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Personal Narrative: Revealing Self and Reflecting Other.

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Personal narrative: Revealing self and reflecting other

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PERSONAL NARRATIVE: REVEALING SELF AND REFLECTING OTHER

A Dissertation

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Abstract

Self-presentation is a response to internal and external demands for self-verification. The telling of personal narratives is one form of presenting self to others that begins early in life, and crosses racial, ethnic, and cultural boundaries. Not only do we present ourselves through narrative, those with whom we are socially involved present us to others through narrative.

The primary purpose of this study was to examine how well one's perception of self is communicated to familiar others. Secondarily, this study explored the impact of sex differences and relationship type on the success of this communication. One hundred targets each brought a friend, relative, or spouse (perceiver) to the experiment. The target and perceiver were separated and given a series of questionnaires to complete. The primary target questionnaire focused on description of self, while the primary perceiver questionnaire required description of the target. The target was then asked to tell a personal narrative, while the perceiver told a narrative about the target.

Findings include 1) self-concept is presented through personal narrative, 2) such self-presentations function as impression management, 3) view of other is presented through narrative, 4) narrative presentation of a familiar other reflects the familiar other's self-concept, 5) men

and women do not differ in their knowledge of familiar others, 6) female targets are not better known than male targets, and 7) elements of relational history such as relatedness, longevity, and knowledge of other may impact the accuracy of presentations of familiar others.

Chapter I

Review of Literature Pertaining to Self-Concept, Self-Presentation, Impression Management, Narrative, and Identity Negotiation

In recent years the word narrative has come into its own. According to Josselson (1993), the study of narrative has become not only prevalent in the academic community, but "vogue" as well. In fields such as clinical psychology, genetics, and astronomy, "the idea of restoring narrative [has] become a new approach" (p. x). Perhaps this interest stems from the idea that everyone tells stories. Widdershoven (1993) contends that people who tell stories about their own lives are like historians who tell stories of the past. "Stories are somehow important for our identity: They tell us who we are. Again it can be asked what relation these stories have to the persons we are" (p. 6). The present study contends that personal narratives serve as representations of the roles we have and are playing, and as the "masks" which we present as images of ourselves. As a result, these "stories" play an integral role in "the persons we are" and the persons we present to others.

Although the personal narrative has long been a part of oral tradition (Stahl, 1983), the power of the personal narrative in revealing self has been overlooked in the

social sciences. Those working in the field of folklore, however, have recognized the rich source of information provided by such narratives (Basso, 1984; Bauman, 1986; Johnstone, 1990; Stahl, 1977, 1983, 1989). The first stage of this study seeks to take the personal narrative into the social sciences by examining those personal narratives which are a part of one's repertoire, and analyzing the link between such narratives and one's self-conception.

During the presentation of one's narrative an "audience" is present. As researchers have pointed out, the social interaction between participants impacts the self-concept as interpretations are made and reactions are perceived (Mead, 1934; Schneider, 1981; Snyder & Swann, 1978; Tedeschi & Riess, 1981). Although previous research has examined the perceiver, the emphasis has been on the perceiver's impression of the target and the impact that impression has on the target (e.g., Swann & Ely, 1984). In the present research, the effect of the target on the perceiver will be explored. Specifically, the second stage of this study examines the target's impact on the perceiver by analyzing the perceiver's presentation of the target (through narrative). The link between the perceiver's presentation of the target and the target's self-conception will be analyzed to examine the success of the target's presentation of self to audience.

In general, this study seeks to examine the role of narrative in communicating one's perception of self to others with whom the individual is socially involved. How well does the target manage the perceiver's impressions of self through self-presentation? How well does the perceiver manage those communicated impressions through his/her presentation of the target?

Review of Literature

Self and Self-Concept

The self-concept is "a generalized view of oneself" (Wilmot, 1987, p. 42) or, according to Rosenberg (1979), "the totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings with reference to self as an object" (p. ix). Schouten (1991) defines self-concept as "the cognitive and affective understanding of who and what we are . . . to encompass such things as role identities, personal attributes, relationships, fantasies, possessions, and other symbols that individuals use for the purposes of self-creation and self-understanding" (p. 413). Eder (1989) claims that the existence of self-concept is in memory. Specifically, "recollections (i.e., autobiographical memories) about events in one's life constitute the content of the self" (p. 1218).

Based on previous work with Klein and Straumann (1985), Higgins (1989) provides a general framework for considering the relationship between self and affect:

Self-Discrepancy Theory. Self-discrepancy theory distinguishes among three domains of self: (1) the actual self, which is a representation of the attributes that someone (self or other) believes you actually possess [self-concept]; (2) the ideal self, a representation of attributes someone would ideally like you to possess [self-guide]; and (3) the ought self, a representation of the attributes that someone believes you should or ought to possess [self-guide]. Self-discrepancy theory posits that people are motivated to reach a condition where their self-concepts match their self-guides. In addition, people use self-guides as a yardstick for both self-regulatory and self-evaluative purposes. Mead (1934) argues that the self "develops in the given individual as a result of his relations to that process [social experience and activity] as a whole and to other individuals within that process" (p. 135). Higgins (1989) agrees that the development of children's self-regulatory and self-evaluative functions is based on the child's early social interactions with significant others and the emotional significance of those interactions. In addition, family structure variables and peer group culture contribute to the development of self-guides.

The development of the self-concept is, as Mead (1934) and Higgins (1989) point out, a process. Eder (1989)

exemplifies this process in her examination of children's self-concepts. In her research with 3-1/2, 5-1/2, and 7-1/2 year olds, Eder finds that the tendency to provide specific information in describing self increases with age. In addition, the use of trait information to describe self increases with age. Eder concludes that children's general memories serve to hold self-concepts that have broad utility; later they develop the ability to make specific inferences about self. The general memories have wide applicability for the child and are representational of typical, frequent, enduring, and/or stable behaviors or states.

In an extension of her earlier research, Eder (1990) examines the variation in the self-concepts of children within an age group. Two large puppets interviewed children by asking the children to describe themselves. Results indicated that the children's responses were meaningfully and consistently organized, and did differ from child to child. Eder contends that these results demonstrate children's possession of rudimentary dispositional concepts of self by 3-1/2 years which reflect their own beliefs about their actions/behaviors rather than their actual actions/behaviors. Eder concludes that the children's feelings about themselves are reflected in their self-conceptions.

Kihlstrom, Cantor, Albright, Chew, Klein, and Niedenthal (1988) address the issue of self and the data represented within the self-concept. Like Eder (1989), Kihlstrom et al. explain that the self is linked to a vast body of autobiographical memory, which includes "some degree of introspective knowledge of one's own thoughts, goals, and emotions during the events and experiences recorded there" (p. 157). This information suggests an answer to a question posed by Andersen and Ross (1984), "If revealed thoughts and feelings are held to be uniquely informative about the speaker, is it private thoughts and feelings rather than past behaviors that we choose to share when we want others to know what we are truly like?" (p. 292). A likely answer is that both behaviors and thoughts are revealed as they go hand in hand in creating memories and, hence, our personal narratives.

Prentice (1990) also believes that knowledge plays a part in creating conceptions of self and other. She examines the extent to which greater familiarity with oneself, in contrast with others, can account for differences in self- and other-concepts. As do Andersen and Ross (1984), Prentice finds in her research that the self-concept includes more privileged information about internal states; concepts of others are characterized by more observable properties such as physical appearance and social interactions. Prentice argues that this difference

is a compelling one: "self-perception is informed by direct knowledge of internal states, whereas the perception of others is restricted to observable, external features" (p. 369).

Prentice's view is in direct contrast to Bem's (1970) self-perception theory. Bem argues that a person comes to know his/her internal states (attitudes, emotions, etc.) through observations of his/her behavior and the situation in which the behavior occurs. His theory is in contrast to what Bem calls "conventional wisdom": Attitudes cause behavior or "I eat brown bread because I like it." Bem, however, discusses experiments which point to another explanation: Behavior causes attitudes or "I like brown bread because I eat it" (p. 54). One study involved each subject answering questions about him/herself while being tape recorded. A light was present that changed from amber to green: amber indicated that the answer should be truthful, green that it should be false. Finally, each subject was asked to make false statements about his/her attitudes no matter what the color of the light; following each statement, the light was turned off and the subject was asked to indicate his/her true attitude. As Bem hypothesized, the subjects tended to change their attitudes about the statement significantly more when they had stated it in the presence of the "truth light." Bem interprets these results as indicating that the individuals felt that

their behavior was indicative of their true attitudes. Hence, according to Bem, the behavior changed the attitude.

Whether led by cognitions or behaviors, our memories and knowledge create concepts of both ourselves and others. In our everyday social interactions, these concepts of self and other play an integral role in our actions and behaviors.

Self-Presentation

As one tells his/her personal narratives, self-presentation occurs. "The term self-presentation refers to the process of establishing an identity through the appearance one presents to others" (Arkin, 1986, p. 8). In a review of the literature, Buss and Briggs (1984) maintain that two themes appear in the self-presentation literature: "Self-presentation is an ever present part of social behavior and self-images govern the form of self-presentation" (p. 1310). Both of these themes are present in Arkin's definition of self-presentation. Arkin argues that people are constantly presenting appearances, either intentionally or unintentionally, honestly or deceitfully, to actual or imagined others. As a result, he feels that "the boundaries of self-presentation often seem ill-defined and, among some, this fact has led to disillusionment" (p. 8).

One theorist who has laid much of the groundwork in defining self-presentation is Erving Goffman. In The

Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (1959), Goffman argues that we play roles and wear masks which are representations of the way we see ourselves. Goffman explains that a "performer" can believe that his/her actions are sincere and a true reflection of the reality of his/her self. On the other hand, an individual may recognize that his/her "act" is not authentic. This second type of presentation of self is not always a self-serving one, according to Goffman. Although the individual may be misleading the audience in an attempt at personal gain, he/she may "delude his audience for what he considers to be their own good, or for the good of the community, etc." (p. 18).

Whether authentic or deceptive, an individual determines his/her conduct by comparing the potential meaning of his/her actions to the self-image that he/she is attempting to uphold (Goffman, 1967). Like Goffman, Buss and Briggs (1984) argue that social behavior is often the result of a compromise between external demands for maintaining appearances (self-presentation) and "one's personal needs, impulses, and dispositional tendencies (individuality)" (p. 1311). The individual differences affecting social behavior are identified as differences in pretense, formality, shyness, role identity, and personality traits. These individual differences, coupled with the external demands for self-presentation, impact the

behavior of individuals. Buss and Briggs conclude that it is important to recognize the roles these individual differences play when examining social interaction and people's behaviors across situations.

Mead (1934) claims that people come to see themselves in terms of the internalized attitudes and values of the community as a whole ("the generalized other"). "The determinant in the amount of the self that gets into communication is the social experience itself . . . We carry on a whole series of different relationships to different people. We are one thing to one man and another thing to another" (Mead, p. 142).

Although Goffman's theatrical language tends to lead to an emphasis on the duplicity of self-presentation, it is important to remember that Goffman did not see all self-presentation as insincere. Buss and Briggs (1984) agree. For example, they point to previous examinations of formal behavior as strategic. Buss and Briggs argue, however, that formal behavior usually involves no deception. Instead, formal behavior is only the following of specific, unwritten rules. Hence, such behavior can be considered strategic only as any rule-following behavior is strategic.

In Schneider's (1981) definition of self-presentation it seems as though there is an emphasis on the duplicity that is possible. He defines self-presentation as "the manipulation of information about the self by an actor"

(p. 25). Schneider goes on, however, to point out, via Goffman, that self-presentation is a response to internal and external demands for self-identification. It is not necessarily linked to a desire for approval. Hence, for Schneider "manipulation of information" is not necessarily a duplicitous act.

The focus of self-presentation for Arkin (1986) is on confirming self. Arkin appears to hold to the belief that self-presentation is designed to reaffirm privately held conceptions of self. Through presenting self to others, one seeks to confirm his/her own self view. Arkin goes on to explain that when an individual attempts to create a specific impression in the mind of a receiver, self-presentation has an effect, whether directly or indirectly, on that individual's self-concept. According to Swann and Hill (1982), a person's self-view can endure only when his/her social environment is one that legitimizes and validates the self-view. Arkin extends this notion suggesting that an individual needs a stable view of self in order to make actions possible without being plagued by doubts and uncertainties.

Gardner and Martinko (1988), however, focus on self-presentation as the most prominent means of managing others' impressions of self. "Verbal self-presentations are influenced by the complex interaction of actor, audience, and environment. The environment provides the

general setting and context for the actor's performance" (p. 44). In addition, a variety of cognitive processes, including one's perceptions, attributions, motives, and expectations, influence the manner in which one interprets situations and his/her role (Schneider, 1981). Moreover, one's self-concept limits the number of presentations that he/she will consider authentic and viable (Schlenker, 1980).

Arkin (1986) argues that an individual's self-presentation has an impact, either directly or indirectly, on his/her self-concept. According to Leary and Kowalski (1990), the self-concept is a primary variable which influences the manner in which people manage their impressions because certain aspects of the self are valued and displayed at appropriate times. "Impression management often involves an attempt to put the best parts of oneself into public view" (p. 40). Although this process may appear to be "tactical," Leary and Kowalski argue that an individual's selection of specific aspects of self to portray are, in fact, mirror images of the individual's self-concept. "People hesitate to claim images that are inconsistent with how they see themselves because of the possibility that they cannot pull it off" (p. 40). Citing Tunnell (1984), however, Leary and Kowalski note that those who are high in public self-consciousness [awareness of the image of self that one presents in public] show less

congruency between their private and public selves than do people with low public self-consciousness. Hence, although self-presentations are often mirror images of the private self, they are not always so. Leary and Kowalski do, however, conclude that one's private self-concept does have an impact on one's self-presentational choices. According to Tedeschi and Rosenfeld (1981), inconsistency between public and private selves can lead to instability and undermine attempts at gaining influence. An inconsistent self-presentation leads others to view the person as a less than credible interaction partner. As a result, the person will attempt to appear consistent in order to make the interaction successful.

Schlenker and Trudeau (1990) examine the role prior self-beliefs play in moderating change after self-presentations. According to social interaction theory, self-concepts are in a state of flux; they are more the product of social interaction than a determinant of it. Schlenker and Trudeau found that subjects with strong prior self-beliefs were influenced only by behaviors that fell in their latitude of acceptance. They took personal responsibility for these behaviors and shifted their self-ratings accordingly. Subjects with weak self-beliefs used their behavior, not their initial self-beliefs, as a basis for assessing their standing. They shifted their self-beliefs to correspond with their behavior. Schlenker and

Trudeau argue that these findings refute the view that self-beliefs [self-concepts] are merely products of self-presentational behaviors and have little or no impact on people's transactions with the environment. Hence, the self-concept can be best represented as having a relatively solid core of strong self-beliefs with a more fluid periphery of weaker, more situationally dependent self-beliefs.

Impression Management

Although not always duplicitous, self-presentation does serve to manage others' impressions of self. As Goffman points out, it is clearly in an individual's "interests to control the conduct of others, especially their responsive treatment of him" (Goffman, 1959, p. 3). Arkin (1981) argues that "one common way to accomplish this is to engage in impression management" (p. 311). An important component in the investigation of social interaction is that of impression management (Schlenker, 1980).

