had begun to query 'gender' but none had seen the contradiction between attributing gender to socialisation and/or biology and their own actions in redefining gender roles.

As a result of their questioning of 'gender', many were unhappy about the whole subject. For example, Chris.

> The more I sit here and say feminine qualities and male qualities, the more I just want to piss both the terms off and just say that he has that nurturing quality or she has the quality where she likes to punch people in the pub. The more you talk about it, the more it doesn't really seem right to have those terms.

Simon too, was not happy living in a gendered world.

> I'm one of those people who really gets annoyed by the male/female comparison. I think we are the same apart from the physical differences and the odd psychological and emotional difference (laughing). I think we are just the same and I had a big argument with my father a couple of years ago because he said I shouldn't be doing what I'm doing and

> that the kids really needed their mother and I said no. I know for a fact
> that I can do a better job.

Like Simon, Chris did not see anything strange about his current situation.

> I don't think my current situation is a role reversal. I think I've been
> doing a lot of it all my life. It's no reversal for me, it's just me.

However, Chris was very much aware that others did see his situation as
unusual. It wasn't just Simon's father who had expressed his reservations.

> It's a problem in as much as my male friends give me hard time but it's
> all done jokingly... it doesn't bother me.

It appears then, that even if some are prepared to step outside 'traditional'
boundaries, others in turn try to maintain the boundary markers. Bowlby,
Gregory and McKie argue that "[e]ven today, when women and men venture
into the worlds most associated with the other gender, it is, at best, the subject
of comment, and, at worst, the object of social condemnation" (Bowlby,
Gregory & McKie 1997, p345), while Segal cites Russell's report:

> ...that fathers who were centrally involved in childcare tended to
> encounter negative reactions from their relatives and male peer group,
> with only a minority finding their men friends or workmates
> sympathetic to their participation (Segal 1990, p40).

Greg and Chris had found themselves being treated in a similar manner to
'women'. Greg's male friends, for instance, teased him, as they teased their
wives, about sitting around at home all day, drinking coffee, gossiping with
other women, of not really working but, as shown above, the reality is
completely different. They found themselves being treated according to the
stereotypical images of how 'women' lived. But although the men had
encountered this situation, none of them had allowed it to bother them even as
they acknowledged that it bothered others. In other words, they knew who
they were and they could ignore the opinions of others. However, three of the
men, Chris, Don and Graeme, had all had experiences in paid employment[12]
where other men had been responsible for the domestic duties. As a result they
did not necessarily equate domestic activities with women. This experience

left them relatively free to define their own masculinity outside of the more narrower confines experienced by others.

This was in contrast to the situation the women found themselves in. Here, Ussher's argument that women can "negotiate femininity" (Ussher 1997, p111) was only beginning to take hold. Some of the women considered the manner in which they had been socialised to be 'women' as the reason for their current problems. Consequently, they were redefining what 'woman' meant to them. For example, Tabitha.

> I don't know if it was because of my age but I was the young wife and I
> wanted to fulfill that role I'd seen my mother do, bending over
> backwards for the man.

Likewise Kirsten.

> Maybe it was something that I learned from my mother, that it was the
> way for a woman to behave…I think that possibly comes from our own
> role models, from the women we learned to be women from.

And Vicky.

> I thought that getting married was the only future I had. When I got
> married I thought I was successful. Isn't that pathetic? I'm telling
> Lousie [her daughter] not to get married until she is at least thirty five
> [laughing].

Further, being treated as 'woman' can cause pain. For example, Maureen.

> Talking about gender is uncomfortable in some ways because I've had
> a lot of put downs from the male area [long pause] and I'm not stupid
> and I'm not ugly and I just think that to do with the male gender, they
> just seem to look at you as [pause] they looked at me as a sex object,
> rather than as a person and I don't like that. And [pause] I recognise it
> now and I won't allow that to happen to me again.

To Maureen, how she had been treated as someone other than a person was the issue. Likewise Ronice associated behaving in a gender appropriate manner as not being a person.

> It's learned behaviour and the women too can't help it. I mean
> sometimes you say to them, 'don't do this, don't do that, be a person'.

The men then, had been used to being 'people' and objected to and could counter the instances when they were treated as anything other. But for the women, this was a process some were gradually becoming aware of.

It would however seem that the belief that there are 'men' and 'women' and that there must therefore be a difference is very deeply ingrained. As Walby argues, the "dichotomy is still part of popular cultural practice" (Walby 1990, p104). Moreover the deep entrenchment of this belief leads to confusion and makes it that much harder for people treated as 'woman' to reclaim their identity as a person. Ronice was one who, as the above example shows, was coming to see the difference between 'woman' and 'person'. And, like many of the others who participated in this project, she was unhappy with living in a gendered world.

> Why can't we all just be equal people?...It's the way we're brought
> up... There are differences between men and women but I'm sure it's
> just learned behaviour and I'm sure that if we could just find the tools,
> we could change that.

In the wider Australian community the concept of gender is being questioned and challenged. This has been noted by them and many agreed with the changing scene. For example, Ronice.

> But it should be changing...Women aren't supposed to be assertive.
> Why not? If I want something, why can't I say [pause] because I still
> find it difficult to get over all those things I learned.

Here Ronice was arguing that being a 'woman' equated with being passive and submissive and she, for one, felt this should change.

But the changes in themselves are causing problems as people learn the new ways. John was one who admitted to having problems in this regard.

> Today's world is more co-ed, it's not like little girls getting together
> and talking about cooking and sewing. It's more one-in, all-in and girls
> are getting more outspoken. Certainly in the way they present
> themselves as well...My views on women today is that they're
> confused, utterly confused...they want to have a career and be the wife
> and be the mother...and I think it's gone too far. You've got women at

the top [in their careers] and that's fine if that's what they want to do
but their biological clock tugs at them and also their womanhood tugs
at them and they get very screwed up...with these roles that they feel
they should take...So that screws up men because they don't know how
to treat women any more. Because some women want to be treated
equally right down the line. They don't expect doors opened for...and
yet some women love it so how do you know?...you don't know how
to treat them and you can offend whichever way you go and that's
screwed men up.

Monedas argues that "traditional sex stereotypes are no longer reliable guides
for behavior...[with resulting] confusion and frustration" (Monedas 1992,
p197). In particular she argues that "[m]any interpersonal problems between
the sexes relate to men's socialized tendencies to dominate, control, and
subordinate women to maintain their traditionally held power (Monedas 1992,
p197). But John did not consider himself as, nor wish to be seen as, a
chauvinist. Indeed, as will be shown in Chapter 5, he believed that respect
should flow in both directions. All the same, while he acknowledged that roles
were changing he still had his doubts.

Marriage is a team and there is no point everybody cooking and nobody
going out and earning money or vice versa. Now however that is
negotiated and divided up is fine... yes, I can cook, iron, wash, and
shop and I can do all the domestic things that the other gender, that
women can do, but... the traditional roles fit neatly with me because
that is the way I have been brought up and that is the way I have been
trained...

But, others did not consider the traditional roles 'fitting neatly'. Consequently,
these people were redefining how they saw themselves as 'woman' and were
aware that this was causing problems for 'men'. Maureen for example, saw the
problems as relating from the association of certain behaviours with 'men' and
'women'.

Male behaviour is associated with certain behaviours and female
behaviours with certain behaviours and the confusion takes place,
especially in the male mind, when females start to become assertive or

> angry and they associate those behaviours with women, not men, and
> they get confused by it.

Not only was a redefinition of 'woman' occurring but also a redefinition of what they expected from 'man'. Vicky, for example, thought that

> a real man is one that actually makes you feel as if he wants you
> around. Wants to spend time with you, wants to be out with you, wants
> to be with you.

and she was quite clear as to how 'men' needed to become more like 'women'.

> Men…they're so bloody analytical, aren't they. They like to look at
> everything logically. Why can't they take it a day at a time and just sort
> of flow into it. They're so bloody terrified men…I think women are
> more emotional. Women talk between themselves more intimately than
> men do [pause] Women have a better support group from their fellow
> women. Men don't quite so much have that. It's not a manly thing to
> talk about your emotions and how you're feeling…I mean I won't put
> all men in one basket like I won't put all women in one basket…But I
> think basically that's the difference, women talk to each other…we are
> there to support each other. Whereas men can't go to other men and say
> 'oh, she's broken my heart, I don't know what to do'[laughing]. He
> would think that doesn't look manly so that's a huge, huge difference.

Vicky too could see the problems that 'men' were having with the changed expectations on their behaviour.

> It has changed but it's tough because men don't know whether to be
> men any more or snags, so to speak. So the poor men are going through
> turmoil. They're getting called wooses at one end of the scale and men
> at the other…men are going to have to learn how to combine the two,
> to be sensitive and gentle as well as be a man…women are a lot more
> independent than they used to be…you've got women that aren't afraid
> of change…that aren't afraid to take control at times. I basically think
> that men still need to have the control.

In other words, it is not just that 'women' are changing that is creating problems for 'men' but that 'men' are expected to be changing too. If, as Connell argues "[m]asculinity and femininity are inherently relational

concepts, which have meaning in relation to each other, as a social demarcation and a cultural opposition" (Connell 1995, p44), it makes sense that changing one side of the equation will alter the relationship and require a changing of the other. Helen's view about the complementary nature of 'men' and 'women' can only hold true if both remain in the original positions that complement. But, to use Helen's example, if 'women' decide that they want to 'alter the course of 'nature' too, then the balance is disturbed. It is not then a case of 'women' wanting more *per se*, it is more of a case of them wanting less of some currently available behaviours as well as the opportunity to behave in other ways. Simultaneously, they want the changes to apply to the rest of the population as well or, as Monedas puts it, the requirement now is that both males and females " "achieve" masculinity and femininity" (Monedas 1992, p201).

Some Theory – thinking about gendering and time

Seeing the world as process affects how one sees gendering. Ortner and Whitehead, for example, argue that, "[w]hat gender is, what men and women are, what sorts of relations do or should obtain between them...are largely products of social and cultural processes" (Ortner & Whitehead 1981, p1). In a similar fashion, Flax (1993) argues that the categories of 'men' and 'women' do not just exist as natural entities. In other words, a constructed situation is presented as a natural occurrence obfuscating the relationships behind the situation. To expose this Flax introduces the term 'gendering' as an "attempt to do justice to the idea that gender is not a fixed or simple identity or set of social relations. I am trying to think of it as a plural verb rather than a single noun" (Flax 1993, p23).

Attempting to de-reify gender by seeing it in the active rather than passive voice, resonates with Elias' argument that rather than using the term 'time', we should use 'timing'. In both instances, changing the descriptors, that is time and gender, from a noun to a verb assists one in seeing the process rather than a fixed object. An examination of process in turn, highlights both the

constantly changing nature of the situation as well as the social relations (in themselves processes) at the base of the situation.

The process of gendering begins at birth (Kaplan & Rogers 1990; Bing & Bergvall 1998)) when a child is designated male or female depending upon their genitalia. However Kaplan and Rogers point out that life does not neatly divide up into either/or categories, even in the realm of the science of biology. There are "biological variation[s] of sex assignment...[and] Within rigid categories, variations from the norm are not easily accommodated" (Kaplan & Rogers 1990, p217). All of which lends weight to the argument articulated clearly by Moore, that the biological difference between people is a cultural construct in that "[t]he meanings given to bodies, and the practices in which they are engaged, are culturally and historically highly variable" (Moore 1994, p815). As a result, in the field of gender "there has been an implicit assumption that binary biological sex differences underlie, even if they do not determine, gender categories and gender relations" (Moore 1994, p815). In other words, the concepts of sex and gender require each other for support and reinforcement. As Moore points out:

> ...*[b]oth* sex *and* gender (rather than gender alone) are socially constructed, each in relation to the other [for] Bodies, physiological processes and body parts have no meaning outside of socially constructed understandings of them (Moore 1994, p816, emphasis in the original).

In a similar manner, Connell argues that "[t]he body, without ceasing to be the body, is taken in hand and transformed in social practice" (Connell 1987, p83). As a result he (like Ortner and Whitehead) believes that the social relations and processes underlying this transformation need to be brought to the forefront of inquiry. To Connell, it is not his "male body...[that] confers masculinity" upon him (Connell 1987, p83) rather it is the social constructing and process of producing masculinity that does. This is evidenced very clearly in situations where possessing male genitalia is not sufficient in itself to

guarantee that one is treated as a male and therefore as a person. According to Carter's research conducted in men's prisons, the:

> ...display of masculine identity within the prison setting is intimately
> tied up with the power relationships between staff and inmates...[and
> a] common strategy...is to reduce the opponent to the role of a woman
> (Carter 1996, p18).

Here, the role of 'woman' is clearly the subordinate role with opponents being reduced to it. Carter's article is also remarkable for the many examples he gives of the parallel between treating a person as a 'woman' and degrading the same person. He further argues, citing Stanko, that:

> ...[i]nmate power and control can be gained by treating other inmates
> 'like women', essentially keeping the fear of sexual danger associated
> with being a female. By turning some men into 'women' these inmates
> use sexuality to dehumanise and degrade fellow inmates (Carter 1996,
> p17).

The process of gendering then, does not necessarily depend upon selected, observable, physical differences. As a result, Butler argues that:

> ...[w]hen the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically
> independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with
> the consequence that *man* and *masculine* might just as easily signify a
> female body as a male one, and *woman* and *feminine* a male body as
> easily as a female one (Butler 1990, p6, emphasis in the original).

Clearly then there is no specific prototype 'man' or 'woman' as my evidence illustrates. Instead there is a process whereby people are categorised with the categorisations generally being based upon observable physical differences and generally based upon a dichotomy, 'like me/not like me'. This in turn results in people treating people they have categorised as 'not like me', or the 'Other' differently. At its most extreme, the treatment can be dehumanization in that the 'Other' is seen as being so unlike 'me' that the 'Other' can not therefore be human as 'I' am. Categorisations are linked to belief systems that there are given, accepted 'scientifically' based differences between people. Popular culture, for example, abounds with examples of this, such as Gray's best selling work *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* (Gray 1992). But although the literature I have reviewed shows that these 'differences' are

unsustainable, the generally perceived link between biology and gender remains tenacious and pernicious in popular culture.

For example, John attributed the differences between men and women to biology. But he also attributed caring to biology.

> Woman are built and attuned to nurturing, it appears that it is built in their gender, in their genes, it's built into their biology...hence that is why you find hundreds of women out there bringing up their kids alone. They don't want to let their kids go, they feel that there is nobody better suited than they are. And I have to agree to a certain point.

Vicky agreed with him.

> Women are very caring, very giving, it's the natural instinct that they have...I think there are attributes that you are born with. You don't learn them, they are there. And one of them is caring and loving and giving and all those nice things that women do and that men like to receive.

Seeing women as 'natural' givers of care has implications that I return to in the next chapter.

To some, not only do people have a gender, but so too, does 'time'. Leccardi, for example, argues that " '[w]omen's time' can be defined as a conceptual construction developed, in part, in relation to the feminist movement since the 1960s (Leccardi 1996, p173). Kristeva and O'Brien argue in a similar fashion that 'women's time' is posited as the antithesis of 'masculine time'. Others reject the notion that there can be a specific 'women's time'. Ermath, for example, sees the phrase as:

> ...a contradiction in terms. If, as I believe, our conventional definitions of it are rooted in patriarchy, then women's time *qua* time does not exist at all: except as an exile or an absence of time as it is conceived in patriarchal conventions (Ermath 1989, p37 emphasis the original).

Similarly, Forman argues that "women are strangers in the world of male-defined time" (Forman 1989, p1). However arguments that 'time' is masculine or feminine or both, are contingent upon a male/female dichotomy which in

itself is unsustainable for the arguments rely upon a biological base to the dichotomy (Fisher 1989). As a result, these descriptions of 'women's time' are fundamentally flawed by essentialism. As Glucksman argues:

> ...[b]ringing a gender perspective to the analysis of time should not imply that there is a 'female', or a 'male', experience of time common to all women or all men. Yet some feminist approaches to time (several contributions in Forman and Sowton 1989) and critiques of E. P Thompson come dangerously close to essentialism by reworking the modernist dualism of cyclical versus linear time (Kristeva 1981) as a gendered division. From this viewpoint women's time is conceptualised as cyclical, following biological rhythms and phases of life, while men's is linear and progressive, approximating more closely to industrial time (Glucksman 1998, pp242-243).

To Knights and Odih, it is the gendered nature of the society which gives rise to gendered concepts of 'time'. However, Knights and Odih do not base their argument upon an essentialist dichotomy. Instead they argue that:

> ...linear time is grounded in gendered, power-knowledge relations...
> Our central argument is that the discursively constituted constructions
> of linear time are predominantly aligned with the equally discursively
> constituted constructions of 'masculinity' (Knights & Odih 1995,
> pp206-207).

Consequently, they break the nexus between men and women, and masculine and feminine 'time' and place temporal experiences firmly within a situational context by maintaining that "masculine and feminine conceptions of time are not synonymous with men and women respectively...[for] conceptions of time vary between individuals and contexts" (Knights & Odih 1995, p206).

According to Glennie and Thrift, much feminist literature on this subject argues that:

> ...women's lives are seen as having fundamentally different temporal
> structures which affect the construction of their identity. Women
> experience a distinctive tension between dominant (male) temporal
> consciousness (the prevalence of linear and clock time in wage labour
> and the public sphere) and their own quite distinctive usage of time
> shaped by gender relations (Glennie & Thrift 1996, pp281-282).

In a similar vein to Glennie and Thrift, Glucksman argues that:

> ...[t]he few feminist studies of women's time tend to draw attention to
> the embedded character of women's time as opposed to
> decontexturalised abstract time characteristic of exchange value...The
> focus shifts to women's capacity to generate and 'give' time as a
> resource rather than simply spending or using it up, so establishing a
> new emphasis on women's creation of time for themselves and
> others...especially through emotion work (Glucksman 1998, p242).

But this is comparing two different categories. Here, women's lived temporal experience is being compared to an abstract concept, previously labelled 'masculine'[13]. Further, what is missing are the temporal experiences of men 'as opposed to the decontexturalised abstract time characteristic of exchange value' for as Knights and Odih argue above, temporal experiences are contextual for all people.

Thus while K. Davies argues that "linear and clock time...may be used...as an instrument of power and control over women" (K. Davies 1990, p231) I suggest that power, or the domination of 'clock time', is not necessarily a question of gender alone. Moreover, this suggests that the linking of non-problematised categories of both power and gender is dangerous leading to a situation where:

> ...[t]he reliance...on a conception of power as the property of some to
> the exclusion of others and outside and beyond the individual, has the
> unintended consequence of setting up a dichotomous relationship
> between powerful men and powerless women as largely
> undifferentiated categories (Odih 1999, p21).

If concepts and experiences of temporality are contextual then what in many instances is described in the literature as 'women's time' or 'women's unique experience of time' is in actuality an experience dictated by the situation, or activity, in which the person, admittedly more often than not a woman, is placed. For example, Pasero argues that "[w]omen's disposable time seeps

away invisibly into the caring functions they perform for family members and relatives" (Pasero 1994, p188), while Sullivan concludes her paper by stating that her:

> ...analyses support the conclusion that women's time is not only more pressured in terms of the intensity of domestic tasks, but that the more enjoyable aspects of their time, such as leisure time, tend to be more fragmented than those of men (Sullivan 1997, p237).

In both these instances one is left wondering if firstly, men perform any caring functions, and following from that, if they do, what happens to their experiences of temporal concepts.

Hantrais, like Sullivan, seeks to "illustrate the ways in which time is gendered" (Hantrais 1993, p141) and concludes that in their use of 'time', "they [women] must act like surrogate men" (Hantrais 1993, p155), if they wish to succeed in their paid employment. To Elchardus and Glorieux "being born male or female already strongly determines the time use pattern that will be adopted in adult life" (Elchardus & Glorieux 1994, p12). Not surprisingly then, they describe " 'masculine'... [and] 'feminine' pattern[s] of time use" (Elchardus & Glorieux 1994, p12).

What is problematic here is the term 'women's time'. The word 'time' has a multitude of meanings as shown in earlier chapters, and the meaning of the word 'women' is equally contentious. Unfortunately, very few of the discussions on 'women's time' explain what they mean when they use either term. Leccardi, for example, argues that "[a]t issue is the need to deconstruct and reconstruct the temporal categories generally used for the investigation of time in a social sense" (Leccardi 1996, p175). However, while 'time' in her work appears to be any concept of time other than the "dominant temporal paradigm, grounded in the hegemony of commodified, economically valued time" (Leccardi 1996, p175), it is not so clear who or what 'women' are. Thus we learn that "'women's time' is shown to be 'contaminated' by emotions and affections, never to be merely clock time" (Leccardi 1996, p182) and that 'women's time' is a "challenge... to economic temporal logic" (Leccardi 1996,

p181), and that women have the ability to " 'make time'" (Leccardi 1996, p180). A closer examination of her paper shows that the women studied are primarily involved in the domestic sphere. But as my evidence shows, the activities that occur in the domestic sphere, particularly caring for children is caring for children regardless of whether men or women are doing it. The problems and tensions that arise for both men and women, occur because of the tension between the dominant concept of linear clock time and the plastic nature of the duration of processes.

I am suggesting here that it is the situation, or activity, that generates the temporal experience and not necessarily the gender of the person. As the context, that is the domestic space, is ordained by the action of caring (whether for children or adults), it is therefore the caring which leads to this temporal experience. As a result, when men enter into caring, the range of their temporal experiences parallels that of women who are caring.

This, in turn, highlights another problem with Sullivan's work. It is not women per se whose 'time' is 'more pressured and fragmented', it is women engaged in a specific activity. But as her own research demonstrates, there was not a recognisable difference in the amount of 'time' spent in domestic activities by three of her four categories of people in that 'married men in employment with small children', 'single men' and 'single women' all had similar patterns. Thus she concluded that:

> ...married women in employment with small children in the household
> are on average the most likely to be engaged in periods of intense
> domestic work involving more than one domestic task being
> undertaken simultaneously. These combinations of domestic activities
> are most likely to revolve around a nexus of cooking, cleaning and
> child-care tasks (Sullivan 1997, p232).

This is a point also made by Le Feuvre. She argues that:

> ...[a]lthough time-budget research suggests that women who are not in
> the labour market have more daily free time than economically active
> men and women, Deem's research (along with that of Green et al.,
> 1990) clearly shows that full-time housewives' greater quantity of free

time does not translate easily or automatically into a greater quantity or diversity of autonomous leisure activities...Thus the time experience of full-time housewives appears to be more fluid, discontinuous and inclusive (Mercure and Wallemacq, 1987) than either that of women in paid employment or that of all social categories of men" (Le Feuvre 1994, p156).

This emphasis on the relationship between women and the domestic sphere has led to gender being seen as the main cause or explanation for various situations such as women's temporal experiences. As a result, the experiences of men are left unaccounted for. But when their experiences in similar situations are added, as detailed in my evidence, it is possible to appreciate other explanations. Moreover, the focus on women leads to a tendency for 'men', when they are mentioned, to be seen as a homogenous category (McLean 1996). Odih warns of the dangers of "transforming what are merely heuristic categories into reified ontological realities" (Odih 1999, p33) and she argues that it is "necessary not to invert, but to deconstruct the masculine/feminine opposition" (Odih 1999, p34). As a result "[t]he experience of women as women cannot be taken as an unproblematic starting point...because that experience has no overriding, permanent meaning" (Odih 1999, p34).

The same holds true for the category of 'men'. Various writers on the subject of men have shown that masculinity, rather than being a single homogenous identity, is a fractured, multiple concept better described as masculinities (Connell 1987, 1995; Cornwall & Lindisfarne 1994; Morgan 1981, 1992; McLean 1996). Moreover, the category 'men' and the bundle of characteristics labelled 'masculine' are not mutually exclusive. In a similar manner, neither do the terms 'women' and 'feminine' stand for each other (Smith 1996). All of which situates gender on constantly changing ground or, as Odih puts it, "the meaning of gender is constantly deferred and endlessly multiple" (Odih 1999, p35).

Seeing gender, then, as a construction grounded in a fixed dichotomy can lead to the assigning of a gender to other social concepts such as 'time'. Thus, the concept of 'gendered time' or 'women's time' is contrived and used as an explanation. Perhaps more importantly, it is assigned to bodies and as such is seen as a permanent feature which can then be used descriptively as well as explanatorily. For example, stating 'that person is a man', is a descriptive use of gender but stating 'that person has acted in that way because he is a man', is using gender as an explanation.

While the symbiotic relationship between power and gender has been much written about in the social sciences, what hasn't been so recognised is the part that temporal concepts play in this relationship. In part this is because time is often seen as a singularity or, if the multiplicity of times is recognised, only one has been singled out for attention thus devalorising the links between the various temporal concepts (Adam 1990). The result of not recognising the interrelationship between the three has been a tendency to examine either the relationship between time and power or the relationship between time and gender. The latter has lead to a grouping of literature that argues for some variation on a theme of 'gendered time'. However, I have suggested that it is not 'time' that is gendered. Instead, temporal concepts are utilised to reinforce and reproduce power differentials in society and in the next chapter I examine the evidence for this.

Review

The evidence presented in this chapter shows that at least four insights can be gained if we emphasise people's subjective and culturally constructed experiences in a study of time in the domestic sphere.

First, the data from time use studies is compromised by a flawed conceptualisation of time. In turn this understanding of time allows actions to be categorised as either/or situations, i.e., caring, housework, leisure and paid work and the attributing of time values to each category enables conclusions

on equivalency to be drawn. However, the evidence showed that when subjective opinions were allowed, the establishment of categories was not easily possible. Moreover the subjective nature of experience does not easily allow for time measurements of experiences to be used to establish equivalency. In other words, there is little to be gained by equating, for example, one hour of cleaning with one hour of leisure[14]

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Secondly, the literature draws a constant parallel between gender and work in the domestic sphere. There is an assumption that the domestic sphere equals 'women' and, in the few instances where 'men' in the domestic sphere are examined, they are reflected back against 'women'. This reinforces the conception of 'women's time' The point though from the evidence is that it is not 'women', it is the adult who is the primary care-giver in relation to the child(ren). In other words, what makes the difference is the orientation and not the actor. It is taking care of children that makes life hard, NOT being a 'women' *per se*. And one thing that makes it hard is the manner in which a particular concept of time, i.e., linear clock-time, is used to reinforce and reproduce ideologies. For the privileging of linear clock time means that only those activities that are sequenced and occur one at a time are highlighted, thus excluding the multiple and overlapping nature of many other activities. The privileging of clock time over other concepts of time results in only activities that can be measured by clock time being considered thus devaluing a great deal, perhaps the bulk, of people's activities. This likewise results in time being used as a form of control, over a constantly changing situation and confusing the issues of choice.

