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Power and Narrative
in Day-to-day Consuming

by
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To--

Jeanette
Jordan
Spencer

And to my parents.

Summary

In this dissertation I address the question, how does power operate in day-to-day consuming in a consumer society? My theoretical framework has two bases. One base is Foucault's theories of power, including but not limited to his work on normalization, surveillance, examination, confession, and identity. The other base is narrative theory, including the relevance of narratives to personal and social identities, the role of narratives in creating social order, the impact of narratives on such things as the organization of space and time, and the effect of narratives in creating coherence and directionality across operants of power. I suggest that many of the mechanisms of power identified by Foucault have unmistakable narrative features, and that by combining narrative and Foucauldian perspectives a more comprehensive understanding of the operation of power in day-to-day life is attainable.

I apply my theoretical framework to data collected using autoethnographic methods. Specifically, I spent one year keeping a detailed journal of my and my family's experiences relating in the broadest sense to consuming. During this period we lived in a middle-sized Canadian city. To heighten my awareness of the taken-for-granted aspects of power and consuming we alternated lifestyles each month, living months 1,3,5,7,9, and 11 as conventional Canadian consumers, and months 2,4,6,8,10, and 12 as committed environmentally-mindful consumers. In addition, I conducted interviews of small samples of conventional and environmentally-committed consumers; I undertook a content analysis of print advertising delivered to our house; and I conducted background research on various issues relating to consumerism.

My research indicates that Foucauldian operants of power are used extensively to support consuming, and that, in addition, many narrative structures are also employed as operants of power, including charms and stories. These operants of power are aligned with one another to form coherent patterns through the effects of metanarratives. I argue that, despite claims by Lyotard (1984) and others, modern consumer societies are highly narrative, and have defining metanarratives. In addition, environmentally-based opposition to the dominant metanarrative of consuming has a metanarrative of its own, but is distinctly lacking in operants of power.

Acknowledgments

All successful PhD students who are married and have young children owe more than they can express in a few sentences to the commitment and faith of their families. Anyone reading this dissertation will soon see that I owe even more than the usual gratitude to my wife, Jeanette, and our children, Jordan and Spencer. For in addition to the usual demands of time, money, and patience that my studies placed on our family, I asked them to be participants in my study for an entire year. Every day for twelve months they were with me as I turned our own lives into a research project, changing lifestyles and living the consequences. They were willing and good-natured through the whole process, showing a love that I will always honour.

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1. Introduction and Research Methodology.

A. My Argument in Brief.

This research asks, how does power operate in day-to-day consuming in a consumer society? Clearly, this question will never have final answers, but it opens a rich area for inquiry. My research suggests an answer with three aspects. First, power in day-to-day consuming operates through such well-known Foucauldian forms as the creation of discourse; surveillance; examination; confession; control of the body; and the organization of space and time. Second, power in day-to-day consuming also operates through narratives, and through practices and processes related to narratives, including charms and rituals. Third, narratives not only act as operants of power themselves, they also serve as organizing frameworks for other operants of power; narratives in various forms help to establish general coherence and direction among individual operants of power.

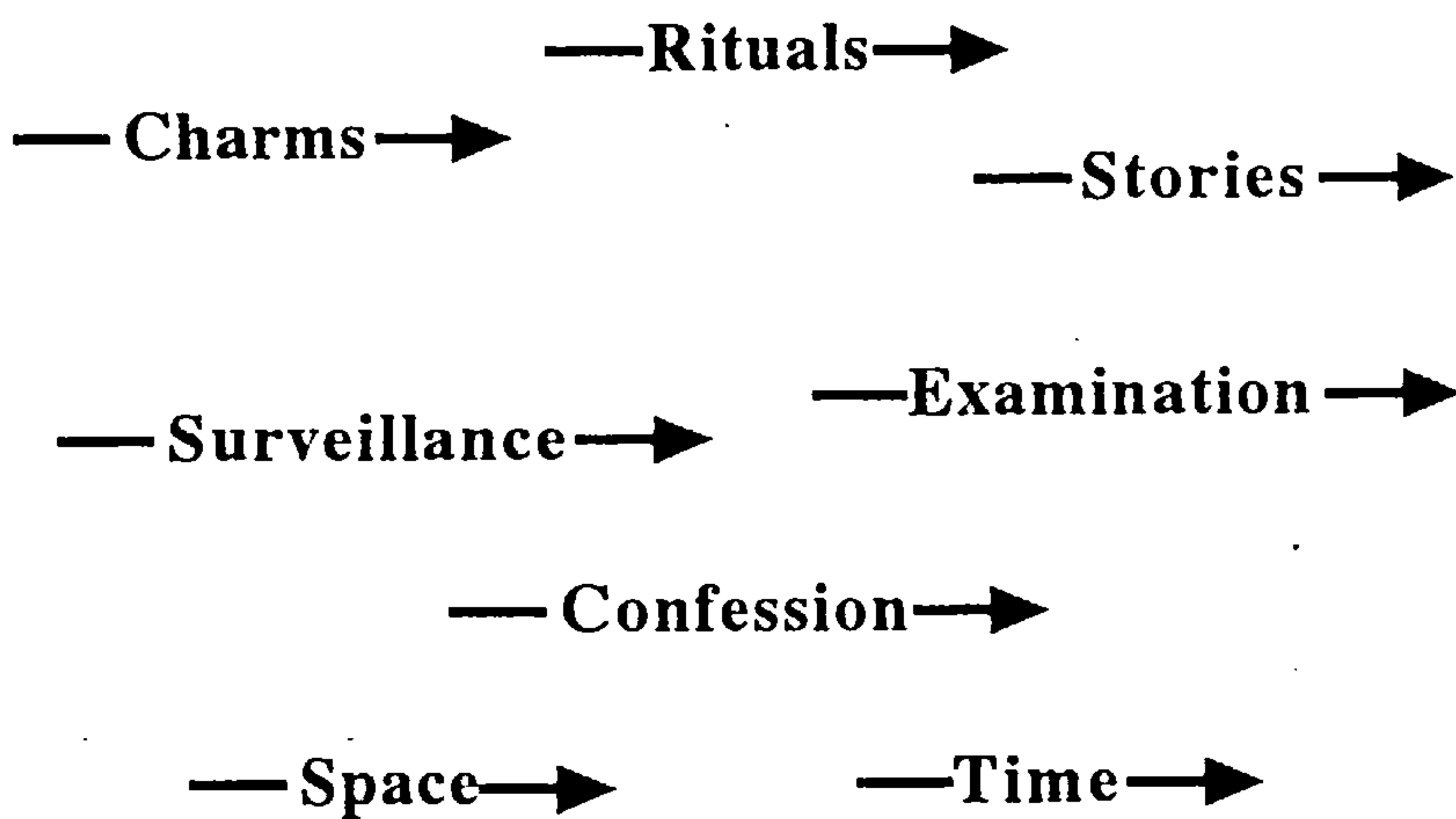
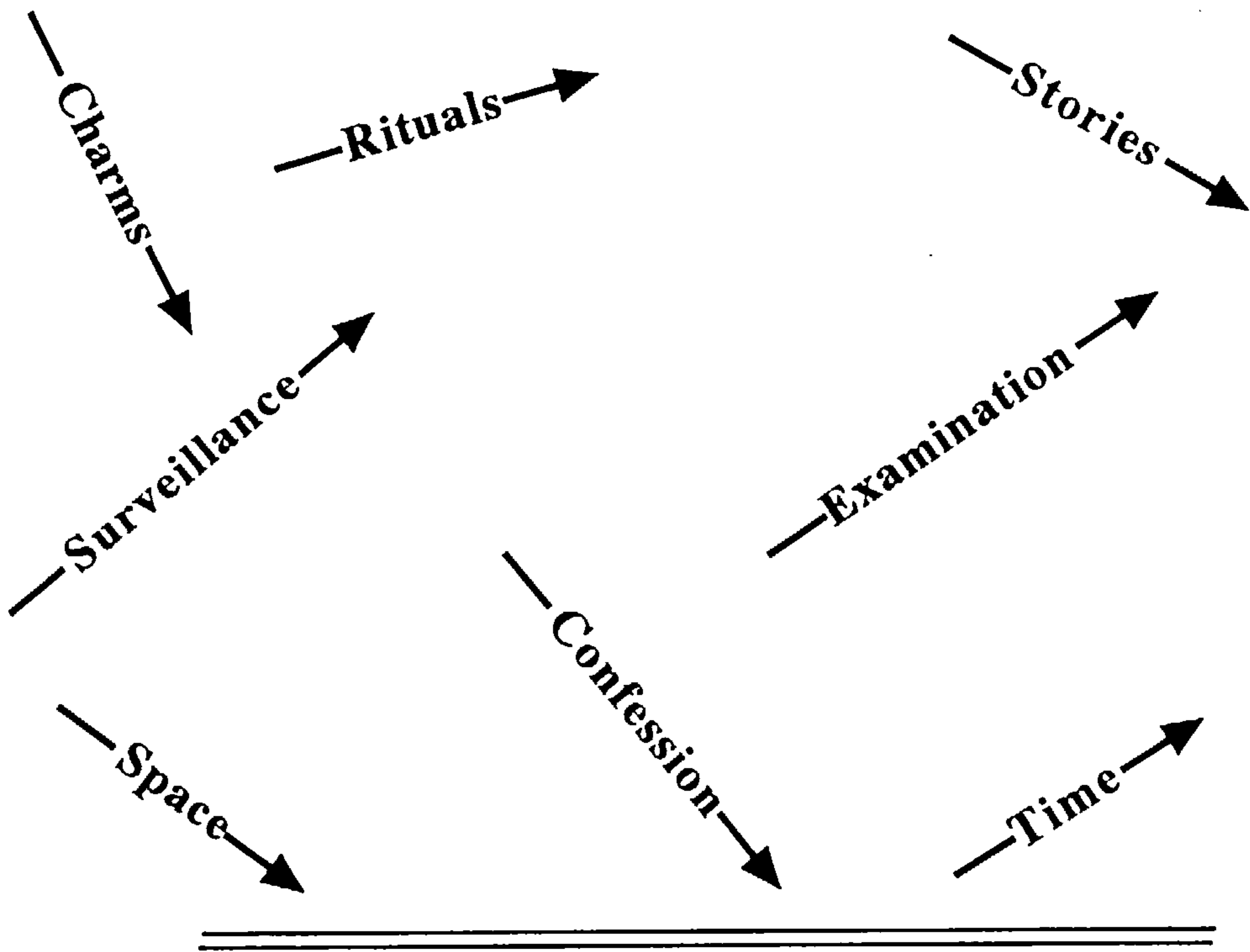
Foucauldian-like operants of power --which Foucault (1997) at his briefest defined as 'mechanisms likely to induce behaviours or discourses' (p.51)-- are not generally linked to narrative theory. However, I found that there are many traits in common between the two. For example, both Foucauldian-like operants of power and narratives influence cognition, create norms, subjugate and privilege information, affect personal and social identities, and influence the organization of space and time. They are both endlessly adaptable yet specifically definable, pervading social life yet generally being taken-for granted. Perhaps most importantly, both create directionality; that is, they consistently favour some factors and outcomes over others. While in theory this creates the potential for chaos if differing operants of power and narratives were to pull in random directions, in practice there is an intricate

alignment among them, creating a consistent and coherent directionality. My research suggests that narratives and metanarratives can give diverse operants of power a consistent alignment of direction, decreasing chaos and increasing order. (See Figure 1.) In my research I found two major metanarratives. One is the metanarrative of consumerism, which can be phrased as 'striving for fulfilment and happiness through endless consuming'. This has both comedic and tragic elements. I also identified a metanarrative for environmentally-mindful consumers, which is primarily romantic and which I phrase as 'Saving the world from the excesses of materialism, to restore it to its lost purity'.

To conduct this research, I adapted ethnomethodological techniques. This included keeping a detailed diary of consumer-related activities for one year; conducting interviews; and analyzing documents. Of these, the diary was most important. In order to obtain the most detailed and intimate notes feasible on the lived experience of the consumer, I adapted the notion of 'autoethnography' (see for example, Hayano 1979, 1982; Wallace, 1965) and studied my own and my family's experiences as consumers for twelve months. During the fieldwork we lived in a highly consumerist society. Paradoxically, in such a setting the full range of factors that maintain consuming could be difficult to perceive, for they blend in with an entire way of life. To create contrast, and make more evident the processes of power in day-to-day consuming, we determined that every second month we should resist these processes. (I say 'we' because I could not have done this without the wonderfully tolerant support of my wife and children, who were inextricably involved in this research). So we deliberately confronted the dominant 'brown' regime with the counter-position of a serious 'green'. In months 1,3,5,7,9, and 11, my family and I lived our normal lives as conventional middle-class Canadian consumers, while in months 2,4,6,8,10,

Figure 1. Metanarratives Help Align Operants of Power.

Each operant of power creates its own directionality. Metanarratives help align directionality across operants of power. The top half of the figure shows operants of power without metanarrative; the bottom half shows operants of power with metanarrative.



and 12, we lived according to predetermined guidelines intended to help us resist consumerism by living as if we were seriously committed environmentally-mindful consumers. These guidelines included such things as reducing our reliance on our automobile; eating less meat and more organic, locally-grown food; and cleaning our house with non-toxic products like baking soda and vinegar. In Foucauldian terms we interrogated and problematized mainstream consuming; in Garfinkel's (1967) terms we 'made trouble' for the normal situation. Every day of this research I kept a thorough diary of the experience, eventually totalling over 200,000 words. To complement and triangulate this information I conducted a small number of interviews with 'green' and 'brown' consumers, undertook a simple content analysis of the newspaper and print advertising delivered to our house, and conducted historical research.

My research reveals the immense range and intensity of power that sustains the consumer society. I found that power was immanent in a great variety of practices, processes, and designs, including (but not limited to) language, ways of thinking, morality, creations of identity, surveillance, confession, charms, stories, physiological interventions, and the organization of space and time. Because I focus on consuming in day-to-day life, I examine the operation of power in such things as advertising, store design, modes of transportation, Christmas celebrations, marketing databases, and social interactions. Based upon my research, it is obvious that fundamental changes in consumerism, if they are to be made, will eventually require a thoroughgoing revamping of society. Substantively changing a consumer society into an 'environmentally-friendly society' will require new language, new thinking, new design, and perhaps most importantly, a different dominant metanarrative. It is the latter that will provide these changes with the necessary coherence, direction, and urgency. At the same time, local, '*pétit*'

actions of resistance of the kind encouraged by Foucault (1980; 1997) and Lyotard (1984) are not pointless; they may be seen as the beginning of a new metanarrative.

By connecting Foucauldian power with narrative theory, my research can contribute to broader theoretical discussions that are concerned with the relationships between and among, on one hand, individuals and their actions and identities, and on the other hand, societies and their structures and discourses. These discussions are conceived of and phrased in various terms, such as 'structure and agency' (Brown, 1994; Morrow, 1994), and 'structural power and existential identity' (Knights and Willmott, 1985). My dissertation is, in effect, an attempt to describe this relationship between the individual and society as it was lived over the course of a year. My analysis suggests that Foucauldian power and narratives are strongly complementary, and that when used together in the analysis of day-to-day life they provide useful insights into the relationships between the individual and society.

A few terms must be explained before I proceed. An 'operant of power'¹ includes anything that Foucault may have referred to as a mechanism, gadget, or technology of power; as well as stories and other narrative mechanisms of power; as well as mechanisms of power that are typical of neither of these, such as diet and transportation systems. At this point, there is little benefit in dividing these into categories: they blend and weave together. An operant of power is a selective agency: it selects in favour of some activity or outcome, and against others², which means that, in Foucault's terms, operants of power

¹ The word 'operant', which derives from the Latin *opus*, meaning 'work', is defined as "producing effects" or "a person or thing that operates" (Collins English Dictionary).

² This definition is loosely based on Stephen Pepper's definition of a 'selective system' (Pepper, 1958, 1966). Pepper is best known for his 1942 book World Hypotheses, in which he proposed the idea of root metaphors, and of four world hypotheses: Formism, Organicism, Mechanicism, and Contextualism. In 1958 and 1966 he published books arguing for a fifth, and in his mind superior, world hypothesis, which he called Selectivism.

are directional. Throughout the dissertation I use terms such as ‘mechanism of power’ and ‘technology of power’ as synonyms for ‘operant of power’.

The term ‘narrative’ means a symbolized account of actions that has a temporal dimension. It is made coherent by recognizable patterns of events called plots. Central to the plot are predicaments and attempted resolutions. When I speak of ‘elements’ or ‘fragments’ of narratives, I mean components of narratives such as characters, symbols, and discrete events that on their own are insufficient to constitute a narrative, but that represent or index a narrative. Later in this chapter I will discuss the definition of narrative more.

Note that a narrative both can be an operant of power, as when a brief story and photo inclines me to favour Ford automobiles, and can contain other operants of power, as when a brief story about a girl learning to shave her legs includes a confession (these are examples from my fieldwork that I discuss later).

The term ‘metanarrative’ refers to the structure common to narratives with similar themes and lines of action, as in the metanarrative of human progress, or the “...metanarrative of the march towards socialism” (Lyotard, p.37).

Related to this is the idea of archetypal narrative, or ‘mythos’, which classically includes comedy, romance, tragedy, and irony (Frye, 1957/71).

B. My Interest in the Study of Power.

This research began when I started to wonder, how does power operate in day-to-day life? It is a question I first pondered in the early 1980s. The world was witnessing an intense arms race between the Soviet Union and the United States. In reaction, a very large peace movement developed in

Western and Soviet bloc countries, holding rallies, occupying buildings and military bases, writing letters, and organizing protests that on many occasions drew hundreds of thousands of participants, and sometimes more than a million. I counted myself among the members of this movement, and wrote letters and attended rallies and marches. The arms race continued despite this opposition, and the governments that supported it --even the democratically elected ones-- stayed in power, often getting reelected with increased majorities. Why, I wondered, was this huge, outspoken, well-organized and well-informed peace movement so ineffectual? Where did power rest? Was it in the military-industrial complex? Or was it in the way that people understood their world and their places in it? Was power purely a matter of big money and well-connected organizations, or did it emerge from the very ways in which people conceived of and lived their day-to-day lives?

When I looked at other issues, similar questions came to mind. How did power operate in environmental issues? Winning court battles and blockading forestry roads were important for this cause, but could it be that the biggest issues, the biggest weights and counterweights of power, were in the patterns and organization of the everyday lives of ordinary people? And I wondered if the changing nature of my neighbourhood and city might be understood not just as issues of urban planning, traffic control, and economic cycles, but also as issues of the organization of power in my day-to-day life.

So I began to read in the social sciences about power, and gradually pieced together the history of the concept of power. There were some important discussions of the topic of power before World War II, including Weber's (1978) and Russell's (1938/1957), but the social sciences in English-speaking countries did not enthusiastically embrace the concept until the 1950s. In 1950, Lasswell and Kaplan published Power and Society and argued that

“The concept of power is perhaps the most fundamental in the whole of political science” (p.75). They presented a definition of power that gave it a straightforward appearance, and linked it directly to decision-making: “Power is participation in the making of decisions” (p.75). Countless definitions of power have been offered since.

In the 1950s, Weber’s work, including his discussion of power, became widely available in English. It was initially translated by Parsons (Weber, 1947), who subsequently incorporated power into his own elaborate theories of the structure of society (Giddens, 1968). The nature of power was also analyzed intensely by a host of other prominent theorists. For instance, the famous ‘community power debates’ set social elite theorists like C.W. Mills (1967) against pluralists like Dahl (1961). Bachrach and Baratz (1962, 1963) weighed in with their argument for a broader understanding of the ‘two faces’ of power, and were critiqued by Wolfinger (1971).

Lukes effectively brought this phase of debates on power to an end in 1974, when he published Power: A Radical View. He captured the sense of futility that had entered the discussions of power. Power was a concept that was essentially contested, said Lukes, and the typical ways of approaching it were mired in erroneous assumptions, including the idea that power of necessity involved conflict, and that of necessity it would be manifest in behaviour. Power is much more subtle than this, he argued, and asked: "... is it not the supreme exercise of power to get another or others to have the desires you want them to have-- that is to secure their compliance by controlling their thoughts and desires?" (p.23).

Despite the prodigious output of fine academics, the concept of power has not achieved the kind of widespread acceptance and consensual definition

that has been granted to concepts such as 'class', 'value', or 'institution'. More than a decade after Lukes' (1974) analysis, Knights and Willmott were writing about the basic matter of how to conceptualize power, identifying key unresolved questions that still escape broad consensus in 1998:

Is power a property or a relationship?

By whom or what is power possessed or exercised: by agents (individual or collective) or by structures or systems?

Does exercising power by some reduce the power of others? (Is it a zero-sum concept?)

Does the concept only apply where there is conflict of some kind, or resistance? (1985, p.23. See also Cavanaugh, 1984; Clegg, 1989; Lukes, 1977; Ryan, 1984.)

Lukes' (1974) was a harbinger of a major shift to come, toward an increased emphasis on two things in the study of power: the effects of epistemological issues; and the effects of taken-for-granted and generally overlooked factors of social life. Much of this shift can be traced to the work of Michel Foucault, the most influential figure in the study of power since the late 1970s. Coming from outside the Anglo-American tradition, which dominated much of the social sciences in the 1950s and 1960s, Foucault developed a fundamentally different approach to understanding power:

Let us not...ask why certain people want to dominate, what they seek, what is their overall strategy. Let us ask, instead, how things work at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours... (1980, p.97).

Foucault recognized the connection between power and knowledge, and coined the term 'power/knowledge' to illustrate their inseparability. Rather than concentrating on the relation of power and theory, Foucault worked on an 'analytics' of power, examining the ways in which power operated in the procedures and practices of organizations such as armies, clinics, and schools. He was neither concerned with uncovering hidden meanings behind actions, nor with identifying ideal types that would suit theory; his concern was with

the particular effects that social practices and processes produced. He traced the impact of social technologies such as the organization of time and space, the rise of surveillance, and the use of the confession. Paradoxically, though Foucault has been widely and harshly criticized --Rorty (1989) called his work 'politically useless'(p.83)-- his approach to power has been widely useful in applied research (Bloor and Mackintosh, 1990; Brewis, 1996; Deetz 1992; Sturdy, Knights, and Morgan, 1993; Townley, 1994).

Foucault's concept of power was centrally important to my research into the operation of power in day-to-day life, but it was not sufficient. I was not convinced that a straightforward application of Foucault's concepts would fulfil my interest. He often sought mechanisms of power in unusual situations such as prisons and asylums, on the basis that these were where power would be most apparent³. In contrast, I was deliberately examining the operation of power in the most ordinary situations, frequently outside any formal institutional setting. At the least, this meant I had to watch carefully for mechanisms of power that Foucault had not identified⁴.

³ Foucault modified his position on the nature of the setting best suited for examining power. In 1976 he said: "In the very first place, it seemed important to accept that the analysis in question [i.e. of power] should not concern itself with the regulated and legitimate forms of power... On the contrary, it should be concerned with power at its extremities... In other words, one should try to locate power at the extreme points of its exercise, where it is always less legal in character" (Foucault, 1980, p.96-97). In his later work he broadened this perspective. For example, in 1980 he wrote: "When I was studying asylums, prisons, and so on, I insisted, I think, too much on the techniques of domination. What we can call discipline is something really important in these kinds of institutions, but it is only one aspect of the art of governing people in our society. We should not understand the exercise of power as pure violence or strict coercion. Power consists in complex relations: these relations involve a set of rational techniques..." (Foucault, 1997, p.182).

⁴ Foucault did not regard his list of mechanisms of power as complete. In an interview with the editors of the journal *Hérodote* in 1976, he said, "If one or two of these "gadgets" of approach or method that I've tried to employ with psychiatry, the penal system or natural history can be of service to you, then I shall be delighted. If you find the need to transform my tools or use others then show me what they are, because it may be of benefit to me" (Foucault, 1980, p.65).

Studying power in day-to-day life also meant that the formal channels which administered and coordinated mechanisms of power in much of Foucault's (eg. 1979; 1990a) work (eg. prison and medical authorities) had a less direct presence in my work. For example, buying groceries is not highly medicalized in the way mental illness is, and consumers do not face restrictions and enforcement actions in the way that prisoners, soldiers, or factory employees do. While Foucault's mechanisms of power are often readily apparent in day-to-day life, I had to go beyond Foucault to see how they are delivered, and how they are coordinated to form a coherent effect. The means by which the operation of power is coordinated across settings is not explained well by Foucault.

Foucault's connection of power with knowledge then led me to read about ways of knowing. Through the writings of Lyotard (1984), Bruner (1985, 1986, 1987, 1991), Ricoeur (1984, 1991), and many others, I encountered the ideas of narrative theory, and the concept of narrative knowledge. It seemed to me that narrative theory and Foucauldian power were frequently complementary. Time and again I could see a relationship between narrative theory and Foucault's work on the confession, self-identity, normalization, the organization of time, and so on. I realized that narratives could serve as mechanisms of power, and in addition provide the means by which mechanisms of power were coordinated to form coherent patterns. I began to think less in terms of 'power/knowledge', and more in terms of 'power/knowledge/narrative'. (Kvale, 1992a; Lather, 1992; Murray, 1995.)

B.1 Narrowing the Research Question. The question, how does power operate in day-to-day life? was too broad to serve as the basis for a PhD dissertation. For my study to be manageable I had to find a particular aspect of day-to-day life that could fruitfully be examined in terms of power, through

an applied study. I first considered studying aspects of health and medical care --an area with which I had professional experience-- such as the doctor-patient relationship. I also considered examining euthanasia, for clearly this can be seen as an issue of power involving many actors: the dying person, health professionals, loved ones, clergy, legal authorities, and so on. But though everyone gets sick and will eventually die these situations are not routine enough to be typical of most persons' day-to-day lives.

Then, noting that the issue of 'green' consuming was much in the news, I began to consider consuming (not just shopping, but consuming) as it related to the day-to-day operation of power. Very few activities are more taken-for-granted in a developed country than the consuming of household items and groceries: consuming is so central to everyday life in modern culture that the term 'the consumer society' is perhaps the most apt description of this culture. It became clear to me that I could successfully study consuming in a modern society as a process of power. So the question I am examining in this dissertation is, how does power operate in day-to-day consuming in a consumer society?

Garfinkel (1967) provided some of the earliest and most useful insights into day-to-day life. The taken-for-granted nature of practices in day-to-day life make them almost invisible to those who use them. Yet they are overwhelmingly important, providing the common ground by which people think and act:

Socially-sanctioned-facts-of-life-in-society-that-any-bona-fide-member-of-the-society-knows depict such matters as the conduct of family life, market organization, distribution of honour, competence, responsibility, goodwill, income, motives among members, frequency, causes of, and remedies for trouble, and the presence of good and evil purposes behind the apparent workings of things. (Garfinkel, 1967, p.76).

Through his innovative studies Garfinkel demonstrated that day-to-day life is a process of constant invention and reinvention. Common understanding is an ongoing act or achievement, “...an operation rather than a common intersection of overlapping sets” (p.30).

Garfinkel’s (1967) studies pointedly show how social interaction is underdetermined: people know what to do despite the pronounced inadequacies of language and conscious communication. People must fill in the underdetermined aspects of social life by routinely imagining such things as their roles, social expectations, and the meaning of language. People constantly succeed at this, typically without conscious thought. How this happens was the central problem for Garfinkel. Not only does day-to-day life come into existence and function smoothly, it provides silent guidelines for practical action, for sense, fact, method and inquiry. Actions are undertaken in compliance with the expectations of everyday life, actions which are seen as moral or immoral in the sense of being proper or improper. Actions and expectations tend to be self-reinforcing, for actions are carried out in accordance with expectations, which are therefore reestablished as the expectations.

Like Garfinkel’s (1967) work, my research pays “...to the most commonplace activities of daily life the attention usually accorded extraordinary events...to learn about them as phenomena in their own right” (p.1).

C. Theories of Consumerism.

The originating purpose of my research concerns the operation of power, and the theoretical foundations of my work emphasize power and narrative.

Nonetheless, because consuming is the example I use to examine power and

narrative, it is useful to be aware of some of the literature on consumerism, and, as will become evident in Chapter 7, it is particularly interesting to have a sense of the early origins of the consumer society.

Historically in the social sciences, interest in the study of consuming has usually been overshadowed by interest in the study of production. This undoubtedly reflects the influence of the early giants of the social sciences, particularly Marx, whose overwhelming concern was with the nature of economic production. Corrigan (1997), who thinks that the influence of Marx may have “...retarded the development of a sociology oriented to actual consumer practices” (p.33), suggests that “...perhaps it is time to stand Marx on his head and claim that consumption, and not production, is the central motor of contemporary society” (p.1). Like Marx, Weber concentrated much more on issues of production than consumption. Campbell (1983) notes that while attitudes influencing production are a central theme in The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, Weber never mentions consumption, creating the sense that the former existed without the latter. As a result of the interest in production, until fairly recently there were only a few major inquiries into the nature of consumption in industrial societies, most notably Veblen’s Theory of the Leisure Class, published in 1899. In the last two decades, however, research into consumerism has become a major area of interest in the social sciences (see, for example, Campbell, 1987; Corrigan, 1997; Douglas and Isherwood, 1979; Featherstone, 1991; Giddens, 1991; Schmidt, 1995).

It is important to distinguish ‘consuming’ and ‘consumerism’ from ‘shopping’. ‘Shopping’ can be defined as “...consumption-oriented movement in a space where one has the possibility of making purchases” (Lehtonen and Maenpaa, p.143). While many of the examples from my

fieldwork involve shopping, it is too narrow a concept for the needs of my inquiry. Shopping is a manifestation of much more far-reaching social patterns, and it is these patterns that are of interest to me. To illustrate, I am not simply concerned with the purchase of gasoline, I am concerned with the factors that lead people to own and drive cars. So as important and revealing as shopping is, it is only one aspect of consuming. 'Consuming' can be defined as "...the use of goods in the satisfaction of human wants" (Campbell, 1987, p.38). In modern societies, analysts of consuming seem particularly interested in its unprecedented intensity and scale, and the effects of this on such things as economic structures, lifestyles, self-identities, and culture. This approach to consuming is commonly called 'consumerism', which is defined as "...an attitude of limitless desire and discontent, the treatment of consumption as an end-in-itself, and an associated sense of obligation to engage in the continuous pursuit of this end" (Campbell, 1983, p. 293).

The increased interest in studying consumerism has led to many different theoretical approaches. One category of these, which Campbell (1987) calls the 'instinctive' theories, are most widely accepted among market economists, marketers, and consumer behaviourists. It is a self-evident and foundational premise of these theories that people have endless innate needs and wants that they continually try to fulfil through consuming. In other words, needs and wants reside in the consumer; sellers do not create new needs, they simply stimulate latent ones. Instinctive theories of consuming often use terms like 'latent demand', 'unmet needs', and 'acquisitive instincts'.

In this kind of theory, consumer decision-making begins when the consumer recognizes a need, and while the cause of this need is of interest, inquiry into need is constrained by the assumption that the consumer is sovereign: "The

consumer has full capability to screen out all attempts at influence, with the outcome that everything done by the business firm must be *adapted* to consumer motivation and behaviour” (Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard, 1993, p.27, italics in original).

The model of human activity in these theories is *homo economicus*, based on the assumption that people rationally strive to maximize utility by paying the lowest cost for the highest benefit. People are born customers, and the customer reigns supreme. In the words of consumer behaviourists, “...the customer lies at the heart of the [exchange] process. Everything that the supplier does in the way of product, price, promotion, and distribution (the marketing mix) is adapted to market demand. The consumer controls the exchange through the pocketbook” (Engel et al., 1993, p.5). With this view of the consumer, the question of why consumers have needs is secondary to the easier question of what consumers might desire.

These theories are useful for narrow applications within short time frames (Douglas and Isherwood, 1979), which no doubt explains why they remain widely accepted and taught. But with their overt commitment to consumer sovereignty, and their claims that the consumer is able to screen out all attempts at influence, they appear, under scrutiny, to be naive and almost deliberately self-deceiving. My dissertation makes it clear that the consumer is neither sovereign nor fully capable of screening out all attempts at influence. In this, I am consistent with the biggest criticism of the instinctive theories of consumption, which is that these theories distance consumerism from its social context and situate it inordinately in the individual (Campbell 1987; Corrigan, 1997; Douglas and Isherwood, 1979).

A second category of theory of consumerism regards consuming as a process

in which the consumer is manipulated to act against her or his own best interests (Campbell, 1987). The largest influence on these ‘manipulationist’ theories is Marxist thought, which analyzes the manipulation of consumers as a means by which capitalist forces of production maintain and expand markets. The very survival of capitalism depends on an endless commitment to consuming. As a result, according to these theories, people are manipulated into situations where they will consume relentlessly, whether or not they find it fulfilling or satisfying. Consuming is part of the same system of economic domination as producing:

The same process of rationalization of productive forces, which took place in the nineteenth century in the sector of *production*, is accomplished, in the twentieth century, in the sector of *consumption*. Having socialized the masses into a labour force, the industrial system had to go further in order to fulfil itself and to socialize the masses (that is, to control them) into a force of consumption. Production and Consumption are *one and the same grand logical process in the expanded reproduction of the productive forces and of their control*. (Baudrillard, 1988/1970, cited in Corrigan, 1997, p. 21; italics in original.)

One assumption in manipulation theories, in contrast to instinctive theories of consuming, is that people do not by nature have bottomless appetites for consumer products. Rather, these desires are created through such things as advertising and the mass media. Manipulationist theories make a fruitful contribution to analyses of consuming, opening channels for critical thought that simply do not exist with instinctive theories, and focussing skeptical attention on issues of economics and dominance. For example, this position lends itself well to analyses of advertising and promotion, such as those done by Ewen (1976) or Fairclough (1989).

Of course, manipulation theories of consuming have shortfalls. Consumers are not as readily manipulated as might appear, a point that the marketers and consumer behaviourists who emphasize instinctive theories and consumer sovereignty are quick to make. The constant failure of businesses and

products attests to this: “Business history is full of wreckages” that would not have occurred if consumer manipulation was easy or predictable (Engel et al., 1993, p.11). Many more concerns enter consumer decisions than anyone can control, and some of these will conflict with the interests of sellers. For instance, people committed to environmental concerns are likely to resist attempts at manipulating them into making purchases, as my research shows. In addition, manipulation theorists face the problem of establishing the ‘true needs’ of consumers. By assuming that people are being manoeuvred away from their real interests toward meeting those of someone else, these theorists incur the problem of determining people’s real needs, better than people themselves can. This issue also appears in discussions on power (Adorno, 1991; Lukes, 1974).

Instinctivist and manipulationist theories of consumerism emerge from traditions of economics and historical materialism, and as different as they are, both emphasize the economic nature of consuming. Other approaches to consumerism emphasize its cultural and communicative aspects. Douglas and Isherwood (1979), writing from the view of anthropology, confront economic views bluntly: “It is extraordinary to discover that no one knows why people want goods. Demand theory is at the very center, even at the origin of economics as a discipline. Yet 200 years of thought on the subject has little to show...” (p.15). They propose a view of consuming in which consumers acquire and use goods to make sense of their lives:

Man is a social being. We can never explain demand by looking only at the physical properties of goods. Man needs goods for communicating with others and for making sense of what is going on around him. The two needs are but one, for communication can only be formed in a structured system of meanings. His overriding objective as a consumer, put at its most general, is a concern for information about the changing cultural scene. (Douglas and Isherwood, 1979, p.95.)

Consumer goods have meanings attached to them, and in a world in which

meanings are constantly and rapidly changing, goods help to stabilize meaning. Goods are physical embodiments of meanings and relationships: certain goods only go to certain people, or are only used at certain times or places, or for certain purposes. People must strive to make sense of their environments, and consumer goods are crucial to this: "The most general objective of the consumer can only be to construct an intelligible universe from the goods he chooses" (Douglas and Isherwood, 1979, p.65). Goods are the "visible part of culture", and they are arranged in patterns and hierarchies that are ultimately "anchored to human social purposes" (p.65).

There are many 'cultural' perspectives on consumerism beyond Douglas and Isherwood (1979). Perhaps the most famous is Veblen's (1899/1981) analysis of 'conspicuous consumption'. Conspicuous consumption is a means for people to establish their superior status, wealth, and prestige. In effect, consuming conspicuously is a means to communicate information and establish relationships (Campbell, 1987; Corrigan, 1997). Baudrillard emphasizes the aspects of social control at work through consumption, and also regards consumer goods as means of communication and social differentiation. Social differentiation --establishing prestige, individuality, social position-- is a central purpose of consuming, and Baudrillard notes that there is no way to limit demand when this is the case, a great convenience for the system of production (Corrigan). A somewhat different view is presented by writers including Campbell (1983) and Bauman (cited in Falk and Campbell, 1997, p.3), who argue that consuming is a way for people to form and change self-identity, in what is termed the "self-construction-through-acquisition-and-display argument" (Falk and Campbell, p.7). Consuming becomes a way of creating individuality and self-identity in a mass society, and the communication that occurs through consuming is aimed as much at oneself as at others ('I shop, therefore I am'). Giddens (1991) captures this

sense when he writes that in contemporary consumer societies,

...The consumption of ever-novel goods becomes in some part a substitute for the genuine development of the self; appearance replaces essence as the visible signs of successful consumption come actually to outweigh the use-values of the goods and services in question themselves. (p.198.)

Each of the theories I have described above has grounds for justification, and grounds for dispute. One of the striking things about my fieldwork is that examples can be found to reasonably support each theory. A fairly convincing case could be made for instinctive consuming, for instance, during my forays into the mid-winter cold. When the temperature ranges between 30 and 40 degrees Celsius below freezing, and weather reports routinely provide warnings such as “in current conditions, exposed skin will freeze in two minutes”, fashion declines in relative importance to physical self-preservation (though it does not disappear altogether). Likewise, I identified no end of evidence in advertisements for manipulative theories of consuming, some of which I analyze later in this dissertation. Douglas and Isherwood (1979), and others taking a cultural approach to consumption, would also find ample evidence for their positions. Goods do embody meaning, and not just when they are tied to overt rituals, as are Christmas trees and birthday gifts. For example, in the society I study the meaning attached to adult bicycles is almost completely that of recreation, though in other societies bicycles mean serious transportation, including cargo. Imagine how differently a society might organize its roads and cities if the bicycle meant a combination of prestige, good health, and serious transportation, and the automobile meant pollution, disease, and the immoral waste of resources.

Veblen (1899/1981), too, would be reassured that conspicuous consumption is still flourishing, whether in the front-page newspaper stories about the Sultan of Brunei visiting West Edmonton Mall, or the urgency of my children to

collect more than other children of a certain type of toy. And, as Campbell (1983) and Giddens (1991) would expect, my self-identity was in play throughout the fieldwork: Should I risk the embarrassment of making a fuss about organic vegetables at the grocery store? How eccentric was I prepared to have others --and myself-- think of me as I broke the standard patterns of consumption?

I do not use these theories of consuming to frame the analysis in my dissertation, but one thing is clear to me after my research: the consumer is not sovereign, the consumer is not fully capable of screening out all attempts at influence, and the consumer does not control the processes of exchange that sustain consuming.

D. The Origins of the Consumer Society.

Theories of consumerism in industrial societies often assume that consumerism is essentially a post-World War II development, a feature of 'late capitalism' (Campbell, 1983; Corrigan, 1997; Fairclough, 1989). However, there is strong evidence that the roots of consumerism go back much farther, and that a revolution in patterns of consuming in the 17th and 18th centuries was as important to the rise of modern capitalist societies as the revolution in industrial production.

One of the best known analyses of the early stages of capitalism is Weber's (1958/1976) The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Weber's approach is adapted by Campbell (1983; 1987) in his work The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Consumerism. Weber argues that capitalism could not arise without people acquiring a new ethic about the value of work and productivity. He contrasts the traditional preindustrial attitude toward work,

with the modern attitude. Traditional workers do not regard work as inherently good, nor as an end in itself. Weber, using agricultural and textile workers as examples, notes that in traditional societies people do not typically work harder or produce more, even if rewarded with more pay. In traditional societies, incentives such as piece work, which are intended to encourage workers to greater work, can actually lead them to work less, for they only work hard enough to meet their traditional needs, and then stop to enjoy their newly found free time. As Weber puts it, “The opportunity of earning more was less attractive than that of working less” (Weber p.60).

Weber (1958/1976) wants to reveal the changes that lead people to drop this traditional attitude, and begin to value hard work and increased productivity. “Such an attitude”, he notes, “is by no means a product of nature. It cannot be evoked by low wages or high ones alone, but can only be the product of a long and arduous process of education” (p.62). Weber finds the source of this education, and the explanation for the new ethic of work and productivity, in the growth of certain Protestant churches in the 16th and 17th centuries, particularly the Calvinists, but also the Puritans, Pietists, Methodists, and Baptists. In this period, these churches forcefully advance the notion that success in earthly activities indicates God’s blessing and a warm welcome in the hereafter. While Weber’s work is criticized for oversimplifying the causes of the rise of the ‘spirit’ of capitalism (see for example Tawney (1926/1984) and Giddens (1976)), he nonetheless captures the sense in which there is a fundamental shift in attitude from traditional to modern work and productivity.

Weber’s analysis implicitly suggests at least two points concerning consumerism: first, people are no more born as modern consumers than they are as modern workers; and second, the new scale of production that is

necessary to sustain capitalism, even in its earliest stages, requires a new scale of consuming. These issues are taken up by Campbell (1983; 1987), who, in examining the rise of the 'spirit of consumerism', attempts a parallel analysis to Weber's rise of the spirit of capitalism.

Campbell (1983; 1987), citing several sources, argues that traditional societies do not strive to consume ever increasing amounts, but are more likely to accumulate surplus production against future shortfalls, or use it to free up time for leisure. Members of traditional societies will tend to limit their consumption, just as they tend to limit their work and productivity.

In non-literate and preindustrial societies, consumption, like other aspects of life, is largely governed by custom and tradition, and these forces specify a fixed rather than an open-ended notion of wants. It is not merely that in such societies habit has gained an encrustation of normative approval, but that an endlessly changeable pattern of consumption is impossible for the individual to contemplate, or for the society as it is constituted to tolerate. (Campbell, 1987, p.39.)

In these societies, the economy (to use a very modern concept) is almost static, and a person who continually wants more is considered to be immoral and a threat to the established social order. Needs and wants are limited, and "...this fixity of needs is in turn closely linked to the perceived fixity of social structure and status" (Campbell, 1983, p.281). Pre-industrialized Europe was filled with such societies, and as Tawney (1926/1984) and Weber (1958/1976) make clear, traditional and relatively stable levels of production and consumption are crucial to the existence of the religious, social, political, and economic arrangements that comprise these societies up until about the 17th century.

Consuming, like producing, is a learned activity, but there is a basic difference between what is learned about consuming in traditional societies, and what is learned about it in modern ones. Traditional societies teach about consuming

a particular set of goods and services within a broader social context. This approach meets the needs of a traditional consumer, but would quickly render a modern consumer obsolete. Modern consumers learn a generalized attitude and orientation toward consuming, more or less regardless of the goods and services in question. This internalizes what Campbell (1983) describes as the desire to 'want to want', a perpetual attitude of discontent in which complete satisfaction is, by definition, impossible. This, says Campbell, "...is not rooted in human psychology but in the culture of our civilization and constitutes the ethical basis of consumerism" (p.282). The modern consumer ethic is the reverse of the traditional one: "...everyone not only expects to 'better' himself but it is considered 'immoral' not to strive to do so; this means an obligation to seek out and satisfy new 'wants'" (p.281). Consuming has unlimited potential for growth and change.

Weber (1958/1976) is intent on opposing pure economic determinism, proposing that ideas themselves are effective forces in history. It is not in the material world alone that the conditions engendering capitalism originate, but also in the mental and moral worlds: "The question of the motive forces in the expansion of modern capitalism is not in the first instance a question of the origin of the capital sums which were available for capitalistic uses, but, above all, of the development of the spirit of capitalism" (Weber, p.68). Campbell (1983, 1987) accepts this general thesis and applies it to consumerism. More wealth alone does not change a traditional peasant or worker into a consumer; a new attitude is needed, a different morality. A 'consumer ethic' is required so that people regard the consuming of ever more goods as an end in itself. The Protestant ethic, with its emphasis on thrift and investment, did not provide this. What did?

Campbell (1983, 1987) argues that, while an embryonic form of the consumer

ethic can be perceived in the reaction against the austere Puritanism of the 17th century, and in the Sentimentalism of the mid-18th century, the crucial factor was the Romantic movement beginning in the second half of the 18th century. The rise of Romanticism --in politics, philosophy, art, and especially the novel-- encouraged an increase in individuality, self-discovery, self-expression, and sensuality, all of which stimulated consuming. Campbell (1983) states that "What the romantics did was to redefine the doctrine of individualism and the associated idea of improvement and advancement... Clearly the key doctrines were those concerning the 'self', especially the envisioning of it as a 'thing' for registering sensations" (p.287). With this conception of the self, it became a virtual obligation for a person to seek new experiences and new fulfilments. In the process, the pursuit of pleasure, which historically had been barely tolerated in ethics, and frequently condemned, turned into a laudable life-goal.

Romanticism provided that philosophy of 'recreation' necessary for a dynamic consumerism: a philosophy which legitimates the search for pleasure as good in itself and not merely of value because it restores the individual to an optimum efficiency... Romanticism has served to provide ethical support for that restless and continuous pattern of consumption which so distinguishes the behaviour of modern man. (Campbell, 1987, p.200-201.)

The social base for both Romanticism and the first clear emergence of a consumer ethic is the bourgeois middle-class of the late 18th century, particularly the women of this class (Campbell, 1983, 1987; Corrigan, 1997; Nava, 1997). This is the period when industrial production is beginning to surge, and Corrigan cites historical analysis that links this to the first full-fledged consumerism: "...the consumer revolution was the necessary analogue to the industrial revolution, the necessary convulsion on the demand side of the equation to match the convulsion on the supply side" (p.8, citing McKendrick et al.). By 1800, Oxford Street in London "...had already been described as a 'dazzling spectacle' of 'splendidly lit shop

fronts' and 'alluring' and 'handsome' displays" (Nava, 1997, p. 64).

The consumer ethic was not merely a response to the increasing supply of goods yielded by industrialization, it was an active stimulant to industrialization. In England, this demand for more consumer goods did not come primarily from abroad, but from within the country, predominantly from members of the middle class such as artisans, tradesmen, engineers, and farmers. The most important goods connected with early industrialization were not capital goods but consumer goods, including toys, buttons, pins, lace, looking glasses, beauty products, games, fashionable clothes, and novels (Campbell, 1987; Corrigan, 1997). The historical evidence indicates that, in England, "...consumer behaviour was so rampant and the acceptance of commercial attitudes so pervasive that no one in the future should doubt that the first of the world's consumer societies had unmistakably emerged by 1800" (McKendrick et al., quoted in Campbell, 1987, p.6).

Although its effects were dramatic, consumerism evolved gradually. One indicator of the changes it brought is in the nature of shopping. In the 1700s, prior to the beginning of 'the consumer revolution', shopping was centred on the needs of the seller rather than the consumer. Stores, often controlled by producer guilds to limit competition and retain monopolies, were highly specialized, so there was little mixture of goods in one location and people had to go from store to store. Prices were not fixed, and there were no indicators of a level at which the buyer should begin negotiations; there were no displays where people could examine goods; free entry into shops was not allowed, so if people entered a shop they were obliged to buy something; and there were no exchanges or refunds. "The customer was not the most important element in the transaction, but rather the protection of the interests of the guild members... the interests of the producers rather than the

consumers were dominant...the customer is neither right nor first..." (Corrigan, 1997, p.52, 53). But by the second half of the 1800s, the customer was the centre of attention, invited freely to witness the lavish displays of the great department stores of New York, Chicago, London, Paris, and Berlin; hosted by well-trained clerks; relieved from haggling over prices; and able to make refunds and exchanges (Corrigan, 1997; Falk and Campbell, 1997; Schudson, 1984).

When Macy's in New York, Bon Marché in Paris, and other newly innovative department stores in major European and American cities were enchanting customers with their breathtaking displays and monumental architecture in the later 1800s, and long after Oxford Street in London began to dazzle, the city where I would conduct my fieldwork more than a century later was a fur-trading outpost in the frontier of northwestern Canada. A few hundred Europeans, based in and around a wooden stockade named Fort Edmonton, traded with Indians, exchanging manufactured goods such as beads, blankets, and guns, for furs. Economic activity was largely based on traditional bartering, and the value of furs and the selection of goods traded for them were controlled by the Hudson Bay Company, which owned the fort and had a practical monopoly on the local economy. But the outpost grew, the monopoly collapsed, the fur trade was overtaken by other industries, and the city of Edmonton emerged, shaped physically and socially almost entirely by the forces of 20th century production and consumption, and providing an ideal setting for examining how power operates in day-to-day consuming in a consumer society.

E. The Research Setting.

As is often noted, a researcher's choice of topic is invariably influenced by his

or her culture and experience. For most of my life I have lived in the city that grew out of Fort Edmonton: it is my home and it served as the location for most of the fieldwork. Edmonton (1991 metropolitan pop: 840,000) is Canada's most northerly major city, lying at the northern edge of the North American Great Plains where they merge with the vast boreal forests that cover much of northern Canada. It is the capital of the province of Alberta (1994 pop: 2.7 million), one of the three prairie provinces in western Canada. Edmonton is geographically distant from other large urban centres: the nearest major cities are Calgary, 180 miles south; Winnipeg, 865 miles southeast; and Vancouver, 770 miles southwest. Edmonton was established as a fur-trading post in the early 1800s, and after gradual settlement by Europeans was incorporated as a City in 1904 with a population of 8,350. Until World War II its population and economic development were characterized by sudden spurts and slow periods, but from about 1940 to the late 1980s there was a sustained period of strong prosperity based on agriculture and natural resources (especially petroleum) which set the basis for the current situation. (MacGregor, 1975.)

Edmonton's population is ethnically mixed, with the largest ethnic group reported as 'multiple origins' (41.1%) and the next largest as British (16.7%) (Statistics Canada, 1995). The remaining ethnic groups are predominantly European, Asian, and Aboriginal. English is the mother tongue of 77.9% of people. There is a high general level of education, with 53.5% of the population having some post-secondary education. Albertans' houses have an average 6.3 rooms per household, the highest in Canada; there are on average 2.7 persons per household (Statistics Canada, 1993).

Edmonton presents a paradoxical situation. It is a city of relative newcomers, with a population that has grown one-hundredfold in less than a century and

in which the largest identifiable ethnic group, 'multiple origins', forms well under half the population. Yet despite this diversity there is a remarkable homogeneity of patterns of consumption. Edmonton households have generally high levels of consumer goods: in 1994, 98% had a colour television, and 50.3% had two or more; 99% had radios, telephones and refrigerators; 84.7% had microwave ovens; 83.9% had cassette or tape recorders; 82.8% had VCRs; 74.3% had electric washing machines; 72.9% had clothes drying machines; 76.9% had automobiles, and 23.7% had two or more automobiles. (Statistics Canada, 1993.)

How is it that such a high proportion of people adopt such similar consumer lifestyles so readily? Something is happening to quickly channel the lives of a diverse group of people into a narrow range of behaviour. Can this be understood in terms of power? Consuming is not enforced or legislated, and there is seldom formal sanction for not consuming. It is so common that it fades out of sight, becoming part of day-to-day life. To paraphrase Garfinkel (1967), it is done skilfully, reliably, uniformly, with enormous standardization and as an unaccountable matter for the consumers, and in the unknown ways that this accomplishment is commonplace it is an astonishing phenomenon (p.10). It does not just happen, it is achieved and constantly re-achieved. The day-to-day aspects of this achievement, and how they might relate to a theory of power, are the focus of this study.

Several developments of the past twenty years converged to create unusual circumstances in Edmonton's consumer culture. Rapid economic and population growth in the 1970s and early 1980s, largely caused by an 'oil boom', led to major investments in retail facilities. These pressures were controlled by city planners by organizing the city's growth around large shopping malls that acted as retail hubs for their areas. Large strips of land

along major transportation routes that might otherwise have been developed into retail space were kept undeveloped by zoning regulations. Retail space, especially in malls, was built in anticipation of continued population growth, but in the mid 1980s the petroleum-driven economy sharply slowed, and with it population growth. As a result there was a surfeit of retail space. (Prof. Adam Finn, Faculty of Business, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada. Personal communication, February 13, 1996.)

This situation was aggravated in the early 1990s by a shift in retailers' strategy away from malls toward 'big box' stores. Big box stores are very large stores specializing in particular product areas (eg. home electronics, hardware). They offer low prices and a huge range of choices, and are usually housed in low-cost buildings that are, essentially, retail warehouses. In retailing they are called 'category killers' because of their ability to drive smaller competition in their product category out of business. Big box stores require large tracts of inexpensive land (a high portion of which is for parking lots) adjacent to major traffic routes. (See Doocey, 1992; Robaton, 1996a; Warson, 1993.)

Because of the zoning decisions of earlier decades and a slower economy, Edmonton had extensive amounts of just such land when big box stores began opening in the early 1990s. When several of these are built in a single development they are known as 'power strips'; and if several power strips are adjacent to one another they are known as a 'power center'⁵. At the time of

⁵ The concept of 'power strips' and 'power centers' originated in California in 1986, when the first one was developed by Terranomics Retail Services, which then trademarked the term 'power center'. For about ten years, power centers expanded rapidly across North America, but by 1996 concern was rising that they had reached their peak and were set for possible decline, facing stiffer competition from rejuvenated regional malls and smaller retailers. For an interesting comparison see Doocey (1992), who wrote about an older mall which could not compete with West Edmonton Mall being demolished and replaced by a successful power center as part of the wave to 'de-malling', and Robaton (1996b), who just four years later wrote that the trend to power centers was weakening as their prospects turned negative.

my fieldwork Edmonton had two such power centres and various power strips, with big box stores for computers, sporting goods, clothing, appliances and electronics, groceries, furniture, home improvement products, bedding and linen, audio-visual products, automotives, office supplies, toys, and so on.

The result of all this activity is that Edmonton has an extremely high ratio of retail space: 16.4 sq. feet of enclosed retail space per resident compared to 8.0 in Vancouver, 7.5 in Toronto, and 6 in Montreal (Maclean, 1995). In 1992 there were 40 major department stores in Edmonton, 25 major malls, and 1,672 retail chain stores. It is "...probably the most over-stored metropolitan area in Canada -- you could even call it the capital of the world in those terms" according to Vancouver-based retail consultant Phil Boname (Maclean).

With its relatively high levels of disposable income and readily available space Edmonton is becoming "...something of a testing ground for retailers wanting to float new concepts" (Maclean). The highly competitive market has stimulated significant reinvestment and innovation, and several shopping malls have been renovated and upgraded, despite high vacancy rates.

Finally, a factor of definitive impact for consuming in Edmonton is West Edmonton Mall, generally regarded as the world's largest. West Edmonton Mall has become an icon of 'postmodern consumerism' in a surprising range of academic areas, including marketing (Brown, 1995), organization theory (Marsden and Townley, 1995), and environmental design (Shields, 1989). Completed in 1986 at a cost of \$1.1 billion (Cdn), it provides 5.2 million sq. feet of gross leasable area and contains over 800 stores and services, including 11 major department stores, 110 restaurants and 19 movie theatres (City of Edmonton Planning Department, 1988; Stewart and Kubursi, 1993). Most notable is its extension of the mall concept into an amusement park and tourist destination: as well as the stores, restaurants, and theatres, it contains

two roller coasters and several other rides; an enormous water park with indoor wave pool; a submarine ride complete with several functioning submarines; a dolphin pool; a full-sized skating rink; a large hotel (a second is proposed) and many other attractions. It has served as a prototype for similar projects elsewhere, including Seoul, South Korea, and Bloomington, Minnesota.

Information on the impact and operations of West Edmonton Mall varies considerably, depending on the source, research methods, and time period. The City of Edmonton Planning Department (1988) estimated that about 18,000 people were employed at West Edmonton Mall, and that from 1982 to 1986 tourist spending in Edmonton rose from \$200 million to \$700 million, "...largely attributable to West Edmonton Mall". As well, it estimated that from August, 1986, to July, 1987, the mall received 20 million visitors, including 10.8 million from Edmonton and 9.2 million tourists. Different estimates came from Stewart and Kubursi (1993), who calculated that a total of 23,500 person-years of employment were generated by the economic activity of the mall, which had 3.5 million tourist visitors (i.e. people from more than 80 kms. away) that year, and generated \$339 (Cdn) million in tax revenues. They found that about 60% of all inquiries at City of Edmonton Information Bureaus related to the mall, and stated that "...it is the largest privately-held tourism attraction in Canada on the basis of total visitation and expenditure" (Stewart and Kubursi, p.iii). The impact of West Edmonton Mall on retailers in Edmonton is mixed, on one hand attracting business away from other malls, and on the other hand attracting more shoppers and tourists to the city from other cities, provinces, and countries. Aside from providing a huge range of stores for consumers it integrates shopping with the sense of the grand spectacle, but it is difficult to assess the impact of the mall on local consumer attitudes. While tourists can have a 'shopping holiday' at West

Edmonton Mall, for residents of Edmonton it is frequently just 'the mall' or 'West Ed' --no other names needed-- where shopping is done as in every other large mall.

Ironically, during much of the period when retail space was expanding so rapidly in Edmonton, one of the most controversial local political issues concerned garbage disposal. The major city landfill was to reach its capacity by the late 1980s and every new site that was considered faced stiff local opposition. As the search for a new site extended over several years city managers had no choice but to extend the life of the existing site by reducing the amount of waste flowing into it. A major public education campaign about recycling was launched, including concerted environmental programs in the schools. This was complemented with a door-to-door collection program called 'The Blue Box Program'. In this program, which still operates, plastic, glass, metal and paper are collected weekly from every house, along with the garbage for the landfill. The program requires householders to sort their waste, and though it is voluntary, compliance rates exceed 80%. The program has been successful enough that the old landfill site is still in use. The public debates about garbage disposal and the public education on recycling, along with concerns about environmental issues in general, probably generate a relatively high level of environmental awareness among residents of Edmonton. (City of Edmonton Waste Management Department. Personal communication, October 27, 1997.)

F. The Research Methods.

In an advanced consumer society like Edmonton's, the simplest consumer decision is saturated with an immense array of factors: this morning's advertising and memories from childhood; pleading from offspring and

offhand comments from neighbours; a reliable car and easy parking; price and convenience of payment; physical hunger and fatigue; a rude clerk; an upcoming birthday party; a romantic mood; the policies of the International Monetary Fund. Marketing and consumer behaviour textbooks barely scratch the surface.

As I reflected on my life as a consumer, and observed others, it became apparent that the density and pervasiveness of factors that lead a person to consume in particular ways are remarkable. In an exercise early in the development of this research, I took a grocery shopping list and wrote about the things I could think of that prompted me to put each of the ten items on the list. I stopped, surprised, after four thousand words, suspecting I could fill a book about this one little list. Then I conducted exploratory interviews about other people's consuming, and while these were interesting it was immediately evident that working from someone else's account would not yield the desired richness. I also became convinced that observing someone else consume (in the broadest sense) would be neither practical nor sufficient, for, among other things, I would literally have to live with them day and night for an extended period, intruding into the very patterns I was hoping to observe.

At about the same time, my readings of phenomenology (M. Van Manen, 1990) and ethnography (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1992; J. Van Maanen, 1982b, 1988) convinced me that a first-hand account was indispensable, and that in combination with other methods a strong research design could be developed as follows (Martin, 1993; Faulkner, 1982). I call the method 'autoethnography', adapting the term from Hayano (1979, 1982). It includes a modified form of participant-observation; interviews with small samples of consumers; and an analysis of advertising, and historical documents.

F.1 The Ethnographic Approach. The methods of ethnographic research are well-addressed in various books and articles (Van Maanen, 1982b, 1988; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1992; Johnson, 1975). There are many definitions of ethnography and many variations in its application. Ethnographic studies provide descriptions of cultures, and as Van Maanen (1988) says, there are many ways to describe a culture. Ethnography and grounded theory are closely related, though grounded theory as presented by Glaser and Strauss (1979) is more specifically structured. Like grounded theory, ethnography is useful for moving back and forth between topical-substantive problems and generic-formal ones, and is also effective for both developing and testing theory.

Van Maanen (1982b) describes five principles for ethnographic research, providing a concise description of what these involve:

1) *Analytic Induction*: Qualitative work begins with close-up, detailed observation. The specific and local are sought as a primary data base within which patterns may or may not be found...2) *Proximity*: Importance is placed on concrete occurrences and occasions, not on reports of such. The investigator should witness first-hand that which he or she proposes to understand...3) *Ordinary Behaviour*: Topics for qualitative study are to be located within the natural world of those studied. Qualitative research is interested in everyday activity as defined, enacted, and made problematic by persons going about their normal routines...4) *Structure as Ritual Constraint*: Recurrent patterns of social activity are essentially arbitrary, a result of custom, present circumstance, and ongoing interaction. There is no primal social order or set of fundamental environmental conditions against which a “natural deviation” can be defined...5) *Descriptive Focus*: Qualitative work...seeks a description for what is occurring in a given place and time. “What is going on here?” is the most elementary quantitative research question yet the most difficult to adequately answer. The aims of revelation and disclosure take precedence over explanation and prediction. (p.16.)

Ethnographers are clear that they make no claims to objective analysis or value-free neutrality. Johnson (1975) makes an effective book-length critique

of claims to objectivity in ethnographic studies; Van Maanen (1982a) is more economical:

I think neutrality in fieldwork an illusion. Neutrality is itself a role to be enacted and the meaning such a role will carry for people within and without the research setting will, most assuredly, not be neutral...only by entering into the webs of local association does a fieldworker begin to glimpse the distinctive nature of what lies within and without these webs. (p.115.)

Consistent with this, morality is closely tied to ethnographic research. Aside from the ethical issues of the research method, such as concealment and confidentiality, there is the more subtle exploration of morality entailed in exploring the rules of conduct for individual and group actions. Through careful observation and questioning the ethnographer comes to see the arbitrary nature of the unnoticed but continuously-used rules that members rely on to determine the right and proper from the wrong and improper. The model for an ethnographic statement is not in the behavioural form of "If a person is presented with stimulus A, he will do B", but in the moral form "If a person is in situation X, performance Y will be judged proper by members of the culture" (Frake, 1964, cited in Van Maanen, 1982a, p.144).

Ethnography relies heavily on participant-observation, but it also draws on other methods such as document analysis and in-depth interviewing, gaining the advantages of a multiple methods approach, increasing the range and value of information, and maintaining a balance among competing perspectives. Johnson (1975) suggests independent checks with colleagues and (if possible) selected participants; Denzin (1989) recommends triangulation among data sources; and Hammersley and Atkinson (1992) advise careful sampling along the three major dimensions of time, people, and context.

F.2 Participant-observation With a Twist. Participant-observation is the central method of ethnographic study. Classically it was used by anthropologists to study people from other cultures, most notably in studies where Europeans lived with tribal societies in remote locations. Aside from exotic appeal and a sense of adventure, it met the expectation that the object of the study (the 'natives') be culturally remote enough from the researcher to minimize bias and insure objectivity. It gradually became clear, however, that reverse problems occurred: European biases instead of other biases were imposed on the cultures being studied, and ignorance sometimes led to seriously mistaken interpretations. (Hayano, 1979; Van Maanen 1988.)

What these original ethnographers were pursuing, and what remains at the heart of ethnographic participant-observation, is the ability of the researcher to notice the taken-for-granted aspects of a culture that the usual members have lost awareness of through over-familiarity. This is the 'distancing' that is so often referred to. Members of a culture know, live with, and use the rules and expectations of their culture constantly, yet are often unable to describe, question, or even perceive them. They are competent but unaware; it is the researcher's task to become competent and aware. Garfinkel's (1967) advice in his studies of ethnomethodology is helpful here:

Procedurally it is my preference to start with familiar scenes and ask what can be done to make trouble. The operations that one would have to perform in order to multiply the senseless features of perceived environments; to produce and sustain bewilderment, consternation, and confusion; to produce the socially structured affects of anxiety, shame, guilt, and indignation; and to produce disorganized interaction should tell us something about how the structures of everyday activities are ordinarily and routinely produced and maintained. (p.37.)

With all this in mind, I eventually settled on the following approach. For twelve months I carefully studied my and my family's consuming activities. Each day I noted anything that appeared to influence our lives as consumers. I put no limit on what I would include: prices, feelings, products, comments,

distances, advertisements, regulations, customs, thoughts, memories, songs, conversations. If it seemed somehow related to an aspect of our consuming I tried to note it.

The immediate challenge of this approach, and a basic ethnographic concern, was to achieve some distancing from what was my conventional way of living. Throughout the year of fieldwork I was the primary home-maker; my wife, Jeanette, was working at a professional job; and our two boys, Jordan and Spencer,⁶ were in elementary school. As such I was the 'lead' household consumer, doing most of the day-to-day shopping and cooking, and a large portion of the cleaning. The way I 'made trouble' for our familiar scenes was to make particular changes in our lifestyle every second month. In September, November, January, March, May, and July we lived as we normally would, very much in the mainstream of consumer culture for Canada. In October, December, February, April, June, and August we lived as if we were committed environmentally-mindful consumers.