E.E. Jones (1964) was the first laboratory-oriented social psychologist to investigate self-presentational aspects of social behavior. According to Tedeschi and Riess (1981), Jones believed that the basic process involved in self-presentational social behavior was ingratiation. Jones defined ingratiation as "a class of strategic behaviors illicitly designed to influence a

particular other person concerning the attractiveness of one's personal qualities" (1964, p. 2). Tedeschi and Riess conclude that a desire to increase others' perceptions of one's social attractiveness is one reason an individual may engage in impression management.

Although Buss and Briggs (1984) refer to self-presentation and impression management as "twins" (p. 1310), Schneider (1981) argues that the two are not the same.

> Self-presentation may be defined as the manipulation of information about the self by an actor. Obviously self-presentation is a close cousin of impression management, but they are different. Impressions can be managed by means (e.g., third party conveying of information) other than self-presentation, and presentations may be used for goals (e.g., information seeking) other than impression management. It is also important to recognize that the presented information is not the only ingredient in a final impression. Obviously the target must make something of the information, must, in fact, form an impression (p. 25).

Tedeschi and Riess (1981), however, offer a definition of impression management that is closely linked to self-presentation: "Impression management consists of any behavior by a person that has the purpose of controlling or manipulating the attributions and impressions formed of that person by others" (p. 3). Tedeschi and Riess go on to explain that to be considered impression management, "the behavior must have been performed with the purpose of influencing impressions, but the actor need not be aware of this purpose. Much self-presentational behavior is

automatic in the sense of being habitual and not part of self-awareness" (p. 17).

The debate over the difference between self-presentation and impression management appears to be centered on the goals of the presentation. For Tedeschi and Riess, the goal of self-presentation is impression management; hence, the two are inextricably linked. Schneider sees goals available for self-presentation other than impression management, such as information seeking. As a result, he characterizes them as "close cousins."

In keeping with Higgins' (1989) concept of self-guides, the present research takes the perspective that self-presentation and impression management are closely linked or "twins" (Buss & Briggs, 1984). Higgins explains that one's self-guides serve self-regulatory and self-evaluative functions. As a result, in an effort to match one's actual self [self-concept] to the ideal and ought selves [self-guides], the individual presents self in order to manage the impressions he/he has of self as well as those impressions others have of him or her. Hence, self-presentation is seen as serving an impression management function.

Narrative

The presentation of self takes the form of personal narrative when our memories take verbal shape through language. Mead (1934) claims that "the language process is

essential for the development of self" (p. 135). According to Bennett (1986), "Stories may be told for a variety of purposes--for the pleasure of narrating, for the joy of reliving the past, as presentations of self, as phatic communication . . . . They are regarded as carrying very important information in very memorable form" (pp. 430-431). In remembering a personal narrative told to her by her grandmother, Stahl (1989) describes the "text" as "a map, a sketch abstracted from the multidimensional reality of her experience, her culture, her self" (p. xi). Langellier (1989) argues that "in a most profound way, our stories tell us who we are and who we can--or cannot--be, at both surface and deep-level meaning" (p. 267). Previous research has shown that children realize who they are through personal narratives with tellings beginning as early as age three (Minister, 1989). In his study of narratives among the Western Apache, Basso (1984) argues that paying careful attention to claims people make about themselves will enable one to "move closer to an understanding of who the people involved imagine themselves to be--it can be richly informative and highly worthwhile" (p. 19).

In everyday life, within everyday social practices, people tell each other stories "as a means of giving cognitive and emotional coherence to experience, constructing and negotiating social identity . . . ."

(Bauman, 1986, p. 113). Langellier (1989) argues, via Goffman, that "the personal narrative is an act of self-presentation" (p. 247). Personal narratives serve as representations of the roles we have and are playing, and as the masks which we present as images of ourselves.

In presenting self through personal narrative, Stahl (1983) characterizes the storyteller as vulnerable. "I think the personal experience story as a genre is appealing in great measure because of this vulnerability of the storyteller. Nothing creates intimacy quite so well as some confession or exposure of the self" (p. 274). According to Stahl (1989), when a person tells a personal narrative, he/she is opening the door to another and sharing intimate, personal knowledge about self. As a result, the teller is in a vulnerable position. As Stahl points out, however, a person usually, unconsciously, tells personal narratives to those who want to know the teller better. In the sharing of personal narratives, "the teller's identity is the listener's treasure" (Stahl, p. x).

Labov and Fanshel (1977) suggest that the narrative form may serve as a framework for the evaluation of the story and the storyteller: Is the story worth telling and is the narrator worth telling about? The Labovian model of narrative as discourse is the earliest and most widely cited (Langellier, 1989). The model defines narrative as

"one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which actually occurred" (Labov & Waletzky, 1967, p. 20). According to Labov and Waletzky, a narrative displays referential and evaluative functions. The referential function "recapitulates experience in the same order as the original events" (p. 21). The evaluative function is "that part of the narrative which reveals the attitude of the narrator towards the narrative by emphasizing the relative importance of some narrative units as compared to others" (p. 37). Hence, narratives contain both behavioral description and the narrator's thoughts and feelings; if no cognitive elements were present, the Labovian model would consider the discourse to be a report. As narratives contain both cognitive and behavioral elements, Labov states, "The reaction of listeners to these narratives seems to demonstrate that the most highly evaluated form of language is that which translates our personal experience into dramatic form" (Labov, 1972, p. 396).

Bennett (1986) argues that the Labovian model of narrative does not consider the majority of personal narratives. In 1981, Bennett collected stories in Manchester, England; the stories collected focused on the supranormal. Of the 153 narratives collected, Bennett claims that 26 conformed to the Labovian structure of chronological ordering and a focus on events. For example,

Bennett argues that, instead of a chronological structure, the teller may present the story in a circular manner. Bennett explains that the non-Labovian majority of stories was a result of the tellers' use of the narratives as explanations which were a part of, or continuations of, discussions. It is important to note that the stories Bennett considered Labovian were contributed outside discussion situations. According to Bennett, the non-Labovian narratives both function efficiently as explanation and engage interest as narrative. Sawin (1992), on the other hand, reports the personal narratives of a North Carolina woman, Eldreth, that do follow the Labovian model. The Labovian narratives recorded by Sawin, like the "non-Labovian" narratives recorded by Bennett, are characterized as typically set within conversations or, in other instances, are parts of a chain of narratives.

Whether embedded in conversation or contributed outside discussion, the personal narrative is a "powerful expressive vehicle" (Bauman, 1986, p. 35). The personal narrative has long been a part of the oral tradition and is "a vital part of the social life of nearly every American today" (Stahl, 1983, p. 268). Stahl argues that "It would be a rare adult who has not at one time told such a story or who did not have at least one or two such favorite stories in a ready repertoire" (1983, p. 268). The telling of a favorite personal narrative may even be requested by

those close to the teller. According to Stahl (1977), a personal narrative becomes "a part of the teller's repertoire, a repeatable item," because it has meaning beyond the referential; it makes a point or, in Labovian terms, contains an evaluative element (p. 24). As time passes and the individual develops and his/her life history is altered, the teller's repertoire changes in composition (Stahl, 1983).

Stahl (1983) uses the term "personal experience stories" in her discussion of what I am calling personal narratives. She defines a personal experience story as a first-person narrative usually composed orally and based on real incidents in the teller's life. ". . . the stories 'belong' to the tellers because they are the ones responsible for recognizing in their own experiences something that is 'story worthy' and for bringing their perception of those experiences together with the conventions of 'story' in appropriate contexts and thus creating identifiable, self-contained narratives" (1983, pp. 268-269).

Stahl (1983) addresses the personal component of personal narratives by dividing tellers into two categories: "self-oriented" and "other-oriented." The "self-oriented" tellers weave "fairly elaborate tales that build upon their own self-images and emphasize their own actions as either humorous or exemplary." The "other-

oriented" tellers "underplay their personal role [sic] in the story to emphasize the extraordinary nature of things that happen in the tale" (p. 270).

Johnstone (1990) found in her research in Fort Wayne, Indiana, that women's stories tended to be "other-oriented" while men's stories were "self-oriented." The storytellers in Johnstone's research were middle-class whites who lived in and around Fort Wayne. She does not claim that this sample is representative of the community, and explains that she did not intend them to be representative. Instead, Johnstone argues that her choice of storytellers is based on the rarity of studies investigating the communicative behavior of "the non-minority 'mainstream' of the American heartland" (p. 3). Students enrolled in Johnstone's classes in Fort Wayne, from 1981-1984, tape-recorded stories that occurred spontaneously in their own environments. Her assistants discovered that they knew a great number of storytellers: spouses, children, friends, and parents. The storytellers ranged in age from 14 to 64; 35 female and 24 male storytellers were recorded. She found that men's stories focused on their own character and abilities; hence, they were identified as "self-oriented." The women's stories tended to be "other-oriented" and focus on "the social world, rather than about individual heroes" (p. 67). The narratives told by women about their personal exploits gave credit to an external locus of control (e.g.,

luck) versus their own skill or ability. Johnstone explains that the "women's tendency to present themselves as powerless may also have to do with gender-specific conventions for the expression of modesty, a quality expected of all Fort Wayners" (p. 67). Sawin (1992) also identifies the community norm warning against self-praise in her examination of Eldreth's personal narratives. Sawin points out, however, that this norm applies to men as well as women, but is stronger in its application to women. In her narratives, Eldreth is able to promote a positive self-image through the use of the reported speech of others and, hence, avoid violating the restriction on self-praise. In characterizing Eldreth's self-presentation through personal narrative as a rhetorical force, Sawin concludes that Eldreth "ensures that her listeners hear what she would never say about herself" (p. 208).

As an audience member is an active participant in making meaning from a performance, so too must a friend, relative, spouse, or stranger interpret the personal narratives we tell. As Benjamin (1969) claims, "The storyteller takes what he tells from experience--his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale" (p. 87).

Identity Negotiation

When one hears the personal narratives of another person, he/she is getting to know that teller. According

to Schneider, Hastorf, and Ellsworth (1979), this is the "process of perceiving that person" (p. 1). Involved in the person perception process is responding to the physical person one can see, the behaviors observed, and then drawing conclusions.

Referring to the work of past researchers, Swann (1984) explains that person perception research tended to use object perception as a model and, as a result, it was assumed that person perceivers detected the identities of targets just as they might detect the identities of physical objects. Swann writes:

> They have therefore overlooked the fact that object perception offers a poor analogy to everyday person perception in that target individuals are neither invariant stimuli nor are their identities independent of the activities of perceivers (i.e., traitlike), the identities of targets are negotiated through a series of behavioral transactions with perceivers. Of course, such negotiated identities may be binding only within the relatively narrow range of settings in which particular perceivers interact with particular targets. Yet it is precisely within these settings that perceivers often are concerned with predicting the behaviors of targets; to perceivers, how targets conduct themselves within other settings or in the presence of other perceivers is frequently of little or no consequence (p. 472).

Snyder and Swann (1978) maintain that our impressions and perceptions of others are important because they "exert powerful channeling effects on subsequent social interaction such that actual behavioral confirmation of these beliefs is produced" (p. 157). In their research Snyder and Swann found that perceivers' false perceptions of the targets evoked behaviors in the targets that made

their false perceptions become true. Specifically, the perceivers treated the targets as hostile or nonhostile, depending on information given to them before the interactions took place. The targets responded to the perceivers in kind and began to behave in the manner in which they were treated, in a hostile or nonhostile fashion. Snyder and Swann (1978) explain that perceivers seem "blissfully unaware" of the role that they play in generating behavior that "erroneously confirms their expectations, inferences, and attributional labels. Unbeknownst to them, the reality that they perceive to exist `out there' in the social world has in fact been constructed by their own transactions with the social world" (p. 159). Snyder and Swann go on to argue that "Reality-testing has become reality-construction" (p. 159). Perceivers seem to be unaware that how they first treat others impacts how others will treat them.

Swann (1984) contends that "in everyday person perception the activities of perceivers exert a powerful channeling influence on the identities that targets assume" (p. 460). He goes on to explain that perceivers may regard the identities that they have negotiated with targets as accurate rather than examining the traits actually displayed by the targets and then determining the target's identity from those traits: ". . . targets do assume different identities within different situations and at

different times, in social relations a belief can be true for one perceiver but not for another" (p. 461). Swann does argue, however, that accuracy may remain high as sociocultural pressures may encourage people to interact with people who are predictable to them. "The accuracy of social beliefs is therefore determined by how well they serve the goals of perceivers rather than by the extent to which they are accurate in an ultimate sense" (p. 461). Swann does point out that there are instances in which highly generalizable beliefs are desirable, but he argues that in many instances the perceiver's most important concern is that his/her beliefs offer "precise predictions concerning the behavior of targets within highly circumscribed conditions" (p. 461).

The identity-negotiation process begins before people enter the interaction context; it starts when they choose where and with whom to interact (Swann, 1984). A second important step occurs in the interaction context when the target displays identity cues designed to make the perceiver aware of the identity that the target wishes to assume. Swann argues that "people apparently possess a biologically based drive to seek out interaction partners who are relatively familiar and predictable to them" and "who are similar on a variety of physical, attitudinal, and cognitive dimensions" (p. 463). He goes on to explain that the perceiver must believe that the target is predictable

on all dimensions that are central to the relationship; "those who fail to meet this criterion are scrupulously avoided" (p. 463). As a result of interacting with a similar person (the target), the perceiver will have an insider's view of the norms, mores, and social rules that guide the behavior of that target. "The result will be that when perceivers encounter targets, they will accurately infer the identities that such targets are able and willing to assume" (p. 463). Swann contends that targets follow a similar interaction pattern: they are motivated to find interaction partners who are predictable to them. As a result, they may strive to find perceivers who see them as they see themselves. "In this way, targets may raise the probability that the identities that perceivers wish them to assume are ones that they also wish to assume" (p. 463). There is some evidence that targets strive to arrange their social relationships so that they encounter perceivers who treat them in a manner that is consistent with their self-views (Swann, 1984). In addition, targets can selectively display identity cues, "carefully avoiding cues that might lead perceivers to anticipate performances that they are unwilling or unable to deliver. . . . To be maximally effective, identity cues must be highly visible and capable of evoking predictable reactions from perceivers" (p. 464).

Schneider (1981) argues that the target must convincingly perform a particular self-presentational

behavior. In addition, the target must realize that various alternative interpretations of his/her behavior in terms of situational forces and past behavior are available to the perceiver in analyzing the present behavior. "From the perspective of person perception, it is a minor wonder that impression management is ever successful" (p. 33). According to Schneider, the perceiver has already formed an impression of the target in the typical impression management context. The perceiver's "willingness to believe and accept any subsequent behavioral or verbal self-presentation rests in large part on how well this new information fits with the old" (p. 38). Snyder and Swann (1978) describe the perceiver's knowledge of the target as "active, initiatory cognitive structures or conceptual schemas" (p. 160). These schemas guide the processing of information about the target and, hence, influence future interactions between the perceiver and target.