Thirdly, the concept of time that has been used has further restricted and distorted the research by insisting on linear, sequential activities, rather than recognising the multiple and overlapping nature of activities. Opening up the field of inquiry by not privileging one concept of time and thus not forcing actions to be slotted into pre determined categories highlights other aspects. As I noted in Chapter 1, we are aware of time because of change and we use

verbs to describe change. Or, as Ausloos translates Aristotle; "By time we measure movement, by movement, time" (Ausloos 1986, p549). As a result, focusing on caring as an activity or action and thus adopting a diachronic approach opens up the inquiry. In this manner questions such as Who cares?, Where does caring occur? When is caring done? What constitutes caring? remove the presupposed boundaries that see caring as an activity of a particular space. Anyone, regardless of gendering, can care. In this I follow Segal who concludes that "[m]ost of the studies...come to the conclusion that when fathers are primary caregivers from choice, there is very little difference in their capacity to care for children" (Segal 1990, pp45-46). Moreover, my evidence also shows that caring occurs in all the locations in which the person caring is. It is not restricted to a specific place. Neither is it restricted to a specific time. As a result, asking what actions constitute caring means re-examining the divisions between housework, leisure, paid work and caring.

As the evidence showed there is a strong correlation between caring and doing things for people. To date the evidence discussed has only consisted of caring for children. But as Ronice pointed out when I first raised this issue:

> Caring for who? Do you mean caring for me or caring for the outside
> world? What is caring? Is that caring for your children...or when you
> get the friend that talks for three hours solid about her problems and
> you sit there and listen to it...that's caring too isn't it?

Caring then, is something that is not done just for children. Thus caring in the domestic sphere is seen to encompass adult/adult relationships as well as adult/children relationships.

Finally, the people in this project discussed time as reified and external to them. They saw it as something they did (or didn't) do something else with. It is apparent that what one does with one's time is going to be dependent on what one feels is appropriate to the situation one is in. The people in this project very much saw that there was a high correlation between what they did with their time and raising their children. However, underlying their choices as to what they did with their time is an assumption that it is, in effect, their

time and not another's. In other words, they owned their time and could use it as they saw fit. But this was not always perceived by them as being the case and their reasons for thinking this seem to be related to issues of caring. Consequently, in the next two chapters I explore further the relationships between caring and time in the domestic sphere.

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[1] The concept has been variously labelled. Throughout this thesis I use the term 'women's time' as a generic term incorporating all the various linkings of time and gender.

[2] Throughout the writing of this thesis I have struggled with finding a term that satisfactorily encompasses the idea that people 'do something' with their commodified understanding of time. According to the Thesaurus I checked, dispense stands for "distribute, deal, parcel out, assign, award, mete, share, dole, allot, allocate, divide, apportion" (Landau & Bogus 1977, p 197) and to me, people did all of these things with time.

[3] For examples see the work of J. Pleck (1985) and B. Shelton (1992) for a discussion of time use in relation to the division of labour in the domestic sphere, and the work of A. Crouter and M. Crowley (1990) and T. Mauldin and C. Meek (1990) for a discussion of time use and the effects of single parenting upon children.

[4] For examples see:
T. Boje, (1996), W. Bryant (1992), G. Davison (1993), M. Elchardus & I. Glorieux (1994), M. Garhammer (1995), L. Hantrais (1993), P Hewitt, (1993), K. Holmes (1994), H. Inhetveen (1994), D. Kantor & W. Lehr (1976), R. Key & M. Sanik (1990), E. Kingdom (1996), S. Nickols & E. Metzen (1982), S. Overton (1997), J. Reeves & R. Szafran (1996), T. Robins (1995), M. Sanik & K. Stafford (1986).

[5] See M. Weisbord (1987) for a fuller discussion of the work of Taylor.

[6] There is an implication here that people do something with time. As I showed in Chapter 1, this suggests that time is an external reality to and not an inherent part of humanness. That people felt they did something with time is a key point of the thesis.

[7] The objective of Henwood's study is "understanding and describing contemporary family patterns, the changes that are taking place and the implications of such changes for policy and practice" (Henwood 1987, p7). Although she argues that she wants to achieve a more quantitative result, her work is still largely qualitative. In respect to the category of caring , she separates it out from her other categories "in order to consider the question of care more generally" (Henwood 1987, p19), and she includes caring for "elderly relatives...and aged spouses" (Henwood 1987, p19) along with caring for children.

[8] I return to this point shortly with the example of Helen.

[9] In this respect, Chris's statement resembles those of the men in Russell's study (cited by Segal 1990) who "experienced the boredom and repetition of continuous childcare and housework" (Segal 1990, p45).

[10] In a similar manner to Ussher, Brook too argues that "[a] woman who produces her body in such a way as to challenge the whole scale of femininity against which she can be measured creates enormous crises of interpretation" (Brook 1994, p55).

[11] See my discussion on this in Chapter 5.

[12] Chris had been in the services and Don and Graeme had both worked in the North West of the State. In these situations men did the cooking and cleaning.

[13] In Chapter 1, I discussed the concept of linear time. The domination of this concept has lead some to see it as 'masculine' (Glennie & Thrift 1996), leading to the arguments of Ermath and Forman that women are excluded from this particular temporal concept.

[14] This is a point that is recognised in the paid workforce. Even when hourly rates are used for payment, the actual amount paid for each hour's work is context specific. One hour of a manager's time is not considered equivalent to one hour of a laborer's time in any way except in the period of clock-time involved.

4

TIME and CONTROL

"Time is the one thing we all have…the one unit of exchange we all
have in equal amounts, the one investment we all have to make"
(Waring 1996, pp87-88)

Overview

In Chapter 3, I showed that an understanding of time in the domestic sphere
required more than a series of measurements of actions. I also showed that the
people in this project understood time as an external reality that could be
owned and dispensed in some manner or another. In this chapter I look at the
implications of people understanding time in this way. In the discussions
which centred on time, certain representations were constant. Time was
represented as something the people gave and were, or were not, given in
return. This giving of time was informed by their relationships both with their
children and with other adults in the form of caring. Simultaneously, their
understandings of their relationships, particularly the adult/adult relationships,
informed their understandings of time. The giving of time could also be
identified by them as a control mechanism. Subsequently, they interpreted the
absence of this control, when the adult/adult relationships changed as freedom.

I suggest that the giving of time as described by the people in this project can
be recast as an exchange. Consequently, Sahlin's (1974) model of reciprocity
as generalized, balanced or negative, is useful in understanding how this
exchange of time within the domestic sphere was played out in the lives of the
people in this project. Moreover, the model assists in understanding the
people's representations of unbalanced time exchanges, loss of control, and
the relationship between giving time and representations of time.

The concept of exchange and reciprocity has a long and continuing history in anthropology. Gergen, Greenberg and Willis argue that much of the contemporary literature has its roots in the works of Marcel Mauss, Claude Levi-Strauss and Karl Marx (Gergen, Greenberg & Willis 1980, pv). Komter's (1996) work demonstrates the centrality of the concept of exchange to social scientists. Like Gergen, Greenberg and Willis, Komter acknowledges the writings of early theorists, along with others such as Bronislaw Malinowski in 1922 and Georg Simmel in 1908, as well as later theorists such as Marshall Sahlins in 1974 (Komter, 1996). Moreover, Komter illustrates the interdisciplinary approaches to the concept of exchange and reciprocity

In 1954, the work of the French anthropologist, Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, was published in English. In her forward to a later edition of Mauss's work, Douglas argued that for Mauss "the whole idea of a free gift is based on a misunderstanding" (Douglas, 1990 pvii). The perfect gift implies giving with no expectation of return; there is no exchange. What the work of Mauss and subsequent anthropologists has shown is that the act of giving strongly implies reciprocity, a social exchange, and thus is very much implicated in establishing social relationships (Sahlins 1974; Levi-Strauss 1996).

Further, some literature indicates that exchange relations help in the creation of time. For example, Bourdieu argues that exchange cannot be seen outside of its temporal aspects in that it occurs in time but simultaneously constitutes time for it allows a predicability of the future to occur (Bourdieu 1996). Thus exchange and reciprocity act to structure a chaotic world. To Bourdieu all exchanges whether of a small nature, "the 'little gifts' that 'bind friendship'" (Bourdieu 1996, p136) and exchanges with more "magnitude and solemnity" (Bourdieu 1996, p136) such as marriage, have this effect. As a result, he argues that "[t]he simple possibility that things might proceed otherwise than as laid down by the 'mechanical laws' of the 'cycle of reciprocity' is sufficient to change the whole experience of practice and, by the same token, its logic"

(Bourdieu 1996, p136). The experiences of the people in this project demonstrate this and I return to this point.

In *Stone Age Economics* (1974), Sahlins puts forward a model of exchange. He describes three types of exchange: generalized, balanced or negative and sees actual exchanges falling "somewhere along the line, not directly on the extreme and middle points here outlined" (Sahlins 1974, p196). Thus, Sahlin's three types of exchange are useful as guides to understanding the underlying assumptions of exchange practices and are not intended to be used as definitive specificities into which one can allocate each and every exchange practice. They are generalisations.

Generalized reciprocity is characterised by its altruism. Here, although an exchange will take place, the details of when, how, what and who are vague. Thus, while there is a counter-obligation, it "is not stipulated by time, quantity, or quality: the expectation of reciprocity is indefinite" (Sahlins 1974, p194). As a result, Sahlins describes this exchange diagrammatically as a one-way flow and a good example of this type of exchange that is also relevant to my work is the giving by a parent to a child.

In contrast, balanced reciprocity implies "direct exchange" (Sahlins 1974, p194). The exchange does not have to occur immediately nor does it have to involve exchange items that are the same. But it does have a time period in which the counter-obligation needs to occur and there must be an understanding that the two items being exchanged are commensurate. Thus, in contrast to generalized reciprocity, "a failure to reciprocate within limited time and equivalence leeways" (Sahlins 1974, p195) results in a breakdown in relationships. As a result, for Sahlins, generalized reciprocities are "sustained by prevailing social relations" (Sahlins 1974, p195) whereas it is social relations that are sustained by balanced reciprocity. In other words, a failure to reciprocate in generalized reciprocity will not generally lead to a breakdown in relationships but a failure in balanced reciprocity will do so.

Negative reciprocity then, according to Sahlins, describes the state of unequal exchanges. Like generalized reciprocity, the exchange is seen as being a one-way flow but, unlike generalized reciprocity, there is no expectation that this is how the situation should be.

While Sahlins does not specify time as an object of exchange, my evidence suggests that it is being understood as the object of exchange for, when time is seen as objectified and commodified, it too can be exchanged. The idea that time is given in exchange is not a new idea. Capitalist societies, such as Australia, are premised upon the exchange of time with the item exchanged for time being money. This has led to time becoming commodified through such institutional changes as wages contracts, free markets in labour, and land and capital. In other words, time becomes a commodity with both recognised quantitative and qualitative features that have a market value. Quantitatively, it is argued that time can be measured implying a beginning and end point and an agreed upon instrument of measure, while qualitatively, its value will depend upon whether it is seen as good or bad time, productive or unproductive.

While time may in specific situations equal money, it is not the same as money. To Glucksman:

> ...[t]ime can be conceptualised as a medium of exchange broader than money...Many exchanges of time do involve money...But, whether direct or indirect, money exchanges far from embrace all exchanges of time. Many labour activities involve exchanges of time or particular allocations of time use that have no financial dimension (Glucksman 1998, p243).

This is the situation in the domestic sphere where time is given with an exchange process operating, but it is not normally seen as being exchanged for money although this is being challenged by the payment for services debate (Luxton 1997) and by others arguing that work done in the domestic sphere should be seen as part of an economic exchange (Waring 1988).

The belief that if you give something you should get something in return is so embedded in social life that it underwrites actions that occur within the domestic sphere. Komter, for example, argues that reciprocity is "a basic dimension in people's dealings with their fellow human beings" (Komter 1996, p1). Within the domestic sphere I give you my time because I love you, therefore if you love me, you will give me your time (Cheal 1996). Love is shown by caring. Thus time, or time as was understood by the people in this project, is exchanged as love in the form of caring with caring containing an emotional component as well as a physical component, as detailed in Chapter 3. As a result, if people care for you they do things for you not just in a physical sense but in an emotional sense as well. In this way time is perceived as being exchanged.

While there are parallels between Sahlins' notion of generalized reciprocity and the adult/child relationship, in this chapter I focus on the adult/adult relationships. Here the exchange of time is better seen as balanced or negative reciprocity. When the exchange of time was understood as unbalanced (or negative to use Sahlins' terminology) it led to feelings of a loss of ownership of time and a loss of the future. However, many of the people described how they felt they had now regained their ownership and control of their time and, somewhat paradoxically, they also felt that they now had more time[1]. These representations revolve around notions of responsibility and caring.

In this chapter then, I show first, in section I, how an exchange of time within a relationship incorporates aspects of future expectations. As a result, when the relationship breaks down expectations of the future also disintegrate. However, I also show that reclaiming ownership of time results in a new understanding of the future, one that is not based solely upon expectations resulting from relationships. In section II I look more closely at exchanges of time, the notion of reciprocity, and the way in which the obligation created from the exchange can become a means of control. The theme of control is

continued in section III where I show how unbalanced exchanges of time can lead to feelings of a loss of control of, and ownership of time. In section IV, I look at how an understanding of regaining one's time is equated as freedom although, as I show, this is sometimes not as simple as it would appear. Finally, in section V, I examine why there is an understanding held by some of the people in this project of having gained time.

I

Time Exchanges and the Future

As Bourdieu (1996) argues, exchange and reciprocity take place in time and so create expectations of a future and this is seen in the institution of marriage. To all the people in this project, marriage was for the rest of their lives and accordingly they were giving their time as an investment in their future. As a result, some were prepared to accept that the time exchange would be unbalanced in the present but it would equal out over the future together. Thus the loss of the marriage is perceived as the loss of the future and as a loss of an investment. For example, Ronice.

> I could see a future before the separation...it wasn't a horrible
> future...it was financial comfort, having money to do what I wanted to
> do, growing old together...it wasn't horrible, it was quite comfortable.
> It might have been a bit boring now looking back (laughing)...he went,
> yes my future went [pause] I still think of that woman. She took my
> future and my kid's future.

Expectations of future time are a part of the time that is exchanged in the present. Brines cites Curtis as explaining that:

> ...women often do housework because they expect some unspecified
> benefaction in the future, to be decided upon by the partner in the
> relationship they are establishing and perpetuating, and not because a
> contract has determined the amount of bed and board equivalent to so
> many hours of housework (Brines 1994, p657).

However, this holds true for some men as well. John, for example, regretted the loss of the future plans he had for his family. He considered that he worked hard now to provide a comfortable future for them all.

The concept of actions occurring in the present with the benefits to be obtained in the future is a basic premise in our society and it is the loss of this future time that is felt very strongly. Moreover, it further demonstrates that marriage is a process rather than an event. The process of marriage can be seen as a process first beginning in the present with a future orientation based on expectations and at some point or stage changing to occurring in the present with a past orientation based upon shared memories. It therefore depended upon how far through this process people were as to whether they mourned the loss of the future and/or the loss of the memories.

In Chapter 1, I showed that the Past, the Present and the Future are concepts used to explain memory and fore-thinking. But equally, they are terms used in connection with time as a reality i.e., there is such a thing as time and it can be divided into these three parts. Thus discussions relating to the control of one's time can, and do, become discussions regarding control of these temporal orientations and in particular the present and the past. Further, the three are relational and as a result, taking back control of the present has to occur before one can effectively take control of one's future as the evidence will show.

Time, though, is an abstract concept which makes it difficult for people to describe and discuss. Normally, and in particular when discussing the past, present and future, lineal representations in the form of a life-line are used. But, as K. Davies points out, while the:

> ...life-line was/is a tool to help analysis, it is a memory aid. It can
> clearly and quickly summarise an individual's life in graphic form. It
> can succinctly pin-point major events in an individual's life and suggest
> why certain choices were made, rather than others...it is too flat a
> reconstruction, with a considerable inbuilt risk of distorting reality (K.
> Davies 1996, p585).

In my own field work I did introduce the concept of a line to try to assist the people participating in discussing these concepts. But, as will become apparent, and like K. Davies, in most instances, the line quickly became a myriad of shapes and diagrams. Although I concede that specifying a line could be seen as framing the answers, that so many people choose another shape reassures me that ultimately initially specifying a line did not distort the evidence collection process. In particular, this part of my research was the theme of a research paper. As part of my belief in collaborative research I gave each of the people (bar one[2]) who featured in the paper, a copy to read. While those who had stayed with the initial straight line scenario were intrigued by the results of alternative depictions, they did not, when asked by me, want to reconsider their own pictorial representations of the past, present and future. As a result, I am satisfied that the material collected was not unduly prejudiced by me beginning with a straight line.

Specifically, I would draw a straight line and ask each person to indicate boundary markers between the past, present and future. Most people found this part of the process hard going at first, although considerably easier than just trying to articulate ideas; many became fascinated with the process and some spent a considerable amount of 'clock' time in ensuring that their ideas were represented 'just so'.

I originally analysed only the transcripts of the discussions and this resulted in the identification of three distinct patterns that people seemed to follow. Put another way, the relationship of people to each of the majority of the data categories, including temporal concepts of the past, present and future, related to how people had initially perceived their marriage/ relationship in respect to their perceptions of the present and the future. The common thread for one set of people was that they had all seen their previous marriage **as a part** of their future at the time it occurred. Consequently, the loss of the marriage caused a loss in a part of the future.

But the majority of the people all saw their marriage as their **entire** future and as a result the loss of the marriage, for them, meant a loss of the future. Consequently they were either currently experiencing, or described having experienced, feelings of loss, anguish, despair, hopelessness, anger, helplessness and grief. While the people in the first set were all upset at the demise of their marriage they did not report going through this period of depression.

The larger second set of people divided again into two with the difference being in how they had reconstructed their lives and therefore their conceptions of the present and the future and the relationship between the two. A small number had yet to begin this period of reconstruction, whereas the remaining people were actively rebuilding their lives.

When I later looked at the diagrams, I realised that they too, not only followed these three patterns, but additionally told much about how people understood time. For example, the diagrams drawn by the people in the first set were strikingly similar. The only difference between John and Simon (figure 1, page 153) is the positioning of the cross marking the present and in both instances, the cross was placed on an estimation of how far through their life span they were, and both were insistent that the cross accurately reflected this. Thus Simon, who estimated he was half way through his life placed his cross exactly in the middle, while John's was slightly to the right indicating his belief that he was "a bit over half way". Time here, is equated to life span and has terminal points. Thus an external measurable time can be seen as being finite and accordingly limited. While neither John or Simon knew exactly when they would die, they did understand that they had a limited quantity of time.

SIMON

PRESENT

PAST ——————————×—————— FUTURE

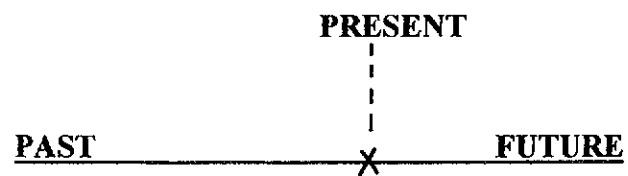**JOHN**

PRESENT

PAST ——————————×—————— FUTURE
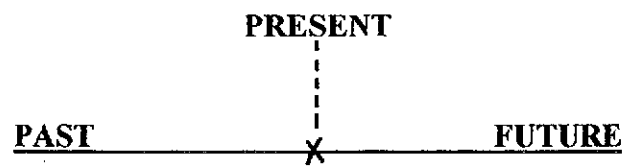
Figure 1

Representation of Time: Simon and John.

What is interesting about these diagrams, and the others from the people in this set, is that only one boundary marker is used, even though they were asked to indicate all three temporal concepts. What John and Simon did was use the present as a demarcation, or boundary, between the past and the future. Thus the present is very much this instant, and the future from the next moment on. Their lives then, consist of an extended past and future but only an instantaneous present.

Notwithstanding the similarities in these diagrams, John and Simon's life situations were very different and their rationales for their drawings were likewise different. John had very clear views on the past, the present, and the future, seeing the past very much as a learning experience from which the future could be planned here in the present.

> A number of people aren't into pre-planning, only going day by day, and I don't know why that is because I tend to pre-plan, using your past experiences to plan for the future.

> *Would you say you were future-oriented?*

> Yes. I don't like surprises. I have a plan to stick to, although the plan can have flexibility to change as well.

> *Some people refuse to plan because they have lost their hopes for the future, so they live only in the present.*

> Well, you can't do that. You can't do that [forcefully] because you don't grow. You have to have a plan, you have to have some goals, you have to have something to aim for.

The breakdown in his marriage had forced John to re-evaluate, not his total future, but a part of it. On realising that he was not going to be able to save his marriage he re-assessed.

> I started looking at my future rather than the family future...my new plan started to reflect the old plan, but it was just that certain people weren't in it.

The situation for Simon is very different. When our discussion first began, Simon's daughter Melanie had been in remission from leukemia for over two years and the future to Simon was looking bright.

> I'm not uncomfortable with my situation. I wouldn't call myself poor, I wouldn't call myself rich, I'd call myself comfortable. The government payments that you receive, provided that you don't have excessive debt, you can live off them if you're sensible. I suppose I am lucky that I have a reasonable rental here…I'm quite comfortable doing manual labour and I'm quite comfortable doing white collar work. As long as I've got the income, it doesn't worry me. The only factor I suppose is that I haven't got a chosen career path.

But six months after that discussion Melanie had a relapse of her leukemia and this caused a major disruption in the lives of Simon and his three children. His frequent trips to the hospital meant he was no longer able to work at all. As he explained, "it is next to impossible for me to be able to accurately predict just what will happen the next day, let alone the next week". Although the hospital had given him a protocol of Melanie's treatment regime for the ensuing months, it could only ever be a guide. This example of process time v clock time had put Simon into a position where he could only live his life day by day.

Once Melanie's condition had stabilised somewhat[3], Simon and I resumed our discussions, and we talked about the future.

> It's a hard one…I'd like to be in a certain spot in the future but sometimes the fun is the ride while you're going there and the ride may bring you to forks in the road that may change that direction…I mean that's how my life's gone in the past…I feel you're continuously veering off, depending on what the opportunities are along the way. I'd like to be happy, fit, rich, whatever, further down the track. How I get there, that's open to conjecture at the moment…I can't really think… the last six months I've been focused a lot more on other things. If you'd asked me six months ago, I'd probably have had a good answer for you but at the moment I can't.

But Simon had not changed his original views that too much of a focus on the future was detrimental.

> I think a lot of people are rushed within their lives, trying to get ahead.
> I remember I told you at our first discussion about when I was married
> and trying to raise kids and work, a career, and do all that sort of
> thing...and you don't really get to stop and see the good things in life
> or what's important in life.

While their situations were different, both John and Simon drew very similar diagrams. Although Simon was temporarily restrained in his ability to plan his future, like John he still believed that the future was his to plan to a greater or lesser extent. In other words, both consciously chose to plan, and in Simon's case, the choice was to what degree the planning would extend.

This contrasts markedly with the diagrams (figure 2 page 157) from the second set of people. The most striking difference between figure 2 and the previous one is in the placing of the boundary markers. First, the marker between the present and the future is some way further down the line than where they indicate they actually are at present. Unlike the people in the previous set where the future is the next instant, to the people in this set the future is still some way ahead, and the present is thus an elongated period. Secondly, with the exception of Nicole, all the people in this set and the people in the next set, used their separation as the cut off point between the past and the present. Lastly, no-one in this set was really happy with a 'straight' line. All told me that life is more up and down, as indicated by the graph like shape both Nicole and Christine drew.
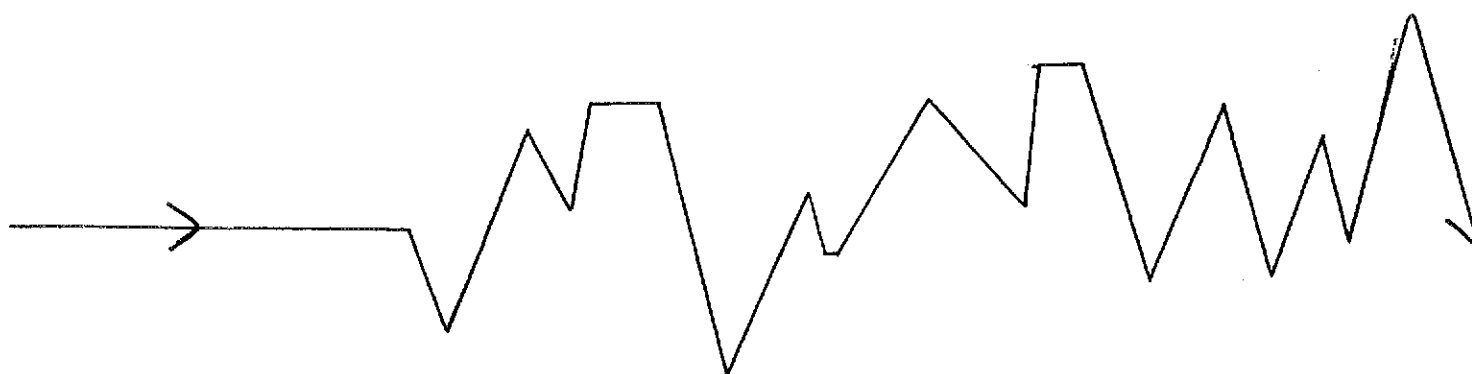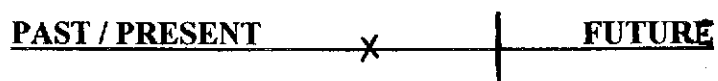
CHRISTINE

PAST ↓ PRESENT | FUTURE

NICOLE

PAST / PRESENT X | FUTURE

Figure 2

Representation of Time: Christine and Nicole

What ar

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live hap
happen l
pause] v

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currently was.
separation, and
next marriage.
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for life to begi
while waiting f
future was virt

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done, was not a

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my futur
what I wε

While Christine and Nicole's diagrams are very similar, t
difference. In contrast to my two examples from the prev
and Christine's life situations are very similar. Both had
both have four young children, live in rented accommoda
struggling financially on the Supporting Parents Benefit
maintenance payments. But unlike Nicole, Christine was
the line exactly where she was except somewhere in the
And whereas Christine had marked the past off from the
date of her separation, Nicole was unable to differentiate
and the past. An explanation for these differences is sugg
comments from the discussions.

Christine had been adamant that her future could only ex
man in it".

> I suppose from what I've said, I would be thinking that my
> when I meet somebody else…I was going to say somethin
> terrible. I'll tell you what I was going to say. I was going t
> get married [again], my future will start again.

> *Why do you think that is a terrible thing to think?*

> Well, maybe it's not terrible, maybe it's the way that I thir
> pause] the importance of my life is not what I'm doing, it'
> somebody else is doing, you know what I mean?

Unlike the people in the first set then who planned their
the people in this set in planning had been shattered by t
they now only had wishes and hopes for the future, if th
all. For example, Christine.