In effect, then, my research was under way 24-hours a day for an entire year. Given the nature and context of the research it was important to account for seasonal variations. For example, market-gardening flourishes in the Edmonton area from mid-June to October, and as a result it is relatively easy to get high-quality, low-priced, locally-grown organic produce during the summer and autumn. Through the winter and spring, however, this option is almost eliminated (except for some root vegetables and cabbage). Seasonal changes were also important considerations for personal transportation. The only way to sample all these factors was to sustain the research for a full year.

⁶ For the rest of the dissertation I call our sons 'Paul' and Phillip' to conceal their identities. These names are taken from a newspaper article, and I have mixed their application between the two boys.

To provide consistency I established the following guidelines for green and brown consumers, and tried to follow these as the months alternated. These guidelines were also useful in selecting the interview participants, as will be discussed below. My guidelines for the 'green' months were drawn largely from the Canadian Green Consumer Guide (Pollution Probe, 1991), and were as follows:

- 1) Regard myself as a consumer with a committed concern for the environment, taking serious account of the impact on the natural environment of the products I purchased and used, and the way I and my family lived.
- 2) Be prepared to consistently pay higher prices for environmentally-friendly products.
- 3) Deliberately seek information on the environmental impacts of products and consuming.
- 4) Make serious efforts to reduce the use of our motor vehicle.
- 5) Reduce the amount of meat (especially beef) in our diets and increase the amount of fruits and vegetables, especially locally-produced and organically-grown products.
- 6) Use environmentally-friendly ways of keeping house (for example, cleaning bathrooms with baking soda and vinegar, and drip-drying rather than machine-drying laundry).

The guidelines for my normal or 'brown' months are essentially the negative versions of those for the green months, as follows:

- 1) Give little or no serious attention to issues of the natural environment in my purchasing and lifestyle decisions; do not regard myself as a committed 'green' consumer.
- 2) Do not be prepared to consistently pay higher prices for green products.
- 3) Do not deliberately seek out information on the environmental impacts of products and consuming, though such information may come through the media or unsolicited sources.
- 4) Rely primarily on the automobile for transportation.
- 5) Do not make significant adjustments to diet, behaviours or lifestyle because of concerns for the natural environment.

The effect of alternating lifestyles each month was always stimulating, and could be dramatic and disorienting. For instance, the seemingly straightforward commitment to eat less meat and more organic and locally-produced food immediately had implications for everything from cooking techniques and recipes, to shopping patterns, to reconsiderations of social

relations with committed meat-eaters. The repercussions of our monthly alternating were far-reaching, revealing unanticipated habits, assumptions, and attitudes, and making visible some otherwise unseen connections among taken-for-granted activities. This was expected with the change from brown to green; at least as important was that the change back to brown also led me to see many familiar things anew. Everything became slightly foreign: after a month of cleaning the bathroom with baking soda the once familiar fumes from our usual commercial cleansing sprays were startling. All this was enhanced because I had lived in Britain for the year immediately prior to the fieldwork, increasing my ability to look at customary Canadian ways with a slight unfamiliarity.

In addition, the discipline of keeping a thorough and systematic journal about consuming was in itself an effective way to unveil many taken-for-granted aspects of daily life. Almost every day for a year I spent one to three hours taking notes. I took my notebook nearly everywhere, and when I forgot it I would write on scraps of paper or the palm of my hand. Most of the time I did not need to worry about blending in with my research subjects: jotting a few notes in a grocery aisle, at home, or while driving was seldom obtrusive, and I would compile and write-up the notes for each day at my home. For the year, my daily journal totalled 209,000 words.

F.3. Precedents. There are several relevant precedents to my approach.

Roy's (1960/1990) article on the nature of time in the workplace, "Banana Time: Job Satisfaction and Informal Interaction", is an example of highly personal, detailed first-person research. He presents his research as one would tell a story, describing the events and misadventures of his stint as a worker and participant-observer in a factory, focussing on the nature and organization of time. Roy initially conducted his research for his PhD

dissertation, and through serendipitous circumstance, Burawoy (1979) replicated and expanded Roy's research using the same method, working on the floor of a similar shop in the same factory, thirty years after Roy's initial work.

Wallace (1965), using what Hayano (1979) described as "self-ethnography", bases his research on his own "introspective account" of driving to his work. He provides a detailed description of operating his car, analyzing the complexity that is involved and relating this to theories of cognitive mapping. His descriptions of operating the car, which are thorough and efficient, would be difficult or impossible to obtain except through his introspective approach. For an observer to note all this information would require immense time and effort, would demand an intrusion into the setting that would distort the research, and would be open to many misinterpretations. As Wallace says, in his study "...the anthropologist uses himself as his own informant" (p.278), for which he provides straightforward justification:

For the anthropologist to act as his own informant presents some interesting methodological problems. At first glance, it would appear that the issue is simply one of "introspection" versus objective description of behavior by an "outsider" observer. Introspection, indeed, has little or no value as a source of information about certain sorts of psychological processes, or even about the finer details of processes for which it has some value as an initial method of observation. But, nonetheless, it is unavoidable, and the anthropologist derives a large proportion of his information by the simple procedure of asking an informant to introspect: to say, or write, what he is thinking about a certain subject. Thus for the anthropologist to record, by writing or by dictating, his own thoughts about his own culturally relevant behaviour involves only a minor difference in method from standard procedure. And...when the technique is used as a means of approach to certain theoretical problems, it has the advantage of permitting a high degree of thoroughness of inquiry and of directness of approach to "psychological reality". (p.278.)

It is clear to Wallace (1965) that observation by an outsider cannot be defended as objective: written and oral responses from third parties are as

dependent on introspection as notes taken directly by the researcher on his or her own thoughts. Wallace's point might be taken further by arguing that there is a double introspection, or double subjectivity, in a great deal of social science research: the subjectivity of the person under study is being interpreted through the subjectivity of the researcher.

It is not uncommon for people to study members of a group to which they belong. Faulkner (1982) was a professional musician studying professional musicians. Van Maanen (1982a) in his ethnographic work on police actually completed full training at a police academy and worked side-by-side with police on a regular shift, sometimes participating fully in police duties. "I tried to come as close as I could to becoming what it was I was studying [police officers]. The problem, of course, was not to lose sight entirely of the reasons that had brought me to the field" (p. 23).

Hayano (1979, 1982), an academic specializing in ethnographic research as well as a serious poker player, conducted a long and detailed ethnographic study of poker players after his curiosity was aroused by his long periods in the poker clubs of southern California. He continued and intensified his poker playing as part of his research. Building on this experience, and that of many others who had used their experience and background to do academic studies of their own professions or people, Hayano (1979) developed the concept of autoethnography. It is, essentially, the ethnographic study of a researcher's 'own people'.

While auto-ethnography is not a specific research technique, method, or theory, it colors all three as they are employed in fieldwork. In many ways, the problems of autoethnography are the problems of ethnography compounded by the researcher's involvement and intimacy with his subjects...critical issues of observation, epistemology, and "objective" scientific research procedures are raised. (p.99).

Not surprisingly, these problems are balanced by some particular advantages, including easy access and acceptance, a common understanding of the situation, and the rich empathy "...which insiders share from knowing their subjects on a deep, subtle level. These are emotions which outsiders cannot feel in the same way, or for the same things...Subjectivism and personal involvement, then, need not necessarily be methodological "problems," but can be assets to deepen ethnographic understanding" (p.101).

The place of emotions, especially those of the researcher, are of central interest to Johnson (1975), who feels they have been almost completely overlooked in social science research:

Most of us have an intuitive understanding that our personal feelings are very important ingredients of our everyday practical affairs. There is a vast range of human feelings, and most of us understand the importance of sexual desire, love, hate, resentment, infatuation, exhaustion, and all the others. These are often the prime movers of our daily actions. But the methodological literature contains very few references to the writers' feelings. On the whole, it is impossible to review the literature about methods in the social sciences without reaching the conclusion that "having feelings" is like an incest taboo in sociological research. (p.146-147).

There seem to have been only slight changes in this regard in the ensuing years; in general the feelings of the researcher remain a taboo in the social sciences, posing a threat to the appearance of objectivity. And yet, as Johnson notes, there are many ways in which the "personal feelings of the observer become fused with the rational cognitions of the inquiry" (p.150-151).

From early in my research design I was aware that feelings and emotions were of central importance to the topic, for it is clear that consuming is laden with emotional weight. Further, I was convinced of connections among feelings, knowledge, and power. From the first, I realized it was important to note things such as how it felt to be teased about carrying groceries on my bicycle,

or how it felt to insist that clerks dig through bookworm refrigerators for organic fruit while piles of the regular fruit were at my fingertips. Feelings, then, are a central element of this research, and the method of personally living my research gave me first-hand access to them.

F.4. Interviews. An important part of my research involved conducting a small number of ethnographic interviews. The purpose of the interviews was neither to glean 'how to' information on consuming, nor to assess attitudes, values and beliefs. The interviews were conducted to listen to the accounts normal and green consumers gave about their consuming, in order to, first, confirm or contradict my own fieldwork experiences as a green or brown consumer (triangulation), and second, to enrich and extend the data sources for my analysis.

Ethnographic interviews contrast to conventional survey interviews in that they do not follow a closely standardized format. The interviewer conducts a reflexive interview, working through a list of predetermined topics but adjusting the interview content and style to the situation and the respondent. (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1992). I began each interview with a set of issues and general questions to guide and stimulate discussion. Through questioning, probing, and discussing, I wanted to learn how consuming was entwined in the respondents' lives. What were their experiences as consumers? How did they perceive themselves as consumers? For greens, what did it mean to be a 'green consumer'? I asked my subjects to describe some successes and failures they had had as consumers, and also explored if they had habits, routines, or rituals of consuming. How did they conceive of the connection between consuming and the natural environment, if at all? What changes over time had they noticed in consuming? What did they feel affected their consumer behaviour? What were their shopping routines, and

did they enjoy shopping? I listened to how they expressed themselves, paying attention to the sort of language they used, and the narrative forms their responses took.

The sample for my interviews was divided into brown and green consumers, with one unmarried male, one unmarried female, and one couple in each group. Further, all interviewees had post-secondary education, were long-time residents of Edmonton, were employed, and did not have children living with them. Each candidate had to meet the defining conditions for being brown or green that I myself followed during our alternating months, as listed earlier. Both samples were selected through referrals. The brown consumers were referred to me by friends and relatives, though they themselves were not friends or relatives of mine. I used an expert referral method to obtain my sample of green consumers. I asked three well-known environmentalists in Edmonton to each provide a list of potential candidates for the interviews. The candidates I selected were those who appeared on all three lists and who met the above conditions. I screened candidates through initial telephone contacts. The interviews usually lasted about 90 minutes, were all conducted in the interviewee's residence, and were recorded on audiotape. I prepared complete transcripts of each interview. Permission forms which guaranteed the confidentiality of the interviewees were signed by each candidate and by me. The interviews were valuable in triangulating my personal experiences in the fieldwork, often corroborating or extending my experiences (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1992). In the text of the dissertation I draw on the interviews primarily for illustration.

For example, the difficulties that the green respondents described in their day-to-day lives paralleled the difficulties I felt I faced, whether with transportation, the availability of organic groceries, or the temptations to

sometimes 'give in' to consumerism. When I heard my green respondents describe the strains that their lifestyle placed on relationships with friends and family, I recognized a similar situation to our relations with friends and family when we were being green. And when they spoke of the sense of satisfaction that came from getting along without a car, I felt my own successes in these areas were somehow shared. Or, when the brown interviewees spoke of the ease of shopping at a nearby mall, or of their dreams of owning a new house, I felt confirmation that my own similar thoughts were not isolated.

There were also some contrasts and surprises in the interviews. For example, none of the respondents I designate as 'green' liked the term 'green consumer', preferring instead terms like 'anti-consumer' or 'non-consumer'. As well, while there were many similarities with my experiences, all of the green respondents rejected consumerism more thoroughly in their lives than I did during our green months, and at least one of the brown respondents was a much more enthusiastic consumer than I feel I have ever been. I have not explored those differences, but suspect they largely represent more extreme cases on a continuum of green and brown lifestyles, rather than a difference in kind.

F.5. Analysis of Print Advertising. Print advertising is a concrete indicator of the nature of consuming, and both its style and volume can be striking. Individual advertisements are often analyzed for the messages they convey and the discourses they create, often revealing much about society's portrayal of sexuality, gender roles, morality and lifestyles (Barthes, 1993; Corrigan, 1997; Engel et al., 1993; Nava, 1997; S. Brown, 1995; Wernick, 1991). I engage in some analysis like this, examining individual advertisements, particularly for their narrative structures, and I present these

cases in various places in the dissertation.

In addition, I also do a content analysis of the print advertising delivered to our house. The almost daily deliveries of printed advertising to households in Edmonton provided a valuable source of documents directly related to my research. (Perhaps my interest in this stems from my childhood, when for two years I earned extra money by delivering flyers door to door to up to 400 houses, twice a week.) Each day in the year of fieldwork, I monitored in detail the print advertising that was delivered to our house. I only counted unsolicited material; advertising from organizations with which I or my family had formal established contact (eg. banks) was excluded from the count, as was material that was not directly intended to sell something. The material thus selected was divided into two categories: a) material contained in the newspaper (for which we had a subscription), including enclosures and flyers, and b) material delivered by Canada Post or other delivery services.

I tallied the volume of this material: each page was counted and a calculation was made to convert these to the equivalent of a standard broadsheet newspaper page. Over the period of the fieldwork, the equivalent of 13,709 broadsheet pages of advertising in the body of the newspaper, and 5,712 broadsheet pages in inserts in the newspaper, were delivered to our home. A further 2,148 broadsheet-equivalent pages of advertising were delivered through Canada Post and other delivery services. I also kept a count of advertisements in which environmental concerns in relation to the product were noted, which I called 'green advertisements'. Detailed discussions of this material appear in subsequent chapters. Finally, I used other material to provide background for several topics I explored historically, including a wide range of primary and secondary texts, studies, and archival material.

F.6. Overall Analysis and Write-up. There are no 'rule-book' formulas for analyzing and writing ethnographic research such as I have conducted, although there are some useful guidebooks (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1992; Johnson, 1975; J. Van Maanen, 1988). One of the essential features of research based on ethnography is that it is continuously reflexive, and this requires recognizing that "...the social researcher, and the research act itself, are part and parcel of the social world under investigation" (Hammersley and Atkinson, p.234). From beginning to end the research and conclusions are open to reinterpretation, for new evidence and new perspectives are always emerging. In contrast to the 'snapshot' research of a survey, which tries to freeze a moment in time, my research is interactive and 'multi-media'.

The analysis in my research did not occupy a specific stage in the research process. It began when I first considered issues of power long before I commenced a PhD, it continued through the preliminary interviews, through the fieldwork and the writing of this document, and will carry on, for me at least, long after my degree is complete. The research in this dissertation had what Hammersley and Atkinson (1992, p.175) call a 'funnel structure'. This occurs as a result of the clarifying that delimits the nature of the study and provides it with an analytical structure; the wide open aspects of the early stages of research slowly narrow as the focus of the research concentrates on increasingly specific matters which simultaneously tend to be more theoretical and explanatory.

I began the fieldwork with two 'sensitizing concepts' in mind, Foucauldian notions of power, and narrative theory. I also had a hunch that the two had much in common, though I was not aware of any specific work on possible linkages between the two. At the same time, I was not sure how well Foucauldian theory would apply to the relatively decentralized and informal

topic of day-to-day consuming. As I proceeded through the year of fieldwork, and my ideas began to form, my attention intensified on narratives and metanarratives, and on the relation and interaction of these with Foucauldian operants of power. As well, once I realized how useful Foucault's idea of mechanisms of power was, I began to look for other examples of them. Given my dual interest in narrative and mechanisms of power, it is not surprising that I came to regard stories, charms, and rituals as mechanisms of power in themselves.

From the beginning of my fieldwork I looked for patterns, surprises, puzzles, outstanding features, things that might be so obvious as to be obscure (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1992). Two things struck me immediately in my first month, September: first, the remarkable ease of consuming in Edmonton, an ease that was so far-reaching it was readily taken for granted; and second, the staggering volume of print advertising delivered to our door, which I will describe in detail in Chapter 3. As I began to critically consider the advertising I was led into issues of language and discourse, identity and morality, thought and interlocution. But the real 'take-off' point for the fieldwork occurred in October, my first month as a green consumer.

Suddenly, I was disoriented in a setting and with processes with which I had been familiar most of my life. Something as simple as grocery shopping was no longer simple. I had to struggle to learn new skills, routines, and roles. The connection between my identity and my consuming became more clear as I tried to reconceive of myself as a bicycle-riding semi-vegetarian; the relationship between physical space and social organization was never more evident to me than when I cycled to stores, only to find vast parking lots for cars and not a single rack for bicycles.

As Christmas approached, with its tales of Santa and Scrooge, the connection

between narrative and selling was unavoidable, and as I saw sellers employ Foucauldian mechanisms of power (surveillance, the confession, etc.) within narratives such as Christmas and Valentine's, I began to see the intermeshing of narrative and power. As the months passed and I gradually became more comfortable as a green and, to my surprise, more uneasy as a brown, I could almost see my self-identity changing. I was becoming that bicycle-riding semi-vegetarian as much as I had been a mainstream, middle-class, mini-van driver. As I conducted the interviews in March, April, and May, and particularly listened to the passion and commitment of my green respondents, I could see that consuming was a moral issue, although most consumers are blind to this. By now, the incoherence of early October was beginning to become an immensely complex coherence, in which everything was connected, from language to washing machines, from bus schedules to birthday parties. I could perceive the coherence because of the theories I was using; I could see aspects of both narratives and Foucauldian power in a great number of things, and further, I could see how they worked together. I began to see consumerism in terms of power, knowledge, and narrative.

This complexity made it difficult to write up the results, and eventually led me to organize my dissertation according to themes and theoretical topics, rather than by a chronology of the fieldwork. The insights and most telling examples from the fieldwork did not occur in a theoretically convenient chronology, so following that chronology would make explication of theory confusing and awkward.

G. The Organization of My Dissertation.

A PhD dissertation is expected to have a fairly standard and rather linear organization, selecting and presenting information in an orderly fashion to build an argument. There should be a beginning that provides a clear and succinct introduction and describes the methods, a middle which presents the information that, chapter by chapter, develops the argument, and an ending that brings everything to a reasonably tidy, though thoughtfully open, conclusion. In contrast, the experiences of day-to-day life are not particularly linear. Unfortunately for me, this is a PhD dissertation about the experiences of day-to-day life.

The way in which I have organized my dissertation's chapters may create the sense of an ascending analysis, which begins with what might be considered basic elements (language and thought) and then builds 'up' from that foundation through various topics, to conclude with the overarching concept of the metanarrative. I caution the reader that I do not wish to suggest that some of these chapter topics are more fundamental than others. Rather, they are interconnected and interdependent. In truth, the order of my analytical chapters (Chapters 3 to 8) is somewhat arbitrary. I try to provide a connection from one to the next, but I ask that the reader remember that I am struggling to describe an aspect of life, not a perspective on a line.

By its nature this dissertation looks for organization and pattern across topics as much as within them, and as such it is wide-ranging. Chapter 2 lays out the theoretical background I use to frame the dissertation. It begins with a summary of Foucault's work on power, then provides an overview of narrative theory, and concludes by looking at possible complementarities between the two. Chapter 3 is intended to reveal some of the ways in which

relentless promotion and advertising create a discourse that makes consumerism seem natural to human thought, morality, language and identity. This includes a brief history of the rise of advertising and promotion, a content analysis of the daily print advertisements that were delivered to our house during the fieldwork, and many examples of the place of advertising and promotion in my fieldwork.

Chapter 4 is centred on Foucault's concept of normalization as an important element of disciplinary power. It is in this chapter that the value of my methodology begins to become evident, for it is only when I begin to resist being 'normal' by living as a green that I start to perceive the wide range of often intense pressures of normalization. I begin with a selection of notes from my daily journal illustrating the ease with which I lived as a brown consumer in Edmonton, and the challenges I faced when my family and I lived outside the norm, as green consumers. I use several Foucauldian concepts of power in this chapter, including surveillance, the examination, the confession, and correct training, and several times I supplement the insights from Foucault's ideas with material from narrative theory. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of norms, narratives, and the subjugation of knowledge.

Chapter 5, "The Body, Space, and Time", increases my integration of Foucauldian concepts with narrative theory. I begin with examples of the effects on the human body of operants of power that are intended to increase consuming, including the use of physiological interventions to stimulate appetite or invite rest, and the use of the body as a sign to carry fashion. Then I examine some ways in which I found that space was organized to induce consuming, in my house, in retail spaces, and in the design of the city. I then look at the organization of time in consuming, using the concepts of *chronos* or clocktime; cyclical time; and *kairos*, or narrative time. When

examining modern societies the social sciences generally regard time from the perspective of the clock; the social implementation of clocktime is seen as a vital factor in the rise of industrialism, capitalism, and eventually the consumer society. I do not deny this, but my fieldwork suggests that clocktime alone is not the preeminent form of time for organizing consuming. I argue that two other forms of time are also crucial to consumerism. One of these is cyclical time, which is more typically associated with traditional agrarian societies which organize their calendar around the seasons and the rhythms of nature. In my fieldwork I found that cyclical time was very important in consumerism. There is a widely followed though unofficial 'consumer calendar', with such annual celebrations as Christmas, seasonal fashion sales, birthdays, and back-to-school sales. In addition, I found that *kairos*, the time that is created through narratives, is also crucial. While clocktime drains meaning from time, making every moment uniform, narrative time creates meaning for time: in clocktime December 25 is the same as every other day, in narrative time it is the climax of the Christmas narrative. Narrative time is reified in the consumer society, and used as a temporal framework for organizing other operants of power. Time in the consumer society is most intensely experienced when clocktime and narrative time are integrated, as they are in the celebration of Christmas and other observances on the consumer calendar. Finally, in this chapter I argue that the compression of space-time which has occurred in modern society is not universal, and that for the green consumer who does not use an automobile there has actually been an expansion of space-time. Together, the factors I describe in this chapter affect the human body and its experience of space and time, and contribute to the formation of the consumer self-identity.

In Chapter 6, I concentrate on material from my fieldwork that goes beyond the typical range of Foucauldian analysis. As a result, I shift emphasis from a

primarily Foucauldian perspective supplemented by narrative theory, to a perspective informed primarily by narrative theory. I begin the chapter with Frye's (1976) description of 'charms', which I apply directly to certain types of advertising and promotion. Charms, which I analyze as operants of power, tend to have important links to rituals. As J. Campbell (1973) and Frye (1976) recognize, social rituals are enactments of social narratives, and in this chapter I dwell on consumer rituals in the consumer society as the enactment of consumer narratives. Beginning with Valentine's Day, which began to develop as the first ritual of consumerism in the late 1700s, I look at how narratives have been used to provide frameworks of coherence for power, creating a singular directionality from an array of operants of power. The consumer Valentine's Day was followed some decades later by the consumer Christmas, which quickly became the preeminent ritual of consumerism, a result, I suggest, of its unprecedented narrative assets. I present an extensive sampling from my journal of the experience of Christmas in a consumer society. I also present a history of the modern consumer Christmas, and take a close look at some of its important narrative aspects. Finally, I draw on my fieldwork to present examples of other important consumer rituals, including Mother's Day and birthday parties.

In Chapter 7, I argue the case (in contradiction of Lyotard (1984)) that there are important metanarratives at work in modern consumer culture. I begin by returning to the historical origins of consumerism, looking at the work of Weber (1958/1976), Tawney (1926/1984), and C. Campbell (1983, 1987) on the early rise of industrial capitalism and consumerism. I suggest that it is easier in some regards to see the ways in which metanarratives organized operants of power in historical situations than in contemporary ones. I then describe the operation of metanarratives in my fieldwork. This includes a metanarrative of consuming in which happy times and happy endings are,

quite literally, guaranteed, and which I phrase as ‘striving for fulfilment and happiness through endless consuming’. This metanarrative appears to be essentially comedic, but contains structures that also give it undeniably tragic elements. I propose that it provides a framework and a direction to the countless mechanisms of power that discipline the modern consumer and create consumerism. I also identified a metanarrative for environmentally-minded consumers, which is primarily romantic and which I phrase as ‘Saving the world from the excesses of materialism, to restore it to its lost purity’. This is the dominant but not the only metanarrative in effect in the consumer society. Serious green consumers are in a romantic struggle to regain a more pure and honourable past, but as yet they lack the mechanisms of power to seriously challenge consumerism. There are also elements of irony, and even tragedy, to consuming.

In my final chapter I review my line of argument and briefly discuss my findings in the context of Foucault’s brief discussion of governmentality, resistance, and critique. I propose some areas for further study, and end with a consideration of what this research meant for me as a consumer, and as a PhD student.

H. Constraints and Limitations.

The constraints and limitations of this study are of at least two kinds: perspective and method. A researcher can never escape his or her perspective, for it enters the research from the raising of the first questions of inquiry, through data collection, analysis, and writing (Martin, 1993; Mishler, 1986; Pym, 1993). Precautions can be taken, as I have done by triangulating my diary with interviews and document analysis, and by constantly struggling to stay actively conscious of my own involvement in all aspects of

the research, remaining open to various views. However, there are aspects of perspective I cannot escape, fully compensate for, or even fully appreciate, and so the best I can do is acknowledge some of them.

First, consuming in general, and shopping in particular, is highly gendered. From the surge of interest in novels of the 18th century, to the emphasis on women by department stores in the 19th century, to the 'commodity feminism' of the late 20th century, modern consuming has been largely geared toward and conducted by females (Campbell, 1987; Corrigan, 1997; Nava, 1997). This is very evident in research on shopping, which suggests that, more than any other variable, the "...critical fact about shopping is the extent to which it is gendered" (Hewer and Campbell, 1997, p.190).

Historically the predominance of women in shopping has been so strong, and has been so taken for granted, that "...it has only been in comparatively recent years that men as well as women have been included in samples of shoppers chosen for study" (Hewer and Campbell, p.190). Research suggests that men have quite different styles of shopping than women. Men tend to be less involved in and more apathetic about most purchases, except for major purchases such as automobiles and major appliances, and are much less likely than women to regard shopping as a leisure activity. There is some evidence of recent decline in these differences, a trend which may be stronger in North America than elsewhere. (Campbell, 1997; Engel et al., 1993; Hewer and Campbell, 1997).

Given the gender effects in shopping, it is not surprising that other aspects of consuming are also highly gendered. Advertising, for example, has frequently been analyzed for its gender biases; consumer behaviourists take careful account of gender in their research; and the roles of the department store and the mall in creating safe urban spaces for women to spend time, socialize, and

recreate, has been studied. (For examples, see Corrigan, 1997; Engel et al., 1993; Nava, 1997.)

The consensus of research strongly suggests that, as a male, my experiences with consuming are quite different than if I were a female. This does not negate the value of my experiences, but it does suggest that my approach to the activity of shopping and to many of the products we consumed were probably atypical. In some ways this may have reduced my sensitivity to operants of power that were specifically directed at women consumers, and in other ways perhaps allowed me to consider them in different ways. Certainly, my research should be read with my gender in mind, and with the gender of the reader in mind as well.

A second consideration in this study is location. As I have explained, Edmonton has some unusual traits, including its geographic isolation and northern climate, its high level of retail space, and its high disposable incomes and levels of education. While it may be reasonably similar to some other mid-sized Canadian cities, comparisons to similar-sized American, British, or European cities would be risky. A further aspect of location is the place of our home within Edmonton. We lived in a well-established middle-class neighbourhood centrally located in the city, near a major university, and within fairly easy cycling distance of many stores, services, and other amenities. My research conclusions would have been different if we had lived in other parts of the city, especially in suburban areas, where the demand for an automobile is larger because of urban design.

Other considerations are our family income and education. Our family income declined sharply when I commenced my PhD studies, for we went from two incomes to one, my wife's. While this was adequate for our day-to-day needs

it meant we were quite conscious of our levels of spending, and that we constantly felt financial constraints on our levels of consuming. Each month, we spent our entire income, though we were living a fairly modest life by the standards of most people around us. The impact of this on my fieldwork may have been to make it easier to constrain our consuming, and simultaneously make us more aware of the pressures to consume, because we had to consider our choices with care. Our family education level is high: my wife completed her PhD while I was working on mine. This may lead us to think more critically about issues related to consuming (though there are no guarantees!); it almost certainly means that we are targeted for marketing promotions intended for people who have higher educations, and therefore likely have higher incomes.

In addition to these kinds of limitations are those of my research method. Most notably, this is not a statistically valid study, nor is it intended to be. The advantages that may come from statistical studies such as surveys were not priorities for me. Having conducted and supervised a number of statistical studies, I was quite prepared to trade off the advantages they offer for greater depth, nuance, and subtlety. My curiosity about the operation of power in day-to-day life required an approach that emphasized explanatory value, theory development, and contextual sensitivity, over standardization and generalizability.

2. My Theoretical Framework: Foucauldian Power and Narrative.

Foucault's emphasis on the taken-for-granted and seemingly unimportant processes of social life in his analyses of power, lends his work to my interest in the operation of power in day-to-day consuming. So I begin this chapter with an overview of Foucault's analysis of power. This provides the basis for my applications of his ideas to consumerism, which I make in subsequent chapters. In the second half of this chapter I shift to an overview of narrative theory. As I have said, I started this research suspecting that theories of narrative and of Foucauldian power may be complementary. The background I present on narrative theory in this chapter sets up my later analyses using narrative, and in the final pages of this chapter I commence my process of interweaving narrative and Foucault.

A. Foucauldian Power.

A.1 Sovereign and Disciplinary Power. Foucault never strictly defines power, though he describes and analyses it at length¹. He is not interested in developing an overall theory of power. Instead he pursues means of understanding and studying power, an 'analytics of power' (Foucault, 1990a, p.82), with the result that his work is readily adaptable to practical applications. For Foucault, power is not a 'thing', a literal or metaphysical commodity that can be used by one person or given to another. It is neither an ability which some have, nor an institution or an organization. There

¹ When presenting an interpretation of Foucault it is standard practice to note that Foucault's work is often inconsistent: Foucault's "...refusal to retain one position for longer than the period between his last book and the next is certainly problematic" (Burrell, 1988, p.222). Nonetheless, there are consistencies in Foucault, especially when focussing on particular periods of his work. I concentrate on his works from the early 1970s to the early 1980s; the major sources for the interpretation I present here are Discipline and Punish (Foucault, 1979), The History of Sexuality Volume 1 (Foucault, 1990a), and the interviews, essays, and lectures in Power/Knowledge (Foucault, 1980).

would be little point in quantifying it. As much as anything, power is a methodological tool that “...merely covers a whole series of particular mechanisms, definable and defined, which seems likely to induce behaviours or discourses”, in the process opening up a useful ‘analytical front’ (Foucault, 1997, p.51).

Foucault argues that the nature of power has changed fundamentally in the past three centuries, a change he identifies as the shift from ‘sovereign power’ to ‘disciplinary power’ (Foucault, 1979, 1990a), and a change, I might add, that coincides with the rise of industrialization and consumerism. Foucault traces the roots of sovereign power to antiquity, citing for example the Roman *patria potestas*, the right (in theory more than practice) of the father of the Roman family to “dispose” of the lives of his children and slaves, taking away if necessary the life he had given them (Foucault, 1990a, p.135). In the period of the great European monarchs a sovereign could not unconditionally take the lives of his or her subjects: this action could only be justified during periods of war, direct threat to the sovereign, or transgression of law. As the codification of the rights and limits of sovereigns developed, so did that of their subjects. Law, authority, rights, crimes, social codes, the organization of power, all emanated from a centre occupied by the sovereign.

It was a system that required the physical existence of the sovereign--‘The King is dead, long live the King!’-- and frequent reminders of this to his subjects. Hence, argues Foucault, the great emphasis on the spectacle of monarchy: the massive ceremonies, the pageantry, the entourages and the symbols of power. Unable to constantly occupy the lives of his subjects, the monarch instead relied on periodic but dramatic displays of potency.

Sovereign power is predominantly negative power. It originated with the

ability to take away life or refrain from taking away life. Death, a constant and present menace, was the ultimate expression of sovereign power. “The right which was formulated as “the power of life and death” was in reality the right to *take* life or *let* live. Its symbol, after all, was the sword” (Foucault, p.136, 1990a, italics in original). This form of power became ever more elaborate,

...a subtraction mechanism, a right to appropriate a portion of the wealth, a tax of products, goods and services, labour and blood, levied on the subjects. Power in this instance was essentially a right of seizure: of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself; it culminated in the privilege to seize hold of life in order to suppress it. (Foucault, p.136, 1990a).

Sovereign power began to decline, says Foucault (1979), with the gradual economic development of the 17th and 18th centuries, particularly in agriculture.² Slowly but steadily the threat of mortality, especially famine and epidemic, receded, and economic production increased. The wider accumulation of wealth and the development of capitalism raised new issues of security, control, and rights. Simultaneously, knowledge in various areas grew, and the interest in and possibility of cultivating life --agricultural and human-- expanded. Foucault’s (1979) analyses focus mostly on France, while Weber’s (1958/1976), Tawney’s (1926/1984), and Campbell’s (1983, 1987) focus mostly on England, New England, Holland, Switzerland, and Germany. There are important differences in the timing of these modernizing changes,

² In his major works that concentrate on power and knowledge, Discipline and Punish (1979) and History of Sexuality Vol. 1 (1990a), Foucault implies an economic and material basis to the changes that facilitated the shift from sovereign to disciplinary power. In comparison, his earlier works The Archeology of Knowledge (1972) and The Order of Things (1970/1994), though addressing a similar time period, are focussed primarily on changes that occur in language and discourse. There is not necessarily a conflict between these two perspectives, but it is far beyond my scope here to attempt an integration of them, a task that Foucault’s writing style and evolving ideas might make impossible in any case. Reading The Order of Things, Weber’s The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, and Tawney’s Religion and the Rise of Capitalism together, shows differing aspects of the development of a detached, rationalistic, precise, measuring, inquisitive worldview. The position I take is that these various views, along with others such as Campbell (1983,1987), enrich our understanding more than confuse it.

with England generally leading the way in the 18th century in industrialization and consumerism. Nonetheless, the changes in power that Foucault notes generally fit with the broader changes in industrialization, capitalism, and consumerism described by Campbell, Weber, and Tawney.

During the period of these changes, it began to appear that it was life more than death that was without limits³. “Western man was gradually learning what it meant to be a living species in a living world, to have a body, conditions of existence, probabilities of life, an individual and collective welfare...” (Foucault, 1990a, p.142). The human being, especially the human body and actions, became a subject of detailed study, a subject of its own examination.

For the first time in history, no doubt, biological existence was reflected in political existence; the fact of living was no longer an inaccessible substrate that only emerged from time to time, amid the randomness of death and its fatality; part of it passed into knowledge’s field of control and power’s sphere of intervention. Power would no longer be dealing simply with legal subjects over whom the ultimate dominion was death, but with living beings...it was the taking charge of life, more than the threat of death... (Foucault, 1990a, p. 143).

Death as a centre of social gravity weakened and became aligned with the life-administering powers, becoming one focus among many. A metaphorical space in society had opened and filled with life, and this required a form of power altogether new, one that needed to organize, control, monitor, and develop human beings. “The old power of death that symbolized sovereign power was now carefully supplanted by the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life” (Foucault, 1990a, p.139). This was the beginning of ‘disciplinary power’.

³ I paraphrase Marquez, 1988, p. 348: “...he was overwhelmed by the belated suspicion that it is life, more than death, that has no limits”.

Disciplinary power is a symptom or effect, or a set of symptoms or effects, that results from the nature of the knowledge, relations, and practices with which we live. It is not interior to one thing and exterior to another; rather it is immanent in all relations. Power is inherent in the practices that we use and are subjected to every day, practices that have become such familiar parts of our social landscapes that we no longer perceive them (Foucault, 1988b). As day-to-day lives and practices constantly change, so power constantly changes. These practices are often highly refined 'technologies of power' that have become taken for granted. They invariably impose a direction, often unperceived, on persons. But while these practices impose direction they may no longer be connected to an original intent. It is quite possible, then, for power to have direction but no specific objective. In Foucault's (1990a) terms, power is 'intentional but non-subjective'. There is no 'headquarters of power' which can be traced through careful detection; power has no centre (p.94-95).

A.2 The Operation of Power. Disciplinary power operates not primarily through violence, but through training and the organization of the social and physical environment, through a vast uncoordinated array of manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, and functions diffused through social life. This is both negative and positive: power not only limits and constrains, it enables and produces. (Foucault, 1979, 1980, 1990a.) Foucault (1979, 1990a) argues there are two streams of disciplinary power, one concentrated on the individual, the other on the human species. The first emphasises the performance of the body, its disciplines, its optimal capacities, its usefulness, and the efficient and effective integrating of all these into a broader system of control, productivity and behaviours. The second aspect of disciplinary power is represented in regulatory controls. The emphasis of this aspect is on the species rather than the individual, on reproduction and demographics,

health, life, mortality, and all the conditions on which these depend. “The disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population constituted the two poles around which the organization of power over life was deployed” (1990a, p.139). Through these the power of the sovereign was not so much usurped as simply rendered small.

If for Foucault power focusses on the body and the population, it operates through knowledge. He coined the term ‘power/knowledge’ to indicate the inseparable link between power and knowledge, explaining it this way:

...basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth...In the last analysis, we must produce truth as we produce wealth, indeed we must produce truth in order to produce wealth in the first place. In another way, we are also subjected to truth in the sense in which it is truth that makes the laws, that produces the true discourse which, at least partially, decides, transmits and itself extends upon the effects of power. In the end, we are judged, condemned, classified, determined in our undertakings, destined to a certain mode of living or dying, as a function of the true discourses which are the bearers of the specific effects of power. (1980, p.93-94).

In The Archaeology of Knowledge (1972), which preceded and anticipated his explorations of power, Foucault described the linkages among knowledge, discourse, science and ideology, and pointed out how areas of knowledge (eg. psychiatry, natural history) are brought about by sets of relations among concepts, institutions, jurisprudence, literature, philosophy, political decisions, morality, and so on. There is a complex process in which knowledge, including science, is a product of social functioning and social functioning is a product of knowledge. From this position it is a clear step to linking power

and knowledge, for how we know something is inseparable from how we do something. “Power produces reality” (Foucault, 1979, p.194).

In practical terms what does all of this mean? In schools, clinics, armies, the church, the workplace, prisons, and homes --throughout society-- new methods of controlling, organizing, thinking, knowing, and disciplining have developed since the 18th century. Foucault identifies several of these ‘technologies of power’, tracing their development from sometimes mediaeval practices in narrowly specific settings, to widespread usage across social organizations. These technologies of power have continued to develop and spread, and I encountered them repeatedly in my fieldwork, functioning to sustain consumerism. In Discipline and Punish, Foucault presents a detailed consideration of them, intended as a set of examples rather than a complete list.

He begins with a discussion of ‘the docile body’. The term ‘docile’ means both ‘teachable’ and ‘easily managed or dealt with’, and Foucault uses it to describe the attitude toward the body that prevails under disciplinary power. He describes several means through which this docility is achieved, reflecting a kind of *dressage* for the human being that joins a careful analysis of the body and its situation with an intent to increase both its utility and its obedience. Disciplinary methods of this kind were in use for centuries in monasteries, armies and workshops, but what marks the rise of disciplinary power is the gradual development and spread of these techniques throughout society, reaching prisons, secondary and then primary schools, hospitals, factories and beyond: “...the disciplines became general formulas of domination” (1979, p.137).

Essential to the development of disciplinary power is a careful attention to

detail, a legacy, says Foucault, of Christianity (the attention to detail is also reflected in the analyses of Weber (1958/1976) and Tawney (1926/1984)). The Christian heritage, which taught that “...in the sight of God, no immensity is greater than a detail” (Foucault, 1979, p.140), was transposed onto the lay world: “The meticulousness of the regulations, the fussiness of the inspections, the supervision of the smallest fragment of life and of the body will soon provide, in the context of the school, the barracks, the hospital or the workshop, a laicized content, an economic or technical rationality for this mystical calculus of the infinitesimal and the infinite” (p.140). Gradually, there developed bodies of detailed knowledge, data, plans and practices, and as these disseminated they transformed society and established a regime of disciplinary power. The next several sections of this chapter describe various aspects of disciplinary power, to lay the basis for my subsequent analysis.

A.3. Distribution in Space. For Foucault, the first control of space comes from *enclosure*, in which an area is walled off from other spaces to control what occurs both within and outside. In the 18th century there arose many examples of enclosures of specific spaces to exercise control: barracks; secondary schools; confinements for vagabonds and paupers; and workshops and factories complete with workers’ accommodation. The second control of space is *partitioning*, in which each element or individual is assigned a space. The aim of partitioning “...was to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits” (Foucault, 1979, p.143). The third control of space was to assign *functional sites*, designating locations where particular functions would be performed, effectively articulating humans with a blueprint of productivity. The workspaces and workforces of factories, for example, became organized to

maximize both control and efficient production. A fourth principle for controlling people in space was to distribute them according to *rank*. Individuals were categorized according to age, ability, performance or behaviour and assigned space on these bases. The essential consideration was not one's relation to the physical space but one's hierarchical relation to others, to what might be called the social space. In schools, for example, students were assigned space by grade, and within the grade by behaviour and achievement.

The combined effect of these was to create a space that integrated control, function, and hierarchy. Individuals have specific spaces but also deliberate linkages to others; obedience is increased while at the same time there is a greater economy of time, action and resources. These spaces are both real and ideal, "...real because they govern the disposition of buildings, rooms, furniture, but also ideal, because they are projected over this arrangement of characterizations, assessments, hierarchies" (Foucault, 1979, p.148).

A.4. Control of Activity. With the rise of disciplinary power, the *timetable*, which had long been in use in monasteries, provided a means of organizing activities. By establishing rhythms, specifying activities and regulating repetition, people --alone or in groups-- obeyed orderly patterns (eg. 'rise, wash, pray, eat, begin work'). Activities themselves became ever more *precisely elaborated in time*, with each gesture and movement analysed and circumscribed. The marching of soldiers, for example, evolved from a careful walk beginning with the right foot, to a multiplicity of precise movements specified to the inch and timed to the split second. This programming of activity and body represents a transition in which "We have passed from a form of injunction that measured or punctuated gestures to a web that constrains them or sustains them throughout their entire succession"

(Foucault, 1979, p.152). Through this process the *correlation of the body and the gesture* is optimized for efficiency and speed: “...nothing must remain idle or useless: everything must be called upon to form the support of the act required” (Foucault, 1979, p.152). As well, there is a careful *body-object articulation*, in which every detail of activity involving a physical object is coded and analysed. Exacting positions are required for each moment and gesture in handling a weapon, tool, or machine. A kind of ergonomics of power develops in which the human and the machine are synthesized. Finally, there is the idea of *exhaustive use*, by which Foucault means the notion that every moment and every force must be used to its utmost, maximizing speed and efficiency.

A.5. Organization of Progressions. The parallel ideas of the development of societies and the progressions (“geneses”) of individuals are two of the great discoveries of the eighteenth century, states Foucault (1979, p.156). Central to them are the notions of advancing or growing through a series of graduated levels toward a terminal state. Concurrent with this is a refinement of the organization of time, in which time is increasingly segmented, the segments correlated with a plan, filled with exercises, and often fulfilled with an examination or some other confirmation of achievement. This is most evident in the military and schooling, in which soldiers or students progress from one level to the next after a period of training and exercise, and a demonstration of competence. This makes possible “...a whole investment of duration by power: the possibility of a detailed control and a regular intervention (of differentiation, correction, punishment, elimination) in each moment of time...” (Foucault, 1979, p.160). As a result, subjection and intervention are no longer occasional; the practices of power become more totalizing.

As well, individual and social life develop a new coherence in which a linear time of integrated moments and exercises that build one upon the next, lead not toward spiritual salvation but to a terminal point that "...does not culminate in a beyond, but tends towards a subjection that has never reached its limit" (Foucault, 1979, p.162). There is an interesting consistency here with the analyses of Weber (1958/1976), Tawney (1926/1984), and Campbell (1983; 1987). They argue that with the rise of certain of the Protestant churches in the 16th and 17th centuries, there is a marked increase in the priority given to daily life on Earth, as opposed to eternal life in the hereafter. Worldly life acquires a new purpose, and the orderly pursuit of this is, initially at least, an act of religious duty. However, says Campbell, as religious fervour declines and views of self and society change, daily life becomes not a celebration of piety but an unlimited celebration of selfhood that evolves into modern consumerism. I will return to these themes later in my dissertation.

A.6. Composition of forces. From the 17th to 19th centuries, groups or forces of individuals, whether in the military or the workforce, are gradually reconceived so that singular masses are subdivided into elements, and these elements are organized in relation to other elements (Foucault, 1979). The mass army of pikes and muskets used as a projectile or wall, for example, is slowly replaced with the army of smaller units moving and functioning in relation to one another to obtain a specific result. This is the result of technological innovations such as the rifle, and of a desire to improve the efficient use of each member of the unit (eg. soldier, worker). In the process specific traits of individuals, such as skill and bravery, become less important. Instead, "The body is constituted as a part of a multi-segmentary machine" (Foucault, 1979, p.164). The coordination of elements with one another requires a kind of mechanistic organization, which in turn requires a more demanding control of time and a precise system of command and discipline.

These changes are the basis of much social organization today. Their result is a continuous, detailed, finely coordinated control of space, time, purpose, and social organization, and the creation of an individuality that suits these.

The success of disciplinary power in creating the docile body is a result of particular means of 'correct training', among which Foucault identifies surveillance, normalizing judgments, the examination, and the confession. In contrast to the majestic power of the sovereign these are humble, but as they diffuse throughout society their effect is profound. Their chief function is to produce individuals who are trained to be both objects and instruments of disciplinary power. "Instead of bending all its subjects into a single uniform mass, [disciplinary power] separates, analyses, differentiates, carries its procedures of decomposition to the point of necessary and sufficient single units" (Foucault, 1979, p.170).

A.7. Normalizing Judgment and Surveillance. Sovereign power relies on the law to judge, and the law is essentially a binary system in which one is either guilty or not guilty. Disciplinary power, in contrast, relies on norms, and in a system of norms measurement is in degrees; one is always at a certain closeness to or distance from the norm. As a result individuals are studied closely and constantly, not to determine whether they are 'in' or 'out', but to find how far they are from the norm and in what ways. The effect of this is to bring people closer to the norm: normative judgment "...has the function of reducing gaps. It must therefore be essentially *corrective*" (Foucault, 1979, p.179, italics in original). The result, paradoxically, is that there is both greater individualization through the careful judging of each person, and greater homogeneity by bringing persons closer toward a standard. Normative discipline uses both punishment and gratification, and in either case it requires a well-developed system of surveillance.

The purposes of surveillance are to provide a disciplinary gaze and to observe and record: “The exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation...” (Foucault, 1979, p.170). Surveillance under disciplinary power reverses the lines of visibility of sovereign power. In the latter it is essential that power be displayed, but under the former, power is partly concealed and it is the individual who is made visible. The palace, the cathedral, the monumental bank building, the pomp and circumstance are replaced by the anonymous office building housing the inspector, the marketing manager, or the clerk, who are making observations, following procedures, and compiling documents and files. This surveillance is hierarchical, with one level of observers reporting to the next, and as it becomes more widespread its structure becomes more clearly pyramidal. The top of the pyramid is cemented in this process along with the bottom: “...although surveillance rests on individuals, its functioning is that of a network of relations from top to bottom, but also to a certain extent from bottom to top and laterally; this network ‘holds’ the whole together and traverses it in its entirety with effects of power that derive from one another: supervisors, perpetually supervised” (Foucault, 1979, p.176).

A.8. The Examination. Foucault’s use of the word ‘examination’ is broad, covering both the examination of, say, a patient by a doctor to assess the patient’s condition, and the examination of a pupil by a teacher to assess knowledge. “The examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgment. It is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish” (Foucault, 1979, p.184). The examination makes it possible to both measure and judge. As a complement to surveillance, the examination increases the visibility of the individual by holding him in a ‘mechanism of objectification’

that requires him to be seen; the individual is no longer the audience to which the sovereign displays power, but the performer placed on stage. The examination gives rise to procedures of registration, averaging, and categorizing, and because examinations are ultimately individual they lead to the creation of the individual as a 'case', "...a case which at one and the same time constitutes an object for a branch of knowledge and a hold for a branch of power" (p.191).

Our comprehension of individuality, if Foucault's (1979) argument is accepted, is fundamentally shaped by the examination:

The examination as the fixing, at once ritual and 'scientific', of individual differences, as the pinning down of each individual in his own particularity...clearly indicates the appearance of a new modality of power in which each individual receives as his status his own individuality, and in which he is linked by his status to the features, the measurements, the gaps, the 'marks' that characterize him and make him a 'case'. (p.192.)

Once again, there are parallels here with the analyses of Weber (1958/1976), Tawney (1926/84), and Campbell (1983, 1987). The intensified interest in the individual that arose in the 16th and 17th centuries increased the examination of the individual. Under the philosophy of the Calvinists and related Protestant churches, the individual was in a direct and continuous relation with an all-knowing God, so that every aspect of an individual's life --from the use of language to the shape of the toes on shoes-- was a legitimate object for continuous examination. The church, sometimes backed up by the state, conducted such examinations. Each person, as Foucault might say, received a status as an individual that brought with it particular measurements and marks. It was then a manageable step from the carefully examined individuality of the pious Christian, to the carefully examined individuality of the consumer.

A.9. The Confession. Foucault (1979, 1990a, 1997) discusses the confession at length. Originating in Greek and Roman practices as a means of self-examination and self-improvement, and becoming in Christian practice a means of revealing sin and inaugurating penitence, the confession becomes centrally important to church inquisitions and criminal punishment. It is seen as vital that wrong-doers not simply be punished by authorities; most importantly they are to judge and condemn themselves. “The confession had priority over any other kind of evidence...it was also the act by which the accused accepted the charge and recognized its truth...Through the confession, the accused himself took part in the ritual of producing penal truth” (1979, p.38). The confession becomes a practice for producing truth.

At the core of confessional practices, then, is the process of the self subjecting the self. By speaking at length about the self in the presence (actual or virtual) of an attentive listener, one is effectively defining and subjecting oneself: “...the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement...And this discourse of truth finally takes effect, not in the one who receives it, but in the one from whom it is wrested” (Foucault, 1990a, p.61). The confession, as with so many practices of disciplinary power, gradually spread to other settings. Whether in the psychoanalyst’s office, the justice system, family affairs or love relations, confessing one’s intimate and often most troubling thoughts becomes a highly valued technique for producing truth and defining selves.

The cumulative effect of these various practices of power is a profound change in society and in the nature of power. In a summary description of disciplinary power Foucault (1979) writes the following, and though he relates it to prisons it has general application:

...throughout the social body, procedures were being elaborated for distributing individuals, fixing them in space, classifying them,

extracting from them the maximum-in time and forces, training their bodies, coding their continuous behaviour, maintaining them in perfect visibility, forming around them an apparatus of observation, registration and recording, constituting on them a body of knowledge that is accumulated and centralized. (p.231.)

Disciplinary power is so encompassing that its concepts and practices even inform the resistance to it. Resistance takes the form of the very thing it is resisting; the same life-administering notions that define disciplinary power are used in efforts to contain it, especially through the concept of rights:

...life as a political object was in a sense taken at face value and turned back against the system that was bent on controlling it. It was life more than the law that became the issue of political struggles...The 'right' to life, to one's body, to health, to happiness, to the satisfaction of needs, and beyond all...the 'right' to rediscover what one is and all that one can be... (Foucault, 1990a, p.145).

The impact of disciplinary power, and the struggles of resistance to it, had the effect of generating a new purpose for life, focussed on the here-and-now rather than the hereafter. The ancient dreams of a return to a golden age or a cycle of time declined. "One no longer aspired toward the coming of the emperor of the poor, or the kingdom of the latter days, or even the restoration of our imagined ancestral rights; what was demanded and what served as an objective was life, understood as the basic needs, man's concrete essence, the realization of his potential, a plenitude of the possible" (Foucault, 1990a, p.145). Implicit in the new 'objective for life' centred on 'basic needs', 'concrete essence', 'the realization of potential', and 'the plenitude of the possible' which Foucault says are inherent in disciplinary power (and which Weber (1958/76) might say is inherent in the modern worker, and Campbell (1983, 1987) in the modern consumer) are two other things: a metanarrative to give coherence to power in day-to-day life, and an ideal situation for the rise of consumerism.

B. Narrative Theory: An Overview.

B.1 Introduction. As useful as Foucault's analyses of power are, I was not convinced that they were sufficient for addressing the operation of power in day-to-day consuming. In the early stages of my research, well before the fieldwork began, I saw that notions like surveillance and examination could apply to consuming, but there seemed to be much more going on than a straight application of Foucault's mechanisms of power would address. At the same time, Foucault's emphasis on the connection between power and knowledge lead me to read about different ways of knowing. This led me to narrative theory, and ideas like 'narrative knowledge'. If power was closely connected to ways of knowing, and if narratives were closely connected to ways of knowing, then perhaps power was closely connected to narratives. Reinforcing my interest was the obvious narrative content of a great deal of advertising and promotion, a mainstay of consumerism and a 'powerful' element of the consumer society.

Narrative theory argues that humans of necessity give a narrative or story-like structure to their experiences and understandings of the world, including important components of their cognition, their actions, their personal and social identities, their sense of time and space, and their individual and collective histories and futures. In this section of the dissertation I describe various views of narrative theory, exploring the nature of narratives and how they work, and particularly addressing the crucial elements of coherence and direction. I will then examine epistemological issues raised by narrative and what Bruner (1985, 1986, 1991) and Lyotard (1984) both refer to as 'narrative knowing'. Finally I will introduce some issues concerning the relation of social narratives and individual identities, issues which will be more fully developed in later sections of the dissertation.

B.2 What is Narrative? Evidence of the importance of narrative permeates everyday life. Newspapers communicate the events of the world through stories; morality is taught through morality tales and fables; religions reach their followers with stories; and conversation is filled with stories.

The narratives of the world are numberless... as though any material were fit to receive man's stories. Able to be carried by articulated language, spoken or written, fixed or moving images, gestures, and the ordered mixture of all these substances; narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting (think of Carpaccio's Saint Ursula), stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news items, conversation. (Barthes, 1977, p.79.)

The universal occurrence of stories in societies suggests that they are fundamental to human beings. Fuller says that "The need to make our life coherent, to make a story of it, is probably so basic that we are unaware of its importance" (cited in Mancuso, 1986, p.224). People appear to give narrative structure to their experiences naturally. Sarbin (1986) puts this clearly when he proposes that

...human beings think, perceive, imagine, and make moral choices according to narrative structures. Present two or three pictures, or descriptive phrases, to a person and he or she will connect them to form a story, an account that relates the pictures or the meanings of the phrases in some patterned way. On reflection, we discover that the pictures or meanings are held together by the implicit or explicit use of plot...The plot will influence the flow of action of the constructed narrative figures. (p.8.)

One of the strengths of narrative is its capacity to connect the unique to the universal through endless flexibility, without losing its quality of being a narrative. Narratives take many forms and no single definition will cover them all (Robinson and Hawpe, 1986). There are prototypical features of a narrative, but all need not be present for something to be recognisable as a narrative. The many approaches of various scholars provide useful insights,

and there is no need to accept any one of them to the exclusion of others.

The historiographer Hayden White (1980), whose work on narratives in the writing of history was seminal in the recent development of narrative analysis, adopted a narrow view of narrative, keeping it closely identified with the traditional literary concept of 'story' and separating it from forms such as the lyrical poem, the chronicle, and the philosophical discourse. For White the essential attributes of a narrative are a central subject; a well-marked beginning, middle and end; a *peripeteia* (a turn of events; action); and an identifiable narrative voice. This narrow view has been vigorously stretched by others, particularly those from disciplines outside literature.

Robinson and Hawpe (1986), drawing on the work of Stein and Policastro, suggest as a prototypical narrative structure: "...a protagonist, a predicament, attempts to resolve the predicament, the outcomes of such attempts, and the reactions of the protagonists to the situation" (p.112). This prototype can be generalized even further, as Joseph Campbell does in identifying the 'monomyth', a kind of universal structure for all myths, which is "...the story of the hero who overcomes obstacles to reach some transcendent goal" (Gergen, 1988, p. 95).

The psychologist Jerome Bruner (1987) cites separate work by Burke (drama) and by Turner (anthropology) to suggest that a narrative requires "an Action, an Agent, a Goal, a Setting, an Instrument --and Trouble". 'Trouble' is what carries the narrative along, and occurs when "an initial canonical state is breached, redress is attempted which, if it fails, leads to crisis; crisis, if unresolved, leads eventually to a new legitimate order" (p. 19). Bruner, drawing on various sources, suggests that a narrative can be analysed according to its *fabula*, *sjuzet*, and *forma*. The *fabula* is timeless, "...the

mythic, the transcendent plight that a story is about: human jealousy, authority and obedience, thwarted ambition, and those other plights that lay claim to human universality” (p.17). The *sjuzet* is how the *fabula* is revealed through a sequence of actions and the “unwinding net of language”. The *forma* is much like the genre (p.17).

Bruner, however, does not let these analytic forms restrict what he will count as a narrative. After reviewing many of the considerations involved in trying to define the concept of ‘story’, he adopts a widely encompassing view of narrative: “...we would do well with as loose fitting a constraint as we can manage concerning what a story must “be” to be a story. And the one that strikes me as most serviceable is...narrative deals with the vicissitudes of intention” (1986, p.17).

Smith (1980) is skeptical of the whole idea of categorizing narratives and comparing them to distilled forms that are supposedly universal, such as a prototypical version of Cinderella. Too often, she argues, this involves a ‘naive Platonism’ of real and ideal types. It is misguided to speak of ‘universal versions’: a story is inseparable from the telling, and for every telling there is a purpose or intent, a specific teller trying to serve a particular audience or purpose. A story, Smith says, can be told in limitless ways (narratologists have identified many hundred versions of Cinderella, with huge variations), but until the story actually is told it remains largely indeterminate and unfixed. The alternative to thinking of a single ‘basic’ story form is to accept that for any particular narrative there are “...an unlimited number of other narratives that can be *constructed in response* to it or *perceived as related* to it” (p.221, italics in original).

Smith (1980), who defines a narrative as “...someone telling someone else that

something happened” (p.232), makes the point that narratives are products of social situations. Because every narrative is connected to a particular teller and a particular occasion, every narrative is created in accordance with certain purposes or interests. All versions of a narrative are constructed “...by someone in particular, on some occasion, for some purpose, and in accord with some relevant set of principles” (p.218). The nature of a narrative varies with the purpose or motives of the teller: narratives, argues Smith, are “...*functions of ...multiple interacting conditions* rather than...*representations of* specific, discrete objects, events, or ideas...” (p.226, italics in original). In other words, narratives are not just structures but also acts, and like all acts are functions of the conditions in which they are performed.

Narrative discourse is linked explicitly to other forms of discourse, and to social behaviour in general. Smith (1980) notes that almost any form of verbal communication is ‘laced’ with narrative elements, whether fragments, partial anecdotes, or entire stories, and narratives may also be expressed through gestures, pictures, and other non-verbal media. The result of this perspective is that it becomes questionable whether any logically rigorous “...distinction can be drawn between narrative discourse and any other form of verbal behaviour” (p. 232). Rather, narrative is viewed as part of a social transaction.

The broadly encompassing definitions of Smith (1980) and Bruner (1986) are clearly a long distance from narrower views such as White’s (1980). The more that work is done on narratives, the more it is accepted that the concept is far-reaching. Regardless of which framework is used, there is no question that narratives of many forms are found in every known culture from every known time. To tell a story, to give narrative form to experience, appears to be essentially human regardless of the circumstances. Narrative, says Barthes

(1977), "...is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative. All classes, all human groups, have their narratives..." (p.79).

For the purposes of this dissertation, I will use the following definition of narrative, adapted from Sarbin (1986, p.3): a symbolized account of actions that has a temporal dimension. It is made coherent by recognizable patterns of events called plots. Central to the plot structure are predicaments and attempted resolutions. When I speak of 'elements' or 'fragments' of narratives, I mean components of narratives such as characters, symbols, and discrete events that on their own are insufficient to comprise a narrative, but may represent or index a narrative.

B.3 Direction and Coherence in Narratives. What makes a narrative work? A grocery list is not a narrative, and while it may imply a narrative or even have narrative elements, it lacks the essential features that make a narrative work. While definitions of narrative such as Bruner's and Smith's are wide and suggest there is no clear definitional boundary around the concept, it is still the case that there are stronger and weaker narratives, and that this variation helps to reveal the vital components of narrative.

For a narrative to occur something has to happen, and this automatically requires that there be an actor or agent, an action, a setting in which it occurs, and the passage of time. But these components are barely adequate; beyond the barest level of development a narrative requires that the actor be attempting to move toward a particular end and that the actions reflect these efforts. A narrative requires some kind of valued endpoint (rescuing a damsel, solving a crime, fulfilling a life) and an arrangement of events that carries the

action toward or away from it. It is also widely accepted that some kind of causal connection among events is of particular significance (Robinson and Hawpe, 1986; Mishler, 1986; Gergen and Gergen, 1986). To put it differently, a narrative breaks down if events happen randomly. A successful narrative needs direction.

Gergen and Gergen (1986) note that there are only three fundamental directions for the action in a narrative: it may progress toward the valued endpoint, or regress away from it, or hold stable. The actions of all narratives --the plots of all stories-- are variations on these, and it is here that prototypical forms such as comedy (movement toward the valued endpoint from afar) , tragedy (movement away from the valued endpoint after beginning near it), and romance (alternating swings toward and away from the valued endpoint) have their place. The most influential analysis of comedy, tragedy, romance, and irony in recent decades is Frye's Anatomy of Criticism, first published in 1957. Frye refers to these forms of "generic plots" (1957/1990, p.162) as archetypes or *mythos*, and while Frye's primary context is literary criticism, his analysis has been extended beyond that field, both by himself and others (eg. Frye, 1976; Bruner, 1986). I describe and use some of his work in more detail later in the dissertation.

For a narrative to work well, then, there must be coherence among actions, and a sense of direction in relation to a desired goal. By creating a connection among events, in effect creating a plot, a narrative acquires meaning that a mere sequence of events does not possess. It is important to note that it is the relationships among the events and the goal, rather than the events in and of themselves, that provide the narrative with dramatic energy. Even exciting events (car crashes, fights, disasters) become tedious if they have no relation to other events and a goal.

B.4 Narrative Knowing. Narratives are not merely means of describing the world, they are ways of understanding and explaining it. For our lives and our perceptions to be coherent we are constantly making connections among the episodes, activities, thoughts and memories that constitute our existence. Things cannot just be random; they must make sense to us. Narratives are one of our primary ways of making sense.

Psychologists have studied the roles of narratives in thought in various ways. For example, subjects in an experiment were shown a short film in which a large triangle, a small triangle and a circle moved in various directions and at various speeds in an area around a rectangle (Sarbin, 1986, p.13, citing Heider & Simmel). Some subjects were asked to report simply what they saw, while others were asked to regard the shapes as human. The results for both sets of subjects were similar: the actions of the shapes were described not as the physical movements of geometric forms but as the actions of people following plots and subplots. There was considerable agreement among observers on the 'characters' of the shapes and on the forms of the plots and sub-plots, and some of the narratives developed were extensive and elaborate. In various research described by Mancuso (1986), it is well established that story is a significant aid to memory; that persons recalling stories in which salient parts have been omitted will automatically fill in the missing parts in ways that preserve the essential story; and that the speed and nature of text processing by readers varies consistently in accordance with changes in the features of the narrative structure (p.94-96).

Fuller (1982) suggests that the human brain is biologically predisposed to think in patterns that are essentially forms of stories (i.e. something happening to an object). She finds that when children, particularly mentally

handicapped ones, are taught language using stories rather than rote methods, they have much higher levels of learning and comprehension. There is, she suggests, a “...preprogramming of the human mind” (p.129) to think, comprehend, remember, and feel by using stories. Noting that basic story comprehension emerges very early in development (normally by age two), Fuller suggests that stories may be “...essential for the proper functioning of our nervous system...” (p.134), allowing for efficient storage and retrieval in our minds of large amounts of information. She notes that stories combine cognition and emotion, and that this makes them particularly important for the functioning of memory and thought: “...it is precisely because stories do give meaning to factual content, that they are so important. We use them to understand ourselves and our universe” (p.139).