In the event that a perceiver mislabels a target, the target may attempt to change that impression by providing the perceiver with corrective feedback. Swann (1984) explains that "perceivers form expectancies about targets and try them out by adopting appropriate behaviors. At the same time, targets monitor the activities of perceivers to insure that the expectancies of perceivers are compatible with the identities that targets wish to claim" (p. 465). Swann argues that targets are more inclined to accept

identities that confirm rather than disconfirm their self-views. However, interaction with the perceiver does play a role in the decision. For example, Swann and Ely (1984) found that a target who is relatively certain of his/her self-concept always behaves in ways that are compatible with his/her self-concept, whether the perceivers are certain or uncertain of their expectancies about that target. However, a target who is uncertain of his/her self-concept behaves in a self-consistent way only when the perceivers are uncertain of their expectancies about that target.

Swann (1984) argues, however, that people "want others to see them as they see themselves; otherwise they will be forced either to revise their self-views or to stop using these views to predict the reactions of others" (p. 466). In addition, targets may reject self-discrepant identities because they fear that they will be unable or unwilling to honor such identities. The target may reason that if he/she is misidentified, the perceiver may leave the interaction before the target can achieve his/her interaction goals.

Swann (1984) does, however, point to a potential conflict within the target. "This tendency for targets to strive to behave in ways that confirm their self-concepts (<u>self-verification</u>) might compete with the tendency for them to behave in ways that confirm the expectancies of

perceivers (behavioral confirmation)" (p. 466). He explains that accuracy is generally highest when self-verification occurs because perceivers will better "predict how targets will behave in the future because targets will theoretically continue to behave in accordance with their self-conceptions" (p. 466).

There are, however, instances in which the "targets' goals may also prompt them to behave in ways that undermine the accuracy of perceiver expectancies" (Swann, 1984, p. 469). For example, a target may be very shy, but in an effort to comply with the rules of conversation, interact in an apparently comfortable way. A target may also allow a perceiver to hold incorrect expectancies because the relationship with the perceiver is not valued; as a result, the target feels no motivation to take corrective action. On the other hand, in the case of the confidence man or the pool shark, the target may actually promote an erroneous expectancy. Swann states, "What is striking about such accuracy-diminishing misrepresentations of self, however, is that they work only if they are used infrequently. Indeed, if all targets sought to mislead perceivers, they would probably gain little because perceivers would distrust them" (p. 470).

Rationale and Statement of Hypotheses

The self is linked to autobiographical memories (Eder, 1989; Kihlstrom et al., 1988). These memories serve as the

material with which personal narratives are created. As Stahl (1983, 1989) points out, people carry with them a repertoire of personal narratives that are made up of personal knowledge about the self and become repeatable items within our social interactions. As the self is made up of memories, and personal narratives are made of these memories, it follows that the personal narratives reflect self. Personal narratives reflect who we are and who we imagine ourselves to be (Basso, 1984; Langellier, 1989). As we present personal narratives, we seek to confirm our self-views; we want others to see us as we see ourselves (Arkin, 1986; Swann, 1984). Schlenker (1980) explains that the self-concept limits the number of presentations that are considered viable. People hesitate to claim inconsistent images for fear that they will not be able to live up to them (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). In a study conducted with 40 undergraduates, Markham Shaw (1992) found that the self presented in a personal narrative "that almost everyone who knows you has heard" does coincide with self-description. Thus, to test this notion further, the following hypothesis is offered:

H1: Self-description ratings coincide with self-conceptions presented in personal narratives.

As self-concepts are made up of autobiographical memories, so is the concept of an other created from the memories one holds of the other. Prentice (1990) and

Anderson and Ross (1984) explain that concepts of others are characterized by observable actions and behaviors. Both a description of an other in the form of ratings and a description in the more dramatic form of a narrative about an other are based on one's concept of the other. This leads to the following hypothesis:

> H2: Description ratings of a familiar other coincide with the presentation of the familiar other in a narrative.

The above hypotheses lead to a third hypothesis to be tested in the present research. As two interaction partners [Chuck and Mary] come together, learn about each other, and become good friends, Chuck tells another friend, Gene, about Mary. One form that this telling may take is narrative. As Swann (1984) points out, targets [such as Mary] are motivated to find interaction partners [like Chuck] who see them as they see themselves and who will treat them in a manner that is consistent with their self-views. Likewise, the perceiver [Chuck] interacts with targets [like Mary] who are predictable on dimensions central to the relationship. Hence, the perceiver will have an insider's view of what guides the behavior of the target. As a result, the perceiver will be able to accurately infer the identity that the target is willing and able to assume. In the event that the perceiver mislabels the target, the target may attempt to change the

label by providing corrective feedback to the perceiver (Swann, 1984). Although the target may wish to be mislabeled for self-gain, a familiar perceiver [such as Chuck] would recognize the misrepresentation. As Swann (1984) explains, such misrepresentations are only effective if used infrequently; little self-gain is made as distrust follows. As a result, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Presentation of a familiar other in a narrative will coincide with the familiar other's self-description ratings.

Limitations of Existing Research

The importance of this study is in its attempt to go beyond how people present "self," to how well one's perception of self is communicated to others with whom the individual is socially involved. The personal narrative approach offers a rich arena for such an investigation. According to McGuire and McGuire (1981), the basic limitation in the past self-concept research is the focus on the "reactive" rather than the "spontaneous" self-concept. The reactive self-concept approach refers to the procedure of asking the person to place him/herself on a dimension presented by the experimenter. McGuire and McGuire explain that the limitation in this approach is that it does not provide information about how people spontaneously think of themselves and what aspects of self

are important to them. As a result, McGuire and McGuire prefer the spontaneous self-concept approach in which the person is asked to respond to open-ended questions such as "Tell us about yourself" (p. 150). This study employs an element of the spontaneous self-concept approach by asking the person to tell a personal narrative, but also provides a form (narrative) with which the person is familiar and perhaps more comfortable. In addition, the present study includes a reactive measure in the form of the self-description questionnaire. By employing both measures, the present study searches for a correspondence between the reactive and spontaneous approaches.

Stahl (1983) argues that by asking a target to tell personal narratives that are part of the his/her repertoire valuable material can be collected.

> One advantage to the out-of-context collecting would be the collector's certainty about the traditionality of the story in the teller's repertoire. And when the story is thus regarded as a "text" rather than part of an interactional event only, it can be studied comparatively, either as it varies over time or as it may contrast with a story based on the `same' incident as told by another person (p. 274).

Bauman (1986) argues that there is not much research which considers performances as a special mode of communication. He goes on, however, to point out that there are multiple rewards in investigating oral narrative. Bauman argues that "in exploring the social nexus of oral storytelling we explore one of the most fundamental and

potent foundations of our existence as social beings" (p. 114).

Organization of Study

Chapter II discusses two related, secondary issues: sex differences and relational development. A focused review of literature and three secondary hypotheses are presented. Chapter III describes the methods and procedures for addressing the hypotheses. Chapter IV presents the results as they relate to the hypotheses investigated. Finally, Chapter V discusses the results and identifies implications for future research.

Chapter II

Sex Differences and Relational Development

Individuals tend to categorize their lives in an effort to make sense of the complex social world of which they are a part. The focus of this chapter is on two of the categories that serve individuals in their quest for organization and understanding: sex differences and type of relationship. In an extension of the primary analysis discussed in Chapter I, the effects of sex differences and type of relationship are investigated in order to examine their effect on the matches hypothesized in the primary analysis of this study.

Review of Literature

Two lines of research in the sex differences literature that are directly relevant to the present investigation are self-concept and self-disclosure. The effects of sex differences on the creation and maintenance of the self-concept, and the amount and kind of self-disclosure engaged in are topics that a number of studies have examined.

Sex Differences

According to Josephs, Markus, and Tafarodi (1992), the process of self-definition is different for men and women; hence, different types of self-concepts result. "Women are more likely than men to have what is called a collectivist, ensembled, or connected schema for the self"

(p. 391). Josephs et al. explain that in a woman's self-schema, relationships with important and valued people are critical elements and, as a result, these important others are represented as part of the self. Men, on the other hand, "are relatively more likely to develop what is called an individualist, independent, or autonomous schema for the self" (p. 391). In such schema, others are not represented as part of the self; they are separate from it. Josephs et al. indicate that the origins of these hypothesized differences between male and female self-concepts are varied. For example, Chodorow (1978) argued that mothers and sons experience some difference and, thus, a separation occurs. Mothers and daughters, however, experience mainly similarity with each other. Therefore, sons learn to emphasize and value difference while daughters learn to value connection and relationships. Another explanation is offered by Miller (1986). Miller contends that women are in a relatively powerless position in society; as a result, they must be attuned to and responsive to others. According to Miller, a woman must be especially responsive to dominant others who control her fate. Hence, relationships and interdependence are presented as more central to woman's self-concept, while individuality and dominance are central to man's.

In a study of the relationship between self-esteem and self-concept, Josephs et al. examined whether men and women

with varying levels of self-esteem differed in self-concept. Although the present study does not examine the role of self-esteem, the results of the Josephs et al. study are important. They found that men with high self-esteem did see themselves as different, unique from others. For women, self-esteem was not related to self-definition; high self-esteem was not linked to defining one's self as unique from others. These findings are consistent with the idea that men derive and maintain self-esteem through matching the "male" self-schema.

In a second experiment, Josephs et al. found that high self-esteem women (relative to low self-esteem women and all men) have superior memory for stimuli linked to others. The authors contend that important others may be encoded interdependently as part of the self-concept; they are conceived of as part of the self. The study revealed that for high self-esteem women encoding with respect to important, self-relevant others facilitated recall at least as much as encoding with respect to self. "Perhaps the most straightforward interpretation of this finding is that high self-esteem women have highly elaborated structures of knowledge about important others . . . ." (p. 396). Josephs et al. maintain that these findings fit well with a number of recent studies indicating that women are "more concerned than men with establishing close relationships, and also better at doing so" (p. 400). Such behavior,

according to the authors, is appropriate, societally prescribed behavior for women. This importance of others to women indicates that "women should have access to a relatively greater store of knowledge about the significant others in their lives . . . ." (p. 400).

According to Eagly (1987), gender-stereotype studies have shown that the majority of beliefs held about differences between women and men can be summarized in two dimensions: the communal and the agentic. Deriving her term from Bakan's (1966) term "communion," Eagly explains that "communal qualities are manifested by selflessness, concern with others, and a desire to be at one with others" (p. 16). The agentic dimension, derived from Bakan's "agency," is characterized by self-assertion, self-expansion, and the urge to master. According to Eagly, previous research has shown that women and men differ in self-reported traits and behaviors, and that these differences show an orientation toward greater communion in women and greater agency in men. Eagly explains that a major assumption of the social-role interpretation of sex differences is that the specific roles occupied in the family and society by women and men impact the perception of women as communal and men as agentic. "Despite the increase in the proportion of women in the paid work force, the overall tendency to perceive women as communal and men as agentic has remained intact" (p. 32). Eagly also points

out that self-concepts have shown little change in their stereotypic aspects: Women continue to describe themselves in terms of more communal qualities than do men, and men continue to describe themselves in terms of more agentic qualities than women do.

Eagly's analysis of social behavior focuses on the importance of these characteristics stereotypically attributed to women and men. She contends that "social behavior can be predicted from the content of stereotypic beliefs about personal attributes because these attributes are themselves abstractions about social behavior" (p. 17). Eagly argues that "internalization of gender-role expectations is not a necessary prerequisite for sterotypic behavior because such behavior is rooted only to some degree in people's own attitudes and self-concepts" (p. 19). She explains that conformity to gender-roles is often the result of the power that groups and individuals who support these norms have over others through access to resources, rewards and punishments, and influence. Eagly points out that the extent to which gender-stereotypes are played out continues to be of interest to scholars: Are these stereotypes based on consistency with one's self-concept or are they efforts to manage impressions in order to obtain short-term gains? Eagly concludes, "the argument that gender stereotypes, which are themselves derived from the sexual division of labor, constitute normative beliefs

to which people then tend to conform (or are induced to conform) describes a social psychological process by which stereotypes maintain the social order" (p. 134).

Archer and Lloyd (1982) contend that the characteristics used to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors for one's gender depend on cultural influences. Through the socialization process, standards of masculinity and femininity become part of one's "mental fabric" at an early age. "In this way, human beings possess the intellectual equipment for incorporating aspects of their culture into a particular way of viewing the world, one which emphasizes differences between categories" (p. 212).

Contrary to traditional gender stereotypes, Snodgrass (1985) found that women were not more sensitive than were men when in leadership roles. She contends that what stereotypically has been seen as <u>women's</u> greater sensitivity might actually be the greater sensitivity of <u>subordinates</u>.

Likewise, Snodgrass (1992) found no significant main effects for sex when women were in the role of leader as often as were men. Women were no more sensitive to their partners than were men in leadership roles. Snodgrass reasons that a subordinate needs to know how his boss views him because the boss is in control of the rewards. Hence, the subordinate needs to know if the boss thinks he is

doing a good job, if the boss like him, and so forth. It is not, on the other hand, typical for a subordinate to be concerned with whether the boss is enjoying her work or feeling secure. However, a boss might be interested in how her employee feels about himself in order to monitor productivity and quality of output. As a result, the boss is more likely to reveal her feelings about the subordinate in an effort to provide the worker with feedback. The boss is less likely, however, to reveal feelings about self; she is not concerned with how the subordinate feels about her. Her job is to provide leadership and guidance to the subordinate. Snodgrass concludes that "sensitivity is influenced by the role one plays in interpersonal interaction" (p. 158).

Another area of research that takes an interest in the effects of sex differences is self-disclosure. According to Archer (1979), a large number of studies have found a correlation between responses on Jourard's (1964) Self-Disclosure Questionnaire (JSDQ) and the sex of the subject. The results indicate that women disclose more than men in more than 75 percent of the studies. Archer points out, however, that inconsistencies in the data dealing with sex differences suggest that the JSDQ "may be unique in some way" (p. 30). For example, Archer reports that Gitter and Black (1976) and Morgan (1976) found that women reported disclosing more than men only on the JSDQ's intimate

topics. Rosenfeld, Civikly, and Herron (1979) explain that, although the majority of recent studies support Jourard's original proposition that "females in our society are socialized to be more open, self-disclosing, and empathic, whereas males are taught to be concealing and unemotional," a substantial body of research also casts doubt on the notion of sex differences in self-disclosure (p. 82). A number of intervening variables may play a role in the incongruous results. One such variable is attractiveness. Cash and Soloway (1975) found that males who perceived themselves as attractive self-disclosed more often than did other males; females who perceived themselves as attractive self-disclosed less often than did other females. In addition, Derlega and Chaikin (1976) found that males who avoided self-disclosure were seen as better adjusted, while females were viewed as better adjusted if they did self-disclose. Rosenfeld et al. contend that the varied results concerned with sex differences and self-disclosure can be explained more meaningfully through role and socialization theories rather than biological theories. "Results are not linked as much with anatomical sex differences as with psychological sex differences" (p. 86). Derlega and Grzelak (1979) explain that an individual may display behaviors congruent to normative expectations. "In turn, expressing these behaviors influences self-identification" (p. 164). The

example is given of a boy who thinks that men hide their feelings; as a result, the boy avoids self-disclosure in an effort to be "a man."