> When I was younger I just thought we were going to get n
> we were going to have kids and live happily ever after, an
> found out that the world doesn't always work that way…I
> that plan for the future [marriage and children], whereas n
> more…[pause] I don't know what's going to happen, ther
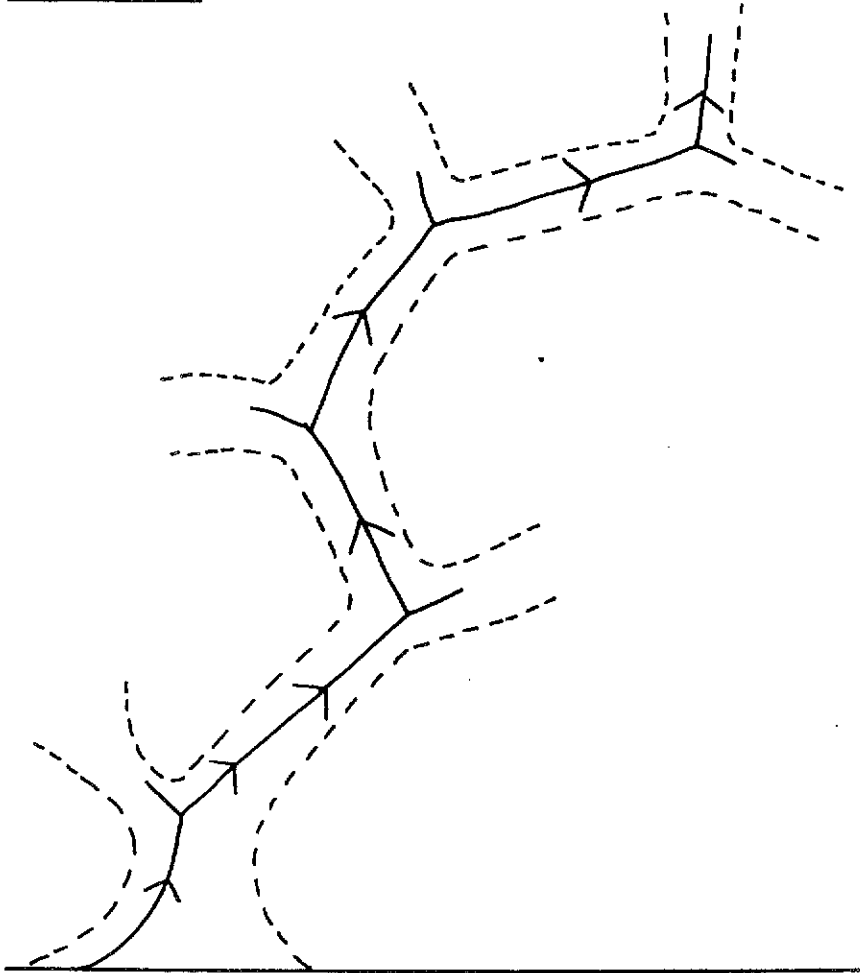> Things are just happening…but I have hopes for the future

JEANETTE

Figure 3

Representation of Time: Jeanette

Jeanette (figure 3 page 161) told me that she had gone through a depressed state after her separation but one day she had decided to "live her life rather than just lie around reading about how other people lived theirs". Jeanette's diagram represents her belief that life consists of choices and is thus not a straight line, but a line that is shaped by the choices made. And because she had no idea what choices she was going to make, it stops at the present moment. Thus although she does not draw a future, she still firmly believes it will happen, like the people in the first group, from this moment on. While Jeanette was happy with the tree shape embedded in an ongoing understanding of time, she was unsure how to incorporate her son into her drawing[4].

Maureen (figure 4 page 163) like Jeanette, had suffered a depression after the separation even though she had left a violent marriage. To Maureen, time most definitely was life

> To me, life is like a wheel and it has all these cogs coming out of the
> wheel and all these cogs are lessons in life. When you learn a lesson,
> and you have to learn it three or four times from different angles, a cog
> is knocked off. That's when you get those moments of peace and
> happiness. So the more lessons you learn in life, the more cogs that get
> knocked off, the more peace and happiness.

While Maureen found this part of the discussion quite easy, she did have problems when I asked her if life then was a cycle. Several pages of diagrams later, she decided upon a spiral shape as best describing how she saw the situation.

> You could start from the centre and go round and around and around
> and come out. That's a better idea. So as you improve...your own self
> development... yeah, you reach out more and others are attracted to
> you so you help others. You have more surface area to contact others.
> The world becomes at your feet instead of you...thinking that you are
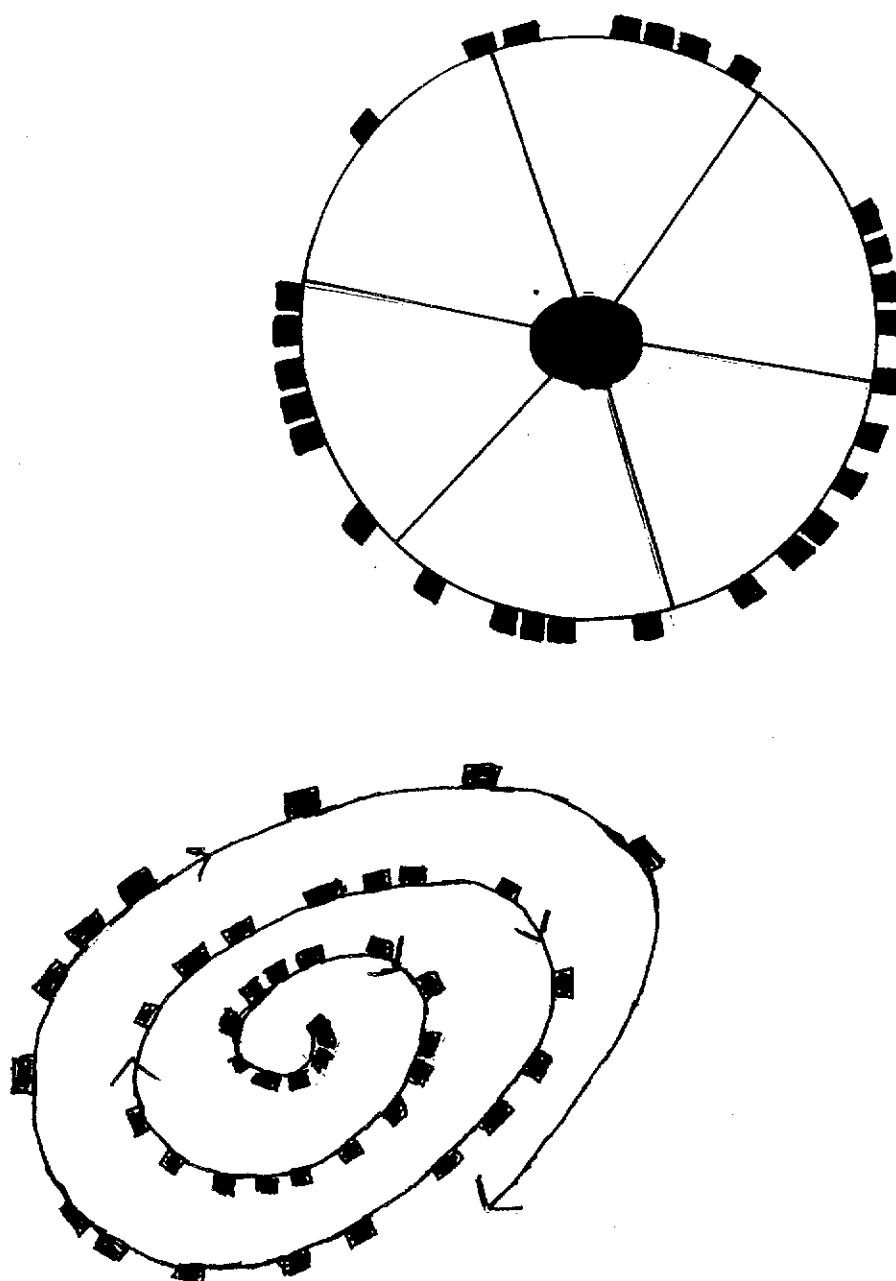> in a little corner of the universe.

MAUREEN

Figure 4

Representation of Time: Maureen

What Maureen in effect had done with the spiral shape, was not only widen her perspective on life but, in three dimensional terms, heighten it as well, thus allowing her to perceive the world as being at her feet. Once again, Maureen's understanding of time is on two levels. There is her time or her life and there is again the idea that this is a part of a greater whole.

Ronice too, told me of the depression that had accompanied her separation and once again, she had realised one day that she could turn things around in her life. And, once again, it took several hours and many false starts before Ronice came up with two diagrammatic schemata (figure 5 page 165), that she considered best represented her ideas about time and life. In her first diagram Ronice 'solved' the problem of incorporating other people's lives into her own by eventually using the analogy of an electrical cable with "all the twisty, coloured wires inside it". This analogy also got her over the difficulty of having "lots of futures", and the resulting multiple pasts and presents, although like all the people in this set and the first set, the present is still very much this moment. The line cutting across the cable in Ronice's diagram thus indicates the present moment, and it intersects the multiple pasts, presents and futures. Thus, to Ronice, all three concepts exist at any given moment of the present.

When I discussed Ronice's ideas with Jeanette she agreed with Ronice's views telling me:

> It's true that people belong to the past and are in the future as well as
> the present. For example, my ex is very much a part of my past but he
> is also in my present because of my son, and no doubt he will be in my
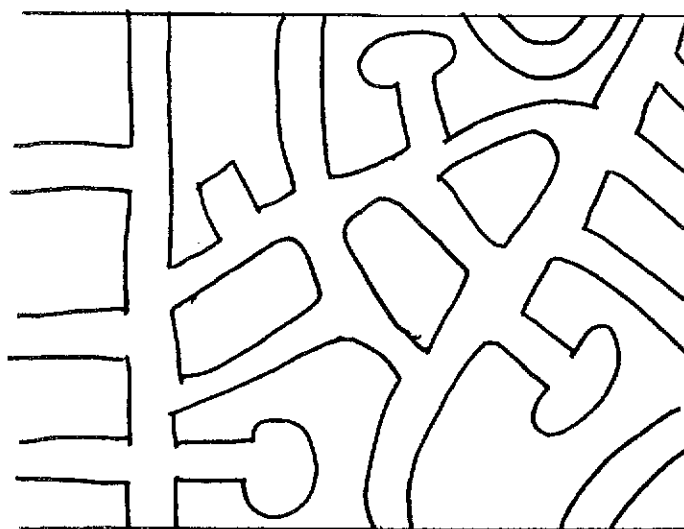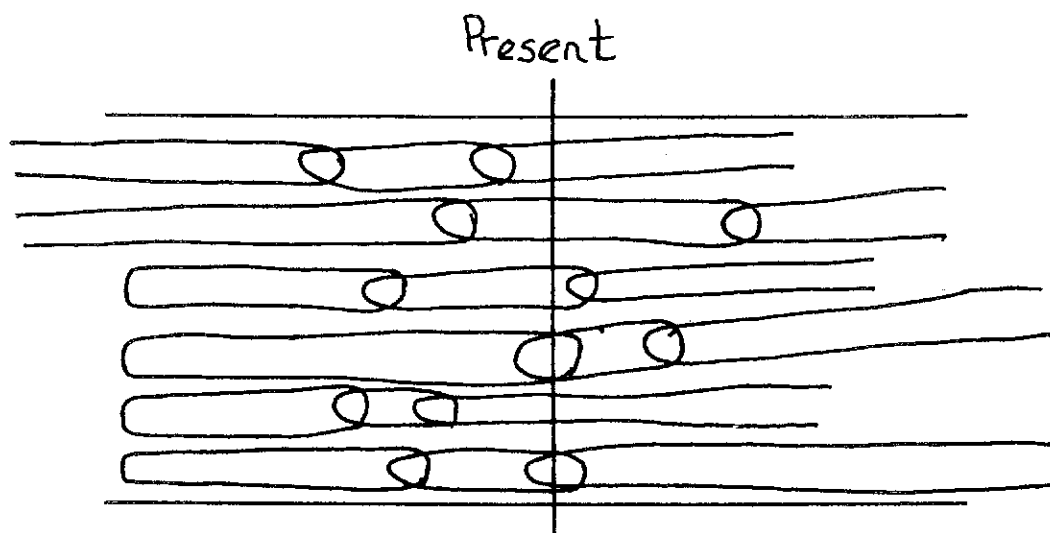> future as well. The diagram says it all.

RONICE

Figure 5

Representation of Time: Ronice

Ronice was also very clear that each individual past, present and future was not a discrete entity. Instead they all overlapped. Finally, Ronice also saw the pasts, presents, and futures, as being of differing lengths, and some pasts and futures as extending out into infinity.

Ronice's second diagram was produced to show how time is not uni-directional and to explain what she saw as the constraints on choice. It resembles a road map where one can accordingly travel in all dimensions over the space-time continuum. But Ronice, like everyone else in the first set and this set, was adamant, that you cannot repeat exactly. Thus although you could go down the same road again, it would not and could not be the same as the first time. As Jeanette commented, "you are coming down the road again but each time is different because you are different because of your experiences".

The analogy of the road map also helped Ronice to explain how she believed that one always has choices in where you go, but the choices depend upon where you are at the time you make them. Thus to choose to turn down a particular street, for example, requires you being in the appropriate section of the map. Therefore, if you want to turn down a particular street, you need to first get to that part of the map

What the diagrams drawn by Jeanette, Maureen and Ronice, as well as their comments, have in common, is an awareness of both the interconnectedness of people's lives and the multi-faceted nature of people's identities along with the multi-faceted nature of time. But more importantly they show the importance of change, control, and choice. I do not believe that it possible to over emphasise just how important this awareness of their ability to choose is to the people in this group. For example, when I discussed this issue with Tabitha she told me that:

> If you had asked me to do the drawing when I was married or just after
> I separated, I am pretty sure my drawing would have looked like
> Christine and Nicole's. Because when I was married I was not able to

> see that I had options, so it would have been a straight line because there were no choices, just a continuation.

Likewise Ronice.

> The choice and control is mine and when I was married I probably would have been on the straight line too.

What comes through very clearly from all the diagrams, as well as the discussions, is the effects of the differences in perceptions of who controls your time. The people in both the first set and the last group are insistent that they do the owning and the controlling. The difference between these two sets is that the people in the first set have always thought that, whereas the people in the last set had to learn it. It is the middle set that do not consider that they have any control or ownership. Control, choice and change involve concepts of ownership. Without change, we would have no need for a concept of time. And without change, there would be no need to choose. In other words, change and choice are inextricably linked with time. We live in a constantly changing universe, but we attempt to control these changes by imposing order.

As the people in the last set learnt to take control, they also began to understand that they had choice, hence the shape of their diagrams, and their comments. Again, this is a major difference. The people in the middle set did not see that they could control and so they wished and hoped for their future. The people in the first set not only believed they could choose but they planned for their future, thereby attempting to control it. The people in the last set also believed they could choose but they were less certain that the future could be planned for, and they tended to be more focused on the present. However they did think about the future, which again is reflected in the complexity of their diagrams. As Maureen put it, "You can re-think the future to what you want it to be instead of the future controlling you". Further they were optimistic they could cope with what ever the future brought which again is seen in the expansiveness of their diagrams.

The diagrams and discussions also show the difficulties in using the terms 'past', 'present' and 'future'. The three terms are contextual and do not necessarily relate to clock-time or chronological understandings of time. On a day to day level, all the people in this project understood these concepts in the same manner as I did. We could make arrangements for future meetings and we could discuss past meetings. In these instances the concepts were understood as being part and parcel of chronological and clock-time. But on another level, we conceptualised the three concepts quite differently. Talking about the future, for example, could mean anything from the next nano-second to the next century. Thus understanding their lives implies understanding that their use of the terms was context specific. In other words, the relationship between exchanges of time and the concept of the future have to be understood as contextual.

II

Time and Exchange

Exchanges of time involve notions of reciprocity which, following Sahlins (1974), need to be balanced. When the balance is perceived as unequal, problems arise and this was consistent and applied equally to the people who had left their relationships as well to the people who had been left. For example, Ronice was one who had been left.

> He was very selfish with his time. We got the dregs because other
> things took priority. I don't know where on the list of priorities we
> should have come but I think we should have been higher up the list
> than we were…that's where family picnics and things would have been
> repayment of time given. That's when he could have gone out and dug
> the hole in the garden for the tree or whatever. You see I never got any
> of that sort of time. Even fixing the car was a big drain on him, to make
> sure the car was safe.

> It was very [pause] all his time was very reluctantly given. I feel he
> didn't spend enough time with me and the kids as a sort of family unit
> or even with me as a partner. I always felt that I was an imposition on

his time, that he always had more important things to do, more
important people to see, more important people to talk to and I felt that
[pause] I wasn't very important... The time I gave and the time he gave
was completely out of balance.

But the giving of time was seen as involving not only physical actions
symbolising caring, such as digging holes in the garden for the tree or going to
family picnics, but also emotional aspects. Kirsten was one who differentiated
out emotional time and identified its exchange as being lacking.

I don't think it's a question of not spending enough time, it's 'you don't
spend enough emotional time'. By that I mean enough attention,
enough recognition. It was just so taken for granted...You put other
people first...if things weren't important to my ex husband personally,
well he just wouldn't do them. He didn't have that sort of sense of
responsibility.

It comes back to a child going and picking a flower from the next-door
neighbour's garden and that has more meaning for you than an ex-
husband coming home drunk three hours late for dinner clutching this
lousy bunch of flowers from the nearby deli. One's an expression of
love and the other is an attempt to placate you.

It's a question of 'I've expended all this emotional energy trying to do
something that meets your needs. Why don't you expend the same
amount of emotional energy trying to do something that meets mine. So
it's got nothing to do with the dinner, it's to do with this is how I'm
showing you that I care and you're not showing me in return that you
care by doing something that you don't want to do for me.

It's thinking about what it is that would make some one happy.
Whether that's a meal or a walk after dinner or whatever. It's not
always just taking the easy way out and buying a bunch of flowers as
some sort of response.

Time exchange transactions in the domestic sphere are not as straight forward
as in the labour market where time is given for money. Brines, for example,
argues that:

> ...there exists a tension between norms typically governing the
> exchange of resources for labor (i.e., to drive the hardest bargain
> possible) and norms of social exchange aligned with the code of
> marriage (Brines 1994, p656).

But it is not just a question of giving time in a quantitative manner that leads to the tensions. As Scott argues, "a gift or service received creates, for the recipient, a reciprocal obligation to return a gift or service of at least comparable value at some future date" (Scott 1976, p168). The qualitative aspect coupled with how much time is perceived to need to be given also causes tension. In other words, it is not just 'how much' time but 'what one does with the time'. Moreover, the creation of an obligation can lead to a control of time.

Merely being physically present, that is synchronising a period of clock-time to be at a specific place with a person, is not necessarily seen as giving time. Christine, for example, told me that the person she was married to thought he had spent time with her and the children and he considered that he had given his time in the form of going to work. She, however, considered that him sitting watching television was not necessarily giving time for her.

> I think that you need to make time for each other...like the time when
> your husband is out at work...it's also time that he's giving to the
> family...but you need some time to be together, it's really important...I
> think his time for himself when he wasn't at work became more
> important than time for us and I would have liked more of his
> time...when he wasn't at work he spent the time at home but he was
> doing what he wanted to do which was fine too but...there has to be a
> time for me in there somewhere...

> Maybe he did feel that I was more important when we were sitting
> watching telly but to actually be shown...like turning off the telly and
> having a conversation...we shared our time when I was married
> because if he wasn't at work he was with me, but I still didn't feel he
> was giving me time...you need to know that the other person is fully
> conscious of you and you are not just there in the background...it's
> attention.

> He was a good provider, and I'd never take that away from him...but
> you can have all the money in the world but it doesn't mean you are
> going to have peace of mind...He was never really there for the kids,
> he was never really there for me...The worst thing is when you felt you
> needed somebody...you wished there was somebody there for
> you...now I'm not saying in particular that my husband would have
> been the best person to be there for me because he wasn't...

Thus, both parties need to share a similar understanding on exchanges of time and agree on the interpretive assumptions that underlie their actions.

According to Gerner, Montaldo and Bryant :

> ...one of the motivations for marriage was the benefit to be reaped
> from specialization of the marriage partners in different activities, that
> is, different time uses. Similarly, one reason that marriages may have
> broken up was that these benefits were not as large as expected
> (Gerner, Montaldo & Bryant 1990, p8).

The contribution that each person makes needs to be acknowledged and validated by the other person and this is how the shared understanding is negotiated. One person has already received this acknowledgment in the form of money, the other has received no acknowledgment. Thus Haavind & Andenaes argue that:

> ...[w]hat women want to accomplish through their care work and
> domestic work is appreciation...They want their husbands to affirm the
> value of their work as personal and unique, reflecting their personal
> commitment for each other. It is this appreciation that makes the chores
> worth while taking on. According to this effort to be validated as
> lovable, service has not to be returned just with service. Even
> gratefulness could be tasteless, since any sign of exchange has to be
> concealed...Violation of this rules[sic] is interpreted as lack of respect
> for her as a person. (Haavind & Andeas n.d., p19).

To both Don and Anne, marriage meant more than just the material things in life. Their problems arose from people have differing expectations of what a marriage means and what exactly it is that each person expects the other person to do. For example, Shelton argues that:

> ...[f]ew men feel forced to choose between paid labor and family
> responsibilities, partially because the "responsibilities" of a family may
> be seen to be different for men than for women. Rather than
> contributing time to the family, men may contribute financial resources
> (Shelton 1992, p2).

However, as Don's case shows, the situation is not always so clear cut. Being made to feel guilty for not caring, coupled with his own feelings of loss at missing out on the intimacy of family life, led him to consider, as many of the women did, that the exchange of time was unequal.

To some, the imbalance if recognised, as Jeanette did, during the marriage could become a source of anger and resentment.

> When I was married I was always asking for more of his time and
> attention...we'd argue, 'you never spend any time with me', sort of
> thing...if he loved me he'd want to spend more time with me, that's the
> way life is supposed to be...When I was married I was aware that it
> was my time and I think that was the cause of the resentment. This is
> my time and I'm giving it you and I'm getting nothing back.

But to others, such as John, the realisation occurs after the marriage causing confusion and pain.

> In my marriage I thought the exchange was balanced but if it was we'd
> probably still be married [long pause] I thought it was.

Like Don, John had considered that being a good provider of material things was what his role was. The idea that he was required to provide emotional as well as financial support was new to him and not an idea he was completely comfortable with.

The people in this project believed that time was what was being exchanged in their relationships and they expected that the exchange would be balanced. They cared about the other person and they showed this by giving their time. As a result, they believed that if the other person cared too, the other person would also give their time. Caring, rather than being an activity, is evidenced and demonstrated by activities. Thus, it is how they understood the motivation behind the activity that dictated whether they saw the activity as caring or not

caring. In other words, it was a perception that mattered and not the activity itself. When they considered the activity as not caring, they began to understand the time exchanges as unbalanced.

However, underlying this comprehension of time being exchanged to indicate caring is an understanding of time as a commodified, external reality that they can dispense. In other words, they controlled their time and the choices they made with this time. They chose to exchange time in their relationships by caring. As long as they perceived the exchange to be balanced the relationship was sustained and they considered they controlled their time. But the reciprocal nature of exchange creates an obligation and the meeting of the obligation in a manner that is considered adequate by the donor can lead to feelings of control. In the next section I examine the situation when the exchange was clearly understood as unbalanced and the consequences of this for perceptions of control.

III

Ownership of Time and Involuntary Exchanges

> Time, I suppose you'd have to say has always been an issue
> where I felt like I didn't have any of my own...[in my
> marriage] I had nothing left that was my own.
> Kirsten

> [in the relationship] she owned my time...probably I owned
> some of my time...but not much of it. That was one of the
> biggest problems we had.
> Don

> "At present, the power struggle between the sexes is often
> more or less a struggle over time" (Jurczyk 1998, p 290).

When time is no longer seen as being exchanged voluntarily or equally (or, following Sahlins, the exchange has become negative reciprocity), it is likely to be then perceived by the person who feels the imbalance to be controlled. At its most extreme, control of a person's time may lead to a person no longer believing they own their time. This situation is not unique to the domestic sphere. At its most extreme, ownership, and thus control, of another person's time, is seen in the process of slavery as well as through the process of incarceration. It is also reflected in the various social institutions such as the military, paid employment and education. For example, Nguyen argues that:

> ...[t]he temporal regime which identifies correct and morally superior conduct with a strict schedule of chronometrically defined activities...invades most other spheres of life...Most notable of the disseminating institutions are the school, the church, the military, the prison, and the poor house" (Nguyen 1992, p41).

Likewise, Glucksman argues that time:

> ...constitute[s] an integral dimension of power in relationships where some people possessed more control over it than others or had the ability to determine what was done with it (both their own and that of others) (Glucksman 1998, p243).

Maureen is an example of one who believed that losing control of her time had resulted in her losing herself. She initially told me that while she was happy to help me with my research she didn't want to talk about time because she hated it with a passion. But later she changed her mind and opened up on the subject over several discussions.

> When you talk about time, well time was never my own. I was always there for someone else...during the marriage I never really took time for myself, it was never allowable...there was a lot of fear.

> In that situation [referring to her marriage] everything is power and control. So your time...he owned me. He felt that he owned me. When he owned me, it wasn't only my physical self. He owned everything about me plus what I said, who I spoke to and my time. My time was really his time...so everything was taken from me, everything.

One reason for Maureen's intense dislike of time was her realisation of the relationship of time to the periods of domestic violence.

> Time had a lot to do with it...He'd come home and he'd say the house
> was untidy and he'd ask me what I had been doing all day...If the
> dinner wasn't ready on time, there would be hell to pay... When I saw
> that he was on his way I would always try and look busy, cleaning or
> peeling potatoes or whatever. While he was around, I always had to be
> on the move. I always had to look busy, even though I wasn't doing
> very much. I had to find something to do when he was there because if
> I didn't there would be hell to pay...I never used to pick up a book to
> read it, it was banned in my house because I was wasting time; I wasn't
> allowed to read...I was always doing something that you could
> physically see...Time was never your own, ever!

Maureen eventually left her marriage not just because of her own sufferings through the abuse but because she began to understand the flow on effects to her four children.

> I remember with Paul [her eldest son] I was pretty awful to him. Time
> was a big thing. Every morning was hard because he was slower at
> getting ready for [primary] school so I'd punish him for being slow, for
> not being ready on time, stuff like that. It was not very nice because it
> was really me being punished and then passing my own punishment on
> to him.

Anne's story in many aspects closely parallels Maureen's and like Maureen, Anne's story emerged over several discussions and caused us both much distress in her telling it.

> My husband was fanatical with the house. I remember one day he came
> home from work in the afternoon and there were lace curtains up in the
> window and he came striding into the house. And I asked him if he'd
> had a good day and he said "it's like a fucking boong's[5] house when
> you drive up to it" and I didn't understand. So he said "look at the
> curtains" and I did and they had been caught in the back of the chair.
> Well that was it...
>
> I never would be sitting if he was home. I might have sat down for a
> while but as soon as I heard the car pull in I'd get up and go and stand

at the sink because I always used to have to appear that I was doing
something. I used to be very conscious of watching the clock for the
time that he would be coming. Then I'd move and make it look as if I
was doing something. Like I'd fold the laundry that had already been
folded. And I'd say "oh, I've had such a busy day that I've only got
round to doing the laundry now" because I always felt that I had to be
doing something...