Lyotard (1994) and Bruner (1985, 1986) recognize the immense importance of narratives, but they argue that there are other ways by which people also acquire knowledge. In contrast to narrative knowledge, there is ‘scientific’ (Lyotard) or ‘paradigmatic’ (Bruner) knowledge. Bruner (1986) argues that narrative knowledge is qualitatively different from the knowledge of science: “...narrative is built upon concern for the human condition: stories reach sad or comic or absurd denouements, while theoretical arguments are simply conclusive or inconclusive” (p.14). Narratives are assessed by standards such as verisimilitude and dramatic impact, which are fundamentally different from the standards for assessing scientific theories. A story, says Bruner, even one alleged to be true, “...is judged for its goodness as a story by criteria that are of a different kind from those used to judge a logical argument as adequate or correct” (p.12). This is the case even though there are overlaps among the standards by which we judge narratives and science, as in the need for a successful story to conform to canons of logical consistency, or the use of a dramatic example to clinch an argument whose basis is principally logical.

Lyotard (1984) makes similar arguments. Using an analysis that is heavily based on language, especially Wittgenstein's notions of language games, Lyotard concludes that it is "...impossible to judge the existence or validity of narrative knowledge on the basis of scientific knowledge and vice versa: the relevant criteria are different" (p.26). The two ways of knowing are based on different sets of rules in different language games, and so are irreducible to one another. Lyotard argues that narratives do not need to legitimate themselves in terms of science, but that when science wants to go beyond "...stating useful regularities" (p.xxiii) it must legitimate itself in terms of narrative knowledge. In other words, to establish that it is relevant and important, science must be linked to the human values expressed in narratives. Lyotard's concern is that capitalism and consumerism have destroyed society's fundamental narratives, its 'metanarratives', eroding the common themes and purposes that provided unifying frameworks of social values. Where, he asks, can legitimacy reside in a society without metanarratives?

While Lyotard (1984) and Bruner (1985, 1986) emphasize the differences between narrative and scientific ways of knowing, others emphasize their intertwining. Fuller (1982) suggests that scientific theories are types of stories, reflecting the human need to make life coherent by giving it a storied form. She sees science emerging from our attempts to develop stories that stand up to experience with ever greater success:

Science was to give us some of the most fascinating of all stories. In the 19th century, it told us the story of evolution and the origin of our species. In our 20th century, it was relativity and the story of the cosmos. And so, what we are most proud of, our logic, our rationality, seems to have its origins in story cohesion. (p.132.)

Fuller's position is similar to that of Howard (1991), who argues that science, and even mathematical equations, are forms of story-telling. With the erosion

of foundationalist claims of science, the idea that scientists find 'truth' is no longer defensible. A more appropriate construal of scientific rationality, says Howard, "...sees the scientific community telling ever better (or more likely to be closer to the truth than their forebears) theoretical stories in each research domain..." (p. 188). Howard is clear that scientific stories are expected to meet different 'epistemic criteria' than other stories: "The criteria for determining the adequacy of nonscientific forms of storytelling are quite different from the epistemic criteria... that test the adequacy of scientific stories" (p.189). Non-scientific stories should meet criteria such as empathy (Bruner (1986) would say verisimilitude) and internal consistency, while scientific stories must meet criteria of internal consistency and predictive value. Nonetheless, Howard says, they are both forms of stories.

Attempting to establish or eliminate the boundaries between narrative and non-narrative ways of knowing is not vital to my research. What is vital is to make clear the very substantial impact of narratives on people's knowledge of their world, their society, themselves, and their actions. In this sense stories themselves can be operants of power, and the concept of 'power/knowledge' so well illuminated by Foucault can be extended to 'power/knowledge/narrative'. The work of Gergen and Gergen (1986) supports this conclusion convincingly. Objects and events, they state, cannot be identified and analyzed independently of the concepts with which one approaches them. These preconceptions largely determine what are taken to be entities in the world, and what will count as facts. These preconceptions commonly have narrative forms. In other words, whether they are in informal relationships, or in scientific attempts to describe and explain human behaviour, these preconceptions will tend to take forms that create both connectedness, and a sense of direction through time. Building on this line of argument, Gergen and Gergen then present this proposition: "It is the selection of narrative

form that largely determines what is to count as fact, and not fact which determines the developmental story. Narrative form is critical; observational grounding thereafter operates most importantly as a rhetorical device” (p.39). In more common parlance, people, even scientists, select the facts to support their stories.

While Gergen and Gergen (1986) are most concerned with revealing the operation of narrative in scientific theory, their points are perhaps even more valid in day-to-day life. Because both day-to-day life and stories are inherently temporal, they become closely interwoven and crucially important to one another, as my research will show. Sarbin (1993) expresses it in this way:

The very nature of social life depends upon actions that have a temporal dimension. Raising a child, for example, involves hundreds of episodes, each with a beginning, middle, and an ending. For each episode, the caretaker consults the past and leans into the future. The caretaker grinds the corn for her baby’s meal as a necessary step in preparing the baby for the ultimate goal of a healthy warrior. The day-to-day actions of social beings are not chaotic. They are organized, ordered if you will, according to narrative plots... [N]o identifiable text is involved. The text is composed of cultural practices, practices that are contained in the stock of stories that differentiates one culture from another. (p.61, emphasis mine.)

B.5 Social Narratives and Individual Identities. The connection between the individual and his or her society is a central issue for narrative theory, as it is for Foucault. Within narrative theory, the relationship between society and self-identity is generally based on a framework in which cultures provide canonical narratives which are learned by individual members, who adapt them to their particular circumstances; in turn, these individual adaptations lead to changes in the canonical narratives in a kind of spiral through time. Bruner (1987) paraphrases Oscar Wilde: “Narrative imitates life, life imitates narrative” (p.13).

A narrative is much more than just the telling of a story; it is a social act with profound functions:

A narrative is not merely a transmission of information. In the very act of telling a story the position of the storyteller and the listener, and their place in the social order, is constituted; the story creates and maintains social bonds. The narratives of a community contribute to uphold the values and the social order of that community. (Kvale, 1992b, p. 34.)

A society or culture might be defined as a number of people who share closely similar narratives. “The act of telling or narrating appears to be the key to the type of connectedness that we evoke when we speak...of the ‘interconnectedness of life’...” (Ricoeur, 1991, p.77). Narrative is a way of making sense of experience, and people become fixed in social positions through their sense-making practices (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.109). Narratives provide a way to warrant and justify actions, and in the process maintain relations of power and positions of dominance and subordination. From fairy tales to advertisements, narratives typically reinforce a given social order, validating particular values and ideas and devaluing or ignoring others. This effect may seem so natural as to go unnoticed, and yet a careful analysis of narratives reveals a “...highly constructed, organizing thinking about social orders in particular ways” (Tilley, 1991, p.60). This can be seen as the ideological function of narrative. It can be conservative, tending to reinforce existing arrangements, a point Tilley notes: “Narratives are about the survival of *particular* social orders rather than their transformation” (Tilley, p.61, italics in original). But narratives can also be about change and struggle, as with the narrative of ‘human progress’, or certain religious narratives, or various political narratives (Lyotard, 1984).

A society’s narratives provide a cultural stock of stories about the human

experience, and these begin to be acquired at the earliest age. The young are socialized into their culture, and learn its characteristic meanings, largely through stories, "...be those stories scientific, civic, moral, mathematical, religious, historical, racial, or political in nature" (Howard, 1991, p.190). As a child develops and enters into his culture, he "...comes to define his own intentions and even his own history in terms of the characteristic cultural dramas in which he plays a part -- at first family dramas, but later the ones that shape the expanding circle of his adventures outside the family" (Bruner, 1986, p.66). People conceive of themselves in terms of their culture's stories, constructing personal narratives that "...draw together and configure the events of one's life into a coherent and basic theme. One's future is projected as a continuation of the story, as yet unfinished" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p.107). Ricoeur (1991) argues that the self only knows of itself indirectly, through the vast array of cultural signs and practices, including narratives. Knowledge of the self by the self is an interpretation, and narrative provides a 'figure-able character' for the self to adopt.

Murray (1989) illustrates how people convert socially available narratives into lived experiences. He proposes that "...both personal and social identity are constructed by finding stories to tell about the self" (p.176). Using Harré's theory of personal and social identity, Murray studies individuals who have decided to run a marathon, examining the stories they use to explain their motivations. Harré theorizes that people have both a 'social identity' (a place in the social order) and a 'personal identity' (a sense of biographical uniqueness). The sense of self is gained only through social meanings, a paradox that is resolved "...in the way social meaning is *lived*" (Murray, 1989, p.180, italics in original). Murray finds that both personal and social identities are constructed through narratives, as people find stories to tell about themselves and their world, to others and to themselves.

In Murray's (1989) analysis, people's personal narratives help them clarify both their social and personal identities in several ways: narratives are concerned with a specific (as opposed to generalized) time and space; at the same time, they offer prototypical structures such as romantic struggle or comedy that are readily used and understood; narratives have the 'elasticity' to temporarily allow the individual to depart from the normal social order and then return; and they have a point or conclusion that provides a sense of direction. By living a narrative, such as the romantic struggle of meeting the challenge of a marathon, a person is able to affirm his or her personal identity without departing permanently from the social order (and losing a social identity): "...familiar patterns of life are disrupted and new meanings explored" within acceptable social limits (p.196).

Narratives serve as processes for mediating between norms⁴ derived from the social order and individual lives. This is achieved, says Murray (1989), by finding a point or purposeful direction in a sequence of events. The purposeful direction of the narrative, once appropriated by the individual, allows for the "...possibility that lives might contain a meaningful and honourable point" (p. 200). Conversely, this implies that without a narrative structure life simply becomes a series of disconnected and pointless events. The narrative functions of selecting which things will count, whether they will count as good or bad, and how they will conclude, are essential for a coherent and satisfying approach to the world.

To review, then, a well-developed narrative is a particular way of organizing experience (real or imagined) in which agents act through time in relation to a

⁴ Murray and Harré tend to use the term 'rules' instead of 'norms', but the meanings appear similar.

valued endpoint. The actions or events in a narrative have some causal relation to one another and to the movement of the actor in relation to the valued endpoint, and this gives the narrative a basic coherence and directionality. Narratives create canonical characters and roles which provide guides to action, thought, and self-definition for members of a culture. By doing this, narratives provide links, perhaps the major links, among a person's sense of self, a person's sense of others, and a person's sense of his or her place in the social order.

C. Foucault and Narrative: Complementarities.

In some senses the fit between Foucault and narrative theory appears difficult. Foucault refuses to accept metanarratives of social progress and improvement; the traditional modern pursuit of better futures is displaced in his work by fragmentary and aimless change (Harvey, 1990). He regards shifts in knowledge and power not as the advance of ever-more-refined knowledge, theory, and practice, but as mere changes in systems of subjectivity, one system replacing another. Issues of right and wrong become difficult to determine, and morality (which is inescapable in narratives) threatens to become indefensible. "It is a disturbing consequence of [Foucault's] approach that questions of legitimacy, distribution, and control cannot be considered" (Paternek, 1987, p.116). The sense of aimless but ordered social drift that Foucault presents, in which power has direction but no one is at the helm, can be seen as disallowing any place for human purposiveness (Taylor, cited in Paternek, 1987, p.113). If the practices of power have a direction but not an objective, it is argued, then the place of deliberate human action is undervalued and unexplained.

Not surprisingly, Foucault is often described as anti-humanist, on the basis that he denies that there are essential, foundational features in human nature (Weedon, 1987; Paden, 1987; Rorty, 1989). Human nature is socially constructed, he says, so that pursuing universal truths about societies and individuals is doomed to failure: the search for foundations has become a “...monotonous...journey which, though it probably has no end, is nevertheless perhaps not...without hope” (Foucault, 1994, p.314). Foucault’s work is also described as, in effect, anti-social. Rorty (1989) regards Foucault as invaluable in pursuing the intimate work of self-examination and personal, highly localized action, but also observes that “The sort of autonomy which self-creating ironists like... Foucault seek is not the sort of thing that *could* ever be embodied in social institutions”, and that Foucault is “...pretty much useless when it comes to politics” (p. 65, 83, italics in original).

Rorty’s opinion of the political uselessness of Foucault is rejected outright by writers such as Weedon (1987) and Townley (1994). Weedon concurs that Foucault is anti-humanist in the sense of refuting an essential human nature, but regards his position on the constructed nature of individuals and societies as a great tool for effectively enacting political and social change. Townley, who examines human resource management using Foucault, is equally clear: “Critics argue that Foucault’s conception of an all pervasive and oppressive disciplinary power is fatalistic, pessimistic and leaves little room for change. I argue to the contrary, believing that Foucault’s emphasis on the ‘how’ of power has significant implications for the politics of work...” (p.145). She argues that “...a new concept of power also requires a new concept of politics” (p.146). Both Weedon and Townley demonstrate that Foucault’s apparently anti-social, de-centred, unfocussed, and fatalistic analyses can, in sympathetic hands, constructively animate broad social agendas.

Viewing Foucault from the perspective of narrative helps to explain some of the debate about his theories. Criticisms that Foucault is fragmentary and aimless, amoral, politically useless, and generally nihilistic can be seen as laments for the apparent lack of an unifying narrative structure in his work. On the other hand, supporters of his work, such as Weedon (1987) and Townley (1994), seem prepared to turn Foucault's insights to advantage by linking his analyses to narratives of their own, whether these be feminist, emancipatory, or otherwise.

From my perspective, Foucault is more clearly narrative than seems to be generally acknowledged. For example, many of the operants of power he describes are highly narrative. The confession, for instance, is unmistakably a form of autobiography, and its effects are better understood when this is realized. Similarly, Foucault's description of the organization of progressions, in which a person or organization advances through stages to an eventual fulfilment, is highly narrative. Not all operants of power identified by Foucault are, in and of themselves, strongly narrative. An example of this is the timetable, which as a list of repeating times and functions is not on its own a narrative. However, timetables do not exist entirely on their own, and neither do examinations, surveillance, the organization of space, nor other operants of power. Instead, they are linked to broader purposes, to wider regimes that are inescapably narrative.

Foucault's work is not a struggle with narrative, but a struggle with metanarrative. For him it is a moral responsibility to subvert the totalizing effects of metanarratives, to undermine the overarching metanarrative structures and themes that span and integrate the immense array of operants of power that sustain a society. In this way his work is consistent with Lyotard (1984) and others. As will become clear, my analysis suggests that,

despite Foucault, Lyotard, and others, totalizing metanarratives are not in any danger, at least when it comes to day-to-day consuming.

For my purposes of applying both Foucauldian power and narrative theory to day-to-day consuming, it is helpful to identify features that Foucault's analyses of power do and do not share with narrative theories. I discuss these at length throughout the dissertation. By way of introduction, the most notable difference I find is that narratives of necessity require some sense of a conclusion, while Foucauldian operants of power, strictly speaking, do not. Conclusions, as I noted earlier, are not mere cessations; they provide a sense of resolution. It is through conclusions that narratives create their coherence; conclusions connect the beginning, the middle, and the end. Because narratives always have a sense of conclusion, they are more effective at creating a singular directionality through time and across operants of power than are the non-narrative operants of power described by Foucault.

In contrast to this major difference, there are several notable complementarities between narrative and Foucault which I will explore in the dissertation. First, Foucauldian power and narratives are both essentially relational. A narrative is not the events *per se* that happen in an account, but how they are related (this marks the difference between random events and a story). Similarly, Foucault conceives of power as a 'function of multiple interacting conditions rather than a discrete object or event' (these are actually the words Smith (1980, p.226) uses to describe a story). Foucault frequently refers to power in terms of relations:

[Power] is the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power... [Power] is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another... power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical relationship in a particular society. (Foucault, 1990a, p.93.)

Second, and closely related to their relational natures, narratives and Foucauldian mechanisms of power are both directional. They both work through time to encourage particular kinds of actions that tend to have consistent outcomes, creating a sense of direction among a series of actions. They are coherent because they have order and consistency across relations. Yet neither narratives nor mechanisms of power require a deliberate plan -- a 'headquarters' -- to have this effect. Rather, their directionality is immanent. In my analysis later in the dissertation, this shared directionality becomes crucially important to the formation of patterns across mechanisms of power.

Third, narratives are pervasive in a society, as are Foucauldian mechanisms of disciplinary power (at least in a modern society). As a result, both of them tend to be taken for granted, their effects easily overlooked because of their ordinary presence. Fourth, narrative and Foucauldian power are social transactions that create social order and norms, and as a corollary also create personal identity and subjectification. As I noted above, narratives create canonical roles which tend to reinforce the existing social order, and in their endless elasticity these provide means for people to develop unique personal identities while retaining a common social bond. As Bruner (1991) says, these canonical roles permit us "...to form our own narratives of deviation while maintaining complicity with the canon... [This] must surely be a major prophylactic against alienation" (p.20). This has important parallels with Foucault's work on power, which is an elaborate examination of ways in which power establishes social positions and social order through everyday processes that create a sense of 'naturalness'. It is not entirely coincidence that the rise of the autobiography is contemporaneous with the rise of disciplinary power, as well as capitalism and consumerism. All four indicate a changing notion of the 'self', an attitude that the self is an entity discrete from

others, a 'subject' that can be narrated in story and manipulated in power. The coherence of the self is a result of its narrative structure and of its subjectification by power. Finally, both Foucauldian operants of power and narrative structures influence the organization of space and time.

This chapter has described the framework of theory that I will use in my analysis. I will return repeatedly to the connections I perceive between narrative theory and Foucauldian mechanisms of power in later sections of the dissertation, and in the process expand on these descriptions. While there is a good theoretical basis for arguing the connections of narrative and power, the real strength of the argument did not become clear until I conducted my fieldwork.

3. Day-to-day Advertising and Promotion.

A. Introduction.

Fairclough (1989) describes advertising as ‘the most visible discourse of consumerism’ (p.200), and it is in discourse, says Foucault, “...that power and knowledge come together” (1990a, p.100). It was apparent from the first day of my fieldwork that advertising and promotion were going to be crucial for me to examine; it seemed reasonable to suspect that they embodied, as Foucault’s comment suggests, a vital aspect of the power/knowledge nexus that sustains day-to-day consuming in Edmonton.

On the first day of my fieldwork, 328 pages of advertising were delivered to our house, plus the equivalent of another 36 broadsheet pages in the body of the daily newspaper. On the second day 108 pages were delivered, plus the equivalent of 30 more broadsheet pages in the body of the daily newspaper. By the end of the first week, 35 advertising flyers with a total of 800 pages¹ of advertising were delivered to our house, plus the equivalent of another 275 broadsheet pages of it in the body of the daily newspaper. By the end of the year of fieldwork, the equivalent of over 21,500 broadsheet pages of advertising were delivered to our house. We did not request any of it.

Though I had lived with this flow of advertising for years I had never methodically attended to it. I took it for granted. As I made my daily counts of these pages in those first few weeks I was amazed at the volume and variety of the material. Gradually I came to expect it, and realized that the months before Christmas carried the heaviest load of advertising.

¹ These flyers were of varying sizes, and were the equivalent of 226 pages of broadsheet newspaper.

Mostly I tried to shut off the intended effects of advertising, even though I was examining it more closely than usual because of this research. My usual response, I felt, would be to ignore it as much as possible. But at times it got through to me. Sometimes the effect of the advertising was direct and concrete. If items we ordinarily used were advertised at low prices, particularly groceries, I made a point of buying them. This sometimes applied during green months as well as brown, for on occasion organic foods and other green products were promoted.

At other times the effects of advertising and promotion were so subtle I was barely aware of them. Thinking about consuming a product or service is a process of imagination, in which the potential consumer is, in his or her mind, engaged with the product (Campbell, 1987). Sometimes I reflected on exactly what was happening in my imagination when I saw an advertisement. For example,²

DAY 277: Friday June 9, 1995

Tucked in this morning's newspaper is a 24-page flyer from Canadian Tire, advertising Father's Day items. As I flip through it I see things about which I cannot help feeling, "Oh, that would be nice to have". As I look at the ads I even get an image in my mind of how I would use the items. For example there is a basketball hoop for sale, with a photo of a boy taking shots. I glance at it no more than half a second as I scan the page but the image that registers in my mind is that the boy in the photo is Phillip, who has been wanting to try basketball in the last few days, and the hoop is set up on our driveway by the garage. The entire scene flashes into my thoughts, and then is gone as I move down the page. Another image briefly occurs when I glance at an ad for a set of golf clubs: I am at a nice golf course with my best friends, having a good time. Last night I drove some golf

² Throughout the dissertation I will often present excerpts from my daily journals, always beginning with the number of the day in the fieldwork, the weekday, and the date, and always indented and in a different font from the rest of the text.

balls with a friend, and lamented not having clubs of my own. The ad in this flyer resonates with that feeling and I briefly imagine buying golf clubs.

At the moment in which I look at the ads these images are virtually unconscious to me. They only come to the front of my mind when I go back to look more carefully so I can write notes for my journal. Then, I realize the boy taking shots at the basketball hoop is black, while Phillip is very fair, and I notice the hoop comes with a backboard and portable base, which doesn't fit with my image of mounting the hoop on the garage...

In cases like these my imagination fleetingly carried me into the world of the advertisement, and simultaneously adjusted the image in the advertisement so that the image corresponded with my world. The entire process, it seemed, took less than a second. When I suddenly became aware of this process I felt that something like it was happening frequently when I considered promotions and advertisements, but it was almost always just below my level of awareness.

Advertisements are deliberate attempts to get people to consume. What happens in them? When I had a sense of projecting myself into the advertisements without even being aware of it, what was this doing to my sense of who I was? When I saw an advertisement and thought, 'Wouldn't it be nice to have that', was I subtly adjusting my view of my life to suit the product that was appealing to me?

Advertising is a form of promotion. The word 'advertise' derives from Latin *advertere*, meaning 'to turn to'. As its usage developed in English, it came to mean 'to turn one's attention to', 'to describe', 'to notify the public', 'to give notice'. To 'advertise', then, means to 'call the attention of the public to something'. It once applied to the role of the town crier; with changes in

technology its meaning shifted to include printed notices, and then electronic and other notices. By comparison, the word 'promote' derives from Latin *mouvere* (to move) and *pro* (forward, ahead). It means 'to move or push forward', 'to advance', 'to urge the adoption of', 'to raise to a higher rank'. 'Promote', then, denotes a more directed, active, engaging and instrumental approach to informing people than 'advertise'. In the context of consuming, 'promotion' includes many things in addition to 'advertising' (design, packaging, pricing, symbolism, etc.). (Ayto, 1990; Collins English Dictionary, 1991; Oxford English Dictionary, 1971; Wernick, 1991.)

Advertising has become increasingly promotional as consumerism has developed. Advertising in its traditional and least promotional form is typically found in classified advertisements, as in these examples from the Edmonton Journal on the last day of my fieldwork (Sunday, September 3, 1995): "HUGE YARD SALE. Tools, furniture, ceramic wall & floor tile, carpet roll ends, misc. Fri., Sat. & Sun. Opens Friday at 10 a.m.", or "CRIB and mattress, \$55; swing \$5; highchair \$2 & \$5; change table \$25; + misc.". These use essentially the same 'public notice' style of advertising that prevailed in the early days of consumerism in the late 18th century, when the only advertising in newspapers was columns of classified ads. (For examples see Corrigan, 1997; Schudson, 1984). This style provides the minimally necessary description of the product, but makes little effort to advocate it or entice the reader. For the past two centuries classified advertising has remained important, but advertising has also taken many other forms, becoming more and more promotional. It does not just give notice of something, it tries to push it forward, urging its adoption and engaging the audience. Promotional advertising changes the item being sold from an object described, to an object made desirable. In the process it also changes the audience.

In this chapter I argue that advertising and other forms of promotion affect language, thought, identity, and morality, by: using devices that include relentless repetition and pervasive penetration; shifting the meanings of words and symbols; encouraging the audience to identify with the advertisement and the product; changing the presentation of morality (good and bad, desirable and undesirable, etc.); telling stories; and eliciting confessions.

Sections B, C, and D of this chapter are primarily descriptive, showing the historical circumstances and saturating presence in a consumer society of advertising and promotion. Section B presents a brief history of advertising and promotion; Section C describes the scale and nature of print advertising delivered to my house during the fieldwork; and Section D gives a sample of entries from my daily journals describing perceptions, incidents, and experiences of promotion during the fieldwork. With this background, Section E argues that the general effect of advertising and promotion is to contribute to creating thought, language, self-identities, and morality that sustain the consumer society and resist substantial environmental action.

B. A Brief History of Advertising and Promotion.

As I showed in Chapter 1, today's consumer society, as natural as it appears to people living in it, is a result of unique historical circumstances.

Advertising and promotion in the forms they take today are largely products of the last 120 years, though their beginnings are recognizable in the early days of consumerism in the late 1700s. They have risen step-by-step with the modern industrial economies of capitalist countries.

Josiah Wedgwood was one of the first major figures to comprehend the importance of attending not just to production but to promotion (Wernick, 1991). In 1779, he wrote to an associate of his that, “It seems absolutely necessary for the increase of our sales that some means must be unremittingly made use of to keep up the attention of the world to the fine things we are making and doing for them,” (quoted in Wernick, p. 1). Wedgwood innovated with selling as much as he did with pottery. Though he advertised his products he put greater emphasis on other forms of promotion. He took the unusual step for the time of establishing permanent showrooms in cities across Britain, carefully attending to lay-out and visual appeal and ensuring displays were changed every few days to keep them interesting. He created a system of travelling salesmen trained in customer etiquette to visit homes in the countryside, and set up permanent sales agencies across Europe. All were provided with a large catalogue. At great expense he made a perfect replica of an antique Roman vase, then used it as the centrepiece of an international tour to promote his products. He mixed with royalty and aristocrats, seeking their support and endorsement. (Wernick.)

Wedgwood personally listened to customers and altered his designs to fit their tastes and concerns, linking promotion directly to industrial design and production in what Wernick (1991) calls a ‘production/advertising/ design matrix’. (See also Forty, 1986.) Wedgwood’s most important insight may be that he saw promotion as part of the function of the product. His still famous designs reflect this, both serving utilitarian-aesthetic functions and promoting Wedgwood products. One glance at a classic Wedgwood-blue vase simultaneously tells the looker ‘high quality’, ‘exclusive style’, and ‘Wedgwood’; other more recent examples are the shape of a Rolls Royce grill, the wood and leather of Birkenstock sandals, or the stylized red letters of Coca-Cola, which communicate across different languages and even across

different alphabets. Here is “...the industrial manufacture of meaning and myth” (Wernick, p.15).

Coinciding with the success of early industrialism consumerism was the birth of advertising agencies. Early in 19th-century Britain, nascent advertising agencies began publishing guides to newspapers for potential advertisers, including circulation figures, numbers of ads, political character, and price (Leiss, Kline, and Jhally, 1986). By the mid-1800s these guides were sometimes hundreds of pages long. The agents collected commissions from newspapers for selling advertising space. The first North American advertising agency was opened in 1843, in Philadelphia. Over several decades agents gradually added other services, including advice on advertising style, libel, and market analysis. In this period the biggest advertisers were sellers of patent medicines. The simple printing technology of the time limited newspaper advertisements to written text, although magazines printed pictures. Manufacturing, brands, media, and markets were predominantly local because of difficulties with transportation, distribution, and communication. (Leiss et al.; Schudson, 1984.)

This was also the era when credit agencies began to develop, compiling records of creditworthiness for use by various businesses (Schudson, 1984). Both the ad agencies and the credit agencies used new forms of social technology: creating and maintaining files on individuals and businesses, refining methods of surveillance to insure accurate information, and turning these files into commodities for sale. This was the commercialization of surveillance and examination. (Surveillance and examination will be discussed more in a subsequent chapter).

The last decades of the 1800s brought profound changes on many fronts.

Railroads, refrigeration, the telegraph, and other developments meant distribution systems and market areas could expand enormously. The mechanization of manufacturing, especially continuous process methods, raised volumes of production by orders of magnitude and cut unit costs to unprecedented levels. For some products new forms of production meant a single new factory could flood an entire national market at existing levels of consumption. The greatest challenge for manufacturers was to sell everything they could produce. (Leiss et al., 1986; Schudson, 1984; Wernick, 1991.)

The emphasis on selling supported the closely connected expansions of department stores and the 'yellow' or 'penny' newspapers. The growing cities, with better urban transit, provided the conditions for department stores to rise and compete with traditional neighbourhood shops. They promoted themselves aggressively, staging entertainment and cultural events, using extraordinary architecture and displays, and advertising heavily. By the 1880s in the U.S., department stores had replaced patent medicines as the biggest advertisers in newspapers. This advertising helped push revenues for newspapers up sharply from 1880 to 1910, and the portion of total newspaper space allotted to ads doubled from 25% to 50% (Wernick, 1991). Advertising, which had been mostly restricted to columnar text, was opened up to illustrations and new formats by the hotly competitive Hearst and Pulitzer newspaper groups. Newspapers could sell each copy well below the cost of production and still be profitable because of ad revenue. They worked so closely with department stores they were accused of being their appendages (Schudson, 1984, p. 152).

This period also saw the rise of another kind of major advertiser, the new national and international corporations, with brands such as Quaker Oats, Pillsbury, Heinz, Eastman-Kodak, and Procter and Gamble. Their massive

production necessitated a new scale of operation. They had to coordinate on unprecedented scales the acquisition of raw material, manufacturing, distribution, and mass marketing, spanning vast geographic areas and populations. To keep their high-volume factories operating effectively these producers had to market aggressively (Schudson, 1984). Like Wedgwood a century before, they developed a range of promotional methods. The key was organization:

More crucial than advertising was the development of national and sometimes global organizations of managers, buyers, and salesmen that the early mass marketing firms created. The new technology of continuous-process production made possible a new social invention -- not advertising but the organization chart, a regular hierarchy of responsibility, an administrative structure responsible for marketing as well as the production of the manufactured good... the key innovation that made mass marketing possible was not advertising but corporate organization. (Wernick, 1991, p.166-67, citing work by Chandler).

Throughout this period advertisements were changing. Copy writing became more elaborate and persuasive, appealing to emotion as well as reason. Improved printing methods allowed newspapers to use ads with pictures and colour, so the preeminence of text was challenged by the visual image. Promotions became more visible than ever before. For example, in 1886 Quaker Oats used new packaging technology to put sales messages on packages for the first time, endorsing the quality of their products and providing recipes in which they could be used. This was only one small part of Quaker Oats' promotional work: "...the Quaker Oats symbol was permanent and visible everywhere, on billboards, streetcars, newspapers, calendars, magazines, blotters, cookbooks, Sunday church bulletins, metal signs on rural fences, company-sponsored cooking schools, free samples given away house-to-house, booths at county fairs and expositions" (Schudson, 1984, p.166).

Integral to these changes were the advertising agencies. Originally, agencies

did not prepare advertising for manufacturers, they simply sold it to newspapers. As they became better established they sometimes bought large blocks of advertising space from publishers and resold it in smaller units to advertisers, and occasionally an agency ran a newspaper's entire advertising operation. By the end of the 19th century agencies frequently prepared advertisements for manufacturers, writing text, arranging lay-out, and developing whole campaigns. They also encouraged the rise of magazines, seeing them as vehicles for targeting particular consumer groups. One agency in this period gave a \$200,000 line of credit to a publisher to launch *Ladies' Home Journal* (Leiss et al, 1986, p.108). But the most basic function of agencies was to 'promote promotion': agencies were constantly convincing skeptical companies that they needed to promote and advertise their products. (Leiss et al; Schudson, 1984; Wernick, 1991. See also Ewen, 1996, for the related history of public relations firms.)

By the first decades of the 20th century, agencies were heavily involved in market and consumer research. 'Scientific marketing' was trumpeted. Detailed market analyses were conducted, often focussed on women, whom research identified as the major household consumers. Consumers were divided into more specific groups, such as higher income 'quality' audiences and lower income 'mass' audiences, with specific media and promotions directed appropriately. Consumer psychology --Freudian, behaviourist, and others-- became formally entrenched by the 1920s, though its credibility ebbed and flowed. (Schudson, 1984.)

Promotion and advertising were strongly shaped by changes in media, and vice versa. By the end of the 1800s more than half the revenue of most newspapers and magazines was from advertising. "As a result, advertising considerations began to influence greatly the operations of media, particularly

their orientations to content and programming and the organization of audiences in terms of social, spatial, and temporal qualities” (Leiss et al., 1986, p.71). The popularity of magazines challenged newspapers from the 1890s onward, and radio began challenging all print media in the late 1920s. The early decades of commercial radio relied heavily on programs sponsored by single advertisers, especially in the United States. Many programs were created and directed by sponsors’ advertising agencies, with special studio booths for sponsor officials to review dress rehearsals and modify programs if they felt it was needed. (Leiss et al.; Schudson, 1984.)

By the end of the 1920s, the fundamental structures of today’s advertising and promotion were in place:

- the idea that advertising and promotion were important;
- a core of major national advertisers with the resources to lead the way in the ongoing refinement of advertising and promotion;
- the recognition that promotion should be considered in product design;
- corporate organization that included separate marketing functions and strong distribution and sales systems;
- sophisticated advertising agencies whose product was promotion itself, and who researched, designed and conducted marketing campaigns;
- an understanding of the importance of integrating text and visual design, and of making both rational and emotional appeals;
- an extensive media industry committed to advertising, dependent upon it, and often created to carry it;
- regulatory systems and forms of surveillance, including government licensing and independent organizations to confirm circulation and audience ratings;

- an expanding body of theory and research, the emergence of business schools, and the professionalization of the practice of marketing;
- a population accustomed to playing the role of consumer, attentive to advertising for information on both products and self-identity, and accepting the prominent place of advertising and promotion in culture and society.

Innovations in promotion, and new forms of media, have built on this base. Television's spread in the 1950s had a huge impact on all other forms of media. In the United States, the initial trend was to follow the model of radio and use advertiser-controlled programs. For various reasons, among them legal and cost considerations, this broke down, and the networks assumed greater control over what they broadcast. In Canada, the government-supported Canadian Broadcasting Corporation established a national television network that accepted advertising (unlike public broadcasters in most other countries), and fully commercial networks also were formed. In effect, networks didn't sell advertising time to advertisers; their product was audiences: "Audiences were the currency of the advertising business and they became the currency for television programmers as well" (Leiss et al., 1986, p.87). Television became the medium of choice for national brand advertisers, and radio, once a strongly national medium, changed to a primarily local one. (Leiss et al.)

In recent years television's advertising preeminence has lessened. With videos, pay-per-view systems, and vast increases in the number of channels, television audiences in North America have fragmented. Television, while centrally important, is just one component of the advertising mix, which in turn is just one component of the promotional mix. Promotion, as anticipated

by Josiah Wedgwood, touches every aspect of a product, from its design and manufacture, to the organization of the marketing department, to packaging and retail display, incentives and training for sales personnel, customer service guarantees, sponsorships, advertising, and cross-promotional campaigns. Market research has reached remarkable degrees of sophistication through computerization, tracking the buying habits of great numbers of people, moving increasingly from targeting groups and cohorts (eg. people within income groups or postal zones) to tracking and targeting individuals (Branscomb, 1994; Engel et al., 1993; Lyon, 1994).

Each new medium for promotion affects all those that preceded it, not replacing but adding to them. Magazines changed newspapers but did not squeeze them out; television seriously altered radio but did not eliminate it.

...no phase supplants the foregoing ones, but rather each complements the others, adding variations and new operations to the existing repertoire. Posters, signs, and flyers --the classic means of publicity in early times-- still flourish. Classified and local advertising still provide up to one-third of newspaper revenue...The status-envy appeal formats of the 1930s, the testimonial pitches, and the celebrity appearance all persist for specific uses. This is an "articulated" communication system, a collection of distinct yet interconnected parts, composed of products, persuasive strategies, and media channels whose unity is forged by the accumulated experience of the advertising agencies. (Leiss et al., p.125-26.)

C. Print Advertising in the Fieldwork.

Modern advertising and promotion create what Wernick calls a 'dense communicative complex' that envelops promoted goods and is culturally saturating. One of the bluntest indicators of this is the volume of advertising in a consumer society. Statistics Canada (1991) figures show Canadians watch an average of 23.3 hours of television a week. With 12 minutes of advertising per hour, this is about 550 30-second commercials weekly, or

28,600 annually. It is estimated that in the U.S., the average person sees about 35,000 television ads per year (Engel et al., 1993, p.10), and the average American adult receives 41 pounds of junk mail annually, spending in a lifetime the equivalent of almost a year sorting through it (Branscomb, 1994, p.11). During the year of fieldwork, our household was disconnected from any commercial television because we did not subscribe to cable, and did not install an aerial to receive broadcast signals. In this regard we were in a very small minority of Canadians.

C.1 The Frequency of Print Advertising: As noted in Chapter 1, there were two main sources of print advertising for our household during the fieldwork: the daily Edmonton Journal newspaper (Edmonton's major newspaper), and unsolicited deliveries of advertising flyers. I kept careful track of both of these, tabulating the number and nature of the advertisements delivered to our house. This would not have been possible for electronic media, for they are too fleeting, but with print media I was able to count and measure each item, a process that on high volume days took two hours or more.

The basic unit of measurement I used was the 'broadsheet-equivalent page', (13.5 inches by 23.75 inches). I assessed the size of each ad as a proportion of one broadsheet-equivalent page. The results of my analysis are as follows:

1. There were 357 editions of the Edmonton Journal published during the period of my fieldwork (September 6, 1994 to September 4, 1995), with an average 64 broadsheet pages per edition.
2. Using the Edmonton Journal's information, 60% of its space is allotted to advertising; therefore, in the body of the newspaper 38.4 broadsheet-equivalent pages of advertising were delivered to our house daily.

3. In addition, an average of three advertising flyers were inserted into the newspaper each day, the equivalent of 16 broadsheet pages.

4. Therefore, through my newspaper subscription alone 54.4 broadsheet-equivalent pages of advertising were delivered to our house daily, a total for the year of 19,420.8.

5. In addition to the newspaper, 603 unsolicited advertising flyers were delivered to our house through Canada Post and commercial private services. These averaged 3.6 broadsheet-equivalent pages each, for a total during the year of 2148 broadsheet-equivalent pages.

The combined total of advertising delivered to our house through both the newspaper and unsolicited sources was 21,568.8 broadsheet-equivalent pages. This is a conservative figure, for it does not count such things as free-distribution magazines, the TV Times, and the advertising commonly included in correspondence from organizations with which we have established connections, such as banks and utilities. It also fails to include any other forms of advertising and promotion so common in day-to-day life (billboards, in-store promotions, event sponsorships, etc.), though I noted some of these *ad hoc* in my daily journal and will discuss them later.

C.2 The Brown-ness of Print Advertising. With exceptions such as public service campaigns, the purpose of advertising and promotion is ultimately to sell a product. The large volume of print advertising is an indicator of the constant and intense encouragement to consume. It is a social practise in support of consuming and in opposition to environmental concerns about reducing consumption.

There are environmental concerns about virtually everything consumed, from the pollution and resource depletion of cars, to disposing of shampoo containers, to the use of pesticides in growing the food served at restaurants. I assessed the content of each newspaper advertisement and flyer for indications of environmental concern regarding the product, classifying as 'green' every ad in which there was a clear mention of an environmental issue. Sometimes this was obvious (eg. when Terra Foods advertised organic foods, including comments on the environmental impact of pesticides, under the headline 'Our Veggies Don't Do Drugs'), but often environmental mentions were not prominent (eg. a photo of a detergent box with the notice '100% phosphate-free' on the box). Sometimes it was a matter of judgment whether or not I counted an ad as 'green', and I tended to be inclusive rather than exclusive.

In total, 67.4 out of 21,568.8 broadsheet-equivalent pages of advertising delivered to our house mentioned concern for the environment (1 page in 320). This breaks down as follows. In the body of the Edmonton Journal I identified 117 'green' ads during the fieldwork. They were mostly small, equivalent in total to 15.2 broadsheet pages. This amounts to one in every 902 pages of advertising. In the inserts delivered with the newspaper there were 201 green ads covering 30.9 broadsheet equivalent pages, or one page in every 185. In the unsolicited flyers were 145 green ads equivalent to 21.3 broadsheet pages, or one page in every one hundred. A handful of advertisers accounted for a large share of all green ads, especially The Real Canadian Superstore, Terra Natural Foods, and Debaji's Foods.

C.3 Dark Brown Advertisements. The huge majority of ads are silent on the environment, but occasionally some openly undermined environmental

concerns. Following are entries from my daily journal on such ads.

DAY 107: Wednesday December 21.

...In today's Journal is a large illustrated ad for the Pontiac Firefly car. The headline is "The New Firefly vs. The Alternative". The 'alternative' is a bicycle, pictured in the ad. The main text of the ad is this:

"The advertiser does not mean to promote the automobile's superiority over the bicycle in all cases. In fact, the use of the Firefly's two-wheeled cousin may prove advantageous pending such exterior factors as distance, weather conditions and willingness of the operator to wear his/her right pant leg inside of his/her sock. (Failure to comply with the latter condition may result in grease stains. Hand wash separately. Do not bleach. Dry flat. [Followed by symbols for laundering.]")"

The ad also lists the features of the Firefly and the Bike: 24 hour roadside assistance, dual airbags, 3yr./60,000 km warranty, side impact protection, available ABS brakes, Scotchgard fabric protection, best fuel economy, cupholders/coinholders/map pockets, 636 l. cargo capacity, passenger capacity. Each of these is checked off for the Firefly with none for the bike, except the passenger capacity which is listed as "2 (w/opt. banana seat)". Even on fuel economy the Firefly is checked off and the bike isn't. It ends with this headline: "Wouldn't you rather be in a Firefly?"...

DAY 147: Monday January 30.

In today's Journal is a large ad for Jeep that seems actively anti-green. It is a half-page, and features a large photo of a mountain and forest. The text reads this:

"JEEP TERRITORY. It is the earth [sic] at its most magnificent. There are no boundaries. Here, the rules of the road are the laws of nature. It is many places. In many shapes. It is ice and snow. It is mud and rock. There is no beaten path. Here you follow your instincts. Only limited by your sense of adventure. And the four wheels that touch the ground. Jeep. There's only one way to get there."

On the following page is the same large photo

with 3 jeeps in the foreground and this text: "Now entering Jeep Territory." and under the photo of the Jeeps "Price of Admission. 1995 Jeep Grand Cherokee."

This ad is a direct affront to protecting habitat and wilderness. Its message is 'have fun at the expense of nature'. I assume the failure to capitalize 'Earth' is deliberate...

C.4 The Paleness of Green Ads. Even in the green ads (as few as they were) the primary message was 'consume', and environmental awareness was secondary. One indicator of this was what the ads did not say. Public education campaigns often refer to the 'Three R's' of green consuming: recycle, reuse, and reduce. It was common for advertising flyers to have a small recycling logo stating 'printed on recycled paper' or 'please recycle', and in certain situations, such as with plastic grocery bags, there were occasional messages to reuse them. (These notices were not linked to particular products and I did not count them as green ads.) What never appeared was an appeal to 'reduce', though reducing is widely accepted as more important than recycling or reusing: "Reduction is the most effective of the three Rs -- you won't have to throw away what you didn't buy in the first place" (Pollution Probe, 1991, p.111). For example:

DAY 213: Tuesday April 4, 1995

A Wal-Mart insert in today's Journal features two ads I count as 'green'... It also includes a column of text encouraging people to recycle, to use public transit, to compost, etc. The one thing it does NOT advise is that they reduce their levels of consuming...

The same thing extended far beyond print advertising:

DAY 201: Thursday March 23, 1995

...There are more signs of environmental awareness at Superstore than other major grocery stores. For example, I am not offered any bags for my groceries and if I hadn't brought my own I

would have been charged extra (or is this cost-cutting disguised as environmental concern?). Also, the bulk food section is draped with large banners with a photo of the Earth, saying: "Green Zone. The Ultimate Solution to Overpackaging. Something Can be Done". Every bin has a label with the same message. This is commendable in a sense, but in another sense it is surely a diversion from the real environmental issue. Superstore's greatest success is in volume high-pressure selling. Many times my eye is caught with labels saying "Multiply Your Savings", encouraging me to buy several of the same items to get a reduced price. Given the exhaustive attempts to have people buy as much as possible I am convinced there is no interest at Superstore in getting people to 'Reduce' consumption, or even 'Reuse', except for such basic items as grocery bags...

The imperatives of retailing preempt any messages to reduce consuming.

Even mainstream marketers acknowledge this, as when Engel et al. (1993) note that though environmental concerns may necessitate 'demarketing' -- the deliberate effort to induce consumers to buy less-- it "...requires quite a measure of faith to believe that business will ever demarket voluntarily" (p.836).

C.5 The Function of Green Advertising. Why are environmental issues addressed at all in advertising and promotion? With few exceptions green ads were surrounded by ads for regular products, as when The Real Canadian Superstore would advertise dozens of products on a page, only one of which would be green. What is the function of a green ad in a page of brown ones? This contradiction between green and brown sometimes reached extremes, as with a flyer from Home Depot (June 3) that advertised "Environmentally safe and organic based" plant fertilizer, and on the same and facing pages advertised a "vegetation control product" that "Controls virtually anything green and growing", as well as "Top Gun Weed Killer/Herbicide"; "Wipe-

Out total weed and grass killer”; “Killex lawn weed killer”; “Spot Weeder”; and two insecticides.

One way to understand contradictory statements from the same source is to ask, what function do they serve? In the terms of Potter and Wetherell (1987), what valued endpoint do they advance? It is clear producers do not want consumers to reduce their levels of consumption. Since the function of advertising and promotion is to sell, the question is, how does exhibiting concern for the environment help with this? One set of answers is conventional, though by no means invalid: it allays customer concerns and salves the consciences of both producer and consumer; it makes people feel they can maintain their levels of consuming without impinging on the environment; and it increases profit margins because some people will pay more for products they believe are environmentally friendly.

There is a different set of answers. Green advertising reinforces the same consumer presuppositions as all other advertising. Environmental concerns are potentially a serious threat to consumerism, advocating a morality of consuming less. Green marketing co-opts this potential resistance, submerging it in the consumer culture it initially opposed. In the process, the environmentally-mindful consumer remains as embedded in consumerism as the brown consumer.

D. The Pervasiveness of Promotion.

Print advertising is only one aspect of consumer promotion. Consumer promotion of one kind or another pervaded my day-to-day life. Throughout the year of fieldwork I noted some of the countless moments of promotion that formed a constant backdrop to the other activities of living. A sample of

these follows, and though it appears large it is only a small portion of the total:

DAY 21: Monday September 26.

...After school, Paul brought home an order form from the school for books from Scholastic Books. He and Phillip each bring different ones of these home once a month...

DAY 135: Wednesday January 18.

...Today Phillip went to the Space and Sciences Centre on a field trip with school. On his return the teacher gave him a coupon for a free Pepsi at Taco Bell restaurant. Why? Pepsi (which I believe owns Taco Bell) is a sponsor of the Space and Sciences Centre.

DAY 191: Monday March 13.

...Several items come in the mail. Most of them are from organizations with legitimate connections to us, such as our banks. As usual most work a sales pitch into their other information. Our statement from the Credit Union includes a promotion for a "Personal Loan Sale", and the Alberta Motor Association has a promotion for VISA cards...

DAY 208: Thursday March 30.

This morning I phone the Space and Science Centre to get the schedule for IMAX films. A recorded message says 'The daily IMAX schedule after this message'. Then I am forced to listen to two advertisements before it gives the schedule.

DAY 229: Thursday April 20.

This afternoon I checked the household garbage collection schedule. I realized, I think for the first time, that the City of Edmonton garbage schedule is sponsored by a pizza company, and the complete menu is printed at the top of the schedule. In fact about half the space of the schedule is taken up with advertising for the pizza company. In the past 2 or 3 months we have ordered pizza from this company a few times. I had never ordered from them before. I thought the main impetus for trying them was the boys, but was my mind subconsciously tuned in through the garbage schedule I check every few weeks?

DAY 233: Monday April 24. .

This evening Paul has a soccer game, but the weather is showery and the game may be cancelled. There is a phone number on the soccer schedule to call if the weather is bad. It is an automatic answering service, and when I get to the information on soccer games an advertisement comes on. I am forced to listen to an ad before I can find out whether my son's soccer game will be cancelled...

DAY 283: Wednesday June 14.

... At the end of Paul's soccer game the head coach hands out brochures from the Alberta Soccer Association on summertime soccer camps. The brochure is sponsored by Squirrel Peanut Butter, with the Squirrel logo dominating the front page and a large coupon for 50¢ off Squirrel Peanut Butter.

DAY 292: Friday June 23.

...A woman comes to the door from Canada Post, showing me two flyers to check if we received them this week. We had. Then she asked if, a few days ago, someone else had checked that we received them. Someone had. So we have someone checking that I receive the flyers, and then someone a few days later checking that the checker has checked that I received the flyers, all to insure that our household does not miss its allotted advertisements...

DAY 294: Sunday June 25.

Today I take the boys to the movie Batman Forever... Along with the tickets I am handed a small coupon for a soft drink and popcorn. I study it for a minute before I realize it isn't a coupon at all, but really just a small advertising flyer designed to look like a coupon but offering no discount or other reward.

We walk past several posters and promotions for current and upcoming movies and take our seats. Pleasant music plays on the theatre sound system. It's a bit too loud to be just background, and after a couple of songs a voice announces, "You are listening to the soundtrack of the new Disney movie Pocahontas. Look for it wherever audio products are sold." Two more songs and the announcement is repeated, and so on through several cycles until the lights dim.

While I listen to the Pocahontas soundtrack I notice on the back of the seat in front of me a sticker, about 3 by 6 inches, advertising The Edmonton Journal as the best source for movie reviews. I glance about and see one on the back of every seat, hundreds of them row upon row. Sensitized now to commercial messages I notice several people with baseball-style caps in the theatre, every cap with a commercial logo on it, and likewise a number of t-shirts with logos. The lights go down and three previews for upcoming movies come on, including the second Ace Ventura movie out next November, which the boys instantly ask to see...

DAY 328: Saturday July 29.

...A common destination of mail-order catalogues in our household is the bathroom. The Tilley Endurables catalogue was in the basement bathroom through much of the winter and I think I read every page. Currently the L.L Bean Fall 1995 catalogue is the reading of choice in the upstairs bathroom. It is a slick production of 216 full-colour pages of 'outdoorsy' things, from Swiss army knives to clothing to roller blades, and quite a number are tempting. It will be reviewed and studied every day for weeks, and gradually its temptations will be planted in our minds, perhaps to grow some day into full-blown desires...

DAY 331: Tuesday August 1.

...Just after lunch Phillip came up from the basement with a Lego wall poster to put up in his room. The picture shows an action scene of Lego pirates cruising amid Lego south sea islands, and has the Lego logo on it. He will go to sleep and wake up to Lego advertising.

DAY 344: Monday August 14.

Paul and several friends are attending a bicycle safety course in the next five mornings at 'Safety City'. Safety City is a miniature version of a city, with roads, buildings, crosswalks, and so on, designed for children to learn road safety by practising in a realistic but safe setting. It is operated by non-profit groups as a public service. It has been financed largely through corporate sponsors, and in return for their support the buildings in the miniature city are small versions of these businesses: a Tim Horton's Donut shop, a McDonald's, and others, each the size of a large garden shed.

The instructor tells me that at break time the kids get McDonald's cookies and on the Friday they will cycle to McDonald's for a treat. For the next five mornings Paul and the other participants will be surrounded by the presence of these companies, reinforcing the image of McDonald's, Tim Horton's, and the rest as fun, safe, generous and responsible organizations...

...Today's newspaper describes advertising on public buses that completely wraps the outside of the bus. The article focusses on new technology used to produce these ads, which are printed on huge pieces of vinyl. I have noticed these fully-covered buses and yet I don't think I have noted them in this diary before now. They are outstanding, yet are also just part of the setting, and so are both highly visible and yet ordinary and normal, unremarkable in a world saturated with ads.

DAY 348: Friday August 18.

I pick up Paul and a friend at Safety City. As they come cycling past us they excitedly call "We went to McDonald's!" "We had a treat at McDonald's!" I notice a sign with a phone number telling teachers that when they bring a class here McDonald's wants to provide a meal. The boys get treat bags from Safety City and are delighted to find a card offering them a free drink at McDonald's if they are wearing a bike helmet, and two coupons for 10 Tim Horton's Timbits mini-donuts. As I drive home the boys chat at length about how great these treats are, when they will use them, how nice it is of the companies to give them out...

DAY 350: Sunday August 20, 1995

While we are at our dining room table with guests for Sunday supper, Paul looks out the main window and points at a hot-air balloon floating in the clear blue sky a short distance to the south. "Remax," a few of us absentmindedly say, reading aloud the huge logo on the balloon. Sunday family supper in our dining room, no TV or radio or other means for advertising to penetrate our awareness, and this billboard balloon for a real estate company goes floating by the window...

DAY 364: Sunday September 3.

... I go to the symphony concert in the outdoor amphitheatre... I notice the large banners of the corporate sponsors immediately above and behind

the symphony players, but curiously they barely register with me. They are just part of the normal setting. Gradually, however, I become more conscious of them: a big white and blue banner with a logo and the words "Labatt Lite"; beside it the biggest banner, for DuMaurier tobacco products; then a banner for the Edmonton Sun newspaper. Lower down and less ostentatious are banners for two radio stations.

The conductor briefly explains the program. Then he says "In the rush of things last night I forgot something very important. I would like to thank our corporate sponsors for their support of this concert and this series," and the audience applauds the sponsors...

E. The Effects of Advertising and Promotion on Language³, Thought, Identity, and Morality.

E.1 Consumerism, Language, and Thought. Like all familiar language, the language of promotion and advertising gives the sense that it is transparent and neutral. Of course, such is not the case; language is fundamental to thought, identity, and morality. As Deetz (1992) says, "...every linguistic system puts into place certain kinds of social relations and values... Each discourse and attendant technology constitutes ways of knowing the world, privileges certain notions of what is real, and posits personal identities" (p.29,32).

Watching an advertisement or pondering a marketing promotion is not spontaneous engagement using naturally evolving language; these

³ There are many terms that might be used here instead of language: discourse, signs, symbols, etc. I primarily use 'language', with the definition from the Collins English Dictionary (1991): "...a system for the expression of thoughts, feelings, etc., by the use of spoken sounds or conventional symbols". Conventional symbols I interpret broadly, including texts, photos, designs, images, icons, etc.

engagements are constructed and instrumental, and use language that is designed to achieve promotional purposes, language that has a deliberate direction. The ubiquity of advertising and promotion conjures a social convention of consumerism that makes the consumer life seem natural and normal. It also means that consumers are relentlessly engaged with commercial concerns, even at unexpected times: the symphony performance, children's soccer camp, the Sunday dinner table. This relentlessness is important because language is learned socially, through interlocution with others; when it comes to language, our most important teachers are our interlocutors. To illustrate, our confidence that we know what we mean when we use language depends on others.

The meanings that the key words had for me are the meanings they have for *us*, that is, for me and my conversation partners together... in talking about something you and I make it an object for us together... I can only learn what anger, love, anxiety, the aspiration to wholeness, etc. are through my and others' experience of these being objects for *us*. (Taylor, 1989, p.35, italics in original.)

This does not just apply to intangibles like anger, love and aspiration to wholeness. It also applies to physical objects and commercial products. And when those 'others' we are engaged with are using words and symbols as instruments of promotion, deliberately shifting their meanings, then it is unavoidable that my understanding of those words and symbols will sooner or later change. The meaning of wilderness changes as we consider it as a

place to drive a Jeep; the meaning of an item of clothing changes as we discuss it with a clerk; the meaning of a bank service changes as we deal with the bank manager. "...[P]roducts, even physical and practical ones, are inseparable from language... and from patterns of use that are overlaid with ceremonial and cultural significance" (Wernick, 1991, p.32).

Language is vital to thought. Without the symbolic character of language even rudimentary thought and problem-solving would be difficult. Language "...is our most powerful tool for organizing experience, and indeed, for constituting realities" (Bruner, 1986, p.8). It "...is inseparably involved with processes of thinking and reasoning... [I]t is hard to see how complex abstract reasoning could be performed by people without a language" (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.9).

Language that is used as an instrument for promotion works through a process in which a promotion (in semiotic terms, 'the sign', eg. the appearance, name, and description of Wedgwood pottery) associates a product ('the signified', eg. pottery and dishes) with a symbol ('the signifier' eg. the British royal family). As this occurs, there is a two-way transfer of meaning: a product may acquire some of the meaning of the symbol through association (the promoter's usual desire), but the symbol also acquires some of the meaning of the product (Barthes, 1957/1993; Wernick, 1991). For example, a Revy Hardware flyer (June 28) had an illustration on its cover of their staff raising the Canadian flag in the pose of the famous photo of U.S. Marines raising the American flag at the battle of Iwo Jima. The next time I see the original image it may remind me not of heroic and horrifying battle, but of a hardware store.

If language and symbols are subjected to enough promotion, meanings change fundamentally. In my fieldwork notes, Christmas is a stronger symbol of gift-giving and shopping than of the birth of Jesus. “[I]nvesting consumer goods with symbolic significance increases...the subjective worth of brand-name products as such. But... systematically associating cultural symbols with the profane world of commerce also cheapens those symbols as a medium of communicative exchange” (Wernick, 1991, p.30-31). By its pervasiveness, promotion extends its particular meanings into many aspects of communication and understanding: “Advertising surrounds us and enters into us, so that when we speak we may speak in or with reference to the language of advertising and when we see we may see through schemata that advertising has made salient for us” (Schudson, 1984, p.210). It changes our versions of the world, which confirms and explains Schudson’s claim that “...advertising may shape our sense of values even under conditions where it does not generally corrupt our buying habits” (p.210).

The consumer is not a passive recipient of a marketing monologue, but an active conversant with important resources, engaged in responses and initiatives. Schudson (1984) notes the impact of advertising on consumers, but acknowledges that “The normal adult consumer has a lifetime of informational resources and a complex cognitive makeup” with which to assess, screen and discount promotions (p.90). Even so, the consumer-seller relationship is an unbalanced, asymmetrical engagement. Although consumer responses to sellers may include complaints, replies to marketing research, etc., they are dominated by one binary message: buy, or don’t buy. In contrast, the sellers’ responses to consumers take the full range of marketing forms. As well, the resources of consumers --finances, information, expertise, time, etc.-- are generally much more limited than those of sellers. There is also an

insidious constraint on the consumer: consumers draw on their personal experiences and knowledge when they respond to advertising and promotion. These are formed in a social context that is imbued with the language of consumerism, so such experience and knowledge are predisposed to reinforce the role of the consumer (Fairclough, 1989).

The transformative effects of advertising and promotion on the meanings of words and symbols are usually gradual, depending heavily on a great number of imperceptible changes carried along by the overwhelming volume of promotional activity (Fairclough, 1989). But sometimes there are blatant examples of attempts to redefine words, with the intent of redefining thought.

DAY 165: Friday February 17.

...An ad in the Journal for GM Saturn cars has this headline: "Finally, you don't have to 'see dealer for details' " followed by this: "At Saturn you don't see any dealers, just helpful people"...

GM is attempting to change the meaning of 'car dealer': a buyer no longer goes to a car dealer for a new car, but to a 'helpful person'. This not only alters the meaning of car dealer, it alters the meaning of 'helpful person'. A much richer example of the change that advertising and promotion can bring to meaning is apparent in the following advertisement, which concerns one of the iconic corporations of the consumer culture, McDonald's:

DAY 156: Wednesday February 8.

...The Journal insert contains a full page ad from The Franklin Mint. Headline: "The First Officially Authorized **McDonald's® Collector Plate**". There is a large photo of a plate decorated with a busy urban scene of a 1950s McDonald's drive-in, with crowds (overwhelmingly caucasian) of happy people, some outside the restaurant and others in the streets or busy in their yards. The text in smaller print says:

"The Franklin Mint presents their first-ever

officially authorized McDonald's Anniversary Collector Plate.

McDonald's. Their Golden Arches® are legendary around the world. A cheerful symbol of joyful family memories and wholesome fun. Now, all the warmth and 1950s nostalgia of the very first McDonald's comes to life in the *first-ever* officially authorized McDonald's Anniversary Collector Plate.

"Golden Moments." Commissioned by The Franklin Mint to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of McDonald's. Created by award-winning artist Bill Bell. In the tradition of the most prized collectibles, this heirloom collector plate is crafted of fine porcelain and lavished with breathtaking color. It is hand-numbered and bordered in 24 carat gold. And each imported plate bears the artist's signature mark on its reverse side.

Priced at just \$39.95, this Limited Edition will be *closed forever* after just 45 firing days. Available *exclusively* from The Franklin Mint, 90 Royal Crest Court, Markham, Ontario L3R 9T6."

There is a McDonald's logo above this text, and an order form beside it at the bottom of the page, which includes a guarantee of satisfaction.

In this promotion McDonald's is no longer a seller of fast food, but "A symbol of joyful family memories and wholesome fun". From the illustration in the ad there is not one clear image of a hamburger, but there are many dozens of people, all of whom are happy: babies do not cry, children do not fight, people do not get impatient in line-ups. The original meaning of McDonald's --a fast food restaurant specializing in hamburgers-- is diminished and displaced by a new meaning of "cheerfulness", "joy", "wholesome fun", "family memories", and in the picture an overwhelmingly caucasian, safe, clean, prosperous society. McDonalds' business isn't hamburgers or even fast food, it is happiness (right down to the "McHappy Meals" for children). The equation of consuming stops being 'if you are hungry get a

meal at McDonald's' and becomes instead 'if you want happiness get a meal at McDonald's'. McDonalds' marketing rises to a new level of effectiveness and subtlety when its name stops meaning 'fast food' and starts meaning 'happiness'.

If we know our world through the language of commercial promotion, we will act to make our world in that image. As Foucault's work makes clear, how we know something shapes how we do something. The language of commercial promotion helps to instil a perception of the world as an agglomeration of consumer products and commodities. The world is comprehended as a set of commercial opportunities filled with commodities, and commodities yet-to-be. I frequently noted examples in my diary (there were many beyond these):

DAY 65: Wednesday November 9.

In an interview on CBC radio a police spokesperson defended a decision to charge higher rates for certain services. At one point the spokesperson referred to policing as a "product". The interviewer asked "Since when did policing become a product?" He did not get a clear answer...

DAY 130: Friday January 13.

...a story on the radio discussed trapping wolves in Alberta to repopulate areas where they are extinct in the U.S. The Canadian government is not charging the U.S. for the wolves, and one critic said "We should be charging \$5000.00 a wolf; they are a commodity like anything else."

DAY 186: Wednesday March 8.

...a front-page story in the newspaper has this headline: "Cash-strapped School Board plans to peddle its know-how". It begins: "Psst. Want to buy some school services? The Edmonton Public School District is going entrepreneurial, setting up a Crown-corporation-style body to market its know-how to other districts and public institutions".

In these cases, people are thinking of police services, wildlife, and public education with new meaning: these items are now commodities. The process through which items become commodities to be bought and sold is commonly associated with the rise of capitalism, particularly in the Marxist tradition (Corrigan, 1997; Heilbroner, 1980). But in the examples above, neither the police, the wolves, nor the public schools are privately-owned for profit, and there is no consideration that they should be. Nonetheless, they are coming to be regarded as commodities. Perhaps the process of commodification has outgrown its for-profit origins and become a way of understanding the processes and property of government. Corrigan would say this is a process of 'desacralization'. He notes that some objects never become commodities because they are deemed by society to be 'sacred', priceless, beyond exchange value. For example, national historical sites or certain religious symbols are not commodities because they are kept out of the system of exchange. But there are no guarantees, even for these 'sacred' objects: "Once the process of commodification touches the sacred, the latter is in serious danger of losing its reason for existence for it is no longer protected from the exigencies of the ordinary commodity world" (Corrigan, p.39). Power in day-to-day consuming seems to operate in part by encouraging a discourse that makes almost everything appear to be a commodity.

E.2 Self-identity In A Consumer Society. My self-identity --the sense of who I am-- has a basic impact on what I think, the choices I make, how I live, and the actions I take. My fieldwork can be seen as a kind of confirmation of this, an unintended experiment in changing my self-identity (I say unintended because I did not set out to change my sense of self). When I thought of myself as 'a green' my actions, lifestyle, diet, and so on, were different than when I thought of myself as 'a brown'. Although this was entirely artificial in

the beginning, I started to feel my sense of self change as the year proceeded, actually identifying myself increasingly as a green. It became clear to me that a tremendous achievement of consumerism is to create and sustain the self-identity of the modern consumer. Giddens (1991) gives a sense of the connection between the consumer self-identity and the urge to constantly consume: “To a greater or lesser degree, the project of the self [under modern consumerism] becomes translated into one of the possession of desired goods and the pursuit of artificially framed styles of life” (p.99).