Rosenfeld et al. found in their own investigation that when the listener is a stranger, males disclose more (in volume versus intimacy) than do females. Hence, the authors conclude that the frequent report of higher female disclosure may be an artifact of defining the listener as a friend or acquaintance.

The impact of sex differences on the creation of self-concept and on the amount and type of self-disclosure is an important factor in the creation and maintenance of relationships. The present study examines both sex differences and type of relationship for their effects on knowledge of relational partners.

Relationships

Altman and Taylor's (1973) Social Penetration Theory contends that relationships progress by gradual, relatively linear, reciprocal increases in the breadth and depth of information exchanged. Over time, people gradually reveal more about themselves and the level of information disclosed. The resulting intimacy increases with the level of disclosure.

The metaphor used in this model is that of an onion; its layers are peeled off as the relationship progresses until the core is exposed. Altman and Taylor present the

development of relationships as progressing in a like fashion. As partners become involved, they expose more and more about their individual personalities. Wilmot (1987) contends that relationships that proceed too quickly to the private or core areas are "fragile and susceptible to disruption" (p. 187). According to Altman and Taylor, the information disclosed is characterized by the topics chosen, the breadth of the topic, and depth of the topic. As the information becomes characterized by depth, the more core areas, (such as fears, self-concept, and values), become apparent. Wilmot contends that the Altman and Taylor model of relationship development is "essentially correct": relationships develop incrementally from superficial to intimate in order to insure the ability of the relationship to deal successfully with negative information and continue its growth.

Knapp's model of relational stages also shows the generally systematic and sequential movement of relationships through developmental stages. Knapp notes that the process is not a fixed, linear one; instead, stages may be skipped, and movement through the stages may be backward and forward. Similar to the Altman and Taylor model, Knapp's stages move from "initiating" in which communication is generally phatic, to "experimenting" in which small talk is used to uncover topics held in common. Knapp's third stage is "intensifying" in which the deeper

areas of the partner's personalities begin to become exposed. Stage four, "integrating" is when the dyad forms a sense of "we-ness." The final stage in the development of the relationship is "bonding." At this stage a public ritual formally acknowledges the relationship.

Aron, Aron, Tudor, and Nelson (1991) contend that an individual is strongly motivated to become involved in relationships in which his/her own self-concept is consistent with the views of the others involved. "The principle is that in a close relationship, the person acts as if some or all aspects of the partner are partially the person's own. (There may in addition be some sense of a general increase of fusion of self and other)" (p. 242). Aron et al. found in their own study that concepts of self and other are more closely interconnected when the relationship is a close one.

Reardon (1987) explains that people categorize their relationships in an effort to impose order on their social lives. One type of relationship is the "acquaintance." According to Reardon, much research suggests that information shared by acquaintances is different from the type of information shared by those people who are more familiar. Reardon contends, for example, that people are unwilling to share information about sensitive topics in a first time meeting. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule. The "stranger in the plane" phenomenon, where

individuals reveal very private information during the trip, works because the individuals know that they will not see each other again. Hence, the general norms for relationship development can be suspended. In general, acquaintances gather "factual background information" in initial encounters, and then assess whether they have anything in common that would move them to the next level of the relationship (Reardon, p. 169). Archer (1979) contends that the reciprocity in disclosure is the rule only during the building of the acquaintanceship. "For strangers reciprocity is a question of `now or never,' while for intimates it is more an issue of `now or later'" (p. 55).

A second type of relationship is friend. There are levels of friendship. Wilmot explains that individuals have "filters" or categories for defining friendship. For example, a "close friend" might be someone who has stood up for you. A "best friend" might be someone who has been your friend through time, space, trials, and tribulations. Reardon argues that by calling someone friend, "we impose on him a special position in our lives. We assume that he can be trusted, and so we admit him to what Goffman (1959) refers to as the `backstage' or `back-region' of our performances" (p. 170).

Cushman and Cahn (1985) contend that friendship has several underlying factors at its base. One of these

essential factors is "self-concept support or respect for certain specific relationships between a friend and other objects or persons" (p. 53). The authors go on to explain that accuracy in original perceptions of an other's self-concept, coupled with mutual respect of each other's self-concepts, leads to increased self-concept support causing the relationship to grow.

VanLear (1991) argues for a cyclical model of openness in relationship development. The results of his study reveal "recurrent, periodic cycling between openness and closedness, revelation and restraint" (p. 356). These cycles and the resulting dialectic between openness and closedness may be relational. VanLear argues that this tension "may be as much between reciprocity and compensation as between openness and closedness" (p. 356). His study does support that more long-term, well-developed relationships experience a wider range of variance in open and closed states than do new relationships. In addition, VanLear suggests that the threshold for the upper boundary of openness may increase in well-established relationships.

The characteristics of a well-developed or "close" relationship are called into question by Berscheid, Snyder, and Omoto (1989). Berscheid et al. contend that a close relationship is one that is characterized by high interdependence. This interdependence is based on frequency of impact, diversity of impact, and strength of

impact. The authors argue that the assumption that relationship longevity is an important feature of closeness is false. Many long-term relationships become "fixated at low levels of closeness, or at only slight interdependence" (p. 796).

Gilbert (1976) agrees that long-term relationships are not necessarily close ones. She adds that needs for security in a long-term relationship may override needs for depth. Security needs develop such "that `rocking the boat' becomes more risky than maintaining the status quo" (p. 228).

Rationale and Statement of Hypotheses

Beliefs concerning appropriate and inappropriate, socially prescribed behaviors for women and men are rooted within the social structure (Josephs et al., 1992; Eagly, 1987). Josephs et al. point to the "collectivist schema" to describe the emphasis placed on relationships by women, and "individualist schema" to describe the separateness of the male. Eagly uses the terms "communal" and "agentic" to address the same elements found within basic beliefs held about the differences between women and men: women have a desire to be at one with others while men are more interested in the self and mastering others. Josephs et al. found that high self-esteem women have superior memory for stimuli linked to others, indicating that women establish more close relationships than do men and have

more knowledge of the important others in their lives. This research supports the notion that women know more about others in their relationships than do men. Thus, the following hypothesis was made:

> H4: The female perceiver's presentation of a familiar other in a narrative will coincide with the familiar other's self-description ratings significantly more than will the male perceiver's presentation.

Not only are women portrayed as developing closer relationships and knowing more about significant others, research indicates that women disclose more than do men (Archer, 1979). The research, however, is not consistent; intervening variables such as socialization, intimacy of topic, and attractiveness have been shown to affect the results (Derlega & Chaikin, 1976; Gitter & Black, 1976; Morgan, 1976; Rosenfeld et al., 1979). Rosenfeld et al. found that females disclosed more to friends or acquaintances, while males disclosed more to strangers. As women are said to develop closer relationships, have greater knowledge of important others, and disclose more to these important others, it would follow that women would be better known by important others. This leads to the following hypothesis:

> H5: The presentation of a female familiar other in a narrative will coincide with the familiar other's

self-description rating significantly more than will presentations of a male familiar other.

As relationships progress, people gradually reveal more about themselves (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Knapp, 1984). Reardon (1987) explains that the information shared with acquaintances is generally factual while friends have access to private "backstage" information. Aron et al. (1991) add that an individual will tend to stay in relationships in which his/her self-concept is consistent with the view that others involved hold of him/her. VanLear (1991) contends that the upper boundary of openness may increase in well-established relationships, resulting in the revelation of deeper aspects of one's self. However, he adds that more long-term relationships experience wider ranges of closed and open states.

Berscheid, Snyder, and Omoto (1989) contend that openness and longevity are not necessarily linked. They argue that relationship longevity does not reveal the level of closeness in a relationship. In addition, Gilbert (1976) argues that needs for security in a long-term relationship may outweigh needs for depth and closeness. In order to examine the connection between relational history and closeness, the following research question was proposed:

RQ1: Is relational history associated with the number of matches between the presentation of

a familiar other in a narrative and the familiar other's self-description ratings?

Chapter III

Methods and Procedures

Subjects

Subjects for the present investigation were drawn from undergraduate Speech Communication courses at Louisiana State University. Each student was asked to bring a friend or relative to the experiment; not all friends and relatives were associated with the university. Subjects participated in the present research on a voluntary basis, or were given extra credit for their participation at the discretion of the course instructor. Participating in the experiment were 100 targets (44 male, 56 female). Each target brought a friend, relative, or spouse (perceiver) to the experiment (43 male, 57 female). Of these pairs, 11 were related, 34 lived or roomed together, and 31 were involved in romantic relationships. The mean age for targets was 21.46 with a range of 18 to 39. The perceiver mean age was 21.55 with a range of 14 to 47. The pairs fell into the following relationship types: male target/male perceiver = 6 best friend, 12 close friend, 4 casual friend; male target/female perceiver = 11 best, 9 close, 1 casual; female target/male perceiver = 13 best, 6 close, 2 casual; and female target/female perceiver = 13 best, 16 close, 5 casual.

General Procedure

Each target participating in this study brought a close friend, relative, or spouse with him/her to the experiment. Upon arrival, the pair signed in; the person who signed up for the experiment was the target and the person accompanying the target was the perceiver. After signing in, the target and perceiver read and signed consent forms. Both were then assigned identification numbers in order to preserve anonymity, and were taken to separate rooms where they were greeted by assistants who directed them through the procedures.

In the first phase of the experiment, the target was asked to complete a series of questionnaires. The initial questionnaire in the series was the Ziller self-description questionnaire. Ziller's questionnaire is based on the idea of the complexity or "differentiation" of the self-concept. Ziller, Martell, and Morrison (1977) explain that, according to Schroder, Driver, and Streufert (1967), differentiation is conceptualized as the number of elementary dimensions or domains an individual perceives as salient when faced with an array of stimuli. Ziller et al. provide an overview of the theory chain behind the development of this measure, as well as the measurement's link to self-complexity and identification with others (see Ziller, Martell, & Morrison, 1977). The authors argue that "a multi-faceted self-concept is presumed to develop within

a social environment which facilitates comparison and contrasts with a wide variety of others" (Ziller et al., p. 413). In a study involving 100 randomly selected subjects from grades 7 to 12, the reliability for the measure was .92 (Long, Henderson, & Ziller, 1968). Test-retest reliability after one month for college sophomores was .72. Ziller et al. asked subjects to check all adjectives that described him/her. In this way, the complexity of the self-concept was measured. In the present study, the measure was employed differently: each subject chose the 15 adjectives that best described him/her.

Also included in the series were questionnaires measuring self-monitoring, self-esteem, communication apprehension, and a demographic/state of the relationship questionnaire (see Appendix A). The perceiver was asked to complete a similar series of questionnaires. However, rather than describing self on the Ziller questionnaire, the perceiver was asked to describe the target. The additional questionnaires assessed the relationship between the participants in addition to other communication characteristics not related to this investigation. The questionnaires unrelated to the present study were employed in order to avoid leading subjects as they progressed to the second stage of the study.

Following the completion of the questionnaires, the assistant provided the target with written and oral instructions directing him/her to "Think of a story about yourself that you tell to friends, relatives, boyfriend/girlfriend, and/or spouse; a story that almost everyone who knows you has heard you tell. Please tell this story to the assistant in the same way that you would normally tell it." The same procedure was followed with the perceiver; however, he/she was asked to "think of a story about the person you came with and signed in with today; a story that you would tell to a stranger who asked about the person you came with today." In both conditions, the assistant then exited the room and instructed the subject to open the door when ready to proceed. Upon returning to the room, the assistant then repeated the instructions and, as he/she turned on the tape recorder (placed in sight, but out of the direct field of vision), the assistant explained that "we will be recording this interview in order to preserve your story in the way that you tell it. The stories we are collecting are being used in a written study of stories. You will remain completely anonymous. The tapes will not be played for the public. They will be used for research purposes only." Following the telling of the narrative, the assistant announced the subject's identification number, the date, and the time (see Appendix B for sample narratives).

The assistants then administered the final questionnaire which asked the subjects to respond to the presence of the tape recorder and the assistant's performance (see Appendix C). Finally, the subjects left the rooms and were debriefed concerning the purposes and procedures of the experiment, thanked for their participation, and dismissed.

All assistants (2 female, 1 male) were undergraduates. They were dressed in dark slacks or skirts and white shirts. The assistants were trained to be active listeners during the tellings and provide subtle, nonverbal feedback.

Reliability

Four coders were trained to examine the audio taped narratives for the presence of adjectives identified by Ziller et al. (1977). Two training sessions were conducted. In the first, the coders examined written narratives collected in a previous study. The second session was conducted using oral narratives collected in a pilot study (see Appendix D for coding guide). Following the completion of all coding, reliability was tested. Each assistant coded 15 audio taped narratives in order to determine inter-coder reliability. Scott's Pi was used to assess the coders' reliability in identifying adjectives present in the narratives. Reliability for the coding of the target and perceiver narratives was Pi = .72.

Selection and Creation of Primary Variables

Four primary variables were assessed in the present study: (1) target's self-description; (2) perceiver's description of the target; (3) target's personal narrative; and (4) perceiver's narrative about the target.

The first variable, target's self-description, measures the target's self-concept using Ziller's (1977) self-description questionnaire. The questionnaire provides a list of 108 adjectives from which targets were asked to choose 15 that best describe themselves (Appendix A).

The second variable, perceiver's description of the target, is the perceiver's view of the target whom he/she accompanied to the experiment. An adaptation of Ziller's (1977) self-description questionnaire provides the same list of adjectives given to the target; the perceiver chooses 15 that best describe the target (Appendix A).

Self-presentation, as seen in the telling of the target's personal narrative, is the third variable in this study. Each target was asked to tell a personal narrative that is a part of his/her repertoire.

The final variable, the perceiver's narrative about the target, is the presentation of the target by the perceiver. Each perceiver was asked to tell a narrative about the target whom he/she accompanied to the experiment.

Primary Data Analysis

In order to determine the match between self-description and self-presentation through personal narrative, each target's narrative was analyzed according to the appearance (implied or expressed) of adjectives from Ziller's (1977) self-description questionnaire. After listing all adjectives present in the personal narrative, the list was compared to the target's self-description questionnaire in order to determine the number of matches. The target's list of personal narrative adjectives was also compared both to the adjectives listed in the self-description questionnaire of a randomly selected target of the same gender and to the adjectives listed by a composite target of the same gender. The two composite targets were generated by determining the 15 most frequently chosen adjectives for each gender.

The match between the description ratings of a familiar other (target) and the presentation of the familiar other (target) in a narrative were determined following the analysis procedure described above. After listing all adjectives present (implied or expressed) in the perceiver's narrative about the target, the list was compared to the perceiver's description of the target on Ziller's questionnaire to determine the number of matches. The perceiver's list of narrative adjectives was also compared both to the adjectives listed in the description

of a target by a randomly selected perceiver of the same gender and to a description of a target by a composite perceiver of the same gender.

Finally, the match between the perceiver's presentation of the target in a narrative and the target's own self-description ratings were determined in the same manner described above. The perceiver's narrative was analyzed according to the appearance (implied or expressed) of adjectives from Ziller's (1977) self-description questionnaire. After listing all adjectives present in the narrative, the list was compared to the target's self-description questionnaire in order to determine the number of matches. The list of adjectives found in the perceiver's narrative was also compared both to the adjectives listed in the self-description questionnaire of a randomly selected target of the same gender and those listed by a composite target of the same gender.