So I think a lot of married life revolved around time. The certain times I
had to do a certain thing...It was very much a race against a time. I had
to have everything done [emphatically] because I had to have this
perfect picture for him coming into.

But do you know when the best time was? When he used to start
working at three o'clock in the afternoon. And I used to say "oh,
yes...half past two. The kids can come home and they can do what they
want. They'll be in their bed when he comes home again". I might have
to sit up till half past eleven to have his tea ready for him but it was like
utter relief. Eight hours, me and the kids...

Maureen and Anne are describing situations in which all aspects of their lives
were perceived as being controlled by another. When the people they were
married to were present, they had to appear busy and their actions had to meet
another's criteria. Thus, as Henderson and Allen point out in their discussion
of the relationship between leisure and empowerment, "while some women
may have free time, not having choices in using it in the ways that one would
like also creates a constraint" (Henderson & Allen 1991, p105).

Both Anne and Maureen understood their time as not being their own but
neither seriously queried this situation whilst married. As Anne put it:

I was quite, dare I say it, happy in my marriage, well I thought I was
because that was the situation I thought I should be in.

Anne left her marriage as a result of discovering her husband was having an
affair but the time that has elapsed after events can significantly alter how
people reconstruct the event. For example, Anne.

> I always said that he left us [for her]…and it was a couple of years
> before I realised that I had actually told him to go…in fact I actually
> packed his bags. So I suppose in a way that means I kicked him out.

In effect, Anne's understanding of having no control in the marriage had resulted in her initial idea that he had initiated the separation. According to Henderson and Allen this situation occurs because "women also may be socialized into being more accepting of constraints and limitations…and may truly believe that their time is really not their own" (Henderson & Allen 1991, p105), while Fisher, for example argues, that:

> …[t]he single greatest source of strain for both prospective and
> matriculated adult women students is finding the courage to "take time"
> for themselves, usually after years of deferring their interests to others'
> needs and goals (Fisher 1989, p137).

In other words, there is an entangling of temporal concepts, control and gendering. However, this does not mean that time itself is gendered. As I have shown, it is, instead, an example of the utilisation of temporal concepts to reinforce and reproduce the process of gendering. As a result, how one views one's own and other's gender roles has a corollary in how one understands not time itself, but one's ability to be able to use time. The idea that certain understandings of gendering imply a right to control another's time is one that recurs in this work. Having a claim on another's time, or being able to take their time can be seen as having control over that person. Conversely, taking back one's time equates to taking back control.

However, this reclaimation process gradually evolves over a period of chronological time and as a result, changing one's status to 'separated' does not automatically change the person. For example, as Maureen initially found, leaving the marriage and shifting with her children to Perth did not alter her situation greatly. As she explained, she needed to unlearn the old habits and learn new ones. Gradually, and particularly after she began her program of counselling, things began to change for her by her changing her self and her attitudes.

I realise that we are taught to conform by society and all that…We're
taught to run on a clock, to run here and to run there, and to earn money
and all that and it's all time. But we take it for granted…

Maureen believed that for her to change her situation she needed to change
how she viewed herself. In other words, as she discovered, changing situations
in itself, such as leaving the marriage, is not sufficient. Change can only occur
through the changing of one's self, one's attitudes. She believed that we had
been socialized into accepting the control of time over us to the extent that we
did not question it. This meant, in her case, a re-learning of all the things she
had previously been taught, the things that she now saw as wrong with time.

From the western culture, time is when you get up in the morning, you
look at the clock and you have to be at a certain place at a certain time
and then you've got all these things to do in your day and then you're
stressed out because you can't get them all done within a certain time
limit and some of them have to wait till tomorrow. So it's a doing.
You're doing tasks all day to complement the time that's there.

And then the other way of looking at time is that we're here to enjoy
life and if things don't get done then they're not meant to have been
done that day and to back off [laughs] and look at nature. The more I
give my time away, the more I seem to struggle…but if I give my time
for myself…life seems to be a lot easier

In a similar manner to Maureen, Anne gradually re-established control over
her life again, and like Maureen she used examples of time to describe this .

That pressure to have a set meal on the table at a set time has gone, I
don't have that now. I mean sometimes I think, 'oh, just because it's six
o'clock doesn't mean we've got to eat, we can eat when we get
hungry'. I'm still quite fanatical about the house though [laughing].

It is only since they separated that Maureen and Anne have come to see the
situations as they described them to me. Maureen was so well aware of how
her ex-husband had used time that she now refused to wear a wrist watch.

I hate being ruled by the clock. I don't wear a watch any more…it
inhibits…because when you are ruled by time, when you have to be at

> a certain place at a certain time it means that you are there for someone
> else.

But while Maureen was now well aware of how time was used as a means of control in her marriage, Anne wasn't. Instead she saw time itself as her enemy explaining:

> for example, [if the dishes aren't done] time has got the better of
> me...it's time's fault. Time has run away with me.

She perceived her problems in her marriage as being problems with time, not with her relationship "It was very much a race against a time". It was not until our discussions that she began to see that it was not so much time that imprisoned her but her acceptance of her husband's behaviour.

> The first time you came here I really felt off track. I didn't really
> understand what you were doing...and I thought at one stage 'we're
> prattling on about my life here, how's this relevant to anything?' But
> after the last time you came I realised how many expressions I use
> about time...and I don't think I'd realised either how much of my
> marriage was taken up with looking at the clock...

In other words, her focus on time had obfuscated the way in which the clock had been used to control her behaviour and Anne had become, in Turbayne's words, a victim of metaphor. Moreover, she had displaced responsibility for her situation from her husband to the clock for as Taussig argues, once an abstraction "appears to be something natural and immutable" (Taussig 1980, p4) the underlying social relations are obscured. Anne's actions throughout this particular discussion graphically illustrate this phenomenon. At the beginning of the discussion we had been sitting inside and I realised that every time she mentioned the word 'time' or 'clock' she would quickly glance up at the clock on the wall. This was not an easy discussion for either of us and to ease the tension, we eventually agreed to move outside where Anne's behaviour changed and she became more relaxed. Here there was no clock. Eventually, I asked her if she had realised that she had been looking at the clock while we had been inside and she replied no. Unfortunately the

realisation of what she had been doing proved too much for her and the .
discussion was ended at that point.

It is significant that Maureen and Anne describe feeling throughout their
marriages that they had to be constantly in action sometimes to the extent that
both related incidents where they 'created' tasks to make it appear they were
working 100 per cent of the time. But the physical absence of the person they
were married to did not necessarily alter their situations as both believed that
every second of their day had to be accounted for. Maureen for example,
detailed having to account exactly for why it had taken her a certain period to
do the shopping or collect the children from school. The sense of someone else
"owning" them and their time was a constant factor. It is, therefore, little
surprise that leaving their marriages did not automatically change their
feelings. Having learnt a particular pattern of behaviour in marriage, both
Maureen and Anne had to then learn a new pattern out of marriage.

Separation then, like marriage, is very much a process rather than an event.
Changing one's status does not in itself change a person's understandings and
actions. Instead a complicated process of reassessing and reconfiguring events
needs to occur before behaviours can change. Simultaneously, a change in
status can stimulate this process. As a result, how one perceives one's self and
one's situation in the present, is very much dependent on how one has
constructed (and re-constructed) one's past and future. I return to this theme in
the next section. The fluidity of this process directly affects the data collection
process and the process of interpretation by social scientists. For example, in
their study of 'One- and two-parent mothers', Mauldin and Meeks (1990) give
no indication of how long the 'One-parent mothers' have been in that state.
And while Hilton does mention that "[a]nother factor which might impact time
use in single-parent families is the length of time that the family has to adjust
to the single-parent structure" (Hilton 1990, p296), she does not incorporate it
as a variable into her own data and results. As my own evidence shows, the
period of adjustment is significant.

For example, Anne came to see that her husband "was a control freak".

> It wasn't until after the marriage breakup that I was able to sit down
> and say that I was abused. I think it's really important that you can put
> a name to things but only when you're ready to and then come to terms
> with that. It took a long time and it really pisses me off that this
> marriage is over and done with and he's walked away from it totally
> unaware of what he did to me...

It was only at a later point in our discussions that Maureen began to understand that if she owned her time, as she claimed, she could control it.

> The time in my marriage was never my own. This is a new experience
> being able to choose what I do with my time...my life has never been
> my own...I'm learning about violence and compliance and self
> development and the more I self develop, the more I am taking back
> my time [laughs]...I keep saying I want my life back but I'm going to
> say I want my time back now.

According to Henderson and Allen this is very much an issue of empowerment for "[m]aking choices to include self in the caring nexus is a way that women value and take seriously their own developmental...needs" (Henderson & Allen 1991, p102). However, I suggest that this is valid for all people and not just 'women'. As I have shown, the manner in which caring for children is done is the issue and not the gendering, or any other aspect, of the people doing the caring. It is hard to value one's self when what one is doing is not valued by the society as a whole. It is also hard, even if one does value one's self, to 'take seriously...[one's] developmental needs', in the situation in which caring occurs. Segal for example, cites studies that show that full time fathers "bemoaned the loss of status and reduced self-esteem accompanying the absence of paid work" (Segal 1990, p45). Thus caring within the domestic sphere can leave both men and women with feelings of low self esteem. Moreover, the combination of feeling one must put the needs of the child first and the relatively physically isolated conditions in which this occurs can make it difficult to value what one is doing.

Being seen as low on the list of priorities of the people they were married to, as in the case of Ronice and Jeanette, also leads to feelings of lack of self worth which in turn reinforces views that caring is not valued. Waring (1996) argues that time is the one thing we have to give, giving time is therefore giving oneself. As a result, if the time you give is not valued, then neither is oneself. Time is not money although both can be exchanged for the other. But for it to be a balanced exchange, both people must agree that the time given equals the money given or, that the money given equals the time given and, more importantly, there must be an agreement that money will be the medium that is exchanged for the giving of time.

IV

"Freedom is putting tea on the table when I want to":
Time and metaphor

Given that neither Anne nor Maureen was able to tell me what time was when I asked them, what then were they referring to when they talked of time? Maureen, as above, equated time with life and she frequently used both words in an interchangeable manner. Anne, after she had thought about this, decided that what she was talking about was freedom[6] as opposed to control over when things occurred. To Anne, freedom meant she had control and was not controlled by another person. Freedom, then to Anne, equalled the control being her's.

> Freedom is putting tea on the table when I want to…doing things when
> I want to do it…if the kids want tea because of soccer I normally say
> "Well, okay then, when do you want to eat? Do you want to eat just
> now, do you want to eat later?"…I feel good that I could actually give
> the kids that choice…[but] if it was completely impossible it just
> wouldn't happen.

But this discussion with Anne raised another important aspect of control.

Is there a difference between your ex-husband saying tea must be on the table at six and one of your boys saying tea must be on the table at six?

[long pause, deep breath] oh yeah.

I wish I could get the way in which you said that into the transcript. Why is there a difference?

Because if one of the boys says "I need tea at six o'clock"...he's not threatening me. There is no power coming from him...whereas with my ex-husband it was like a life sentence if tea wasn't on the table at six o'clock. That was his way of keeping me in line with 'if you've got tea on the table at six o'clock you're doing what I want, so I'll reward you, I'll speak to you, might even have sex with you", so that...there was always this threat and this power that came from him that intimidated me.

Here Anne is differentiating between the perceived voluntary and involuntary giving of time.

Anne was not the only person to make the connection between time and its use as a control, as a metaphor for freedom. For example when I asked Tabitha what was the best thing about not being married she replied very quickly.

Finding my freedom again and finding myself again because when you're with someone so long you lose yourself a bit...the end of the marriage meant that I could just think of myself, not of him...that freedom...my life mostly revolved around him and what he wanted...

When I say freedom, I would never have gone back to study full-time when I was with him...because it would have taken too much time away from him...So I guess when I say freedom that's what I mean. It's just...to make decisions based solely on myself whereas most major decisions that were made were made mostly with him in mind and his career and his wants and needs.

In this respect, Tabitha matches the women in Fisher's (1989) study. She argues that:

> [a]s girls and women, we learn to channel our resources into boosting
> others' chosen paths... Taking time for ourselves does indeed... raise
> concern about taking time away from others whom we somehow still
> consider more deserving (Fisher 1989, p137).

Ronice's sentiments paralleled Tabitha's.

> The best thing about not being married or in a relationship is that I'm
> independent... I don't have to consider anybody else's wishes...
> [pause]... completely autonomous, completely responsible for myself
> and the worst thing is I'm completely autonomous, I'm completely
> responsible for myself [laughs]... it's nice if you don't feel like cooking
> a proper meal... it's good being able to eat whatever you want,
> whenever I want... I can do whatever I want, whenever I want.

But the sense of gaining freedom, i.e., identifying a lack of control, was also a feature of the men's responses. For example Chris.

> Living with another grown up, they sort of have ideas... you don't sort
> of get to be totally in control of what you're doing and that. But now I
> don't have to answer to anybody else... [the best thing about not being
> married is] you don't have to answer to anybody. That's the classic
> best, to me that would be the classic answer... the best... You don't have
> to consult anybody or please anybody with what you do. Just do what
> you want.

While Fisher (1989), as noted above, attributes women's behaviour to practices of gendering, this view has to be seen as limited in that it does not explain why the answers I gathered from both the men and the women were the same. For Chris was not the only man to express these views. The issue of control in adult relationships is more complex than some discussions of gendering would suggest.

Being able to control one's time, the 'when' things are done or occur then, is seen as freedom by one party to the action and as a loss of control by the other. Thus an act of defiance regarding the 'when' something will happen within a marriage is construed as an act of rebellion which needs to be punished for

control to be maintained. In contrast, its occurrence after the marriage is seen as an act or sign of liberation.

However, while I have shown that within particular relationships, such as marriage, there is a relationship between time and control, the ending of the relationship does not necessarily equate to an ending of the control and consequent construction of freedom. Although there was unanimity between the people in this project that there was a distinct difference in time and control during marriage and (eventually) after marriage, several told me that the people they were married to were still using time as a means of control after separation. Generally the manner in which this occurred was through the children. In theory the person with access would take the children for an agreed upon period of time with both the collection time and return time of the children to their home agreed upon. This left the person with custody with a pre-arranged block of clock-time in which they were free to come and go as they pleased.

This situation often did not occur. The children would not be collected at the correct hour leaving the person with custody having to cancel their own arrangements if they clashed while they waited for the person with access to arrive to collect the children, a situation that I can attest to as having happened on several instances when I arrived for our discussions. Likewise children were not returned at the appointed hour. Bringing the children back earlier than expected meant the person with custody had to remain at home to wait for them instead of knowing when to return. Wanting to change the dates of access visits also caused considerable inconvenience and angst.

But the one that antagonised the people with custody the most was the person with access ringing sometime during the access visit and needing to come back because the child had forgotten or needed something. They represented this as effectively meaning they were not free to leave the house and were restricted in whom they believed they could entertain in their own home.

In all these differing scenarios, the behaviour of the person with access was very much seen as being a form of control. For example, Christine.

> He likes to control what I'm doing with my time even though we're not
> together...he won't let me know when he's going to have the kids until
> the last minute so that I can't make plans...I don't feel I'm in control of
> my life most of the time...I felt he had control of my life more than I
> did...even though I've made the step [separated], I'm still not in
> control.

At a discussion two months later, the situation had still not improved for her.

> At the moment I still feel like my ex-husband is very much controlling
> my life...when he says that he'll have the kids or he won't even tell
> me.....if he does have the children he expects me to have a mobile
> phone with me all the time so that I can be contacted at any time...he
> can't deal with not knowing where I am even though I try to explain to
> him it's none of his business anymore but he still likes to have
> control...it's quite common that he'll take the kids but then still need
> later to come back to the house to get something.

Segal argues that joint custody "gives the father considerable power over his ex-wife" (Segal 1990, p53). However, the reverse is also applicable. For example, Don contrasted the situation between his boys going to stay with their mother and when they went to their friends' places for sleepovers.

> With sleepovers...if I know exactly where they are then I can go and do
> my own thing. But, if they're going over to their Mum's, I'm on
> standby even though they're not here. I'm still thinking about
> them...the problems that could be happening [at their Mum's] that I
> know about....at times it worries me that I could be doing things but
> I'm still preoccupied with something which is not even here...it's not
> physical, it's a mind game.

In most instances the people in this project went to great lengths to ensure that their own feelings about the person they had been married to were not made known to their children. Normally, if their children were within ear shot during our discussions, people were circumspect in what they would say. On

one occasion I was present when an ex-spouse arrived unexpectedly to visit his children. While he put the children to bed, we moved outside for a smoke and I asked how she felt about his unexpected arrival. She replied, "What can I do? The kids adore him. How can I say he has to go?"

The belief that children needed the contact with the other parent and the belief that the other parent had a right to see the children regardless of the views the person with custody may hold about the person with access, prevailed with some of the people. Segal, for instance, argues that "the emphasis on fathering is...another way of asserting the importance of the traditional heterosexual nuclear family..[and] 'good families' are male-headed nuclear families" (Segal 1990, p53). She sees this as "shor[ing] up men's power and women's dependence" (Segal 1990, p53) and she points out that "it is [considered] always better for children to see their fathers, even fathers who have been denied access because of their physical violence to wives and children" (Segal 1990, pp52-53).

But, as in Don's case, the situation described by Segal applied equally. While Don explained to me the situation that was occurring at the boy's mother's place to enable me to put his above comments in context, he was unwilling for it to be detailed in this thesis. Suffice to say, his concerns seemed warranted and, as a result, he was caught between his belief that children should have access to both parents and the dangers that this involved. The argument then, is that children need both parents. However, not all the people necessarily held this view as I detail in the next chapter.

In many instances there is a strong correlation between the behaviour of the person with access and the issue of maintenance. Segal, for example, argues that "[f]athers can also try to use their income and status to undermine or interfere with women who have care and control of children" (Segal 1990, p53). The people who felt they were still being controlled after separation usually had difficulty getting their maintenance on a regular basis. This was

another reason for them to accept the status quo. However, the person paying maintenance, even though it was usually for the benefit of the children and not the adult, was seen by some as believing that they still had a right to dictate how the adult lived their life.

An explanation for this can be seen in the equation time = money. Nguyen, echoing Marx's Labour Theory of Value, points out that this equation is better expressed as "labour = time = money" (Nguyen 1992, p36). This is partially the reason why work in the domestic sphere is unvalued leaving the people in this sphere feeling that what they do and they themselves have no value. The giving of money in the form of maintenance can be seen by some as equalling a control of the time one gives the money to. As a result, the pattern of control of another adult's time that develops during the marriage, is maintained after the marriage ends. In other words, underlying the control is a commodified notion of time.

The children then, are very much used as a means to allow control of one adult by another adult. This in turn highlights another problem in the use of labels to identify people. As Corrigan and Meredyth argue:

> ...the 'self' is not seen as a whole (or as a potentially coherent 'subjectivity'). Instead, individuals occupy different positions, roles or personae at different times and in different contexts, often in combination and in conflict with one another (Corrigan & Meredyth 1994, p45).

In the cases above, each person had two labels, 'parent' and 'partner'. Their separation meant that the 'partner' label changed but not the 'parent' label. As a result, the person generally needed to maintain contact with the person they had been married to, regardless of their own feelings about that person. In turn this led to contradiction in their lives as it made it extremely difficult for the process of separation to end and the marriage/separation to be consigned to the past. And it appears that this process needs to end before a future can be contemplated. Thus for a person, such as Maureen or Christine, trying to change a behaviour is handicapped by the continual presence of the person to

whom they had been married. This made the adjustment process very much a one step forward, two steps back scenario. It was not just a case of not wanting to let go (as in Christine's case for example) but of the remaining person being hindered in their attempt to let go of the relationship.

V

Time and Responsibility

Discussions on the imbalance of exchanges of time also highlighted another aspect of life in the domestic sphere. The things that needed to be done in the domestic sphere were expected by the women to be done by them. Not only did they expect to do them but they were expected by others to do them. Here the links between understandings of gendering and control of time is demonstrated. In other words, what they did with their time was circumscribed by their understanding of gender roles. As a result, when they found themselves on their own, their work load did not increase dramatically and in many instances it decreased.

Vicky, for example, had been working part time for large periods of her marriage and after the separation she had returned to full time employment because she had wanted to try and keep the family home. The home was a large house and stood on a large block of land (half an acre) which, because of its proximity to fire danger areas, required a great deal of maintenance.

> I was totally stressed when my husband was living here. Pressured,
> stressed, you name it. I was doing everything and there was this
> vegetable sitting there doing nothing. I have more time now definitely,
> absolutely definitely. It sounds ridiculous doesn't it. One less adult in
> the house but I've got a lot more time. I think he expected a certain
> standard and I was probably looking for excuses to avoid him so I was
> working my arse off and he did nothing. So I used to do an excessive
> amount of housework which took time and feel pissed about it because
> he didn't want to do anything. So there was all that negative stuff in

there whereas now it's my choice. I'll do it when I want to do it basically.

Over the next six months the paper work for the mortgage of the house was transferred to her. Vicky had also decided that she needed a social life so she had joined a social club for people who had separated and was going to social functions at least once a week. Vicky was also delighted to be able to tell me that she had finally found a time saving device that actually saved time; a garden vacuum blower.

At a subsequent discussion, Vicky returned to the theme of the difference between her life now and before her separation.

> I'm amazed at what I get done now physically in the house and at work, as well as go out. And I'm not exhausted. I'm not grumpy and moody any more because I don't feel that tired. You know, I'm starting to realise that all that emotional crap that went on in our marriage must have been affecting my whole physical well being.

Asking the women what they had to do now that they didn't previously do caused mirth and perplexity as they tried to think of examples which, when they finally thought of one, tended to be almost inane. For example, Anne.

> I can see things now that I do that he used to do. I must admit not a lot (laughing)…we always used to go shopping together, and I would empty the trolley at the checkout and he was really shit hot at packing the shopping bags…I remember standing in the shops one day [after separation] and I'm trying to muddle through this…and I thought, 'there is something wrong'…and I thought, 'it's because I've never done this'. He always packed the shopping. Because I stood at the other end with my purse and paid for it and he was at the top and packed it. And even now I still laugh about it. I'm trying to get my money out and pack the bags and I thought, 'shit, you were really good at this…so that is definitely one thing (laughing).

> In the marriage I guess I was doing it all myself anyway…You're the one who is usually running the household anyway, so what's the difference.

Notwithstanding my concerns expressed in Chapter 3 about some of the ways in which qualitative data has been collected by others in the past, some of the data does tend to coincide with the perceptions of Vicky and the other women. Douthitt, Zick and McCullough, for example, state that there is a:

> ...view held that couples divided home and market work
> responsibilities between themselves and shared the fruits of their
> labors. Thus, upon dissolution of a marital or common law
> relationship, custodial parents often faced having to meet their
> children's demands with half or fewer of the resources they had while
> married (Douthitt, Zick & McCullough 1990, p24),

and Demo and Acock argue that:

> ...[s]pouses or partners provide a potential source of labor, but they
> also contribute to the amount of work needed. Families that do not have
> a father present lose both the labor he contributes to household chores
> and the burden he adds to the total labor required to run the
> household...[as a result] The absence of a husband does not
> significantly increase the time the mother spends on most tasks...the
> father's presence or absence does not affect the time mothers spend on
> household chores (Demo & Acock 1993, pp324, 329-330).

However, my evidence is quite clear that rather than there being no noticeable difference, there is generally a perception of a distinct decrease. According to Mauldin and Meeks' research:

> ...[f]amily structure does not appear to affect time allocation decisions
> in Market Work or Leisure activities. However, time in Household
> Work is affected by family structure. These results suggest that the
> reduction of household demands, as a result of one less adult,
> outweighs that adult's contribution of human resources to household
> work. This is not surprising, given results of previous research on
> division of household work. It appears that husbands create more
> household work than they perform (Mauldin & Meeks 1990, p66).

The difference in the amount of work done is not explained by children taking up extra chores. Key and Sanik argue that the:

> ...single-parent status of the homemaker is not resulting in an
> overburdening of children with respect to home maintenance activities.

> In addition, there is no evidence from this study that single-parent
> status of the homemaker has a significant effect on older children's
> work and recreation patterns (Key & Sanik 1990, p84).

My observations support this finding for many of the people who participated in this project saw the work as their responsibility, a theme I return to in the next chapter.

Part of the reason why there is an expectation that domestic labour should increase with the absence of one person is the manner in which domestic labour itself is divided into outdoor and indoor with outdoor being seen as the province of the 'men' and indoor as the province of the 'women'. For example, Shelton argues that, "[t]here are a variety of tasks normally considered household labor, including tasks typically done by men (e.g., auto maintenance, outdoor chores) and tasks most often done by women (e.g., meal preparation, indoor cleaning)" (Shelton 1992, p6), while Elchardus and Glorieux argue that:

> ...[w]omen are still, despite their high labour market participation,
> primarily responsible for domestic tasks and child-care, while men are
> primarily responsible for paid work and for the more durable
> maintenance work that is performed (largely as odd jobs and do-it-
> yourself activity) (Elchardus & Glorieux 1994, p15).

But most of the women in this project would dispute this gendered division of labour. For example, Vicky.

> I did all the gardening, all the mowing, everything, cleaning the pool.
> He's never done any of that. So that hasn't changed.

> *Is there anything that he did that you had to pick up?*

> [pause] well he cooked sometimes, no, well, let me think [pause] You
> see this is the thing. I did everything. [pause] We did do things together
> like we built this patio on the back here but I painted it, put the roof on
> it. He did the retainer walls out the back but I lined them with plastic. I
> went down and got the soil from the place and wheelbarrowed it in.

One explanation for the work load being perceived as having decreased is the issue of responsibility. In Chapter 3, I alluded to this when I stated that cooking was perceived as easy if another person had already ensured that all the required ingredients were on hand while Lee, in discussing his own situation comments that "I very quickly learned that there was a difference between my taking responsibility for a task, either alone or jointly, as opposed to helping someone else with the task, but not seeing myself as responsible for it" (Lee 1996, p147).

The issue of responsibility for something or someone in the domestic sphere is entangled with the concept of caring. Moreover, it is responsibility for people or actions, rather than the tasks generated by caring that can be seen as gendered. For example, Bowlby, Gregory and McKie argue that:

> ...[w]hile surveys suggest that there is a small increase in men's involvement in both parenting and household chores...the *responsibility* for these and for the less easily identified activities of caring is still expected to be, and usually is, women's (Bowlby, Gregory & McKie 1997, p345, emphasis in original).