Advertising and promotion can have this effect on the self because self-identity is highly malleable. The self is a multiplicity of factors, constantly in flux, defined through language, experience, and context. The self is not an object like others; it is inherently reflexive, simultaneously third person and first person (Townley, 1995). It is an ongoing achievement in perpetual re-creation, requiring constant maintenance. The self is not something that arrives at birth and remains permanently embedded; we do not possess a self as we possess a heart or a liver. The latter are independent of our understandings of ourselves and our world (Taylor, 1989, p.34). In contrast, the self exists only through these understandings, and is constantly subject to scrutiny, management and alteration by itself (Foucault, 1990a). As Taylor says,

One is a self only among other selves... My self-definition is understood as an answer to the question Who I am. And this question finds its original sense in the interchange of speakers. I define who I am by defining where I speak from, in the family tree, in social space, in the geography of social statuses and functions, in my intimate relations... (p.35.)

In Giddens’ (1991) terms, “Intersubjectivity does not derive from subjectivity, but the other way around... Self-identity...is not something that is just given...but something that has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual” (p.51, 52).

E.2.1 Constructing The Consumer Self-identity. Self-identity is constructed in an ongoing process that is largely dependent on language and social interchange (Taylor 1989). Given this, the immense scale of promotion and advertising must have an impact on the self-identities of people in a consumer society. Promotion influences self-identity just as it influences the identity of objects. Just as the meaning of the photo of U.S. Marines at Iwo Jima changes when it is related to a hardware store, the meaning of who I am --my self-identity-- is changed as I am related to commercial products and promotions. Some advertising campaigns make this readily apparent. In April and May of the fieldwork I noted an advertising campaign that was a particularly clear example of how promotion aims directly at people's identity. The theme of the campaign was 'I Deserve':

DAY 220: Tuesday April 11.

A half-page ad in the Journal catches my eye. It is for the Bank of Nova Scotia (Scotiabank). There is a large black-and-white photo of a husband, wife and child smiling happily into the camera while standing in front of a tray of seedling plants. The lead text accompanying the photo is this:

"We deserve to pay off our mortgage sooner.

We deserve flexibility and control.

We deserve to be treated with respect.

We deserve a reason to come back.

We deserve to be treated as if we're important to our bank."

This is followed in different print by: "Get the credit you deserve. Scotia Mortgages." and several sentences about how well the Bank of Nova Scotia will treat you, including this sentence:

"It's just one of the many ways we help you get the credit you deserve as a customer, and as a person."

This was the first of six entries I made on ads in this campaign. Each presented the same theme but in different settings:

DAY 227: Tuesday April 18.

In today's Journal is another "I Deserve" ad for the Bank of Nova Scotia. It is set against a photo of a woman in business clothes chatting with another woman, presumably working for the bank. The lead text is:

"I deserve to save hundreds of dollars a year in interest charges.

I deserve to feel more comfortable about borrowing money.

I deserve to be treated with respect.

I do not deserve to be charged for a lot of frills I never use.

I deserve to be in control."

Then there is the slogan "Get the credit you deserve." and further text, including the sentence

"We have many ways to help you get the credit you deserve as a customer, and as a person".

Other ads in the series showed a father and teenage child working together in the kitchen, and a mother and young child cuddling together. Each told the reader what they deserved: one said "For that new car, or whatever you need, you deserve a Scotia Plan Loan."; another said "I deserve the freedom to give myself a loan". The latter phrase, by claiming the customer gives himself a loan, gives an added twist to the advertisement's gambit with identity. Who is the lender and who is the borrower? Every ad included the phrase "... get the credit you deserve as a customer, and as a person."

This advertising aimed directly at my self-identity, explicitly trying to shape how I "as a person" think about myself, in this case in relation to credit. By

presenting credit as something people deserve, these ads turn credit into a right. By redefining credit (traditionally a revocable privilege that was gradually earned) as a right, it redefines, in effect, the meaning of a 'person': a person is 'incomplete', even violated, if he or she does not have credit. These particular ads intensify this effect by explicitly reaching beyond the reader as a bank customer to the reader's life in general, "as a person". A change in the meaning of a product (credit) is intended to cause a change in the meaning of a person. This shift in language as well as in self-identity illustrates the close link between the two.

The 'I Deserve' ads were just one example from my journal of ads that directly told me about myself:

DAY 243: Thursday May 4.

...In just three pages of The Journal there are the following ads that tell me about myself: There is an ad for Scotiabank with the headline "I deserve to save hundreds of dollars a year in interest charges." There is an ad for GM with the title "Everything You Want in a Minivan!" There is also a half-page ad for Nu-Maid Dairy with this paragraph: "You've told us you want milk produced by local farms. A wholesome family of milk products for your whole family. And a dairy that's committed to your community. Well, we've listened. And promise to deliver." As well, an ad for The Cooperators car insurance has this headline: "You should be talking to us."

By relating the customer to the product, promotion affects the identities and meanings of both. The identity of the product is affected by 'me' in design, manufacturing, packaging, distribution and marketing, because considerations are given at each of these stages to the consumer. Likewise, my identity is affected. I become someone who wants a GM Minivan; someone who wants milk produced by local farmers; someone who should talk to Cooperators car insurance; someone who deserves credit at the bank. An experienced consumer may ignore all these particular claims, but the persistent embrace of

advertising and promotion, with their purchase on language and thought, begins to shape what Taylor (1989) calls the “...geography of social statuses and functions” (p.35) from which one forms a self-identity.

E.2.2 Consumerism, Self-identity, and Self-narratives. Maintaining a coherent self-identity, particularly in a fluid and rapidly changing world, requires maintaining a coherent self-narrative. Self-narratives are the stories that one tells about oneself to oneself and others, and they are crucial to self-identity: “The existential question of self-identity is bound up with the fragile nature of the biography which the individual ‘supplies’ about herself. A person’s identity is not to be found in behaviour, nor --important though this is-- in the reactions of others, but in the capacity *to keep a particular narrative going*” (Giddens 1991, p.54, italics in original).

Promotion and advertising create and adapt narratives, turning them into instruments for achieving particular ends. The operation of promotion and advertising on self-identity and self-narratives provides a useful example of the relation between power and narrative: promotional narratives become what Foucault might call gadgets of power. They become part of the culture’s broader repertoire of narratives, contributing to the self-narratives of modern consumers, and in turn to their self-identities. And as I shall discuss in the next chapter, the effect of self-narratives becomes intensified through techniques such as the confession.

As was noted earlier in the dissertation, narrative theory is often related to theories of self-identity. People use and adapt narratives --in fragments and in wholes-- to help form their self-identities. Witherell (1991) states that “The coherence of the self is grounded in its narrative structure” (p.92), and that narratives are centrally important in the formation of self-identity and a

person's notions of time, value, and purpose. Sarbin (1986, 1993) proposes the 'narratory principle': "...human beings think, perceive, imagine, and make moral choices according to narrative structures" (1986, p.8). Murray (1989), after applying Harré's theories of social and personal identity to specific cases, concludes that people live narratives; both personal and social identity are constructed through narrative, as a person finds stories to tell about her or him self, and to emulate. The role of narratives in establishing and changing self-identity is important in the rapidly developing field of narrative psychological therapy (Coles, 1989; Parry and Doan, 1994).

Narratives are not the only aspects of self-identity; for example, people also gain identity from belonging to certain categories (age, skin colour, income, nationality, etc.). But "*Narration* is the most central moment that structures human identity. This does not simply mean that identity takes a narrative form, but that it is accomplished through the interpretation of narrative texts" (Brown, 1994, p.280, italics in original). In Ricoeur's (1991) words, "...the self does not know itself immediately, but only indirectly, through the detour of cultural signs of all sorts... among them the narratives of daily life" (p.80).

It is clear that self-narratives are centrally important to self-identity. What I argue here is that advertising and promotion make extensive use of narratives, and that this has an important effect on self-identity. In turn, the changing and reinforcing of narratives, including self-narratives, becomes an important aspect of the operation of power in day-to-day life.

Bruner (1985, 1986, 1987) provides analysis that is particularly clear in revealing the complementarities between narrative and identity. Bruner is generally interested in narrative as a mode of thought (in contrast, for example, to logic), and is specifically interested in self-narratives and how

they are constructed. He begins from the position that when a person describes his or her own life, “It is constructed... through active ratiocination, by the same kind of ratiocination through which we construct narratives” (p.13). From the practically limitless experiences of any given life, we include some things and exclude others, account for time in certain ways, impute intentions, and provide conclusions and outcomes. The process of telling about one’s life and self to oneself, and to others, is the same as the process of telling a story, with one important difference: in self-narratives, the narrator and the central figure share an identity. As an object, the self is aware of itself and has the capacity to change itself.

Self-narratives are “...notably unstable...[and]...highly susceptible to cultural, interpersonal, and linguistic influences” (Bruner, 1987, p.14). This instability does not mean that just anything will do for a self-narrative. “One imposes criteria of rightness on the self-report of a life just as one imposes them on the account of a football game or the report of an event in nature” (Bruner, p.14). These criteria of rightness originate with the narrative models provided by a culture. These include the canonical characters recognized and accepted by a society: warrior, business leader, mother, sports hero, yuppie, environmental activist, etc. At any given time these “...reflect the prevailing theories about ‘possible lives’ that are part of one’s culture” (Bruner, p.15). In the consumer society presented in my fieldwork, and especially in advertising and promotion, the cultural conventions, language, and prevailing models of possible lives are largely based on consuming. The dominant canonical character of my fieldwork might be called ‘the happy consumer’.

Narrative models go beyond characters to include actions and situations. Taken together, the narrative resources of a culture are important indicators of the nature of that culture:

...one important way of characterizing a culture is by the narrative models it makes available for describing the course of a life. And the tool kit of any culture is replete not only with a stock of canonical life narratives (heroes, Marthas, tricksters, etc.), but with combinable formal constituents from which its members can construct their own life narratives: canonical stances and circumstances, as it were. (Bruner, 1987, p.15.)

Bruner (1987) goes one step further. He argues that if cultural and linguistic conventions are consistent enough they shape thought, memory, perception, and future action.

...eventually the culturally shaped cognitive and linguistic processes that guide the self-telling of life narratives achieve the power to structure perceptual experience, to organize memory, to segment and purpose-build the very "events" of a life. In the end, we *become* the autobiographical narratives by which we "tell about" our lives. And given the cultural shaping to which I referred, we also become variants of the culture's canonical forms... [T]he ways of telling and the ways of conceptualizing that go with them become so habitual that they finally become recipes for structuring experience itself, for laying down routes into memory, for not only guiding the life narrative up to the present but directing it into the future. (p.14-15, p.31, italics in original, underlining mine.)

One result of this is what Bruner (1986) calls "the regulatory self" (p. 67).

There is a constant process of self-correction and self-monitoring as a person moves through the transactions of life. A society creates a self that regulates its own activities in accordance with norms provided, indeed often explicitly taught, to a large extent by narratives, and in a consumer society these are often presented in advertisements and promotions.

Promotions, especially advertisements, commonly have obvious narrative elements, telling stories of fulfilled dreams, romantic adventure, careful engineering, and so on. For example, the following advertisement was part of a promotion for Swedish coffee, but it could have been the beginning of a storybook:

DAY 142: Wednesday January 25.

...[The text of the ad] begins, "The streets were cobblestone, winding down to salt-stained wooden wharves where shipments of rare coffees, spices and other fine goods were unloaded from fleet clipper ships. It was 1823. And here, in the Swedish port of Gavle, 28-year-old Victor Theodor Engwall watched the ships and their cargoes arrive from far-off lands..." And so it proceeds, eventually suggesting that I will become part of this heritage if I buy this coffee, joining not only the ranks of countless people with excellent taste, but also Swedish Royalty...

Usually the narrative elements in advertising are more fragmentary, but each fragment evokes entire scenes, especially if it is coordinated with strong visual images:

DAY 198: Monday March 20.

Today's Edmonton Journal runs a half-page ad with a large photo of two older men on a park bench having an enjoyable chat. In large letters below the photo are these words:

"70 years. Booms and busts. Good times and bad jokes. Grand plans and grandchildren. Wind and weather. Friendships and hopes. Smiles and stories. And all along the way, it's always been Ford."

Then in handwritten script: "It's always been Ford.", followed in bold letters by "Alberta Ford Mercury Dealers" and the Ford and Mercury logo.

DAY 60: Friday November 4.

...One of the inserts in the Journal today is from Hitachi. The text focusses not on the product but on the consumer. The front has full-colour photos with this text:

One day a kiss will change your life.
One day you will create a memory.
One day your team will win it all.
One day you will feel the music.

When I turn the page there are big bold letters: "One Day you'll want the best." followed by Hitachi's name, the slogan "Exceptional

Performance", and this text:

One day something exceptional will happen. Two words will change your life forever. The team you cheered for all those years will finally take the cup. You'll discover a song you want to hear again and again. These are moments that are irreplaceable. Moments you want to experience to the fullest. That's why there's Hitachi. Home electronics that deliver exceptional performance when you really want it. Take a look at Hitachi today, because who knows what could happen tomorrow.

It was a rich, sensuous advertisement presenting narratives of happy action, with me as the hero. How do I celebrate my success? With, or at least through, Hitachi home electronics. There is an impressive stock of canonical life narratives in this ad, including romantic love, heroic struggle, sports championship, beautiful music, and even a glimpse of immortality, and I am presented to myself as the leading figure for each.

Sometimes the narrative elements in promotions become individualized. In the following example, my name was placed directly into a text that, in just a few phrases, made me a hero in the compelling story of 'striking it rich', with all the imagery that story evokes. This canonical narrative was adapted to me personally, so that I would imagine myself in terms the promoters wanted me to:

DAY 39: Friday October 14:

One of the items in the post proclaims in big bold capital letters "KEVIN TAFT VERIFIED AS UNCONTESTED \$1,000,000 WINNER". Skeptical though I am I open the envelope and read some of the material. It is enough fun to read that I laugh at the audacity of it all, the way they have inserted my name in the sentences about becoming rich: "Maybe you'll choose to quit your job. Maybe you'll set up your own company -- and make millions more for the Tafts..."

Even when it isn't obvious, promotions can be loaded with fragments of

narratives that together provide substantial structure for me to adopt narratives for, and of, myself. For example, I conducted a careful analysis of a flyer received from the Home Depot hardware store on November 19 (day 75). There is no apparent story in the flyer, but it still contains crucial narrative elements. There is a cast of characters, with specific traits. “You” the customer have needs to be met: “Fix Up Your Home”, “Find Great Gifts!”. “We” the store have friendly, knowledgeable people to help you: “We’ve Got What Ya Need”, “We Have the Answer”. There are pictures of smiling staff helping happy customers, and there is a sense of urgency and narrative direction --a plot-- as customers must make their purchases before Christmas arrives, the special prices end, and time runs out.

E.3 Promotion and Morality. Promotions and advertisements tell me what I deserve, want, and feel, engendering a sense of self that becomes generalized beyond specific products. The idea ‘I deserve’, once implanted, is unlikely to limit itself to bank services. This is not just a matter of self-identity, it is a matter of morality. Morality --including both “discriminations of right or wrong, better or worse, higher or lower” and “what makes our lives meaningful or fulfilling” (Taylor, 1989, p.4)-- is intimately integrated with self-identity. Self-identity is a result of having preferences, commitments, and judgments, of having standpoints for assessing worthiness.

To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand. My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. In other words, it is the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand. (Taylor, p.27)

Taylor argues that these moral frames or horizons are inescapable for humans; we cannot make sense of our world without them. If everything is valued equally nothing has value, and living and identity lose coherence.

The connection between morality and identity is illustrated in the notion of identity crisis, or what Giddens (1991) calls 'personal meaninglessness'. An identity crisis is often put in terms of confusion over 'knowing who oneself is', of separation from others, and of loss of purpose. In moral terms it can be understood as confusion over knowing where one stands in relation to a range of important questions, and of being alienated from the moral resources needed to establish a personal purpose and live a full and satisfying existence (Giddens, 1991; Taylor, 1989). In an identity crisis, people "...lack a frame or horizon within which things can take on a stable significance... the meaning of [life's] possibilities is unfixed, labile, or underdetermined" (Taylor, p.27-28). This is aggravated in a consumer society by the speed of change --which helps sustain a high level of consuming-- and the constant subversion of fulfilment to create new needs. Giddens calls personal meaninglessness "a fundamental problem in circumstances of late modernity" (p.9), circumstances which no doubt contribute to what Lasch (1991) calls 'the culture of narcissism', populated by consumers "...longing to be free from longing" (p.241).

Near the end of our first, and most difficult, green month, I reflected on why people often asked, what job will you get after your PhD?, but never asked, what will you learn from your PhD? I recognize now that it is a matter of identity and morality.

DAY 52: Thursday October 27.

...I am sometimes quite aware of an internal feeling I have that my PhD must in some fairly obvious way have an economically beneficial outcome. It should help me get a job and increase my income or it will not have been worth it...

What makes this feeling powerful is the idea that my worth is strongly related to what I consume. If asked whether I believed this I would deny it, as would almost everyone... But it seems to me

that many people live as if it were true... The fact that I live at a material level higher than, say, the people who lived in my house in the 1950s and 1960s, is not enough to make me feel satisfied. Nor is it terribly important that I can have enough food to eat myself to obesity if I wish, and enough clothes to give bags away to charity. Nor is it enough that I have good health, a vital mind, flourishing children, and good friends. 'More' seems to always be chanted at me, just as in the Zellers' Club Z catalogue, which is conceived with perfect clarity around the word 'MORE' for all its high-gloss, sumptuous, sensual 156 pages.

I have been trying to come to terms with what it is like to read the Journal newspaper every day, which averages almost 2/3 advertising; to wander through the malls and the stores; to drive past the billboards, watch television or listen to commercial radio; to walk through the neighbourhood and see the houses being renovated and expanded, or completely replaced; to listen to the dreams of my children, and indeed my wife and myself; to read the financial reports on the success of the economy and listen to the platforms of the politicians. In its clearest form it all comes down to the Zellers' theme. It all comes down to 'MORE'...

'More' is part of the morality that is relentlessly conveyed in promotions.

Promotions constantly present a preferred, happier, more highly-valued way of life, based on consuming (and most definitely not on reducing). Whatever the product, it must appeal to values held by the consumer if it is to be successful. Of necessity, then, promotion must identify and reinforce values, and if need be create them. "[A]dvertising's first-order function as promotion leads it to engage with the values, norms, goals, and dreams of those to whom it is addressed" (Wernick, 1991, p. 26). The pervasiveness of promotion generates a consumer morality that promises personal happiness through endless consuming. In turn, this consumer morality is a way of continually re-creating consumer selves.

The consumer morality stands in sharp contrast to the morality of the

committed environmentally-mindful consumer. My interviews provide examples:

K: Are you satisfied with your overall level of consumption? Or do you have dreams or ambitions for other things or more stuff?

Brown #1: Oh ya, I always have those things. I want to buy a house in the next year. I'd love to have a truck.

K: Pick-up truck?

Brown #1: Ya. I think maybe two years, that's kind of my dream...

.....

K: You've got a beautiful hardwood floor, and I see lots of wood around the house. Would you think you might alter your buying habits and that sort of thing if it was tied to a rainforest issue?

Brown #2a: I don't know, I haven't thought about that aspect of it particularly. I have not [changed my buying] in the past. If I have been able to afford it I've bought it... To me it's not even a question. We, and I have to include myself I suppose, we are not willing to...

.....

Brown #3: ...If I want it, I want to buy it...

K: What about you working at your job all week. Do you need to have something to show for all that effort?

Brown #3: I think so. I think it's like: Ya, I've worked hard all week and I deserve a treat. I deserve something.

.....

Green #1: I believe in material adequacy and social wealth. I think our wider society's got the adjectives mixed up. They've switched the adjectives. So I think of myself as trying to [be a] subsistence consumer...

Green #1: ...environmentalism has evolved into a kind of creed or value system that puts an extra layer of meaning on the things that I do. I get on the bus and I look around and I think about this act of riding the bus as not just transportation, but I'm practising something. I'm practising my beliefs...

.....

Green #2: ...there's only so much I can do, but I can do that much and so I choose to do that much, out of a sense of responsibility for the planet, in terms of the ecological justice, in terms of social justice for my fellow human beings across the world... it's a sense of responsibility.

The environmentally-mindful interviewees have a clear sense that their choices are moral. For example, riding the bus is understood as having moral implications for Green #1, while there is no sense for Brown #1 that buying a truck is a moral issue.

The interweaving of identity and morality is confirmed in each of these statements, for they are all highly personal. If persons' identities are framed by consuming, then a move away from consuming risks their self-identities. Their senses of what matters are put in doubt. In becoming green, a consumer needs to learn a new morality along with a new identity, making the transition from brown to green all the more difficult. A thorough transition from brown to green eventually requires a change in identity, morality, language and thought.

F. Conclusion.

Power in day-to-day consuming, as I found in my fieldwork, operates in part through a discourse that makes a particular kind of consuming appear to be natural and normal. An important component of this discourse is advertising and promotion, which encourage language, thought, identity, and morality that support consuming. They help to fix people's identities into particular social, linguistic, and moral positions, and through repetition, to hold them there. This stabilizes patterns of action and thought. In the process, the product and the consumer are lined up to fit one another as two halves of a circle. This is not simply a matter of fitting the product to the consumer; the identity of the consumer must also fit the product. As Wernick (1991) notes, "Consumer and commodity must be defined in such a way that their respective attributes perfectly match" (p.38). Promotions are as effective in creating particular kinds of consumers as they are in creating particular kinds of products. They create appealing narratives for both products and consumers, and then encourage people to live them out. As a promotion does this, it constructs "... a personal and social identity for its potential users" (Wernick, p.30), creating a society of consumers. As a successful discourse, advertising and promotion are as much about the processes for living the consumer life as they are about the objects to be consumed. People perceive this discourse but are not *mindful* of its importance, because its operation is built into other activities. The pervasiveness of advertising and promotion reduces their visibility; they soon function mostly unnoticed, becoming taken for granted. As I noted in my journal, even at a time when I was trying to maintain a high awareness of commercialization I could be surprisingly unaware of buses entirely wrapped in vinyl advertising, or huge banners for

corporate sponsors. This experience is not unusual.⁴

In the following example, which occurred during one of our green months, the ability of consumerism to create a natural and normal world can be seen in full, yet nearly invisible, operation:

DAY 218: Tuesday, April 11.

...Later in the evening I go shopping for groceries, and for supplies for Paul's birthday party... My first stop is Debaji's food store, where I buy several organic items: carrots, lettuce, broccoli, apples, oranges, and free-range eggs... The costs of the organic items are very high, and the cashier, a rotund young man I've not seen before, makes various comments: "What's the bread like here? I only eat McGavin's [i.e. mass-produced white bread]", and "I just like to eat, I'm not too concerned about how healthy it is." When the lettuce comes in at \$4.99 for one head, the apples at \$1.60 each, and the broccoli at \$8.32 for a moderate-sized bunch, I try to be nonchalant in the face of these exceedingly high costs. He, on the other hand, lets his amazement show: "Are you sure you want these?" he asks, and makes it obvious I can leave them behind. "I don't get it. What's the difference you notice with organics?" I try to explain but he seems to think I am out of my mind.

...Then I go to McKernan IGA to finish getting supplies for the birthday party. These include 6 2-litre bottles of soft drinks, 3-dozen wieners, and 4 large boxes of potato chips.

I only realize later that it strikes neither the cashier nor me as odd that I spend so much on junk food (\$7.14 on soft drinks, \$4.76 on potato chips, \$8.97 on wieners), but that the cashier at Debaji's earlier in the evening was dumbfounded that I would spend \$8.00 for organic broccoli.

My actions as a green consumer did not make sense to the cashier at Debaji's.

⁴ For example, Schudson (1984) reports research that most people cannot specifically remember a television commercial minutes after they have seen it; and also reports on the 'sleeper effect' of advertising, in which ads seem to have little specific impact until the consumer is at the physical and mental point of purchase.

They were in conflict with his thought and language (he 'doesn't get it' when I try to explain what I am doing); with his identity as a brown consumer; and with his morality (he obviously thinks I am mistaken to be doing what I do). He could not comprehend a purpose or morality which would justify spending \$20.00 on a small supply of organic vegetables. In fact, my actions felt unnatural and abnormal to me as well, though I carried them through because of my fieldwork commitment. Yet shortly after, neither the second cashier nor I found it odd that I spent over \$20.00 on 'junk food'. Presumably, our reactions stemmed in part from the scale of advertising and promotion for soft drinks and snacks, which often have potent narrative elements.

To say that advertising and promotion unavoidably influence people is not to say that they make some thoughts and actions certain and others impossible, but rather that they make some more likely and others improbable. When only one page in 320 of advertising shows any environmental concern, the likelihood of readers seriously considering environmental factors in their purchases is very low, though not zero. What one can safely say is that the promotion and advertising identified in this fieldwork increases tendencies to consume, trivializes issues of recycling and reusing, and renders invisible the option of reducing consumption. It implants a consumer identity and morality, differentiating the acceptable from the rejected, right from wrong, higher from lower. The Pontiac Firefly is preferred to the bicycle, hardwood floors are preferred to tropical rainforests, Jeeps are preferred to hiking, consuming is preferred to reducing. Advertising and promotion create directionality, consistently selecting for certain outcomes.

Advertising and promotion are intended to create a response, and it is largely in the response that the person is drawn into the role of the modern consumer.

The act of responding, even if it is negative, acknowledges the promotion and may help to create the consumer. Through my response I am engaged in the terms of the discourse, I validate its language and thought, I must contend with its morality, and I expose my sense of self to new possibilities. As these responses multiply they form a series of commitments and possibilities that define the way of life of the consumer (brown, or in refusal, green). Through their reality the responses become symbols to the self of what the self is; they become what Schudson (1984) calls "...molds for thought and feeling... equipment for living" (p.232). They become expressions of the consumer way of life, obtaining a substantiveness that privileges certain thoughts and actions and discourages others.

Because advertising and promotion are so visible and pervasive, it would be tempting to focus an analysis of power and day-to-day consuming exclusively on them, taking a cue, for example, from Wernick (1991) or Ewen (1976). If my research design had not required me to 'make trouble' by living as a green consumer, my dissertation might be mostly an elaboration of this chapter. Such is not the case. I certainly return to advertising and promotion many times in subsequent chapters, but within days of beginning my second month of fieldwork, and our first of living green, I realized that there was far more to the operation of power in day-to-day consuming than could be explained through advertising and promotion.

4. Norms and Normalization.

A. Introduction.

The first month of my fieldwork seemed 'natural'. It was uneventful, more or less normal for us. As the previous chapter reveals, I was impressed and a bit surprised by the huge scale of print advertising delivered to our house, and by the intrusiveness of advertising and promotion in every aspect of our lives. But these things did not disorient me. They were essentially familiar parts of my day-to-day life.

The second month of my fieldwork, October, was a different matter. This was our first month of living green, and almost immediately I felt the disruption. As a means of implementing Garfinkel's advice of 'making trouble', it was a success. Living by the guidelines I had prepared meant some significant changes, and these were disorienting. Things were no longer normal for us as consumers.

The pressures to be a 'normal' consumer in Edmonton are strong. Some of the pressures are informal and casual. Others are deliberate and highly refined, including several of the central mechanisms of disciplinary power identified by Foucault: surveillance, the examination, correct training, and the confession. Foucault identified these techniques in formal institutions such as prisons, clinics, factories, the military, and schools. It is an indicator of their effectiveness that these techniques have transferred very successfully to the much more fluid and decentralized organization of day-to-day consuming. Residents of Edmonton are not prisoners of consumerism, but they are confined by it.

These pressures of normalization, I found, are interwoven with narratives. This is particularly discernible with the confession, the effects of which become much clearer when it is understood as a self-narrative, or autobiography. Narratives also share with Foucauldian mechanisms of power the creation of directionality, and the closely related effect of privileging and subjugating knowledge. When narratives and Foucauldian power are joined, some knowledge disappears completely.

This chapter begins with examples from my fieldwork of casual social pressures which encouraged me to fit the social norms of a consumer society. These norms were brought into sharp focus when our family shifted away from them during our green months, and encountered an array of pressures to 'return to normal'. These pressures continued throughout the year of fieldwork, but as the months passed and I became an experienced green consumer I was surprised to sense my personal norms begin to change. I began to adopt the norms of green consuming as my own, and to some degree I slipped out of synchronization with the norms of the consumer society. I began to see more clearly that a norm is an ongoing achievement rather than a fixed mark.

The chapter then discusses more formal pressures to be a normal consumer, and it is with these that Foucauldian analysis of normalization and power has the most direct relevance. The fieldwork illustrates the links among normalization, surveillance, examination, correct training, and confession. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the relation of norms with narratives, focussing on the confession and the subjugation of knowledge.

B. Norms in the Fieldwork.

‘Norm’ has two meanings, roughly parallel to ‘is’ and ‘ought’. The ‘ought’ meaning concerns a preferred standard (eg. sexual conduct, social behaviour, consumer choices) against which what ‘is’ can be judged. What ‘is’ may be the norm in the sense of being average, while what ‘ought to be’ is the norm in the sense of being healthy or desired. The two meanings easily slide into one another. As Hacking (1991) says, the word ‘normal’ bridges “...the fact/value distinction, whispering in your ear that what is normal is also all right” (p.160).

Despite appearances, ‘ought-to-be’ social norms are not static. They are dynamic processes through which things are assessed as preferred or not preferred. An ‘ought-to-be’ norm is a process for selecting against some elements (acts, dispositions, objects, persons, institutions, etc.) and in favour of others. This selectivity is what gives norms their directionality. When a norm, filter-like, consistently selects for certain elements, it creates a pattern among them that can be readily perceived and understood as a direction. (Pepper, 1958.) This, I believe, is what gives Foucauldian technologies of normalization the ability to have direction without intent. It is also a vital basis, I will argue, for the relationship of Foucauldian power and narrative structures.

Norms take many forms. They are not limited to widely held guidelines for proper behaviour, as is commonly accepted in the social sciences. Rather, “...there are as many different kinds of good and bad as there are kinds of selective system selecting pro and con” (Pepper, 1958, p.688). For example, personal and social norms may differ, as between the social norms of a consumer society and the personal norms of an environmental activist.

Social pressures to be 'normal' range from the casual to the calculated. In the fieldwork, examples of casual normalizing pressures were common, and I encountered them most sharply during October, my second month of fieldwork and my first month of living 'green'.

DAY 31: Thursday October 6.

This morning feels like a moment of reckoning with being a green consumer. Our supplies from last month are running out and I must replace them, but I am not yet sure where I will go, what I will get, or how much it will cost. We have been out of eggs for 2 days, I used the last of our cheese in the boys' lunches today, and we are low on fruit. Jeanette has invited a friend over for supper, which adds an extra twist. In fact it led to a bit of friction between Jeanette and me just after the boys left for school. We were talking about what to serve, and Jeanette suggested a stir fry with pork. I volunteered to buy the ingredients because I was shopping anyway, at which point Jeanette requested that I buy a large quantity of stewing beef to make stews which we could freeze. I wasn't prepared to do this, at least until I check out some 'green' suppliers of meat. And I want to reduce our meat consumption as part of the 'green' notion of eating lower on the food chain. One thing led to the next and soon we were in a real debate about how I should shop, what we should eat, how I was going to carry significant quantities of things without a car, etc. It got a bit heated, and none of it would have happened if I wasn't trying to buck the system. Normally, I would just hop in the van and come back an hour later with bags of whatever food we wanted...

...This afternoon after school, Phillip was picking apart some styrofoam and dropping it on the grass. I asked him not to because it littered. He stopped doing it, but called me 'an environmental nut' or some such term. I was surprised because he has never used that term or had that attitude before. At first I just ignored it, but now it bothers me a bit. I can sense some pressure growing on me even from my family to be more 'normal'...

DAY 32: Friday October 7.

...Thanksgiving weekend starts tomorrow.

Tomorrow guests, including relatives, are coming for supper. Right away I begin thinking about making this a 'greener' meal... Jeanette and I discuss what we will serve, and Jeanette, who enjoys cooking and doesn't get much chance, would like to prepare it. We settle on lasagna and I suggest vegetarian lasagna. Her response, which I can sympathize with, is "I'm not prepared for the hassle that would create with our guests". To serve vegetarian instead of beef lasagna would lead to rejection of the food, or at best resigned acceptance, from some of our guests...

DAY 39: Friday October 14.

...After supper friends come by for coffee and cake... They are curious about my research so I try to give them a good explanation, especially about my fieldwork... I mention that one of the green things to do is 'eat low on the food chain': less meat and more vegetables. They get a kick out of the phrase 'low on the food chain'... [The next day:] One of the friends who visited last night dropped by for a moment. She commented on how much they enjoyed last evening's visit and then said, in complete good-nature, that they had been joking about eating 'low on the food chain' and wondered if perhaps they should start eating cockroaches. It is not a bad joke, but I am also aware of how it unintentionally places a bit of pressure on me to conform. After all, who wants to be joked about as 'eating cockroaches', even good-naturedly?

DAY 52: Thursday October 27.

[I am at a bicycle shop, looking for a bicycle suitable for my daily household errands.] ...I am concerned that this bike won't be good for carrying much other than me. I think of China, where I saw bicycles carrying or pulling loads of charcoal, furniture, large pressure tanks of methane, even small farm animals. The salesman here knows none of this. He is clear: about all a bike can carry is one person, a few books strapped to a rack, or what will fit in the restricted spaces of saddlebags. In total this amounts to one large bag of groceries, if that...

If it is possible in China to adapt bicycles for carrying things why is it so difficult in Canada? The function of the bicycle there is utility; the function of it here is recreation and status. If I want to make the function of a bicycle here utility, I am contesting the existing power arrangements. I can imagine this becoming a

serious contest, too, with various laws coming into play if I tried to haul, say, a small trailer-load of furniture down the street behind my bicycle. I also reflect with some regret on my own mild and unspoken disdain for a woman I see cycling around the neighbourhood who has rigged a Superstore plastic crate to the rack on the back of her bicycle, so she can carry things. Now I understand why she has done this, and now I also understand how others will view me if I do the same thing. I imagine the label 'eccentric' coming into play. Perhaps I will stay with the babyseat on the back of my bike; it presents a socially palatable image and holds two bags of groceries quite well...

DAY 63: Monday November 7.

...Today is the first day of our second brown month. In many ways it feels like a relief. The demands and hard work of being green will relent. I will be able to 'go with the flow' and not worry about finding organic products or green laundry detergent. Grocery shopping will be more fun. Cooking for the boys will be easier; tonight's menu will be well accepted: hamburgers. I am looking forward to them...

Our first green month was difficult because I was forced to challenge my personal norms as well as society's norms, but our second green month, December, was easier.

DAY 98: Monday December 12.

...After lunch I ride my bike to do some shopping. It is calm, clear and sunny, about - 8°C. I am beginning to get efficiently organized for winter cycling, especially because now I have the right equipment: a carrying case on the bike, a warm hat that fits under my helmet...

...The shopping trip took about 75 minutes. I am noticing my patterns changing. I am getting more comfortable in this role, working out my equipment, learning the stores and the products, making acquaintance with the proprietor of Earth's General Store, thinking about new recipes. New habits are forming...

I was coming to realize how my brown habits were actively cultivated and

sustained by the society I was living in. I began to see the patterns of my day-to-day life as achievements of social interests rather than the natural routines they appeared to be. By February, my third green month, my personal norms were diverging from the consumer society's:

DAY 154: Monday February 6.

Today marks the beginning of our third green month. I feel more confident than ever in our ability to thrive as 'greens'. Unexpectedly I found that last month (which was brown) I was constantly struggling not to be greener. I wanted to ride my bike more, to eat less meat, to buy organic foods...

Throughout the year the social pressure to be a 'normal' consumer continued, though with declining strength as I, my family, and our friends, adjusted. As my abilities to live according to our green norms developed, it was easier to resist the norm of being brown. By March 6, I noted in my diary that "...several months ago I did not mind shopping at these big grocery superstores at all; now I have almost no interest in going back". Still, the normalizing pressures never relented:

DAY 292: Saturday June 24.

...we cycle to the barbecue at our friend's house, about 5 blocks. Both the beer and the cake we have been asked to bring fit in my bike box. When we get to the barbecue people are standing outdoors as the food cooks, and see us coming. One woman, who I have never met, sees me unloading the beer and cake from my bike and jokes "Oh, look at the delivery boy!" It is not mean-spirited but I find myself wondering what this prosperous white-collar crowd (lawyers, a teacher, a psychologist, businessmen) thinks of my Superstore box strapped inelegantly to the back of my bike. Later in the evening the same woman again refers to me as the delivery boy...

The difficulties of resisting dominant norms also came out in the interviews with the committed green consumers.

Green #1: ...the most dramatic change was the decision to stop owning a car... [I saw] the car as being this empowering thing that enables me to do all these things that I do at the drop of a hat. Like I say 'Oh, I'm going to go to the mountains this weekend'... you can drive your friends around and it gives you this extra power that you can be more popular... And the other thing, and I should include, extend that to women as well, that it's come up in my personal life where this decision not to own a car has cost me... my most recent ex-girlfriend actually made, made that point pointedly, that you know she's used to dating guys that have cars... you know, I have to admit that it certainly did shake my cage a lot...

.....

Green #2: ...I do feel that stress sometimes, you know, especially if I'm going out with friends from way back... They're in a totally different sort of consumption pattern that I don't quite fit in and they don't necessarily respect my position and they don't ask about it...

.....

Green #3a: [Discussing shopping for groceries.] ...It's bad enough being adults walking around with backpacks when nobody else does.

Green #3b: Oh, the kids stop us, 'Are you going to school today?'... When we get to Safeway the procedure is really typical except that we use our own bags and over in the produce section that sometimes does get a few looks... We would go through the check-out and have to explain that they really are our bags and so they don't have to worry that it's some product

they're not familiar with... I always have a fight with the person who's doing the bagging... usually when somebody is bagging for us they have no concept of what it takes to bag when you're backpacking... So we've gotten to the point of just smiling very nicely... [then] we'll take the cart over to another side and basically repack the groceries...

C. Foucauldian Normalizing Technologies. Often expectations to be normal were more formal and calculated than illustrated in the examples above. It is in these cases that Foucault's analysis of normalization is particularly useful. Foucault's term 'normalizing judgment' includes both senses of 'norm', for it is based on the discrepancies and alignments --the relationship-- between 'is' and 'ought to be'. With normalizing judgment, the difference between what is and what ought to be is carefully delineated, and if possible corrected. Normalizing technologies --processes through which 'ought-to-be' norms are established and systematically imposed on what 'is'-- are integral to modern practices of power. These include, for example, defining people as specific 'cases' with individual files and case management plans. Foucault traces the growth of normalizing judgments and technologies in prisons, workplaces, the military, and sexual practices (1979; 1990a; 1990b). He regards normalizing judgment as central to disciplinary power, and a vital development in modern society.

Others besides Foucault have studied the rise of normalization. Hacking (1991) explores it, beginning in such things as the demands by quartermasters in the Napoleonic wars to get standardized supplies, so they could efficiently meet the unprecedented material requirements of an industrial-age war. Postman (1993), using different terminology, notes that the first numerical grades for students were given by a tutor named William Farish at Cambridge

in 1792, introducing the idea that a quantitative value could be given to the quality of thought, and gradually leading to the elaborate normalizing technologies of modern education.

Foucault's (1979) analysis of normalization, when applied to consuming in Edmonton, helps to explain the consumer homogeneity of a society that, given its recent growth and ethnic mix, has a potentially more diverse population. The disciplinary power of normalization, even while emphasising individual traits, increases similarities:

...the power of normalization imposes homogeneity; but it individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels to fix specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them to one another... the norm introduces, as a useful imperative and as a result of measurement, all the shading of individual differences. (p.184.)

In a system of norms, individuals are studied closely to determine how far they are from the norm, in what ways, and how they can be brought closer to the norm. This is the consumer society at work, creating an impression of supposedly chaotic and varied life that is actually surprisingly uniform. Some important means of normalization are described below, including surveillance, the examination, correct training, and the confession.

C.1 Surveillance. Surveillance as a technology of power has arisen, says Foucault, with the increased emphasis on controlling ever more aspects of life, in order to manage populations and maximize productivity (I would add 'and to maximize consumption'). It functions "...like a microscope of conduct" and "...coerces by means of observation" (1979, p.173, 170). Giddens (1991) places even stronger emphasis on surveillance, saying it is "...the basis of the massive increase in organizational power associated with the emergence of modern social life" (p.15). He broadens the sense of the term, making it readily applicable to general application in a modern society: "Surveillance

refers to the supervisory control of subject populations, whether this control takes the form of 'visible' supervision in Foucault's sense, or the use of information to coordinate social activities" (p.15). Surveillance is a common practice in the seller-consumer relationship. Marketing surveillance in the form of follow-up and reminder notices says, in effect, 'We are keeping tabs on you, you should do as we suggest'.

A thorough and balanced analysis of surveillance in contemporary society is provided by Lyon (1994). Lyon recognizes that surveillance provides both benefits and drawbacks, sometimes increasing convenience, efficiency, and safety, and sometimes diminishing privacy, personal autonomy, and freedom. Surveillance has progressively replaced coercion as a means of social control and coordination in modern societies, says Lyon, particularly with the development and integration of computers and telecommunications. He identifies four dimensions along which there have been major advances in surveillance capacity in the last two decades.

First, "...the size of files has grown, and they are far more fine-grained, precise and discriminating, as a result of amplified storage capacity" (Lyon, 1994, p.51). Second, surveillance is more comprehensive, simultaneously becoming both more centralized and more de-centralized because of computer networking and telecommunications: "Surveillance is ...more dispersed, but the same technical systems make it easier for individuals to be traced by central institutions" (p.51). Third, data-flow is faster. For example, in five seconds a bank can obtain a credit report on an individual containing names, addresses, social security numbers, and credit history, updated monthly from sources including banks, credit card companies, and retailers (p.142). Below, I note an experience from my fieldwork with this kind of system, that occurred while I purchased a bicycle. Fourth, there is the increased ease with which

surveillance systems “can maintain numerous points of contact between themselves and their subjects... Ordinary citizens, workers and consumers are more visible to largely invisible ‘watchers’ who subject them to increasingly constant and profound monitoring” (p.52).

Information that is collected through surveillance has immense value and has become a commodity that is processed, packaged and sold. Lyon (1994) maintains that “...it is quite clear that the big actors in this drama of commercial surveillance are the major corporations” (p.150), who he refers to as data entrepreneurs, and that the relation between these organizations and individual consumers is not equal: “The power of the data entrepreneurs is highly asymmetrical with respect to individual consumers, who often lack the knowledge, will or organization to effect any resistance of change” (p.155).

My fieldwork describes various examples of surveillance. For example, seven years before the fieldwork, we had bought a new mini-van from Chrysler. For all those years Chrysler had kept a file on us, and during the fieldwork they began contacting us:

DAY 121: Wednesday January 4.

...The unsolicited item in the post today is from Chrysler Canada. It is a letter on good quality bond paper addressed to K. Taft from the President and CEO of Chrysler Canada, and it gives some “advance notice” of the soon to be introduced revamped mini-van. They are obviously hoping to sell new mini-vans to people who have bought ones before...

DAY 280: Monday June 12.

...In today’s post comes a glossy booklet from Chrysler personally mailed to me, promoting their new mini-van. This is a follow-up to mail-outs in the winter. They try to make the new van appear to be my idea: “The 1996 Chrysler Minivan. The Innovation You Inspired.” and “The Attention To Detail You Wanted.” and “The New Original. It’s What You Wanted.”...

During the fieldwork I recorded many other reminder and follow-up notices stemming from commercial surveillance. Four days after ordering a pizza I got a thank-you card from the pizza company, with a discount coupon to encourage me to order from the same company again (October 4, day 29). Or, after cancelling a trial mail-order subscription for coffee I received a personalized letter telling me the company will 'keep my file open' so I can quickly recommence their service (March 23, day 199). I often received mail from companies after making purchases from them. Letters arrived several times to remind me that dental work was due, or my car should be serviced, and it was not unusual to get phone calls from companies to confirm plans or to follow-up services.

This surveillance is not just good customer service. It is a means to hold people in a particular social position through observation and monitoring. Surveillance reinforces norms (you should consume; you should keep your appointment; you should maintain your car; you should replace your car) and fills out a much larger process of creating and sustaining the day-to-day life of the consumer. It was not uncommon for this surveillance to refer to exact physical or chronological coordinates: You will be at this location, at that time, for this function. Technologies such as these are devices of social efficiency; they help establish and maintain a level of precision in social operation that maximizes productivity and consuming, and minimizes inefficiency: no appointment is to be missed, no role is to be dropped, no opportunity is to be lost. They keep consumer and supplier in smooth synchronization.

C.2 The Examination. Surveillance is not just a means of normalizing through observation; it is an essential method of gathering information, and is closely

allied with what Foucault (1979) calls the 'examination'. The examination makes it possible "...both to measure and to judge" (p.186). It places the person who is subject to power at the centre of attention, transforming that person into an object for study and analysis. On the one hand Foucauldian examination is descriptive; it scrutinizes, inspects, weighs, assesses, and studies. It collects and compiles detailed data to be placed in files. It converts the whole into an anatomy of parts. On the other hand it tests and interrogates: Is this object healthy? good? bad? acceptable? Does it fit this category, or that? Is this object normal?

The examination is vital in creating the modern individual (Foucault 1979; 1990a). The person becomes a particular 'case' with a personal 'file' and is defined by his or her correlations to the examination's categories: mad, diseased, criminal, homosexual, fashion-conscious. Each detail is made visible, something to study, organize, and act upon. This process inscribes on the person "surfaces of intervention" (1990a, p.48), 'areas' where particular interventions can be focussed and practised: mental health, physical health, behaviours, sexuality, purchasing habits, and so on.

In the consumer society the scale of examination and surveillance is unprecedented. Branscomb (1994) reports that Equifax, one of the big three U.S. credit bureaus, has files on over 160 million Americans. "The files are updated daily from reports submitted by thousands of merchants covering every purchase made on a credit card. These credit reports are available to more than 50,000 businesses" (p.21). This is part of a much larger forum of power:

Millions of businesses are collecting data about the purchasing habits of specific people, along with their lifestyles, political preferences, shopping habits, credit history, and payment practices... One of the most efficient miners of such information is the American Express Company. By sifting through the files

detailing the purchasing patterns of its credit card holders, American Express has divided its lists into six categories: Rodeo Drive Chic, Fifth Avenue Sophisticated, Fashion Conscious, Savvy and Established, All Around Traditional, and Value Seeker. By further sorting its cardholders by categories such as frequent air travel, car rental, use of hotels, and gift and apparel purchases, it can create lists that become of great value to companies seeking to dominate the purchasing power of these cardholders. (p.21.)

This is examination and surveillance in the extreme, the creation of 'surfaces of intervention' and consumer-defined individuality on a gargantuan scale, a disciplinary power for an emerging global consumer society.

The cases of surveillance and examination which Foucault studied began to arise in the 1600s and 1700s. It should not be surprising that this is also the general period when Weber (1958/1976) and Tawney (1926/1984) found that certain churches (eg. Calvinists, Puritans) and governments (eg. Geneva, Massachusetts) encouraged a sharp increase in the monitoring of intimate and often tiny details of people's individual lives. This was justified on the basis that every earthly activity was a reflection on God, and so had to be monitored and disciplined. During these times surveillance was usually direct, and was based largely on the functioning of architecture and organization.

In today's consumer societies surveillance and examination are largely electronic, which changes the quantity and the quality of surveillance and examination. Computer databases now require more from people and have greater impact on their lives than they once did, but are also less visible and accessible, often operating beyond the awareness of consumers (Lyon, 1994).

The average American consumer is entered in at least 50 computerized databases (Branscomb, 1994, p.11):

Mountains of detailed data are piling up in computers, just waiting to be mined for their commercial value. Such transaction-generated information (TGI) is produced every time a credit card is used to make a purchase, an 800 or 900 telephone number is called, a hospitalization becomes necessary, a mortgage is needed,

or a loan is sought. Each of us is providing information to someone with almost every action we take: when we sign our name to a check, when we purchase a new car, when we visit the doctor, when we move to a new condo, take a trip, or buy the "Uh-huh" cola instead of its competitor. All these transactions generate data that, when accumulated and matched with our demographics, give a pretty reasonable portrait of our behavioural patterns. (p.20.)

An array of popular marketing devices can be understood as technologies of power based on surveillance, examination, and normalization. These include frequency programs (eg. frequent flyer, frequent shopper), market surveys, targeted programs such as selective mail-outs, and credit services.

DAY 39: Friday October 14.

...Phillip wants to join Club Z [a frequent buyer program] at Zellers and is figuring out how much we need to buy in order to get enough points for the things he wants...

DAY 51: Wednesday October 26.

...This morning I register for two courses at Grant MacEwan Community College... The person answering the phone immediately asks my last name, then my first name. Instantly she says, "Is your middle name Edwards and your birthday September 9, 1955?" I was startled she had this information. When I queried her about how she got it, I discovered that I had taken a course there 14 or 15 years ago and they still had my record at their fingertips. It was eerie. In any case, I registered and paid by telephone, using my Visa credit card. I feel like a tiny blip zooming through the predetermined channels of a giant electro-social circuit...

DAY 53: Friday October 28.

...This afternoon I drove to United Cycle, having decided to buy the two bicycles we shopped for yesterday. I agreed to the offer they made, which included not paying for my bike until March, and paying no interest. This required me to fill out a credit application that had to be faxed to Ontario for approval... I returned two-and-a-half hours later and was told there was no problem with credit approval... Apparently the

key to a quick approval is a good credit card record. No doubt the credit agency had instant access to our credit card payments through the credit card number I had put on the application. The speed and impersonality of the process, all made possible through electronics, was striking...

DAY 60: Friday November 4.

...As I tally our expenses for last month I come across a receipt from Zellers and notice it lists the total Club Z frequent buyer points we have tallied so far. The calculation was done by computer at the instant of our purchase, and printed on our receipt to give immediate feedback as a reward for shopping...

DAY 64: Tuesday November 8.

...Jeanette and I each received credit cards as a result of buying bicycles at United Cycle using the 'don't pay until March' scheme. I was never told this would happen but today we were mailed credit cards, and informed we were now enrolled in the 'Source for Sports' credit card scheme. This means we have a \$1500 line of credit, will receive monthly statements, and must pay 28.8% interest on overdue accounts. I was not impressed and have no interest in becoming involved in another credit card plan. I phoned the 1-800 number listed on the form and said I wanted out, but was told I couldn't terminate the credit card until I had fully paid for the bicycle...

DAY 129: Thursday January 12.

...The Canadian Forum magazine promotion that came in the mail offers me a reduced subscription. It is a politically 'radical' magazine, fairly nationalistic, left-wing and anti-establishment... But it relies on exactly the same marketing techniques as most magazines: differentiating itself from the market, using celebrity endorsements, buying mailing lists to get my name, reducing prices, providing a money-back no-hassle guarantee, and so on... It is clear they got my name from a list: "...if the list we found your name on is any indication, you're very likely to be precisely the kind of thoughtful, involved Canadian for whom THE CANADIAN FORUM is a breath of fresh air!"... (Emphasis in original.)

DAY 148: Tuesday January 31.

...The other unsolicited mail is a consumer survey from Carole Martin, whoever she is. The address is "Carole Martin, Effective Shoppers Survey" in Etobicoke, Ontario. It offers "Money Saving Coupons" in return for responding to the survey questions. The questions are organized into several categories. The first category is misleadingly titled "How to Receive Your Free Coupons". Here is where details on name, address, partner's name, marital status, age of you and partner, home ownership, income, and length of residency are collected. The remaining categories are : "You and Your Shopping Preferences"; "You, Your Family and Home"; "You and Your Household Products"; "You and Your Meal Planning"; "You and Your Family's Health and Beauty Needs"; "You and Your Family Automobiles"; "You and Your Travel Plans"; "You and Your Pets"; "You and Your Leisure Time"; "You and Your Finances". Each has several multiple choice questions...

Think of what Carole Martin (is she a real person?) will know when this is done: she will have files on individuals with detailed demographic information; income; education; family structure, genders and ages; expenditures; preferred stores; pets; reading patterns; travel plans; credit cards; and on and on, even including bladder control...

DAY 236: Saturday April 29.

...in renting the video, my membership number was entered in the store's computer. I always pay with cash here because the sums are so small, so I was surprised when the clerk said "Your credit card has expired." His computer had correlated my video membership number with my Visa card, and told him my Visa card had expired. I suppose they have my credit card number as a kind of insurance. I gave him the expiry date of my new card, but I found it disconcerting that this information was so readily available...

C.3 Correct Training. Foucault regarded techniques such as surveillance and the examination to be means of what he called 'correct training'. Modern power, with its emphasis on the control of the details of everyday activities,

relies upon and operates through a correctly trained populace. The occasional displays of force preferred by the sovereigns of traditional societies are inadequate for disciplinary power, even counter-productive. Internalized training has the advantages of being continuous, individualized, and more efficient and reliable. Foucault (1990a) argues that the highest function of disciplinary power, as noted earlier in the dissertation, was "...no longer to kill, but to invest life through and through" (p.139). What more penetrating way for this to occur than through training?

The chief function of the disciplinary power is to 'train', rather than to select and to levy; or, no doubt, to train in order to levy and select all the more. It does not link forces together in order to reduce them; it seeks to bring them together in such a way as to multiply and use them. Instead of bending all its subjects into a single uniform mass, it separates, analyses, differentiates, carries its procedures of decomposition to the point of necessary and sufficient single units. It 'trains' the moving, confused, useless multitudes of bodies and forces into a multiplicity of individual elements. (Foucault, 1979, p.170).

Foucault studied the development of training in areas such as the military. The emphasis here shifted from recruiting men who were ideal physical specimens for soldiering in the early seventeenth century, to meticulously training ordinary men for the military in the late eighteenth century. The soldier was no longer a natural product, born with the innate physical and mental traits required of military service; these could now be trained into almost anyone: "...the soldier has become something that can be made" (Foucault, 1979, p.135).

From the 1700s onward, techniques of training slowly spread from schools and universities into industrial settings, where properly trained workers gradually came to be regarded as vital assets for maximum productivity. Today, McDonald's restaurants has surpassed the U.S. Army to become the world's largest training organization, having trained one in five people now working in the United States ("McJobs," August 21, 1995).

But training is not just necessary to sustain modern production; it is necessary to sustain modern consumption, a point Foucault did not examine. Like the modern soldier, the modern consumer must be made. As the need to train the modern consumer has arisen, the job of training has spread beyond schools, universities and workplaces. The seller has become a trainer of the consumer, both through advertising and through 'clinics'.

C.3.1 Training and Advertising. Advertising and promotion can be understood as efforts at training, and many magazines, newspaper articles, and advertisements are, in effect, manuals for proper consuming. This is especially important for new types of products, which consumers may not understand and therefore not want. I noted various examples of this training in my fieldwork, such as for new women's shaving products and home steambaths.

The best example was home theatre, introduced throughout 1994 and 1995 as an enhanced home entertainment system, integrating very large television screens (up to 60 inches), multi-speaker stereophonic sound systems, VCRs, cable television, and furniture such as cabinets and seats. The intent is to have home owners convert their living or family rooms into theatres, but consumers must be trained to do this. From November to August I made ten entries in my journal concerning home theatre. Four of these concerned advertisements explicitly meant to train consumers in this product, including one offering a "Free Seminar: How to Buy and Install a HOME THEATRE and Prepare Wiring for the Theatre" (November 11); one explaining home theatre under the banner "What is Home Theatre" (January 27); and two almost identical inserts in the newspaper (June 7, August 16) from the same electronics store, as follows:

DAY 275: Wednesday June 7.

...An 8-page full-colour glossy insert in today's Journal is all about Home Theatre. Beneath a very large headline "HOME THEATRE SALE-A-THON" is this message:

Over The Next 8 pages, You Will Get The Full Picture Concerning Home Theatre. We Will Take The Mystery Out Of It, But We'll Leave The Magic Right Where It Belongs. We're Going To Show You What Home Theatre Is, And Why It Is So POPULAR! And... We're Going To Make It EASY & FUN!! [Punctuation and emphasis as in original.]

Page two features a section "What is Home Theatre?" and another "Why Home Theatre?" This is followed by a schematic diagram of how the equipment is arranged and connected, and a "Home Theatre Checklist" of the components that are needed. The rest of the flyer features home theatre components...

My other entries on home theatre indicate how this new product has diffused into the consumer society: one noted a conversation with a friend who was considering buying a home theatre system; the second was a general advertisement for home theatre products; the third was an ad from a major furniture store for home theatre shelves and cabinets; the fourth was of a charity lottery that offered a home theatre as a prize; the fifth was of a service van that stopped beside me at a red light, painted with the logo of a company that installed and maintained home theatres, billing them as "The next wave in home entertainment"; and the sixth was for a sale with this headline: "Home Theatre BLOW-OUT!! Five Days Only!!".

C.3.2 Training in Clinics and Schools. Consumer training by sellers goes well beyond advertising. Some stores include teaching facilities, and regularly offer training sessions --often called 'clinics'-- in the use of their products. I noted this in advertisements for a new, large computer store that was opened, but my most direct experiences with it were with the giant hardware stores,

Revy, Eagle, and Home Depot. All three frequently advertised their schedules of courses: "How to install a sink", "How to do simple electrical wiring", "How to install a central vacuum system", and so on. On one occasion I noted the scene at Eagle when it was time for one of these to start. This was a huge, warehouse-style store claiming 57,000 different products for home improvements and gardening:

DAY 27: Sunday October 2.

[I am in the store.]...Like its competitors, Eagle offers free courses on how to use the products it sells, taught by staff billed as 'Experts' in a training area with seating for perhaps 30. Some of the Experts have their names and photos posted near the main entrance to reinforce their presence. Customers are called to these sessions through the in-store announcement system (I can't help thinking of people called to prayer from loudspeakers on mosques), and there is also a schedule posted on a very large notice board. Eagle calls these sessions 'Clinics'. The 'Expert' from the store conveys knowledge to the presumably uninformed consumer...

Through these clinics, the consumer is taught a skill that requires the consumption of products from stores like Eagle, and may acquire an attitude of respect and trust for, and possible dependency on, the store. The store takes on some of the authority and moral independence of a school. The metaphor the seller uses to relate to the customer begins to change from 'store' to 'school', or even 'doctor' (through the term clinic). The customer takes on more of the role of student or patient, potentially altering his or her attitude from the skeptical interest of the buyer, to the trusting receptiveness of the student or patient in the halls of the expert.

Although retailers are an important source of consumer training, schools also have a role in this, often in an informal manner that may have arisen more from default than deliberation. My journal noted how our sons' school facilitated

various commercial activities, such as monthly sales by a large book company, and advertising for video tournaments sponsored by Sega and Nintendo. It also required students to buy many supplies, such as 'indoor' shoes, and materials for special events such as Valentine's Day. Commercial activities were commonly built into the school day:

DAY 186: Friday March 10.

...the boys bring home forms to order pizza for another pizza lunch at school. I fill the forms out and send \$8.00 back, wondering how Pizza Hut managed to penetrate my kids' elementary school so effectively.

In contrast to activities of this kind, official Edmonton Public School Board policy does not allow material or activities by religious groups. The moral aspects of consuming are unseen, as they were in the interview excerpts with brown consumers (see the section on morality in Chapter 3). Consumerism has become articulated with the activities of schools, building itself into society's formal training activities.

C.3.3 Training and Socialization. Consumer behaviourists define socialization as "...the process by which an individual learns the skills, attitudes, and customs to participate in the life of the community" (Engel et al., p.113). Socialization *per se* is not what Foucault spoke of when he discussed training, although he often addressed the processes through which people become particular kinds of subjects in a society (Foucault, 1979, 1988a, 1990a, 1990b). Socialization is a much broader concept than training. Given the scale of promotional activity in society it is not surprising that themes of consuming turn up in the socialization of children. The consumer society raises children to become appropriate consumers. As Lasch (1991) says, "...every culture works out distinctive patterns of child-rearing and socialization, which have the effect of producing a distinctive personality

type suited to the requirements of that culture" (p.238). My fieldwork journal often noted these patterns of socialization, particularly among my children and their friends. For example:

DAY 19: Saturday September 24.

[Paul and I are in the Italian Centre Grocery Store]... As I go around and comment on products and prices, I notice how Paul is learning. I am being a role model. He comments on prices, helps pick out the vegetables, makes suggestions and asks questions... I am reproducing a particular kind of consumer, the kind that I am.

DAY 244: Friday May 5.

...The boys come home from school for lunch. Immediately Phillip reads his Disney Adventures magazine, a gift subscription from relatives. The cover features 'virtual reality' computer games and he is very excited about these. He wants us to buy one, and when I refuse he says he will save his own money. He has been speaking about them for a few days, since the magazine arrived. It also has ads for McDonald's, movies, candies, etc., as well as promotional pieces that are advertising in the form of articles. For example, there is a section on the most recent collector cards from Disney, and an article and photos of new attractions at amusement parks. Phillip pleads to go to Columbus, Ohio, for our summer holidays, so he can go to a new attraction at an amusement park there. There is a section called 'Techno-mania' with brief features on the latest video games and CD-roms. The movie section, called 'Ticket', features child movie celebrities and recent and upcoming movie releases... There is even a rewriting of history, with this item from the table of contents: "Robyn meets artist Vincent van Gogh. Together they invent a new colour: RobGogh Red." I must ask Phillip if he thinks Vincent van Gogh is still alive...

Delivered as a gift to our door, this magazine draws Phillip into the world of consuming, introducing him to processes and protocols (reading ads, saving money, placing orders), giving him standards by which to judge himself (does he have as many pogs as the boy in the magazine?), giving him things to hope

for (there are several contests to enter) and dreams and goals to aspire to (owning a virtual reality game, travelling to Disney World or Columbus, Ohio).

Whether shopping with a parent, or in magazines like Disney Adventures, people are trained at an early age in the correct procedures of consuming. In the following example, this education in effective consuming is coming along well:

DAY 340: Friday August 11.

...The boys go ahead of me to exchange a faulty styrofoam glider we got yesterday at the museum. By the time I catch up they have made the transaction: at nine years old Phillip can negotiate an exchange of faulty merchandise without a hitch...

There were many examples of socialization in my fieldwork notes beyond these. It became clear as the year progressed that, as I was watching my children acquire the skills, knowledge, and attitudes of modern consumers, I was watching a consumer society reproduce itself. Whether in the broad sense of socialization, or in the more specific sense of Foucault's correct training, these children were being taught what it meant to be subjects in a consumer society, complete with the necessary language, thoughts, identities, and morality, and with an unmistakable sense of what the normal consumer should be and do.

C.4 The Confession as Self-narrative. Another normalizing technique analyzed at length by Foucault is the confession. In a confession, "...the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement"; the self is discussing itself, albeit with an actual or presumed witness: "one does not confess without the presence (or virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession..." (Foucault,

1990a, p.61). The confessor is meant to be changed, even transformed, but the agent receiving the confession remains unaltered: the confession “...finally takes effect, not in the one who receives it, but in the one from whom it is wrested” (p.62). The confessor is in a subordinate position. The rationale of the confession is that it is not enough for others to judge persons; they must judge themselves. The confession transforms a judgment, investigation, or examination into a “voluntary affirmation” (Foucault, 1979, p.38). The subject addresses in one form or another the question, ‘Do I meet the norm?’.

The confession has a long history in the West, closely intertwined with Christianity, from St. Augustine, to the mediaeval church, through the Inquisition, to modern times. The confession has spread far beyond the realm of the church. It is evident in the judicial and penal systems, where the accused are encouraged and expected to confess their guilt and remorse; in medicine, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis, where patients confess their illnesses and troubles; in literature, where, for example, the autobiography has become an important genre; and in marketing, where consumers are encouraged to reveal their wants, fantasies, inadequacies and ambitions. As Foucault (1990a) says, “...the confession became one of the West’s most highly valued techniques for producing truth. We have become a singularly confessing society” (p.59).

The confession is a popular tool in advertising and promotion. For example, I copied down the following text from an advertisement posted inside a public transit bus on October 27 (emphasis and punctuation as in original):

Who taught you to shave your legs? Your mother?

“Now you start with a bar of soap...”

“Then you work up a good lather like this...”

“Sometimes I use your father’s shaving cream...”

“These little bandages are a perfect fit dear...”

Welcome to the better way to shave.

SKINTIMATE SHAVE GEL.

Goes on silky. Foams up soft.

With 7 moisturizers to protect

against the nicks and dryness

that soap and water

shaving can cause.

(Don’t forget to tell your mother.)

THERE’S NO SOFTER WAY TO SHAVE.

The first five lines were set against a grainy, black-and-white photo of a bar of soap, a razor, a man’s shaving brush, some band-aids, and a towel. The confession begins in the first line: “Who taught you to shave your legs? Your mother?”. Immediately, the reader is asked to examine herself and provide an answer, with the intent of revealing a shortcoming. Then, having turned the reader into the object of her own examination, the advertisement proceeds to mock this shortcoming, and to offer its product as a way to correct the confessed flaw.

The confession turns up in other forms of promotion:

DAY 45: Thursday October 20.