Primary Statistical Analysis

T-tests for matched samples were performed on all data. This statistical procedure allowed comparisons to be made between the target and the particular perceiver he/she brought to the experiment. This comparison highlights the role of the relationship between the target and perceiver.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that self-description ratings would coincide with self-conceptions presented in personal narratives. In testing the first hypothesis, a t-test

compared the number of matches between the target's self-description and the target's narrative to the number of matches between a random other's self-description and the target's narrative. In addition, a t-test compared the number of matches between the target's self-description and the target's narrative to the number of matches between the composite other's self-description and the target's narrative.

The second hypothesis predicted that description ratings of a familiar other would coincide with the presentation of the familiar other in a narrative. Hypothesis 2 was tested by comparing the number of matches between the perceiver's description and the perceiver's narrative to the number of matches between a random perceiver's description and the perceiver's narrative. Second, a t-test compared the number of matches between the perceiver's description and the perceiver's narrative to the number of matches between the composite perceiver's description and the perceiver's narrative.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that the presentation of a familiar other in a narrative would coincide with the familiar other's self-description ratings. In testing the final hypothesis, a t-test compared the number of matches between the target's self-description and the perceiver's narrative to the number of matches between a random other's self-description and the perceiver's narrative. In

addition, a t-test compared the number of matches between the target's self-description and the perceiver's narrative to the number of matches between a composite other's self-description and the perceiver's narrative.

Selection and Creation of Secondary Variables

Three independent variables were assessed in the present study's secondary analysis: (1) perceiver's sex; (2) target's sex; and (3) relationship type.

The first and second independent variables, perceiver's sex and target's sex, were reported on the demographic/state of the relationship questionnaire (Appendix A). The questionnaire was the last in the series completed by both targets and perceivers before the telling of the narratives.

The third independent variable, relationship type, was reported on the demographic/state of the relationship questionnaire. Questions were asked indicating how long the partner had been known, the type of relationship (best friend, close friend, casual friend, or acquaintance), if related, if romantic, if living or rooming together, the number of hours and days spent together per week, and knowledge of partner.

In determining the third independent variable in the secondary analysis, relationship type, one element included was that of knowledge of partner. The final four questions on the demographic/state of the relationship questionnaire

measured this element. In order to assess reliability for this element of the variable relationship type, Cronbach's alpha was computed. Results are as follows: target knowledge of partner (Cronbach's alpha = .81), perceiver knowledge of partner (Cronbach's alpha = .82).

The dependent variable assessed in the secondary analysis was the match between the perceiver's narrative and the target's self-description. The characteristics present in the perceiver's narrative about the target were compared to the adjectives identified in the target's self-description questionnaire (Ziller, 1977). This comparison examined the match between the perceiver's presentation/concept of the target and the target's self-concept.

Secondary Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 4 predicted that the female perceiver's presentation of a familiar other in a narrative would coincide with the familiar other's self-description ratings significantly more than would the male perceiver's presentation. The fourth hypothesis was tested by comparing the number of matches between the female perceiver's narrative about her target and the target's own self-description rating to the number of matches between the male perceiver's narrative about his target and that target's own self-description rating. This comparison

examines the difference in female perceivers' and male perceivers' knowledge of familiar others.

The fifth hypothesis predicted that the presentation of a female target in a narrative would coincide with the target's own self-description rating significantly more than would the presentation of a male target. Hypothesis 5 was tested by comparing the number of matches between the presentation of a female familiar other in a narrative and her self-description ratings to the number of matches between the presentation of a male familiar other in a narrative and his self-description ratings. This comparison examines the difference in knowledge of male and female targets.

Research question 1 asked if relational history is associated with the number of matches between the perceiver's narrative about target and the target's self-description ratings. Research question 1 was tested by comparing the matches between the perceiver's presentation of the familiar other in a narrative and the familiar other's self-description ratings to the description of the relationship provided in the demographic/state of the relationship questionnaire. This comparison examines the difference in knowledge of a familiar other based on the status of the relationship.

Secondary Data Analysis

The match between the perceiver's presentation of the target in a narrative and the target's own self-description ratings were determined in the primary data analysis of the present study. The perceiver's narrative was analyzed according to the appearance (implied or expressed) of adjectives from Ziller's (1977) self-description questionnaire. After listing all adjectives present in the narrative, the list was compared to the target's self-description questionnaire in order to determine the number of matches.

Secondary Statistical Analysis

In testing the fourth and fifth hypotheses, a two-way analysis of variance was used in order to determine the degree to which target and perceiver sex was associated with matches between target self-description and presentation of the target by the perceiver. In addition, the two-way analysis of variance would indicate a possible interaction effect between target and perceiver sex.

Research question 1 was tested in two procedures. First, an ANOVA was performed to determine the variance of perceiver matches to target based on the type of relationship (3 categories: best friend, close, and casual; acquaintance category collapsed into casual), the romantic element, the relatedness element, and the living/rooming element. Second, a multiple regression was

performed to determine the relationship between perceiver matches to target and the number of months known, hours per week spent together, days per week spent together, and knowledge of partner.

In order to examine the possible interaction between target sex, perceiver sex, and type of relationship, an additional procedure was performed: a three-way analysis of variance.

Chapter IV

Results of Analyses of Presentation Matches Between Targets and Perceivers, and Effects of Gender and Relationship Type

The results of the preceding analyses are divided into three sections. The first section describes the results concerning the primary hypotheses under investigation. The second section reports results for the secondary hypotheses. Finally, the third section presents analyses of the composites created for male and female targets.

Results of Hypothesis Testing

Results of Primary Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1 predicted that self-description ratings would coincide with self-conceptions presented in personal narratives. T-tests for related measures confirmed that the target's self-conception, as presented in the personal narrative, did coincide with self-description ratings significantly more than it coincided with a random other's self-description ratings (target: $M = .85$, s.d. $= .857$; random: $M = .54$, s.d. $= .658$; $T = 3.13$, $p < .003$). In relation to the composite other, however, the t-test revealed no significant difference between the target's personal narrative and matches to self-description, and the target's personal narrative matches to the composite self-description (target: $M = .85$, s.d. $= .857$; composite:

M = .85, s.d. = .744; T = .00, p = 1.0). Hence, hypothesis 1 is partially supported.

T-tests for related measures were used to test the second hypothesis. T-tests confirmed that description ratings of a familiar other do coincide with the presentation of the familiar other in a narrative. Specifically, perceiver's own descriptions and narratives matched significantly more than did the perceiver's narrative and a random perceiver's description (perceiver: M = 1.08, s.d. = .99; random: M = .45, s.d. = .62; T = 6.13, $p < .001$). In addition, the perceiver's own descriptions and narratives matched significantly more than did the perceiver's narrative and the composite perceiver's description (perceiver: M = 1.08, s.d. = .99; composite: M = .72, s.d. = .79; T = 4.33, $p < .001$).

The final primary hypothesis predicted that the presentation of a familiar other in a narrative would coincide with the familiar other's self-description ratings. T-tests for related measures confirmed that the perceiver's narrative matched the target's self-description significantly more than a random other's self-description (target: M = .82, s.d. = .80; random: M = .49, s.d. = .69; T = 3.82, $p < .001$). In addition, the perceiver's narrative was found to match the target's self-description significantly more than the composite other's

self-description (target: M = .82, s.d. = .80; composite: M = .64, s.d. = .76; T = 2.30, $p < .03$).

Results of Secondary Hypothesis Testing

The fourth hypothesis predicted that the female perceiver's presentation of a familiar other would better match the familiar other's self-description than would the male perceiver's presentation. Results of the two-way analysis of variance revealed no interaction between target sex and perceiver sex [$F(1,98) = .12$, $p > .72$]. In addition, perceiver sex [$F(1,98) = 2.23$, $p > .13$] was not significantly related to the match between the perceiver's presentation of the target and the target's self-description (see Table 1). Hence, hypothesis 4 was not supported.

Results of the two-way analysis of variance failed to confirm hypothesis 5, that presentation of female targets will match the target's self-description significantly more than will the presentation of a male target. Table 1 shows that target sex [$F(1,98) = 2.07$, $p > .15$] was not significantly related to the match between the target's self-description and the perceiver's presentation of the target.

Two statistical procedures were used to examine research question 1 concerning the impact of relational history on the match between perceiver's presentation of the target and the target's self-description.

Table 1
Two-Way Analysis of Variance for Target and Perceiver Sex

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F
Main Effects	3.128	2	1.564	2.44
Target Sex	1.329	1	1.329	2.07
Perceiver Sex	1.429	1	1.429	2.23
2-Way Interactions	.079	1	.079	.12
Explained	3.207	3	1.069	1.66
Residual	60.874	95	.641	
Total	64.081	98	.654	

First, a four-way ANOVA was used to examine four elements of the independent variable "relationship type": type of relationship: [M = mean matches between perceiver presentation of target and target self description] (best friend: M = .87; close: M = .82; casual: M = .70), romantic element (yes: M = .90; no: M = .79), relatedness element (yes: M = .36; no: M = .89), and living/rooming element (yes: M = .70; no: M = .88). No significant main effect was found (see Table 2) for perceiver's match to target's self-description according to the type of relationship [$F(2,98) = .32$, $p < .72$], the romantic element [$F(1,98) = .059$, $p > .80$], relatedness [$F(1,98) = 3.52$, $p < .07$], or the living/rooming element [$F(1,98) = .37$, $p > .54$]. The relatedness element did approach significance in its effect on the perceiver's ability to match the target's self-description. A post-hoc Scheffe's test revealed a significant difference between pairs related and those not related [$F(1,98) = 4.22$, $p < .05$] (see Table 3). Pairs who were related had significantly fewer matches than unrelated pairs (related: M = .36, s.d. = .67; unrelated: M = .88, s.d. = .80).

The second procedure, multiple regression, was used to examine four additional elements of the independent variable "relationship type": number of months known, hours per week spent together, days per week spent together, and knowledge of partner. The multiple

Table 2
Four-Way Analysis of Variance for Four Elements of the Variable Relationship Type

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F
Main Effects	3.451	5	.690	1.05
Type of Relationship	.421	2	.211	.32
Romantic	.038	1	.038	.05
Relatedness	2.301	1	2.301	3.52*
Living/Rooming	.245	1	.245	.37
Explained	3.451	5	.690	1.05
Residual	60.630	93	.652	
Total	64.081	98	.654	

NOTE. * indicates $p < .07$

Table 3
Scheffe's Test for Effect of Relatedness Element

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Squares	F Ratio
Between Groups	2.6717	1	2.6717	4.22*
Within Groups	61.4091	97	.6331	
Total	64.0808			

NOTE. * indicates $p < .05$

regression used the perceiver's answers and score on knowledge of partner. These elements were examined to determine their impact on the perceiver's match to the target's self-description. Results of the multiple regression indicated that the only element of the variable "relationship type" that approached significance in the match between target self-description and perceiver presentation of target was months known [$F(4,94) = 1.342$, $T = -1.903$, $p < .07$] (see Table 4). Post-hoc t-tests revealed significant differences between groups. Pairs who had known each other for more than 5 years had significantly fewer matches than 2 to 5 year pairs (more than 5 years: $M = .51$, s.d. = .63; 2 to 5 years: $M = 1.06$, s.d. = .85; $T = 2.81$, $p < .05$). More than 5 year pairs also had significantly fewer matches than pairs who had known each other for less than 2 years (more than 5 years: $M = .51$, s.d. = .63; less than 2 years: $M = .87$, s.d. = .83; $T = 1.99$, $p < .05$).

A final procedure, a three-way ANOVA, was performed in order to determine if there was a relationship between target sex (male: $M = .68$; female: $M = .95$), perceiver sex (male: $M = .67$; female: $M = .95$), and type of relationship (best friend: $M = .87$; close: $M = .82$; casual: $M = .70$). Results indicated that there were no significant main effects [$F(4,99) = 1.200$, $p > .31$]. In addition, no significant interaction effects were found (see Table 5).

Table 4
Multiple Regression for Four Elements of the Variable Relationship Type

Predictors	Beta	S.E.	t
Perceiver Knowledge of Partner	.155	.036	1.34
Months Known	-.196	.101	-1.90*
Days Per Week Spent Together	-.105	.236	-.85
Hours Per Week Spent Together	.042	.137	.32
Multiple R	.232		
R Square	.054		

NOTE. * indicates p = .06

Table 5
Three-Way Analysis of Variance for Relationship Type and Target and Perceiver Sex

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F
Main Effects	3.153	4	.778	1.20
Type of Relationship	.024	2	.012	.01
Target Sex	1.311	1	1.311	1.99
Perceiver Sex	1.304	1	1.304	1.98
2-Way Interactions	3.061	5	.612	.93
Type of Rel/PSEX	.238	2	.119	.18
Type of Rel/TSEX	.632	2	.316	.48
PSEX/TSEX	.281	1	.281	.42
3-Way Interactions	.069	1	.069	.10
Explained	6.283	10	.628	.95
Residual	57.798	88	.657	
Total	64.081	98	.654	

Supplementary Analyses

In order to test the match between target and perceiver descriptions and narrative presentations, two sets of composites for male and female targets were created. The first set of composites was created by identifying the fifteen adjectives chosen most often by the targets (male and female) in defining self (see Table 6). The second set of composites was compiled by identifying the fifteen adjectives chosen most often by the perceivers (male and female) in describing the targets (see Table 7). It is interesting to note that the characteristics represented in the composites all have positive connotations.

The wealth of positive descriptors was also seen in the narratives presented by both targets and perceivers. A t-test for matched samples indicated that positive characteristics were identified in the personal narratives significantly more than were negative characteristics (positive: $M = 1.76$, s.d. = .99; negative: $M = .29$; s.d. = .49; $T = 11.06$, $p < .001$). Likewise, a t-test demonstrated that positive characteristics were used significantly more in perceiver narratives about target than were negative characteristics (positive: $M = 1.58$, s.d. = 1.16; negative: $M = .40$, s.d. = .55; $T = 7.91$, $p < .001$).

The results of the secondary analyses raised some intriguing questions. At the base of many of these

Table 6
Characteristics of the Composite Male and Female Target Self-Description

MALE TARGET COMPOSITE	FEMALE TARGET COMPOSITE
Able*	Active
Active	Attractive
Attractive	Busy
Busy	Capable
Capable	Careful*
Curious	Curious
Faithful	Faithful
Friendly	Friendly
Funny*	Generous
Generous	Happy
Happy	Independent
Independent	Polite
Polite	Responsible
Responsible	Sensible*
Smart*	Special*

NOTE. * indicates composite characteristic for that sex only

Table 7
Characteristics of the Composite Male and Female Perceivers' Description of Target

MALE PERCEIVER COMPOSITE TARGET DESCRIPTION	FEMALE PERCEIVER COMPOSITE TARGET DESCRIPTION
Able	Able
Active	Active
Attractive	Attractive
Bright	Bright
Capable	Busy*
Faithful*	Capable
Generous*	Friendly
Friendly	Funny*
Independent	Independent
Lively*	Polite
Neat*	Responsible
Polite	Sensible
Responsible	Smart
Sensible	Sweet*
Smart	Special*

NOTE. * indicates composite characteristic for that sex only

questions was the dependent variable, match between the perceiver's narrative presentation of the target and the target's self-description. Because the range of talent was low on the dependent variable [0-3], further consideration of the variable was necessary. As no previous research had tested the concept of perceiver narrative as reflection of target self-concept, the construct validity of the variable was tested. The reasoning behind this testing was as follows. In the primary analyses, the present research found that the matches between perceiver's narrative and perceiver's target description was significantly higher than the match to a random other perceiver's or a composite perceiver's target description. In addition, the match between perceiver's narrative and the target's self-description was found to be significantly higher that the match to a random other target or composite target self-description. It would follow that perceivers with high numbers of matches between perceiver's narrative and target's self-description would also have a high number of matches between the perceiver's target description questionnaire and the target's self-description questionnaire. In this way, the possible problem [low range of talent] associated with the narrative as a means of describing other was tested. In other words, is the perceiver who scored a 2 or 3 on matches between his/her

narrative and his/her target's self-description actually more aware of the target's self-presentation/self-concept?