As a result, to the women, their work load had decreased as their responsibility for another person had gone. For example, Tabitha, like Vicky, was continuing to pay the mortgage on the family home. Since separating she had commenced studying full time and working casually but because she was receiving the Sole Parent pension, the number of hours she could work in paid employment was limited. She received child support maintenance payments but not spouse support and coupled with the intermittent nature of these payments, this made her financial situation somewhat precarious. However, even though her financial situation made life hard for her, Tabitha, like Vicky, considered she was better off.

> [my ex husband] didn't really take any responsibility...even if I tried to discuss things about the children with him, he didn't have much of an opinion...I ended up making all the decisions anyway...When he left I don't think the workload increased and in fact it probably decreased. He used to do some things around the house but when he left it was like one less child because ultimately I made most of the decisions.

> My ex husband always did the ironing, that's what I miss him for
> [laughing] but I always did most of the work. He did help but I would
> have to ask him, it wasn't voluntary.

Kirsten too nominated ironing but, more importantly, like Tabitha she had noticed that she had to ask if she wanted something done and this in itself was sometimes more trouble than it was worth.

> The only difference I notice is that my ironing doesn't get done, really
> that's the only difference. Anything else I'd have to ask him to do it
> and as far as I'm concerned it's often easier to do most things yourself
> rather than track down someone else and ask them to do it.

> Maybe there were things that he was doing... but now having a
> household of my own I don't recognise that there's anything I'm doing
> that I think, 'gee, that would have been his job', no, nothing...

The perception of the level of responsibility for the women, then remains constant.

Looking after the children was also something that needed to be asked for as Christine shows.

> It's pretty full on sometimes...[but] I was the main care giver anyway...I
> was doing most of the work with the kids, so I don't feel I do a lot more
> work without him around...But there's a lot of positives too, like we
> were constantly arguing and I don't have that and that's one extra stress
> I don't have in my life. I didn't really get a lot of help then [during her
> marriage] either. He was willing to baby sit if I made a point about it,
> but he wasn't really happy about it.

This is a situation that Ronice can relate to.

> There wasn't a noticeable difference when I separated because I was
> more or less doing it on my own anyway...I used to have to ask him if
> he'd come and baby-sit so I could go to a P & C meeting. 'Would you
> mind baby sitting your children?' [laughing]. And sometimes he'd
> forget!

It has been argued that with two people parenting, one provides and the other cares. Thus there is the expectation that the situation should be more difficult if the one person has to take on both roles. As the above examples demonstrate this is not the way some of the women understood their situations and there are several possible explanations for this. First, in many instances, the original division had not been that clear cut and many of the people in the project had been providing as well as caring. Thus, for these women, the loss of one income, while altering the financial situation, did not necessarily alter the actual balance of tasks because it was only one of two incomes that was lost, not necessarily labour and responsibility in the home. Secondly, the Government through providing the Sole Parent Benefit becomes the de facto provider thus leaving the person receiving it with just the caring responsibility. In a similar manner then, financial resources alter but not necessarily the actual tasks being done. Thirdly, the number of people perceived as being cared for lessens and as a result so does the time involved. Fourthly, competing expectations are reduced in that only one set of standards now applies and these may be lower than the standards imposed by another.

However, some of the men did not find that their situations had become easier. For example, Chris.

> You've got to do all the other things that aren't being done. If two
> people share the responsibility to any degree and if one person is
> removed then that other person has to have more to do. It may not be
> twice as much but there has to be extra for you to do...[during my
> marriage] the responsibility was divided. She worked some of the years
> we were together, mostly she was just a housewife. So while I'd be out
> at work, she'd be home and organising the kids at school and looking
> after that side of things.

Chris's comments about responsibility differ from most of the comments by the women noted above. While the women reported no noticeable increase in the tasks they did and attributed this to them always having had the responsibility, Chris describes a situation where there is a change from responsibility being shared to one where he has to take all the responsibility.

Accordingly, he found that he had "to do all the other things" that had once been someone else's responsibility.

Perceptions of a shortage of, or gaining of time, are therefore related to issues of responsibility. In the situations where the people considered they had always had the responsibility, such as Kirsten and Ronice, they felt their load had eased because of the decrease in the number of people they felt they were responsible for. But this was not the only reason given for feelings that life was now in some ways easier. Another reason for the perception that there was more time, was the absence of conflict for time is taken up with conflict. For example, Vicky.

> Contrary to popular belief, you are less stressed when you are on your own. Don't ask me how to describe it but I have more time. I was not only looking after every body in the house physically but emotionally as well. You are looking after your husband by making sure that you didn't say the wrong thing and that the children weren't all at each other's throats when he walked in the door and things like that. There was constant conflict and when it went to no conflict, it was wonderful.

> A lot of time was wasted, when we were all together, on sorting out conflict. Well, not sorting out conflict, they were just happening and they were not getting resolved. So they would just keep coming up, and coming up, and coming up. So all the time it was 'don't shout at each other, don't do this, don't do that'. It was time wasted.

I have noted that all the people in this project had suffered financially as a result of their separations and some were still experiencing financial difficulties. But many told me that even though this was the situation they were now in, that is, life in one respect was harder, it was more than balanced by the peace of mind stemming from the removal of the conflict. For example, Anne.

> The phone's never been cut off and the lights have never been cut off and I've never been evicted. There's always been food on the table...So even though there is only one income coming in...the financial thing is not relevant to happiness.

Kirsten too, could see that some parts of life were more difficult but this was outweighed by the positives.

> I don't have the same emotional responsibility for him. I found that the greater burden [laughing]...I wouldn't go back to what I had for the money. So whilst it's hard financially to manage, I wouldn't change it.

This is similar to how Goodnow and Bowes describe 'emotional labour'. They argue that:

> ...work–paid or unpaid–may be described in terms of the extent to which it involves 'emotional labour'. The term refers to activities that involve listening, being attentive to the moods and interests of others, providing support or a safe opportunity to express a variety of feelings. Emotional labour is called for in a great deal of the work expected of 'support' staff (private secretaries are probably the supreme example in the paid work area) and of people in 'caring professions'. It is a strong feature also in household work (Goodnow & Bowes 1994, p32).

But like some of the people in this project, Goodnow and Bowes appreciate that there is a fine line between doing things because one cares and doing things because one has to. They also appreciate that the location of caring within the domestic sphere, and thus its connection with housework, can entrap some.

> ...There is pleasure attached to doing for someone else the things they clearly cannot do, rather than the things they 'could do for themselves'. And there is pleasure attached to the occasional, voluntary taking on of a task that the other can do and should do but either dislikes or has little time for. In both cases, the work becomes a volunteered gift-a true 'labour of love'-rather than a taken-for-granted part of one's job or an enforced tribute.

> At the same time, we need to recognize that household work is not the only gift that one person may offer another. In the long run, a relationship may benefit more from the gift of 'emotional labour'...We also need to recognize that the blind and total alliance of 'household work' with 'caring' disguises the fact that a great deal of the work is tedious and difficult to persuade others in the family to do. It can also

be a trap for women, who are the more often expected to care
(Goodnow & Bowes 1994, p33).

Here, again, what a person does with their time is allied to understandings of gendering. Thus, if a person defines their role (or has it defined for them) as being the 'carer' then their control of what they do with their time is dictated by this definition.

Caring is thus complex in the experiences of people's lives. It is entangled with ideas of exchange and reciprocity, time, gendering, responsibility and control. In many respects it is problematic because, as Mason argues, there is "an overemphasis on physical activity in our definitions of care – as though care equates to physical labour – risks underplaying the significance and potentially gruelling nature of sentient activity" (Mason 1996, p29). It is this emphasis on the physical aspects of caring that led to the discrepancies in some of the previous time-use surveys. But it is also the emphasis on the physical aspects that led to perceptions that the giving of time in relationships is not being reciprocated. Mason further suggests:

> ...that if we reconceptualise...aspects of care as sentient activity and active sensibility, we move beyond dichotomies between caring for and caring about, or loving and labouring, and we join those scholars who are beginning to rethink conventional sociological distinctions between activity, thought and feeling (Mason 1990, p32).

However, caring in the domestic sphere involves child/adult relationships as well as adult/adult relationships and in the next chapter I look at the similarities and dissimilarities in these two types of relationships.

Review

Time was understood by the people in this project as being an external, commodified reality that they could dispense. In turn this implied that they had choices and control. In this chapter I focused upon the exchange of this

reified time in adult relationships. Although there is an expectation that time will be equally exchanged in relationships, with the exchange occurring either in the present or in the future, this did not turn out to be the situation for the people in this project. Instead they felt that the time exchanges were unequal and that their time, either all or significant parts of it, was being controlled by others. In part this can be explained by the notion that women 'naturally' care and because it is 'natural' it does not need to be reciprocated. It can also be partly explained by the notion that men care by providing material needs and that in return women provide care. Underlying this is the idea that doing something involves a financial return and if what women (and men in the same situation) are doing is not rewarded financially then their actions have no value therefore no exchange is required. In other words, their time has no value and it is difficult to respect something or, by extension some person, who is seen as having no value.

But while the process of gendering explains a great deal, it does not explain why the men felt as strongly as the women that their time had been owned and that they had now regained control of their time. What the men and women had in common was their understanding of time. Time was an external reality that they could do things with. Within their relationships they exchanged in the guise of caring. But caring is an orientation to action and not the action itself. Consequently, for the exchange of time in the form of actions to be seen as balanced, there had to be agreement on the understandings of the motivations driving the actions. In other words, both parties to the exchange needed to agree that the action equalled caring. When this did not occur, the exchange was perceived as negative. In turn, this led to a perception that rather than their time being exchanged equally, it was controlled or owned by another. According to Sahlins, it is balanced reciprocity that sustains personal relationships. As a result, perceptions of unbalanced exchanges can lead to resentment and the eventual breakdown of relationships. And because balanced reciprocity invokes a perception of a future, a breakdown in a

relationship based upon balanced reciprocity consequently results in a loss of a future.

But caring also involves another dimension, that of responsibility. Like caring, responsibility is an orientation and is not the action itself. Responsibility then is difficult to measure in a quantitative fashion. However, increasing or decreasing perceptions of responsibility are reflected in perceptions of available time and the time that was seen as being used in relation to caring for another person is then converted into time to be used caring for oneself.

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[1] Much of the evidence in this chapter arose from discussions that revolved around the people comparing their current situation with their previous situation. To facilitate these discussions I would ask them to tell me the best and worst thing about their current situation. However, many made the comparisons without any prompting from myself.

[2] This was not deliberate as the person concerned was experiencing major problems in her life and was unavailable.

[3] At the time of writing this, Melanie had completed her treatment and she (and her family) were optimistic the leukemia had finally been beaten.

[4] In the end she decided that he would have to have his own 'tree' but she could not see how to link it to her 'tree'.

[5] The expression 'boong' is a particularly vulgar appellation used in reference to Australian Aboriginal people. As I noted in Chapter 2, the evidence in my writing comes from transcripts which each person had agreed to me using. In this instance, Anne was adamant that I did not change her words as she wanted to clearly demonstrate what sort of person she felt she had been married to. This particular example also helps to explain her views in Chapter 5 as to why she felt so strongly that no role model was better than a role model who was going to put forward a view of the world to her children that she completely disagreed with. Anne then, at the time the incident occurred was not only dealing with her confusion and fear but also with her intense dislike of the language used.

[6] Anne, like many others in this project casts freedom as the opposite of control. One of the themes of this thesis is the manner in which time is controlled. I do not therefore propose to enter into a discussion about freedom. Instead, I use the word as their representation of the situation in which they were.

5

TIME and CHOICE

Overview

In Chapter 4, I showed that caring in adult/adult relationships involved an exchange of time with patterns of reciprocity and created obligation and this in turn, raised issues of control of time. I also indicated that for many of the people in this project the boundary lines between caring for an adult and caring for a child had become blurred with the result that caring for an adult and caring for a child had collapsed into one another. Consequently, the change in situation with the absence of the adult/adult relationship had been interpreted by many of the people as has having made their life easier and as having given them more time and in some instances, they had seen this as having regained ownership and control of their time. I further suggested that issues of responsibility were entangled with the concept of caring.

However, while the actions predicated upon caring for a child and caring for an adult may be the same, there is a difference between caring for an adult and caring for a child and the difference revolves around the exchange of time. With adult-adult caring there is an expectation that time is exchanged and, following Sahlins' model of reciprocity, the exchange needs to be recognised or accepted as balanced. The subsequent meeting of the obligation maintains relationships. In adult-child caring, the situation is more complex. The exchange of time, particularly when the child is very young can be more appropriately seen as an example of generalized reciprocity. Here, there is no expectation that the time given will necessarily be returned by the person receiving it and the exchange occurs because of the relationship. Consequently, one could assume that the conflict scenarios associated with time in adult relationships would not occur in adult/child relationships. However, no person in this project was able to describe a conflict situation

with their children that did not in some way entail a notion of time. In part, this is because while the notion of generalized reciprocity holds true in adult/child relationships, as the children grow and mature elements of balanced reciprocity appear and time exchanges become more complex.

In this chapter I look further at the similarities and differences associated with caring in adult/adult relationships and adult/child relationships. In Chapter 3, I showed that caring in the domestic sphere is better described as an orientation to an activity (or activities) rather than the activity/activities. Understanding caring in this manner allowed for it to be problematised so that caring could be seen as something occurring continuously and constantly by both men and women. Moreover, I showed that caring in the domestic sphere occurs along two distinct axes; the adult/adult relationship and the adult/child relationship[1]. In this chapter, I first focus on the adult/child exchange of time and I look at understanding why the representations of conflict between adults and children is related to time. It appears from my evidence that the children, particularly young children, had a concept of time peculiar to them. Problems then arose for the people in the project as they tried, in their understanding of what parenting entailed, to balance the children's concept of time with the dominant societal concepts, particularly clock-time.

Although people may, in one circumstance, i.e., the adult/adult relationship, be controlled, in the adult/child relationship, they have the control. As Jurczyk states, "[t]o be in charge of one's own time is a necessary if not sufficient condition for autonomy. By the same token, to be in charge of the time of others signifies individual and social power" (Jurczyk 1998, p 290). In the adult/child relationship, the contradictory nature of the control relationship is more clearly exposed. Understanding why this should be so, entails understanding how the people in this project understood parenting. This is the focus of section II. All were in a situation where they were parenting their children in a situation that they had not intended i.e., they had initially had children in a two parent relationship. However, the change in their situations

had resulted in them having to make adjustments in how they understood parenting[2]. Moreover, parenting is allied to the process of gendering and the experiences of the people in this project helped some of them to redefine their understanding of gendering. This new understanding affected their views on the socialisation of their children with regards to gendering.

In section III, I return the focus to the similarities and dissimilarities between caring for adults and caring for children and I show how some of the people in this project came to realise that they had been acting as though there was no substantial difference between the two. Here caring and taking responsibility for another are seen as two discrete entities rather than a situation where one automatically equals the other. In other words, they realise that caring for another is not the same as taking responsibility for another. Moreover, as caring underlined the giving of time, a change in attitude to caring is reflected in a change in attitude towards time and vice-versa. In other words, a change in how one understands one's time corresponds to changes in the choices one makes to dispense it and in turn alters the understandings of obligation associated with reciprocal exchanges. Finally, a consequence of this realisation was a further refinement of how they understood gendering and their identity as men and women.

I

Time and Children

Probably more than half [of my time] is owned by the kids I'd
say [laughs] and the rest by me
Tabitha

Well, the children own my time
Don

All the people in this project believed that to a greater or lesser extent their children owned their parent's time. But, unlike the situation when they perceived their time to be owned by another adult, they accepted that their

time was owned by their children. Underlying this was the rationale that they loved and therefore cared for their children. This meant they did things for their children. But, more importantly, the 'when' these things were done was often dictated by the child or, perhaps more accurately, their understandings of the needs of the child. Moreover, the people in this project had noticed that children, particularly very young children, had their own conception of time different from their's.

However, the adults, through caring, owned and controlled to some degree the time of the child. As Henderson and Allen argue, caring gives power to women. "[a]lthough women are oppressed within their homes, as research on wife abuse has documented...the care of others is an avenue for control over the lives of others" (Henderson & Allen 1991, p101). However, while Segal argues that "[w]omen's 'domination' in the home is a limited one" (Segal 1990, p48), caring for children, regardless of who, i.e., women or men, is doing the caring, can and does give control over the children being cared for.

In my own material this is shown in discussions revolving around conflict over time situations. Here it became apparent that adults expected children to do certain things, at particular points in clock time. But most of the adults had realised there was a distinct difference in their concept of time and their children's concept of time. In other words, society's concept of linear clock time is something that very much needs to be learnt. As K. Davies points out "a clock time way of thinking has been *internalized* by individuals" (K. Davies 1994, p286 emphasis in the original), and, in the case of children, has to be internalized.

The difference in perceptions of time is seen in situations where the adult had left full time employment to become the primary caregiver either through the birth of the child or, through changing roles when the child was older. In these cases the adult soon learnt that children, particularly very young children, are

not clock-timetable oriented. Helen, for example, contrasted her full time paid employment with caring for a new born child.

> It was a huge shock to me when I had my first child...[in my job] I had
> to be very organised...time was very critical. I was very critically
> aware of lineal time. There could be no interpretation, that's it! And the
> child threw me so, just so much because I was no longer in control.
> This small creature was in control of my routine, my day, when I woke,
> when I slept, when I went to the toilet, when I was able to have a
> shower, all of those things. And I think that hits other professional
> women more so.

> In generations gone by when girls grew up looking after younger
> brothers and sisters, they were more attuned to that. I'm now
> completely attuned to that one...I think that through mothering women
> learn that they can not alter the course of time, of what's happening.
> Other events do take over. This baby needs to sleep when it's not
> convenient, it needs to eat when it's not convenient, but you have to go
> with the flow.

Graeme too, was struck by the difference between the concept of time he was used to and what he described as 'kid time'. When I began these discussions with Graeme he had only just become the primary care giver and was finding the situation difficult.

> There seem to be two layers of problems. On the one hand men haven't
> been taught, as part and parcel of the socialisation process, the technical
> knowledge they need to bring up children. Things like washing dishes
> and cooking and stuff like that and how to organise things like bringing
> in the washing and all those sort of things. And so there is a level of
> tension in thinking I've got to learn how to cook, how do I mash up
> baby food and all that. The difficulty of this is that they are little micro
> skills, they are not the big things that you get educated on.

> But there is another layer...with young kids particularly, I think it
> slows down as the kids get older, because they are growing so fast and
> changing so much and they are inventing new ways all the time of
> doing things and they don't have a sense of routine. So there is a
> continual process of negotiation and re-negotiation of all the little

> events that happen right throughout the day between the adult and the
> child. The adult has objectives about what they want to achieve in a
> day. In the best of worlds you could switch over completely to kid time
> and you would do whatever they wanted but because you've got
> another child to get to school you're concerned they get to bed early,
> and you might want to do the banking or shopping or whatever.

Both Helen and Graeme (along with many other people) are here commenting on the culture shock experienced in moving from the paid employment sphere to the domestic sphere. Both had problems adjusting their concepts of timing and both had problems in knowing exactly what it was they were supposed to do. Thus although Segal, for example, comments on the difficulties that men have in learning how to complete the activities in the domestic sphere (Segal 1990), so too do women. In other words, literature that focuses on the problems of men in adjusting and ignores the similar problems of women, runs the risk of assuming that caring for children is at best something women learn as part and parcel of their socialisation to being women or, at worst, some natural instinct.

Most of the people in this project were comfortable with Graeme's expression of 'kid time'. To them, 'kid time' was very much present oriented with concepts of the past and the future being almost non-existent. In this way, they are seeing 'kid time' metaphorically and understand it as something different from their own understanding of commodified time. Moreover, because 'kid time' is seen as what their time isn't, they have in effect constructed a dualism.

The demands of a small child are immediate and the younger the child, the more immediate the demand. Explaining to a baby that they can not be fed until the adult has washed the bottle, made up the formula and so forth does not work. Neither does a baby understand that their needs will be met once the adult has met their own. Thus as Helen and Graeme learnt, small children have a way of ensuring that the outcome is that an adult very quickly loses their

own autonomy and sense of being in control of the situation with the result that the adults' objectives take second place with control over time being conceded.

For example, Graeme.

> The real bottom line of it is that the children have ultimate control unless you are into child abuse and you are completely malicious and/or negligent. In the end, their needs are going to come first.

However, particularly as the child grows, this control can be the subject of negotiation as Graeme explains.

> But there's a point back from that where you actually have levers, emotional or hitting them or whatever, where you can exert your control so you can impose your will on them and you can get things done that you need to get done. There's various other points along the scale where you can sort of negotiate with kids and choose how far you are going to push it. So most of the time you've got control over the kids, you've got sufficient influence and a sufficient idea of where you are going yourself that you can actually direct things.

Thus the control operates in both directions provided the adult is prepared to concede the child's rights to have his/her needs met first. However, children and the adults caring for them live in a wider society than just their home and society has its own views on time which can lead to tension. Most of the people in this project could recognise that the conflict between the adult's concept of time and 'kid time' stemmed from the outside society. For example, Tabitha.

> I think all children have problems with the concept of time, clock time. It is only really just now that Simon has been realising it because he has to be at school and we have to rush out of the house to be at school at nine o'clock. And then he has lunch at twenty past twelve every day.
>
> He is trying to come to terms with it but he doesn't like it and I don't think he really sees the need for it...so I'm rushing around telling him to hurry up I have no choice in the matter because the world does run by clock time so he has to learn about it.

I don't know that I would teach him it is a necessary evil because it is something that he has to live by. It's one of those compromises that you have to make. It is something that you have to live by because that is the way society is and you have to somehow fit into that. But at the same time I will teach him that there are people who don't live like that and that there are other ways of thinking about it.

Graeme too described the conflict that occurs between the process and clock time.

What I like to be able to do is have periods where I say 'this is kid's time' by which I mean that it's up to them to decide what to do and how long to take to do it. I'm just there in whatever capacity they want me to be there but I'm not controlling it in any way and that's what I think of in terms of being on kid time.

But in day to day life, you have to allow for things getting upset by kid time. They have processes that they go through that have nothing to do with clock time. So I think there is real conflict there and it is a conflict that happens at lots of micro levels. For example, the last ten minutes in trying to get out of the house and take Daniel to school in the morning and the incident that occurred just this morning with Benjamin... Ideally we shouldn't have to rush it and we shouldn't have had all the anxiety of me trying to get Daniel to school on time. Now if we hadn't had the clock time deadline we could have let the process take its course and Benjamin and I could have quietly and slowly negotiated this whole thing [referring to that morning's incident] without any conflict. In the end if I'd let it happen that way it might have been quicker but alternatively I could have settled it by just putting him in the pram and of we go. So clock time gets in the way all the time.

How do you resolve the conflict between the two?

Well, ideally the school would be open whenever you turn up. You think that school's an institution and it's for children and ultimately it will become that flexible. But there's a limit to the institutions and the practices within society that will become this flexible. In the end I think

you can't resolve it if you've got these western, material, economic
complexities in our life style.

When asked, no person could give me an example of a conflict situation with a child that was not in some way time related. For example, Helen.

I can think of very few issues that don't revolve around time. Even the
language...the language that I catch myself using with the children,
when it's 'you haven't time for that now, it's time for your bath, to go
to bed, do homework, or whatever'. Or, 'you can have half an hour or
whatever with the play station or television, or whatever'. And even
negotiating between them, 'it's my turn, she's had longer than at that
than I have'.

So it's all to do with time. 'She's been on the trampoline, it's my turn'.
'You have to get up, go to bed, brush your teeth now, you'll miss your
favourite TV program. So just trying to line all of those things up so
that all of those things happen, which is teaching them.

Graeme too had similar views.

There are very few reasons to get angry at children without clock
time...[after some thought] I think that a hell of a lot of conflict is
associated with time. When you think about it...you'd probably find
time was at the root of it [conflict]. Yes, if you consider having dinner
at a certain time, ultimately it gets back to the fact that kids need to go
to school and therefore they need to go to bed and therefore we need to
get dinner done with.

Significantly, all the people in this project identified the period from getting up in the morning till the children were taken to school as the most stressful period in their day. Clearly, trying to meet an enforced clock time, in the school's hours, caused the most conflict. And, as Graeme did, many could see that other time conflicts such as dinner time and meal times had their origin in the requirement for the children to be at school at a specific time[3].

But Graeme had also realised that being able to dictate the 'when' something would occur was a means of control.

Time has acquired its own value as a means of control. People use time as a means of control, and have had time used on them as a means of control and therefore time has acquired its own meaning as a control mechanism...if adults aren't prepared to say [in relation to caring for children] 'well, this is only a few years of my life, therefore I'm prepared to go on kid time', then there is also conflict....It's only when we set objectives for ourselves...we've got this idea of our own personal development, doing things out there in a constructive materialist way, or in terms of working out our personal needs somehow, and we think that that is separate from parenting, that's when the conflict arises...as adults we think we've achieved things when we've measured them against a time scale, some sort of abstracted fixed time...parenting is not valued and therefore it is not an achievement looking after kids.

Clearly two processes are in evidence here. First, there is the socialisation process whereby a child learns to concede autonomy over themselves to another person through the concept of time before they perhaps take it back in some small way. As children grow they learn that their needs will not always be met immediately. In this manner they learn about the concept of the future and the concept of deferring gratification. A demand for food, for example, will be countered with a reply of 'not now, wait for your dinner'. Simultaneously though, they are learning that others have control over them and no longer can they eat when they are hungry and sleep when they are tired. As well as the concept of the future, they also learn about the concept of the past and about cause and effect relationships. The same demand for food could have also solicited the response, 'not now, you've just had your dinner'. Given that these are issues of control it is not surprising they result in conflict.

The children associated with this project ranged in age from new born infants to adult. The people who were caring for children in their teenage years also reported conflict over time. Children would be asked to perform a household chore, such as washing the dishes and this would rapidly become a contest of wills. But the issue wasn't whether the child would do the dishes, that was uncontested, it was when the task would occur that was most often reported as

contested. Thus the children could be seen as trying to regain some of their autonomy. The parallels between this situation and that in which adult/adult conflict occur are striking. While freedom to an adult might be deciding when to put tea on the table, to a child freedom is not a situation where one never has to do the dishes, it is instead a situation where one chooses when one will do the dishes.

The socialisation process also involves another conflict with the child having to learn to fit into the wider societal structure dominated by clock time. Here, although the adult's authority and control is also being challenged, it is significantly different because the adult too is constrained by the external demands.

In her work on the process of economic rationalisation in Swedish day nurseries, K. Davies argues that process time "is a useful concept to describe or capture a plurality of times that are indissolubly linked to their context...[and] on many occasions [are] not measurable...the boundaries are fluid" (K. Davies 1994, p280). The staff cuts in the nurseries coupled with many of the auxiliary staff (such as cooks and cleaners) on reduced hours, meant that the children were more regulated in what they did. The degree of flexibility necessary in process time situations is missing. Thus the staff found that activities needed to be curtailed to ensure the children had their meals when the cooks were present and finished them before the cleaners left (K. Davies 1994).