...Late in the afternoon the phone rings. It is a salesman for AllState Insurance. He is clear, direct, and personal, using my first name. Though I normally shut these people down immediately his style keeps me on the line for a couple of minutes. He asks me a few questions: ‘Are you satisfied with your current insurance?’ Yes. ‘Have you ever considered AllState?’ No. ‘Do you get estimates before you renew your policies?’ Well, no. ‘Would you like us to do an estimate? We do house calls.’ Though I feel pulled, I decline and end the conversation...

Through a short series of questions the anonymous sales call was turned into a mini-confession, and within moments I had admitted to both the salesman and myself that I am a bit careless in choosing my insurance. I am a less careful consumer than I should be. Before he called I was reasonably satisfied with my car insurance. By the end of his questions I regarded myself as someone who should review my policies. Through the process of a confession I had changed from a passively satisfied insurance client to an actively concerned one. In a small way, I was no longer quite the same person. (Having stayed with the same insurance company for twenty years, several months after the fieldwork ended I changed to another company, though not AllState.)

Confessing is a form of story-telling; it is autobiographical (Frye, 1957/1990), a telling of a self-narrative. As noted earlier, self-narratives are the stories that one tells about oneself, to oneself and others, and they are essential elements of self-identity. Such stories may be complete and well articulated, or fragmentary and ill defined.

Part of the effectiveness of the confession comes from its role in establishing, changing, and reinforcing self-narratives. When a confession is made to an actual or implied authority, an opportunity opens for the authority to participate in the confessor's self-narrative. The authority receiving the confession can turn the confession into an instrument, making use of the instability of self-narratives, setting terms that have a potential impact on self-identity and perception.

For example, the advertisement asking women, "Who taught you to shave your legs? Your mother?" elicits (or even creates) the intimate self-narrative a

woman may have of learning to shave, and puts it in terms that mock and degrade. As a technology of power, the promotional confession attempts to extract the existing self-narrative, and change or replace it with one better suited to the needs of the seller. The car insurance salesman is not content when I answer 'Yes' to his question 'Are you satisfied with your car insurance?'. Instead, he leads the confession into terms intended to make me unsatisfied, so that I no longer fit the role of careful consumer that is idealized in my culture. Indeed, a good deal of promotional confessing operates on the basis of distancing me from the preferred norm, and then helping me return to it, using the promoter's product to better fit the canonical role of 'the happy consumer'.

The confession is sometimes explicitly linked to other mechanisms of power, especially the examination and surveillance. Consider the following mail-out survey from a dating service called Partners Inc., noted in my journal on February 14, Valentine's Day (emphasis as in original):

Dear Single Friend: Are you looking for a fuller, more interesting life? Are you single and looking for a rich, meaningful relationship with someone of the opposite sex? Take a few moments to reflect upon your current social situation. Are you truly happy with this situation?

Do any of the following statements apply to you? If yes, please check:

Regarding Meeting New People:

The bar scene is definitely not my "scene".
I am insecure about meeting new people.
I do not feel safe meeting people in the typical settings.
The people I find attractive never seem to approach me.
I do not have the time to commit to meeting new people.
I am unsure of where or how to meet new people.
The people I am attracted to always seem to be taken.

Regarding Your Future:

I no longer want to spend my weekends alone.
I am looking for someone who truly shares my interests.
I am ready to make a long-term commitment if the right person

would come along.

I wish I had someone special to share my life with.

If any of the above statements apply to you, **Partners** is the answer to meeting that perfect person. **Partners** confidentially screens thousands of singles, and through our interview and evaluation process will connect you with persons of the opposite sex who share your interests and goals. New people are continually being added to **Partners**, through our ongoing, extensive search for eligible singles.

Meeting new people is as easy as filling out and returning the Personal Questionnaire printed on the reverse side. Mail the Questionnaire back in the enclosed self-addressed, postage-paid envelope to **Partners**. This is the important first step to finding the right person for you.

Partners Inc.

Three things are happening in this survey. First, readers are being asked to confess their innermost feelings to the dating service, and in the process to themselves. Beginning with general confessional questions, the survey then provides a list of specific issues for readers/confessors to reflect upon. At the end there is a promise that, if the reader/confessor identifies problems, these can be overcome with the help of the company.

Second, this confession forms the basis of an examination. The reader/confessor is interrogated through a series of questions and, if she or he responds, an individual file will be opened to create a case for the company to manage. Third, the confession and examination, if undertaken, begin a process of surveillance: responding to the questionnaire is “the important first step” in what promises to be an ongoing process of monitoring, examination, and confession, until the reader is normalized into “a rich, meaningful relationship with someone of the opposite sex”, or the process is abandoned.

One intent of this process is to create a particular kind of person; that is, to have the reader come to identify him or herself as a person who has a need

that can be met by consuming a product. -A surface of intervention is formed on the person's identity, upon which the company can operate to move the person toward its norm.

This combination of confession, examination, and surveillance is widespread in marketing research, where research goes beyond passive information gathering to become an instrument for acting upon the respondent. The most detailed consumer survey I received during the fieldwork (February 21) had about 755 choices in 69 categories. Those who responded to the survey shared information such as favourite foods, dental work, bowel habits, travel plans, athlete's foot, finances, social concerns, hobbies, age, travel and reading habits, as well as their name and address. The only direct enticements for responding were some coupons to be sent after-the-fact, and entry in a contest for small cash prizes or one chance at a trip. The introductory paragraph on the survey indicates the intensity and detail of the intended examination:

In order for manufacturers to truly understand what consumers want, it is important for them to know more than simply how much of a product is sold. They need to have a clear picture of who is buying and why they are buying. This survey can help. The following questions are being asked as a means to place you and your family into sub-groups. This makes it easier for us to understand your preferences and attitudes.

During the fieldwork I received at least five consumer surveys unsolicited, and several more in conjunction with products I purchased or organizations with which I had some affiliation. In the process of completing surveys like these, people are not simply providing information. They are contributing to the definitions they have of themselves. A few well-placed questions, as the car insurance salesman knew, can lead people to alter the way they regard themselves. The consumer must think about who he or she is, and then

indicate to the surveyor 'I am a person with these tastes, these interests, this level of health, these desires', and so on. In many cases this information is then compiled by the survey company into both individual files and aggregated categories. In turn, these are sold to marketers. The process is an integrated one of confession, examination and surveillance.

The confession-examination-surveillance triad appeared in many varieties. A confession was virtually demanded from me in a personalized letter sent from the Air Canada frequent flyer program on November 29. After addressing me by name it opened with this question: "Why in the world are you passing up a faster way to earn free Aeroplan reward travel?" (emphasis in original). The enclosed brochure was even more demanding, beginning with these opening lines:

You could be earning Aeroplan reward travel faster with CIBC Aerogold VISA. But you're not. Why not?

In September 1994, you had **more than 10,000 Aeroplan miles** in your account. With 5,000 more Aeroplan miles, you could claim reward **1W1 - one Economy Class ticket to selected short-haul destinations within North America and within Europe.** [Emphasis in original.]

Enclosed was an application for a Visa credit card, including detailed personal questions concerning job, residence, marital status, and so on. The application also confirmed that this information would be shared with other organizations.

Air Canada had kept my account, and though I had not flown with them in at least two years they pursued me, using the information in their file. The questions in the letter immediately turned me upon myself, asking me to confess why I hadn't done what they expected. This was followed with detailed information taken from their files, indicating that their surveillance of me revealed a shortcoming in my activities. Finally, they requested further

information (a form of examination) to update their files.

D. Norms, Narratives, and the Subjugation of Knowledge.

To adapt Bruner's (1986) words, narratives 'make a world'. A narrative requires that some events be privileged for the narrative purpose and hence be included, and others not be privileged and so be ignored. White (1980), who argues that narratives are "inevitably moralizing", makes the point in this way: every narrative "...is constructed on the basis of a set of events *which might have been included but were left out* ; and this is as true of imaginary as it is of realistic narratives" (p.14, italics in original).

In effect, narratives make claims on reality that suppress alternatives, making some events, objects, or people appear normal and natural, and others appear strange and unnatural, or even become invisible. The narratives we use to understand everyday life help create the reality that we live in, with its peculiar mix of events, people, and objects. This is the normative effect of narratives.

A well presented narrative creates an impression of transparency, a sense that it needs no interpretation and simply 'is as it is'. Promotions such as advertisements can succeed at this very well, achieving an acceptance by audience members that allows the advertisement to become part of the viewer's world, indeed to construct part of that world. Bruner's (1991) analysis of this effect of narratives attributes it to two factors. The first is "narrative seduction": "The great storytellers have the artifices of narrative reality construction so well mastered that their telling preempts momentarily the possibility of any but a single interpretation -- however bizarre it may be" (p.9). As a definitive example of this Bruner refers to Orson Welles' broadcast

of The War of the Worlds. Its brilliant use of narrative techniques and devices of text and context "...predisposed its hearers to one and only one interpretation... It created "narrative necessity", a matter we understand much less well than its logical counterpart, logical necessity" (p.9).

The second factor that helps to make a story self-evident is "narrative banalization": "... we can take a narrative as so socially conventional, so well known, so in keeping with the canon, that we can assign it to some well-rehearsed and virtually automatic interpretive routine..." (Bruner, 1991, p.9). Advertising and promotion, in the skill and frequency with which they are produced, take full advantage of both narrative seduction and narrative banalization. The result is that their audience tends to fall into a kind of placid acceptance, relying on the taken-for-granted narrative canons of the consumer culture to make automatic interpretations. These are, in a way, "...comparable to the default settings of a computer: an economical, time- and effort- saving way of dealing with knowledge -- or, as it has been called, a form of 'mindlessness'" (p.9). The relentless promotion a person experiences in a consumer society creates a form of automatized interpretation of the narratives of consuming, a kind of mindless acceptance of their structures and values that conjures the 'normal world of consuming'.

The world-making effect of narratives has an important connection to Foucault's analysis on the subjugation of knowledges. Foucault's discussion of subjugated knowledges relates to his work on discourse, and the 'archeology' and 'genealogy' of knowledge. There are clear parallels between discourse analysis and my discussion of narrative. Bruner's (1986) comments on the world-making effect of narratives overlaps Foucault's (1972) statement that discursive practices "...systematically form the objects of which they speak" (p.48). And White's (1980) observation that narratives

are formed from a select few of all possible events is consistent with Foucault's (1972) question at the centre of discourse analysis: "...how is it that one particular statement appeared rather than another?" (p.27). In his studies on power, Foucault broadened his interest from the "language analysis" (1972, p.27) of discursive practices to topics such as institutions, the body, and economic and social practices, providing a cue which I have followed in this research. But the formation and subjugation of knowledges always remained central to his work.

Subjugated knowledges are those "...that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity" (Foucault, 1980, p.82). They are the local, folk and popular knowledges, non-scientific (in the formal sense) and resistant to centralization. They stand in contrast to knowledges claiming global relevance and universal authority. These latter give rise to what Foucault calls "...the tyranny of globalizing discourses with their hierarchy and all their privileges of a theoretical *avant-garde*" (p.83).

A narrative gains dominance through being told, and the more often and more compellingly it is told, the more dominance it gains. The advertisement of the girl learning from her mother to shave her legs shows the beginning of this process of subjugation: through this brief story the knowledge that one can shave with a razor and soap is denigrated, though it is still allowed to exist.

An example of subjugation in its late stages surfaced in my first green month:

DAY 37: Wednesday October 12.

...Cleaning the shower stall is well overdue...
My Canadian Green Consumer Guide suggests I use baking soda instead of other cleansers, so I get

some from the kitchen cupboard, where we keep it for baking, and sprinkle it in the shower and on a cloth. I am delighted with how well it works. Almost immediately the soap scum starts to lift. With no more work than other cleansers the shower stall comes clean... The fibreglass shines, I don't need rubber gloves, there are no fumes or discomfort, I don't feel concerned about rinsing it down the drain, and it is cheap.

...the label on the box of baking soda encourages me to use it as a cleanser, but I have been skeptical to the point of never bothering to try, while spending more on other products. The image that technologically-improved cleansers are better is very strong for me. In fact, I am still uncertain enough that I will need to use the baking soda again to clean the shower, to see if it really works...

Later today I have supper at my mother's and ask her and two other women if they ever clean with baking soda. They all say they do, and my mother chuckles at my discovering something so old-fashioned...

I discovered through my fieldwork that home cleaning has been changed from my mother's time, to the point that people like me only know to use commercial cleaners. We literally do not think of using baking soda; knowledge has been altered and power has been rearranged.

There is more to the loss of knowledge about baking soda as a cleaner than can be explained by narrative. It could be analyzed as a process of correct training, and I will revisit this example in my discussion of space. But several months after I learned that baking soda cleaned so well, I came across an advertisement that hinted at how this subjugation had occurred and been maintained:

DAY 233: Wednesday April 26.

In today's Journal is an insert which includes a large ad for Lysol products, with a picture of an early-middle-aged woman looking a bit matronly, holding a Lysol product, and this text:

Lysol. Clean, Yes. Germs, No. Lysol products

have been killing germs for over 100 years.
We've got a complete family of household
cleaners and disinfectants to protect your
family. Lysol. A complete line of products
for your entire home. (Emphasis in original.)

This is accompanied by four coupons for 50¢
reductions on various Lysol cleaners, including
the aerosol cleaner I used to use on our shower
stall before I realized how well baking soda
works...

This advertisement has several important narrative elements: characters (the woman in the picture; a family of products; my family; germs); action (cleaning; killing germs); time (over 100 years); a preferred norm or morality (cleanliness); and a purpose (achieving the norm by using Lysol). In this ad Lysol is presenting a narrative that lays claim to memory and to history, leaving the impression that people have used the complete family of Lysol products pictured in the ad for over 100 years, though the products pictured are all relatively recent. To the extent that this ad is successful, it becomes harder to think of alternatives, and the knowledge that baking soda is an excellent cleaner is subjugated and lost.¹

Foucault (1980) writes of the "insurrection of subjugated knowledges" (p.80), in which local, apparently disqualified knowledges provided potent criticism and useful alternatives to dominant, centralizing discourses. Being a committed, environmentally-mindful consumer can be seen as participating in an 'insurrection of subjugated knowledge'. I am living day-to-day with new norms, which select for different factors and therefore create a different

¹ Coincidentally, Forty (1986) reproduces a Lysol ad published in 1918 that also has strong narrative elements (though Forty makes no comment on them). The ad has a dark picture of an old house in the background and two containers of Lysol in the foreground. The headline is "Do you live in a haunted house?", and the long text begins with these sentences: "There is a haunted house in almost every community. Its spooky character awes and frightens the children; grown-ups shun it on dark nights. There is another kind of haunted house, the germ-haunted house, that shelters a menace which is far from imaginary, which is dangerously real. Is your house germ-haunted? It is, and so is every house that is not regularly disinfected..." (p.158).

directionality. Cleaning with baking soda, buying locally-produced foods that have been grown without chemicals, and discovering how to carry groceries on a bicycle, each requires resurrecting disqualified knowledge and norms and using them to change direction and confront narratives, knowledge, norms, discourse and practices that are dominating and 'centralizing.

5. The Body, Space, and Time.

A. Introduction.

I had found that Foucault's normalizing technologies --surveillance, examination, the confession, etc.-- applied very well to my fieldwork. When I considered these technologies in light of my analysis of advertising and promotion, I started to understand day-to-day consuming as an operation of power. I also began to better understand the connection of Foucauldian power with narrative, particularly in my analysis of the confession and self-identity.

Foucault's work also helped me with my data in other ways, as I discuss in this chapter. Foucault focusses attention on the human body as a site for the operation of power. Throughout my fieldwork I often noted the bodily effects of power. These included both semiotic effects, turning the body into a 'sign' through things like fashion and manners, and physical controls, affecting the position of the body in space and time. The physical effects of power ranged from very local scales, as in the seating position in a car, to much larger scales, as in the design of a city. This turned my attention to the organization of space, and then to the organization of time, for as is often recognized, time and space are in many ways inseparable.

So this chapter addresses the operation of power in a consumer society as it relates to the human body, space, and time. The chapter begins with various examples from the fieldwork in which the operation of power is applied directly to the body. These include physiological effects such as appetite, comfort, and fatigue. They also include physical control, such as channelling and directing movements, and the design and placement of objects. I also

look at the pressure to dress in particular ways, so as to signify an appropriate social message.

The chapter then examines the organization of space. The organization of space in a modern consumer society, from house to store to city, is intended to be continuous with the thoughts, morality, and actions of consuming. The organization of space provides the settings in which the roles of the modern consumer are fulfilled. These settings channel actions, signal appropriate behaviours, and remind the consumer what is expected and how to act.

As the body changes position in space, it also changes position in time. In this chapter I argue that time as measured by the clock (i.e. *chronos*) is not singularly preeminent in consuming, in the way it is in industrial production. The requirements of consuming are not so much for a version of time that allows for precise control, as does the clock, as they are for a version of time that induces actions by creating meaning. What is important in consuming is that certain times have special meanings that trigger consumer activities. In my fieldwork, I found that there is an annual cyclical calendar of consuming that plays a central role in organizing day-to-day events, a calendar that appears to have much in common with the cyclical time of traditional preindustrial societies. In addition, I found that *kairos*, time as it is expressed in narratives, is vital for creating meaning from the meaningless time of *chronos*. In my fieldwork, I found that *kairos* is instrumentally coordinated with *chronos* and with cyclical time to encourage and sustain actions of consuming. For instance, the climax of a consumer narrative (eg. Christmas) coincides in an annual cycle with a particular time and date (eg. the morning of December 25). Through this integration of narrative/*kairos*, clock time/*chronos*, and cyclical time, some important effects of time in a complex urban society are achieved: synchronization across society for special events;

the coordination of interactions across space and time between consumers and sellers; the marking of seasonal and annual cycles; and the creation of social and personal meaning.

The chapter next explores issues of space-time. On large scales (eg. a city) there is an immediate connection between space and time. Modern technologies have tended to compress space-time, allowing people and objects to move through space in less and less time. I argue that this space-time compression is only selectively felt, however. Green consumers not using automobiles in *Edmonton* have experienced an expansion of space-time in important ways; the mechanisms of power that operate to shrink space-time for brown consumers often operate to expand it for green consumers.

The chapter concludes by arguing that the effects of power on the human body, space, and time can also affect self-identity. Inevitably, the body occupies a space and role that is to varying degrees public, in which it is displayed, regarded, and subject to action and control. It is also intimately private, the seat of the self, physiologically inseparable from the experiences, perceptions, motivations, and sensations that mould self-identity. The result is a two-way dynamic: on one hand, a person, through diet, exercise, activity, expression, dress, etc., presents some version(s) of the self to the public. On the other hand, self-identity is susceptible to action visited upon the body by external factors. The presentation of the self flows through the body to the public world, and the effects of the outside world flow through the body to influence self-identity. As a result, the regularized control of the body by mechanisms of power can have a collateral effect on self-identity. It is not surprising that I was comfortable with myself as a meat-eating, car-driving, normal consumer (as opposed to a vegetarian, bike-riding, anti-consumer) given the space and time in which I lived.

In summary, this chapter argues that mechanisms of power in day-to-day consuming directly affect the body and its position in space and time. These mechanisms have a variety of means, relying on things as varied as physiological effects; material objects; time; space; and narratives. In their diversity there is a unified directionality that encourages consuming and discourages alternatives.

B. The Human Body.

The body and the mind have been traditionally treated as separate topics in the social sciences. Indeed, the human body has been seen primarily as belonging to the domain of the natural sciences. The result is that in much social analysis the body is treated as if it were of no special concern or interest. Corrigan (1997) suggests this may be a legacy of Descartes' split of the mind from the body, noting that, "Descartes' motto was 'I think therefore I am' -- not 'I eat, drink, sleep, and have sex, therefore I am'" (p.147). However, in the past two decades in the social sciences there has been increased study of the body as a topic in itself (Brewis, 1996; Corrigan, 1997; Giddens, 1991; Townley, 1994). Some of this undoubtedly results from Foucault's emphasis on the body in his work on power (Foucault 1979, 1980, 1990a).

The relationship of power with the individual human body is a central theme in Foucault's works on imprisonment and sexuality. The human body is the material form upon which the processes of power operate: "...power relations have an immediate hold upon [the body]; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs" (Foucault, 1979, p.25). Yet power can operate on the body without violence: power

can be “...direct, physical... bearing on material elements, and yet without involving violence; it may be calculated, organized, technically thought out; it may be subtle, make use neither of weapons nor of terror and yet remain of a physical order” (p.26). In Foucault’s disciplinary power, the body is analyzed, and its movements are trained in a kind of ‘dressage’; it is fitted to equipment, organized in space and time, and coordinated with other bodies undertaking other functions. Power can have effect on the body without conscious awareness: “... power relations can get through to the very depths of bodies, materially, without having been relayed by the representation of subjects” (Foucault, 1996, p.209).

The disciplinary control of the body includes techniques that treat individuals at the level of specific movements and gestures, concentrating neither on the flourish nor on the signifying elements of actions, but on economy, efficiency, and internal organization. Discipline is delivered through uninterrupted supervision, conceived through a codification that “partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement” (Foucault, 1979, p.137).

Disciplinary methods for training the body existed for many centuries in monasteries, workshops, and the military. Foucault (1979) argues that in the 17th and 18th centuries these became “...general formulas of domination” (p.137), extending to ever broader areas of society. Once again, though Foucault makes no note, we are in that period strongly influenced by the Calvinist and Puritan emphasis on the godliness of discipline in day-to-day life (Campbell 1983, 1987; Tawney 1926/1984; Weber 1958/1976). Foucault finds there was a gradual process of minor changes in this period, extending into secondary and then primary education, hospitals, industry, and so on. “On almost every occasion, they were adopted in response to particular needs: an industrial innovation, a renewed outbreak of certain epidemic

diseases, the invention of the rifle or the victories of Prussia” (p.138).

Disciplinary power has two simultaneous effects on the body: it increases the economic utility of the body while it diminishes its independence (Foucault, 1979, p.138). The body is both a more forceful economic producer and a more compliant subject. It is, in Foucault’s terms, ‘docile’, in the dual sense of being easily trained, and of being easily managed and submissive.

The nature of disciplinary power has continued to evolve. While Foucault’s analyses concentrate on historical periods, he occasionally addressed more recent developments. In this interview, given the same year Discipline and Punish was released, 1975, he suggested the grip of disciplinary power on the body has become perhaps more confident, and more relaxed:

What mode of investment of the body is necessary and adequate for the functioning of a capitalist society like ours? From the eighteenth to the early twentieth century I think it was believed that the investment of the body by power had to be heavy, ponderous, meticulous and constant. Hence those formidable disciplinary regimes in the schools, hospitals, barracks, factories, cities, lodgings, families. And then, starting in the 1960s, it began to be realized that such a cumbersome form of power was no longer as indispensable as had been thought and that industrial societies could content themselves with a much looser form of power over the body... (Foucault, 1980, p.58.)

This transition from rigid disciplinary techniques to a “looser form of power” coincides with the full-fledged predominance of consumerism as a social force. But Foucault did not note this; for him, much of the intent of the operation of disciplinary power on the body is the enhancement of economic productivity. The body must be disciplined for work in factories, offices, schools, the military, etc. So, to understand day-to-day consuming as a process of power, the questions arise: In a consumer society, where the emphasis is less on production and more on consumption, what are the implications for disciplinary power? How is the body disciplined and made

docile in a consumer society?

Giddens (1991) provides a somewhat elaborated perspective on Foucault's analysis of the body. He argues that the body has important connections to self-identity, and that self-identity and perspectives toward the body are undergoing important changes during late modernity.

The body used to be one aspect of nature, governed in a fundamental way by processes only marginally subject to human intervention. The body was a 'given', the often inconvenient and inadequate seat of the self. With the increasing invasion of the body by abstract systems all this becomes altered. The body, like the self, becomes a site of interaction, appropriation and reappropriation... (p.218.)

The body is no longer a passive object, but "...part of an action system" that includes the self (Giddens, 1991, p.77). The body can be shaped by the self through dieting, dress, exercise, self-help, surgery, and so on; it becomes an active, mutable expression of, and contributor to, self-identity: "The reflexivity of the self *extends to the body...*" (p.77, italics in original). This, Giddens suggests, leads to a richer and subtler understanding of the operation of power on the body than Foucault offers; the body is not merely an 'inert object' to be disciplined, but a site actively involved in the creation and expression of self-identity. If Giddens is right, Foucault's speculation on the loosening of power on the body may be better understood as a shifting of power from direct external discipline to discipline extended through the self. The dual public-private nature of the body means that the body is susceptible to effects of power inscribed on the self, and that the self is susceptible to effects of power expressed on the body.

B.1 Senses, Appetite, and Diet. Disciplinary power is effective, Foucault (1980) once argued, not so much because it represses, restricts, and negates, but because, "...as we are beginning to realize, it produces effects at the level

of desire..." (p.59). These desires, I argue; include physical appetites such as hunger, sexual desire, and so on. Several times I noted how appetites for food were deliberately stimulated in malls and large stores by displays, and by the venting of the smell of food into public areas. These techniques are well known to retailers and consumer behaviour specialists. Aromas, for example, have become instruments to assist in selling: "There is growing evidence that supports the potential payoffs from using the right smells" (Engel et al., p.216). Grocery stores have found a threefold increase in bakery sales when the aroma of baked goods is pumped into a store, and shoe retailers have found certain scents increase both customers' valuation of products and the likelihood they will purchase them (Engel et al.). Consumers are not the only ones subject to this technique. At least one retailer has found its staff perform better when certain aromas are used: "The employees find it very pleasant. A happier staff means a happier customer, and that means more sales" (Engel et al., p.216).

DAY 120: Tuesday January 3.

...On the entry to the mall we had to walk through IKEA, right past the cafeteria. There was a very enticing aroma of freshly-baked cinnamon buns, which worked on all three of us while we were in the store, and again while we were leaving. Without that delicious smell I am not sure we would have stopped for a snack, but we did. To my surprise the cinnamon bun I was served was cold, and clearly had been baked many hours ago. It was very good, but it was not the source of the aroma we had smelled. I wondered what was, for I could see nothing else that would cause it. Might it have been artificial?...

DAY 139: Sunday January 22.

...Debaji's makes a point of cutting up fruit and vegetables near many displays, as samples. Phillip is helping me choose some apples when he sees the watermelon samples: "Here's a twist tie for-- OH! I've just GOT to try some watermelon" and he leaves me and goes straight for a small slice of watermelon. He quite enjoys it and though I am skeptical about the quality of mid-January watermelon we buy a half. At dessert

this evening it is well enjoyed, tasting better than any of us expect.

The allure of aromas is not limited to food. The scent of lemon is strongly associated with cleanliness, and so, in the common slogan, 'Lemon Fresh Scent' is added to household cleansers. This 'advantage' does not exist with pure baking soda, which has no scent:

DAY 37: Wednesday October 12.

...We have previously tried several cleansers on our fibreglass shower stall, including Lysol foam, Saniclean, Mr. Clean, and our current one, Vim. Vim works about as well as any. It is made by Lever Brothers and is billed as "Lemon Fresh" "Powerful Cream Cleanser"...

DAY 49: Monday October 24.

...This morning I clean the basement shower stall, sink and toilet with baking soda and an old diaper for a rag. I continue to be impressed with how well baking soda works... I mentioned to Jeanette that I had used baking soda to clean the basement bathroom. This led her to comment, "Do you know what I like about Vim? The lemon smell, and the smooth feel. It just feels like it's doing something"...

I also made note of times when visual images were used to stimulate appetite, as in this example:

DAY 140: Monday January 23.

This morning I go through the newspaper inserts from yesterday. ...after looking through five consecutive inserts on food and groceries, four of them sumptuously illustrated in full colour and one with various well-illustrated recipes, I realize my mouth is watering and I am feeling hungrier than just a few minutes ago...

The appeal in cases like those above is directly to bodily senses, attempting to bypass whatever conscious screens the consumer may have established. If

the tactic succeeds, the consumer buys. The connections among pleasure, sensory input, and bodily awareness are noted by Giddens (1991):

“Awareness of the body is basic to ‘grasping the fullness of the moment’, and entails the conscious monitoring of sensory input from the environment...”

(p.77). Adapting Giddens’ phrasing, one might say that in some cases careful control of the sensory effects of the environment (eg. the smell of cinnamon buns) encourages a consumer to ‘grasp the fullness of the moment’ by purchasing the thing that will relieve ‘the emptiness of the moment’ stimulated by the sensory effect.

What makes this more than just a simple stimulus-response mechanism is its connection to self-identity: people come to understand themselves in part through the way they connect sensory input, bodily awareness, and fulfilment. These connections became evident in the fieldwork when we tried to increase our vegetarian meals during green months. It was immediately apparent that we did not identify ourselves as ‘vegetarians’, and that becoming vegetarians, even partially, was not simply a matter of cooking differently.

DAY 43: Tuesday October 18.

...Today I spend some time struggling with what to prepare for supper. This wouldn’t be much of a problem if I weren’t trying to minimize the use of meat: I could fall back on staples like hamburgers, a roast, or something. But with minimal meat I am going against a lifetime of experience and knowledge in which meat is the central portion of the meal. I am having to learn a different approach and new skills. After spending some time going through cookbooks (Diet for a Small Planet, Moosewood, Greens) I give up on them. While looking over the ingredients we have, I suddenly think ‘stir-fry’. So tonight we will have stir-fried veggies with a small amount of pork, and brown rice...

DAY 274: Monday June 5.

...I also spend time looking through cookbooks

for ideas for low meat meals. I am still most comfortable thinking of menus, shopping, and cooking when meat is the central item of the main meal: roast chicken, pork chops, hamburgers, etc. These are the foods I grew up with and have prepared and eaten throughout my adult life: they are my 'culinary discourse', my repertoire of meals. Replacing them with low-meat or non-meat meals requires special effort. I am trying to change my knowledge, my habits, my self...

As members of a society where meat is a common food, our identities as meat-eaters were sustained by a host of intertwined factors: I lacked the knowledge, experience and training to prepare a range of vegetarian dishes; foods with meat in them are heavily advertised; many of our friends and family expected us to eat meat with them, and to be served meat when they visited us; a wide range of high quality meat was readily available year round; our culture celebrates Christmas with turkey, Easter with ham, birthdays with barbecued hamburgers or steak; and I had a lifetime of pleasurable memories of roast beef dinners, summertime wiener roasts around the campfire, bacon at Sunday brunches, and so on. Satisfying our hunger was not simple biology. It was an elaborate process of social and personal identity, richly sustained. Put simply, we did not identify ourselves as vegetarians, but as people who ate and enjoyed meat.

We did substantially reduce our meat consumption, and at least Jeanette and I were quite comfortable with this. But it was a struggle that ebbed and flowed:

DAY 52: Thursday October 27.

...At supper I serve vegetarian chili, corn on the cob, and broccoli. As a meal it is not well received. Phillip pokes through the chili and asks "Is there any meat in this?" When I say no he rolls his eyes and groans... The corn on the cob is late in the season and tasted it: soggy and not very sweet. Broccoli is overdoing

its welcome on our menu...

DAY 126: Monday January 9.

...the insert from the nearby IGA grocery store advertises 71 meat items and only 46 non-meat food items...

DAY 269: Tuesday May 30.

...One thing I have noticed clearly is that meat has once again become the central item in our meals. Several things have contributed to this: regular social pressure and tradition; the hot weather has encouraged us to barbecue outdoors so the house doesn't heat up; and the visit for a few days by a friend who has traditional tastes in food. Luckily it is a brown month. And I must admit I have enjoyed the burgers, chops, and so on, and no complaints from the boys either...

DAY 291: Thursday June 22.

...I have been aware how easily we have reduced our meat consumption to a small level. One or two days a week we have no meat at all, and on most other days we are satisfied with minimal amounts of meat...

DAY 344: Monday August 14

...I am finding it more difficult than I expected to produce vegetarian meals. Partly our schedule has made it hard for me to get good quality produce at the farmers' market or Debaji's, whereas meat is readily available, and partly the lifelong pattern of summer meals like hot dogs, barbecued burgers, steaks, etc. is influencing us...

B.2 Comfort. Physical comfort was also used as a mechanism of power. On one occasion, for example, I was made unexpectedly comfortable during some routine banking. As well as maintaining good customer relations, this positioned me to absorb more readily a range of marketing messages:

DAY 46: Friday October 21.

...The teller and I both sit in comfortable padded chairs during our business, meeting across a desk-like counter with no other barrier between

us. Normal chat is easy. The service is direct, friendly, personal and my physical comfort is taken care of. No gesturing through glass partitions or getting tired standing on my feet for 20 minutes. As she works on the bank draft I notice a couple of posters for cross-promotions the bank has with other companies, one with Volvo and the other with Cathay Pacific Airlines. As well, displayed at my fingertips on the desktop are brochures promoting a mutual fund...

On several occasions I noted how the physical comfort offered by our van contrasted to bicycles and public transit. During my first green month I made the following note after a bicycle trip to the library and the grocery store. I had dressed too warmly, one of my shoelaces had got caught in my bicycle pedal, and I was unable to complete all the shopping I wanted because I couldn't carry the full load on the bicycle:

DAY 51: Wednesday October 26.

...At Debaji's food store I tromp around, smelling of sweat, lugging my bike helmet and the load of books I got at the library, fingers greasy from pulling my shoelace out of the pedal bearings. The sheer ease and comfort of using a car sinks in: no sweat, no helmet, no need to carry the books with me... I can't finish my grocery shopping because my carrier is full of books and apples and oranges. The ride home is awkward... All in all, after the past couple of hours I'm sure most people (me included if I weren't doing this research) would wait a long time before being so conscientiously green again.

Likewise, public transit was never as comfortable as driving:

DAY 174: Friday February 24.

[Having waited several minutes for a bus in winter weather, the snow falling and the temperature perhaps 15 degrees Celsius below freezing, one stops for me]...The bus is crowded, with only two seats vacant. I choose one. After a few stops the woman beside me wants off. I stand to let her out and she presses past me awkwardly, squeezing me with her large hips and over-sized purse rather more than I expect. Soon another woman sits beside me, also late middle-aged but smaller. She sets her purse on her lap

and begins a vigorous search through it, in the process driving her right elbow into my left ribs three or four times. I shift away but she makes no apology or comment. After about 15 minutes I get off downtown. To get to my two banks and back to the bus stop requires fifteen blocks of walking. I am glad the weather is not worse. I cannot help thinking of driving in our van instead of this...

These experiences contrast to the comfort of driving, which I noted several times, including the following entry made several hours after a four-hour airplane trip:

DAY 264: Thursday May 25.

...Having been away from our van for a few days there is a slight sense of newness to driving it again, a combination of familiarity and freshness. I am fatigued from the flight earlier in the day, and from the noise of the soccer game and getting the boys to bed, and I realize more clearly than usual that when I get into the van by myself I am entering much more than a mode of travel; I am entering an all-enclosing environment. The seat is comfortable. When the door closes I am in near silence. Immediately I relax, feeling as if I have escaped from the pressures of day-to-day life for a few moments. Though it is simply a drive to a drugstore for some cough syrup I enjoy the solitude and quiet and the easy sense of control...

B.3 Body-Object Articulation: the Ergonomics of Power. My position in the driver's seat of the van is not simply one of physical comfort. I occupy a space carefully designed to provide an optimum articulation between body and automobile. It is what Foucault (1979) would describe as a "meticulous meshing" that "...defines each of the relations that the body must have with the object that it manipulates" (p.153). In my fieldwork, the automobile is the case *par excellence* of how detailed attention to the physical fit between my body and a product creates a nearly irresistible invitation to consume.

DAY 264: Thursday May 25.

...Being in the van is a pleasure in itself, and I realize that, at times when I have gone for a drive to relax, it is not the transportation that matters, it is the comfort and control, and the comfortingness of the control. Slow or fast, quiet or loud, warm or cold, left or right...

The intimate articulation of vehicle and driver, as the following entry from my journal suggests by comparing automobile and bicycle, altered both my relation to the world, and my relation to myself.

DAY 237: Friday April 28.

This morning the weather forecast is for cloudy and cool weather, with an increasing likelihood of rain or wet flurries as the day progresses. We are low on fruit and vegetables so I decide to cycle to Debaji's shortly after breakfast, before the weather gets bad. The seat of my bicycle is wet from overnight rain and as I wipe it with my jacket sleeve I once again realize how much more I am subject to weather as a cyclist, than as a motorist.

The air is cool and damp but there is no wind. As I pedal along, the intoxicating smell of spring is magnified by the scent of the just-finished rain. The air is laden with sounds that would be silenced in my car: birds singing to find mates and set territory; cars, busses and airplanes; people's voices; the crunching of my tires on the leftover sand of winter; the splash of riding through puddles. Twice at intersections drivers slow to let me cross, though they have the right-of-way. I wave and smile; they nod back; it is a satisfying exchange. What is their pleasure in it, I wonder.

On my bicycle I am a subject of nature; in my van I am a subject of machines. On my bicycle, my environment is oblivious to my presence: the birds do not care about me, the rain will fall regardless, the scents will linger and diffuse whether I am there or not. In my van, I am the focus of its design. Everything affecting me is engineered: the position of my body, the sounds

that I hear¹, the sightlines of my vision, the smell of the vinyl and the draft of the heater, the voice on the radio that reaches into my thoughts and tries to shape them... In its complete ignoring of me on my bike, nature gives me space to think and act and feel more widely. There is latitude. In its complete engineering of me, my van constrains as much as it empowers...

There were other recurring examples of the power of body-object articulation in my fieldwork. One concerned the design of the tiny space that cashiers work in, at grocery stores. This space provides a highly efficient setting for the cashier to perform all the functions needed to tally the cost of groceries, bag them, and collect payment. During green months I would take my own bags with me, to avoid using the disposable ones provided by stores. I quickly learned that the design of the cashier's space, combined with his or her training, meant that in one or two motions groceries were scanned and put in bags held open on special brackets. This happened so quickly that if I did not remember to give the cashier my bags before I unloaded my trolley at the till, the groceries would all be in disposable bags before I realized it. More than once I ended up with all my groceries packed in disposable bags, and all my reusable ones empty. Asking to use my own bags slowed the processing of groceries, causing delays for other customers and extra work for cashiers.

Another example of body-object articulation was in our laundry room. The clothes washer and clothes dryer, while separate machines, are designed to function side-by-side. This sets up an articulation with the user that easily facilitates the transfer of wet clothes from the washer to the dryer-- and easily facilitates the 'consumption' of the dryer. This was reinforced because many clothes are now made to look more acceptably wrinkle-free if they are machine dried rather than drip dried. During green months I wanted to keep

¹ Some car manufacturers promote the fact that they hire musicians to 'tune' exhaust systems so they produce the most appealing sound.

the use of the dryer to a minimum, and hang clothes to drip dry. However, because I was in the habit of using the dryer (i.e. I was 'trained') and it was so effectively placed, I would sometimes unconsciously fill the dryer with wet laundry when I did not want to. The equipment, combined with my training, created an effect that at times led to an automatic response. In that most mundane of places, our laundry room, there was a process operating that fits Foucault's description of a body-machine complex.

As a person in a consumer society, I was living in close contact with equipment and machines in my home, shopping, recreation, and transportation. All of it was carefully designed to physically articulate in particular ways with me: I was living in a 'design-intensive' culture (Forty, 1986; Lash and Urry, 1994; Wernick, 1991). Each of these objects has its own syntax, in the process helping to create a particular kind of consumer and encourage a substantial level of consuming.

B.4 Fashion and Clothing. In the examples above, the operation of power is primarily upon the body as a physical and biological object. An additional view of the operation of power in relation to the body regards the presentation of the body as a social sign. The presentation of the body through clothing, manners, comportment, and so on, is an indication to others and to oneself of things such as culture, income, lifestyle, occupation, class, and gender. The body becomes a sign (intentional or otherwise) to be interpreted in responses and interchanges. (Campbell, 1987; Corrigan, 1997; Giddens, 1991; Veblen, 1899/1981.) From this perspective, power operates by influencing the form of presentation that the body takes; the body obtains various positions, or various equipment or clothing, so that it itself becomes a properly designated sign. In terms of consumerism, this can both increase consuming by constantly changing the nature of the sign (as in fashion), and

it can confirm to others and to oneself that one accepts the predominant consumer identity. In my fieldwork notes the best evidence of the relation between the body as a sign, and day-to-day consuming, concerns clothing and fashion. It is worth acknowledging that this is a particularly clear area where my gender will have affected my research, for fashion is highly gendered.

Campbell (1987) notes that fashion, in the sense of prevailing custom, is universal, and that even in traditional societies it changes, albeit very slowly. One of the marked characteristics of fashion in a consumer society is the great acceleration of the pace of change. Drawing on historical work by McKendrick, Campbell argues that the general pace of change in clothing fashion accelerated in the middle 18th century:

...whereas previously modifications in styles of dress had taken generations to reveal themselves now they occurred within the space of a few years, even in some cases annually. In 1753, for example, purple was the 'in' colour, whilst in 1757 the fashion was for white linen with a pink pattern; in 1776 the fashionable colour was 'couleur de Noisette'; in 1777 it was dove grey.
(p.22.)

As part of the general rise of consumerism in England at that time, interest in fashion rapidly spread through society, reaching "...from the domestic servant class to industrial employers and eventually even to agricultural workers; all began to feel some compulsion to be 'in fashion'" (Campbell, 1987, p.22). London was the geographical and social centre of fashion in England, from which fashion radiated outward to the rest of the country. The sense here is that fashion was a process of middle and lower classes emulating upper classes, who then changed their fashion in order to differentiate themselves from their imitators, who then repeated the process. This process, which predominated in 18th century fashion, eroded somewhat in the 19th century, when there tended to develop a greater emphasis on uniformity, and less

emphasis on conspicuousness and social differentiation (Corrigan, 1997). Fashion became a sign of social cohesiveness, signalling that a person belonged to and understood the social norms. This may have stemmed, suggests Corrigan, from a desire for stability and anonymity in a period marked by urban upheavals; another contributor was undoubtedly the mass production of clothing, which made similar items widely available across the population. Forty (1986) illustrates this sense of uniformity well with a quote from an 1855 edition of the Journal des Tailleurs, commenting on the dress of visitors to the Paris Exhibition:

Between the black coat of M. Rothschild and the black coat of his lowest clerk, there are only imperceptible nuances which could be appreciated only by a tailor's apprentice --M. Rothschild's coat probably comes from the Renard workrooms and cost him 180 francs. The clerk's coat without doubt was bought at La Belle Jardiniere and cost about 35 francs. For the present, that is the only difference, only M. Rothschild's coat will stay black, and the clerk's will turn from blue to dirty green. M. Rothschild is also a little more free in his movements. (p.73.)

In the 20th century, fashion seems to have become gradually more confusing. On one hand, consumer behaviourists hold that fashion remains a clear social sign: "The kind, quality, and style of clothing a person wears is closely linked to that person's social class... Clothing furnishes a quick, visual cue to the class culture of the wearer. It serves well as a symbol of social differentiation..." (Engel et al., 1993, p.130). In contrast, Corrigan (1997) cites various authors and evidence to suggest that fashion is increasingly ambiguous. Clothing is now largely 'under coded', making it difficult to tell much about the person bearing it. My fieldwork tends to be inconclusive on this issue. I wore the same style of clothes in both green and brown months, as well as in most of my social roles (I could usually wear the same things as student, homemaker, consumer, and parent, and be socially acceptable). As a result, I did not experience a lot of 'trouble' concerning clothing (as I did, say,

with transportation).²

Nonetheless, there are many entries in my journal concerning clothing. In some entries I note unusual cases, as in the neighbour who spent five consecutive hours shopping with her mother in one, small clothing store, or the sister of a friend who converted a full-sized bedroom into a closet for her clothes. Presumably the presentation of the body is of serious interest to these people. Several other entries address problems of laundering clothes with 'green' detergents. These often left streaks of residue on clothes, and clothes generally looked duller using green detergents because these did not use surfactants, optical brighteners, and other chemicals used in brown detergents. For example:

DAY 50: Tuesday October 25.

This morning before breakfast Jeanette comments that she doesn't think the clothes are coming out as clean with the 'green' detergent. It leaves white undissolved streaks and the dirt isn't washing out well...

DAY 182: Monday March 6.

...This morning Jeanette tells me she is finding the green laundry detergent we are using is not rinsing out of the laundry fully and there are streaks of it in some of the clothes. Last week I had to rinse Paul's sheet twice to get the residue out, and even then it didn't come out. Jeanette is not satisfied with the green detergent; I am not impressed either. Once the dirt of summer shows up on the boys' clothes it will likely be a worse problem...

These troubles did not pressure us to change our clothing, but to change our detergent, for with 'brown' detergent our clothing, regardless of its fashion,

² It would be interesting to conduct a study in which the researcher deliberately dressed out of context, for example wearing a tuxedo or tennis clothes to the office, or clothes of the opposite gender or a different culture, and noted the pressures that developed to return to normal.

looked more acceptable. This suggests a possible shift in fashion, in which the acceptable style of clothing is very flexible, as long as it is properly laundered. Undoubtedly this stems from the traditional concern with hygiene in consumer cultures, something which Foucault and others have revealed has been used commonly and with great success to change or reinforce patterns of power since the 18th century, in fields as diverse as sexuality, the medicalization of public life, the design of cities, household lay-out, and home appliances (Corrigan, 1997; Forty, 1986; Foucault, 1979, 1980, 1990a). Hygiene is also an area with strong narrative elements, as some of my analysis in the previous chapter indicated.

The following two entries illustrate what might have emerged if clothing and fashion had been stronger focusses for my study. In the first example, the pressure to wear the proper clothes for the occasion conflicted with my desire to ride my bicycle. It is a situation in which I wanted to conform to the expected norm of clothing, signalling that I 'belonged' in the business lunch crowd. It illustrates a limitation placed on cyclists: dressing properly for cycling does not mix with dressing properly for business. In the process, a brown lifestyle is privileged, a green one is not.

DAY 17: Thursday September 22.

...It was such a nice day I thought I would ride my bike... The first problems were around the etiquette of going to a business lunch by bicycle. I wasn't prepared to wear a business suit on my bike, but I didn't feel right going to lunch dressed in the clothes I would normally cycle in. I tried wearing a shirt and tie with the jacket I normally wear cycling. This looked silly, and finally I decided to wear a 'golf shirt' with some black slacks. Then there was the question of my helmet. Did I carry it around wherever we went? Did I leave it at home? I decided to take it with me and if need be carry it around. And there were the issues of grooming: I might be sweaty, even if I rode slowly. And my hair may be all messed. None of this would happen if I drove the car...

The next example shows a moment when our children, and we as parents, learn to enjoy the social success and self-esteem that come from dressing properly:

DAY 37: Wednesday October 12.

...Tonight Jeanette took Phillip out to buy some more clothes and return some boots that didn't fit him... she bought some new outdoor fall college style jackets for Phillip and Paul from Zellers. The boys really like them, as do I. Phillip's last words to Jeanette before he fell asleep tonight were, 'Mom, I just love my new jacket'. Over the next several days they get various complements about the jackets, including from a teacher at school and from a neighbour...

My interviews also provided examples of the place of fashion in consumerism. One brown interviewee described an eight-week-old niece whose parents had outfitted her extensively in prominent designer clothes. A green interviewee spoke of the temptations of fashion, and of how she resisted these in part by simply avoiding places where fashions were sold. She also spoke of the gap that had developed between herself and some of her friends, who remained actively interested in fashion. Although my fieldwork evidence on this is not rich, both my interviews and my journal indicate that fashion in general remains an important way of achieving identity, indicating belongingness, and demonstrating an understanding of social --and overwhelmingly brown-- norms. It also increases consuming by constantly changing the semiotics of the body.

C. The Organization of Space.

“Design at all scales”, writes the architect and anthropologist Amos Rapoport

(1980), “from regions to furniture groupings... can be seen as the *organization of space* for different purposes and according to different rules which reflect the activities, values and purposes of the individuals and groups doing the organizing” (p.293, italics in original). The organization of space, he says, can be defined as the way in which the distances, intervals, and relationships between people and people, people and objects, and objects and objects occur. Rapoport (like Harvey, 1990) regards ‘space’ as elusively difficult to define, and recognizes that concepts of space vary profoundly with cultures and functions (physical, social, sacred, conceptual, etc.). These definitional difficulties do not diminish the importance of space in understanding social life, for whatever its form, the organization of space influences such social fundamentals as communication, interaction, dominance, avoidance, and meaning (Rapoport, p.295). The organization of space alone does not determine social practices, as Harvey (1990) notes, but it does create settings which restrict, guide and constrain the range of responses and make certain behaviour more likely (Rapoport).

Foucault discusses the relation of physical space to the operation of power in Discipline and Punish and related works (Foucault, 1980; 1996). As described earlier in this dissertation, Foucault’s analysis included the enclosure of space to separate inside from outside; the interior partitioning of enclosed spaces; the creation of functional sites where particular activities could occur in accordance with a plan of productivity; and the distribution of people within the space, according to rank. The outcome was a space that integrated control, function, and hierarchy.

Foucault (1980) notes an intensifying interest in the political and administrative uses of architecture and the design of space, gradually beginning in the 17th century. Up to that time, major architectural projects

such as palaces, churches, and fortresses were designed to “...make power, divinity and might manifest” (p. 148). But new issues began to emerge, such as public hygiene and health; urbanization; population growth and control; and private architecture. By the 19th century, doctors and the police had joined the military as important contributors to architecture and urban design. Unlike military planners, who thought in terms of campaigns, passages, and fortifications, doctors and other public officials thought of space in terms of habitation. They carefully considered local geographical conditions; the co-existence of functions (eg. people and animals; water and sewage; cemeteries and housing); the nature of residences; migration; the spread of disease; and so on.

Foucault (1979, 1980) makes the point that the architecture of power has reversed itself with the rise of disciplinary power. Centuries ago it was important that power be prominently exhibited; now, it is important that power be partly concealed. With disciplinary power, it is those who are subjected to power who need to be most visible.

A whole problematic then develops: that of an architecture that is no longer built simply to be seen (as with the ostentation of palaces), or to observe the external space (cf. the geometry of fortresses), but to permit an internal, articulated and detailed control -- to render visible those who are inside it; in more general terms, an architecture that would operate to transform individuals: to act on those it shelters, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them, to alter them. (Foucault, 1979, p.172).

Space, said Foucault (1996), “...is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power” (p. 345). Weedon (1987) expresses a similar idea: discourses “...inhere in the very physical layout of our institutions such as schools, churches, law courts and houses” (p.111). In my fieldwork, the organization of space provided countless examples of the operation of power.

C.1 The Home. The refined and intensified organization of space has become evident in people's most personal quarters. The typical house, which historically had very few differentiated spaces, began to be divided in the 19th century into separate functional rooms: kitchen, dining room, bathroom, parent's bedroom, children's bedrooms (preferably separating the genders), and --I might add-- the laundry room. These spaces, Foucault (1980, 1996) notes, helped prescribe a family morality of proper behaviour for particular spaces. (See also Forty, 1986; Corrigan, 1997.)

Foucault does not note that the morality prescribed by home design also prescribes certain forms of consuming. The design of the home creates spaces that facilitate and induce consuming. The home theatre, mentioned earlier, is a space that by definition requires expensive electronic equipment, just as dining rooms, bedrooms, and laundry rooms require tables and chairs, beds, and washing machines. The apparently most mundane aspects of a modern home are also important for consuming, including things such as electrical outlets and running water. I made the following entry in my journal while we stayed at my mother's holiday cottage:

DAY 338: Tuesday August 8.

...There is no running water here so we must drive to a pump about a mile down the road to fill two ten-gallon containers. As a result we are frugal using the water. Several of us wash our hands in the same soapy water, for example, and the hot rinse-water that we pour over the dishes in the drying rack is drained back into the wash basin to become wash-water. Because there is no toilet we use an outhouse. I suppose we use as much water here for all our activities in a day as we would consume in two or three flushes of our toilet at home.

The electrical system, unimproved from the time the cottage was built in the late 1950s, has a handful of outlets on two circuits. Each circuit has enough capacity for one small electrical

appliance, but not two...

C.2 Store Design. Space provides a setting that can be mobilized by social actors in their interaction (Giddens, 1993, p.181). Retailers, through their ability to control the space they contain, provide excellent examples of this, as in this case:

Heavily advertised sugar cereals tend to be placed at a child's eye level. Since most shoppers are right-handed, the supermarket house brand, where profit margins are generally higher for the retailer than on the more expensive private-label brands, will be placed directly to the right of the leading national brand -- usually a heavily advertised product. (Schudson, 1984, p.23.)

This illustrates how power can operate closely yet unobtrusively through the organization of space, often just below the level of awareness. In this process, people are made highly conspicuous as the focal points for the mechanisms of power, yet the mechanisms themselves remain unrecognized, made transparent by the apparent effortlessness of their effects.

In the example I provided earlier, in which I bought cinnamon buns at IKEA, it wasn't just the aroma that was at work, it was also the store design, which placed the cafeteria by the entrance, channelling unwitting customers into this enticement. This is literally a textbook example of a store design technique, as this passage from Consumer Behaviour shows in its discussion of store lay-out: "...the bakery department might be located close to the entrance and/or check out lines in the hope that the aromas of fresh-baked items will entice shoppers" (Engel et al., p. 216). A parallel technique involving body physiology applied in the following example, during a visit to Zellers department store:

DAY 319: Thursday July 20.

...Just when we reach the check-out counter Paul announces he needs a toilet. The bathrooms are in the back corner of the store. The toy department is placed in such a way that it is

impossible to get to the bathrooms without passing through it. I am certain this is not coincidence, though it is only now, as I write this, that I become conscious of it. I led the boys past the toys and the "Back-to-School" items (I was surprised these were out, given it is six weeks before school starts) without paying much attention to the displays; I was concentrating on finding the bathrooms. But Phillip immediately asked, "Can we look at the toys after?" Wanting to keep things going smoothly, and feeling clear that I would not let them buy anything, I consented. So once done in the bathroom the boys immediately explore the aisles of toys...

Virtually every retail space I entered during the year of fieldwork was arranged to increase my level of consuming. I recorded a number of examples, such as the design of the lobby of the Space and Science Centre that channelled the waiting line for the IMAX theatre right past the huge glass windows of the gift shop (April 1); or the entrance to movie theatres in West Edmonton Mall being located at the back of the fast food courts (July 31).

The organization of space can work in a somewhat different manner, transforming what were once non-retail functions and spaces into retail ones. Because of the privatization of most retail postal services, virtually all post offices are now located inside stores, often at the back so customers must walk past product displays to use the post office. On errands to buy stamps, I sometimes made other purchases because the post office was located inside a store (September 23, October 14). The basement lobby of the Edmonton Art Gallery became a retail space: newly placed soft drink machines led Paul and Phillip to pressure me to buy Coca-cola for them after an art lesson (February 18).

Most of these are examples of what consumer behaviourists call 'store atmospherics', which are the "...physical properties of the retail environment" created by "...the conscious designing of space to create certain effects in

buyers” (Engel et al., p.214, 624). They include store lay-out, aromas, music, colours, crowding, lighting, aisle space, temperature, and displays.

This design of space is also the design of meaning and identity, particularly the meaning and identity of the objects and people inside that space. I become more than a person posting a letter, I become a shopper. The furniture shopper, seeing and smelling food, becomes a potential food customer; the art student becomes a Coke drinker. This is the relational nature of power being exhibited: who I am and what I do is being influenced by the relations among elements in my setting, and the relation between me and these elements. While any one of these examples is trivial, they are parts of a pervasive pattern that is important in creating and sustaining the character we call ‘the consumer’.

In the same process, the meanings of products themselves are altered, which is why retailers routinely rearrange their space to change the perception and appeal of products (Engel et al.). When I began using baking soda as a household cleanser, I realized that one reason I had not considered this before is that in grocery stores baking soda is placed with the baking supplies, not with the cleaning supplies, thus defining it as a baking product rather than a cleanser.

I have chosen to end this section with two long excerpts from shopping trips to a very large supermarket, ‘The Real Canadian Superstore’. This chain is known for its intense and sophisticated store atmospherics and very successful store branding. This is not a store we shopped at often, but these entries illustrate how space can be organized to create certain effects, and can be integrated with things like information systems, promotions, and transportation systems.

DAY 136: Thursday January 19.

...Next on the shopping trip is Superstore... Last night Paul realized I was coming here and made a special request in an enthusiastic voice for President's Choice Passion Fruit Sherbet, which he has learned from me is only available at Superstore. The effect of store-branding on products, for Superstore at least, is strong.

Parking is free. I get a cart outside with a 25¢ deposit. At the entry I am welcomed by the greeter, a middle-aged man who looks perfectly cast for the job in his completely bland manner... I have been careful to make a list: plastic storage crates, crackers, fruit snacks, relish, Crisco shortening, serviettes, cheese, and passion fruit sherbet. The items on my list that are closest to the entrance are the storage crates, but to get to them I must pass by a very long aisle of toiletries. This reminds me that I ran out of shaving cream this morning, so I pick up a can of that. In fact despite my list I immediately begin thinking about other things we might need ("Are we low on shampoo?"), and I compare prices to other stores ("Hmm, better price on that than at IGA")...

I get to the back corner of the store and pick out three storage crates, and then look for the serviettes, which should be with other paper products in an aisle nearby. Before I get to the serviettes I see large packs of toilet paper made from recycled paper. Regardless of which month it is I like to buy this (we were buying it before this research began) and I remember we are getting low, so I pick out a 24-roll pack of President's Choice GREEN brand. I am impressed with the information on the package, which is bright red with a cartoon picture of logging on Prince Edward Island and this statement in large letters: "SAVE OUR FORESTS. Made from 100% recycled paper. Every year in Canada we harvest a forest the size of P.E.I. to produce paper and paper products. By buying bathroom tissue and other products made from 100% recycled paper, you are helping to save our natural forests." The function of this statement, it seems to me, is not so much to convey information as to ease any concerns we may have about consuming paper products...

I then begin going through the grocery aisles. As I look for the things on my list I am

constantly distracted by other opportunities: big displays, reduced prices, products that are not on our list but that we may need. I get a large jar of mayonnaise because of the good price, though we won't need it for months. I almost buy 3 large bottles of mustard because of the price, but then admit to myself it would take years to use.

As I go through the aisles I am aware that I am having a physical stress reaction to the pressures of the store, which come through the noise, light, vivid colours, and the flow of "Buy me, Buy me" messages from the product displays. There is no music in this store, just a near constant stream of announcements in coded language by incongruously friendly voices on the P.A. system: "Over-ride on 18, please" and such. I feel a rise of muscular tension and heightened sensory awareness (i.e. I feel more alert to everything) as if I've had too much coffee, and I suspect my heartbeat and blood pressure are elevated. When I get to the relishes, which Jeanette has specifically requested, I ponder which one she would like best. As I do this I notice my mouth is watering. Even though I purposefully had a good snack before I came so I wouldn't be shopping while hungry, my body is reacting as if it were about to get a meal.

I am actively engaged in a dilemma: should I stick to my list, which I made up in advance with some deliberation, or should I take advantage of the lower prices and easy availability and get other things too. By assaulting me with choices the store is requiring that I change my thinking. It is breaking down the thinking I put into the list, and is building up its own agenda of selling. As a result I start to rework my list.

This irritates me though, and makes me defensive. Feeling ever more manipulated I rush through what remains of my list, trying to shut out the context, and practically flee to the check-out counter. Thankfully there is only one person ahead of me. As I prepare to unload my cart I realize I am out of cash. "Do you take Visa cards?" I ask the cashier. Only on non-grocery items. "Is there a bank machine?" Yes, but it is easier to use the direct debit system right here, and she points at the machine by her till... I have never used a direct debit system before and assume to myself that it requires a special card. I decline. Seeming to know my concern she says "You can use the same card here as you use at the bank machine". No thanks, just

tell me where the bank machine is. Predictably it is near the entrance. I go back there with my cart, get some cash, go through another line, save 9¢ on bags by packing my groceries in the crates I have bought, and leave...

DAY 306: Saturday July 8.

Today is our last full day to prepare for departing on our camping holiday tomorrow. After a short drive, I arrive at the Superstore on Calgary Trail by 9:00 a.m.... I am surprised at how many cars are already in the parking lot, and though the crowd isn't bad at first, it grows markedly. Wanting to avoid the long check-out lines I begin pressuring myself to hurry along. But the store is so big and complicated, and there are so many tempting items to examine, I go slower than I want. Time after time the price of items changes depending on how much I buy. Sometimes it goes up, such as with the macaroni dinner where the first one is 42¢ and each additional one is 59¢. I buy six. Sometimes it goes down, as with the facial tissues that are 68¢ a box if I buy less than 6, or 64.5¢ a box if I buy six or more. I buy six. While their system is fully computerized for the store's convenience, I must work these out in my head. It is clear who has the advantage.

There are some things I find hard to locate. I double back through the aisles looking for cocoa for baking, and though I never find it I end up buying some premixed pancake mix: "Just add water". When I get home Jeanette points out we could easily prepare this kind of instant mix ourselves. I wonder if they design the store to get people to double back, so they will buy more.

I buy President's Choice brand [Superstore's house brand] frozen orange juice, remembering how much Jeanette enjoyed it. I am beginning to feel, not just think but feel, how a successful store brand works on a person, building a pattern that draws one back again and again to the same store. Superstore's President's Choice sets the standard here, and we regard this brand of sherbet, macaroni dinner, and orange juice as highly desirable. But I resent the fact that I can only get it at this store; I feel manipulated. Deliberately I avoid buying President's Choice "Decadent" chocolate chip cookies, for I do not want to find another product that is so good it increases my dependence on this one store. I do not want to get drawn further into their system.

What started as a quick shopping trip expands into a long and expensive one. I spend almost \$150.00 and nearly fill my large cart. I don't worry about not having enough cash for I have become comfortable with the direct debit system, directly deducting the money from my bank account. They charge me 4¢ each for the 7 bags I use...

D. Time.

My fieldwork occurred, with few exceptions, in a given physical space, the city of Edmonton. It also occurred in a given time, measured by the calendar as September, 1994 to August, 1995. And just as I found that the organization of space was important in the operation of power in day-to-day consuming, so too, I found the organization of time to be important.

Foucault discusses the organization of time as a form of disciplinary power in Discipline and Punish, examining it in relation to production, whether of goods, soldiers, or students. For Foucault (1979), the function of time in production is to increase precision, discipline, and efficiency, which require exact measurements and schedules. Through ever finer timetables, applied to ever finer analyses and elaborations of human activities, the discipline of time moves from a series of occasional punctuations on human activity, to a continuous web of constraints and supports. The clock is vital to this process. This organization of time is extended over substantial durations, by linking activities into series, and then building the series into successions (such as grades) aimed at long-term personal, economic, and social objectives. In these processes, "...power is articulated directly onto time; it assures its control and guarantees its use" (p.160). In his analysis Foucault uses one sense of time, time as measured by the clock. There are many other ways of

thinking of and measuring time, and I shall argue that some of these are also important to the operation of power in day-to-day consuming.

Time is a difficult and elusive concept that addresses the temporal nature of human and natural life, including both 'temporariness' and 'tempo', meaning such things as pace, rhythm, speed, sequence, and rate of change. It can be related to the clock or to tasks; to social events such as market days; or to natural changes such as the seasons or the movement of the sun. It can be thought of as cyclical or linear. (Bourdieu, 1963/1990; Harvey, 1990; Hassard, 1990; Lash and Urry, 1994; Malinowski, 1926-27/1990.)

Time is important for at least two reasons. First, it facilitates social coordination: "The need for social collaboration is at the root of social systems of time" (Hassard, 1990, p.xi). This is as true for preindustrial societies collaborating in hunting and harvest as it is for consumer societies collaborating in construction projects or Boxing Day sales. Some system of time is needed for coordinating social activities. Foucault's comments on time relate to this aspect of it, noting that through ever more precise timing a new level of discipline can be applied to people.

Second, time has an important role in making meaning. One way it can do this is by connecting an experience with a temporal point of reference, as when Bourdieu (1963/1990) notes the Algerian tribe of Kabyle speaking of "the year in which there was a plague" or "the year when the ship burned in the harbour". The Kabyle did not form these into a sequence or continuous line. For them, "Temporal points of reference are just so many experiences... The islands of time which are defined by these landmarks are not apprehended as segments on a continuous line, but rather as so many self-enclosed units" (p.223). In a consumer society, an advertising campaign for beer may invoke

a generic 'summertime', creating a strong sense of a specific time without referring to a particular summer.

Time also makes meaning by forming temporal points of reference into a sequence, as when the Trobriands studied by Malinowski (1926-27/1990) described the times of the day: "Early morning, the time before sunrise, sunrise, the time when the sun's rays are horizontal, tilted, overhead, aslant, toppling over, right down" (p.205). Here is a description of time, formed by several points of reference linked into a sequence, that shapes the meaning of each point: 'toppling over' will always mean a moment later than 'overhead'. The importance of sequences in time is that the meaning of each point of reference is shaped by its position in the sequence. Later in this chapter, in the section on narrative and time, I will discuss this more fully.