The top 10 and bottom 10 scorers on match between perceiver's narrative and target's self-description were selected. Each perceiver's target description questionnaire was then compared to his/her target's self-description questionnaire. The number of matches between the two questionnaires was recorded. A t-test for independent groups was then performed to determine whether a significant difference existed between the high and low groups of perceivers. Consistent with the findings in the analysis of the present research, a significant difference was revealed [high group: $M = 6.2$, s.d. = 2.4; low group: $M = 3.5$, s.d. = 1.36; $T = 3.095$, $p < .01$]. Hence, these findings support the construct validity of the dependent variable, match between the perceiver's narrative presentation of the target and the target's self-description.

In order to test further the null results of the secondary hypotheses, additional analysis of perceiver description of target and target self-description were performed. In an effort to discover if the low range of talent for the dependent variable [match between perceiver's narrative presentation of target and target's self-description] was responsible for the results, a new dependent variable was created: match between perceiver's

target description and target self-description. The new dependent variable was created by comparing the perceiver's questionnaire describing the target to the target's self-description questionnaire. The number of matches for each pair was recorded.

All previous statistical tests of hypotheses 4 and 5, and research question 1 were performed in the supplementary analyses using the match between perceiver's target description and target's self-description as the dependent variable. Results of the supplementary two-way analysis of variance failed to confirm hypothesis 4, that the female perceiver's description of her target would better match the target's self-description than would the male perceiver's description of his target. Results revealed no interaction between target sex and perceiver sex [$F(1,99) = .14$, $p > .70$]. In addition, perceiver sex [$F(1,99) = .29$, $p > .58$] was not significantly related to the match between the perceiver's target description and the target's self-description (see Table 8). Hence, hypothesis 4 was not supported.

The supplementary analysis also failed to confirm hypothesis 5, that description of female targets will match the target's self-description significantly more than will the description of a male target. Results of the supplementary two-way analysis of variance revealed that

Table 8
Two-Way Analysis of Variance for Target and Perceiver Sex (Supplementary Analysis)

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F
Main Effects	11.846	2	5.923	1.67
Target Sex	9.824	1	9.824	2.77
Perceiver Sex	1.036	1	1.036	.29
2-Way Interactions	.494	1	.494	.14
Explained	12.340	3	4.113	1.16
Residual	339.820	96	3.540	
Total	352.160	99	3.557	

target sex [F(1,99) = 2.77, p > .09] was not significantly related to the match between the perceiver's target description and the target's self-description (see Table 8).

Supplementary analysis of research question 1 employed two statistical procedures. The first, a four-way ANOVA, failed to support research question 1. No significant main effect was found (see Table 9) for match between perceiver target description and target self-description according to the type of relationship [F(2,99) = .76, p > .46], the romantic element [F(1,99) = .29, p > .58], relatedness [F(1,99) = .17, p > .67], or the living/rooming element {F(1,99) = .20, p > .65].

The second procedure, multiple regression, also failed to confirm research question 1. Results indicated that the only element of the variable "relationship type" that approached significance was perceiver knowledge of target [F(4,95) = 1.27, T = 1.75, p > .08] (see Table 10). No significant effect was found for months known [T = -1.24, p > .21], hours per week spent together [T = .30, p > .75], or days per week spent together [T = -1.08, p > . 27]. Hence, research question 1 was not supported in the supplementary analysis.

The following chapter discusses the results of these analyses. In addition, suggestions are made for future research.

Table 9
Four-Way Analysis of Variance for Four Elements of the Variable Relationship Type (Supplementary Analysis)

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F
Main Effects	7.602	5	1.520	.41
Type of Relationship	5.641	2	2.820	.76
Romantic	1.083	1	1.083	.29
Relatedness	.652	1	.652	.17
Living/Rooming	.732	1	.732	.20
Explained	7.602	5	1.520	.41
Residual	344.558	94	3.666	
Total	352.160	99	3.557	

Table 10
Multiple Regression for Four Elements of the Variable Relationship Type (Supplementary Analysis)

Predictors	Beta	S.E.	t
Perceiver Knowledge of Partner	.203	.082	1.75*
Months Known	-.127	.235	-1.24
Days Per Week Spent Together	-.135	.548	-1.08
Hours Per Week Spent Together	.041	.321	.30
Multiple R	.225		
R Square	.050		

NOTE. * indicates p > .08

Chapter V

Interpretation of the Results Concerning Narratives and the Presentation of Self and Other; Suggestions for Future Research

Self-presentation is a response to internal and external demands for self-identification (Goffman, 1959; Schneider, 1981). The telling of personal narratives is one form of presenting self to others that begins early in life (Minister, 1989), crosses racial, ethnic, and cultural boundaries (Langellier, 1989), and is closely linked to identity (Langellier, 1989; Widdershoven, 1993). Not only do we present ourselves through narrative, those with whom we are socially involved present us to others through narrative. The primary purpose of the present investigation was to examine how well one's perception of self is communicated to familiar others. Secondarily, this study explored the impact of sex differences and relationship type on the success of this communication.

Primary Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1, that the target's telling of a personal narrative would coincide with his/her self-concept, was partially supported. The prediction that the target's personal narrative would match his/her own self-concept significantly more than the self-concept of a randomly

selected other of the same sex was strongly supported. Hence, it is clear that the personal narrative does reflect self-conception. As Langellier (1989) and Widdershoven (1993) contend, stories tell us who we are. The present study reveals that personal narratives also tell others who we are.

Although a significant difference between self and random other was revealed, there was no significant difference found between matches to self and matches to the composite. This finding does not nullify the strength of the initial results for congruence between presentation and self-conception. Instead, it sheds interesting light on the idea of self-conception itself. As Higgins (1989) contends, the self-concept is made up of three domains that include not only who you actually are, but also who others believe you ideally should be, and who you ought to be. The present study supports and extends the idea of self-guides developed by Higgins. As shown in the match between personal narrative presentation and self-concept, the self-concept is made up of what one actually possesses and experiences. In addition, the impact of the composite on the presentation of self indicates that memories of interactions with others and the expectations communicated are also important elements in the composition of self (Mead, 1934). These general expectations for the "average" target take the form of the composite.

Characteristics of self represented in the composite targets were all positive. Although not all adjectives chosen were positive, the top fifteen were positive. Hence, the "average" person is seen in a positive way. Likewise, the number of negative characteristics represented in the personal narratives was minimal. Wilmot (1987) explains that the individual has "a desire to maintain and enhance a positive conception of oneself" (p. 67). This enhancement is obtained through selectivity of self-attributes, goals, and behaviors. The positive nature of the narratives points to the function of such self-presentation: impression management. As Jones (1964) and Tedeschi and Riess (1981) contend, self-presentation serves to influence other's perception of one's social attractiveness.

The wealth of positive descriptors used in perceiver narratives about target, however, may be a function of the experimental design of the present study. Each subject was asked to bring someone close to him/her. As Swann (1984) argues, targets seek out partners who see them as they see themselves. As the target composite is based on positive descriptors, it then follows that the perceiver composite of target would likewise be positive.

Do these results indicate that core personal narratives serve only to reveal positive attributes and increase another's perception of one's social

attractiveness? If so, Schlenker and Trudeau's (1990) solid core self would then be positive, with the fluid periphery made up of a wider array of positive and negative characteristics that change according to the experiences of the person. In addition, as Mead (1934) contends, people see themselves in terms of the values of the community. Hence, the community sees the composite as "average" or "ideal" and it becomes part of the self-concept of the individual. These characteristics then become manifested in self-guides (Higgins, 1989). This does not mean that all individuals have the same core self, however. The present study extends this line of research by showing that individuals are different from randomly selected others. Hence, individuals differ but the composite self impacts or guides each of the individual selves. The positive nature of the composite indicates that the "ideal" self is a socially attractive self. The match between the personal narrative self-presentation and the composite self-description indicates that core narratives serve an impression management function in linking self-concept to an "ideal" or socially attractive self.

In summary, the present study supports and extends the idea of the self-concept as made up of a solid core of what one actually possesses and experiences, but also includes a periphery of "ideal" and "ought" self-guides made up of interactions with others and the expectations they

communicate. In addition, the present investigation reveals that one method of presenting this self-concept is through personal narrative.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the perceiver's description of the target would coincide with the perceiver's narrative about the target. This prediction was strongly supported in the present study. In comparison to both a random perceiver's description and the composite perceiver's description, the perceiver's own description of target matched the narrative significantly more. These results support the idea that concepts of others are characterized by previous experience with the other. Previous research (Andersen & Ross, 1984; Prentice, 1990; Schneider et al., 1979) substantiates this claim in that observable actions and behaviors of others are the basis for perceiver understanding. The present investigation expands this line of research by providing a clear link between the observable actions of other and the general conception of other. The experiences had with the target are given tangible form in the shape of a narrative about that target. This experience, however, is not based entirely on observation; behaviors, thoughts, and feelings are shared when we want others to know what we are truly like. In the case of the telling of a narrative, both referential and evaluative functions are required

(Labov & Waletzky, 1967). Hence, both behaviors and thoughts are revealed in the creation and telling of a personal narrative. Not only does the perceiver hear the stories the target tells about self, the perceiver is involved in the creation of narratives about the target as well. These narratives are based on personal narratives told by the target, on experiences the perceiver has had with the target, and on the perceiver's thoughts about those experiences. These thoughts are part of the resulting narrative.

When presenting the narrative, the perceiver is not only sharing a story, he/she is conveying his/her impression of the target. In the same way that a target presents self in the telling of a personal narrative, a perceiver presents his/her view of the target through a narrative. Like Basso's (1984) contention that listening to a person's self-claims is worthwhile, paying attention to the story told by the perceiver about the target will result in an understanding of whom the perceiver believes or imagines the target to be. The narrative form allows the teller to bring coherence to experiences, memories, and thoughts. Whether the narrative concerns self or other, it is a reflection of our perceptions of our experiences.

Strong support was found for Hypothesis 3, that the perceiver's presentation of the target would correspond with the target's own self-description. The perceiver's

presentation matched the target's self-description significantly more than it matched a random target's description or the composite target's description. These results indicate that the perceiver's knowledge of the target is a reflection of the target's own view of self. Scholars in impression management (e.g., Arkin, 1981) might argue that this match between perceiver narrative and target self-concept is the result of the target's ability to manage impressions of self. Others (e.g., Swann, 1984) might argue that the perceiver has influenced the identity assumed by the target. Although outside the scope of the present study, the nature of the narratives collected suggests that the match is more the result of the self-presentation of the target. Because the perceiver was asked to tell a story, he/she was situated in a position that required placing a memory or experience into narrative form. Although mediated by the perceiver's own thoughts and feelings toward the target, the target's own "acting out" in a situation is the focus of the narrative. Hence, the target's self-presentation, as seen through the eyes of the perceiver, is the material from which the narrative is created.

The results of Hypothesis 3 also give support to Swann's (1984) argument that a target is motivated to find interaction partners who see the target as he/she sees self. As a result, the target will be treated in a manner

that is consistent with his/her self-concept. In addition, the present study reveals that the perceiver did see and present the target in a manner consistent with the target's own view of self. Hence, as Swann (1984) contends, the perceiver has an inside view of what guides the target's behavior and is able to interact with a target who is predictable. The perceiver's access to the self-concept of the target through knowledge of the target's previous self-presentations allows the perceiver to present the target to others in a way that is consistent with the target's own self-concept. A target's self-presentation is a response to his/her own internal demands for self-identification and the external demands by others. As Swann (1984) points out, although a target may wish to be mislabeled, a familiar other would recognize the misrepresentation. Targets want others to see them as they see themselves; in this way, their self-concepts are supported and the reactions of others can be predicted (Swann, 1984). The present study clearly indicates that targets present self in ways that match their views of self and are presented by familiar others in a like manner. Hence, not only do targets wish to be seen in a particular light, they are seen and presented in that way.

It is important to note that the use of the spontaneous measure in the present study revealed fewer aspects of self than did the reactive measure. The mean

match between narrative and description was less than 1.00 for both targets and perceivers. This low mean does not indicate a lack of ability to match; instead, it indicates that few characteristics were present in the narratives. McGuire and McGuire (1981) argue that this is in fact a strength of the spontaneous measure; it provides fewer views of self (less breadth), but may indicate which aspects of self are more important (greater depth). On the other hand, in the present study, the use of the spontaneous measure [narrative] by the perceiver to describe the target was problematic. Although the narrative choice may highlight the perceiver's perception of the important aspects of the target's self-concept, the breadth of the perceiver's knowledge of the target is not tested by the spontaneous measure as it is by the reactive measure [questionnaire]. The perceiver may be able to present the depth of a few aspects of the target through narrative, but the spontaneous measure does not indicate the perceiver's knowledge of the breadth of the characteristics present in the target's self-concept. The value of the spontaneous measure, however, is in its contextualization of the aspects of self and other. The spontaneous measure [narrative] requires not only the recognition of a characteristic of self or other, but the presentation of that aspect through specific example. As a result, the narrative serves as a kind of "proof" of the

identified characteristics for both the teller and the audience. Hence, future research should address the importance of breadth versus depth and the ability of spontaneous and reactive measures to explore these issues.

Secondary Hypotheses

The failure to confirm hypothesis 4, that the female perceiver's narrative presentation of her target would match the target's self-concept significantly more than would a male perceiver's presentation of his target, contradicts much of the previous research. Perceiver sex was not identified as a variable impacting the match between perceiver narrative and target self-description. In addition, the supplementary analyses, using an alternate dependent variable, also failed to find any sex differences. Hence, the present research did not reveal that men and women differ in terms of their knowledge of familiar others. The results did not support previous research that women are more attuned to others (e.g., Miller, 1986), better at establishing close relationships (e.g., Josephs et al., 1992), or that women are more "connected" (e.g., Eagly, 1987). No significant difference was found between men and women in their knowledge of a familiar other.