K. Davies does not argue that the nurseries should be run solely on process time. Like some of the people in my own project, she appreciated that our society ran on linear clock time and as a result, she argues that the ideal situation was when "process time and linear/clock time united in harmony and wove a well-designed pattern" (K. Davies 1994, p288). As she points out "[c]are and caring are dependent on process time being available to a large extent" (K. Davies 1994, p289). In other words, not allowing children process

time, i.e., the time needed to master a new skill (and thereby increasing their independence and autonomy) such as dressing themselves, or feeding themselves, could be seen as a situation in which caring was not happening.

This was a situation evident in my own material. To allow process time to occur, a period of clock time had to be available, or made available. Thus the people in my project recognised that the early morning stress could be alleviated if they allowed a certain amount of clock time. As a result, the time a person got up in the morning was calculated back from the time they needed to leave the house to have the children at school, i.e., to meet the externally imposed clock time, plus another period of time to allow for unforeseen problems. But even allowing for this, they recognize the veracity of K. Davies' comment that "[a]ctivities cannot be neatly scheduled; the unexpected repeatedly rears its head and demands flexibility and a process relation to time" (K. Davies 1994, p295).

For example, when I asked if school starting half an hour later in the morning would ease the situation for them the consensus was no. Graeme explains why.

> For example, if the kids wake up really early, say six o'clock, and there
> is no requirement for them to get to school till quarter to nine, you have
> this enormous lump of time in the morning to fill in. Benjamin starts
> playing games and there's real difficulty in saying 'it's eight o'clock,
> now we need to start structuring things, such as baths and packing bags
> and all that'. That's when it gets much harder to redirect things...
> Ultimately there is this structure built around the deadline of getting to
> school and if the activities stay within that clock time stream it is much
> easier. It's less stressful.

Thus the issue is not when the school starts but that the time it does is inflexible. The conflict arises with trying to match a fluid situation to a fixed point. For as K. Davies notes, "[c]are and caring have to be given, regardless, and temporally these cannot be shut off or confined to a fixed time limit just because this has been decided" (K. Davies 1994, p295). As a result the actions of people caring for children are controlled by an externally imposed time.

This control leads to conflict for, even in situations where the people recognised 'kid time' and were prepared to follow it, their choices were still limited by external controls. Thus there was a need for a constant negotiation between allowing the children to do things in their own time and their belief they had to teach their children about time to enable them to fit into the society. This led to their perceptions of conflict being time related.

Time exchanges in adult/child relationships are not easily seen. This is because the reciprocal action occurs at a relatively much later date. In other words, the original giving is in the present with the reciprocal action well into the future, if at all. Consequently, the people in this project did not always expect their children to give them back time as children. However, some expected a return of time from the children as adults. For example, Maureen.

> I do expect that in time when they are married and take off that they
> will come back and visit me every now and again.

Children then, can be seen as a form of investment in the future.

The people in this project were all children themselves and the idea that the reciprocal action occurs at a later date was expressed by Graeme.

> There are some people who drop by my home and I won't stop what
> I'm doing and yet I know when my Dad is dropping by...I'll spend as
> long as Dad wants to spend there and I don't expect anything in return
> for that. I think I feel like I am [pause] perhaps I actually feel like I'm
> paying back...something that's been given to me...I don't actually
> expect anything of my parents any more at all.

Graeme, in this manner, is meeting the obligation created through the initial exchange of time.

But while they were prepared to allow for a future reciprocity to occur, they did expect some forms of reciprocal actions in the present or more immediate future. For example, Jeanette.

> It's the parent's lot in life [laughing] to give and to give, and to give
> [laughing] and theoretically I suppose, the motherly people amongst us
> would say that a child gives back in joy [laughing].

John too, had similar views.

> With children, there's no exchange other than a hug or two…I guess
> [when they're older] you expect respect [but when they're little] it's
> love and affection. They run to you and give you a cuddle. It's little
> things like that…a cuddle goes a long way. And that's what parents like
> in return for parenting…the recognition that their kids love them.

However, now that his child was older, John had redefined the exchange relationship

> I figure that because he's in year 10 at high school, if he does his
> homework, keeps his room tidy and gets good grades, I'll vacuum his
> floor and do his washing ironing and cooking.

Here, there is a distinct division of labour more closely paralleling the adult division between caring and providing with John's son's actions being seen as an equivalent to work. As long as the child studied (worked), thereby investing in his future, the other party would care for him now in the present. In this manner, John moves from expectations based upon generalized reciprocity to expectations based on balanced reciprocity.

The idea that caring, and therefore selflessly giving one's time without expecting an immediate reciprocal action, in other words, following Sahlins (1974), generalised reciprocity, has consequences. For example, it causes tensions in the adult having to juggle time for themselves with time for their children. Tabitha's children spend every second weekend with their father. This, to Tabitha, is time to herself. However, at the beginning, it very much involved mixed feelings.

> When they go, there's a big sigh of relief that I've got a few days break.
> Even when we first separated, it was really difficult being without them
> but I still looked forward to having the time away from them, even
> though it is awful.

Kirsten too did not like her children being away from her.

> ...the most difficult thing is having to move my children off every
> other Saturday. It's very difficult indeed. Saturdays are always horrible.
> That's, without a doubt, the most difficult thing.

Because caring is seen as continuous and continual, giving time to oneself is problematic. For example, Tabitha.

> when I am at Uni, I class that as time to myself. If I don't get it, then
> the time that I spend with the children loses it's funness, it becomes
> more of a chore if I don't get that breather.

But there is also a tension between time for oneself and giving time in a caring relationship. Jeanette for example, found that she had negotiated how the time she shared with her son was going to be spent.

> Motherhood, I'm not very good at [laughing], especially play dough.
> God, I hated play dough [laughing] and ludo, things I just could never
> do. Now he's older, it's fine. We can share the same interests...But
> when they're little and want to play Ludo and all those other horrible
> things that kids like [laughing]. I did do them but not as often as I
> probably should have but [pause] I've always been there emotionally
> for him I like to think [laughing)]. I just wasn't any good at silly games.
> It was usually, 'Mummy's busy, she's reading'.

A focus on children and time shows that the concept of clock-time needs to be learned and internalized to the extent that it is unquestioned and seen as 'natural' and 'normal'. Clock-time becomes time. However this leads to conflict. In the first instance, the adults believe that they need to teach children the importance of time, or more precisely clock-time. This in part requires them to organise their children's activities to match an externally given time frame. Activities in the domestic sphere were accordingly organised around the school times and, if they had paid employment, the adult's work. The children needed to be in bed at a certain clock-time to ensure they had enough sleep to be able to be got up in the morning to allow them to get to school on time. The evening meal was thus fitted in to allow the appointed bed time to happen. The children, as a result, were fed and put to bed, not when they

wanted but when their parents dictated. But the children had their own body times, a point Adam makes when she discusses internal clocks (Adam 1990). Consequently, the children needed to learn that they could no longer eat when they were hungry or sleep when they were tired and it is in the process of learning this that one see how the clock-time becomes internalized (K. Davies 1994).

The second type of conflict occurs from the adult's internalisation of clock-time as time. As adults, they understood that generally things needed to be done at specific times and in a specific order. Consequently, they would ask their children (particularly as the children grew older) to do something and expect it to be done when they asked. When the child did not, conflict arose over control of the child's time. There was an assumption that, notwithstanding their understanding that their children owned the adult's time, they, as adults, owned the children's time. This contradiction then gave rise to tensions and conflict as the people in this project expected their children to do as they were told and, more importantly, when they were told. Moreover, associated with internalising clock-time, the children began to learn the principles of exchange of time and reciprocity. Consequently, exchanges of time in adult/child relationships incorporate elements of both generalized and balanced reciprocity.

Tensions also occur with adults needing to balance their understanding that their time is for their children with an appreciation that they needed time for themselves as adults. Moreover, how the time they gave their children was going to be spent could also create tension. I return to time and children again in section III of this chapter.

II

Parenting

I rang up a friend once and said 'what have I done?' I've emasculated
my sons and my daughter's the only girl on the inter-school soccer
team' [laughing].
Ronice

Within western society in recent times, parenting has been seen as requiring
two people (Segal, 1990) and the division of responsibility has been divided
along gender lines. The 'man' (referred to as father) provided and the
'woman' (referred to as mother) cared. Additionally, the father was the
disciplinarian and the mother balanced this by being 'softer'. However,
although all the people in this project began their parenting along these lines,
their situations changed and they found themselves having to do both.
Sometimes this change occurred within the process of the marriage itself and
sometimes as a result of the process of separation. As a result, in having to
combine the traditional two roles into one person, some are now questioning
the need for the original division into two.

Further, although most could see how having more than one person parenting
would be of advantage to the children, the collapsing of the original gender
based roles into one, has led many to query the original division based upon
gender. In other words, the women are finding they can do the things a father
would have been traditionally expected to do, while the men are coping with
what they saw as the traditional actions of the mother.

It is to be expected that the memories of their childhoods and their
relationships with their own parents will have influenced, either positively or
negatively, how the people in this project are parenting. This can be
demonstrated in their belief that all had wanted to raise their children in a two
parent family based upon the assumption that this was the ideal situation for
this. However, they are now all raising their children outside of the ideological

norm of a two parent family. This has resulted in many changing their views on parenting. Moreover, parenting is closely aligned to gendering for, even though "gendered subjectivity is created everywhere... [and] there is no privileged site, neither early childhood, nor sexuality" (Walby 1990, p104), gender relations are still first encountered in the home. Witt, for example, argues that "[a] child's earliest exposure to what it means to be male or female comes from parents" (Witt 1997, p254). In other words, if gender is the meanings we give to relations between people, it is in observing the relationship between the people who parented them that the people in this project first encountered gender. Secondly, through parenting they are reproducing the process of gendering in their own actions as well as in their socialising of their children to gender.

Starting with two

With three exceptions, all the people in the project grew up in two parent households. But, almost without exception, memories of their childhood equalled memories of their mother for, as Segal argues, "[s]ome fathers... will remain forever strangers in their children's lives (Segal 1990, p28). For example, Helen.

> As a child...I suppose my dad had the ultimate authority because we
> lived in that kind of family but it was rarely exercised. Occasionally I
> was smacked [by him] across the back of the legs with this ruler that I
> dreaded but usually it was my mother I would defer to. She was the
> important person in my life, he was a shadowy figure...Do I see my
> father in the images of my childhood? Not very often...I guess he's
> there but almost like a prop, not as a significant part of it.

It is perhaps no surprise, then, that their descriptions of their childhoods and their descriptions of their married lives, closely resemble each other. This is Ronice describing her father.

> As I got older [as a child] Dad sort of faded more and more into his
> shed [laughter]...I remember as a little kid, him coming home from
> work and playing with us and taking us out in the bush but then as the
> family grew he retreated.

Compare it with her description of the person to whom she was married.

> I was the parent and when he wanted to play families he'd come and
> take us out of the box and we'd play families for half a day or
> something and then we'd get packed up and he'd go off and do his
> thing with his life.

Don could relate to that story. He told me of how 'family outings' consisted of he and his four sisters being taken to the wrestling as that was what his father wanted. Additionally, like so many others, his daily contact with his father was limited.

> I didn't have much contact with my father, he would go to work at
> seven thirty and get home at five thirty. He'd walk through the door, I'd
> shake his hand, it wasn't hugs and kisses, we'd talk [pause] a little.

A generation later, Anne described the relationship between her sons and their father.

> Their dad was never one who could sit and have a conversation with
> them, you know, 'come and talk to your dad' sort of thing.

The situation of their childhoods then was more accurately reflected in their marriages then many appreciated at the time. For example, Anne.

> I suppose when I was married I would have looked at myself as being
> the mother...but now I look at myself as being the parent because I do
> not just do the so called mother/woman duties [but also] the things that
> you would normally expect the father to do. Take the kids to sports, cut
> the grass, tend the garden, change the oil in the car [pause] not that he
> did most of that. When it came to transporting them to their sports he
> would often be there but I was always there...as far as cars are
> concerned, he knew nothing about cars so the boys would have dipped
> out in that [laughing].

Likewise Ronice.

> Some people have divided this that mothers are softer and fathers are a
> bit more the disciplinarian. But I disciplined the kids, still do...I did the
> fixing up of the bike and putting new seats on and mending punctures
> and all that...Now I have seen two relationships where the parenting is
> done equally by both mother and father but in normal households

> [laughing], mother does it all…when we were married it was never laid
> out in black and white, I just did it. I was the parent.

If childhood is where the process of learning about parenting first occurs, then the three people who experienced a childhood different to the idealised norm could be expected to have an advantage in having to cope with their own changed situation. In some respects this holds true for Kirsten.

> It wouldn't be strictly true to say I had no idea [of parenting on my
> own] but my experience of it has been very different than my
> mother's… there were all sorts of avenues closed to her because of her
> marital status [divorced] or lack of [pause] thank god I don't have to
> confront those things in my life. In that regard it's a lot easier…But I
> had a very good role model in her…I certainly saw her achieve what
> she wanted to achieve and cope with her situation…and come sailing
> through, so I suppose in many ways I had a positive image to look to.

But the situation also held true for some of the people raised in two parent homes. For example, Tabitha.

> In my home situation, my mother did nearly everything. She practically
> raised us…she would come home from work and she did absolutely
> everything in the house and he wouldn't raise a finger. She has always
> paid for our clothes and food [from her earnings]. He paid the mortgage
> and bills….when I was a child it was like my mother was a sole parent.
> He was never there, he never had much to do about raising us, he never
> knew what was going on at my school. It was always she who did that.
> She used to take me to my tennis lessons. So in a way I don't think my
> situation is all that different.

It would appear then, that the institution of the two parent family as portrayed in society was far from the reality that the people in this project experienced. However, all set out to raise their children in two parent families. Thus the idea of the two parent nuclear family would seem to be a deeply ingrained ideal (Segal 1990). But, while some considered that they had originally stayed in their marriages 'for the sake of their children', with one exception, none were endeavouring to replace the absent parent. As Hanson states "[a]s more time passes following divorce, there is a decreasing need [for men] to find a

surrogate mother for their children" (Hanson 1986, p142). My evidence indicates that this holds equally true for women.

Jeanette initially believed firmly that two parents were required but she had changed her mind.

> At first I thought there should be two parents. I'd read all the adverse reports in the media on children from broken homes who are going to be drug addicts and criminals and they're going to do this and they're going to do that. And I thought, 'oh my god, my darling perfect little son is going to end up like that'. But so far that doesn't seem to be happening [laughing] and I don't think it will...I think it's because I've given him a stable, caring and loving home...I haven't felt any great necessity to rush and out and replace Liam's father, far from it.

Maureen was another who expressed similar sentiments. She was now having another adult relationship but this was for her and not her children.

> I set out on purpose to divide the two roles [mother and partner]. I have explained to the kids that they can treat him as a friend but not to look on him as a substitute father, because that's not on. I don't agree with that idea at all, forget it!.

Maureen's attitude was not unusual. In other words, subsequent relationships were seen as being for themselves and not as a means of providing a step parent. This was perhaps understandable in the cases where custody was shared. For example, both Kirsten and John saw their new partners during the week in which their respective children were at the house of the other parent. To them, their children still had two parents, they just didn't live in the same house.

Others, however, were not so sure that only one parent was the best solution. John believed that

> what is good for the kids is both parents. That is what is good for them.

Hence his decision to agree to a joint custody arrangement.

The absence of the other 'gender' more than the other parent worried some. For example, Anne was concerned that she was presenting the world to her sons from a distinctly one sided perspective.

> Sometimes when they come to you for advice I step back and think, 'am I only saying this from a women's point of view?', but I must admit it's not often.

Helen's concern too was that her children were not getting a true picture of the relationships within the wider society.

> I guess what they get from both parents is a rounded view of humanity which they probably don't get from a just a single sex situation.

However, she could also see how this was very much an ideal situation.

> Witnessing a really good relationship between a man and woman...appears to be the exception, not the rule and therefore in marriages where children are witnessing women being put down [pause] I think that's more damaging than if they are simply brought up by their mothers.

Like Helen, Simon too thought that one parent of either gender while the ideal, was not always critical.

> I've said people are the same [pause] but there are slight differences between male and female in the perspective of things and I feel singularly that I have to draw on a feminine side of myself to impart certain things to my kids and also there's a masculine side that I have to impart [pause] and it's nice if there's two there to share...it takes two to create the kid so the two should be there throughout the life of the kid and hopefully together, not apart...It's the way we've been brought up...but that's not to say that single doesn't work.

Others thought two people parenting would be nice but they did not need to be of different genders. For example, Don.

> I don't think it makes any difference whether the parent is the same sex as the child, it's all a question of exposing them to different people. There is only one role model for my boys, it's irrelevant if that role model is male or female.

To Ronice, simply having someone to share it all with was enough.

> It's a heavy responsibility for one person. It would be good if I have
> somebody there who was equally concerned so that you can bounce
> ideas off them.

This was a commonly expressed sentiment and, in some instances, I became the 'other'[4]. However, what is interesting about these sentiments is that the other person was not necessarily required to be present full time. It was more a case of them being required on a situation to situation basis. Tabitha could see when it would be advantageous.

> One person can do it but...there is this very intense relationship if there
> is just one parent...It must get frustrating for them having just me
> around sometimes.

> Maybe it's not a man, maybe it is just another person to balance out my
> personality. It's just that I tend to be a quiet person. So it would be nice
> if there was another person around who is more outgoing...I know my
> children have their own personalities but a lot of it is learnt. Just
> someone to even out my flaws, what I think of as my flaws.

The idea of more than two parents was also mentioned. For Graeme, two parents was good, but more was better.

> I think on balance two is preferable...but let me say that I don't think it
> has to be confined to two

Likewise Kirsten thought that the more there were, the better.

> Kids need all the parents they can get. The more people you have in
> your life that can fulfil that role, the better. I don't believe that it should
> be limited to biological parents. I think it is just wonderful to have
> loving, supporting adults around you who respect you and love you for
> what you are.

Although most had lived in a traditional two parent family as a child, most also told me that the bulk (if not all) of the parenting had been done by only one person. Thus, albeit, unconsciously, they had learned that it really only took one to do it. As a result, the situation they found themselves in upon

separation was not necessarily as foreign as one may have imagined, particularly for the women.

However, there are at least two other possible explanations for this. Firstly, most of the women considered that they had been doing all of the parenting before their separation and thus their situation had not really changed. Secondly, most of the men told me that before their separations, they would have described themselves as 'hands on fathers', particularly in relation to their children as infants. For example, Chris.

> [knowing what to do] was never a problem for me because I did most of that anyway. I cooked a lot and did baby things and stuff. I did a hell of a lot of it. I did more than my equal share which was fine.

Moreover, with one exception (Graeme), the men had all spent time out of the paid workforce before separation to provide the at home care. Their children then, were not complete strangers to them at the time of separation. As a result, most aspects of parenting were familiar to most people and they were all quite comfortable handling the aspects normally seen as the responsibility of the other person parenting. Hanson for example, argues in her study of father/child relationships

that:

> [s]ingle fathers who interacted frequently and effectively with children from very early infancy, adjusted more readily to single parent roles...and felt that they were doing a good job parenting (Hanson 1986, pp 139-140).

Don also believed that

> the actual skills have to be trained for both men and women. There is no real thing as a maternal response, you have to be socially trained for it. You can see this with our cat and her kittens.

However, there were occasions when some of the people found themselves in situations that they weren't 'trained for'. The situation was resolved by them learning. For example, Simon,

> Last year the girls were playing netball and I felt left out because I
> hadn't been brought up with that. I didn't know the rules and I'm the
> kind of person that will play sport with my kids in the backyard, so I
> learnt [netball].

But both Simon and Don did not consider that it was always necessary for them to gain a skill to teach their children.

From mothers and fathers to parenting

It appears then, that parenting to most of the people in this project had some links to gendering but what the links are is debateable. Parenting also had little to do with a two person domestic division of labour. According to Ronice,

> If parenting is done properly it can be either gender. Parenting is
> nurturing, teaching, protecting, feeding, providing, listening,
> disciplining, guiding, talking, sharing, caring... There is a division of
> roles but I don't think there should be...I would like it to be parenting
> regardless of gender...even when I was married I would have liked it to
> have been parenting...I wanted parenting for my kids and they got
> mothering...Mothering is something that society sees as parenting
> which is done by the female not the male. Society sees mothering as
> being completely different to fathering. They see mothering as the giver
> of love...whereas I would like that to be known as parenting which can
> be done by a male or a female parent.

Helen too, noticed that parenting often is equated to mothering.

> I've been thinking a lot about the importance that society places on
> parenting, but really, often that comes down to mothering rather than
> parenting.

In a similar manner to their wanting other aspects of gender divisions to change, as detailed in Chapter 4, most of them also wanted what they saw as the artificial division of parenting into mothering and fathering to change. Tabitha agreed with Ronice that the situation should change.

> I think the roles are different but they shouldn't be. I think that
> everything should be more even and shared...Parenting is caring for
> and raising children.

To Kirsten, there was no difference.

> I guess a mother is someone who has your best interests at heart [pause]
> and a father is also someone who has your best interest at heart. There
> ought not to be a difference between mothering and fathering...we
> should be asking what's a good parent, not what's a good mother or
> father...I don't think it is necessary to differentiate parenting based on
> gender, who takes those roles and I think the separation of these roles is
> very much destructive.

To Kirsten, parenting involved more than just gender.

> There are stages of parenting. So I've got two different children at two
> different stages so I'm a different parent to one than I am to the
> other...it's also to do with different personalities of the
> children...there's no point when you could say 'this is 'motherhood',
> this little thing encapsulates what it is to be a mother' because it is
> different from day to day and from child to child, and is influenced by
> all the other aspects of my life as well. I'm a different parent when I
> have a shit day at work than I am when everything is going beautifully.

Graeme was another who was not sure about the connection between the roles
of mother and father and other aspects of gender.

> In the end it comes down to the whole messy thing about whether
> males and females are socialised differently. So whether there is
> something intrinsically different in being a mother as distinct from
> being a father...I don't know. I would say that children with only one
> parent are not missing out on anything particularly by virtue of gender
> differences. Unless you attribute particular personality characteristics
> or aspects of behaviour to gender, then it's pretty hard to say that they
> are missing out on anything from a gender perspective.

Thus while they perceived differences between men and women they did not
perceive differences between father and mother or, at least they did not see
this differences as being relevant to their lives or as essential to raising

children. In other words, their own situations and practices provided grounds for a cultural critique of traditional roles.

Consequently, definitions of parenting tended to be gender free. For example, Simon.

> Parenting is raising children to the best of your ability, teaching them
> right from wrong by your own values and also society's values because
> sometimes they can be two different things, showering them with love,
> affection, kindness…I firmly belief that apart from the physical aspects
> [breast feeding] everything else can be shared.

Like many, he objected to having his parenting described in terms of gender roles.

> A lot of people come up to me saying, 'you're doing a good job as a
> dad', and I like to say 'I'm just doing what every other parent would
> do'.

Most would agree with Tabitha's summation of the situation.

> The times when I feel I am sticking out like a sore thumb are times like
> parent's night when there is mum and dad there…most of the time it
> doesn't feel that different. It is just sometimes that I realise that my kids
> are not being raised in the perceived normal way.

However, not all were as relaxed as Tabitha and not all saw parenting as being 'gender free'. For example, John considered that the male had to be the disciplinarian, although he did concede that this needed to be tempered.

> You need that blend [mother and father] so the kid can grow up with
> the right balance knowing what their own limitations are; what they can
> get away with and what they can't…Traditionally, the mother is the
> loving, nurturing person and the father is the disciplinarian. It is
> unfortunate but that's how it works out because Mums let kids get
> away with things because they love their kids. So rather than them
> turning out as fair little swines, Dad has to step in and draw lines.
> Having said that, the child needs to see Dad's good side, playing
> around, attending sport, kicking the ball and all that sort of thing.

But Chris, had a different perspective on whether disciplining could be seen as separate from caring and nurturing.

> Behaviours are good or bad irrespective of whose doing it. So caring
> and nurturing, it doesn't matter who is doing it as long as it gets
> done...disciplining is part of nurturing and caring as I've tried to
> explain to Brett. If I didn't care why would I be doing what I do.

However, Chris found having to balance both in one person, a difficult task.

> I think a lot of that comes from me struggling with the nurturing role
> [pause] it's so hard to balance it out by yourself. Maybe that's the
> answer why we are born into two sexes...It's a hard job with two
> people doing it, a hell of a lot harder with one...if I've just blown him
> up for doing something, he's just been disciplined in whatever fashion,
> then the other person [pause] I guess it's not necessarily a mother/father
> thing...it's two parents...would come along and console him and
> explain it all [pause] there are times when I have tried to go into his
> room and do the consoling thing afterwards but you're the one who has
> just jumped on me, so how can you be consoling me. That side of
> things is a little bit hard.

Don, however, expressed a different view.

> There used to be a distinction to me that the father would do the
> disciplining and the mother would do more of the empathy/ sympathy/
> caring thing. But I find that now I do both...I'm comfortable with the
> level I am at the moment.

Hanson's work provides the beginnings of an understanding for both Chris and Don's experiences. She argues that "it only makes sense that parents do change their disciplinary style when they *no longer have a partner to mediate between themselves and the children*" (Hanson 1986, p140, emphasis added). Chris for example, shows that not having another adult there to sympathise with the child while explaining the actions of the other adult to the child, was a problem.

Where the men did have a problem with physical contact was in how others would perceive their actions. Although all of them were, as Don described it,

"comfortable" with their own physical contact with their children, they had noticed that this was not necessarily so for others. Graeme, for example, had noticed that he would get 'funny looks' from some people if he was sitting cuddling and kissing his child on the train. He was quite sure that if he had been a 'woman', he wouldn't have got those reactions. Simon too had found that he initially had problems with the people parenting friends of his children not allowing their children to 'sleep over' at his house. Like the others, he did not feel he had to moderate his behaviour in public but the issue was still of some concern to him.

> It's an issue I had thought about because being in my situation I'd hate
> to be accused of something that I'm not and that is a big fear. I mean
> it's not something I lie awake in bed thinking about every night but it is
> something that is there. You read about it everyday and so you do have
> to be careful...I feel comfortable within myself but it is an issue.

Most of the people then, had in effect reproduced their own childhood patterns of parenting in both their marriages and their current situations. However, while they may have felt that they were parenting on their own in their marriage, they now were in actuality doing it. As a result, they had questioned many of the ideals associated with parenting. While there was no agreement as to how many parents were in effect needed, on the whole they had redefined parenting as 'gender' free.

One parent or two?

Some people considered that although two people parenting was the ideal, one person parenting was better than two if the second person's contribution was perceived as a negative role model of gendered behaviour.

For example, Jeanette.

> I think my son is better off not having his dad here as much as his dad
> is a nice person. But he's a racist, he's sexist, he's 'big boys don't cry'.
> And I don't want my son growing up that way...when Liam comes
> home from school and complains about some kid at school I tell him to
> talk it over, whereas his father would say, 'oh, punch him in the gut',
> and I don't want my child raised like that.