D.1 Chronos: The Time of the Clock. One way of thinking of time is carried in the Greek word *chronos*. This is the time of the chronometer, time in the sense of a regular, measured, numbered interval. It is linear time, because metaphorically it is a "...discontinuous succession of points on a line" (Jaques, 1982/1990, p.33). As Kermode (1967) says, *chronos* is the time of "...one damn thing after another" (p.47).

The rise of *chronos*, in the form of abstract, standardized, quantifiable clock time, is a defining feature of industrial society³ (Boorstin, 1983; Hassard, 1990; Lash and Urry, 1994; Thompson, 1967; Thrift, 1990). As Foucault (1979) noted, it enables social collaboration to be taken to an extreme, markedly intensifying co-ordination, efficiency, discipline, and precision. Mumford argues that the clock was more important to industrialization than the steam

³ I am including the modern Gregorian calendar in the term 'clock time', for it shares the abstract, standardized order and precision of clock time; conceptually the Gregorian calendar is a clock counting days, months, and years instead of seconds, minutes, and hours.

engine (Hassard, p.12). It is well-suited to the needs of the factory, the production line, the shipping agent, and countless other aspects of producing. As such, clock time has largely been analyzed in the context of production: labour relations, industrialization, and the spread of capitalism. Marx, for example, considered that "...the regulation and exploitation of labour time is the central characteristic of capitalism" (Lash and Urry, p.225).

The clock allowed time to become a commodity. "Time is money", wrote Benjamin Franklin in 1748 (Weber, 1958/1976), the period when clocks were beginning to become common household objects and personal watches were gaining popularity. The sentiments in this phrase, suggests Weber, are perhaps the quintessential expression of the ethic that emerged from early Protestants to form the mindset of capitalism. With the mechanical clock, time could be accurately and conveniently divided into components and, in the form of labour, bought and sold in hourly, weekly, or monthly units. "[A]t the heart of this commodification process lies the image of the clock... As high levels of coordination needed high levels of planning, so sophisticated temporal schedules were necessary to provide a satisfactory degree of predictability... Under industrial capitalism, timekeepers were the new regulators and controllers of work..." (Hassard, 1990, p.12-13). In this culture, time became a scarce commodity, to be spent or saved. Thompson (1967) and Thrift (1990) trace the changes that occurred as the clock preempted other measures of time during the long rise of industrialization. Very often the clock was resented by workers and abused by employers, and its rise was marked by strikes, political campaigns, legislation, and propaganda.

D.2 Clock-time in my Fieldwork. During my fieldwork I tried to remain aware of the clock-time it took for various activities. I often noted that activities such as shopping, and driving to malls and stores, took very little time. For

example:

DAY 25: Friday September 30.

This morning I had to run several errands: banking, grocery shopping, making a deposit at a credit union, pick up an item at a downtown office. I was concerned about doing all this before the boys got home for lunch, but I shouldn't have worried. It was all done in about 65 minutes, excellent service, almost no parking problems, no traffic delays...

Sometimes I noted that activities related to green consuming took more time than those related to brown consuming:

DAY 31: Thursday October 6.

...The laundry was finished and I kept most of it out of the dryer, hanging it up to dry in our laundry room. Tossing it all in the dryer takes maybe 30 seconds; this took me about 6 minutes...

DAY 238: Monday May 1.

...In the evening I drive Phillip to a soccer game. It is about a seven-minute drive from our door to the playing field. I check with Edmonton Transit to see about bus service: the best I can manage is about a 20-minute trip, plus a walk of about 1 km at the end. That is peak hour service, and I do not ask about returning at 7:45 p.m., after peak hours...

There were also times when being green, at least in terms of bicycling, seemed quick. This was particularly the case when I travelled short distances, for in those cases there is not enough distance for the speed advantage of the car to matter.

DAY 211: Tuesday April 4.

...Shortly after 1:00 p.m. I head off by bicycle to do some shopping... When I get home I am surprised that it is only 2:30; the whole trip was under 90 minutes, and the cycling was not difficult despite the weather conditions...

DAY 234: Thursday April 27.

...This morning I have a dental appointment at 10:00 a.m... I am feeling better today than on Tuesday and decide to cycle. I give myself close to 30 minutes to get there, but it only takes 15. The efficiency of my bike is great. But when I arrive there are no bike racks...

Although these entries relate to consuming, they really reflect the productive aspect of consuming; they indicate that, in terms of clock-time, the production of consumption is quick and efficient. In this sense, they are an extension of the longstanding observation that the clock is crucial throughout modern production. Without quick and efficient production (which in the broad sense includes such things as service, inventory management, staffing, transportation, and parking) consumerism would not function at the level it does.

However, there is much less in my fieldwork notes about clock-time as it relates to the consumption of production. I was virtually never prompted to consume because of the clock; paradoxically, I was often prompted to consume because of the time. What I mean is that I seldom, if ever, went shopping or used a product because the minutes on the clock were running out, or the store was closing for the weekend in ten minutes, or an equivalent opportunity just would not be available next week. But I did buy a lot of gifts and eat a lot of food because it was Christmastime, and I did buy a tent and burn a lot of gasoline because we went on a camping trip during summertime holidays. From my research, it appears that while *chronos* is the singularly preeminent form of time for organizing production in a consumer society, it is not the singularly preeminent form of time for organizing consumption. I can identify at least two reasons for this, one relating to the function of time as a social coordinator, the other to the function of time in creating meaning.

D.3 The Decline of Clock-time in Coordinating Shopping in Edmonton. In contrast to the gradual, contested rise to dominance that the clock enjoyed in production, in Edmonton it has lost prominence in its role in consuming. The clearest example of this concerns shopping hours. The history of shopping hours in Edmonton reveals continual struggle. In 1913, the Government of Alberta passed an act establishing the charter for the City of Edmonton, legislating in section 239 the normal closing of store hours as no later than 6:00 p.m. Several years before this, the Government of Canada had passed The Lord's Day Act, requiring non-essential services across the country to be closed on Sundays. These provisions were repeatedly debated, challenged, and revised for the next 70 years.

In 1925, in response to requests from store owners, Edmonton City Council extended store hours until 9:00 p.m. for the three business days preceding Christmas; otherwise, stores closed at 6:00 p.m. Monday to Saturday, as well as all Wednesday afternoon and all day Sunday (City of Edmonton, 1925).

Archival material shows that there were periodic attempts from at least the 1920s to the 1980s to enforce adherence to store closure laws. For example, in response to a letter dated September 25, 1933, from "The Hardware Men of the City", who cited "...the persistent and growing evil of Service Stations and Garages selling hardware merchandise [on] Wednesday afternoon, after six o'clock each night and on Sundays...", the Mayor and Aldermen of Edmonton requested that the police intensify efforts to enforce the laws. The police sent plainclothes officers to investigate, and compiled lists of stores that complied or did not. Various charges and fines were levied (City of Edmonton, 1933).

Actions of this type continued sporadically as the city grew. By the 1960s there emerged a substantial public debate on the hours of stores and services. In 1962 a laundry business was taken to court for opening a coin-operated laundromat on Sundays. The lower court found the business guilty and imposed a fine, but on appeal a higher court reversed the verdict and refunded the fine, arguing that changing technology and social conditions justified the laundromat operator in staying open. Laws controlling store hours were becoming increasingly inconsistent, with more exemptions and arbitrary categories being established. For example, drugstores could sell cosmetics after 6:00 p.m., but not jewellery. In a municipal plebiscite in 1968, the voters of Edmonton endorsed a proposal to establish normal store hours as 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday to Saturday, except to 9:00 p.m. two days a week. Most stores were required to close on Sundays because of the federal Lord's Day Act.

By the early 1980s the Lord's Day Act was being legally challenged in several locations across Canada, and the Alberta Government had divested regulation of store hours to municipalities. In this period, increasing numbers of large stores and malls were staying open for extended hours, in defiance of regulations. A series of court decisions concluded in April, 1985, with the Supreme Court of Canada ruling the Lord's Day Act as unconstitutional, on the grounds that it was contrary to the newly established Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Attempts by municipalities in Alberta to regulate store hours failed on legal and political grounds.

Six months after the Supreme Court ruled against the Lord's Day Act, the Edmonton Journal newspaper reported that,

The issue of Sunday shopping, which raised fierce debate, brings one overwhelming response from management and staff in large retail outlets: It's here to stay whether we like it or not. "Sunday shopping is established... It's just regular routine now, just a

regular day of the week," says [the personnel manager] for The Bay [department stores] in northern Alberta. (October 24, 1985.)

With few exceptions, the laws allow stores to be open whenever they want. The role of *chronos* in coordinating shopping has been greatly weakened. I noted several times in my fieldwork that large stores were open late, sometimes 24 hours, and it was not unusual to go grocery shopping after 10:00 p.m. Only on rare occasions did I note that a store was closed when I wanted to go shopping (October 23, July 3, August 17). Most stores and malls are open seven days a week. Holidays which were once occasions for stores to be closed, are now occasions to go shopping; increasing numbers of stores are open on Christmas Day afternoon. One Sunday we stopped to do some shopping before going to the museum, but spent more time in the stores than we planned:

DAY 27: Sunday October 2.

...By now we have spent over two hours shopping and it is too late to go to the museum. Our Sunday afternoon has been spent shopping. Ten years ago it would have been against the law for these stores to be open today.

On a trip to Ontario, where store hours remained more tightly controlled, I made the following note:

DAY 261: Monday May 22.

...I notice the effect of shorter store hours in Ontario, compared to Alberta. On Sunday and holiday Monday most stores are closed. Parking lots at malls are empty...

There were some interesting contrasts in the organization of clock time, depending on the activity involved. On April 13, I went to a police station to turn in an old rifle, in compliance with new gun control regulations. I arrived shortly after 9:00 p.m., only to find the police station closed for the day,

although it was in an area of many restaurants, bars, and theatres. By contrast, I noted a Wal-Mart department store in a suburban mall was open to 11:00 p.m. (June 30). Or, Paul and I ended up browsing through stores one Saturday morning, waiting for Phillip to finish his art lesson at the public art gallery (September 24). We would have preferred looking at the art in the gallery, but that part of the building didn't open until 11:00 a.m., well after Phillip's lesson was over. These examples perhaps illustrate the difference between the functioning of time in a non-profit, non-retail capacity (police services and public art exhibits), and the functioning of time in support of consuming.

In general, the competitive marketplace puts pressure on retailers to extend store hours to the maximum justified by profitability, unless competitors unanimously restrict their hours. While it is in the interest of retailers as a whole to limit their hours to minimize costs, it is in the interests of individual retailers to maximize hours to attract customers away from competitors. As one mall manager said in October 1985, shortly after regulations on hours were lifted, "My job is to protect the market share of the shopping centre-- that's what this question [of retail hours] is all about. We have to be open" (Edmonton Journal, October 24, 1985). The failure of regulations is a result of the constant temptation of individual retailers to subvert regulations and improve profitability, combined with the lack of an adequate social and political consensus to sustain regulatory controls.

Thrift (1990) argues that with industrialization and the demands of production, "...enclosure did not... take place just in space but also in time" (p.114). The restriction of shopping hours during most of this century can be seen as a furthering of this enclosure of time, an extension of the temporal mindset of producing into the realm of consuming. For workers in the retail

sector, of course, longer shopping hours mean longer working hours, and the need to protect retail workers is a common issue in debates on restricting shopping hours. This concern, in addition to concerns about higher costs to retailers and the morality of unrestricted shopping, were adequate for at least seven decades to maintain the enclosure of time and the discipline of the clock in shopping. But since the early 1980s in Edmonton, the enclosure of retail time has been sharply reversed. The post-industrial consumer society has a different tempo than earlier societies. When it comes to shopping, at least, hours are no longer scarce commodities; indeed, there may be a 'de-commodifying' of some aspects of time.

The effect of very long store hours is to substantially reduce the importance of clock time in shopping. Traditions and rules designating selected times for selling and shopping have almost dissolved. The clock is no longer Edmonton's social coordinator of shopping. When there is an abundance of clock time for shopping, its ability to create urgency and meaning for consumers is diluted. This might be regarded as a failure of disciplinary power, in the Foucauldian sense in which mechanisms of power tend to become wedded to the precision of the clock. But it may rather signify a shift in the mode of power, and suggest other ways in which disciplinary power may operate in a consumer society. The decline of clock time does not mean the decline of other forms of time. The temporal meaning and coordination of consuming largely come from elsewhere.

D.4 Cyclical Time in Consuming: The Consumer Calendar. The clock and Gregorian calendar are typically associated with linear time, time that moves in one direction, toward the future and away from the past. Linear time has come to be seen as the essential time of modern industrial societies, in contrast to the circular or cyclical time often associated with traditional societies

(Hassard, 1990). Nonetheless, there are important cycles of time in consuming that strongly influence the day-to-day activities of the consumer. My fieldwork suggests the time of the cycle is important as a stimulant and coordinator of consuming.

During my year of fieldwork I slowly became aware of the operation of a consumer calendar. At one level, of course, it is blatantly obvious: there are the predictable annual repetitions of Christmas shopping, spring clearance sales, and so on. What I became attuned to was how these consumer rituals fit together to form a coherent whole, an orderly calendar. Here, I distinguish 'consumer ritual' from 'sale', the former meaning a generalized practice based on a consistent theme and a social consensus that is widely used to encourage and celebrate consuming, and the latter meaning an event specific to any given retailer. There are countless sales, but relatively few consumer rituals. One can easily tell when the consumer calendar is progressing from one ritual to the next. Store decorations, advertising, and displays change; signs are replaced; music may change; and products are different.

I kept track of the changing consumer calendar through my analysis of print advertising delivered daily to our house. It became evident that consumer rituals have varying levels of precedence. Christmas is preeminent, followed by several other major rituals: Spring Sales, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Back-to-School Sales, Fall Fashion Sales, and Boxing Day. Then there is a series of minor consumer rituals: New Year's, Valentine's Day, Easter, Canada Day, Summer Sales, and Halloween. Forming a backdrop to all of these are the endless other sales and promotions organized by individual stores, often with their own themes. Some of these recur more-or-less regularly, such as annual inventory clearance sales and monthly "Discount Tuesdays", "Month-End Clearances", etc. While these may have a temporal rhythm they

are limited to particular retailers and lack a broad social base.

The calendar of consumer rituals is busy. Some periods are quieter than others, but the calendar is seldom unoccupied. Even so, there are few direct conflicts among major consumer rituals. There are no overlaps in time among the rituals that emphasize buying for others, and few overlaps among those that emphasize buying for oneself. As I came to recognize the coherence of this process, it became so clear that, as one theme passed, I would wonder with curiosity what the next would be:

DAY 288: Monday, June 19.

...Now that Father's Day has passed [yesterday] I wonder what the next advertising theme will be...

DAY 292: Friday June 23.

...This morning's Journal has an insert from Canadian Tire promoting a Canada Day Sale [Canada Day is July 1]. I am not surprised at this, as it is the next 'holiday' after Father's Day...

At one time in Edmonton, when consumerism was less developed, the consumer calendar may have had some minor or even major rituals related to an individual store. The Hudson Bay Department Stores in the 1960s may have achieved this with the annual 'Bay Day Sale', which originally lasted only one day. Now, no retailer can create such an impact alone. The significant events on the consumer calendar are not creations of particular stores; they are a result of social consensus rather than individual management.

The consumer calendar is an example of cyclical time, in which social coordination is achieved by the annual cycle, not the clock. In some regards it is not unlike the calendars marking rituals, activities, and celebrations found among the Trobriand Islanders by Malinowski (1926-27/1990), or among the

Kabyle by Bourdieu (1963/1990).⁴ They all serve similar purposes of social coordination: across society people know when to begin preparing for major events, when to stock up on food for a feast, when to make plans to visit friends and relatives, and so on. The following passage from Malinowski's analysis of the Trobriands could be readily adapted to a commentary on the consumer society:

The practical need of time-reckoning arises out of any somewhat complicated work which has to be distributed over a prolonged period of time, and in which a number of people have to cooperate. When the soil is to be tilled or a long fishing or hunting expedition undertaken, dates have to be fixed by reference to some recurrent natural phenomena which can be foreseen and defined. When a magical or religious festival is to be held, there must, as a rule, be preparations, material as well as spiritual, and it is necessary to place them within the scheme of activities. Again, when people from various localities, at times not easy of access, have to be summoned and later on to foregather, there must be some way by which a future date can be defined for some time ahead. (p. 203.)

For the Trobriands and Kabyle the rituals of the calendar were driven by the demands of agriculture and nature, insuring such things as successful sowing and harvesting. Some rituals on Edmonton's consumer calendar still have natural rhythms, strengthened no doubt by the climatic extremes that require special preparations for the markedly different conditions of winter, spring, summer, and fall. Beyond these, the seamless flow from one consumer ritual to the next, and the subtle coordination that minimizes overlapping time among them, suggest that the consumer calendar is meeting the social and economic necessity of maintaining a predictable, coordinated, and high level of consuming.

⁴It would be grossly simplistic to exaggerate the temporal similarities between Edmonton during my fieldwork, and the Kabyle of the 1950s, or the Trobriands of the first decades of this century, and I do not mean to understate the profound penetration of clock-time in the consumer society.

D.5 Kairos: Time in Narratives. I have argued two things about time in the preceding sections. First, the role of the clock in setting times for consuming in Edmonton has declined in recent years, and is not singularly preeminent in determining when people shop, or how consuming is socially coordinated. Second, there is a consumer calendar in operation, largely unrecognized, that relies on cyclical time and has a major role in the organization of consuming in Edmonton.

This is not to deny the importance of linear clock-time in consuming. It remains indispensable for the productive aspects of retailing such as coordinating shipments, scheduling and paying staff, and controlling hours of operation. As well, the clock remains a defining measure of time for the individual tasks that comprise successful consuming: 'good service' is, among other things, fast service, and the satisfactory shopping trip should not include delays. Finally, stores commonly emphasize the time limits of a sale to create a sense of urgency in their advertising with phrases such as: 'Hurry! Sale ends January 30'.

The shortcoming of clock-time in organizing consuming is that it tends toward emptiness; it is abstracted from any event or special meaning (Giddens, 1991; Sorokin and Merton, 1937/1990). The standardizing and quantifying characteristics that make clock-time so useful for precise social collaboration are the same characteristics that weaken its ability to relate time to the lived experience of people. "[A] merely quantitative measure of time will not account for the qualities with which the various time units are endowed by members of a group" (Sorokin and Merton, p.61).

The difference between quantitative and qualitative time was recognized by the ancient Greeks, who distinguished time in the form of *chronos* from time

in the form of *kairos*. While *chronos* is time marked in regular intervals, abstracted from any events, *kairos* is the time of lived experience, of purposes, beginnings, middles, and endings (Jaques, 1982/1990; Kermode, 1967). 'Kairos' is the name of the Greek god of opportunity; *kairos* time is the time of opportunity, change, freshness, and innovation (Jaques).

While the simple chronicity of *chronos* is empty of meaning, *kairos* is full of meaning. Indeed, *kairos* purges the 'humanly uninteresting successiveness' of *chronos*, replacing it with time that has significance, creating 'temporal integration', "...bundling together perception of the present, memory of the past, and expectation of the future, in a common organization" (Kermode, 1967, p.46). *Kairos*, notes Kermode, is "...the time of the novelist... [It is] charged with a meaning derived from its relation to the end" (p.46, 47). If the mechanical clock and Gregorian calendar are the best expressions of *chronos*, the best expression of *kairos* is the narrative.

Kairos --narrative time-- is, I argue, crucial to the operation of power in day-to-day consuming. Narratives in consumerism create and modify the meanings of events, products, rituals, and people, and they achieve this in part through their effects on time. In my fieldwork I found that some of our most important consuming was prompted because particular times were organized to have special meanings. When the mere succession of the clock was displaced by the rich meaning of time in a story, *chronos* was transformed to *kairos*. December 25 as a 24-hour, 1440-minute day, the same as every other, is *chronos*, a moment in clock time. December 25 as Christmas, the culmination of richly interwoven stories including Christ, Santa Claus, and Scrooge, the preeminent celebration of consumerism and the climax of the busiest shopping period of the year, is *kairos*, a moment in narrative time. (Christmas will be discussed a greater length in the next chapter.)

Time gives narratives dramatic impact and tension (Gergen and Gergen, 1986; Sarbin, 1986, 1993). It is as essential to narratives as are characters and setting; without time there is no action or plot. Time is created in narratives by the sequencing and nature of events. This is the emplotment, and it gives significance and meaning to those events. Plot "...draws a meaningful story from a diversity of events or incidents...or [equivalently] it transforms the events or incidents into a story" (Ricoeur, 1984, p.65). The sequence of events, and their relation to other events, is central to their meaning. The Christmas Carol would have much less meaning if Scrooge became generous before the spirits visited him. In the same way, the ordering of events in real-life situations confers meaning: Christmas would not be as exciting and important for children if parents let them play with their gifts for weeks before they were wrapped and put under the tree. This meaning-making effect of narrative timing is important in the operation of power in day-to-day consuming, and it is an effect that cannot be well-achieved by either *chronos* or cyclical time on their own.

As I discussed in Chapter 2, a useful way to understand the plot of a narrative is the model proposed by the anthropologist Victor Turner (Bruner, 1986, 1987; Murray, 1989). He suggested that the 'superordinate' structure of a plot is breach-crisis-redress: "...an initial canonical state is breached, redress is attempted which, if it fails, leads to crisis; crisis, if unresolved, leads eventually to a new legitimate order" (Bruner, 1987, p. 19). This analysis is complemented by the work of Mary and Kenneth Gergen (1986). They argue that a narrative must establish a goal or valued endpoint, and then structure events in such a way that there is connectedness or coherence among the events. The events then provide a sense of direction in relation to the goal. The movement can be toward the goal, away from the goal, or parallel to the

goal. Like Foucauldian operants of power, narratives create directionality by selecting for particular events and outcomes.

The events that comprise the emplotment of breach-crisis-redress are temporal; they occur in time. If they occur in a fairy tale it is imaginary time; if they are acted out, as they often are in consuming, it is the reification of narrative time. The reification of narrative time contributes to the directionality of events, infusing them with the directionality and coherence of the narrative.

Time in narratives is most effectively reified when it is joined with clock and cyclical time, when a moment from a story can be transformed into a moment on the clock or calendar. In that moment, all the meanings, characters, actions, and purposes that are necessary to narrative time can be transposed onto the precise and exacting measurements of the clock and the reassuring repetition of the cycle, to be more readily articulated with human activity. In the process, the disciplinary power of narratives is increased. Correspondingly, one might also say that abstract clock time is connected to the lives of humans not just through the administrative disciplines that Foucault describes, but in addition through the use of narrative.

As will become clear in the next chapter, Christmas provides the best example from my fieldwork of the reification of narrative time. Christmas is saturated with stories, characters, events, actions, inviolable sequences, valued endpoints, and so on. It is these that give it such intense meaning and importance. What would December 25 be without all its narrative elements, but just another day on the calendar? Christmas is the unfolding in real life of a narrative structure, from the first promotion in August; through the gradual intensifying of fantasies, discussions, advertising, shopping, wrapping, and partying of September to December 24; to the celebration of Christmas Day;

the holidaying of Christmas season; and the thank-you cards in January.

There is a careful sequence of actions, with foreshadowing, suspense, subplots, characters, settings, climax, and denouement.

In addition to Christmas, several of the other rituals on the consumer calendar have strong narrative elements that are joined to exact dates, and then used as promotional themes to encourage and celebrate consuming: Valentine's Day, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Back-to-School sales, and Halloween. (I shall discuss some of these in the next chapter.) Each of these has a narrative structure of breach-crisis-redress in relation to a valued endpoint. For Valentine's Day, for example, the 'normal' state is an idealized romantic relationship. The arrival of February 14 creates the breach (i.e. the cultural demand to acknowledge and celebrate the relationship, or, as the survey noted in my discussion of normalization shows, to find such a relationship). It also introduces the prescribed redress (a gift). The process is given intensified meaning through characters such as St. Valentine, Cupid, and the couples described in greeting cards and advertisements. Without the set date of February 14, the impact of Valentine's Day would dissipate. And without its narrative of romantic love, February 14 would have no more meaning than February 13 or 15.

As Foucauldian theory would suggest, the organization of time is a vital aspect of the operation of power in day-to-day consuming. Through the organization of time, consumer activities are woven onto a schedule, given direction and intent, and carefully coordinated. But as I found in my fieldwork, when it comes to consuming in Edmonton the clock is not a singular arbiter of time, not a supreme master of the schedule. The temporal discipline of consuming is not balanced on the clock alone, but more stably, on the integrated triad of clock, cycle, and story.

E. Space-Time.

There is a widespread view that space-time has been drastically compressed in the past two centuries, and especially in the past several decades. This is considered a defining aspect of modernity. My fieldwork confirms this compression in many cases, but also found that there are important situations where space-time has expanded. Specifically, I found that space-time has compressed from the view of brown consuming in Edmonton, but that in important and practical ways in day-to-day life it has expanded from the view of green consuming. Brown consuming utterly dominates green consuming in the organization of space-time in Edmonton. This is an example of the physical operation of power in day-to-day life: one pattern of consuming is facilitated, encouraged, and induced, and another pattern is discouraged.

E.1 Space-Time Compression. It is widely recognized that space and time are not independent (Giddens, 1991; Harvey, 1990; Lash and Urry, 1994; Le Corbusier, 1981). The way we think of and experience distance depends on the length of time it takes to move through that distance, as much (or more than) it depends on the distance itself. “No concept of motion is possible without the category of time” (Sorokin and Merton, 1937/1990, p.56). With modern technology we can cross a given distance in less time than before, effectively making distance shrink. Le Corbusier (1981) recognized this in 1939, when he described a “radical transformation” that had created “tremendous misery” in cities: “Machines, breaking through millennia of history, replaced the *traditional speed* of men on foot or horseback by *the twenty or a hundred times faster* speeds of railroads, cars, steamers, and planes. Speed has transformed the values of space and time...” (p.109, italics in original).

This compression of space-time, which has intensified markedly since Le Corbusier's comments, is regarded as a central characteristic of modernity. Giddens (1991) links it to wider processes of industrialization, including the abstraction of time from any particular events, and the abstraction of space from any privileged place. In these processes the modern projection map is to space what the clock is to time. As they become abstract, space and time are both 'emptied' of contextual meaning, and once emptied, they can be readily combined into the modern version of space-time. This combining facilitates a host of other effects, including globalization and the 'disembedding' of social institutions, in which social relations are lifted out of local contexts and 'rearticulated across indefinite tracts of time-space' (Giddens, 1991). Lash and Urry (1994), who are sympathetic to Giddens' treatment of space and time, draw on research into the standardization of time zones in the late 19th century to succinctly illustrate how space and time are abstracted and standardized, and then combined into a single mechanism. Perhaps the most notable achievement in this process is the creation of Greenwich Mean Time: "Greenwich time is... a mathematical fiction signalling the attempted emasculation of the human experience of time (and space)" (Lash and Urry, 1994, p.229, brackets in original; see also Thrift, 1990). This triumphant integration of mechanical time and cartographic space signalled the beginning of the end for many other temporal-spatial systems in the world, and created a potent mechanism for coordinating space-time globally.

Harvey (1990) provides a Marxist analysis of space and time that critiques capitalism and postmodernism (and Foucault). He notes that "Spatial and temporal practices are never neutral in social affairs. They always express some kind of class or other social content..." (p.239). Harvey argues that in a money economy, and especially in modern consumer societies, "...those who

define the material practices, forms, and meanings of money, time, or space fix certain basic rules of the social game” (p.226). Fixing the basic rules of the social game does not guarantee who the victor will be, but it does favour certain outcomes.

E.2 Modern Consuming, Space-Time Compression, and the Automobile. In my fieldwork, the most prominent examples of living in a particular arrangement of space-time concerned the urban design of Edmonton. Lash and Urry (1994) suggest that “...many cities and towns are being reconstructed not primarily as centres of production but consumption” (p.216). My fieldwork suggests that Edmonton is an outstanding example of a city constructed as a centre of consumption (it also remains an important centre of production). Although I lived during the fieldwork in an uncrowded neighbourhood of single family dwellings, I was also within a comfortable twenty minute drive (at most) of millions of items for sale. Within that area of space-time are eleven major shopping malls (including West Edmonton Mall), two major power centres of big box stores, and countless other smaller malls, strip malls, street-level stores, and so on.⁵ Within that same area are a large number of restaurants serving diverse kinds of food; many highly specialized stores (wooden toys; Japanese groceries; kitchen gadgets; calendars; etc.); a 2700-seat concert hall and several smaller auditoria; cinemas and stage theatres; four hospitals; a 30,000 student university; large public and university libraries; several golf courses, swimming pools, and ice-skating arenas; a professional baseball stadium; a public museum; a public science centre; a public art gallery; a zoo; and so on and on. Yet, in a seven minute walk from my house was a huge park, large enough to contain wild animals as big as deer and coyotes. All this is achieved while maintaining a generally

⁵ The major malls are Southgate; Heritage; Mill Woods; West Edmonton Mall; Meadowlark; Westmount; Eaton Centre; Edmonton Centre; Kingsway Garden; Bonnie Doon; and Capilano. The two power centres are along Calgary Trail, and 170 Street.

spacious feel to the city, providing neighbourhoods that comfortably house tens of thousands of residents, and without serious traffic congestion. As an example of space-time compression it is a remarkable (though not unique) achievement, yet it is taken for granted by residents. And it all depends on the automobile.

In Edmonton, traffic congestion is a small problem, no doubt because of its moderate population size, its ample space, and its recent design.⁶ In my fieldwork, I quickly became conscious of how easy it is to function in Edmonton, if one uses an automobile (in our case, a minivan):

Day 3: Thursday September 8.

...After supper I drove the van to go grocery shopping [to Southgate Mall]. Driving to Southgate on a week night is almost effortless: perhaps seven minutes without frustration, cocooned in our van, the stereo playing...

Day 14: Monday September 19.

...I then do some other errands that require the van. I return a video, about a 2 mile drive. Then I go to the Revy hardware store to buy some cables so that I can fix a garage door. The parking is convenient and free... It is about 4.5 miles to home, a leisurely 15 minute drive. As I drive I realize how unusual it is for me to encounter unexpected traffic delays... I can't recall more than a three-minute delay in traffic since I returned from England nearly two months ago. There are very few obstacles to consuming.

Day 25: Friday September 30.

This morning I had to run several errands: banking, grocery shopping, making a deposit at a credit union, picking up an item at a downtown office. I was concerned about doing all this before the boys got home for lunch but I shouldn't have worried. It was all done in about 65 minutes, excellent service, almost no parking problems, no traffic delays...

⁶ City of Edmonton transportation figures indicate it is an average 19 to 22-minute drive at peak hours from suburban areas to downtown; during off-peak hours times are less.

These entries are from the first month of fieldwork, and represent a pattern that continued in every brown month. Traffic delays of even a few minutes were unusual, and parking was generally both convenient and free; for the entire year, including the driving I did during green months, my total spending on parking was \$14.05 (Cdn). Even in the most severe winter weather, with substantial snow and ice, the roads were well-enough maintained that driving was almost always quick and efficient.

This easy success contrasted with our green months, when I tried to reduce our use of the van by walking, using a bicycle, or riding on public buses or light rail transit (LRT). To assess our success at this, each month I recorded how far we had driven, separating the distances for urban driving and highway driving. I did not expect the highway distances to correspond to our changes from brown to green, because one out-of-town trip could exceed weeks of city driving. However, I did expect our city driving to be much lower during green months, for I felt I was putting serious effort into using my bicycle for grocery shopping and a wide range of other trips. For the six brown months we drove an average of 727.5 kms/month in the city. For the six green months we drove an average of 555 kms/month in the city. This is a drop of 24%, a notable decline. But during the fieldwork I often felt the drop should be larger, for the effort involved in using the bicycle was significant. In our situation I used the bicycle for a lot of shorter trips, but continued to use the car for longer trips and family outings in the city. One drive to the far end of the city exceeded many short trips on the bicycle, so despite the frequent use of the bicycle our automobile distances remained substantial.

It was not unusual for me to cycle to a building and find large parking lots for cars, but no bicycle racks. During the winter, roads were well-maintained at

public expense for automobiles, but virtually no effort was made to clear snow and ice from bicycle routes. Public transit was never as comfortable or convenient as driving, and because parking for cars was so inexpensive, out-of-pocket costs for a car were often lower than for public transit.

DAY 30: Wednesday October 5.

...For the first time this week I used the van. There is no practical alternative for getting the boys to swimming lessons by 4:00 p.m., a half hour after their school is out. We go to the closest pool to our house, but the public transit connections are poor...

DAY 46: Friday October 21.

In the afternoon I must go downtown... How should I go? The van would be quick, easy, cheap and comfortable, but against my green practises. The bus would be slow and awkward. I decide to bike... It takes about 35 minutes one way. There is no bike stand at the bank...

...Late in the evening I head out to meet friends for a beer at a west-end bar... It is close for them but not for me. I phone Edmonton Transit and learn that it will take me two transfers, three buses and fifty minutes to get to this place, and the same effort to get home, assuming the transit system is working properly and I don't miss any connections. Given the time and the weather I opt for the van: it is a comfortable 12-minute drive listening to the radio...

DAY 172: Wednesday February 22.

In the afternoon I ride my bicycle to do some errands... The weather is near freezing, and the roads are bad. I try to stay off the busy roads. The side roads, however, are terribly icy. I end up on one that is a virtual skating rink; I literally could have worn my ice skates on it... I am very aware that the roads which are most used by cars are the best maintained by the City, and that little if any attention is paid to the needs of winter cyclists. Despite this, I see several other people out on their bikes...

As the year went on, I never became a regular user of public transit during green months, but I did use my bicycle extensively. After my first month of green consuming I replaced my old bicycle with one better suited to heavier year-round use. As noted earlier, I fitted it with a box for carrying groceries and other supplies, and worked out the best equipment for riding safely and comfortably in winter. While cycling was effective and often pleasant, I was having to resist the dominant effects of automobile-based urban design.

E.3 Urban Design and Selective Space-Time Expansion. As Le Corbusier (1981) said, speed has transformed the values of space and time. Yet my experiences cannot be explained just as a matter of the car being a faster machine than the bicycle or bus. These are matters of the organization of space-time. Edmonton is organized in one particular way --to facilitate the easy use of the automobile. It succeeds at this very well, and as a result there is a compression of space-time for car drivers: there is an immense range of activities available within a brief drive. But for the person who does not use a car the effect has not been the same.

During the fieldwork, I lived in the same neighbourhood I had for most of the preceding thirty-two years, and I had seen significant changes. At the beginning of the 1960s, the neighbourhood contained a small full-service grocery store, a butcher shop, a barbershop, and a drugstore. It was bounded to the north and east by moderately busy roads, to the west by a large river valley park, and to the south by a small road leading past a university research farm to a few new houses, and open countryside. By the early 1970s, a freeway system had been constructed that included an important arterial road replacing the small road on the south edge of the neighbourhood, and led to increased traffic on the north and east edges as well. These roads served extensive new suburban developments, which included the large Southgate

Mall, and others. By this time, the barbershop, butcher shop, and drugstore in the neighbourhood were closed, though the grocery store remained. By the mid-1980s the freeway system had been extended and commuter traffic around and through the neighbourhood had increased markedly. Several additional malls had been constructed, including West Edmonton Mall, which as a result of the freeway was less than a fifteen-minute drive from the neighbourhood, though it was in a completely different region of the city. The neighbourhood grocery store had shrunk to a very small convenience store. At the time of the fieldwork in 1994-95, the road on the east edge of the neighbourhood had been modified to handle more commuter traffic. There had been extensive development of big box retail stores in 'power centres', so the malls built in the 1970s and early 1980s were struggling to keep their space occupied, and some significant stores in the vicinity of the neighbourhood had closed. The neighbourhood grocery store-turned-convenience store had become little more than a small video-rental shop and newsstand, in a building that was increasingly dilapidated.

These changes had an effect on day-to-day consuming:

DAY 41: Sunday October 16.

...Late in the morning I make a quick drive to Revy to get some caulking. There is no practical alternative but to drive: the distance is quite far, the roads serving it are freeways and busy arterial roads unwelcoming to a cyclist, and public transit is slow and awkward. But by car I will get there in just a few minutes... Once again, I experience the consumer system working flawlessly. No traffic delays, free parking, directions at the door of the giant store to the right location for caulking, a huge selection (I count just over 100 kinds of caulking), no line-up at the till, and no delays on the way home...

DAY 95: Friday December 9.

...It is another cold day, with daytime highs of perhaps minus 15°C, a flawless blue sky, almost no wind, and 2 inches of new powdery snow. We need

some supplies. Normally I would hop in the van to go to two or three stores and be back home. But I am committed to my bike. This curtails my roaming to shop, especially in this weather, and I stick to closer stores and think twice before going shopping. It is a natural governor on consuming...

...My shopping has been successful and fairly easy. I realize how fortunate I am to live where I do, in an older neighbourhood where services are more localized, and close to an older shopping district of the city where there is some alternate shopping (like Earth's General Store). I realize also that as a green consumer I tend to stay closer to home because of my self-imposed restriction on the van. Green consuming is more consistent with old-style neighbourhoods than new suburbias...

DAY 108: Thursday December 22.

This morning I give our neighbour, an elderly widow, a ride to the downtown bus depot. On the way I ask her about the history of shopping in our neighbourhood, and she speaks of the time when there was a grocery store, butcher, drugstore and barber shop in a little strip of stores just three blocks away, and there was a hardware store five blocks away. The only remnant of these is a tiny convenience store in part of the space once occupied by the grocery store, whose biggest business is video rentals. With the arrival of the giant hardwares like Revy and Home Depot it is very hard for her to get any hardware. Even if she just needs a nail or picture hook, she waits for her son to visit from Calgary so she can get a ride...

DAY 206: Tuesday March 28.

This morning, I wanted to change a washer in a leaky bathroom tap... I ended up driving 13.5 kms round trip to buy a \$1.88 packet of washers. Just three years ago I could have gone to Prudham's, well under half that distance, and in my boyhood I could have walked to the McKernan Hardware, but they are both long gone...

Of the various aspects of our lives that we tried to change during our green months, the most difficult was to significantly reduce our use of an automobile. Unlike many similar families, we operated only one vehicle, not

two or more. For our green months I wanted to use that one vehicle significantly less, though I had no intention of eliminating its use completely. The problem we encountered is that the physical and social organization of our society is wedded to the car. Patterns of day-to-day life cannot be separated from the setting in which they occur. The urban design of Edmonton (or anywhere else) creates an organization of space-time that marks the lives of its inhabitants. "While environments are not determining and do not elicit fully automatic responses (they present some choices), appropriate settings do restrict the range of responses -- they make certain behaviour more likely; they guide and constrain behaviour" (Rapoport, 1980, p.295, brackets in original). Living in a setting that so effectively facilitated the use of the automobile, meant living in a culture that built the automobile into many of its activities. The automobile was not 'added-on' to urban and social life, it was an integral component of it that could not be excised without causing changes that would effect every aspect of how we lived. We lived close enough to Jeanette's work that she walked or cycled to her office, and I generally worked at home. But many ordinary activities required an automobile, and to reject the automobile outright may have required rejecting many of these activities as well, from children's swimming lessons and soccer games, to many forms of entertainment, recreation, shopping, and socializing.

DAY 166: Saturday February 18.

This morning the temperature is getting milder, just a few degrees below freezing. I drive the boys to the Art Gallery for their lessons, and buy a few things at the market. I pay 50¢ for a parking meter.... From the market I drive to the Italian Centre... From the Italian Centre, which offers free parking, I drive to a liquor store... Then I drive to a 7-11 store... Finally, I pick up the boys at 10:30...

This was not much of a green morning, at least in terms of auto use. Nor was last evening. It is proving difficult to resist the kind of social

patterns that are built around the car: shopping at malls, eating at distant restaurants (there is but one tiny pizza place in comfortable walking distance of our home), going to art classes. If we didn't live in just the location we do, it would be difficult not relying on the car for the majority of our grocery shopping too.

DAY 172: Wednesday February 22.

Today I was phoned by the mother of a friend of Phillip's. Her son is having a birthday party on Friday, which Phillip will attend. The main activity is bowling, and she asked if I would drive some kids to the bowling alley. I agree...

The organization of Edmonton succeeded wonderfully in compressing space-time, if one used an automobile. However, when we relied on walking, cycling, or public transit, it often took more time, and we sometimes had to cover more distance, to achieve the same things that were achieved a few decades ago. The changes that had been made in Edmonton had compressed space-time for automobile drivers by introducing such things as freeways, malls, big box stores, and suburban housing; while changes that might have compressed space-time for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit users, such as higher density housing, better public transit services, and year-round cycling paths, had not been implemented. In the process, brown consuming dominated and green consuming was subjugated.

E.4 The Body, Space, Time, and the Consumer Identity. "Regularized control of the body is a fundamental means whereby a biography of self-identity is maintained; yet at the same time the self is also more or less constantly 'on display' in terms of its embodiment" (Giddens, 1991, p.57). The duality of the body as both public and private makes it a focal point of transaction between the social and the personal. As a physical and biological entity the body occupies a given space at a given time, and moves through space-time

interacting with other entities, experiencing appetites, discomfort, pleasure, pain, satiation, and so on. When Giddens notes that regularized control of the body is a fundamental means of maintaining a self-identity, he is referring primarily to regularized 'self-control' of the body.

Of course, the body is also subject to regularized control by external factors. As I found with the use of the automobile, there are physical manifestations of power that make it materially easier to function in some ways, and more difficult to function in other ways.

If the body is a focal point of transaction between the social and the personal, and if regularized control (self or external) of the body is fundamental to self-identity, then factors such as the organization of space and time must be considered vital in the creation and maintenance of self-identity, for they have roles in controlling the body. For example, the physical design of Edmonton imposes a regularized control of the body, which encourages a self-identity drawing heavily on the automobile. The effects of the organization of space and time can flow through the body into the self-identity. Giddens (1991) suggests this possibility:

What applies to the self... applies equally to the sphere of the body. The body, in other words, in late modernity, becomes increasingly socialised and drawn into the reflexive organization of social life... the body is not just a physical entity which we 'possess', it is an action-system, a mode of praxis, and its practical immersion in the interactions of day-to-day life is an essential part of the sustaining of a coherent sense of self-identity. (p.98-99.)

In my fieldwork these effects came out in various ways that can be seen not only as struggles with appetite, training, habit, and physical and temporal limitations, but as struggles with identity. My self-identity was to a substantial degree influenced by the regularized placement of my body in a given organization of space and time. I was a car-driver struggling to be a

cyclist, a meat-eater struggling to be a vegetarian, a normal consumer struggling to consume less. An important reason why my initial self-identity was as a car-driving, meat-eating, normal consumer was that my body was regularly subject to biological, physical and temporal conditions that encouraged this. When these were combined with the effects of pervasive advertising and promotion, as well as the effects of pressures of normalization, it was not only difficult to resist, it could be difficult to conceive of resisting. Together, these various factors created a consistent directionality, each one individually, and all collectively, selecting in favour of consuming. I was a consumer in a physical and social world that was of and for consuming.

E.5 Conclusion. The organization of space and time is an example of the operation of mechanisms of power. These mechanisms of power --the lay-out of the city, the schedule of public transit, the design of the store, *ad infinitum* -- occur in an orderly pattern. Taken individually the effect of each is to create a tendency toward a particular direction in a fragment of human life; taken together, the effect is of a coordinated, all-encompassing current that channels people through time and space in such a way as to form modern consumers.

Most of culture, writes Rapoport (1980), "...consists of habitual, routinized behaviour which, in many cases is almost automatic; the cues and rules of settings which are understood help elicit these appropriate responses" (p.295). The cues and rules of settings are expressed in the relationships among the elements in the settings: "...in the built environment (as in a language) meaning is often established through contrasts and oppositions" (p.300). The placement of the public toilets next to the toy department is a cue for a behaviour; the construction of freeways to serve malls and big box stores creates rules that disqualify cyclists and local hardware stores.

There is a narrative element in the organization of space and time:

If we use the notion of behaviour as drama, it follows that the proper settings and 'props' make it easier to play appropriate roles... It is thus both useful and efficient to express settings physically, to remind people how to behave and help them behave... buildings and settlements are ways of ordering behaviour by placing it into discrete and distinguishable places and settings, each with known and expected roles, behaviours, and the like. (Rapoport, 1980, p.299-300.)

In a city such as Edmonton, the built environment is intended to be continuous with the thoughts, morality, temporality, and actions of consuming. It provides the settings in which the roles of the modern consumer are fulfilled. These settings channel actions, signal appropriate behaviours, and remind consumers what is expected and how to act. As the body moves in time and space, it is in some sense also moving through narratives; the organization of time and space, and the control of the body, intersect with narratives. In the next chapter I shall examine other ways in which narratives and operants of power are related, particularly the ways in which narratives provide organizing frameworks and consistent directionality for a tremendous array of operants of power.

6. Charms, Rituals, and Narratives in Consumerism.

A. Introduction.

Foucault's work had sensitized me to the ways in which the apparent naturalness of day-to-day consuming was a construction of practices like advertising and promotion. It had also given me notions like surveillance, examination, normalization, and the confession, to use in analyzing my fieldwork. As well, his work was useful in focussing my attention on the effects of power on the body, and on the organization of space and time. My initial doubts about the applicability of Foucauldian theory to consuming had been allayed. Nonetheless, I felt that a great deal remained to explore about the operation of power that was beyond the scope of Foucault's work.

At many points in my analysis I had found that a consideration of narrative theory complemented Foucault. It strengthened my understanding of the effects of the confession on self-identity, and it provided insights into the organization of time that simply were not available in Foucault. I felt that narrative still had much analytical value to offer.

As I have indicated, we were frequently prompted to consume by practices, norms, and events that clearly obtained much of their meaning from narratives. It was not just that we were subject to Foucauldian processes of surveillance and examination, or that we were encouraged to confess our shortcomings as members of the consumer society, or that the time and space in which we lived facilitated consuming. Beyond these, we were inundated with narratives, and elements of narratives, that provided role models of happy consumers, encouraged a morality of consuming, enjoined us to celebrate consuming, and obligated us to identify ourselves as consumers.

Even more importantly, I found we were consuming because both Foucauldian mechanisms of power and narratives were affecting us simultaneously and in coordination.

This chapter examines some of the ways in which narratives and narrative elements functioned as operants of power during my fieldwork, to encourage consuming. It also illustrates how narratives provided frameworks that organized coherence across other operants of power. Because narratives arrange time, space, roles, norms, identities, language, etc., into one coherent entity with one direction, they provide an excellent framework for ordering operants of power, which themselves are linked to time, space, roles, norms, identity, language, etc. This is a concept I begin to develop in this chapter, and then develop more fully in the following chapter.

Narratives are often manifest in rituals. Social rituals are the physical enactment of social narratives, and in my fieldwork rituals were centrally important in consuming. Social rituals incarnate the narratives that help to continually re-create the social order, connecting the individual to the transindividual purposes and narratives of society. (Campbell, 1973; Frye, 1976.) As I will show, rituals integrate operants of power with narratives.

The first social ritual to appear as a full-fledged consumer event on the annual calendar was Valentine's Day, emerging as a consumer event in the late 1700s and first half of the 1800s. It established a pattern of integrating narratives with operants of power that has been repeated and developed in consumer rituals to this day. As a consumer ritual Valentine's Day was overtaken in a few decades by Christmas, which has become the defining ritual of consumerism. It contains the characters, narratives, and actions that make it the archetype for most other social rituals of consumerism. In this chapter, I

explore Christmas at length, tracing its history, presenting material on it from the fieldwork, and discussing its narrative structure. Then, I look at some of the lesser rituals of consumerism, including Mother's Day and birthday parties.

I enter the rituals and narratives of consuming --and begin this chapter-- through what may seem to be small openings: brand names, slogans, commercial jingles, logos, and so on. I argue that these can be understood as charms, intended to have effects similar to charms in mediaeval times: enchantment and control. Charms, directly or indirectly, link to rituals and narratives, and the stronger these links the more effective the charms are likely to be. The prolific number and nature of charms in the consumer society indicate the richness and extent of the ritualization and narrativity of consumerism.

By the end of the chapter I hope it is clear that narratives and narrative elements have a dual effect on the operation of power in day-to-day consuming: they themselves act as operants of power, selecting for certain actions and outcomes and against others, and they also provide frameworks for the organization of other operants of power.

B. The Charms of a Consumer Society.

DAY 15: Tuesday September 20.

...This morning as I was pouring my bowl of cereal, Kellogg's Raisin Bran, I quite unconsciously began singing the song from the ad for Kellogg's Raisin Bran...

DAY 37: Wednesday October 12.

...Paul and Jeanette bring home the Zellers 'Club Z' catalogue... the theme of the catalogue is

simply "MORE", which is repeated over and over in the text: 'More Rewarding', 'More Selection', 'More Style', 'More Furniture'... This catalogue sits around our house for several days and becomes an object of study for the boys. They begin picking things out of it they would like. We have imported Zellers' advertising right into our front room and it has gone to work on our family...

DAY 79: Wednesday November 23.

...Right after supper I drive to Superstore to do some grocery shopping. I was prompted to come here because the boys specifically wanted President's Choice brand macaroni dinner, only available through Superstore. Otherwise I might have gone to Save-On Foods...

DAY 193: Friday March 17.

[It is Phillip's birthday.] Late last night Jeanette predicted Phillip would wake up early and start singing to himself about his birthday. Last year in England he woke up and sweetly sang Happy Birthday to himself before he got out of bed: "Happy birthday to me...".

Jeanette's prediction is right. Phillip wakes up and lies in bed and spontaneously sings. But this time instead of Happy Birthday he sings Christmas songs, especially 'He's making his list, and checking it twice...Santa Claus is Coming to Town'. He adapts it for his birthday...

DAY 306: Saturday July 8.

...I buy President's Choice frozen orange juice, remembering how much Jeanette enjoyed it. I am beginning to feel, not just think but feel, how a successful store brand works on a person, building a pattern that draws one back again and again to the same store...

DAY 343: Monday August 14.

This morning Paul and I left home about 8:30 a.m. in the van, picking up another boy enroute to 'Safety City', where Paul and several friends are attending a bicycle safety course the next five mornings. I have never been to this location before, but the boys have. After a few wrong turns we begin to get close. Paul is the first to spot it: "There it is, by that Tim Horton's sign". [Tim Horton's is a major chain of donut

shops.] Immediately the other boy chips in, "Where the McDonald's sign is!" and they both break into the McDonald's jingle, "At McDonalds, we do it all for youuuu..."

In a city like Edmonton the consumer leads a charmed life. To someone from another time or a substantially different culture it might seem unreal, almost magical: fresh grapes and papaya in the coldest January winter; credit cards given without asking; clockwork traffic flows; armies of people dedicated to customer service; millions of items for sale in countless stores; and the chance to shop at West Edmonton Mall while browsing among the life-size replica of Columbus' Santa Maria, the dolphin pools, the tropical beach with its artificial surf, the carnival rides of the amusement park, and the 'Fantasyland Hotel'.

'Charmed' does not just mean lucky. Time and again my journal noted advertising slogans, brand names and songs that popped up, unbeckoned but uncannily present. Though these might appear to be random, they are not. How are they to be understood? As charms.

The word 'charm' originates from the Latin *carmen*, which means song, and charms are traditionally associated with music, sound and rhythm. Literature and history are full of references to the casting of charms. Like spells, charms are cast as a special form of magic to help the charmer control the charmed: "...the central idea of the magic of charms is to reduce freedom of action, either by compelling a certain course of action or by stopping action altogether" (Frye, 1976, p. 124). Charms are practical; traditionally they were used to keep away rats, bring back a lost love, or throw out the devil. Their techniques vary: one charm could use the right name to frighten away evil spirits, another could "...compel by the force of rhythm and sound alone, by getting the right words into the right order at the right speed" (p.125). They rely on repetition and use rhyme, alliteration, pun, antithesis, with the effect

that "...the ordinary processes of response are short-circuited", breaking down and confusing the conscious will, hypnotizing and compelling it to certain courses of action (p.126). These may be as innocent as a lullaby or as dangerous as a siren song.

A charm inherently involves authority and subordination, the charmer and the charmed. Through charms there is a binding process --as in 'spellbound'-- that connects the charmed to the charmer, and in turn the charmer with a more powerful order. Spells and charms

...come down to us from a superior world: if we wish to assert our authority...we invoke this higher authority and join ourselves to it...In the word "spellbound," the conception of "binding" suggests inhibition generally, but also implies a mythical system of some kind invoked by specific names and other formulas. The charmer is bound into this system and gets his power from it; whatever is charmed is externally bound by it. (Frye, 1976, p.130.)

According to Frye, this binding is inherent in the rhetorical structure of a charm, which is 'as that, so this': 'as that is good, so is this'; 'as that is done so should this be'. It is connective, relational, a means for a charmer to braid superior powers into a particular situation. The 'as that' refers to a broader narrative or a superior structure, while the 'so this' refers to what is at hand, whether it be a ritual, or a product.

Kellogg's does not cast a magic spell to have me sing their tune, but the effect is that of a charm nonetheless. Frye (1976) notes this exact possibility:

When the television commercial comes on, and the ordinary viewer goes to the bathroom, the literary critic should stay where he is, listening to the alliteration, antithesis, epigram (i.e. slogan writing) and similar rhetorical devices that invade the sound track as soon as the subject becomes really important. The products are presented as magical objects, and the hypnotic voice of the announcer compels us to go straight down to the store and demand that product, not forgetting the name. Here the tone of giving orders to a mesmerized subordinate is naturally disguised, but the mood is still imperative and the rhetoric repetitive. (p.129.)

Advertising jingles that play through one's head decades after they were heard contain the elements (rhythm, repetition, music, word play) of a charm: 'Double your pleasure, double your fun, with Doublemint Doublemint Doublemint gum' or 'Brylcreem, a-little-dab'll-do-ya...'. So do many brand names. Doyle (1990), a marketing specialist, gives this definition of brand: "A successful brand is a name, symbol, design, or some combination [of these]" that attracts customers to a particular product in preference to a competitor's product through a characteristic that is not easily copied by competitors (p.6). Brands are more like charms than marketers might realize. Consider Doyle's analysis of the operation of brands:

Brands work by facilitating and making more effective the customer's choice process. Everyday an individual makes hundreds of consumer decisions. He or she is besieged by countless products and messages competing for attention. To make life bearable and to simplify this decision-making process, the individual looks for short-cuts [which are provided by the brand]. (p.7.)

In other words, the seller tries to charm the customer into a particular course of action by short-circuiting the usual thought processes, breaking down and confusing the conscious will and then presenting a single enticing fulfilment among an unbearable range of choices.

How does the short-circuiting, breaking down and confusion take place with a consumer charm? First, the clever verbal, visual, musical and rhythmic construction of a good charm lodges it indefinitely in the mind as a mnemonic for the product, privileging the product over uncharmed ones, providing a shortcut through the onslaught of choice that overwhelms the consumer. Then, the 'as that, so this' structure of the charm connects the charm and the product it represents to a broader narrative, morality, canonical identity, etc., invoking such things as: authority, skill and prestige (Superstore's

'President's Choice'); sexual attractiveness (Brylcreem's 'The-girls'll-run-their-fingers-through-your-hair'); and plenitude (Kellogg's 'Two scoops of raisins' or Zellers' 'More'). The charm becomes the connective tissue binding the product, the consumer, and a larger consumer narrative into one; the charm, like other forms of power, is relational.

The most persistent and simple charm I noted was Zellers' 'More' campaign. Almost every week of the year full-colour flyers, usually 16 or 20 pages, were delivered by Zellers to my mailbox. Every one of these centred on the theme 'MORE'. By repeating 'more' in various fonts, colours and contexts and with various modifiers it became an incantation. A typical flyer, for example, has the following headlines adjoining product photos and descriptions: "More...More Savings...More Free...More Safety...More Peace of Mind...More Free...More Savings...More Credit Card...More Card Dollars...More." These rapidly become background, always present but seldom consciously noticed.

Among all the entries in my journal the consistently most charming brands belonged to The Real Canadian Superstore. Their 'President's Choice' macaroni dinner, sherbet, orange juice and chocolate chip cookies all were noted in my journal for their ability to draw me back to Superstore, even though I disliked shopping there. While these are good quality products there are many equally good competitors. Few, however, equal the strength of this brand's charm, with its strong graphic design, 'personal' notes by the President of Superstore, prime shelf placement, and evocative name. Other Superstore brands of note were the 'Too Good to be True' products such as "President's Choice 'Too Good to be True' Ancient Grains Cereal", and the 'Memories of...' line of products, such as 'Memories of Kobe Sauce' and 'Memories of Winnipeg Cream Cheese'. In one case Superstore combined

brands to create a product name that is itself a kind of charm poem of interlocking mysteries, places, times, and characters equal to a mediaeval spell: “President’s Choice Vague Memories of Montego Bay ‘The Timid Jerk’ Hot Glazed Chicken Wings”.

Charms serve as operants of power, intended to induce certain actions and discourses. But they are barren without corresponding rituals and narratives. In the ‘as that, so this’ rhetorical structure of a charm, as I noted above, the ‘as that’ refers to a wider narrative, in Frye’s (1976) terms an ‘archetypal myth’. The ‘so this’ refers to an action or object that reifies the story, frequently some form of ritual. For example, the charm/jingle for Brylcreem once helped to connect the rituals of men’s personal grooming --including the use of Brylcreem-- to the broader social narratives of romantic love and sexuality. Charms are enacted, given effect, granted life through rituals, which connect the charm to a relevant narrative. It is to the rituals and narratives of consumerism that I now turn.

C. Valentine’s Day: The Original Ritual of Consumerism.

Social rituals are actions that typically follow regular patterns and have substantial symbolic and narrative components that are socially shared. They are the physical enactment of myths and stories. Rituals reflect and often exaggerate the values and narratives of the social order in which they occur, in the process reinforcing and transmitting those values and narratives. Because of their social aspects they build solidarity among those who partake in them, combining and coordinating members’ thoughts, feelings and actions. They frequently become sacred events and can be important means for social ordering and control. Special times and places are often established for rituals, and they create a sense of time by establishing regular intervals around which

other activities are organized. They also imbue particular objects or actions with special meanings, and, vice versa, particular objects or actions imbue rituals with special meaning. (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner, 1988; Campbell, 1973; Frye, 1976; Kuper, 1993).

Among the various rituals occupying a regular moment on the consumer calendar, St. Valentine's Day is in many ways the original¹. (I am speaking of rituals in the context of 'rituals of consumerism', not in religious or other contexts.) St. Valentine's Day originated as a commemoration of a third-century Christian martyr who performed miraculous cures before being tortured and beheaded by the Romans². The stories that surrounded and created this figure meant that, in the mediaeval world, St. Valentine became a symbol of steadfast faith and martyrdom who was called on in times of drought, disease, and scarcity. Despite mistaken claims that St. Valentine's Day can be traced back to a Roman feast of fertility, there is actually no evidence that it had any connection to love, courtship, or sexuality whatsoever until the narratives connected to it were suddenly transformed in the 14th century. Schmidt (1995), citing research by mediaevalists, says the "...axial shift of St. Valentine from Christian martyr to front man for Cupid..." (p.41) is a direct result of Chaucer, who, in Parliament of Fowls, described St. Valentine's Day as a day when birds gathered to choose mates. In subsequent works he repeated this characterization of Valentine's Day as a day for courtship and love. This was adapted from Chaucer by several other major poets of the time and spread quickly in popular culture, so much so that "...by the early decades of the fifteenth century, connecting the holiday to

¹ My description of the history of St. Valentine's Day is based on Schmidt (1995).

² Schmidt (1995) points out that there were dozens of St. Valentine's in the early church, all of whom performed miracles or were martyrs. Two of these --a priest in Rome and a bishop in Terni-- appear to have been beheaded on February 14, and the Valentine commemorated on St. Valentine's Day seems to represent a composite of the legends surrounding these two figures.

courtly conventions of 'mannered love' had become a literary commonplace..." (Schmidt, p.42), and the meaning of the term 'Valentine' had radically changed from faithful martyr, to become a synonym for 'sweetheart'. (Schmidt, 1995, Chap.2.) For the next several centuries the church tried to maintain the traditional stories of St. Valentine's Day, but gradually these were completely overtaken by more popular images and stories originating with Chaucer.

The transformation in narrative that led to the transformation of the meaning of 'Valentine' also led to the transformation of ritual: "From an early mediaeval saint's day brimming with stories of martyrdom and miraculous intercession, the holiday became through poetic invention and elaboration a day of matchmaking and conviviality" (Schmidt, 1995, p.46). St. Valentine's Day became a day when young men and women played matchmaking games by drawing lots marked with each other's names. In the courts of England it was a day notable for lavish gift-giving between lovers.

By the end of the 18th century in London, when consumerism was first taking a general hold on the population, and when novels of romantic love were tremendously popular, printers and booksellers started developing a market for commercially produced Valentine's greetings. Their efforts were successful, for by the mid-1820s, an estimated 200,000 Valentine's greetings were circulated in London. In the 1840s this fashion spread to North America, where, as in England, it was taken up with enthusiasm by printers and stationers.

The Valentine greeting card was the key to the interest in promoting St. Valentine's Day on both sides of the Atlantic. As Valentine's cards gained fashion they became more heavily promoted. Stores and manufacturers

began advertising in newspapers, decorating their shops in Valentine's themes, and creating Valentine's displays. In early examples of 'store atmospherics', merchants converted their stores into "The Castle of St. Valentine", "St. Valentine's Theatre", or "The St. Valentine Museum", or changed signage, inviting shoppers to look for "The Sign of the Heart" (Schmidt, p.65). Valentine cards were designed for every price category, and some reached extremes: in 1845 some were reported priced at \$80 (US); in 1846 one store prepared a card worth \$100 (US); in 1851 a newspaper described a Valentine greeting card decorated with various jewels and gemstones, costing \$150 (US).

In this process, the meaning of the word 'Valentine' once again shifted. Having gone from meaning martyr to meaning sweetheart, it now came to mean a particular kind of greeting card. Schmidt (1995) describes this change:

...in the nineteenth century the word [Valentine] came to mean an object of exchange -- a fancy lace-paper missive or colorful lithographed sheet for which one went shopping. A valentine, in short, became a commercial product, a piece of merchandise to be marketed and consumed like any other line of goods. (p.51.)

This is surely similar to the process that is threatening to occur with wolves, police services, and public schools, as I described in Chapter 3: they are in some contexts coming to be seen as 'objects of exchange', in the process affecting how we think about them, how we know them, and how we act with them. Power, knowledge, and narrative shape language, thought, and action.

One of the precedents set by St. Valentine's Day is that manufacturers and merchants took the lead in establishing it as a ritual, decades before encouraging a similar process with Christmas. Wholesalers hired agents and

produced guides for retailers on how to promote Valentine's cards, and retailers developed new strategies to expand the event. "The holiday's approach came to be defined in terms of... shops, advertisements, display windows, and products; these things heralded and structured the holiday's celebration" (Schmidt, p.70).

Throughout the rise of Valentine's Day as a consumer event, narratives and narrative elements were absolutely crucial. Magazine's carried love stories about Valentine's Day, and both the verses on, and the advertisements for, Valentine's cards were highly narrative, referring to mythical characters (Cupid, Venus, etc.) and endlessly providing verses of 'true love'. Time and again these narratives were combined with mechanisms of power. There was correct training of the consumer, as guides for the public on Valentine's etiquette and verse-writing were sold with great success. There was the organization of time, as merchants extended the event from one day, to Valentine's Week, and in some cases to Valentine's Month. Confessing was closely connected to the concept of romantic love portrayed in Valentine's greetings; the whole notion of a Valentine greeting is based on self-disclosure (Schmidt, 1995, p.62), a confessing of personal feelings and thoughts that help to create the identity of both the giver and the recipient. It is a natural extension from these early processes to the experiences in my fieldwork, when on Valentine's Day I received in the mail from a dating service a letter and highly confessional questionnaire about my love life, which, if I responded, would link me to ongoing examination and surveillance. (I discussed these in detail in Chapter 4.)

With the success of Valentine's cards, the idea of creating a commercial opportunity out of Valentine's Day spread from the greeting card business to other industries. Beginning in about 1850 other industries began promoting

their products as Valentine's gifts, including jewellers, florists, and, by the 1890s, confectioners. At the same time, the greeting card industry itself began to transfer the lessons of Valentine's Day to other days, so that by the 1880s there were greeting cards for Easter, New Year's, birthdays, and other special times. Time was being organized into a series of repeating consumer rituals. The creation of an annual calendar for consumerism was well underway, organizing time in a way that we felt strongly during my year of fieldwork. In many ways, says Schmidt (1995), "...St. Valentine's Day led the way as a commercialized holiday, serving as a locus for new merchandising experiments and for the incipient cultural debate about the fate of celebration, ritual, and gift giving in a market economy." As successful as it was, however, it was soon overwhelmed by the consumer Christmas.