Although not a primary subject of study, the present investigation reveals an interesting aspect of self-definition according to sex. The composite target

descriptions (see Table 6) reveal that the "average" male and female are portrayed in very similar ways. For example, both the male and female target composites include the characteristics "attractive" and "independent." Williams and Bennett (1975) found that university students associated the adjective "attractive" with women, and "independent" with men. The apparent weakening of the characterization of people based on sex, as shown in the present study, may be a result of "the changing times" or more likely the difference in the structure of the Williams and Bennett study and the present investigation. Williams and Bennett asked subjects to indicate which adjectives from a list of 300 were typically associated with either men or women. Hence, the subjects were asked to identify stereotypes. The present study removed the need to categorize a group. Instead, targets and perceivers alike were asked to describe a single person based on his or her own characteristics. This move away from stereotyping provided an interesting picture of the "average" male and female targets. Instead of reasoning deductively, this study moved inductively: What are the characteristics most often chosen to describe individuals within this group (sex)? As a result, the "average" or composite male and female targets are shown to be very similar.

The pictures created by these composites are somewhat contradictory to those offered by Josephs et al. (1992) and

Eagly (1987). The male composite is not more "individualist" or "agentic," and the female composite is not more "collectivist" or "communal." The composites depict both males and females as active, busy, capable, friendly, generous, independent, and polite. Hence, characteristics of the individualist and the collectivist are present in both of the sexes. The composites do reveal differences between the sexes, however. For example, the male composite is able, funny, and smart, while the female composite is careful, sensible, and special. Overall, however, the present study offers results that are in conflict with Eagly's (1987) contention that women and men differ in self-reported traits, and that these differences point to communion in women and agency in men. Eagly does, however, pose an interesting question: Are these stereotypes based on one's self-concept or impression management in order to obtain short-term goals? The present study indicates that these stereotypes are not a part of one's self-concept. The composite characteristics for men and women did not create the stereotypic categories. Hence, the stereotypic behaviors detailed by previous research are more likely linked to impression management behaviors. As Eagly points out, those who have power over others through access to resources, rewards, and punishments, may support these stereotypic norms and the consequent behaviors. As a result, the subordinate may

"act out" in sterotypic ways without changing his/her view of self.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that the narrative presentation of a female target would match the target's self-description significantly more than would the presentation of a male target. No significance difference was found based on target sex. Rosenfeld et al. (1979) found that females disclosed more to friends and acquaintances. This would seem to indicate that women would be better known by those around them. The present research did not find this to be the case; there was no significant difference between perceiver knowledge of male and female targets. The findings of the present study may be the result of the narrative form. The perceivers were friends, relatives, or spouses; as a result, each had memories of experiences with the targets. The narrative form allowed the perceiver to present his/her knowledge of the target. Whether this knowledge came from previous disclosures by the target or experiences had with the target, the perceiver was able to create a narrative that matched the self-description of the target. Hence, knowledge of other is grounded in two kinds of self-presentation: self-disclosure and behavior/experience.

The intimacy of the perceiver's knowledge of the subject has also been hypothesized as different based on the sex of the target. Previous studies have found that

women reported disclosing more on intimate topics than did men. Although not within the scope of the present study, this aspect of the level of perceiver knowledge is an interesting one. In the present study perceivers were instructed to tell a story about the target to a stranger who wanted to get to know the target. Further studies might ask the perceiver to tell a story about the target that few people know. In this way, the perceiver's knowledge of intimate details of the target's life could be assessed, and the effect of target sex on this level of knowledge determined.

Research question 1, concerned with the impact of relational history on the match between the narrative presentation of a target and the target's self-description, was partially supported. Relationship type was assessed according to a number of elements: type of relationship (best friend, close friend, casual friend/acquaintance); romantic (yes or no); related (yes or no); living/rooming together (yes or no); number of months known; hours per week spent together; days per week spent together; and knowledge of partner. The primary analysis of research question 1 found that two elements of the variable "relationship type" approached significance in impacting the match between the perceiver's narrative presentation of the target and the target's self-description: months known and relatedness.

The first of these elements, months known, although only approaching significance, presents interesting results. Group means revealed that the pairs who had known each other the longest (more than 5 years) had the lowest number of matches between target and perceiver. Those pairs falling into the 2 to 5 year range had the highest number. These results support previous research (e.g., Altman & Taylor, 1973; VanLear, 1991) that a relationship develops over time as self-disclosure and experience with other increase. However, results of the primary analysis indicate that long-term relationships may result in a diminished amount of self-disclosure and/or understanding of other. VanLear (1991) might suggest that this decline can be explained by his cyclical model of openness and closedness. He explains that more long-term relationships do experience a wider range of open and closed states than do newer relationships. In addition, Berscheid et al. (1989) argue that relationship duration or "longevity" is not an important feature of a close relationship. They explain that many long-term relationships are characterized by low levels of closeness. Gilbert (1976) contends that other relational needs, such as security and stability, may outweigh needs for depth and closeness. Hence, longevity in a relationship is not tantamount to closeness.

Results of the supplementary analysis, using the alternate dependent variable, found no significant effect

for months known on the match between the perceiver's description of target [questionnaire] and the target's self-description. Instead, perceiver knowledge of target was the only element of the variable "relationship type" that approached significance. The conflicting results between the primary and supplementary analyses may be a result of the measures employed in each analysis. The primary analysis focused on the perceiver's narrative presentation [spontaneous], while the supplementary analysis examined the perceiver's description of the target via questionnaire [reactive]. The reactive measure [questionnaire] asked the perceiver to paint a broad picture of the target; hence, his/her knowledge of the target could be a possible indicator of ability to match his/her description of target to target's self-description. The spontaneous measure [narrative], on the other hand, required that the perceiver recount a specific experience that he/she had with the target, or an experience that the target disclosed to the perceiver. The experimental design of the present study required that the perceiver [friend, relative, boy/girlfriend, spouse] have some knowledge of the target. Hence, each perceiver was likely to be able to supply at least one aspect of the target through narrative, and the broad scope of perceiver knowledge was not a significant indicator of match.

Furthermore, the decline in congruence, according to months known, revealed in the primary analysis between the narrative presentation of target and target's self-concept could be the result of the conceptual schema the perceiver has created for the target. For example, a member of the relationship becomes comfortable with his/her view of the partner and ignores changes in the partner's self-presentations. According to Schneider (1981), the perceiver's impression of the target governs the perceiver's willingness to believe that any subsequent self-presentations are accurate. The perceiver will only accept new information that fits within the parameters of the established impression or conceptual schema for that target. This line of reasoning corresponds to that of Swann and Snyder (1978), who contend that perceivers' impressions of targets exert pressure in social interactions. This pressure then results in behavioral confirmation. Although the target behaves in a manner congruent with the perceiver's impression, that behavior may be specific to the situation and represent atypical target behavior.

The second element of the variable "relationship type" to approach significance in the primary analysis of research question 1 was relatedness. Results indicated that the unrelated pairs were better able to establish the match between perceiver narrative presentation of target

and target self-description. Supplementary analysis of research question 1, however, did not reveal that relatedness affected the match between perceiver presentation and target self-description. One possible explanation for the conflicting results is linked to the issue of spontaneous versus reactive measures. The narrative presentation of target by a related perceiver did not match target self-description as well as did the narrative presentation of an unrelated perceiver. On the other hand, related and unrelated perceivers fared equally well when using the reactive measure [questionnaire] to describe the breadth of the target's characteristics. Those related perceivers, however, were less able to choose specific aspects of the target that would match the target's self-description. The specific aspects chosen by the perceiver to highlight in the narrative may no longer be integral to the target's self-concept. The perceiver's impression of target, however, remains intact (Schneider, 1981; Swann & Snyder, 1978). Even though targets want others to see them as they see themselves, it may be impossible for the target to exit the relationships that do not support self-concept; it is difficult to break ties to those to whom one is related. Related partners are generally those involved in long-term relationships. Hence, the relationship may become "fixated at low levels of closeness" (Berscheid et al., 1989, p. 796), or governed

by an outdated conceptual schema of the target. Although these results are conflicting and only approached significance, they do provide an interesting picture of relationships worthy of future investigation.

Limitations of the Study

The primary limitation of the present study is the limited nature of the spontaneous measure used. Both the target and perceiver were asked to provide only one narrative. As a result, only one "slice" of the target was revealed. The self, however, is multi-dimensional as revealed in the reactive measure. The emphasis on a smaller number of aspects of the target in the narrative limited the possibility of matching the target's self-description. In addition, although the supplementary analysis based on the reactive measure indicated the limited impact of relational history, the narrative measure may not be fine enough. In other words, it may be possible for a perceiver to present one narrative that matches the self-concept of the target, but the same perceiver may be unable to provide additional narratives. The use of a single narrative provided problematic, interesting, and complex entry into the realm of self and other presentation.

Suggestions for Future Research

The present investigation offers only a first step in the understanding of the role narrative presentation plays

in the reflection of self and other. The rich nature of the narrative presents a variety of opportunities for future research.

First, in order to capture the multidimensional nature of the self-concept, the design of the present study could be expanded. Both the target and the perceiver would be asked to tell multiple narratives. In this way, the target could potentially offer a number of dimensions of self. In addition, the perceiver would have the opportunity to present multiple dimensions of the target.

Second, in developing the composite male and female targets, the construction could be based on the narratives instead of the self-descriptions. This would specifically reveal the most common characteristics related in the core narratives by both targets and perceivers. Although the present analysis indicated that no significant sex differences existed in the presentations of self and other, the analysis of narratives to construct the composite would be yet another method of examining the complex area of sex differences.

A third direction for future research is the analysis of the narratives for sex differences using Stahl's (1983) categories of self-oriented and other-oriented tellers. Johnstone (1990) found that men's stories tended to be self-oriented, while women's stories were other-oriented. It would be especially interesting to examine the

narratives told by the perceivers in order to discover whether the self- and other-orientation is sex specific.

In relation to Aron et al. (1991) and the contention that an individual is strongly motivated to involve him/herself in relationships in which his/her self-concept is consistent with the views of the others involved, narrative would offer an interesting route into this line of inquiry. The idea that close relationships may result in the interconnected concepts of self and other could be examined in a way similar to the present study. The target and perceiver, however, would both present personal narratives about self and self-description ratings. In this way, the level of interconnectedness between the pair's self-concepts and presentations of self could be assessed.

A fifth direction for future research involves the effect of familiar others on the presentation of self and other. It would be interesting to conduct the self-description section of the study as done in the present research. The change, however, would be in the tellings. Both the perceiver and target would be in the room together for both tellings. In this way, the partner helps the teller decide on a narrative; it becomes a co-telling as the partner makes sure that nothing is left out and adds details. The presence of the familiar other during the telling may have no impact on the narrative, but it would

be interesting to compare the accuracy of these tellings (in terms of match to self and other descriptions) to the accuracy of those in the present study. Does the actual presence of those who provide the target with self-guides impact the self-presentation of the target? Does the presence of the target who has presented self to the perceiver affect the perceiver's telling?

In an effort to refine the narrative measure, future research could replicate the present study and add an additional element. Following the perceiver's chosen narrative about the target, the researcher would ask the perceiver to tell the same story that the target told. For example, "Your friend just told me the story of the time he hit a horse with his van. Would you please tell me that story?" The perceiver's version of the narrative could then be compared to the target's version to determine similarities and differences in the presentation of the target.

A seventh direction for future research involves the impact of sex differences on knowledge of target. In order to further test potential differences based on sex, the target would be asked to bring both a male and a female perceiver to the experiment. Ideally the two perceivers would be similar in demographic qualities such as length of time in relationship with the target, age, and relatedness. The experiment would be conducted in the same manner as the

present research, but two perceivers would be providing presentations of the target. In this way, the impact of sex differences on knowledge and presentation of other could be more closely examined.

In order to more closely examine the narrative form, future research could question the form and structure of the narrative. Is there something about the form that constrains what people say? What are the rules of narrative? How does narrative logic function in our presentations of self and other?

A final suggestion for future research would be to incorporate Bakhtin's (1981) idea of heteroglossia into the analysis of the narratives. Bakhtin is interested in the variety of voices, views, and styles within one language. Considering the narrative as a place where a variety of voices intersect provides the researcher with a different perspective on the study of narrative and self. Indeed, as self-guides influence the development of the self, these guides speak. Their voices would most likely be found in the personal narratives told by the targets. The professional voice versus the fun-loving voice vie for attention in the framework of the narrative. In addition, this variety of voices could also be found in the narrative of the perceiver: the voice of the friend, the guide, the lover, etc. More qualitative in nature, the use of Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia could add dimension to

the study of the development and maintenance of the self-concept.

Conclusion

The presentation of self through personal narrative has been shown in the present study to reveal self-concept. In addition, the presentation functions as impression management. Not only must the target manage the impressions of the perceiver, he/she must respond to internal demands for self-identification. The positive nature of the majority of the personal narrative presentations in the present study indicates that the "ideal" self guides the presentations made as the target attempts to increase self and other perception of the target's social attractiveness.

Likewise, the perceiver presents the target through narrative in a manner consistent with his/her view of that target. The positive nature of the presentation and the match between perceiver narrative and target description point to the reflective nature of the perceiver's presentation. The perceiver presents the target in a manner consistent with the target's self-concept. Hence, the target manages the impressions of other through self-presentation and, in turn, is seen and presented in a manner that reflects his/her self-concept.

The similarity in the male and female target composites paints a very different picture of sex

differences than does previous research. The emphasis on individual versus group is suggested as the force behind these results. In addition, the present research indicates that sex differences are most likely a function of impression management functions rather than an inherent part of one's self-concept.

Finally, the use of both reactive and spontaneous measures in the present study provided interesting results. Each measure provided insight into the realm of knowledge of other. Different results according to measure point to the conceptual differences between the two. While the reactive measure is linked to breadth of knowledge and perceiver knowledge of target, the spontaneous measure indicates that more specific knowledge of target may be linked to relational development. The present study provides only an introductory glance at the complexities involved in examining the impact of relationship type on knowledge and presentation of other.

The present study has shown, however, that self-presentations in the form of personal narratives do reveal self-concept. In addition, this view of self is communicated to others who reflect that view in their narrative presentations of the target. In particular relational contexts, the perceiver's narrative presentation of the target may be inconsistent with the target's self-view. This inconsistency may be the result of the

perceiver's outdated conceptual schema for the target or a result of the status of the relationship. Overall, however, targets manage impressions of self and, in turn, are presented by perceivers who then manage those communicated impressions in a similar manner.

Epilogue

In her book A Primer for Daily Life (1991), Willis writes of a photographic artist, Cindy Sherman, whose work has been publically acclaimed by the New York City art world and the popular press. What makes Sherman's work interesting is that, in the majority of her pieces, she is both photographer and subject. According to Willis, Sherman's photographs are not self-portraits in the traditional sense because they each reveal a different Sherman.

> Each is a discrete photo-object whose singular subject is made-up, costumed, and depicted as somehow autonomous and separate from Cindy Sherman the photographer. Sherman is both the photographer and the subject photographed. She is inside the production/reproduction circuit. She is the product produced and hung on the gallery wall for public consumption and at the same time she is the producer producing the body-image product (p. 76).