Anne's experience was very similar[5].

> When I got married I thought they needed a father...[then]I used to
> look at their father and I thought 'you don't need this, if this is what
> your role model in life's gonna be, forget it'. God help us, it was bad
> enough with one of them in the world, never mind having another two
> of them the same as their father.

> When he would see the kids he'd say things like, 'how's things at
> school? Is anybody bullying you?...You just [expletive deleted] tell me
> and I'll go [expletive deleted] down and sort them out'...I suppose that
> was putting across this image that if you're going to be a man, you've
> got to be tough and you've got to fight all the time...I just used to
> cringe when he used to come in and say that. I never thought it was
> necessary. I just didn't like it...You don't have to be a big macho man,
> you don't have to fight to solve problems. There is such a thing as
> compromise, sitting down and talking about things...just because your
> father has done these things, it doesn't mean that you've got to do them
> and it doesn't mean to say that all men do these things.

Segal argues that:

> ...[t]he contemporary reinforcement of fatherhood is problematic in so
> far as...Its adherents maintain that it is always better for children to see
> their fathers, even fathers who have been denied access because of their
> physical violence to wives and children (Segal 1990, pp51, 52-53).

While some of the women in this project would agree with her argument, so
too would the men. Firstly, as Chris pointed out, it was not just women who
had noticed and defined this as unacceptable behaviour. He too did not think
that being a man necessarily involved violence.

> To me [the Tarzan image] is the biggest hoax...fathers behave that way
> with their sons. You know [deepens voice] 'if he does that to you at
> school, boy, you go and bop him on the head'. I mean, what chance
> does the poor kid stand because he thinks that's a man because that was
> what his father was like...And to me, being a man in those situations
> where someone is in your face and trying to push you [pause] if you
> can handle the situation, be in control and walk away without even

> raising your breath, well to me that makes a real man. And women
> acting in this way, well that's not very feminine either. It's socially
> unacceptable by me, no matter who is doing it.

But equally, two of the men saw the situation in the reverse in that they considered their children's mother to be a negative influence and would have preferred their children not to have contact with their mothers[6]. While some of the women were up against the ideological "Families Need Fathers" (Segal 1990) doctrine, these two men were hamstrung by the opposing argument that children needed their mothers.

From girls and boys to people...

While what is perceived as aggressive behaviour is being discouraged in children seen as boys, the opposite is happening with the children seen as girls. Here assertiveness is encouraged. Kirsten, for example, was quite deliberately trying to provide her daughter with a positive example to follow.

> I'm not a doormat any more. I think I've had my share of doormat
> years [pause] if anything I've probably gone a bit far the other way, I
> probably tend to be too pushy...possibly I feel more validated now
> because I have more authority in other areas of my life...I hope I'm
> raising my daughter not to be a doormat...I hope by example I will
> teach her she can do whatever she wants...

Likewise, Helen.

> With any luck, my daughter will grow up thinking we [women] can be
> perfectly self-sufficient the way that we are and that she can do
> anything and everything...she can make decisions and do it very
> adequately.

According to Witt:

> ...[p]arents encourage their sons and daughters to participate in sex-
> typed activities, including doll playing and engaging in housekeeping
> activities for girls and playing with trucks and engaging in sports
> activities for boys...Children's toy preferences have been found to be
> significantly related to parental sex-typing (Witt 1997, p255).

However, this was not the case in this study for the boys were playing with dolls and the girls were playing with trucks. For example, Ronice.

> My boys were allowed to play with dolls and they did. My daughter's got toy trucks...she plays Nintendo, she likes the computer, she'll read things like Red Dwarf, she's not doing 'girl' things, she's doing cadets...

> Dad's more likely to get upset if his son wants a doll, if the son shows what's considered to be feminine attributes such as playing with dolls or dressing up...whereas mum knows it's not a problem. Mum's all wise, all knowing, all seeing and all smelling, isn't she (laughing). I think women probably know that these qualities should be nurtured in all kids, not just female. Probably from looking at the fact that they lacked some of this nurturing from their fathers and then that their kids are possibly lacking some of it from their fathers.

Witt also argued that "fathers have been found to reinforce gender stereotypes more often than do mothers" (Witt 1997, p255). But this was not necessarily the case. Graeme, for example, told me that

> I don't have a problem with my boys playing with dolls

On several visits to his house both he and I and the children sat and played with dolls. Graeme did, however, watch closely what sort of dolls the children were playing with. Accordingly, he was unhappy with the 'Barbie' dolls feeling they were projecting an unrealistic image to his children. Nor did he approve of dolls representing military aspects of life such as soldiers.

Ronice believed that her parenting was successful, however, she sometimes wondered if she'd gone too far.

> The oldest boy, he's intuitive, he's caring, he's gentle and yet he's strong enough to get out there and do what needs to be done, he believes in sharing, he will talk...and the younger one's still growing up....They're qualities, they're good qualities for a person to have.

> I rang up a friend once and said, 'what have I done? I've emasculated my sons and my daughter's the only girl on the inter-school soccer team'.

As she commented (above), changing her own views and behaviours after a life time of indoctrination was not easy.

In effect, the changing expectations of behaviour appropriate to each gender has resulted in both boys and girls being raised in similar ways in many cases. Some of the people were aware of this and had quite deliberately set out to achieve this end. For example, Maureen.

> I disagree with the notion that boys should be raised in a certain manner
> and girls should be raised in another…they are an individual and I
> don't see them as only male or female. They are an individual person to
> me.

Not surprisingly, given his views (above) that behaviours need to be reclassified along a good/bad continuum and not a male/female one, so too is Chris raising people.

> I'm trying to raise Brett to be a socially acceptable person. His own
> sexuality will develop itself…I'm trying to teach both the values and
> rules to make them become useful and sociable members of society.
> That's pretty much it.

In a similar fashion, Don differentiated between his own views on masculinity and those of his sons.

> I have a very broad definition of what masculinity is. But, they are
> going to have to define what their masculinity is.

John's views were similar to Chris.

> I'm bringing Bob up to be a person…he can do anything he likes in life
> as long as he doesn't hurt anybody, cause some harassment, or cost
> somebody some money. He has rights in this world and whatever he
> thinks are his rights, be assured, they're attached to responsibility. You
> can't have one without the other.

But while the 'person' is still going to have a gender, to John, respect, as an orientation to actions, flows in both directions.

> You can't just sort of look at a person of the opposite gender and look
> at them as an object. You've got to treat them as a person...Boys have
> to be taught to practise respect to women and girls have to respect men.

In attempting to do this, John would no doubt agree with Carey's argument
that in:

> ...[t]he raising of our boy children...we can hope to find new ways of
> bringing up our children that are closer to the ideal of a non-sexist
> society, where neither gender is subject to demeaning or dehumanising
> practices on the basis of their gender (Carey 1994, p85).

It would perhaps be far easier to say that all people need to respect all people.
According to Witt, this is very likely to result from the parenting many of the
children are receiving. She states that:

> [w]hile there may be some benefit to adhering to strict gender role
> stereotypes...there are also costs...[including] perpetuating unfairness
> in our society...those parents who wish to be gender fair and encourage
> the best in both their sons and daughters would do well to adopt an
> androgynous gender role orientation and encourage the same in their
> children (Witt 1997, pp256-257).

...and back again

Regardless, of their views, all the people who participated in this project were
very aware that they lived in a gendered society and this presented them with
problems. In the first instance, no matter what they said and did in the home
their children were still exposed to differing views. For example, Tabitha.

> I always try not to 'do gender' but it is so hard...I think I will have to
> raise them on a desert island. They learn so much from television and
> all the kids at school. I think the best I can do is stick to my beliefs and
> live my life the way I believe that it should be and hopefully it will rub
> off on them, some of it...My mother is always saying 'look at him, he
> is being such a little boy'. But I don't think that way. I think that there
> are a lot of things that my older son is coming home with that he is
> learning from the boys at school.

Maureen too, had problems with the school yard.

> I have noticed that when they hit primary school they come home not
> as an individual, they come home as a gender. And that was worrying
> me and it still worries me, still concerns me because while I'm trying to
> teach or show equality, they are being conditioned to consider
> themselves differently.

For Grieve, the problems experienced by Tabitha and Maureen are the result of peer pressure that occurs in early childhood (Grieve, 1994). She argues that:

> ...[f]or children in primary school, it becomes increasingly difficult for
> cross-sex play to occur in public, even though children may prefer to
> play with the other sex for reasons of liking, familiarity, or style or type
> of activities" (Grieve 1994, p265).

As a result, small children, for Grieve argues that the process is well established by the age of seven years (Grieve 1994), may find themselves in a social situation which conflicts with their home situation. The pressure on the children to conform in the social situation is so great that "[t]here is no question of publicly crossing the [gender] boundary" (Grieve 1994, p265).

Sometimes the pressures arising from the school situation were more subtle than Grieve portrays. Helen, for example, was having problems with the regulations at her daughter's school that stated she must wear a skirt and not shorts. According to Steinem, the dominant cultural construction is that "[c]lothes and body ornamentation follow the same political rules as male strength and female weakness. Female versions restrict the body, and male versions allow freedom of movement" (Steinem 1992, p254) and she further argues that dresses that button up the back, or zip, up the back encourage helplessness and dependency thus making the wearer "a prisoner in... [their] own clothes" (Steinem 1992, p273). In a similar manner, Brook argues that "[l]ittle girls' clothes still emphasise the feminine function to be seen and to be appreciated, rather than to interact independently with the world" (Brook 1994, p63). Helen could see very clearly how wearing a skirt would curtail Samantha in many of the physical activities that she enjoyed.

Helen's problem with how to dress her daughter was not just related to schooling. Samantha did not want to wear dresses in other social situations, such as children's parties. Consequently, Helen was uneasy about delivering her daughter to other houses where all the girl children were dressed in "frills, pastel colours, and fragile materials that will show signs of soil or tear under the least stress" (Brook 1994, p63) while her child was in shorts and a Tee shirt.

Schooling caused another problem for some, particularly secondary schooling. Whether the children should attend a single sex or co-ed high school was a dilemma particularly for the people like Maureen and Kirsten who had both 'boy' and 'girl' children. Maureen told me

> They reckon that girls get on better [academically] if they're in an all
> girls school, but boys get on better at a co-ed school...

Kirsten shared these sentiments. But this put her in a quandary. Wanting to do the right thing for her daughter meant putting her daughter into a single-sex high school where she believed she would gain a better education. However, her son would be better off, according to Kirsten, in a co-ed high school. Her problem was whose daughters were to be 'sacrificed' for her son? Both Kirsten's children are still at primary school so she felt she did not yet have to resolve her dilemma. However, given Grieve's work (above) on primary school children and gender roles, primary school may not be the comfort zone Kirsten believed.

Maureen's children are older than Kirsten's and Maureen's youngest son now goes to a private single-sex secondary school.

> It goes against my values...It's more to do with the standard of
> education...I'm not substituting for his father because the behaviours
> that his father had, I wouldn't want him to have anyway.

Helen too has a daughter and a son and her son also attends a private single-sex secondary school. Like Maureen the rationale for this decision was partially a belief in a superior level of education being given. But Helen also

believed that she needed to balance out what she saw as the feminine influences on her son to more accurately reflect what she (above) perceived as the balance between the genders in society.

> I worry about him being brought up surrounded by women, his mother, his grandmother, his sister. So I'm happy he's going to a male secondary school. His dad's overseas and he doesn't see him much.

Synthesis

The people in this project began parenting in a two parent situation. They had not necessarily thought about this but they had accepted the dominant societal model of two parents to the extent that they feared for their children when their own situation changed. Like their acceptance of the two parent model they had further accepted that there was a difference in mothering and fathering with, in general terms, fathering being seen as equating to disciplining and mothering equating to nurturing. Disciplining and nurturing are thus seen as different aspects of caring and as gendered. But their own situations had shown them they were more than capable of taking on both these roles. As a result they now saw caring for children as parenting and not as a division into mothering and fathering.

However, their new understanding still was problematic to them. First, while they didn't think that parenting needed to be split into nurturing and disciplining along gender lines, they did see that one person doing both was not necessarily the best situation for the child. As a result, they felt that more than one parent was advantageous to the child. However, the 'other' person parenting did not have to be of the opposite gender nor did they need to be there constantly.

Secondly, they had begun to question the process of gendering in relation to their children[7]. They recognised that, regardless of their own views on gendering, they lived in a gendered world which lead to tensions. Some felt that their children needed both male and female role models to reflect this. However, they questioned which femininity or masculinity would be

presented to their children as a role model. Others were concerned that their own efforts in imparting values about gendering were being hampered by other institutions in society particularly the education system. To some, what they taught their children in the home was negated by what happened when their children moved to school and to the play ground where they socialised with other children. Education was also perceived to be a problem area at the secondary level in relation to gendering. They wanted the best for their children but could also identify the contradiction in girls doing better at a girls only school with boys doing better at a both sex school.

Parenting and gendering were therefore aspects of their lives that they were constantly having to re-negotiate. The lasting impression is of a group of people who believed they were parenting well and that, on balance, and contrary to their earlier concerns, their children were not deprived as a result of the situation.

III
"Emotional Housekeeping": Untangling caring and responsibility

One of the paradoxes that my evidence demonstrates is that caring for children is perceived as being made easier by the removal of the second adult. There are two possible explanations for this. First, it removes the conflict between the two adults over what will be done, when and why. In effect, the remaining adult gains total control with the children, although this is tempered by the contradiction discussed above. Secondly, the absence of the second adult eliminates the need for the person remaining to care for another person. Caring, or more specifically the actions motivated by caring, then is significantly reduced as a whole sphere of exchanges and potential misunderstandings is removed. One result of the people in this project having had their situation changed and their subsequent understanding that life has

become easier, is their reassessment of how they used to care for adults. Specifically they had come to understand that caring for adults is markedly different to caring for children and that this difference revolved around the exchange of time and issues of responsibility and obligation.

Removal of conflict

The lack of conflict in adult/adult relationships was expressed when I asked specifically whether parenting was harder or easier now that there was only one. Don thought parenting by himself was easier although he could see that this could also be a problem.

> It's easier as a single parent. I don't have to discuss things. I can say
> yes or no to the children. I don't have to refer to the other parent...in
> other words I can make decisions without having to compromise. But at
> the same time, if you have a bias your decisions could be loaded and
> this might not happen with the other party being there. So it's easier to
> make decisions, but whether it's the right decision, who knows.

Like Don, Graeme too identified the lack of conflict issues as making it easier.

> It's easier with just one adult...the trouble with another adult is that the
> basis of negotiation changes and so when you are negotiating with
> children and you're managing things through children you play the
> game in a certain way. But you can't do that with another adult unless
> what you do is subjugate them in some way and treat them like another
> child (laughing) and that's why I think it's easier when there isn't
> another adult there.

But Graeme's joke about treating the other adult as another child is also a clue as to why people thought their time was actually freer now that they were on their own. In many instances the women described their current parenting situation as "like having one less child".

Most of the people contrasted the difference in giving time and expecting reciprocity between adult/child relationships and adult/adult relationships. For example, Ronice.

> When you give time to children you're not expecting anything
> back...but when you give time to adults, if it's not reciprocated within

> a reasonable amount of time... and if you just give, give, give, you're
> going to start to feel that's being taken advantage of and stop it.

Likewise, Jeanette

> A relationship between a husband and wife, or partners should be
> equal...You should be prepared to spend as much time with each other
> as the other...whereas the relationship between a parent and child is
> different.

Thus, although time is given in both adult/adult and adult/child relationships, there is a distinct difference between the two relating to reciprocity. Following Sahlins (1974), while in an adult/child relationship, time can be exchanged in the form of generalised reciprocity with the period between the exchange being allowed to be considerable (if ever), in adult relationships the exchange needs to be more immediate to ensure balanced reciprocity.

Caring and responsibility

The other major difference revolves around the relationship between caring and responsibility. To Mason, "care is a multi-dimensional activity, ...it is relational and... it involves *inter alia* morality, feeling, and thought" (Mason 1990, p26, emphasis in the original). This is quite clearly seen in Chapter 3, where people argued that caring for their children involved more than just physical actions. It is also reflected in the evidence in respect of comments made about the exchange of time in adult relationships in Chapter 4. It is the focus on the observable that distorts perceptions of a fair exchange and some academic research. Mason argues that if we must focus on activities we need to extend our analysis to include those activities not easily observed.

> ...In using the term 'sentient activity' I am referring deliberately to
> thinking and feeling as *activities*. This focus on activity is intended to
> move us away from the idea that thinking and feeling are merely to do
> with sentiment and non-activity, but also to avoid the dichotomous
> conclusion that sentient activity is mental *labour*, or indeed any other
> kind of labour (Mason 1996, p27, emphasis in the original).

To Mason, it is therefore more logical to describe caring not just in terms of 'sentient activity' but also 'active sensibility".

> ...[This] is the activity of feeling a responsibility for someone else, or a
> commitment to someone else. This involves taking a responsibility on
> board as something which is your own, which you will deal with...
> 'sensibility' does seem to capture the essence of what I wish to
> describe, in the sense that I am referring to a relationally and socially
> constructed 'predisposition' to draw a connection between self and
> specific others, and to take on a responsibility to care (Mason 1996,
> p 31).

The link between caring for and responsibility for is further emphasised by Mason. To her, caring is relational and it does not necessarily transfer:

> ...to different contexts such as care of other people, or care of the
> environment, or world peace, as for example Ruddick would have us
> believe. Someone who regularly notices and attends to the needs of
> *specific* others cannot automatically be regarded as being able or
> willing to do this in general (Mason 1996, p 33, emphasis added).

Caring for children then is not necessarily the same as caring for another adult. But to many of the people in this project, caring for someone and taking responsibility for them had applied equally in both their adult relationships and their relationships with their children. In all these cases the taking on of the responsibility and the caring was demonstrated in exchanges of time. To Kirsten, this had become very clear after her separation.

> I think with your children from the moment they are born, you accept
> the responsibilities that you have to undertake on their behalf to help
> them to be happy and to fulfill their needs and do the things they want
> to do....with a grown up (laughs) adult, you don't choose to take on
> those responsibilities, you don't have to choose to take on those
> responsibilities...I choose to have my children and I choose to accept
> responsibility for them but I don't have to take that responsibility for
> another adult...It's not a parental responsibility with another adult
> ...and if it's allowed, by both, to become parental then you have a
> problem.

Thus Kirsten, draws a distinct difference between taking on the responsibility for a child and taking on the responsibility for an adult. In the former, she cares for the children and takes responsibility for them; in the later she cares for the adult but chooses not to take responsibility for them. But for Kirsten (and many of the others in this project) caring for someone equated to taking responsibility for them, while simultaneously teaching them how to take responsibility for themselves. Children, particularly very small children, while knowing what they want (that is, feeding, changing, and so on) are not capable of fulfilling their wants. Someone else, another person, has to take responsibility for them.

But, if a person takes responsibility for the needs of a person who is quite capable of attending to the needs themselves, that person is in fact being treated as a child, to the extent that in many areas of their life they appear incapable of acting as a responsible adult. All of the women recounted instances throughout their marriages where the people they were married to had expected them to be able to supply the answers to questions that, on reflection, they should have been able to answer themselves. Questions such as where are my socks, briefcase, fishing tackle and so on were normally answered by 'I don't know, where did you leave them', but the woman concerned would still stop what she was doing and assist in supplying the missing article. As well, the women were also held responsible for other events outside of their control such as being late for appointments or missing planes. Moreover, ingrained habits die hard for several of the women recounted instances where the person they had been married to still expected them to supply answers to questions even when they had lived separate lives for several years and, in some instances, lived in separate states or even countries. It is not surprising then, that, many of the women described their situation as having changed because they had one less child. These people had been doing things for, by taking responsibility for, a person who could have done things for themselves.

<u>Getting back 'my time'</u>

The change in their situations led to changes in the understandings of many of the people in this project. As I showed in Chapter 4, many considered that they had now regained control of their time and, as they saw time as something that they gave, they could now control how they gave it. If feeling that you gave all your time and did not get enough, or any, of another's time leads to a loss of identity, taking back one's time results in taking back one's identity. For example, Kirsten.

> The best thing is having my sense of individuality back. Without a doubt that is the best thing. Feeling as though I have a sense of self that has some sort of boundaries. I love that. I love having a sense of having my own life back.

> Once my children were in bed and asleep, or off doing other things that they do, the time that I had was mine...[in my marriage] if he wanted to talk I'd put my book down and talk. I don't have to compromise now what I want for anybody else.

> Some aspects are harder, some aspects are more difficult but overall things are generally easier and I think a lot of that has to do with the fact that I now do have time that is my own. I've gained time.

Compromise and control were two terms used frequently. Not having to compromise over what one did with one's time and regaining control were seen as essential to explaining why they now felt they had found themselves again. Chris, for example told me

> When I was married...you don't get to be totally in control of what you're doing...but now I don't have to answer to anybody...that's the best thing. That's the classic best.

Sentiments echoed by Tabitha.

> When you're with someone so long you lose yourself a bit...it's one of the sacrifices you make being in a relationship You have to

> compromise so much to be together...so the end of the marriage meant
> that I could just think of myself, not of him...
>
> It was a freedom to be who I thought, to live my life how I really
> wanted to live, basically to do what I wanted to do...for me in that
> relationship it was sacrifice...I was angry because I was sacrificing for
> him and he wasn't reciprocating.

To Jeanette, the not having to compromise meant freedom.

> Now I have freedom and autonomy, it's the best thing and completely
> the opposite to when I was married...with Liam [her 13 year old son], I
> have always been able to choose when and what he had for dinner
> whereas when there's a man to consider you don't have that freedom.
> You have to produce a meal or come up to their expectations...I can
> say to Liam now if he wants lunch and I'm busy, 'go and buy yourself
> a sandwich at the Deli', because there's nothing in the cupboard
> [laughing]. No way would I have said that to my ex husband...I don't
> think I would have even said, 'make it yourself'...I probably would
> have said 'okay', and made lunch, not given him $2.50 and said 'go
> and buy your lunch' [laughing].

Because they perceive that they are in control of their time, when they
give it, it is then seen as voluntary as opposed to involuntary. Maureen made
this point very clearly.

> All my time use is voluntary now. I don't do anything involuntary...I
> used to, I don't any more. It's voluntary. I used to say, 'I've gotta do
> this and I've gotta do that;' and I'd resent it sometimes...now it's the
> other way round...I choose the time because it suits me.

Thus not only have people reclaimed their time, or more accurately, their
ability to be able to choose what to do with their time, but in the process they
have re-found themselves. The perception that one can choose what to do and
when to do it is an integral part of identity. This is not surprising given that
society punishes people by taking away their time and thus their autonomy.
But the people in this project were not, theoretically, being punished by
society. They were all doing what they thought was the norm. All of them

thought marriage and children went together and that the nuclear family was therefore the best situation for them in which to be raising their children. What they didn't think was that they were going to disappear as an individual in that scenario. Anne was one who drew the parallel.

> I think one of the best things for me was discovering myself again.
> Discovering that I was a person because I think I lived too many years
> being somebody else and it was a real eye opener. And discovering that
> I quite liked myself, and then discovering that I did like myself, not
> quite, but I did...

> We've found a certain amount of happiness that we never would have
> found if we'd still been in this wonderful nuclear family type shit that
> everybody seems to think that you should be in, that you should have
> [laughing].

Their re-making of themselves and their learning to value themselves has consequences for relationships subsequent to their marriages for most of the people in this project had either been involved in a subsequent relationship(s), were currently involved, or became involved during the course of the evidence collection period. Their views on the giving an exchange of time in adult relationships could therefore be ascertained and how they now gave their time was an important issue with them.

Maureen, for example, knew what she expected and like many, she compared her marriage with her current relationship

> He's there as a partner, a fellow companion that I'm equal to but I'm
> not caring for. Well, we care for each other in hopefully an equal
> relationship...caring for each other, but not doing for.

> I was controlled...there was always fear there [pause] he was in control
> of my time...When I'm with Douglas, it's created a completely
> different relationship to what I had before and I volunteer my time. I go
> to his house when I choose. It's my choice, I want to be there...

Ronice too knew what she expected.

> At one stage I was looking for a man to rescue me...[but now] he's going to have to measure up a heck of a lot. He's going to have to be a partner, not a husband. He's got to give to me exactly what he expects back....He's going to have to give me exactly the same back.

This then implies a change in views on what is accepted as a fair exchange. To Goodnow and Bowes there has been "a shift in what people expect of marriage or close relationships" (Goodnow & Bowes 1994, p11). Too often, they argue, the division between one person providing and the other caring has resulted in:

> ... relationship which is the opposite of what one looks for. Instead of a relationship of equals who respect and care for each other, what is implied is a hierarchical relationship of 'boss' and 'subordinate', of – at best – 'senior' and 'junior' partner (Goodnow & Bowes 1994, p35).

An unequal currency of exchange (providing for caring) leads to an unequal relationship. By equalling the currency of exchange, as Ronice stated, the relationship becomes one between equal individuals.

But establishing a relationship based upon these new values of exchange has not been easy. For example, Tabitha.

> I mean I've been seeing a guy for a little while now. And I just find even when he's here for half an hour, he'll come in and make a mess and he won't clean it up. Even if it just having a cup of coffee. And he smokes, just emptying the ashtray at the end of it. 'Cause it's not like he's a visitor, well not a special visitor anyway. He's here quite frequently. He should be able to clean his cup. Or if he makes a sandwich, he just leaves everything out. And that does anger me because he can do it himself. I suppose it is the same with any adult. I think it is just laziness.

Tabitha describes this behaviour as laziness and she recognised that once upon a time she wouldn't necessarily have described his behaviour as laziness, and that she would have cleaned up another adult's mess. To put this another way, once upon a time, Tabitha would have taken responsibility for his mess. In

other words, she would have allowed another adult to dictate how she used her time.

> If I had another relationship I would still want to have a break...I don't intend to live together with someone. It's nice when he's around, like the cooking. Because I do enjoy doing that...but if he were here all the time I would resent it because I have to do it, I have no choice...

> I think that what you have to compromise on is more than it's worth...you just have to compromise so much. If I could have a huge, huge house where I could have a wing to myself then maybe I'd have a live-in relationship (laughing).

Jeanette too had found this problem.

> I've become very selfish of my personal space and time and it's time that I would have to devote to being nice to them, it's the emotional housekeeping that I just don't want to enter into. The compromises that you have to make, which is generally what the women make, or what I make anyway, I can't speak for all women. The compromises, the playing mediator between my son and whatever man...

> I don't want people hanging around when I want to be by myself...like he [subsequent relationship] would hang around and I'd just want him to go because I'd want to read my book and I felt that I couldn't read because he was there and it would be rude...I couldn't sort of say, 'well, bugger off'. I did say to him, 'well, look there's some books there, you read one too' but he just sat there...I look upon it as sacrificing (laughter), sacrificing my time for something else.