D. Christmas as the Preeminent Ritual of Consumerism.

The preeminent ritual of modern consumerism is Christmas. With Christmas there are rituals within rituals. It is the archetype by which to judge all other such consumer rituals. It has its own characters, music, folklore, history and mythology. There are laws which confirm its existence and protect its integrity as a statutory holiday, and a large number of organizations to enact its rites, from churches to stores to schools. My journal noted references to Christmas in nine months of the year, including Christmas-theme sales in June and August. Estimates of the value of Christmas to business range from one-sixth to one-quarter of annual total retail sales, and because of higher margins up to one half --and in some industries 70%-- of annual profits (Carrier, 1993; Schmidt, 1995). Says Schmidt, "If an anthropologist were to draw up a "temporal map" of American culture, Christmas would have to be inscribed in giant red letters" (p.4).

The potency of Christmas is manifest in its spread around the world. It comes closer than any other event to being a global festival, permeating cultural divides and transcending religious differences (Miller, 1993). In 1952, Lévi-Strauss wryly pondered this phenomenon when it was still fairly new in France: “All these [American Christmas] customs which just a few years ago seemed so puerile and weird to French visitors in the USA, showing clear evidence of a basic incompatibility of mentality between the two cultures, have been introduced to, and spread through, France with an ease that offers food for thought to cultural historians” (p.40). Christmas (usually shorn of its explicit Christianity) is a major event in various forms in Japan and other East Asian countries, and is penetrating some Muslim and Hindu populations (Moeran and Skov, 1993; Miller, 1993). This has given rise to huge variations in its form, though materialism and sociality seem irrevocably attached to it. Christmas, says Lévi-Strauss (1952/1993), “...is one of the most solid bastions and active centres of paganism in modern humanity”.

D.1. The Early History of Christmas. Celebrations corresponding to the midwinter solstice date far back through history. Christmas celebrations can be readily traced to such Roman midwinter celebrations as Saturnalia and Kalends, in which feasting and sociality were abundant, and during which Roman records say “...a thousand presents poured out on all sides” (Miller, 1993, p.8). Miller cites evidence from the rule of the Roman Emperor Constantine, who promoted Christianity, of a syncretization between Christmas and other Roman festivals, and notes that there were repeated references to a relation between Christmas and the Kalends festival through to the eleventh century. The Christian component of Christmas celebrations has ebbed and flowed ever since, but the presence of a midwinter festival seems a permanent feature of cyclical time.

Through the middle ages Christmas celebrations were marked unevenly throughout Europe, without a standardized date and with widely diverging customs. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Puritans, Baptists, Presbyterians and Quakers tried to suppress Christmas celebrations altogether, objecting that the Bible did not prescribe special religious feasts, and that the secular revelry of Christmas interfered with religious devotions and was morally offensive. In their drive for greater discipline, which encompassed every aspect of life, the Puritans and other religious groups wanted to organize the calendar into the perfect rhythm of six days for work and one day for prayer and rest. Any events that violated this discipline were discouraged. As a result, during periods of the 17th century Christmas celebrations were explicitly outlawed in some of the English-American colonies and parts of England. Not all churches agreed: Christmas was celebrated by the Anglican, Dutch Reformed, Lutheran, and Roman Catholic churches with special services and feasts, though they were fragmented on different dates and in many regional and local forms. (Barnett, 1954; Miller, 1993; Schmidt, 1995.)

By the end of the 1700s opposition to Christmas had moderated, partly because of the growing separation of state from church, and --in the U.S.-- partly because of increased immigration from countries where Christmas was celebrated. Even so, Christmas remained a regular working day with full commercial and government activities through to the mid-1800s, and as late as 1855 the Presbyterian, Baptist and Methodist churches in New York City were closed on Christmas Day. Just two decades later Christmas was widely celebrated as a major event, and in the United States most states had given it status as a legal holiday. (Barnett, 1954; Belk, 1993; Miller, 1993.)

The rise of Christmas traditions in the 1800s reflects an amalgam of elements from various nationalities: from the English, carolling and home decorating;

from the Dutch, a visit by St. Nicholas to give children gifts; from the Germans the Christmas tree. The date of Christmas varied, but convention gradually settled on December 25. By the end of the century geographic and denominational differences in Christmas had sharply diminished. In the U.S. it was a national celebration on one consistent date, with similar practices, stories and figures across the country. For Americans, this was an achievement of cultural unity through ritual and narrative. Similar processes occurred, more slowly, in Britain and Canada. (Barnett, 1954; Carver, 1975; Kuper, 1993.)

As the reference in Miller (1993) to “...a thousand presents pouring out” (p.8) from the Roman Kalends festival indicates, gift-giving has been connected to mid-winter celebrations since long before the consumer Christmas. In comparison to today the gifts of pre-consumer Christmases, when they were given at all, were relatively modest and consisted mostly of fancy foods such as cakes, nuts and candies. The typical custom of Christmas gift-giving in the first half of the 1800s was that the father of the family, the ‘paterfamilias’, would give gifts to his children, wife, servants, and the poor, but would receive none himself (Carver, 1975). The story of St. Nicholas was often invoked for children’s gifts. With consolidating social customs and improving economic conditions, gift-giving gradually expanded to broader circles of family and friends, but until the second half of the 1800s the chief expense of Christmas remained the cost of food and drink for the feast.

D.2 Narratives and the Consumer Christmas. The importance of narrative to the surpassing impact of Christmas is shown in its overtaking of New Year festivities. Until the second half of the 1800s, Christmas was contained within a larger set of midwinter celebrations dominated by the celebration of the New Year. “In the winter lull of agricultural and commercial calendars, the

months of December and January gave license to several nights of holiday feasting, imbibing, dancing, masking, and gaming. Within this drawn-out period of celebration, the rites of the New Year were high points” (Schmidt, 1995, p.109). Gifts were much more commonly advertised and given at New Years than Christmas. But gradually, through the middle of the 1800s, gift-giving subsided as a New Year’s custom, and rose as a Christmas custom. A major reason for this, quite simply, is that the narratives of Christmas are far richer for sustaining gift-giving and consuming than are those of the New Year. Compared to Christmas,

New Year’s lacked... [the] symbolic center for the ritual exchange of familial gifts... For churchgoers, biblical stories about the gifts of the Wise Men, the baby Jesus, the Holy Family, and the benedictions of the angels ultimately made for much more interesting and apt symbols around which to organize a great feast of familial gift giving than, say, Father Time or the Roman god Janus... The dense symbols of Christmas would ultimately play better in the marketplace than the thinner emblems of New Year’s. (Schmidt, 1995, p. 124, 126.)

The traditional narrative strength of Christmas was intensely magnified during the mid-1800s by the work of Charles Dickens, especially his story A Christmas Carol. Dickens is widely regarded as centrally important to the morality, rituals, and narrative forms of the modern Christmas (Barnett, 1954; Belk, 1993; Kuper, 1993). The themes of the hugely popular A Christmas Carol, published in 1843 and reinforced by other of Dickens’ writings, were taken to heart by mid-Victorian Britain and America. Its impact is a superb example of fictional narrative creating ‘real’ morality. Barnett (1954) suggests that some people believed Dickens himself invented Christmas. Dickens dwelled on issues of social conscience, family gatherings, sharing and benevolence, which coincided well with the folk traditions of Christmas and the social concerns of the time. Scrooge, Tiny Tim, and the Cratchit family are icons of Christmas, and the images of hope and joyful fulfilment through

material blessings are vivid. To this day Dickens remains the ‘great mythologist’ of Christmas (Kuper, p.160).

The effect of A Christmas Carol when it was first published was dramatic. Thomas Carlyle, Robert Louis Stevenson and William Thackeray each provided accounts of the motivational and charitable effects the story had on them personally, and in 1874 Margaret Oliphant wrote that it “moved us all in those days as if it had been a new gospel” (Glancy, 1996, p.3). In the 1860s Dickens gave public readings of the book to enraptured audiences on a tour of the United States. The story, especially the character of Tiny Tim, inspired charity drives, and Glancy reports that an American factory owner who saw Dickens read the story in Boston on Christmas Eve closed his factory on Christmas Day and in following years provided a turkey to every worker (Glancy, 1983, 1988). Within a few years of A Christmas Carol being published there was an outpouring of Christmas stories by many other authors. Given the enduring presence of the character of Scrooge and the story of A Christmas Carol, there is little reason to believe this effect is exhausted. It has been translated into a great number of languages, from Arabic to Zulu, and at least 23 film versions of it have been made, the first in 1901. (Glancy, 1983, 1988.)

Dickens was a committed Christian, and while A Christmas Carol makes no mention of Christ or religion, the morality of the story, including Scrooge’s redemption and the encouragement of respect, kindness, and generosity within existing relations (reform but not revolution), is clearly consistent with Dickens’s Victorian Christian values. Nonetheless, the story, with its pagan-like ghosts and concern with material blessings, may have inadvertently helped to move Christmas away from its ecclesiastical base, opening space for new rituals and narratives to form, largely based on commerce and consuming.

For example, the first thing Scrooge does upon his redemption is send the largest available turkey as a gift to the Cratchit's, warmly endorsing the habit of giving gifts at Christmas while making no mention of traditions such as attending Christmas church services.

The particular narrative form of A Christmas Carol is worth noting, too. It is an allegorical confession, and Scrooge can be seen as the role model of a consumer created through confession. As he visits Christmases past, present, and future, Scrooge time and again must listen to his own words and watch his own actions. He confronts himself: "...Scrooge sat down upon a form, and wept to see his poor forgotten self as he had used to be" (Dickens, 1843/1985, p.46); "For again Scrooge saw himself" (p.57); "...Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit, and was overcome with penitence and grief" (p.90). By subjecting himself to scrutiny, Scrooge comes to redefine himself so profoundly and suddenly that his relatives and acquaintances scarcely believe it. Through confession, the spirits of Christmas remake Scrooge's self-narrative, giving him a new identity, a new morality, even a new language (no more 'Humbug'!). Dickens, who used the confessional form in various stories, ends A Christmas Carol by implicitly inviting the reader to join in the same process: "...and it was always said of [Scrooge] that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us!" (p.147). Just as the spirits of Christmas demand change through confession from Scrooge, and Dickens asks it of his readers, so in my fieldwork did the AllState car insurance salesman and the Valentine's Day dating service demand change through confession from me.

During the period that Dickens first had such influence on the morality and importance of Christmas, another narrative of great importance to the

consumer Christmas was rising to eminence: the story of Santa Claus. The origins of Santa Claus can be attributed to St. Nicholas, a fourth-century Bishop in what is now Turkey. The St. Nicholas character diffused throughout Europe and eventually North America, mixed with other festivals, and developed into a religious-folk figure. St. Nicholas took many forms, appearances, names, and characterizations, sometimes being presented as a magic elf, sometimes as a disciplinarian. Perhaps because of this diversity he was not a major cultural or religious figure.

The rise of the modern legends of Santa Claus can be traced to a handful of key events, all of which are creations and enhancements of narrative action and character. In 1822, C.C. Moore published the perennially popular poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas" (i.e. "'Twas the Night Before Christmas"). This crystallized the story of Santa as a magic, jolly elf riding through the sky in a sleigh drawn by reindeer, going up and down chimneys with a sack of toys. There is no mention of the Nativity, a curious irony because Moore was a clergyman. In subsequent decades various American artists rendered visual images of Santa Claus, often based on Moore's poem, and both the images and the poem began to be used in commercial promotions. The next major consolidation of the Santa legend resulted from the work of Thomas Nast, a U.S. cartoonist who drew a series of Christmas pen-and-ink sketches for Harper's Weekly from 1863 to 1886, showing Santa as the now stereotyped rotund, bearded, smiling figure dressed in a fur-trimmed suit. While this tightened conventions on Santa's appearance it took the 1931-1956 advertising series of Coca-Cola Christmas oil-paintings by Haddon Sundblom to entrench universally his red and white colours --the colours of the Coca-Cola Company. (Barnett, 1954; Belk, 1993; Carrier, 1993; Schmidt, 1995.).

The legitimacy of Santa Claus and the morality of Christmas were interwoven

in 1897 in a still famous incident which strengthened both. A young girl wrote a letter to the New York Sun questioning the existence of Santa Claus, and the editor, Francis Church (1897), replied with the now famous “Yes Virginia, There is a Santa Claus”. Church said Santa Claus really does exist, “...as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy”. Though Santa might never be seen, people must believe in such a figure if there is to be hope for the world and happiness for children. This editorial “...was a landmark in the crystallization of Christmas sentiments in this country [i.e. the U.S.] for it affirmed a belief dear to children and assented to by adults” (Barnett, 1954, p.30). To doubt Santa was to threaten the sources of children’s hope and happiness: people were obliged to behave as if the story of Santa Claus was real.

As well as acquiring a consistent and unique look, and becoming idolized to the point of reification, Santa acquired a life story that included a host of other characters. Belk (1993) summarizes Santa’s biography: “...Santa Claus has a distinctive appearance and dress, is married, lives at the North Pole, delivers gifts in a sleigh drawn by flying reindeer, and answers the wishes of children around the world” (p.81). Santa’s life narrative was created through a series of stories, songs, and films. Some of these were folklore and morality tales and others had strong commercial links. A good example of the latter is “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” (May, 1939/1989), which was created and published as a promotional hand-out in 1939 by the advertising department of the Montgomery Ward & Company mail-order house; millions of copies were distributed and it was converted to a song in 1949 (Barnett, 1954).

The narrative of Santa Claus provides a morality, a canonical role, and a

directionality that privileges material consuming and integrates it into benevolent and virtuous ethics. This is seldom more clear than in the well-known Christmas story Miracle on 34th Street (Davies, 1947). This story was made first as a feature movie and then published as a book in 1947. The movie is regularly rebroadcast on television during Christmas season and was remade in 1994 in an updated setting, which my family and I attended during my year of fieldwork. In it, an eccentric old man named Kris Kringle is hired to play Santa for Macy's Department Store. He is an immediate favourite with customers, partly because he is uncannily realistic, and partly because he sends Macy's customers to competing stores if they have better prices or selection. Paradoxically, this attracts more customers than ever for Macy's:

Mr. Macy was being flooded with wires, phone calls, and messages of appreciation from grateful parents. This was the biggest goodwill idea that had ever hit the store. Why, it was revolutionary! Macy's Santa recommending Gimbel's! The results were bound to be phenomenal. He intended to make it the policy throughout the store. "The Store with the *Real* Christmas Spirit." It was tremendous -- a brand new departure in merchandising policy, and Macy's would reap the harvest... (Davies, p.28.)

To keep up with Macy's, competitors must follow the policy of cheerfully sending customers, if need be, to other stores. This Christmas spirit sweeps the country, everyone is happy, and retailers not only do the right thing, they do great business. Through various twists of the plot Kris Kringle is proven to be the real Santa Claus by no less than the U.S. Post Office and the New York Law Courts, he travels the world with reindeer to deliver gifts, and he makes even the most difficult wishes come true. Any conflict between intense retailing and the spirit of Christmas is resolved.

D.3. Enacting the Consumer Christmas. In the final three decades of the 1800s Christmas formed into a celebration that is, in its essence, unchanged today. Schmidt (1995) cites entries from several personal diaries of the late

1800s that discuss the list-making, shopping, store decorations, crowds, stressful expectations, gift-giving, feasting, and family gatherings of the time. It seems certain that the people writing these entries a century ago would immediately recognize most aspects of the consumer Christmas that I recorded in my fieldwork. In the century between those diaries and mine, there has been substantial elaborating and reinforcing of Christmas lore and ritual through stories like "Miracle on 34th Street" and "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas"; films like "Miracle on 34th Street", "White Christmas", "A Christmas Carol", and "Santa Claus, The Movie"; and songs like "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer", "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas", and many others. This enrichment of narratives has been accompanied by a refinement of marketing techniques. If anything, today the consumer Christmas is stronger than ever, offering a potent secular alternative to the religious theme of Christmas, providing the motives, the social values, the semi-human/semi-sacred icons, the institutional organizations and all the other components necessary for a secular celebration to rival or exceed any religious ones.

Not surprisingly, Christmas was a major topic in my fieldwork journal. Here is a sample of entries:

DAY 8: Tuesday September 13.

Two Christmas catalogues came in the mail today...

DAY 24: Thursday September 29.

For the past couple of days the boys have been talking about the gifts they want for Christmas. They have plans to write their Christmas gift lists soon, and talk enthusiastically about what they hope to get...

DAY 58: Wednesday November 2.

When I brought in the Journal before breakfast a catalogue from Toys'R'Us fell out. From across the room perhaps ten feet away, and after only glimpsing the back cover, Phillip recognized it.

When I asked how, he pointed out the Toys'R'Us logo. He studied the catalogue enthusiastically before breakfast, and Paul studied it enthusiastically after breakfast. The catalogue has a Christmas theme and the boys were fantasizing about which toys they might ask for.

...As I watch the boys and reflect on my own memories I realize the strength of fantasizing about gifts. It is vivid pleasure. Is it a process that, once imprinted on us as children, remains embedded in our selves, ready to be restarted whenever the possibility of getting more and new things entices us?...

DAY 69: Sunday November 13.

...In the evening Phillip works on his Christmas wish list with Jeanette. His imagination is in full flow and he enthusiastically works with Jeanette looking through catalogues and flyers picking out things he would like, comparing prices, etc...

DAY 79: Wednesday November 23.

...The flyer uses Christmas as its stimulant to consumers. Its huge front-page headline is "GREAT GIFTS CHEAP!" Other headlines include "DREAM BIG, PAY LITTLE!", "GOT YOUR LIST? WE'VE GOT GIFTS!"...

DAY 86: Wednesday November 30.

...This evening Grandpa phoned. He talked to the boys to find out what they want for Christmas. We have already bought them gifts on his behalf, and he knows this (though the boys do not), but it is important for all that he go through the motions of finding out what they want...

DAY 88: Friday December 2.

...This afternoon Jeanette and I discuss what to get the boys' teachers for Christmas gifts. I raise the issue of whether or not to get gifts at all. She reminds me that we got gifts for the teachers in England, which were well appreciated...

DAY 93: Wednesday December 7.

...Today there is a whole section of the newspaper that is discreetly labelled "An Advertising Feature", with this description: "A Guide To Christmas. This is the second of three

guides filled with wonderful gift ideas, entertainment suggestions and season traditions." One ad headline is "Shopping is about giving. Edmonton Centre. Where Christmas begins..."

...A flyer from Sears today advertises women's musical panties for \$6.99 under the headline "Gift Giving Made Easy. There's no place like Sears this Christmas..." In the same catalogue there are power tools, perfumes, shoes, suitcases and appliances, all under a Christmas theme...

DAY 95: Friday December 9.

...The boys are now counting down the days until Christmas. They are eager for us to get a Christmas tree soon, and so we may this weekend...

...As I read through the Journal inserts that advertise things for Christmas I feel skepticism bordering on contempt. At the very same moment I catch myself absentmindedly whistling the cheery tune to "It's a holly jolly Christmas, it's the best time of the year" as I flip the insert pages. The message of happy Christmas consuming --no doubt rooted in my childhood memories-- must be getting from the flyers past my conscious barriers to other aspects of my mind. For all my distaste for the consuming of Christmas it has long since quite permanently colonized my mind, staking out an area of memories of opening gifts, vivid fantasies, family love, caring for others, and delicious meals...

DAY 98: Monday December 12.

...After supper we decorate our Christmas tree. It is one of the important rituals of Christmas. The boys enjoy unpacking the decorations, and we put on Christmas music. Jeanette bakes some shortbread cookies, and gingerbread for the boys to make gingerbread houses...

DAY 101: Thursday December 15:

... After supper it is the boys' school Christmas concert...

DAY 104: Sunday December 18.

...For supper we have been invited to a Christmas open house... the main item is a huge ham. There is lots of food...

DAY 106: Tuesday December 20.

...After supper we go as a family to do more Christmas shopping, particularly to help the boys buy gifts for one another... Both our boys are fairly interested shoppers, and we have taught them well to check prices, compare quality, and so on...

DAY 110: Saturday December 24.

...The boys are behaving well. They are very excited about Christmas. In the evening as Phillip lays out the milk and cookies for Santa with a new napkin holder and coaster he made at school for Santa, I hear him quietly say, "Santa, I hope you enjoy your snack and have a Merry Christmas". To him Santa is real. At bedtime I lie down with him for a few minutes and chat. He tells me that he doesn't think he has been a good boy, not caring as much as he should, and other things. He is so serious I am concerned about whether we are doing damage by maintaining the Santa fantasy so strongly.

DAY 111: Sunday December 25.

The boys wake up at 7:30 a.m. and we start opening gifts almost immediately. They are excited, of course, and we have lots of fun. It is a happy time for the boys, and Jeanette and I enjoy it largely because of them. We ourselves get only modest gifts...

DAY 122: Thursday January 5.

...After playing with friends today Phillip told me "My friend got everything he wanted for Christmas. He's so lucky"...

DAY 123: Friday January 6.

...In the evening we went to the movie "Miracle on 34th Street" at West Edmonton Mall... though I was skeptical at first I enjoyed it. It is a fairy tale that blends belief in Santa Claus with the commercial success of department stores, the wish fulfilment of children, and the romantic fulfilment of adults. It has a happy ending...

DAY 129: Thursday January 12.

...Today in the mail were two thank-you notes for Christmas gifts...The thank-you notes are part of the etiquette of consuming. I was taught at a young age, and we are teaching our children, that

writing thank-you notes for gifts is good manners, a reflection of your gratitude and an acknowledgement of the value of the person who gave you the gift...

DAY 289: Wednesday June 21.

...A&B Sound has an insert in the Journal for its "Half Way to Boxing Day Sale" featuring "Savings in every Department -- Just Like Boxing Day!!!" It even has a variation on the poem 'Twas The Night Before Christmas', with words encouraging people to come shopping at this store...

DAY 337: Tuesday August 8.

...To my amazement the only insert in the Journal --from Wal-Mart-- not only has pages of back-to-school specials, it also has Christmas items. The headline across one page is "Holiday Crafts With The Homemade Touch", and across two more pages is "Add a Festive Touch to the Holidays With Crafts You Make Yourself"... The items promoted are intended for use in Christmas crafts, such as artificial floral decorations, red and green baskets, ribbons and fabrics. It is shocking to see reindeer and sleighs and poinsettias in advertising on August 8.

DAY 345: Wednesday August 16.

...Just before bed Paul, with earnest excitement, tells me about his Christmas gift list. There are two items in particular he wants: a Nintendo Game Boy, a picture of which he shows me from a comic book ad; and a Lego Aquanauts set, a picture of which he shows me from the booklet enclosed with the Lego set he got recently from a family friend.

DAY 349: Sunday August 20.

This morning Phillip talks about Christmas gift lists. He says his cousin starts making up hers in September, while he starts thinking about his the day after Christmas the year before. But, he tells me, he keeps changing it until November or so...

DAY 353: Thursday August 24.

...I take the boys to a hobby shop to buy birthday gifts for their friends. There are hundreds of model kits, which they excitedly study. Eventually Paul tells me he will drop Lego from his Christmas gift list and substitute

some of these models. After picking out a model for each of the upcoming birthday parties I pay and we cycle home. When we look over the gifts we notice one has been opened and taped shut. Since it is a gift I decide to exchange it for one that hasn't been opened. After supper I cycle back to the store to make the exchange. I also buy my first Christmas gift of the year, a model of an airplane that Paul was interested in. It is four months to the day to Christmas Eve...

D.4 The Integration of Power and Narrative in the Consumer Christmas. The popularity of A Christmas Carol and other stories, the rich biblical narratives, and the emergence of a singular version of Santa Claus, helped Christmas leap to preeminence above all other consumer rituals in the last decades of the 1800s. As well, merchants, their customers, and society, had learned crucial lessons from the earlier commercialization of Valentine's Day that applied even better to Christmas: if a narrative was tied to a repeating cycle on the calendar, and was compelling enough to affect people's feelings and actions, then it could be made to serve as an integrating framework for an array of operants of power that would encourage consuming. Correct training, the confession, the organization of time and space, surveillance and examination, charms, rituals, and so on, could all operate in coordination, creating a singular direction, by being harnessed to the same general narrative structure. Disciplinary power and narrative could be integrated, increasing the discipline of narrative and the narrativity of disciplinary power.

D.4.1. Correct Training. In 1874, amidst the growing promotion of Christmas gifts, Macy's arranged the first major display of manufactured Christmas gifts, \$10,000 worth of dolls. Other department stores immediately followed suit. (Barnett, 1954). However, the dominant etiquette of the period was that manufactured store-bought gifts were inferior to hand-made ones. As Belk

(1993) notes, “The idea of giving personal (sacred) gifts that were manufactured and sold in impersonal (profane) factories and stores was still a troublesome one for Americans to accept” (p.90). In two or three decades this ‘troublesome idea’ was overcome. To dissolve their customers’ reluctance to accept manufactured commodities as gifts, retailers developed a number of strategies. Special merchandise was ordered and designated as ‘Christmas gifts’ to distinguish it from regular merchandise. Stores offered services to help people select appropriate gifts. Wrapping paper was introduced so givers could personalize the commodity-as-gift. In a similar vein the practice of removing price tags was established and rituals developed around the gift exchange (Belk, 1993). By 1880 advertising in popular American magazines prominently featured Santa, encouraging people to buy manufactured Christmas gifts instead of home-made ones. Carver reproduces various newspaper and magazine articles from this period that provide advice on Christmas etiquette: ‘Do’s and Don’ts’ (“Don’t buy your wife a cookbook... Don’t forget to remove the price-tag from presents”); what to buy for whom; and ways to “Add to the Fun” of Christmas gift-giving. These changes had their effects quickly; *The Globe* newspaper in Toronto reported that nearly a million Christmas gifts were sold in 1882 (Carver, 1975), roughly ten for every citizen.

This, of course, was a form of ‘correct training’: people were being taught that impersonal manufactured goods were acceptable as gifts if certain rituals and practices were followed. The advertisements, the special services, and the lists of Christmas ‘Dos and Don’ts’ were ways to properly train people in the exacting rituals and detailed disciplines of Christmas consuming. Correct training for Christmas consuming occurred in various forms during my fieldwork. We taught our children to prepare lists, shop carefully, and write thank-you letters, and advertisers filled entire sections of the newspaper with

'Guides to Christmas', filled with advice on the proper ways to shop, entertain, and celebrate.

Correct training, as Foucault (1979) notes, carries its effects to every individual, diffusing rather than centralizing power. There is no commander ordering people to shop for Christmas; instead, almost everyone, suitably docile, follows the normal path. In the process, individuals are not only subject to this power, they recreate it by sustaining the norm. And it is not only consumers who are enmeshed in correct training; retailers themselves must be correctly trained. There are, for example, important trade magazines and journals that teach retailers how to prepare for Christmas (and every other ritual on the consumer calendar), usually focussing on specific industries, such as confections, flowers, dry goods, and department stores.

Schmidt (1995) gives a different example:

...St. Nick's image would continue to be standardized through special 'schools' for department store Santa Clauses, which began appearing in the 1930s, where everything about Santa would be subject to rationalization --the precise pattern of his costume, the correct application of prescribed cosmetics, the appropriate forms for his gestures, and the etiquette of his interaction... (p.147.)

Foucault concentrated on correct training in settings like factories, schools, and the military. As important as these are, the consumer society also requires correct training in the enactment of consumer narratives, rituals, and charms. It may be that the gestures comprising the march of well-trained soldiers (an example Foucault (1979) uses) are no more important to the operation of power in a consumer society than the gestures of well-trained department store Santas.

D.4.2. The Confession. The Christian confession is intended to reveal the shortcomings of the confessor when compared to the ideals of the church. The consumer confession is intended to reveal the shortcomings of the confessor when compared to the ideals of consumerism. The question is not 'What are my sins?', but 'What do I want?'. A Christmas wish list is a consumer confession. The confessor contemplates his or her material situation, and in effect asks, 'What do I have?', 'What is available?', and 'What do I want?'. In the Christmas wish list the confessor reveals his or her material fantasies. These lists do not just organize; they stimulate self-examination, in the process creating, amplifying, and communicating consumer dreams and identities.

A difference between the Christmas wish list and traditional Christian confessions is that the Christmas wish list takes hold not only in the confessor ('I am someone who will be happier when these wants are met'), but in the person hearing the confession ('I am someone who should get these things to make this person happier'). Schmidt (1995) describes the diary of Clara Pardee, an American mother of two. In 1899, Pardee makes special note of her children's Christmas wish lists, addressed to Santa Claus at the North Pole. From the diary it is clear that Pardee "...took obvious pleasure in drawing up these lists and in fulfilling her children's holiday fancies by playing the role of Santa Claus in their lives..." (p. 154). Years later, Pardee noted that she repeated the list-making ritual with her grandchildren, teaching them the processes and confessions of the consumer Christmas. Like Clara Pardee a century before, I noted in my journal the repeated pleasures of preparing wish lists for Christmas as our children dreamed of what they wanted, pored over the Christmas advertisements, considered their shortfalls and fantasies, and listed their final confessions for the season. Like Clara Pardee, Jeanette and I encouraged and enjoyed the process, and subsequently did our best to help

ensure their consumer dreams were fulfilled, at times literally pretending to be Santa Claus.

The canonical consumer confession is found in Scrooge's experience in A Christmas Carol. Scrooge's is not the traditional Christian confession, which Foucault (1997) notes was originally fulfilled by the negative penitence of humility, hair shirts, and self-sacrifice. In Scrooge's experience, Dickens presents a confession which is fulfilled through a positive penitence of gift-giving, joyful celebration, and indulgence. Foucault (1997), at the end of a 1980 lecture called "Christianity and Confession", suggests that "...one of the great problems of Western culture has been to find the possibility of founding the hermeneutics of the self not, as it was the case in early Christianity, on the sacrifice of the self but, on the contrary, on a positive, on the theoretical and practical emergence of the self" (p.229). It may be that one reason for the success of consumerism is that it provides an opportunity for a practical emergence of the self that, for all its materialism and one-dimensional self-examination ('What do I want?'), is positive.

D.4.3. The Organization of Time and Space. As I argued in the previous chapter, the consumer Christmas provides an excellent example of the integration of clock-time (*chronos*), cyclical time, and narrative time (*kairos*). In terms of Christmastime consuming, the effectiveness of clock-time depends on its placement within the framework of narrative time and the cyclical time. One of the first necessities for the rise of the consumer Christmas was to stabilize it in cyclical time. Until the second half of the 1800s Christmas was celebrated on a wide range of dates, from early December to mid-January. As convention settled on one moment in the cycle --December 25-- a single temporal routine could become dominant, allowing more efficiency (less wasteful duplication) and more effectiveness (greater results from each effort)

in creating and enacting the consumer Christmas³. Simultaneously, the strengthening of Christmas narratives (Dickens, Santa, etc.) intensified the meaning generated by the pacing, sequencing, and climax of actions connected to Christmas, and by the objects and rituals associated with each time. With December 25 thus consecrated in cyclical and narrative time, the clock could organize the remaining details, particularly relating to the production of consumption: store hours, shipment schedules, the newspaper countdown of 'shopping days 'till Christmas', and so on. This organization of time was, as my fieldwork notes reveal, crucial to the operation of power in our consuming.

Likewise, Christmas reveals through its exaggerated presence the effects of the organization of space on consuming. Just as moments in time are given special meanings through their positions in narratives, so are objects and areas in space. The house is decorated to signify that Christmas is on its way, and the common focus of decoration is the tree, where the climax of consuming will occur on Christmas morning. Stores engage in similar activity with their Christmas decorations. Particularly at Christmas, stores tend to display fantasies and stories rather than simply products for sale: Santa's castle, mechanical elves, flying reindeer, and so on. These carry semiotic meaning, just as the human body carries it through fashion and gesture. The store that does not decorate for Christmas will be as out of place in the mall as the cyclist who wears cycling clothes and a helmet will be out of place in a business lunch crowd. People 'read' Christmas decorations to learn what to expect and how to react, just as they read clothing to learn what to expect and how to react.

³ There are still important exceptions to the date of December 25. Edmonton has a sizable population of people who follow the Eastern Orthodox and related churches, and so still use the Julian Calendar. These people celebrate Christmas in early January, though there are signs they are being gradually 'normalized' to December 25.

Foucault's (1979) discussion of the organization of space concentrates on places like factories, schools, and barracks, and presents what might be called its 'mechanical' forms, including enclosure, partitioning, and functional sites. Space, as I argued in the previous chapter, is organized in many other ways as well, and these are as important to the operation of power as the variables identified by Foucault. Christmas helps to make more evident how space can be organized to suit narratives, and particularly the narrative of striving for happiness through consuming: the decorated stores, the decorated streets, and the decorated homes reify the narrative of fantasizing, list-making, shopping, wrapping, joyful giving and receiving, and giving thanks. Space, and with it time, are organized and integrated through the Christmas narrative: this action will occur at that place on this time, and will be laden with all these meanings.

D.4.4. Charms, Rituals, and Stories in the Consumer Christmas. As the archetypal consumer celebration, Christmas provides the clearest examples of how charm, ritual, and story work together to support consuming. In my fieldwork notes, the logo for 'Toys'R'Us' demonstrates its strength as a charm when it prevails over all the other advertising flyers to instantly catch Phillip's attention across the room. When I find myself unconsciously humming 'It's the best time of the year', even at a moment of disillusionment with Christmas, I know that a charm is at work. Charms prompt me to think, remember, perceive, and act in particular ways. The charms of the consumer Christmas are countless (even as I write this I cannot help repeating 'He's making his list, and checking it twice'), and their success stems from their symbiotic relationship to fundamentally important rituals.

The rituals of the consumer Christmas are also numerous beyond counting, but are dominated by ones such as list-making, shopping, gift-giving, tree decorating, and feasting. Charms and rituals, of course, are ways of making narratives real. The ritual of putting out milk and cookies for Santa's snack on Christmas eve makes the story of Santa seem real, as I discovered with unease in my fieldwork. The ritual actions of Christmas, even if commenced out of routine obligation, usually generate real emotions. Once the rituals of Christmas begin, the emotions that are expected to follow take on a significance of their own (Moeran and Skov, 1993). For example, the action of a parent and child sitting down with a catalogue to make a 'wish list' of possible gifts creates feelings of eager anticipation and suspense: "...waiting is transformed into expectation" (Lofgren, 1993, p.220). The ritual draws us into the story, complete with its feelings and actions.

The connection of charm, ritual, and narrative facilitates a process of 'sacralization', in which commodities are transformed into Christmas merchandise and then into actual gifts. It is a process that involves a dialectic process between consumer and retailer. The retailer 'prefabricates' an emotional value for the commodity, typically using charms, rituals, and stories. If these succeed the consumer will internalize the emotional value, and reconceive the commodity as something special in terms of a gift. As Belk (1993) says, the "...emotional transformation of things only works when it is reworked by individual consumers" (p.128). This process, embedded in narrative, is constantly repeated from one Christmas to the next: retailers assess the consumer scene and determine a course of action, and consumers assess the retail scene and respond. The meanings of commodities are constantly in flux: "In this process of consumption there is no real or original meaning, and [it] is thus an endless chain of 'subversions'" (Belk, p. 128).

The rituals of Christmas generate a sense of sociality: to be a member of a given community is to share in its defining activities. At the same time, to reject these rituals is in part to reject the community. And so the rituals of the consumer Christmas emerge as a form of social control. The unusually public nature of these rituals makes compliance or non-compliance highly visible, resulting in substantial normalizing pressure. The link of rituals to narratives means that this pressure can be magnified and focussed through stories, for the stories provide canonical roles by which people come to classify, understand, and judge particular behaviours and persons. For example, to be called a “Scrooge” is, as Barnett (1954) notes, a “...severe indictment” (p.82). The strength of this pressure is such that it is felt not only by people of Christian heritage; Barnett cites evidence of its impact on American Jews, and Belk (1993) cites evidence of its impact on Jews and Hindus in the U.S. Accepting at least the secular aspects of Christmas is a mark of acculturation and membership.

It is widely noted that the growth of Christmas commercialism corresponds directly to the rise of capitalism and industrialization. It also corresponds to other changes in society including a reduced role for the church and new forms of social power. “With the secularization of society we have relegated the sacred to the material world. In so doing, the control of transcendence has shifted from the central authority of the church to the diffuse authority of the media and the merchant (Belk, 1993, p.89)”. Schmidt (1995) gives various examples of how the consumer Christmas encroached upon and sometimes usurped the most sacred symbolism of Christianity. Christmas stories and cards in the 1880s and 1890s mixed Jesus and Santa together “...in a jumble of successful petitions for Christmas toys” (p.140), sometimes portraying children kneeling in prayer to Santa. Santa Claus served as “...God’s peculiar messenger in these [Christmas] errands of bounty and

grace”, and became the “...agent of theological transformation...” away from “...an austere Calvinist patriarchy to more-companionable forms of deity and family...” (Schmidt, p.139, 140).

Christmas, through its secular charms, rituals, and narratives, embodies and sustains a secular faith of optimism, hope, and material abundance (Barnett, 1954). Belk (1993) discusses several ways in which Santa parallels Christ, including the working of miracles, the bringing of gifts, the receiving of prayers (children’s requests for gifts), and omniscience (knowing the behaviour of children around the world). Belk then cites several ways Santa is different from Christ: Santa is old, plump, jolly, richly dressed, and gives toys and luxuries. Belk concludes that “...Santa is a secular version of Christ, with one key difference. While Christ reigns in the realm of the spirit, Santa’s realm is that of material abundance...” (p. 83). More than a century ago, says Schmidt (1995), Christmas was already helping consumerism become sacred: “The rituals of home and marketplace competed with church-centered celebrations. Shopping and gift-giving were, in fair measure, secular liturgies, representing a new kind of middle-class faith in family and abundance -- a faith that showed a striking capacity both to absorb Christianity and to supplant it” (p. 159).

E. Consumer Rituals Beyond Christmas.

Shortly after the arrival of the consumer Christmas in the 1800s came the consumer Easter. Easter had suffered under the same suspicion and disapproval of celebration and festivity that had suppressed Christmas. Schmidt (1995) cites various sources from the United States in the mid-1800s which make it evident that Easter was barely noticed on the calendar. For instance, the New York Herald in 1881 reported that “A few years ago and

Easter as a holiday was scarcely thought of, except by the devout” (cited in Schmidt, p.195). This comment was written because Easter was going through a transition into a popular and important event, instigated by the floral industry and quickly supported by milliners, fashion companies, stationers, and confectioners. The pattern for this metamorphosis of Easter is familiar: church and store decorations according to the themes of Easter, springtime, rebirth, and fertility; commercial promotions and special events, particularly fashion shows and Easter parades; the merchandising of ‘Easter’ products such as hats and candies; and the adapting and usurping of religious and other symbols. By 1894, the trade journal Dry Goods Economist would report “Easter is preeminently the festival of the dry goods trade. Much of the success of the year’s business hangs upon the demand experienced during the weeks just preceding Easter... Everything is done during these days to influence the shopper to buy” (cited in Schmidt, p.213).

As with Christmas, there has been much debate about the commercialization of Easter. Despite its early success as a consumer event, Easter has not achieved anything near the impact of Christmas as a consumer ritual. This may be due partly to protests against it, as Schmidt (1995) suggests, but it cannot be the entire reason, for there have been many objections to Christmas as well. I suggest the failure of Easter to become a major consumer event may be due mostly to the inability of Easter narratives to provide strong frameworks for organizing consuming. The crucifixion and rebirth of Jesus is a more ambivalent story for celebration than the Christmas story; there are no parallels to the gift-bearing Magi; and Easter has never had its equivalent to Charles Dickens. Perhaps most importantly, there is no likeness to Santa Claus to conceal consumerism in a sacred disguise, and to bring to Easter a life story so fantastic and vivid that it seems almost real. In contrast to Santa, is the Easter Bunny male or female? Married or single? Where does it live?

Does it have helpers? In my fieldwork, I noted various Easter promotions and advertisements, but Easter was not a time of major consuming for us.

Mother's Day was the next event to arrive on the consumer calendar after Easter, launched in 1908 by an American woman named Anna Jarvis in commemoration of her own mother. Telling the story of her mother's sacrifices and love, she organized committees and undertook letter-writing campaigns with intense energy. From this modest beginning it rapidly grew into an important day of celebration, particularly for greeting card companies, telephone companies, and the floral industry. It was the floral industry that pushed Mother's Day to its current success, starting to promote it in 1914. Drawing on their experience with Valentine's, Christmas, and Easter, florists quickly turned Mother's Day into a national event in the U.S., and then abroad. From the beginning it was filled with sentimentality: Jarvis used the story of her mother's noble Christian life to promote Mother's Day, and businesses and the media were quick to pick it up. After Jarvis began complaining that Mother's Day had become too commercial, businesses stopped using her story and concentrated on general narratives and images of motherhood. (Schmidt, 1995.) In my fieldwork records I noted a number of Mother's Day promotions and advertisements, but as a cause of consuming for us, it was limited to a trip to a botanical garden and attempts to buy a dress for Jeanette that were ultimately unsuccessful.

Two years after Anna Jarvis launched Mother's Day, another American, Sonora Dodd, launched Father's Day. She was more comfortable with the commercialization of Father's Day than Jarvis was with Mother's Day, so she quickly enlisted the help of businesses. But Mother's Day had enough of a head start that Father's Day always appeared as its pale imitation. (In fact, Dodd did conceive of Father's Day after listening to a church sermon about

Mother's Day.) With its experiences of Valentine's, Christmas, Easter, and Mother's Day, the public was beginning to recognize the pattern through which events were turned into consumer rituals, and there was some resistance to and mockery of Father's Day. Its lower profile also reflects the different roles of men and women in consuming. Because most households depended on the father for family income until recently, the cost of Father's Day gifts usually ended up with the father. This was widely and sometimes sarcastically noted in Father's Day cartoons and commentaries, and created ambivalence about who was giving gifts to whom. As well, there seemed to be fewer consumer goods suited to gift-giving for men than for women. (Schmidt, 1995.) As with Mother's Day, the celebrations I recorded in my fieldwork concerning Father's Day were fairly modest: new shirts for me and Jeanette's father, and a family meal.

In my fieldwork I noted one attempt at creating a new consumer ritual, intended to stimulate greater consumption of maple syrup. This example concerned Shrove Tuesday, a day historically marked by the church as the last day of celebration before the beginning of Lent, the seven-week period before Easter that is traditionally a time of fasting and penitence. Shrove Tuesday is also known as Pancake Tuesday, no doubt in reference to preparations for the subsequent fast. These traditions are no longer widely practised, but they provided the following marketing opportunity, as noted in my daily journal:

DAY 156: Wednesday February 8.

In today's Journal one of the inserts is a coupon booklet. The first advertisement is for "Rogers' Canadian Maple Flavoured Syrup". It has a near life-sized photo of a bottle of Rogers' Maple Flavoured Syrup beside a perfectly prepared plate of pancakes and sausages, and a cup of coffee. Headline: "Pancake Day is February 28th!" Smaller text: "Time to make and flip your favourite pancakes, crepes or flapjacks."

Pancakes on Shrove Tuesday is a much loved tradition. Just Like Rogers' Syrup." On the bottom of the page is a coupon to save 50¢ on a bottle of Rogers' Syrup.

In a social order dominated not by religion, penitence, or fasting but by consuming, the rituals of the former are being reconstructed into rituals of the latter. In the process the meaning of Shrove Tuesday is shifted, keeping its form but altering its substance, so that "Pancake Day" comes to mark a special day for consuming maple flavoured syrup. This is no doubt an echo of the processes that transformed Saint Nicholas and the birth of Christ into the modern version of Christmas⁴.

The most frequently repeated commemorative ritual that involved substantial consuming was the birthday. During the year of fieldwork I noted 18 birthdays for children, all of which involved parties and gift-giving, and ten birthdays for adults, all of which were marked by some kind of social get-together and food, and a few of which also involved gifts. Here is a small sample of field notes about these:

DAY 12: Saturday September 17.

...Phillip goes to a friend's birthday party. There have been gifts at birthday parties for as long as I can remember. But now there is a second level of consuming: the birthday child gives a 'treat bag' to each friend who comes to the party. I wonder how this got started? Phillip was given one today. Sometimes the treat bags are very simple and cheap, with a few candies and party favours. However, Paul recently went to a birthday party and each kid got a nice little flashlight, among other things...

⁴ Various industries continue to develop and promote specialized days for the consumer calendar. A 1998 calendar produced by the Hallmark greeting card company lists 35 'Dates to Remember', including Secretaries Day (April 22), Nurses' Day (May 12), Grandparents Day (September 13), and Boss's Day (October 16). Most of these pass without wide recognition, as Christmas and Easter once did. As yet there is no day for PhD supervisors and examiners, and certainly not for PhD students.

DAY 136: Thursday January 19.

...the last request from Phillip before going to bed is for me to go to Toys'R'Us in the morning to get a special present - "Foam Gak"- for a friend's birthday party tomorrow. Phillip wants to get him this because he thinks it would be a nice gift. He has seen it at other friends' homes and enjoyed it...

DAY 138: Saturday January 21.

...Phillip, referring to his friend to whom he gave the Foam Gak at yesterday's birthday: "He liked my gift the most." Paul, genuinely: "Congratulations Phillip. You picked well". Phillip: "I knew he wanted it." The tone and nature of the comments make it clear that Phillip feels good about having chosen a well-liked gift, the one his friend's mother told me was 'the hit of the party'. Paul reinforces this. Phillip has succeeded in 'good gift giving' and is feeling some emotional and social rewards. It will encourage him to try to do the same thing again...

DAY 175: Monday February 27.

...At lunch the boys come home, both in good spirits. Phillip, whose birthday is in less than 3 weeks, begins working on a list of gifts he would like. Paul starts to work on a similar list but decides to wait to do it with his mom...

DAY 201: Saturday March 25.

...One effect of yesterday's birthday party for Phillip is apparent today. Paul has carefully checked out Phillip's gifts and decided which he would like the most for his own upcoming birthday...

Birthdays are significant stimulants to consuming. With the number of birthday parties resulting from having two young children our spending on birthdays rivalled Christmas. While my field notes never mention a 'birthday sale', it is common for birthdays to be used as special events to promote locations for the birthday party: the field notes mention parties at a bowling alley, the Discovery Zone play park, and swimming pools. Birthday parties also serve as an effective means by which new commodities are introduced

into the social world of children.

Birthday parties are typically more important for children than adults. Children's birthday parties can be seen as rites of passage marking growth into the full-fledged consumerism of adulthood, especially when they are seen as part of the larger consumer culture. In children's birthdays, consuming is celebrated as special and important fun. Images, stories, songs, poems, and feasts mark these events. At the same time skills are taught to prepare children to become consumers in their own right: handling money, judging the quality of goods, assessing whether others like something, following etiquette, and so on. Before children are considered mature enough to be independent consumers, rituals like birthdays are an organizing focus for them to learn about and practice consuming. As people move into adulthood they no longer need these: consuming becomes part of the daily routine of being grown up. Birthday gift-giving declines as people come of age and acquire the skills and legal status (eg. contractual authority, full banking and credit privileges) of mature consumers.

The rituals of consuming go far beyond specific commemorations. Shopping itself can develop characteristics of ritual (Carrier, 1993). In my interviews there were examples of shopping rituals with both green and brown consumers. One green consumer was a member of a food buying club that met together once every two months, to order bulk purchases of organic food. As well, she had a set pattern for buying fresh fruit and vegetables at the downtown farmer's market:

Green #2: ...it's been my cultural experience on a weekly basis. I've been going there every week for seven years. I know all the farmers... it's become a real ritual for me to spend every Saturday there, a few hours every Saturday.

One of the brown consumers I interviewed also had a weekly special shopping ritual, but it had a very different focus:

Brown #3: ...I go shopping every Saturday with a girlfriend...
And we go from like nine o'clock in the morning to five o'clock,
and we'll shop all the malls, downtown or wherever.

KT: Do you pick one mall for each weekend?

Brown #3: Ya, for the day.

KT: So you go to, like, Edmonton Centre and Eaton Centre
downtown...

Brown #3: Ya, downtown once a month, Whyte Avenue once a
month, and then Londonderry Mall maybe, you know, every two
months or whatever. And then we go to Calgary, uh, probably
four times a year, on a Saturday, like we'll get up really early and
drive [180 miles] to Calgary to shop downtown...

The telling of consumer narratives, complete with storybook consumers, extends beyond specific marketing into the popular culture. My field notes show that in late January our family attended the movie "Richie Rich", based on the comic book character of a boy who is fabulously wealthy but has trouble finding friends. Richie, his family, and their servants, live in an opulent mansion complete with a private McDonald's restaurant. In the story Richie outwits an evil businessman, leads his father's company to record success, rescues his marooned mother and father, and makes several good friends.

Two months after seeing this movie Phillip and a friend made a plan to earn money by selling home-made pogs and greeting cards at a sidewalk stand:

DAY 209: Sunday April 2.

This morning Phillip invites a friend over to work more on their cards to sell at their stand this summer. We pick him up in the van and he is so keen he is already standing outside, waiting in the chill with his bag of material. They get to work quickly and stay at it until several cards are made. At one point I hear Phillip's friend say "Maybe we can get richer than Richie Rich"...

Characters with myth-like abilities to consume sometimes appear in real life too:

DAY 246: Tuesday May 9.

This morning's Journal has across the top of the front page an article on a shopping trip to Edmonton over the previous weekend by the brother of the Sultan of Brunei. He brought his wife, ten children, 25 staff, and rented 10 limousines and the top two floors of the Hotel MacDonald, a five-star hotel. They spent most of their time at West Edmonton Mall, reportedly enjoying the rides and attractions but disappointed there weren't more stores selling shirts and blouses from \$1000 and up.

The placement of this story across the top of the front page indicates the prominent interest the newspaper editors felt it would have for their readers.

As my research has shown the processes of consuming are infused with charms, rituals, and narratives. Equally telling, environmentally-mindful consuming is starved for these. My fieldwork failed to identify any significant charms, rituals, or stories related to environmentally-mindful consuming. Without these it is an unlikely match for the mainstream. There were two faint exceptions. One was Earth Day, which was held in April. This is an annual celebration to mark environmental awareness. I noted in my

journal that there were some newspaper articles concerning Earth Day, and some events related to environmental issues staged in a local park. I also noted that Home Depot, a major home improvement store, distributed a full-colour advertisement with the headline “We’re Proud to Support Earth Day!”, perhaps an ominous development from the perspective of serious green consumers. Our family did nothing to mark Earth Day. The second faint exception to the lack of charms, rituals, and stories related to green consuming came from the Real Canadian Superstore, perhaps not surprising given its skill with these things. On its packages of recycled paper products, and above its bins of unpackaged bulk food, and on signs encouraging people to recycle grocery bags, is the slogan “Something Can Be Done”, sometimes with a picture of the planet Earth. Given its placement in an intensely consumerist setting, however, it is unconvincing. As a charm it is connected to a ritual of consuming, not to one of environmental concern.

In this chapter I have tried to demonstrate first, that narratives, rituals, and charms can themselves be operants of power, inducing certain behaviours, thoughts, actions, and discourses; and second, that narratives and rituals (which are physical manifestations and enactments of narratives) serve to organize other operants of power, giving them a coherent framework and a coordinated direction. I have focussed on specific and obvious narratives and rituals, as in Valentine’s and Christmas, because they are highly visible. But what about the operation of power in day-to-day consuming more generally? Is there a narrative basis to consumerism that extends beyond the rituals of the consumer calendar to create a general and comprehensive directionality for power? In the next chapter I shall argue that there is.

7. The Metanarratives of Consuming.

A. Introduction.

As Foucault (1979, 1980, 1990a) notes, mechanisms of power can be used in any direction or cause, and may contradict one another. In my fieldwork, for instance, I found them used at times to resist consumerism as well as to support it. This does not mean operants of power are evenly distributed. I found an asymmetry between the power of green consuming and that of brown consuming: the operants of power that support brown consuming are far more plentiful, coherent, and effective. This is not just because there are more of them, it is because they are formed into far better 'networks'. They benefit from strong patterns of coordination that create coherence across operants of power.

The list of operants of power that I have described in this dissertation is long and diverse. The issue I want to explore in this chapter is the coordination that occurs among these, for despite the diversity of these operants of power there are clear and well-integrated patterns among them. In the day-to-day life of the consumer, there is a highly consistent directionality across a large array of very different practices. My position, which I began to develop in the previous chapter, is that narratives, and ultimately metanarratives, help to create this coherence and patterning. In this chapter I want to extend that argument from such strikingly narrative examples as Christmas and other regular consumer rituals, to the consumer society at large.

The coherence that is evident across operants of power was of ongoing interest to Foucault (Foucault, 1979, 1980, 1990a; Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986). He spoke of 'networks' and 'mosaics' formed by mechanisms of

power linking together across organizations and social functions. Relations of power form interconnections, Foucault (1980) said, and these "...delineate general conditions of domination, and this domination is organised into a more-or-less coherent and unitary strategic form..." (p.142). He sometimes traced the spread of various operants of power from, say, monasteries to the military to prisons, hospitals, and schools, and noted that at some point in the course of this dissemination power reached a threshold where it 'took-off' to rapidly colonize many aspects of society.

During my fieldwork I sometimes noted how smoothly a great number of operants of power worked together, forming what might be called a 'network' or a 'coherent and unitary strategic form'. For example, I made the following entry after an almost effortless trip to grocery shop at Southgate Mall, at the beginning of the fieldwork:

DAY 3: Thursday September 8.

...As I pause to think about it, I am amazed at how well the whole consumer system works: a reliable, comfortable, affordable vehicle, equipped with a good radio to convey whatever music or information I choose, including ads to tell me what to buy; several gas stations enroute to the mall; a transportation system that manages the traffic efficiently; cheap and easy parking; buildings that are attractive, comfortable, clean, well-maintained, carefully designed, and safe; money in several forms, including credit cards, cheques, and cash available from bank machines; friendly people to guide and assist me; guarantees of satisfaction. In turn, behind each one of these factors is an enormous system...

I could have written similar analyses every day of the fieldwork, probing the convergence of the many factors that make possible almost every aspect of day-to-day consuming. Actually, my journal holds few such entries, and the ones there are tend to centre on moments when I experience a problem and

the 'system' responds by returning me to 'normal'. For example, when we have car trouble in September we are repeatedly able to get roadside assistance within minutes. Or consider the integration that occurs in this experience:

DAY 285: Saturday June 17.

Last night the fridge was making an odd clicking sound, and sometime during the night it quit working completely. When we started to prepare breakfast everything in it was at room temperature. After moving most perishable items to the freezer downstairs I checked the Yellow Pages for a repair service. I wondered if it would be difficult or expensive to get help on a weekend. The dealers and repair companies covered many pages of the phone book, and I phoned one based simply on its ad, which said they provided 24-hour service and didn't charge extra on weekends. I described the problem to the man who answered and told him the brand name, and he said someone would be there within the hour. Then I rode my bike to Paul's soccer practise. When I returned 90 minutes later, the fridge was repaired and the repairman was writing the bill. The cost was \$37 parts and \$40 labour, quite acceptable I thought. By lunch we had returned everything to the fridge and almost forgotten the whole incident.

In this example, the integration of operants of power once again happens so smoothly that it is easily overlooked. Indeed, because this kind of integration happens constantly and pervasively, it disappears into the invisibility that comes with being taken for granted. But it is an achievement generated by a very high order of social organization. There is a seamless convergence of social and physical infrastructure. The telephone and its directory are at my fingertips, and enable me to locate and speak to just the right person within minutes of discovering our problem. The service is immediately available, even on a weekend, and the technician has been trained with the skills to diagnose and repair the fridge. The road system channels him quickly to our house, in a vehicle that is reliable, properly equipped, fuelled, legally

registered, and insured. And how is it that the technician has just the right part with which to repair our particular fridge and its particular problem? Then, there is the system that allows me to pay without using cash, and the electrical grid waiting to bring the fridge back to life.

How is it that operants of power come together to form order, rather than disperse to create chaos? In Foucauldian terms, operants of power discipline the citizens of a consumer society; the question I have is, what disciplines the operants of power? What makes them docile? What causes them to form coherent patterns so readily?

This coordination of operants of power can be explained in various ways. A Marxist might explain it in terms of commodity fetishism, the operation of capital, class domination, and the false consciousness of the consumer. A conventional market economist might speak in terms of the maximization of personal economic utility, and the invisible hand of the marketplace. This would complement the likely view of a consumer behaviourist, who would speak of consumer sovereignty, consumer needs, and successful marketing. A Weberian might speak of the rationalization of society, and might even develop an argument concerning an 'iron cage of consuming', for the consumer society of my fieldwork is a highly rational, dehumanised, and in some ways ideally bureaucratic system (i.e. fast, efficient, unified, precise, impersonal, continuous). There is some validity in each of these positions, and there are aspects of these approaches that are complementary with each other, despite the differences among them.

Without debating the pros and cons of approaches like these, I would like to consider a different one, which does not necessarily exclude other perspectives. My suggestion is that an important way in which operants of

power form coherent patterns is by conforming to a consistent metanarrative. The tremendous array of factors that come into play, so unobtrusively yet so effectively, when I need my refrigerator repaired or go grocery shopping at the mall, are not orderly and coherent just in terms of the dictates of capitalism or the operation of the marketplace. They also follow a narrative order and coherence. The consumer has a consistent purpose and set of roles, confronts a consistent set of circumstances, and has a consistent morality and identity. Moving through the countless episodes of consuming is not unlike moving through the hundreds of Cinderella-like stories mentioned by Smith (1980): all are different yet all are the same. This is not limited to the person performing the role of the consumer, for the metanarrative of consuming requires compliant producers as well. In a well developed consumer society, retailers and producers also consistently face the same consumer narrative, exhorting them to “service obsession”, “overpowering service”, and “closeness to the customer” (Peters and Waterman Jr., 1982, Chap.6). My point is that operants of power harmonize with other operants of power as they become aligned with a common metanarrative, the metanarrative of consumerism: ‘striving for fulfilment and happiness through endless consuming’. The remainder of this chapter will develop this general argument, and then apply it to the consumer society as described in my fieldwork.

B. Power and Narrative.

Throughout this research I found that the effects of narratives, whether as whole stories, fragments, or metanarratives, are more far-reaching than I initially anticipated. Further, although I began my fieldwork with some skepticism about the relevance of Foucauldian concepts of power to day-to-day consuming, I was quickly impressed with how useful these concepts are. In fact, it became clear to me that narrative and Foucauldian mechanisms of

power are intimately allied, sharing important common structures and effects.

For example:

- narrative and power both affect cognition, shaping the versions of reality that people live with and act through;
- narrative and power are both inevitably moralizing, creating norms that lead to privileging and subjugating effects;
- narrative and power are both important to self-identity, providing roles for the self to emulate and adapt; helping individuals form a sense of their own lives, with coherent pasts and futures; and creating mechanisms and techniques that create and sustain particular forms of self-identity.
- narrative and power are both important to social identity and order, creating hierarchies and social spaces to occupy, reinforce, or resist; and helping people understand who they belong to as a group, which roles are valued, what responses can be expected from others, and what their collective histories and futures hold;
- narrative and power influence the organization of space: space is organized to be continuous with the roles, norms, ranks, etc. of society, and like a stage prop, prompts people to undertake expected and acceptable behaviour;
- narrative and power are important to the organization of time, providing a past, present and future; determining times that are more and less important; and providing a means for individuals to organize actions in their personal lives and across social units.

These effects, particularly when looked at together, create directionality.

Directionality is the effect that results from the selection of some activities or outcomes over others, and the more consistent the nature of the selection across activities and outcomes the clearer the direction. Directionality is the

inevitable outcome of the operation of power; operants of power, as I noted earlier, are by nature directional. Directionality requires time and action; it is relational (all direction is in relation to something); and it is normative, privileging one direction over all others (this is not just an effect of directionality, it is a necessity of its existence). As should be obvious, directionality is inherent both in narrative structures and in Foucauldian mechanisms of power.

Foucault clearly recognizes that individual operants of power have direction, and that they connect with one another to form systems.

...there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives. But this does not mean that it results from the choice or decision of an individual subject; let us not look for the headquarters that presides over its rationality...the rationality of power is characterized by tactics that are often quite explicit at the restricted level where they are inscribed (the local cynicism of power), tactics which, becoming connected to one another, attracting and propagating one another, but finding their base of support and their condition elsewhere, end by forming comprehensive systems: the logic is perfectly clear, the aims decipherable, and yet it is often the case that no one is there to have invented them, and few who can be said to have formulated them: an implicit characteristic of the great anonymous, almost unspoken strategies which coordinate the loquacious tactics whose "inventors" or decisionmakers are often without hypocrisy. (Foucault, 1990, p.94-95.)

What Foucault does not do, in this quote or elsewhere, is satisfactorily address how and why operants of power form into comprehensive systems. My fieldwork presents a situation in which operants of power 'attract, propagate, and connect with one another' (using Foucault's terms) to form a 'comprehensive system' that is almost irresistible. How do they attract and connect with one another? Why isn't there more friction among them? I suggest that one explanation for how and why operants of power form comprehensive systems lies in understanding the integration of narrative and power.

As I showed in the previous chapter, narratives can provide a coherent framework for operants of power, giving them a common direction. A simple example in my fieldwork occurs when the narrative structure of Valentine's Day supports an integrated process of both examination and surveillance for a dating service. Narrative structures have the ability to create a coherent disposition across diverse operants of power. Through their directionality, narratives align the directionality of operants of power. They bring order to what might otherwise be chaos. The crucial thing about the integration of power and narrative, then, is this: if a particular narrative structure --especially a singular metanarrative-- becomes dominant in a society, it will have a coordinating, aligning effect on operants of power, and this will give order to such things as regimes of knowledge and truth; morality and norms; individual and social purposiveness; personal and social identities; and the organization of time and space. (See Figure 1.)

In my fieldwork, the metanarrative of consumerism is sufficiently dominant to have a coordinating, aligning effect on operants of power. It follows from this that an analysis of the metanarrative of consumerism in a consumer society will help explain the operation of power in day-to-day life in such a society.

B.1 The Integration of Power and Narrative in the Origins of Consumerism.

As Lyotard (1984) and Jameson (1984) make clear, metanarratives have defining effects on a society, and a society fundamentally changes if it changes or loses its metanarratives. Such a change is evident in the early stages of development in what has become the consumer society. As I noted in Chapter 1, the origins of consumerism can be traced back several centuries, to the same roots as industrialization and capitalism. The connection of narrative with disciplinary power is perhaps easier to perceive than it is

now, because the narrative structures were so explicit, coming straight from the bible.

Both Weber (1958/1976) in The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, and Tawney (1926/1984) in Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, examine the origins of capitalism in the religious beliefs of the early Protestants, particularly Calvinists and Puritans. While neither Weber nor Tawney use narrative terminology in their analyses of the rise of capitalist societies, the importance of narrative structures is implicit throughout these works. It is beyond my scope here to do a narrative reading of these works, but a brief review provides some useful background to the integration of narrative and disciplinary power in the modern consumer society.

Weber (1958/1976) and Tawney (1926/1984), addressing the period of approximately 1500-1750, examine the transition from traditional societies, dominated by Catholicism, to capitalist ones, primarily Protestant. The former, pre-capitalist societies disapproved of private accumulation, discouraged individual economic initiative and calculation, taught that blessings awaited in the hereafter as rewards for good behaviour, and elevated religion and the religious calling above making a living as a layperson. The church helped justify and enforce serfdom, condemned usury, and considered an attitude favouring the unlimited accumulation of material wealth as immoral, endorsing instead the life dedicated to the contemplation of God. (See also Douglas and Isherwood (1979).) Of course, this does not mean there were not great concentrations of wealth in these societies. As Weber points out, cities like Florence in the 14th and 15th centuries were rich, sophisticated societies built on trade, but they were mercantilist cultures, more feudalist than capitalist.

The beginnings of the new order and 'spirit' of capitalism are attributed by

Weber (1958/1976), and to a lesser extent Tawney (1926/1984), to 16th and 17th century Calvinists, Puritans, and certain other Protestant groups, whose ethos stands in point-by-point contrast to that of traditional societies. This ethos endorses private material accumulation; encourages individual economic initiative and calculation; regards worldly success as justification for behaviour and an indicator of blessings to come in heaven; and eliminates the distinction between religious and secular life, treating the making of a living as a religious calling in itself. (See also Douglas and Isherwood (1979).)

The societies of the Calvinists and Puritans provide vivid examples of the integration of narrative and discipline. Their intent was to establish a human society that reflected as closely as possible God's will as expressed in the bible and interpreted by Calvin and others. In these 'bibliocracies' (using the terminology of Weber (1958/1976) and Tawney (1926/1984)), the bible --with its countless parables and overarching story of the fall from grace, exile, struggle, redemption, and everlasting salvation-- provided a metanarrative that acted as an integrative framework to create and implement a range of operants of power, a complete disciplinary regime. The sovereign authority of the state rested in a strict interpretation of the bible. The bible became the over-riding source of law, to be followed in order to preserve God's plan for the world, and the broadly-based traditional canon law, with its wide-ranging considerations accumulated over centuries, was usurped.