In much the same way that Willis describes Sherman's process of creating and her place in that creation, the teller of the personal narrative can also be described. As Sawin (1992) found, the personal narrative allows the teller to talk about self in a way that does not violate the community norm warning against self-praise. Although

in control of the telling, it seems as though the teller is detached from the "me" present in the personal narrative. Hence, the presentation becomes "safer." There is a distance between the "me" in the story and the "me" in the telling. As narrative scholars such as Genette (1980) point out, time itself is different. Time separates the happening of the event from the telling of the event. This separation in time creates a distance between the self being told about and the self telling. In the telling of the personal narrative, this "safe" distance is a "fake" distance. It creates the feeling of objectivity about the subject of the telling. The teller is not, however, objective. Nonetheless, this false sense of objective distance does provide the teller with the room to talk about self in a society that discourages "me" discourse, especially positive "me" discourse. As Sawin (1992) explains, "Portraying oneself positively may be a problematic undertaking . . ." and there is a "potentially agonistic quality of focusing attention on oneself" (p. 195).

The narrative is an important and powerful vehicle for the presentation of self and other. It allows the speaker to talk about self in a way that is valued in society. The narrative provides the speaker with a vehicle for expressing "who I think I am" or "who I think you are" without explicit statements. The present study supports

the potential of this powerful form of expression and its ability to reflect views of self and other.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire Series

Target Self-Description Questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS: Here is a list of words. You are to read the words quickly and check the fifteen (15) that you think describe you. BE HONEST. Do not check words that tell what kind of person you should be. Check words that tell what kind of a person you really are.

___able	___curious	___large	___sensible
___active	___deceitful	___lazy	___serious
___afraid	___delicate	___little	___sharp
___alone	___delightful	___lively	___silly
___angry	___different	___lonely	___slow
___anxious	___dirty	___loud	___small
___ashamed	___dull	___lucky	___smart
___attractive	___dumb	___mild	___soft
___bad	___eager	___miserable	___special
___beautiful	___fair	___modest	___strange
___big	___faithful	___neat	___stupid
___bitter	___fierce	___old	___strong
___bold	___foolish	___patient	___sweet
___brave	___friendly	___peaceful	___terrible
___bright	___funny	___perfect	___ugly
___busy	___generous	___pleasant	___unhappy
___calm	___gentle	___polite	___unusual
___capable	___glad	___poor	___useful
___careful	___good	___popular	___valuable
___careless	___great	___proud	___warm
___charming	___happy	___quiet	___weak
___cheerful	___humble	___quick	___wild
___clean	___idle	___responsible	___wise
___clever	___important	___rough	___wonderful
___comfortable	___independent	___rude	___wrong
___content	___jealous	___sad	___young
___cruel	___kind	___selfish	

Perceiver Description of Target Questionnaire

IDENTIFICATION # _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Here is a list of words. You are to read the words quickly and check the fifteen (15) that you think describe the person who came with you to the experiment today. BE HONEST. Do not check words that tell what kind of person he/she should be. Check words that tell what kind of a person he/she really is. Your responses will be kept confidential.

___able	___curious	___large	___sensible
___active	___deceitful	___lazy	___serious
___afraid	___delicate	___little	___sharp
___alone	___delightful	___lively	___silly
___angry	___different	___lonely	___slow
___anxious	___dirty	___loud	___small
___ashamed	___dull	___lucky	___smart
___attractive	___dumb	___mild	___soft
___bad	___eager	___miserable	___special
___beautiful	___fair	___modest	___strange
___big	___faithful	___neat	___stupid
___bitter	___fierce	___old	___strong
___bold	___foolish	___patient	___sweet
___brave	___friendly	___peaceful	___terrible
___bright	___funny	___perfect	___ugly
___busy	___generous	___pleasant	___unhappy
___calm	___gentle	___polite	___unusual
___capable	___glad	___poor	___useful
___careful	___good	___popular	___valuable
___careless	___great	___proud	___warm
___charming	___happy	___quiet	___weak
___cheerful	___humble	___quick	___wild
___clean	___idle	___responsible	___wise
___clever	___important	___rough	___wonderful
___comfortable	___independent	___rude	___wrong
___content	___jealous	___sad	___young
___cruel	___kind	___selfish	

Self-Monitoring Questionnaire

IDENTIFICATION #_____

The statements below concern your personal reactions to a number of different situations. No two statements are exactly alike, so consider each statement before answering. Please read each item carefully and try to answer it as honestly as possible. Circle the answer that best represents your feelings, using the following scale.

0 = certainly, always true
1 = generally true
2 = somewhat true, but with exception
3 = somewhat false, but with exception
4 = generally false
5 = certainly, always false

		ALWAYS TRUE					ALWAYS FALSE
1.	In social situations, I have the ability to alter my behavior, if I feel something else is called for.	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I am often able to read people's true emotions correctly through their eyes.	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I have the ability to control the way I come across to people, depending on the impression I want to give them.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.	In conversations, I am sensitive to even the slightest change in the facial expression of the person I'm conversing with.	0	1	2	3	4	5
5.	My powers of intuition are quite good when it comes to understanding others' emotions and motives.	0	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I can usually tell when others consider a joke to be in bad taste, even though they may laugh convincingly.	0	1	2	3	4	5

7.	When I feel that the image I am portraying isn't working, I can readily change it to something that does.	0	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I can usually tell when I've said something inappropriate by reading it in the listener's eyes.	0	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations.	0	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I have found that I can adjust my behavior to meet the requirements of any situation I find myself in.	0	1	2	3	4	5
11.	If someone is lying to me, I usually know it at once from that person's manner of expression.	0	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Even when it might be to my advantage, I have difficulty putting up a good front.	0	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Once I know what the situation calls for, it's easy for me to regulate my actions accordingly.	0	1	2	3	4	5

Self-Esteem Questionnaire

IDENTIFICATION # _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Read each of the following items carefully. Circle the answer which most closely describes you according to whether you:

SA = strongly agree

A = agree

D = disagree

SD = strongly disagree

1.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	SA	A	D	SD
2.	At times I think I am no good at all.	SA	A	D	SD
3.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	SA	A	D	SD
4.	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	SA	A	D	SD
5.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	SA	A	D	SD
6.	I certainly feel useless at times.	SA	A	D	SD
7.	I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	SA	A	D	SD
8.	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	SA	A	D	SD
9.	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	SA	A	D	SD
10.	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	SA	A	D	SD

Communication Apprehension Questionnaire

IDENTIFICATION #_____

INSTRUCTIONS: The following questions concern your feelings about communication with other people. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) are undecided, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree. There are no right or wrong answers. Many of the statements are similar to other statements. Do not be concerned about this. Work quickly; just record your first impression.

	AGREE				DISAGREE
1. I dislike participating in group discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Generally, I am comfortable while participating in a group discussion.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I like to get involved in group discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Engaging in a group discussion with new people makes me tense and nervous.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in a meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Usually I am calm and relaxed while participating in meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I am very calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express an opinion at a meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I am afraid to express myself at meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable.	1	2	3	4	5

12. I am very relaxed when answering questions at a meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
13. While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I have no fear of speaking up in conversations.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in conversations.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Ordinarily I am very calm and relaxed in conversations.	1	2	3	4	5
17. While conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I have no fear of giving a speech.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I feel relaxed while giving a speech.	1	2	3	4	5
22. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.	1	2	3	4	5
24. While giving a speech I get so nervous I forget facts I really know.	1	2	3	4	5

Demographic/State of Relationship Questionnaire

IDENTIFICATION # _____

Please answer the following questions as completely as possible. The "partner" referred to in the questions is the person who came with you to the experiment today.

1. Your sex: _____Male _____Female

2. Your age: _____

3. Your partner's sex: _____Male _____Female

4. For approximately how long have you known your partner?

_____

5. Which of the following terms best describes your relationship with your partner? (circle most appropriate number)

1 Best friend
2 Close friend
3 Casual friend
4 Acquaintance

6. Is your partner related to you or a member of the same family?

1 Yes. Please Specify Relationship:_____
2 No

7. Have you or do you have a "dating" or "romantic" relationship with your partner?

1 Yes 2 No

8. Do you live or room with your partner?

1 Yes 2 No

9. On average, how many hours a week do you spend with your partner?

_____

10. On average, how many days a week do you see your partner?

_____

11. How much personal or private information have you and your partner shared in the past?

    1 A great deal
    2 A moderate amount
    3 Some
    4 Very little
    5 None

Please respond to the following statements by circling the appropriate number.

12. "I know my partner well."

    1 Strongly agree
    2 Agree
    3 Neither agree nor disagree
    4 Disagree
    5 Strongly disagree

13. "I do not understand my partner."

    1 Strongly agree
    2 Agree
    3 Neither agree nor disagree
    4 Disagree
    5 Strongly disagree

14. "I often know what my partner is thinking."

    1 Strongly agree
    2 Agree
    3 Neither agree nor disagree
    4 Disagree
    5 Strongly disagree

Appendix B

Sample Target and Perceiver Narratives

Sample Female Target Personal Narrative

This is the story of me being pregnant in my junior year in high school. Okay, um, I got pregnant by this guy who left. Right when I found out I was pregnant was about the same time he found out he had like ten scholarship offers all around the nation. And, uh, he kinda freaked out and panicked and kinda left me. So I said, "Hell with you, okay, bye." But he proceeded to be salutatorian and everything. He was everything. You know, he was a jock; he was going off to play football and everything. So he had his own little life, left me alone, okay. So I stayed alone and I, um, I was pregnant all throughout the summer. He was still here for the summer but he was leaving to go away; he went to college in Tennessee. Well, I ended up having the baby in September and, um, I went to school nine months pregnant and everything, and I ended up being valedictorian. Showed everybody up.

Sample Male Target Personal Narrative

Okay, um, I had a friend, Mike, uh back in this is junior high. And uh, he was -- I was in junior high a real goody-goody, wore the, my mom dressed me and all that stuff. And I was the mother's angel. Ah uh, Mike, I made good friends with him and he was approaching the opposite. He didn't get in trouble with the law or anything, he wasn't that bad. But, he got into a little bit of trouble. And uh, we uh had our -- the thing that we did that was the most fun that we actually managed to get away with, but uh now that I think about it, it might've been kinda dangerous. We, we were on playing with the computer, uh and we had modems so we were running through a BBS, bulletin board system. We downloaded some files that had, uh, how to make all kinds of homemade bombs and things like that. And uh, it was uh, you know, we printed them out. And I was, uh, teacher's pet too in one of the classes, one of the chemistry classes. So I got to help in the lab. And so while I was in the lab onetime, I swiped a few iodine crystals because that was one of the ingredients. And we mixed it with ammonia and put it in the street. And, uh, it dries and you can't really see it, and a car runs over it and it makes a ton of smoke. It makes red smoke. At least the way we did it it did. And, uh, the cars would hear, and sometimes they didn't, but they'd hear and they'd stop and they'd see all this smoke, and they'd

get all worried you know, and run out -- search their car. It was pretty funny. We didn't get caught for that, other things, but not that.

Sample Female Perceiver Narrative

Well um, the first time I met Vicki it was at, um, a welcoming party because I had just moved back to Louisiana; I had been living away for nine years. And um, I really didn't know anything about her and she was good friends with my cousin. And she walks through the door and she's like, "Heyyy!" And she gives me a big hug and she's like, "Welcome to Louisiana." And at first I was like very overwhelmed, because you know I didn't even know this girl. And she's like talking to me, "I'm so excited your back. I've heard so much about you" and everything. At first I was like, you know, "What is wrong with her?" And then, um, my cousin was fixing dinner for all of us, and we were sitting down [laughs] eating and, you know, this was a really nice dinner she had prepared and everything. And all of a sudden, Vicki is like serving her salad and she's like, "Cucumbers make me fart!" [laughs] And she didn't even know me or two of the other people and I was like, you know, "What is wrong with this girl?" But I thought it was really funny. And then like by the end of the night, I mean, I felt like I had known her for so long because she like was like treating me like one of her friends that she had known for so long. She just got drunk and kinda crazy and stuff.

Sample Male Perceiver Narrative

Um, well the person I came with, uh I have to say, is probably one of the most caring people I've ever known -- that I know. And um, that goes back to, I guess, last fall when I'd gotten sick. I don't know, I was really sick and, um, I had gotten my appen . . . it was because of appendicitis. And, uh, a virus and bronchitis. And, uh, she spent -- like a couple of days before I had, uh, I guess it was the flu; I mean I was really sick. And she, uh, she stayed there the whole time with me, you know, sacrificing her time. And she spent make . . . you know tending to me, making sure I was recovering alright. And then one night I'd gotten really -- I mean I started getting really sick, and she brought me to the hospital. And, uh, stayed with me the whole time in the hospital. I know alot of people, you know especially with school and everything, that would, you know, kinda, you know, wouldn't spend as much time. But she was there the whole time really taking care of me. And I guess when you're sick you kinda bitch and, you know, criticize. But I was, you know, complaining and all that. Stood all that and was very supportive. I really, you know, appreciate that at that time it kinda boosted me out of that and helped get me out of that situation.

Appendix C

Exit Questionnaire

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS USING THE SCALE BELOW:

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Neither agree nor disagree
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly disagree

_____ 1. I was very aware of the tape recorder during the interview.

_____ 2. I felt quite natural during the interview.

_____ 3. The listener was quite natural during the interview.

_____ 4. Because of the tape recording, the way I told my story was different from the way I usually tell the story.

_____ 5. The tape recorder made me feel very nervous.

Please comment on any of the questions that you have answered. Thank you for your assistance.

Appendix D

Coding Guide

1. Listen to the entire narrative without making notes.
2. Listen for the evaluative function (attitudes and feelings of the speaker).
3. Listen for the overall characteristics, versus those that are specific to the situation described; let the situation shed light on the entire character of the speaker.
4. If the speaker is the target, "How does the speaker see him/herself?" REMEMBER: Do not place your judgements onto the speaker; we want to know what the speaker thinks or presents!
5. If the speaker is the perceiver, "How does the speaker see the person he/she is telling the story about?" Again, do not place your judgements of the person speaking onto your coding; we want to know how the speaker presents the friend.
6. Listen to the narrative a second time and take notes (jot down the adjectives).
7. Be conservative in your coding; more is not necessarily better. The speaker may include only one or two characteristics in the narrative. REMEMBER: "What is the speaker presenting?"
8. Write a brief (may only be a couple of words) summary of the narrative after your coding of it. In this way,

when we do inter-coder reliability we can double-check and make sure we are talking about the same narratives.

9. Following each adjective you chose, write a brief phrase explaining why you chose that adjective.

Vita

Charla Lee Markham Shaw was born in Amarillo, Texas on August 25, 1964. Because her father was an officer in the military, her family lived throughout the United States and in Germany. Following the retirement of her father from the military, her family settled in Stephenville, Texas. In 1986, she graduated from Angelo State University in San Angelo, Texas, with secondary teaching certification, a major in English, and minors in Speech and German. She received her M.A. in Communications from Baylor University in Waco, Texas, in August of 1987. The following two years were spent in El Campo, Texas, teaching English, Speech, Theatre, and Debate. In 1989 the sabbatical leave of a faculty member at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, provided her with the opportunity to teach at the college level for a year. While in Abilene, she met and married her husband Gene Shaw. Gene and Charla then moved to Baton Rouge, where she began work on her PhD. at Louisiana State University in August, 1990. Following completion of the PhD. in August, 1993, Charla and her husband moved to Arlington, Texas, where she is employed at The University of Texas at Arlington.

DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Charla L. Markham Shaw

Major Field: Speech Communication

Title of Dissertation: Personal Narrative: Revealing Self and Reflecting Other

Approved:

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Date of Examination:

June 21, 1993