To Goodnow and Bowes, Tabitha and Jeanette's comments are understandable. They argue that:

> ...[t]he occasions that particularly evoke the sense of an unwanted relationship involve tasks which people should do for themselves...It is possible to pay people to do these self-care tasks for you...When you are not paying for the service, and you none the less expect it, then you run the risk of placing the other in the position of 'servant' (Goodnow & Bowes 1994, p35).

In other words, you control the time of another. Goodnow and Bowes further state that:

> ...[i]f women...more often than men...take on, or are expected to do, the work of cleaning up after others [it is] Small wonder then that some women feel the need for considerable appreciation, while others 'draw the line' at picking up after other people (Goodnow & Bowes 1994, pp35-36).

A recognition that one controls the situations that one is in not only affects control of the future (as shown in Chapter 4) but also control of the present. For example, Jeanette had had two subsequent relationships and by her second one, she was, as she put it, starting to learn the relationship between power and control.

> I had power...the person with the least amount of interest in the relationship has the power [and as a result] My second relationship didn't really affect my time at all because I only allowed him to see me on Saturdays if I wasn't doing anything better...the first one, most of the time it was all right ...he decided he wanted to hang around on Sundays and I didn't want him there and I felt that he was basically taking my time.

What many of the other people in this project then are doing is agreeing to care but choosing whom they will care for and how they will care. They do not see caring as something they must do for everyone. In other words, some have broken the nexus between caring for children and caring for others. Moreover, they are redefining the relationship between caring for and being responsible for. As a result, they are redefining what actions constitute caring in particular situations and, because of their understanding of time as a commodity that could be given, they were re-assessing how they would give their time. For example, Tabitha.

> It just comes down to roles, doesn't it. You want to take care of the children but you want to have a more [pause] you don't want to mother your partner. You don't want to have to be a mother, you want to be equal...things like having tea on the table when they want to eat it, picking up their socks and things like that. Tidying up the mess.

Jeanette was more forthright and told the person she was seeing exactly what he could, or could not, expect from her.

> I have said' 'look, I'm not washing or ironing or any thing else. I don't
> cook, so don't expect any thing like that from me'. I'm not going to do
> it. I'm not a mother for you.

In this manner, Jeanette is setting out the terms for an exchange of time by making it clear how she understands the obligation to reciprocate. As I showed in Chapter 4, there needs to be a shared understanding of what the reciprocal obligation involves. By detailing what she won't do, Jeanette is controlling how the exchange of time will occur.

Like Tabitha and Jeanette, Kirsten too saw a relationship between mothering and caring for and about another adult.

> I'm in a new relationship now and it's different. I don't feel responsible
> for things like his washing [laughs]. I don't feel like I have to do it. I
> don't feel like I have to come home and cook a meal...I don't feel the
> same level of [pause] sort of maternal obligation for want of a better
> word.

Caring then, had been seen as equalling mothering. What these people have done is redefine caring in respect of another adult. In other words, perceiving oneself as an adult and therefore as responsible for oneself leads to a perception that all adults should be responsible for themselves. Somewhat ironically, parenting was often defined to me as encouraging their children towards independence and, as discussed in Chapter 3, the actual physical actions seen as part of caring changed as the child grew older. Caring for a child then, means encouraging the child to do things for themselves. But caring for an adult seems to mean the opposite i.e., that the things they can do for themselves will be done by another. Their time then, was used to do things that another person could equally have used their own time to do.

While some of the women had decided that being an adult meant taking responsibility for yourself and they were thus no longer prepared to take

responsibility for another adult, some of the men had likewise decided that there was a negative side to someone else being responsible for them. For example, Don.

> Having a partner again to me would mean that I've got someone picking up after me...Now I like to know where my shoes are. It would be someone telling me 'your shoes are in the corner'...It's like, is the toilet seat up or the toilet seat down...so I know where my shoes are and I'll pick them if need be...hypothetically, if someone put my shoes away it would annoy me very much, because I'd feel there's some transaction going on there and I'd wonder what was the point of the transaction.

> I've come to the stage where there is no worst thing about not having a partner. It's all good...there are expectations and it's highlighted in terms of a relationship when I have to relate to her in terms of certain things...I had a possible relationship but I suddenly found that my life was being controlled again...no, I don't need it, what your friend [Jeanette] called 'emotional housekeeping'.

Jeanette, like some of the women, was very clear that caring for children was not the same as caring for another adult, but she expressed her doubts as to whether she could maintain her independence in a future live-in relationship

> I think if they were living here that might be a different matter. I think I would take on those roles again if I was in a live-in relationship I would once again...I don't think I would be rushing into ironing shirts and things like that (laughing) but I would still take on the emotional housekeeping. That's the bit that scares me.

What helps to explain their concerns is that to them the problem was situational i.e., it would occur if the other adult person lived in the same house as them. Partially this is, as Goodnow and Bowes argue (1994), because housework is seen as synonymous with caring. But partially it is also because they are caring for other people in the house, i.e., their children. Thus having one person with two roles that is caring for an adult and caring for a child in one location leads to a blurring of the meaning of caring.

But the problem is not just spatial. There is also a temporal element. Children require constant, continuous care as shown in Chapter 3. Care becomes a habit. It is also seen as something that one has to do all the time, non stop. It then becomes very easy to slip from Goodnow and Bowes (1994) 'occasional voluntary taking on of a task that the other can do and should do', to continuously and continually taking on the task. However, as Kirsten and Don point out, it requires both adults to allow the situation to occur. There is an expectation that if you care for me you will do these things for me. Hence the difficulty some found between having redefined what caring meant and their subsequent relationships.

Getting the balance right between how much time to give has been problematic for a lot of the people in this project. Chris was one who was having problems.

> I believe people need time together but people need time on their
> own...if you're in a relationship you've gotta [pause] you can't just do
> what you want when you want. You've gotta consider the other person
> at least some of the time.

> It's starting to be a problem because I'm unable to give her all the time
> she requires of me so that's starting to get a bit niggly...what will come
> of it, I don't know [long pause] I mean that's something that she's
> gonna have to get used to because that's just the way things are. I've
> got work to do and this and that and the other and I just can't always be
> there.

John could sympathise with Chris.

> In my new relationship there are some problems, like me working
> while she was visiting. She came up one day and said, 'well, you know
> I sit around without doing anything. I sit around here and I really like
> being with you but when we do things together'. And I said, 'well, we
> are. I'm working on the computer and you're watching me' [laughing].
> And so it went on from there...It wasn't quite enough I suppose...but I
> had to get the work done...people have got to be prioritised but so does
> time. And you have to make an income.

Obviously there are two competing views. One group of people, while wanting a relationship, don't want to, or feel they can't, make the other person the most important aspect of their lives. The other group believe they should be because they have done just that. They have given all their time to the extent they lost themselves. People allocate by prioritising their time. Not surprisingly, if one feels they have allocated all their time to another person one will expect a certain amount to be given back.

But John and Chris' situations also work in reverse. Tabitha and Jeanette, for example, both worried about slipping back into their old habits. But they had also found that it was expected of them. It was expected they would give their time, they would make the other adult person the most important priority in their lives. As a result of appreciating this expectation, some of the people had their doubts that they could have a relationship based on equality. For example, Ronice (above) knew exactly what she expected but she was not as sure it was a possibility.

> I don't think that there's very many men that would be able to give me
> that equality...It's 'don't ask anything of me that you're not willing to
> do or give'. And I'm not making him the first priority...but then how
> many women are their partner's first priority?

Many of the people in the project had redefined their understanding of caring and responsibility in their adult relationships. This had consequences for their exchanges of time. They were no longer prepared to give their time doing things they considered to be another adult's responsibility. Moreover, they were articulating far more clearly when they expected the exchange mechanism to occur and, in what form they expected the obligation to be returned. They understood that caring and taking responsibility was a choice they could make about their time. Significantly, though, nobody had redefined their understanding of caring and responsibility in relationships with their children.

Time and children re-visited

Throughout this thesis I have said that their understanding of time was commodified, external reality. The people in this project acknowledged that children had a different time to the adult's time and that children needed to learn about time or, more precisely, about time as they understood it and accepted it as the norm. They did not question their understanding of time as a generalisation. Instead, they demonstrate Turbayne's argument that the use of metaphor can lead one to "mistak[ing] the mask for the face" (Turbayne 1970, p27). Their questioning of time then is a particularisation peculiar to their changed situations. Time then, is embedded in social relationships and the questioning of a specific relationship, by default, leads to a re-examination of time. As the use of time in the parenting relationship was not fundamentally altered by the change in situation, the relationship with their children was not subject to the degree of scrutiny that the marriage relationship was. Thus through analysing concepts of time which are shared and not shared in both adult/adult relationships and adult/child relationships, insights into relationships can be gained.

In part, as I have shown, the reciprocal exchange of time works on the two forms of reciprocity i.e., balanced in adult/adult relationships and a combination of generalised and balanced in adult/child relationships. But, there is another difference. In the adult/adult relationships there is an assumption of a shared understanding of time whereas this shared understanding has to be learnt by the children. When the children's understanding of time is cast as one part of a dualism then it can not be exchanged because there is no equivalency. To put this another way; you cannot give what you have not got and it was recognised by the adults that the children did not have the adult's understanding of time thus they could not be expected to give it. Children, then, need to learn not only the dominant societal concept of time but the responsibilities and obligations that are part and parcel of this understanding. In other words, they not only need to know what time is but what they are expected by family and society to do with it.

Review

In this chapter I have shown how changes in the lives of the people in this inquiry have affected the choices they make in respect of time. Their lives were changed by their separations and, as a result, how they understood parenting and gendering changed. Parenting highlights issues of control. Here people recognised the contradictory nature of control in their relationships with their children. On the one hand, they as adults had control and they accordingly controlled to some degree the time of their children. On the other hand, they understood that they chose to give their time to their children voluntarily and that they had ceded some of that control to their children. This lead to tensions in their lives as they tried to balance the conflicting nature of control coupled with their understanding that, as parents, they were responsible for their children and part of this responsibility entailed teaching their children the things they needed to know to live in society. As a result, while many recognised that their children did not recognise clock-time as time, they also needed to ensure that their children meet the demands imposed by a society based upon clock-time. This was seen most clearly each weekday morning as they attempted to get their children to school - on time.

To the people in this inquiry, they did what they did for their children because they cared for them. But, as adults they had cared for, or were caring for, other adults as well as children. To many, caring for another adult had become the same as caring for a child. Here, issues of control and choice appear. To some, caring for another adult in a marriage situation had involved them taking responsibility for that adult, *a la* caring for a child, and consequently, they felt all their time had gone into this caring. Others had given the time willingly but had expected a return and when this return was not received they believed their time had been taken by the other adult rather than given by themselves which contrasted with the exchange of time seen in adult/child relationships.

As a result of their change, i.e., their separation, many had begun to reassess how they viewed adult relationships. They believed that they had taken back

control of their time and they were now going to make choices as to what they did with it. In other words, they had redefined how they understood caring in relation to adults. Significantly, none of the people had redefined caring in respect of children. In the adult relationships, it was not the actions associated with caring that were the issue but the perception of a negative reciprocity in regards to the exchange of time. This was coupled with an understanding that a major difference between adults and children is the issue of responsibility. Adults, by definition, are responsible for themselves in a manner that children are not expected to be and some of the people had realised that caring for an adult did not automatically equate to taking responsibility for that adult.

How they understood caring then, changed in regards to caring for an adult and these changes are reflected in their beliefs that they now had control of their time and could accordingly, make their own choices as to what to do with what I have earlier identified as a commodified understanding of time.

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[1] Caring can of course occur within other relationships and not just along these two axes. However, for my purposes I am restricting the discussion to these two axes as these were the two situations which were most clearly represented in my evidence.

[2] This is not to state that no other person parenting would necessarily not reconsider their views on parenting. However, the people in this project had an opportunity to be able compare two forms of parenting.

[3] Zerubavel's (1981) work on scheduling and co-ordination is helpful in understanding this.

[4] There were instances during the discussions where I would be told of an incident and then asked what I thought of their actions. In some cases I was told that the person concerned was worried that because they had done such and such a thing, they were a 'bad parent' and they had been unwilling to discuss this with other people in their immediate circle. My presence as someone who sat and listened and did not express judgment upon them made me an ideal sounding post. Moreover, in many instances, their children were present in the house while I was present and as a result, parenting continued. This also caused some people some difficulties at first. Either the child's interruption was going to interfere with what was perceived of (at least initially) as an 'important project' or, I was going to look unfavourably upon how they had handled the specific situation. As the discussion periods progressed this uneasiness regarding my presence dissipated to the extent that I occasionally baby sat in times of extreme need and in other ways became a part of the activity. My own attitude was that the children had priority over the adult's time so I was more than prepared to take a break from the discussions.

[5] I gave a graphic example of the type of behaviour that Anne objected to in Chapter 4.

[6] See Don's comments in Chapter 4 on this point.

[7] They are not alone in this. My point here is that part of their questioning revolves around their appreciation of gendering resulting from their changed situations.

RETROSPECTIVE

Time is central to the construction of human relationships. This work has explored this centrality within the domestic sphere by drawing upon the lived experiences of time of a set of fifteen people. The work has shown that this set of people perceived time in a specific manner - as a reified, external, commodified reality that they could dispense. Time, then, was understood as something that they and others could own. They could therefore make individual choices about what they did with the time and they could control the time of others and/or have their time controlled.

The siting of this work in the domestic sphere meant that associated aspects of this sphere needed to be considered. Specifically, the process of gendering and the process of caring, both in the form of parenting and child caring, were highlighted. In particular, caring was used in this work as the vehicle to demonstrate the ways in which their understanding of time was played out.

This work has been primarily informed by my understanding of the post positivist principles of research and the writings of Adam. To Adam, an understanding of time requires a research methodology that allows for the complexity of time to be demonstrated. Such an understanding involves appreciating the role played by metaphors, particularly those metaphors related to a Newtonian understanding of the world as a machine. Further, it requires stepping outside Cartesian dualistic thinking and in so doing it opens up an understanding of gendering. Collectively these ideas allow for an appreciation of the complexities of time and allow for an examination of the manner in which they are used to control. Time then, becomes something other than a neutral, singular entity. Instead it is seen

as conceptualisations of various aspects of a constantly changing universe.

The principles of post positivist research allow for an understanding of such a changing world. In particular, these principles acknowledge the holistic and multiple nature of realities (and time) thus breaking down dualistic thinking and in particular, the dualism of researcher/researched. Moreover post-positivist principles acknowledge that time and context free statements are not possible and in this way reflect Adam's argument that 'same' is possible "only in abstraction, by artificially excluding contexts and effects" (Adam 1990, p29). Further, cause and effect statements are not possible given the multiple and constantly changing nature of realities. Finally, a post-positivist approach acknowledges that research is not neutral in terms of values.

This approach, coupled with an understanding of the complexities of time and the relationship between time and the constantly changing nature of realities, highlights process. If, as I have shown, 'same' is an abstraction, the dualism of process/structure breaks down. What is left is an understanding that, as Adam puts it, "stability is fundamentally dynamic" (Adam 1990, p78). In other words, the dynamics of living recognises people as performing practice in dynamic structures that both shape and are in turn shaped by the process.

Using the post-positivist principles as guides, I initiated a series of discussions with a set of people living in Perth, Western Australia. These people had all been married and had children and they were now raising their children in a situation they had not intended. They were thus in a situation where an observable change i.e., the breakdown of their relationships had occurred and consequently, they were keenly aware of a perceived need to re-configure aspects of their lives. In particular, the

discussions focused upon their understandings relating to aspects of the process of gendering, parenting and caring. A discursive analysis of time was the primary research approach through which gendering, caring and parenting were understood.

To these people, time was understood as an external, objectified, commodified reality. It existed and they accordingly dispensed it in exchange relationships. There were occasions when they felt they had no control over time, or what they did with it, and there were occasions where they felt they had regained their control of what they did with time. In both situations though, they understood that they should control it.

Understanding time as a reification allowed them to exchange time and this they did, or set out to do, under the guise of caring. In Chapter 3 I showed that caring was better appreciated as orientation towards activity rather than activity *per se*. They did what they did because they cared and, because they cared, they gave their time. However, notions of reciprocity underlie the giving of time and they accordingly expected something back in exchange for the time they had given.

The evidence showed two forms of exchange relationships – exchange along an adult/adult axis and exchange along an adult/child axis. Sahlins' model of reciprocity was useful in understanding the similarities and differences between the exchange of time in these two relationships. The analysis in Chapter 4 showed that in the adult/adult relationship there was a definite expectation that time was being exchanged for time. The exchange did not need to be immediate and was in many cases expected to occur at a later chronological time. The breakdown of the relationship had then interfered with how people had constructed their understandings of their futures.

When the exchange was expected to occur in a more immediate period and did not occur, problems resulted in relationships. However, as described in Chapter 4, when caring is described as an orientation to an activity, perceptions become critical. There were many instances where actions had occurred that to one party were a reciprocal action but where this action had not been perceived as reciprocal. In other words, both parties needed to share a common understanding of meaning in relation to the exchange.

The discrepancy in exchange between the two parties can be partly explained through the process of gendering. The relationships existed within a wider society predicated upon the process of gendering. While I showed that gendering has a constantly changing nature some of the people in this project had their own understanding of gendering roles. They understood that men and women behaved in a particular manner and the associated roles of husband/wife and mother/father likewise should be performed in particular ways. Thus, some of the men in the project, and the anecdotal evidence given by some of the women, indicated that the exchange of time was not direct. In other words, to the men, going to work and bringing home their pay was how they understood they needed to fulfill their part of the exchange. However, to the women, the actions associated with caring for the children was their part of the exchange and they expected that the caring they gave the adult would be reciprocated in kind.

Additionally, to some people the time given by the men had already been acknowledged by monetary means whereas their time still needed to be acknowledged. To put this another way, the men considered they had given their time in the form of contributing money. However, to some women, while the time they gave was compensated by the contribution of money to the family's finances, it was not a total compensation. They

wanted time from the men over and above the time given in the earning of money and further, the women wanted acknowledgment of the time they had given. To these women, a relationship included direct giving of time between the two adults and not time in the form of money or even time spent with the children. They wanted to be given time as individuals in their own right.

Thus, if there is not a sharing of perceptions and understandings, time exchanges are seen as becoming unbalanced. At its most extreme, this perception of an imbalance was understood as losing or having no control over their time. And as time was understood as an objectified and commodified external reality, some of the people began to see time as their problem. There was not enough time for them to do all they wanted, particularly things for themselves. Time then becomes a scarce resource. Alternatively, time was understood by some to be their enemy. Later, removed from the situation, and after reflection, they changed this understanding to one where time was seen as having been used against them. Time was no longer the enemy, instead it was now understood as a weapon used by another against them. In other words, they could reflect upon the exchange relationship once the obligation had been removed by the breakdown of the relationship.

This control by another party could continue on after their separations and here the focus shifts to the children. The understanding held by most of the people in this project was that although their views on parenting had changed significantly, as shown in Chapter 5, they still generally felt their children needed access to the other person parenting. However, this situation could become one where they felt they lost control of their time. The person with access manipulated the situation with the children to an extent that the person with custody believed they were not free to do what they wanted with their time. In particular, the people in this situation

considered this doubly unfair because the situations occurred when the children were with the other parent and they should have then been able to use that period of clock-time as time for themselves. Instead, they found that their period of perceived freedom could become one of virtual imprisonment when they felt they could not leave the house, or they were not free to entertain whom they wished, or they had to at all times be available.

One understanding that was very clear was the contradictory nature of their relationships with their children in respect to time. To a large extent the people in the project considered their children to own the adult's time. In other words, they understood that caring for the children entailed them being available for their children as required by the child. This was done willingly and many commented upon the difference between believing a child was in control of the adult's time and another adult being in control of their time. However, while they were willing to give their time to children they also appreciated that they needed time for themselves. Consequently, my earlier comment that losing control of a period of time they saw as being time for themselves was doubly unfair.

Notwithstanding their belief that their children controlled the adult's time, time was still perceived as a major (if not the only) source of conflict between adult and child. Unlike the adult/adult relationship where conflicts over time revolved around notions of reciprocity, conflicts in the adult/child relationships revolved around the socialisation of the child to dominant societal understanding of clock-time and an understanding that, paradoxically, given their views above, the adult had the right to control the child's time.

All the people had observed that their children did not appear to have been born with an inbuilt understanding of time as they, as adults

understood it. Initially, as babies and infants, the children's demands had needed to be met as quickly as possible. A conception of the future was thus something they needed to gradually teach their child. Additionally, they had not only needed to teach their children to be able to look at a clock and correctly read the information on the clock face but they also needed to learn to be able to visualise as an abstraction a particular time from the clock (and calendar). For, as adults, they understood that they and their children live in a society where scheduling and co-ordination dominates. Of most relevance to them, the children needed to be at school at particular times. Consequently, conflict arose when they endeavored to ensure their children met this deadline. Most of the day to day activities that took place in the home revolved around the time that the children needed to be ready for school[1]. Consequently, the time children went to bed was established by counting back the number of hours sleep required from the time they needed to get up to be at school at time. The evening meal and homework and other activities then had to occur before the appointed bed time.

Ensuring that all these activities happened at, or close to, the appointed clock-times caused conflict. First, the children, particularly the younger ones had no conception of an abstract time. Secondly, the parents also needed to teach their children other skills such as getting dressed and the time it takes a small child to dress themselves was, as one person put it, as long as the proverbial piece of string. In other words, the time required for the process to occur did not necessarily coincide with the amount of clock time that was, or could be, allocated. Finally, the children had to learn that their control of their own time was subject to the wishes of others. Although as babies and infants they had generally been able to sleep when they wanted and for as long as they wanted and eat (drink) when they wanted, now as they grew older, they had to learn to concede this autonomy. In other words, another person had control of their time.

had, for many, become synonymous with taking responsibility for another adult and performing actions for that adult that could have been done by that person. Consequently, the breakdown in the relationship removed this aspect of caring and the people then perceived that they had gained time.

Unlike adult/adult relationships, the exchange of time in adult/child relationships was not required to be balanced. Nevertheless, conflict situations still arose as a result of the contradictory nature of control of time, the necessity to socialise children to the demands of a clock-based wider society, and the tensions arising from the needs to fit process time into allotted clock-time periods.

Furthermore, understanding time as they did allowed them to identify issues of control and ownership of the time in both the adult/adult relationship and the adult/child relationship and this was shown in my evidence. In the adult/adult relationships, it had become possible for some to believe they had no control of their time and to later take back this control. In the case of the adult/child relationship, the contradictory nature of control was seen in, on the one hand, the adult believing the child controlled the adult's time and, on the other hand, the adult believing they could dictate what the child did with the child's time.

While caring and responsibility and the exchange of time are all interrelated and occur in both adult/adult relationships and adult/child relationships, and while they can be similar, they are different in some respects. There is an expectation that adults are responsible or that children are not and need to learn how to take care of their needs. Moreover, the concept of time is different in the two relationships. In adult relationships, there is an underlying assumption that both adults share the same understanding of time. Children though, are understood as not having this understanding of time and need therefore to learn it. A key

point of Adam's work (1990, 1994, 1995) is that our understanding of time, i.e. time as a commodified, external reality, far from being 'natural' is a social construction. Nowhere in my evidence is this seen more clearly than in the case of the children. Far from being 'natural', they need to be socialised to the dominant understanding of time. Moreover, they need to also learn what to do with it, what the responsibilities and obligations in the exchange of time are and in learning this they learn to concede control and to regain it in new ways.

This learning is informed by other processes, such as gendering, operating in their society. When, as happened to the people in this project, aspects of their situation change, reflection upon the process occurs and subsequent changes are made in their understandings. Their was changed by the breakdown in their adult relationships. Consequently they began to reflect[2] on this aspect of their life and in many cases they reframed their understanding of gendering roles, caring, and responsibility. They also re-negotiated a particular part of their generalised understanding of time.

They did not, however, understand their relationship with their children as a breakdown. While the breakdown in the adult relationship had changed aspects of their relationships with their children, the initial understanding of parenting remained intact. Consequently, parenting was not subject to the same type of examination, either as self reflection or as a part of the discussion process, that adult relationships were. It is in the analysis of the evidence that the differences between the exchanges of time in the two types of relationship becomes clearer.

Adam argues that while people in everyday life may understand time in a particular manner, social scientists need a broader approach to the subject. Seeing time as only Newtonian/clock-time and casting a research project accordingly results in a limited understanding. I showed examples of this

type of research work in an early chapter and I showed how beginning with an unquestioned assumption of time limits findings and understandings. In my project I did not define time nor did I knowingly define significant terms such as parenting, gendering and caring[3]. Instead, the people in this project told me how they understood their lives and opening up discussions on time in this manner has given me insights into other aspects of their lives.

I have shown that time in relation to the domestic sphere is a good deal more complex than a positivist approach would suggest. Time has been shown to be an integral part of people's understandings and constructions of their world. In turn, these understandings and constructions interplay with others such as gendering and caring (which of course in turn interact with each other). In other words, realities are holistic, multiple and changing and understanding time requires understanding other facets of life.

The evidence presented here shows that the process of gendering is intimately connected with time. Accordingly, constructions of gender affect and in turn are affected by constructions of time. Given the similarities in the experiences of both the men and women in this project in relation to time, I would suggest that the notion of time as gendered is limited. Nevertheless, how people thought they should use or give their time or, when and from whom they should be given time, was underpinned by their understandings of gendering. Consequently, issues relating to ownership or control of time are tied to understandings of gendering. However, I repeat my earlier observation that it is not time that is gendered, rather it is a specific concept of time that can be used to maintain and reinforce the process of gendering.

Given the embeddedness of time in social relationships and the holistic nature of the differing forms that relationships take, I suggest that, like Adam, social analysis needs to include time. I have shown that gendering relationships inform understandings and exchanges of time, Given that my sample was small and not representatively drawn, I suggest that a future line of inquiry is to examine more systematically the relationship between gendering and time in a variety of social relationships. I would further suggest that the manner in which other societal relationships inform understandings and exchanges of time needs study.

Throughout this work I have used the principles of post-positivism as a guide to understanding time in the domestic sphere. Given these principles, I am not able to reach traditionally structured definitive conclusions, nor would I want to. I can only record that I found the principles useful as a guide and that I can, and have, summarised what I understand as the main insights arising from my evidence and my experience. Moreover, I do not consider this work as the final word on the subject. Instead I suggest understanding time requires appreciating its complexities and that, in turn, requires a research approach, such as that of post-positivism, to achieve this.

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[1] Although I found that a television program that was running at the time the discussions were held played an equally important role as a point of reference for scheduling activities in most of the homes I visited. Here, the parents needed to organise the evening activities around two points of reference, bedtime and *The Simpson's*. Meals, homework and any other activities were accordingly slotted in around *The Simpson's* and before bed.

[2] I acknowledge that this process of reflection was informed in part by their participation in this project.

[3] I appreciate that how I said what I said in discussions, coupled with my body language and other contextual signals, may very well have acted as guides for the people in this project. My point here, is that I tried not to influence what I was told.

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