Calvinism was a creed that sought to renew society "...by penetrating every department of life, public as well as private" (Tawney, 1926/1984, p.111). In almost Foucauldian parlance, Calvin himself described discipline as "...the nerves of religion" (cited in Tawney, p.124). It was a discipline based squarely on the bible: the earthly world was the "Kingdom of Christ", overseen in every detail by "the great Taskmaster's eye", and every citizen

was a pilgrim “...overwhelmed by a sense of his ‘Ultimate End’...”, which must be revealed not through slothful contemplation but through systematic, worldly action (Tawney, pgs. 118, 200, 241). Each individual and every aspect of society was to be disciplined:

Manners and morals were regulated, because it is through the *minutiae* of conduct that the enemy of mankind finds his way to the soul; the traitors of the Kingdom might be revealed by pointed shoes or golden ear-rings... Regulation meant legislation, and, still more, administration. The word in which both were summarized was Discipline. (Tawney, 1926/1984, p.124, italics in original.)

Calvinism reached its height in Geneva, where Calvin lived in the mid-16th century, and its influence remained very powerful there for over two centuries. Everything possible was brought under “...the iron control of a universal rule...”, including regulations for markets, crafts, buildings, prices, interest, and rents (Tawney, 1926/1984, p. 125). Means of discipline were developed to cover the entire population, including recreation, business, sexual activity, language, dress, and personal presentation. Geneva became

...a city of glass, in which every household lived its life under the supervision of a spiritual police... Consistory and Council worked hand in hand, the former excommunicating drunkards, dancers, and contemners of religion, the latter punishing the dissolute with fines and imprisonment and the heretic with death. (Tawney, p.125.)

The Calvinists, Puritans, and related denominations had widespread influence across northern Europe, Britain, and the New England colonies. Weber (1958/1976) regards them as perhaps the essential catalyst for the rise of capitalism; Tawney (1926/1984) and Giddens (1976) regard them as one of a few crucial factors. Certainly they helped create a new sense of self, in which the self was set in direct relation to God, and was individuated in an ultimately solitary journey. There was a new goal and direction to life, a ‘calling’; God had predetermined an ultimate end for everyone, and worldly success was an

indicator of what that end might be. Hence, action and industriousness were valued over contemplation and sensuality. Time became more clock-like and chronological, as celebrations such as Christmas were, for a period, condemned, and as the calculable notion spread that 'time is money'.

Discipline like that of the 16th and 17th century Calvinists and Puritans can be regarded as an integration of the bible, and its essentially narrative nature ('the greatest story ever told'), with operants of power. Every person was a pilgrim with a richly narrative life direction and purpose, God was the unblinking eye of surveillance, and on God's behalf the church and the bibliocratic state developed and enforced technologies of discipline intended to reach into the tiniest details of everyone's life.

There is a vast gulf between 16th century Calvinist Geneva and 20th century consumerist Edmonton, and it would be silly to overemphasize similarities. But in some ways there are similarities, and they go beyond the emphasis on individualism and material accumulation. For Edmonton, too, is a city of glass, in which every household and every citizen is subject to the constant and multifaceted disciplinary power of consumerism, penetrating every aspect of life. But in a secular consumer society, where is the centre of discipline, the eye of surveillance? What is the metanarrative that gives coherence to operants of power? If the bible provided the metanarrative for the societies of the Calvinists and Puritans, what, if anything, provides the metanarrative of 20th century consumer society? Campbell's analysis suggests the answer lies in the Romantic movement of the 18th and early 19th centuries (Campbell, 1983, 1987).

As I described in Chapter 1, Campbell (1983, 1987) notes that an ethic of consuming is as vital to industrialization and capitalism as is an ethic of work,

thrift, accumulation and investment. He also notes that a consumer ethic began to emerge during the early stages of industrialization, and attributes this to a reaction against Calvinism and Puritanism, the rise of Sentimentalism, and most importantly to the Romantic movement. The Romantics, among other things, extended and developed the notion of the self inaugurated in early Protestantism. Campbell (1987) suggests that as Puritan convictions waned, people redirected the sense of self that had developed, channelling it away from a direct relationship with God, toward other pursuits. This led gradually to the sensuality, pleasure-seeking, self-exploring and self-expression of Romanticism.

While art, fashion, politics, poetry, and philosophy were important vehicles for spreading Romantic ideas, the most important vehicle was the novel (Campbell, 1983, 1987). The novel was a new way of telling stories, a new style of narrative. During the 16th and 17th centuries, reading was intended for religious or informative purposes, preferably both. Tawney (1926/1984) cites titles from the time that illustrate how thoroughly religion penetrated writing and reading, including books such as Navigation Spiritualized, Husbandry Spiritualized, The Religious Weaver, and The Tradesman's Calling (p.242). But in the 18th century, as literacy increased, people began to read largely for pleasure, and there was a tremendous rise in the market for fiction books. There were improvements in printing and production, circulating libraries were established, and subscription plans and serializations extended the reach of the novel throughout society. A 'fiction-manufacturing' industry developed, using aggressive advertising, and the profession of author became established. Women were the main readers of novels, and if the Romantic ethic has had the influence on consuming that Campbell argues, this high female readership may be a crucial factor in the gendering of consumption. (Campbell, 1987.)

Weber (1958/1976) notes that John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress (first published in two parts in 1678 and 1684) was by far the most widely read book of the Puritan era. In contrast, in the 18th century the biggest selling books were love stories and gothic horror stories, both "...filled with sensational action and tawdry sentiment" (Campbell, 1983, p.290). The bible no longer held the position of exclusive preeminence it had occupied at the height of the Calvinists and Puritans, and a bibliocracy was no longer possible.

The rise of Romanticism, largely implemented by the new narrative form of the novel, signals the transformation of a dominant metanarrative in society, and with it a shift in alignment of operants of power. This helps set the stage for the consumerism of the late 20th century that I encountered in my fieldwork. Campbell (1983, 1987), like Weber (1958/1976) and Tawney (1926/1984), does not speak in terms of narratives and operants of power, but his insights are helpful for framing my discussion on the metanarratives of the consumer society. Campbell captures the unmistakable sense of a change in society's metanarrative when he writes that Weber, in The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,

...rightly stressed the powerful transformative effect exerted on the modern world by the force of inner-worldly asceticism, in which the fear of eternal damnation worked as a powerful sanction upon the individual to drive him to restless, self-denying activity within an individualistic, "worldly" context. But the romantic ethic can be seen to be an equally transformative force. Although nominally "secular" in character, this too was powerfully ethical and exerted strong sanctions. In this case these derived from the idea of a "covenant" or compact between each individual and his own "self", in which in return for acknowledging one's duty to serve the spirit of the self, that spirit would in turn bring happiness to the individual. Heaven in such a doctrine is the fulfilment of self, hell the subjugation of self to the constraining demands of custom and convention... (Campbell, 1983, p.293.)

C. The Metanarrative of Consumerism.

The metanarrative of consumerism, I propose, can be phrased as ‘striving for fulfilment and happiness through endless consuming’. It is not a ‘grand’ metanarrative in the edifyingly moral sense of ‘the pursuit of truth’ or ‘the emancipation of humanity’, but it does meet Gare’s (1995) description (based on Lyotard) of a grand metanarrative as “...cosmopolitical, designed to transcend all particular cultural identities to create a universal civic identity” (p. 65). My suggestion that there is a metanarrative of consumerism seems to contradict Lyotard (1984) and others. Lyotard (1984) claims that ‘the most highly developed societies’ have suffered a serious erosion of metanarratives. In his most famous expression of this claim, The Postmodern Condition, he was focussing on metanarratives of science and knowledge. But he implies a more general decline of metanarratives, and Jameson (1984) extends Lyotard’s analysis to society in general: “...the older master-narratives of legitimation no longer function in the service of scientific research --nor, by implication, anywhere else... On the political and social level, indeed, narrative in some sense always meant the negation of capitalism” (Jameson, 1984, p.xi, p.xix). Others have picked up on this view: the decline of metanarratives, claim Parry and Doan (1994), “...has opened a great vacuum of meaning at the heart of this [i.e. Western] civilization...” (p.5; see also Brown, 1995; Gare, 1995; Harvey, 1990).

Narration, says Lyotard (1984), “...is the quintessential form of customary knowledge...” (p.19), in contrast to science, which he argues is based on different ways of knowing. Building from Lyotard, Jameson (1984) suggests that capitalism and narrative are incompatible:

...it is obvious that one of the features that characterizes more “scientific” periods of history, and most notably capitalism itself,

is the relative retreat of the claims of narrative or storytelling knowledge in the face of those of the abstract, denotative, or logical and cognitive procedures generally associated with science or positivism. (p.xi.)

Despite these claims, my fieldwork suggests that the consumer society -- capitalist and science-based though it is-- is highly narrative, both in terms of local narratives and metanarrative. It appears that capitalism is quite comfortable with narrative knowledge, and indeed needs it to give consumer products meaning. When Lyotard proclaimed that metanarratives had lost credibility, he felt they were being replaced with small, local narratives (*petit récits*). This is not the case in mainstream consuming, for the metanarrative of consumerism is neither small nor local.

The metanarrative of consuming has elements of both the Protestant ethic described by Weber (1958/1976), and the Romantic ethic described by Campbell (1983,1987). My fieldwork suggests that this metanarrative has achieved sufficient acceptance and dominance in Edmonton that it helps to align a diverse range of operants of power, creating the directionality and order of an advanced consumer society. It has become real.

The metanarrative of consuming is most blatant in advertising. Indeed, advertising has become so pervasive and effective that it is tempting to think of advertising as a kind of fragmented bible for the consumer society. But that would be simplistic, under-estimating this metanarrative's reach, for as I discovered, its directionality appears not only in advertisements, but in the design of malls and products, in morality and language, in personal identities, store policies, and the organization of time. Across areas such as these the direction is consistent: advancing the cause of fulfilment and happiness through endless consuming.

The breadth of this reach means that the metanarrative of consuming does not just embrace people in their roles as consumers. It also embraces them in their roles as producers and sellers. Indeed, it can actually integrate the roles of consumer and producer/seller into a single coherent personal identity, justifying one side in terms of the other: the more one can produce and sell the more one can consume. At one point during my fieldwork I got an unexpected and vivid insight into how this can work, in the life of a friend. Having met my friend for a visit at a pub, he told me that he had recently begun selling Amway¹ products in his spare time, to supplement his professional income.

DAY 207: Wednesday March 29.²

...As we chat about our recent activities my friend tells me that he is now selling for Amway in the evenings and on weekends. I am mildly surprised... As I ask questions, he uses a pen and paper to provide a spiel, drawing diagrams, explaining long-term trends, and showing how he hopes to reap significant financial rewards. He has been involved for about three months and has learned the basic structures, policies, and sales approaches thoroughly, though he doesn't try to sell anything to me... My friend also briefly mentions some of the training and motivational material he gets from Amway... It seems to me that this material has worked; he is highly motivated, a strong believer...

In my journal I noted that my friend spoke at length about 'personal goals'. His personal goal was to take his family travelling for a year, and he asked me what my goals were. I did not have well-articulated responses, to which my friend said 'Without goals, of course, this system doesn't work'. I felt slightly

¹ Amway is best known for household products such as cleansers, but it sells a very wide range of other products (clothing, electronics, paper products, etc.) through networks of distributors. It rewards distributors for the amount of product they sell, and in a controversial system that has sometimes been subject to legal challenges, it also rewards distributors for recruiting other distributors in what has sometimes been characterized as 'pyramid' selling.

² The journal entries concerning Amway have been edited to conceal the names of the people involved.

inadequate because I did not have well-thought-out goals that fit the Amway scheme, and I momentarily wondered if I should. After all, I would like to travel more and fix up our house. Shouldn't these be my 'personal goals'?

The process of setting goals in this fashion is a way of imposing a narrative structure on circumstances, in this example on an individual's life. Goals are crucial to narrative coherence; without them, the directionality of the narrative, in this case the metanarrative of consuming, is diffused. Having committed to a set of goals that included early retirement, travel, and many consumer items, my friend had established a clear direction to his life based largely on consuming and selling Amway products, and he was now pursuing his quest. In the process, his identity, morality, and actions had changed. He was living the Amway story.

The next day my friend visited me at my house with brochures about Amway, though he did not explicitly try to recruit me as a distributor. The brochure sat out in our house for a few days, which led to an unexpected coincidence:

DAY 209: Friday March 31, 1995

...In the evening relatives from out of town drop by our house. One of them spots the Amway brochure on the counter, and this sparks an interesting discussion. According to him 'half the people of our town' are selling Amway... One relative says 'Amway sells you on your dream and the rest just follows'. My friend's comment from two nights ago echoes back to me: 'If you don't have a goal the system doesn't work'... Under pressure from friends, my relatives had watched the Amway recruitment video and presentations, and in their descriptions they now repeat terms and words I heard my friend using two nights earlier, though this time the terms are greeted with skepticism. They speak of the enthusiasm people develop for Amway.

Another relative jokes about the presentation of women in the video, noting how they always tilt their heads, rest their faces on their clasped hands, and gaze at their husbands as the husbands

speaking about the wonders of Amway. My relative then laughed describing how the video scene was reenacted in a real life meeting, when a husband extolled to them the benefits of Amway, while his wife tilted her head and rested it on her clasped hands while admiring what he said. "It was the video come to life!", my relative laughed.

Whether in my friend's life, or in the recruitment presentation attended by my relatives, the Amway story had come to life, and with it the metanarrative of consuming, for the former is only a variation of the latter. Narratives and metanarratives can change and accommodate to fit countless situations and individual circumstances without losing their defining nature. As Murray (1989), Bruner (1986, 1987), and others note, people are able to personally adapt socially available and honoured narratives to give purpose and identity to their own lives, creating a unique personal identity that is nonetheless aligned with the canonical identities and archetypes of society.

C.1 Understanding The Metanarrative of Consuming as Comedy. Individual operants of power are inherently directional, but this directionality need not be consistent from one operant to the next. The impact of a dominant narrative structure is to create consistency by infusing its directionality into a number of individual operants of power, aligning them into a singular order. As Gergen and Gergen (1986) make clear, there are only three basic directions a narrative can take: it may progress toward a valued endpoint, or regress away from it, or hold stable. The actions of all narratives are variations on these, and it is here that rest prototypical forms such as comedy (movement toward the valued endpoint from afar), tragedy (movement away from the valued endpoint after beginning near it), and romance (alternating swings toward and away from the valued endpoint).

The metanarrative of consumerism has all the appearances of a comedy, and its implementation reflects this. In comedy, the actions of the narrative move toward a desired goal. In Murray's (1989) words, comedy

...involves the victory of youth and desire over age and death. Conflict in comedy usually deals with the repression of desire in a society, which is released in the course of an adventure or festivity by means of which a healthier unit is restored. (p.181).

In the metanarrative of consumerism, desire is revealed through such things as promotion and charms; it is released and fulfilled through acquisition, rituals, etc.; and festivity and happiness follow as the product is consumed. The coherence, goal, direction, and causality of this comedy of consuming are all aimed at a smooth progression to a happy ending. It is an indication of the strength of the comedy of consuming in Edmonton that consuming is as effortless as it is; indeed, as I found, the real effort is in resisting it. But --as I shall come to explain, and as has been observed by others using different analyses (Adorno, 1991; Campbell, 1983, 1987; Lasch, 1991)-- this is a comedy with an element of tragedy, for fulfilment and happiness are, of necessity, constantly subverted. Paradoxically, the consumer metanarrative cannot be fulfilled, for endless consuming requires endless dissatisfaction, and so the more the consumer tries to reach this goal, the less reachable it becomes.

With the most sophisticated retailers, such as Wal-Mart, Revy, and Home Depot, the entire retail process is organized so that every aspect of the consumer experience is infused by a comedic metanarrative, bringing the comedy of consumerism to life. The Home Depot, for example, guarantees the lowest prices; offers a huge selection of products; delivers products if they are difficult to take home; loads your vehicle if needed; accepts four different credit cards, and has bank machines to provide cash; provides clinics on how to use their products; has greeters at the entrance to direct customers to the products they want; offers a "no-hassle" return policy; trains their staff to be

helpful and courteous; and provides a map in their flyers to help customers find the store. Each of these is an operant of power that selects for some activities and against others, creating directionality, building a larger pattern, fitting the metanarrative.

An explicit expression of the attempt to create a comedic structure of consuming is in the guarantees of customer satisfaction that are commonly offered. It seems every store and product offers 'customer satisfaction guaranteed'. The overwhelming majority of purchases we made during the year of fieldwork were satisfactory, but on a few occasions we made exchanges or received refunds for disappointing purchases. These were all easy, but one case was outstanding. We were having Revy install carpet, and after the carpet was delivered and cut to fit the room, but before it was glued down, I realized it was not the shade we ordered:

DAY 361: Friday September 1.

Yesterday evening I became increasingly suspicious that the carpet being installed was a lighter shade than I had ordered, and that it would show soiling and wear too quickly. Shortly after 8:00 a.m. today I drove to Revy with a small trimming from this carpet and the invoice... At Revy I found the carpet they had delivered matched the order on the invoice, but was not the one we wanted. The Revy clerk had mistakenly recorded a colour of carpet on the invoice that we had never considered, and I had failed to check the invoice. So now I had the wrong carpet but no proof that it was their mistake. It was only my word that I simply hadn't changed my mind after the fact.

I went straight to the manager responsible for installations, and explained the situation, uncertain what his response would be. To my surprise and delight, without hesitation he said "We'll get you the carpet you want right now". Immediately he walked with me to the carpet department, and with the help of a clerk measured off the carpet I had wanted from the beginning. He never even insinuated that he doubted my story. Their position, he said, was to insure

the customer was satisfied, and they would do whatever that took...

Revy removed the carpet that had been delivered and cut, and paid for the additional cost of delivering and recutting the second carpet. Because the original carpet was cut to fit our needs, it would have been unusable, a complete loss to them of several hundred dollars.

Of course, there are times when consuming is frustrating because of slow service, faulty products, poor availability, traffic delays, and so on. But in the year of fieldwork I recorded very few such instances. The ease of shopping is only one part of the broader social organization that manifests the metanarrative of consuming: education for a workforce; legal provisions that regulate standards, provide contracts, enforce copyright, etc.; transportation systems that efficiently move goods as well as customers; communications that provide instant credit transactions, transmit advertising, and facilitate inventory control; government monetary policies to stabilize currency; and so on, *ad infinitum*.

The metanarrative of consumerism is central to the social order of the consumer society; to its culture; to its citizens' perceptions of themselves and others; and to the actions they base upon these. The effects of this on self-identities and personal narratives are inescapable. In each of my interviews with brown consumers, there were variations on 'the consumer dream': one spoke of working toward his dream of a new truck and a house of his own; another spoke of window-shopping at stores where the Sultan of Brunei could have found \$1000 shirts, imagining the day she might win a lottery and go to them herself; and the two others spoke of moving to new homes if they were suddenly wealthy. I noted these kinds of conversations in our family too. These are all personal adaptations of the prevalent social metanarrative.

To some significant extent, most members of a consumer society organize much of their lives with the intent of living their own version of the metanarrative of consumerism, hoping to make it real. They need not believe in its worthiness to do this, for it does not demand belief so much as it facilitates compliance. In Fairclough's (1989) words, "...if people are obliged day-in-day-out to occupy the subject position of the consumer, there is a good chance that they will become consumers. What may begin as a sort of game... is likely through sheer weight of habit to end up being real" (p. 207). People may not believe in Santa Claus, but they often act as if they want to.

This highly narrative nature of consumer society is consistent with the declining dominance of linear time I noted earlier. Lyotard (1984) notes that

...a collectivity that takes narrative as its key form of competence has no need to remember its past. It finds the raw material for its social bond not only in the meaning of the narratives it recounts, but also in the act of reciting them. The narratives' reference may seem to belong to the past, but in reality it is always contemporaneous with the act of recitation. (p.22.)

As I have argued, the consumer society is concerned decreasingly with measuring time by the clock, and increasingly with measuring it by the events and actions of cycles and narratives. The metanarrative of consumerism is enacted through the countless moments of consumption. In this process, time, and with it meaning, come from narrative content and consistency, rather than from a correspondence to 'T'ruth. In practice, this means society takes Santa Claus seriously, children's magazines speak of Van Gogh as if he were still alive, advertisements imply that cars use less gasoline than bicycles, and banks claim their customers give themselves loans.

Lyotard's (1984) description of the de-centralized control of narrative in a

traditional culture differs from what I found in modern consumer culture. My fieldwork suggests that narrative production in consumer societies has become centralized, and in important ways is removed from the audience. In a pre-modern society the storytellers were immediate members of the group, and the storytelling position often moved from person to person. There was a highly fluid relation between narrator and audience. In my fieldwork, the primary narrators of the metanarrative of consumerism are employed by organizations wanting to sell me things. The audience is separate from the narrator, alienated from the storytelling function. Indeed, storytelling in the consumer society tends to come from the same sources --private businesses-- that exercise so much influence in other aspects of society, such as communication, transportation, finance, confession, and surveillance. This concentration is inseparable from, and probably necessary for, the existence of the consumer society.

The metanarrative of consumerism reveals some important insights into the operation of power in day-to-day life in the consumer society. First, it is conservative. While many metanarratives are about change and revolution, the metanarrative of consumerism reinforces existing social and economic arrangements. It is not driving toward radical change, but toward refinement of the current system: more consumer selection, better service, lower prices, and so on.

Second, the metanarrative of consumerism emphasizes individual material acquisition, a reflection of its early heritage, no doubt. This requires social cooperation to achieve, and social approval to be endorsed, but is ultimately anti-social, placing individual fulfilment above social fulfilment. This is evident even in the observances that mark the consumer calendar: although people come together to celebrate these events in groups, the celebrations do

not proclaim social achievements, but individual acquisition. The Christmas, birthday, or Father's Day gift honours the recipient rather than any collective achievement. The consumer calendar contains few events that praise a broader commitment to community, no observances that primarily encourage people to expend themselves on a social project rather than a purchase for themselves or a friend or relative. With this metanarrative, day-to-day power operates to delineate the individual in constantly refined and changing but commercially normalizing ways, while remaining indifferent to the group. As Foucault would note, power like this makes individuals increasingly visible, while concealing the mechanisms of power that hold them in their social positions.

Third, the metanarrative of consumerism is fundamentally performative. It doesn't seek truth, beauty, or justice; it is about "optimizing the relationship between input and output" (using the definition of performativity in Lyotard 1984, p.48). The value and success of products, processes, and consumers' lives are judged by whether they improve the input/output ratio of consuming: more for less, just as Zellers advertises.

C.2 Understanding The Tragedy in the Consumer Metanarrative. The performative nature of the metanarrative of consumerism threatens to shift consumerism's comedic direction toward tragedy. Tragedy opposes comedy, and there were traces of it in my fieldwork, traces that a green might call foreshadowing. While comedy begins with the action occurring at a distance from the desired outcome, and then moving toward it, tragedy typically begins with a successful situation and moves away from it. The course of tragedy begins with an act by the protagonist that inadvertently commences a process of downfall. Tragedy has a fatalistic sense to it, but fate only takes over in creating the tragedy after the hero has set the tragic process going.

The pre-tragic condition shows the normal "...internal balancing condition of life. [This balance] appears as... necessity only after it has been violated as a condition of life" (Frye, 1957/1990, p.210). The tragic hero 'goes beyond fate' and so incurs the tragic process:

The tragic hero has normally had an extraordinary, often a nearly divine, destiny almost within his grasp, and the glory of that original vision never quite fades out of tragedy... while catastrophe is the normal end of tragedy, this is balanced by an equally significant original greatness, a paradise lost... The hero's act [that brings on the tragedy] has thrown a switch in a larger machine than his own life, or even his own society. (p.210-211.)

In tragedy, liberty and balance are mishandled, and in the process are usurped by the inevitability of fate. On the part of the protagonist there is "...a use of freedom to lose freedom. And just as comedy often sets up an arbitrary law and then organizes the action to break or evade it, so tragedy presents the reverse theme of narrowing a comparatively free life into a process of causation" (Frye, 1957/1990, p.212).

The tragic moment in consumerism, if there is one, may occur when the process of consuming comes to be valued more highly than the items consumed. This is perhaps an inevitable outcome of a metanarrative that is fundamentally performative (i.e. lacking in any final goal), and that is made real by such extraordinarily intense operants of power. The result is a treadmill, in which people's personal, social, and physical lives are organized to reach fulfilment through the comedy of consuming, while simultaneously there is no possibility of knowing when fulfilment is attained.

DAY 183: Tuesday March 7.

For the past few weeks Paul has shown renewed interest in getting more Lego... I am reluctant to get him more because we have storage boxes full of it, which is unused most of the time. Today there were two large piles on the playroom floor, each with many hundred pieces, leftover

from playing yesterday and on the weekend. As I tiptoed through these I called to him that with so much Lego I didn't think he needed any more. He objected, saying this (which is an exact quote): "Life isn't fun without buying things". I asked him to explain more, and after a few false starts all he could articulate was this (another exact quote): "It's always fun to get new things"...

Paul did not say "Lego is fun", but referred to the fun of getting new things. More than wanting a particular toy, he is attracted to the process of getting; the process of consuming has become more pleasurable than the object being consumed. The same sense sometimes came through in the brown interviews:

KT: Do you have any thoughts on why, why people in our society want to consume so much?

Brown #3: I think partly status. I think, see I, ya I think that status and keeping up with the Joneses kind of thing. And I think it makes people feel good in a way. Like there's no boss telling you you have to do some, it's like, I think it's, ya, status, and just a feeling, a good feeling of being able to buy what you want.

KT: Right. Ya, a sense of, as you say--

Brown #3: Power, maybe.

KT: Power. Ya.

Brown #3: You know. Or a sense of satisfaction maybe.

KT: When you go out, say on these [shopping trips] with your

friend on a Saturday--

Brown #3: If I don't buy something on a Saturday I'm upset. It's like, aaaaaahhhhh [sigh of excitement and relief], it's almost like a drug. Can be pretty deadly. It's like you have to come home with something. You know, it could be something like two dollars or whatever, but you have to have that bag in your hand. It's like you have to have something to show for the whole day. Like you have to have accomplished something.

.....

KT: Are you, are you satisfied with your overall ability or level of consumption now, or your ability to consume? Do you have a satisfying standard of living?

Brown #3: Oh ya. I think I do. I mean you always want more things, or you know, nicer. But I think that, um, no I think I have a pretty good lifestyle.

KT: Sounds like it to me.

Brown #3: It could be better. I could stand more, but I mean I can't complain.

KT: How would you make it better?

Brown #3: How would I make it better? I don't really know. Like, have a new car, or have bigger things, you know more toys maybe. But, uh, I think, I mean, I don't really want for anything. I, you know, I manage to pay for everything that I own, and I

don't think that there's much more that I want.

White (1980) observes that empirically, sequences of events never stop, people simply impose a conclusion: "...events could only have seemed to have ceased to happen when meaning is shifted, and shifted by narrative means, from one physical or social space to another" (p.26). The meaning that is shifted in events comes from the narrative arrangement they are given. If there is a 'tragedy of consuming', it will be because the comedy of consuming contains no final standard against which it can be judged, no point at which it can be determined that enough is enough. At a societal level this might lead to the end of consumer paradise through some form of environmental collapse. For the individual, the tragedy of consuming might be less dramatic. In the comedy of consuming the the consumer never reaches fulfilment. It is a social narrative that cannot be happily transformed into a personal one. "In simpler times", writes Lasch (1991), referring to when advertising was less dominant, "advertising merely called attention to the product and extolled its advantages. Now it manufactures a product of its own: the consumer, perpetually unsatisfied, restless, anxious, and bored" (p.72). In my fieldwork, advertising wasn't the half of it.

D. The Green Romance.

The metanarrative of the environmentally-mindful consumer, the 'green', can be phrased as 'Saving the world from the excesses of materialism, to restore it to its lost purity'. This is a romantic metanarrative:

... 'romance' concerns the restoration of the honoured past through a series of events that involve a struggle --typically including a crucial test-- between a hero and forces of evil. Conflict is resolved by battle rather than sociality as in comedy. (Murray, 1989, p.181.)

The action of romance is centred on conflict between antagonist and protagonist, and while the direction of the action moves eventually toward the goal, it is uneven and unpredictable, involving struggle, advances, and setbacks. Commonly, a romance entails a selfless quest by the protagonist to save or redeem society, in the course of which fertility returns to a wasteland, restoring a lost Eden. (Frye, 1990/1957; Gergen and Gergen, 1986; Murray, 1989.)

In the green romance, the goal is to preserve what is left of nature, and restore what has been lost, reversing the violations of human intrusion and returning nature to its pristine condition. The struggle is between the committed environmentalist (strictly speaking in this research, the environmentally-minded consumer), and the consumer society as manifest in its many forms. The green protagonist is acting for the general good of humanity and nature, often at considerable personal cost.

Some aspects of this metanarrative became apparent in my fieldwork as I tried to live a green lifestyle, but stronger expressions of it came through my interviews, where the greens spoke of such things as struggle and sacrifice, commitment to a social ideal, and decline from times past:

Green #1:...the most dramatic change [in my lifestyle when I became committed to environmental issues] was the decision to stop owning a car... I think the reason why I count that as the most successful thing is because it seemed so insurmountable...

...I believe in... material adequacy and social wealth. I think our wider society has got the adjectives mixed up. They've switched the adjectives...

...buying things is an act of justification for me. I have to justify a purchase rather than [it being] an act of satisfying by purchasing...

...I get on the bus and I look around and I think about this act of riding the bus as not just transportation, but I'm practising something. I'm practising my beliefs...my beliefs mean something because they're translated into practical action. And it makes me feel good, it makes me feel good...

...the other [personal guideline] that I always find very helpful is to live as close as possible to the global average income, which is \$1800 a year, I think. And, yes that's very difficult...

.....

Green #2:...I would call myself more an anti-consumer than a green consumer...

...through my work and through my experience as a leader in work, I see myself as having a bit of a responsibility to uphold my principles, not just for myself but for the people who I've come in contact with who look to me as a bit of a role model, who I've influenced...

...stuff is happening [through my work]. Activists are being trained, they're learning about how the system works, they're speaking before the public, they're speaking before City Council, they're writing up position papers...

...I know all the farmers [at the market], and they're older, they're from the old country, they tell me stories every week. I'm one of the young people that stops to hear about how the market used to be...

...I've seen the change and I've studied it theoretically in terms of urban design, how we've lost that sense of locality, local business, local community...

...people seem to have a sense that, or they seem to believe that, 'Well we can't turn the clock back', you know, 'What are we going to do, tear up the roads?' And I go 'Ya, of course!' (laughter)...

...there's only so much I can do, but I can do that much and so I choose to do that much, out of a sense of responsibility for the planet, you know, in terms of the ecological justice, in terms of social justice for my fellow human beings across the world...

.....

Greens 3a and 3b:...I got to the point where I was really trying to cut back [on consuming], I would carry bags with me to go to the shopping centre and go and get our groceries. And that marriage that I was in at the time, my wife was the opposite. She got embarrassed because I was going to the store with my paper bags to get the groceries. And I lived in [the suburbs] for a couple of years there, until I moved out and we broke up, but I would take the bus in to the university. That's where my job was at the time. Even though the bus service out there at the time, this was the early seventies, was terrible... But I would do that in order not to

drive the car when I had to come to work. It probably added an hour-and-a-half or so to my day each day... And so that's always been with me... even though a lot of it's been frustrating with my work and that...

...My intent has been to keep working at trying to reduce the consumption of things... I would say in terms of simplifying there are still things to be, there's an interesting process we go through... Every six months we go through the entire house... And we keep looking at these things that we have and we say 'Do we really need these things any more? Do we really want them any more?' ...

All four of the greens I interviewed had strong senses of being role models. Each had struggled in various ways. All had strained or broken relationships with friends and family over their stands on environmental issues. Two had changed or quit jobs because of philosophical differences concerning the environment, and all four worked at full-time or part-time jobs that were actively related to environmental issues. All four actively worked to reduce their possessions to a minimal level, going in the opposite direction to the mainstream consumer. All were working to restore nature, and society, to a condition they believed had been lost.

The romance of the green contrasts at some key points with the metanarrative of consumerism. First, it is radical. This metanarrative is about profound change, an end to the current regime and its replacement by a more 'just' order, in the tradition of heroic romances. This metanarrative is not about switching to brands that claim to be environmentally friendly; it is about consuming substantially less. It has a different morality, a different fulfilment,

and a different social order from consumerism. Second, the romance of the greens is idealistic rather than performative. In the metanarrative of consumerism, standards of judgment are inherently performative; they are concerned about achieving more for less in a pursuit that has no end, not even in theory. Many of the positions of green consumers are also framed in terms of performance, such as the improved energy efficiency of compact fluorescent light bulbs, or the water savings of low-flush toilets. But the difference between these gains and those of consumerism is that there is a final standard against which they can be judged: virginal nature. There is a definable end --if only in ideal form-- to the romance of the greens.

Third, the green romance is socially oriented, as is strongly expressed in the interviews. This metanarrative is not fulfilled through the personal success of the protagonist, but through the betterment of society and nature. Its culmination is in the life of others, not the life of the protagonist. As one green explained in an interview, he favours social wealth and individual material adequacy, not material wealth and social adequacy. Fourth, the storytelling function of the green romance is not as centralized as with the metanarrative of consumerism. The greens had little access to the mass media channels that were routinely used to tell the comedy of consuming, based on my analysis of print advertising in Chapter 4. By the very nature of its concerns, much of the emphasis of the green romance is local. The commitment to buying local foods leads almost inevitably to the conversation in the farmers' market described by green #2, where the older generation tells tales to the younger of how the world once was.

But the green romance is not entirely localized, for there are countless international issues and organizations. In the following example, the metanarrative of the green romance is presented by an international

environmental organization:

DAY 191: Wednesday March 15.

...the Sierra Club, of which I am a member, sends its Annual Report and its Newsletter. The newsletter is 8 pages, attractively produced, and contains articles on many of the issues on which the Sierra Club is working... For example, the editorial:

Dear Friend,

The B.C. government's cancellation of Alcan's environmentally disastrous Kemano diversion project is true cause for celebration. To have stopped an already half-completed project championed by powerful economic interests is an environmental victory of enormous proportions.

The credit for this victory belongs to a small band of dedicated environmental, fishing, native and labour groups that persevered year after year against highly improbable odds. The primary lesson here is: never give up...

Or this opening to an article:

The Sierra Legal Defence Fund is again playing a lead role in yet another struggle to ensure that the people of Galiano Island are not excluded when pivotal land use decisions affecting the environmental integrity of their community are made.

Galiano, one of the small Gulf Islands between Vancouver and Victoria, is currently threatened by rampant development on large parcels of forest-zoned land that were privately owned by MacMillan Bloedel until the company recently sold them as residential real estate...

This is promotion through romance rather than comedy, portraying heroic struggle for the greater good against difficult odds. It shares an important objective with consumer promotion: maintaining and increasing a base of support. Both the green romance and the comedy of consuming are grand metanarratives in the sense of attempting to create a 'transcendent, universal civic identity'. They both create meaning by placing events within a

narrative structure. In this process, time is moulded to fit the needs of the metanarrative, as in the generalized 'good old days' motif of the green romance. Both these metanarratives have totalizing tendencies: they establish goals, direction, and morality; cultivate particular identities; encourage distinct ways of life; and seek to dominate alternatives.

But there is an important difference between the two: in virtually every area I examined, the green romance lacks the operants of power that the metanarrative of consumerism has in such plenitude. Consumerism overwhelms concern for the environment in advertising and promotion; in charms, rituals, and stories; in the creation of personal identities; and in the infiltration of thought and the instrumental use of language. Consumer morality is so thoroughly embedded that it is as one with the consumer self-identity. As my brown interviews illustrated, the morality of consuming for the mainstream consumer has become almost invisible.

Similarly, the green romance remains almost entirely unsupported by the kinds of surveillance, examination, confession, and other techniques that are routinely applied in the comedy of consuming. The charms, stories, and rituals that deliver so much impact for consumerism barely exist for the greens. And again, in the organization of space, time, and space-time, the green romance is bereft.

Yet environmentalism is not a lost cause. The green romance is a compelling metanarrative, presenting a worthy goal, a coherent ethic, and a clear direction. It can draw upon a rich cultural stock of romantic heroes, adapting them to circumstances as needed; the romantic struggle is profoundly appealing. In today's society, the green romance is in wide circulation despite its relative lack of resources, and it has led to the creation of roles for

people to play, people willing to play them, and operants of power, however modest, to begin to implement its metanarrative.

E. Irony in Consumerism.

Irony, says Murray (1989), "...deals in the discovery that comedy, romance and tragedy are mere schemes of mortals to control experience: individuals are not so pure, nor is the social order so healthy." (p.181). Irony, suggests Frye (1957/1990), is the opposite of romance, and certainly the greens I interviewed were so committed to their positions that little sense of personal irony emerged. Irony is more compatible with comedy, but again, there was little evidence of irony in the metanarrative of consumerism. The only notable exception was with one of the browns I interviewed, who at times took the "...attitude of detached objectivity" (Frye, 1957/1990, p.366) that irony requires. His view was that the consumer society was placing too much pressure on the natural environment, with the likely outcome of global catastrophe: "You feed the information into the computer and it comes out 'We're done for'". Yet he felt there was little point in taking personal action on this issue, for the effect would not matter: "...what we're willing to do is insignificant. I, I consider myself not to be a pessimist, but I think that is just being a realistic observation of human beings". So he carried on with his usual consumer activities.

Lyotard (1984), having concluded that grand metanarratives are gone, advocated 'paralogy', a kind of active subversion of dominant thinking, a constant problematizing of accepted views, a purposeful violation of consensus. He expected the outcome of this to be a constantly shifting set of local narratives. In other words, Lyotard recommended living with the

reflective uncertainty of irony, over living with the unreflective certainty of a grand metanarrative.

Irony and grand metanarratives do not mix. Neither the metanarrative of consumerism nor the green romance welcome irony, for good reason. Too much irony weakens the narrative direction, calling into question the very goal that gives the narrative its coherence. With too much irony, "...the audience [becomes] confused about its sense of the social norm... The more ironic the comedy, the more absurd the society..." (Frye, 1957/1990, p.176).

While irony had little perceivable impact on the operation of power in day-to-day life in my research, one can speculate on what its effects might be. A large dose of irony would undermine the dominant metanarratives, and without these providing an organizing pattern for operants of power, a society might well resemble Lyotard's (1984) description of the postmodern. There would be a lack of consensus and a constant search for instabilities as small, local narratives competed for legitimacy. Society would consist of "... a heterogeneity of elements...[that] only give rise to institutions in patches -- local determinism" (Lyotard, p.xxiv). Operants of power could be organized in the service of each local narrative. This might provide new opportunities for self-expression, liberty, and personal and social ethics of the kind that Foucault (1988a, 1990b) analyses in his studies of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Or perhaps it would stimulate dangerous conflict, or lead to cynicism, as all claims to legitimacy lost credibility.

8. Discussion and Conclusion.

A. Review and Discussion.

I have examined day-to-day consuming using Foucauldian notions of power in conjunction with narrative theory. This has helped me to better understand why I consume in the ways I do, and why the society in which I conducted my study is understandably considered a 'consumer society'. It has also helped me understand why 'green consuming' has had little impact. The initial question for this research was, how does power operate in day-to-day consuming in a consumer society? My answer, in general terms, is this: power operates in day-to-day consuming through a dispersion of practices, processes, and designs, which I have called 'operants of power', that include (among many things) language, thought, identity, means of surveillance and examination, the confession, the organization of space and time, charms, rituals, and stories. These operants of power function as selective agencies, tending to privilege some effects and subjugate others. These processes of selection, to the extent that they consistently favour certain effects, create 'directionality'. In theory, operants of power could lead in countless different directions. In practice, I found that directionality was aligned across separate operants of power. This coordinated directionality can be understood and explained in part through the effects of narratives and metanarratives, which provide organizing frameworks. I say 'in part' because I have made no effort to examine economic, material, or other factors.

In several ways this research illustrates and extends a Foucauldian perspective on power. In day-to-day life, power is immanent in taken-for-granted practices and processes; it creates direction without emanating from a centre of control; its mechanisms provide a "...grid of intelligibility of the

social order” (Foucault, 1990a, p.93); and it is omnipresent. Power of this kind cannot be reduced to a single factor; instead, it involves what Foucault (1990a) would call “polymorphous techniques” and a “multiplicity of relations” (p.11, 92). As became so clear to me, power is multifaceted, including physical, linguistic, social, temporal, and physiological factors. As diverse and apparently disconnected as these are, there is a coherence among them that can be identified and analyzed, in Foucault’s parlance, as a “regime of truth and power” (Foucault, 1980, p.131).

How do taken-for-granted operants of power form a regime? How is it, as Foucault (1980, p.62) asks, that ‘the highly intricate mosaic of mechanisms of power in a modern society can be so subtle in its distributions, mechanisms, controls, and adjustments, given that no one can conceive of it, much less manage it, in its entirety?’ As I discussed earlier, Foucault’s answers are only general. Tactics of power ‘attract and propagate one another’ to form ‘comprehensive systems’; they ‘enter into an overall strategy through a series of sequences’ in which the specific tactics and the overall strategy mutually form one another through a process of ‘double conditioning’ (Foucault, 1990a). In a kind of drifting circularity, the tactics shape the strategy and the strategy shapes the tactics, all without the coordinating function of a ‘headquarters of power’. This forms a ‘network of relations from top to bottom, and from bottom to top, and laterally’, creating an ‘apparatus as a whole that produces power and distributes individuals’ in a ‘permanent and continuous field’, or ‘net-like organization’ (Foucault, 1979, 1980).

My research suggests we can reach a clearer explanation. The process through which operants of power form generalized regimes can, at least in some cases, be understood through the effects of narratives and metanarratives. Narratives and metanarratives have remarkable capacities to

be elastic without losing their coherence, and when this is combined with their impacts on personal and social identities and their abilities to influence thought and action, they are ideally suited to the task of consolidating operants of power. They provide a coordinating framework for identity, language, time, space, morality, norms, and actions. The result of this coordination is the creation of direction. Both operants of power and narratives create direction; both are selective agencies that consistently favour certain outcomes. The dual effect of narratives is to create direction in and of themselves, and further to coordinate the directionality of other operants of power. This interweaving of narrative and Foucauldian operants of power occurs so readily because they share many important structural features and effects, as I suggested in Chapter 2.

People and organizations can use and change narratives and metanarratives for their own advantage, as my analysis of the rise of consumer rituals like Christmas and Valentine's Day illustrates. Narratives can be created and applied with the same deliberateness and intent as a system of surveillance or the design of a retail store. They themselves can serve as operants of power, and they can be used to harness other operants of power. As with other operants of power, narratives may have their effects whether or not anyone deliberately intends them to. As fields like communications, cognition, and surveillance become better understood, organizations and individuals are able to use increasingly numerous and effective operants of power, complete with organizing narratives, as instruments to advance their own causes.

In presenting my argument and organizing this dissertation I have followed a kind of ascending analysis, beginning with what might be considered the most basic elements --language and thought-- and building 'up' from there, through normalizing technologies; control of the body and the organization

of time and space; charms, rituals, and stories; and finally ending at the broadly encompassing level of metanarratives, which provide an organizing framework for these operants of power. However, I am reluctant to suggest that some of these areas are more fundamental to the operation of power than others, or that some must precede others. Must a particular metanarrative be in place before other operants of power have their effects, or do other operants of power generate new metanarratives? Is a certain kind of language a prerequisite to, an accompaniment with, or a result of, changes in, say, surveillance or charms? I have not tried to answer questions like these, and have not explored the ordering among operants of power, which might require a Foucauldian archeological or genealogical study. Based on my fieldwork, my suspicion is that there is a symbiotic, interdependent, and organic rather than a linear relationship among these elements.

A.1 Power, Governmentality and Resistance. Some years after Discipline and Punish was first published, Foucault briefly explored the idea of ‘governmentality’¹. He used the term ‘governmentality’ not in the modern sense of ‘Government’, but in the more traditional sense of ‘govern’, as in ‘control’, ‘direct’, and ‘restrain’ (Foucault, 1997). Foucault (1979, 1997) argued that the mechanisms of power available to govern in the Middle Ages were necessarily loose by today’s standards; they were sometimes brutal and dramatic, but always occasional and localized rather than constant and generalized. In the 15th and 16th centuries, the belief slowly began to develop that more and more things could be governed: beggars and children, the family, the house, cities, populations, society, economies.

How to govern was... one of the fundamental questions about what was happening in the 15th or 16th centuries. It is a fundamental question which was answered by the multiplication of all the arts of governing... and of all the institutions of

¹ Foucault discussed governmentality in a lecture titled “What is Critique?” in May 1978, and in an interview titled “What Our Present Is” in 1981. These are both reprinted in Foucault (1997). Discipline and Punish was first published in French in 1975.

government, in the wider sense the term government had at the time. (Foucault, 1997, p.27, italics in original).

The intensification of governmentality is a marking feature of modernity, and it is facilitated by the rise of operants of disciplinary power. I regard Calvinism as described by Weber (1958/1976) and Tawney (1926/1984) as an early reflection of the attitude of governmentality, and my fieldwork as a late reflection of it.

Governmentalization, says Foucault (1997), is the movement through which individuals are subjugated “...in the reality of a social practice through mechanisms of power that adhere to a truth...” (p.32). My research suggests that in the reality of social practice, the ‘truth’ to which mechanisms of power adhere often has an essentially narrative structure. Foucault does not discuss governmentality in relation to narratives, but there is a sense in which his work concurs with the positions of Lyotard (1984) and Jameson (1984) that capitalism, industrialization, and empirical science have largely displaced narratives with other ways of thinking, knowing, acting, and organizing.

In contrast, my research suggests that narratives are important to governmentality, and that neither operants of disciplinary power, nor the forces of industrial capitalism and empirical science, displace narratives. Just as science must legitimate itself in terms of narratives if it is to go beyond “...stating useful regularities...” (Lyotard, 1984, p.xxiii), operants of power must be legitimate in terms of narrative, for it is narratives that provide essential elements of morality, directionality, social and personal identity, rituals, charms, and so on. Without some relation to narratives or metanarratives it is difficult to see how multiple operants of power would function with coherence, or how they would establish consistent directionality.

Governing, in Foucault's sense of governmentality, requires the deployment of operants of power. As I learned repeatedly during my months as a green consumer, operants of power are not evenly deployed. Foucault (1996) notes that "In a great many cases power relations are fixed in such a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical and allow an extremely limited margin of freedom [for some people]" (p.441). The green consumer, cycling to market to look for locally-grown organic groceries, lives on one side of this relentless asymmetry. The brown consumer cruising in the comfort of a car to stock up on whatever the world has to offer lives on the other. Narratives and metanarratives, whether used consciously or not, are important in creating and sustaining asymmetries of power like these.

Resistance to dominant regimes of power, knowledge, and narrative is possible, and change does happen. Foucault (1996) notes that even in situations where the imbalance of power is extreme, there are opportunities to resist (p.441). Lyotard's position (1984) concurs: "No one, not even the least privileged among us, is ever entirely powerless over the messages that traverse and position him..." (p.15). From the perspective of narrative, resistance is possible, indeed inevitable, for at least two reasons. First, a modern society contains many narratives and metanarratives, some dominant and some subjugated, some complementary with others, and some in direct competition (Howard, 1991). In my fieldwork, the green romance competed with the metanarrative of consuming; my green and brown interviewees accepted one or the other of these metanarratives, organized their lives in accordance with it, and sometimes passionately advocated it. The environment is only one of many sites for conflicts concerning consuming. Christmas has been a site of chronic competition among narratives, from the Puritan suppression of it, to the recent campaigns to 'Put Christ Back Into

Christmas'. Mother's Day briefly hosted such a competition as well, when Anna Jarvis rebelled against its commercialization and insisted (in futility) that it remain untouched by advertising, promotion, and manufactured gifts.

The multiplicity of narratives yields many ways of understanding issues, interpreting experience, constructing worlds, and acquiring identities. Even in extreme cases, where one narrative predominates, there will be variety, for as Howard (1991) points out, "...even if all members of a society told themselves exactly the same stories, the meaning and implications of these stories for different members of the society would not be the same" (p.194).

The second cause of resistance is simply that circumstances change, whether they are economic, material, or epistemological. In Discipline and Punish Foucault gives several examples of material and economic factors that led to changes in the operation of power: improved agricultural production encouraged a new attitude to managing populations; the rifle caused changes in military organization; increased trade required tighter surveillance of ports and warehouses. My research provided illustrations that often involved various aspects of narratives. For example, the change that Chaucer stimulated in the narrative of Valentine's Day led to new rituals and charms, which eventually stimulated the emergence of the Valentine's greeting card; the success of the Valentine's greeting card then represented a change in material and economic factors that subsequently encouraged changes to the charms, rituals, and narratives that marked Valentine's Day, and also Christmas and other consumer rituals.

Interwoven with economic, material, and narrative changes are epistemological changes. An examination of the epistemology of narratives and of power is beyond the scope of this dissertation (see for example Bruner,

1986; Foucault, 1972, 1979; Haack, 1995; Howard, 1991; Pepper, 1968, 1956, 1942/1970; Sarbin, 1993, 1986). Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that narratives, like scientific theories (which themselves can be regarded as narratives), are judged by epistemic criteria. These epistemic criteria will vary with the nature of the narrative. A novel of romantic love will be judged according to criteria such as internal logic and verisimilitude. A scientific story about climate change will likewise be judged by internal logic, and also by its predictive value and its correspondence to testable empirical evidence (Bruner, 1986; Howard, 1991).

As epistemic criteria change so does the legitimacy of the narratives that rely upon them. This is the case in fictional stories, where certain narrative devices may lose the acceptable level of 'realness' they once enjoyed; and it is the case in scientific stories, where predictive failures or changing empirical evidence may force changes to scientific narratives. Distinguishing 'truth' from 'fiction' in narratives is by no means straightforward. I wonder if the 'truth' that provides the organizing narratives of the consumer Christmas depends any less on empirical evidence than the 'truth' that provides the organizing narratives of the debates about environmental issues. This is not to say that Santa Claus is as real as Chernobyl, but that the joys of children at Christmas, the size of Christmas profits, and the number of Christmas jobs are as true and real in the metanarrative of consumerism as are the beauty of pristine mountains, the cleanliness of the air, or the value of a naturally balanced ecosystem in the green romance.

The variability and dynamics of narratives, knowledge, and operants of power means that in the reality of social practice there is chronic friction and resistance across countless issues. This friction and resistance, these contests among narratives, and the conflicting deployments of operants of power,

relate to what Foucault (1997) calls 'critique'. Critique has grown as a counterweight to governmentality, developing simultaneously with it. The development of a standing attitude of persistent critique correlates to the standing attitude of governmentality. Critique is not an outright rejection of governance in the sense 'We do not want to be governed'. It is a claim that there are grounds for change and improvement, asserting that 'We do not want to be governed like this, by these means, and with those objectives' (Foucault, 1997, p.28). Critique appears historically in such things as the rejection of the traditions of the Church during the Reformation, and in the debates on the place of natural rights in relation to the state.

Critique, says Foucault (1997),

...is the movement by which the subject gives himself the right to question truth on its effects of power and question power on its discourses of truth... critique [is] the art of voluntary insubordination, that of reflected intractability. Critique would essentially insure the desubjugation of the subject in the context of what we could call, in a word, the politics of truth. (Foucault, 1997, p.32.)

Foucault's call for 'voluntary insubordination' and 'reflected intractability' in the struggle over the 'politics of truth' contains a sense of romantic struggle against tyranny and ignorance. Yet elsewhere he concedes that liberation is a cause that will never be fulfilled (1996, p.339). Foucault's 'critique', much like Lyotard's (1984) 'paralogy', presents the tantalizing offer of liberty, autonomy, and escape from social control. This is an offer that cannot be fulfilled in the sense that liberty is a terminus, an object, or a thing. Liberty is not a commodity to be obtained. But liberty in some semblance may be achieved as a way of life. "Liberty", says Foucault (1996), "...is a practice" (p.339). From this perspective, the romantic struggle for liberty is recast as a parable of noble irony, wiser and perhaps no less passionate. My analysis of metanarratives in the previous chapter suggests that irony may not

be a common perspective. While the greens I interviewed are engaged in 'voluntary insubordination' in the struggle over 'the politics of truth', I wonder if this is critique that includes ironic self-reflection, or criticism aimed at replacing one dominating regime of power, knowledge, and narrative with another?

The irony of critique understands that there is no escape from power, knowledge, and narratives, there is only greater awareness and understanding that may translate into action. Power, knowledge, and narratives are inevitable and necessary social creations, and people are inevitably and necessarily social beings, from their first introduction into language, thought, identity, and morality; to their dreams of shopping like the Sultan of Brunei; or their self-conscious decisions to trade their cars for bicycles. If my research shows anything, it is that consuming is not just the work of the sovereign consumer, and that resisting consumerism is not just a matter of the 'will of the individual'. Consumerism is more than a system of economics, and it is more than a system of morality or domination. It organizes time and space, provides purposes for individuals and society, gives people identities that are flexible yet acceptable, penetrates language and thought, grants stories, enacts rituals, normalizes, trains, examines, and surveys. In a consumer society like Edmonton's, people know what to do in day-to-day life, even if it is in resistance and critique, because of the power of consumerism.

B. Implications and Areas for Further Study.

In this research I have examined the relations between the two areas of Foucauldian power and narrative in the context of a third area, consuming. As is common with studies that work at the edges and connections between areas of knowledge, there are many opportunities for further study. This is an

inevitably interdisciplinary process; both Foucault's work and narrative theory dissolve disciplinary boundaries.

My research amounts to a prolonged and multifaceted first-hand analysis of the relationship between the individual and society. By using a combined Foucauldian-narrative approach --by working in terms of 'power/knowledge/narrative'-- I have been able to comprehensively discuss issues concerning discourse, identity, normalization, space, time, ritual, and metanarrative. It may be that my approach will contribute usefully to what Brown (1994) describes as 'a main problematic of recent social theory': "...the comprehension of the agency-structure interface" (p.269). If my work does contribute to this issue, it may be because it links narrative and non-narrative social structures. "The challenge in understanding how narrative is incorporated into social construction", writes Murray (1995), "is to identify its relation to what is not narrative" (p.187). My suggestion is that narrative relates to what is not narrative by creating consistent directionality through time.

Time is the crucial element here. Many traditional concepts in the social sciences are, in effect, static objects, frozen in one position to make analysis easier: 'class', 'institution', 'society', 'individual', 'value', 'attitude', etc. Relying on these objects predisposes researchers to a timeless, snapshot view of human organization: that is working-class; this is an individual; there is an attitude. It is no wonder that Hassard describes time as "...*the* missing variable in modern sociological analysis" (p.1, italics in original).

In contrast, narratives require time, and with it direction. They are dynamic because they account for time. Integrating narrative with power may be a useful way of integrating time into the social sciences. By infusing time and directionality into the study of the individual and society, a combined

Foucauldian-narrative approach can help address problems of structure and agency.

Another area of general study concerns the role of narratives and metanarratives in historical transitions. I have very briefly discussed their role in the Calvinist and Puritan 'bibliocracies' of the 16th and 17th centuries, and their role in the modern consumer society. To what extent can historical transitions such as that which occurred at the beginning of the rise of capitalism, consumerism, and industrialism be understood through changing metanarratives? Do the kinds of changes that Weber discusses in the transformation from traditional production to capitalist production have substantial narrative aspects? Is the new identity, morality, and action of capitalism a result of changing metanarratives, as well as changing economics?

In addition to these general areas, I have identified some that are more specific, as follows.

B.1. Consumerism and Environmentalism. It is common to accept that narrative and metanarrative have weakened as capitalism, industrialism, and consumerism have gained strength (Jameson, 1984; Lyotard, 1984). I have argued differently, but my position is only a modest beginning. It raises many questions. Am I correct to think of one metanarrative of consuming, or are there multiple metanarratives of consuming? How does the metanarrative of consuming relate to social trends, such as globalization, commodification, changing gender roles, and the changing role and legitimacy of government, the public sector, and private business?

While consumerism provides chances to study a dominant and privileged

discourse, environmentalism provides chances to study a discourse struggling for legitimacy. Although it is overwhelmed by consumerism, the environmental discourse seems rich with possibilities to gain strength. It has a compelling and romantically appealing metanarrative that has convincing claims to epistemic legitimacy: in other words, it can make claims to being a 'true story'. It also has adherents who are committed and increasingly able to use operants of power (as in the example I presented from the Sierra Club). It may be that environmentalism is at a stage equivalent to consumerism two centuries ago, and that charms ('Save the Earth', 'Small is Beautiful') and rituals (recycling, Earth Day) that are currently modest will someday be the equivalents of Valentines and Christmas.

Gare (1995) writes that, for environmentalism, "What is clearly lacking are stories of sufficient power and complexity to orient people for effective action to overcome environmental problems..." (p.140). What are these stories to be? Is a 'Charles Dickens of the environment' needed, to tell stories so compelling that people change on the spot and industrialists, instead of giving away turkeys to workers, take environmental action? And how, if at all, might the stories, rituals, and charms of environmentalism be developed so they are self-aware and self-critical in a way that the metanarrative of consuming is not?

B.2. Normalization. The rapid increase in electronic technologies of examination and surveillance makes the study of normalization timely. This is an area receiving increasing attention, as Lyon (1994) indicates, but it is changing rapidly. What are the implications of these intensifying technologies for self-identity, and for the 'identity management' of some by others? And what happens when these technologies are deliberately linked to narratives? How does that change their power? A related area worth

further study is the use of narratives themselves as technologies of normalization, both in the sense of role modelling (Santa vs. Scrooge; romantic lover vs. lonely single) and in the sense of providing organizing frameworks for operants of power, as the narrative of Valentine's Day does for examination, confession, and surveillance by dating services.

The confession appears to be one of the clearest areas where narrative and Foucauldian practices of power are integrated, particularly in the link between autobiography and confession. The confession has gone through a transition from Christian practice to consumer practice. Foucault (1979, 1990a, 1997) notes that the confession in traditional Christian practice is based on a negative approach to the self; confession leads to penitence and self-sacrifice. In contrast, I found the consumer confession leads to something positive. I confess my inadequacies as a consumer and then mark them not with self-sacrifice, but with self-indulgence. How does this relate to the effectiveness of consumerism, and to its role in influencing personal identity and integrating individuals into the consumer society?

B.3. Chronos, Kairos, and Cyclical Time. As I noted in Chapter 5, the general academic consensus seems to be that cyclical time has declined to second or third-rate importance in industrial societies. However, my fieldwork challenges this assumption, and raises the question, what is the place of traditional cyclical time in the modern consumer society? Further, the place of narrative time (*kairos*) in day-to-day life is only now beginning to be considered, in work such as Ricouer's (1991). A crucially important question concerning time, which I only begin to explore in my research, is: what is the inter-relationship of *chronos*, *kairos*, and cyclical time in a consumer society?

B.4. Charms, Rituals, and Stories. I have suggested that the consumer society is laden with charms, and that, as in traditional societies, these are most effective when they are connected to rituals and stories, with which the consumer society is also laden. Examining brand names, advertising jingles, logos, and so on from the perspective of charms may be fruitful in explaining their effectiveness, and in some sense demystifying them. This may also do a tiny bit to encourage a more critical view of marketing and consumer behaviour, fields which, from my reading and others (Brown, 1995; Morgan, 1992), largely lack self-reflection.

C. Conclusion.

The closer I have come to writing this conclusion the more clearly I have become aware that this dissertation --and every PhD dissertation-- has a narrative form. Indeed, there are narratives within narratives. My dissertation is a narrative account of my research; it is largely based on my diary, which is a narrative of my year of fieldwork; my interviews with green and brown consumers mostly comprise the stories they told me about their lives and experiences. There are characters, actions, the passage of time, morality (moving toward order and explanation is good, moving to disorder and confusion is bad), a beginning, a middle, and an end. The process for obtaining a PhD requires what is, in effect, an institutionalized form of the classic romantic struggle: a more or less solitary hero (the student) pursuing a quest for knowledge and truth that, if successful, leads to recognition, honour, and award.

The PhD quest requires a conclusion. But what is a conclusion? As White (1980) makes clear, conclusions only occur because people decide that the meaning of events changes at a particular time, place, or action. Empirically,

there are no conclusions; events never stop happening. The conclusion I write for this dissertation will not end my inquiry into power, narrative, day-to-day life, or consuming. It will not end the process of obtaining my PhD, for I will still need to defend my work before examiners, and perhaps revise it, or perhaps face failure. This conclusion is really no more than a narrative device that makes it legitimate for me to close off courses of inquiry, and to signal that I hope I have struggled well enough in my quest to satisfy the needs of the university authorities.

Having become aware of the relation of narrative and power in day-to-day consuming, I find I am now awkwardly self-conscious about the operation of narrative and power in the process of obtaining a PhD. Just as my actions at Christmas must conform to certain canons of ritual and narrative if the consumer Christmas is to be made real, so must my PhD studies conform to certain canons of ritual and narrative if I am to be granted a PhD degree. Could I write my dissertation in verse? Would I be allowed to submit it on video? What if it was written as a stream of consciousness? Could I pass if I submitted a dissertation without a conclusion, perhaps stopping in mid-sentence to indicate that there really are no conclusions? I face constraints of power at every turn, and recognize that through surveillance, examination, and confession, I will be assessed as normal, or not. There will even be charms --*magna cum laude* is very charming; so, in the opposite direction, is 'fail'. There will also be rituals: a particular seating arrangement at the viva; an approach to the line of questioning; will we drink tea?. Afterword, stories will be told (comic I hope). Some of these will no doubt invoke the metanarratives of higher education and, quite likely, of consuming ('Now you can get a real job and start enjoying the good things the world has to offer'). One wonders, does the designation 'PhD' symbolize learning, wisdom, and insight, or an effective knowledge of how to conform to particular operants of

power organized in a preferred narrative pattern? Perhaps the two are not mutually exclusive.

My approach to producing this dissertation has had things in common with the approaches taken by people who produce automobiles, banking services, or clothing fashions. While my work represents a sincere attempt to learn about and explain something, it also recognizes that this must be done in a form that wins acceptance with its target consumers. I live in what Wernick (1991) calls 'a promotional culture', and I must choose my conclusion with this in mind. I could choose to conclude this work as a comedy, the way many dissertations end: 'While the outcomes were not fully predicted, it is safe to say they fit well within the theoretical framework, confirming and extending the approach and illustrating well the usefulness of...'. I could write a romance, another favourite: 'The results were promising but not fully conclusive, and there is a need for ongoing research to pursue this research further...'. There is also the suspiciously uncommon tragedy (oh, how graduate students struggle to avoid tragedy): 'Unfortunately, the data did not support any clear conclusions; the study appears to have failed...'.

Foucault (1997) once described 'power' as merely a term with the methodological function of 'pinpointing an analytical front' (p.51). Power is not a general principle of reality, but a sometimes useful device for trying to answer the question 'What is going on here?'. This is the same question that lies behind all formal research, and lingers in the minds of everyone who has paused to consider their lives and world. For most people engaged in the ordinary issues of day-to-day living, the theoretical positions of much of the social sciences are faint, if apparent at all. For people reflecting on why they live, think, feel and act as they do; on why their society is as it is; and on how their actions and practices affect their world, the primary questions are the

eternal ones: Who am I? How do I relate to my world and my society? How do I express myself? What should be done? How can I best live? What is going on here? To ask questions like these is to begin, even if inadvertently, to claim power, to identify its operants, to struggle with it, change it, challenge it, or strengthen it. It allows one to perceive and act with greater understanding.

If one recognizes power in day-to-day life in a consumer society as (in part at least) the integration of operants of power and narratives, then one acquires a better understanding of the processes, possibilities, and impossibilities of change, both social and personal. Frye (1976) points out that “Amulets, abracadabras, latin tags, jargon words, formulas...are all charms, or act like charms, as long as they are not understood....the charm you may have may be a riddle for somebody else to smash or solve” (p.138). Frye’s comment may apply to operants of power in all forms: their effect depends in part on not being understood. In a well-known passage, Foucault (1990a) wondered why power is not comprehended more richly:

In a society such as ours, where the devices of power are so numerous, its rituals so visible, and its instruments so reliable, in this society that has been more imaginative, probably, than any other in creating devious and supple mechanisms of power, what explains this tendency not to recognize [power] except in the negative and emaciated form of prohibition?... Let me offer a general and tactical reason that seems self-evident: power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms. Would power be accepted if it were entirely cynical? For it, secrecy is not in the nature of an abuse; it is indispensable to its operation. (p.86).

Unveiling the secrecy of power in day-to-day life opens the way for informed resistance to the asymmetries of power, and at the same time for informed acceptance of the inescapable restrictions that social organization requires.

Power is unavoidable, and so are narratives. When I began my year of fieldwork I had little idea of what efforts, problems, and adventures lay ahead. By the end of the year I understood issues and perceived situations in entirely different ways. I had put day-to-day life in a different perspective. I might succeed with some kind of 'insurrection', and I might not, but at least I was now better aware of the constraints and opportunities.

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