The Literary Journalism as Illuminator of Subjectivity

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of The University of Maryland in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
1990

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Abstract

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Dissertation directed by: Patti P. Gillespie, Professor,
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                          Communication

Research into objectivity in the news media

abounds. Much of it indicates that objectivity is a

flawed concept, one most difficult to incorporate into

traditional journalistic practice. This study, departing

from the customary line of inquiry, concentrates instead

on the ability of journalism to illuminate subjectivity.

The literary journalism is selected as the focus of this

study because it both adheres to the journalistic

contract to sustain factualism and intentionally creates

individual versions of reality.

Examples of literary journalism are analyzed to

determine how they illuminate subjectivity and how they

deal with the tension between objectivity and

subjectivity. Examples of the life history and fiction,

two contiguous forms of writing that also emphasize

subjectivity, are investigated to determine how they

meet these same challenges. Choosing for the examples

works on a similar subject, the lives of mildly retarded

men, facilitates the comparison of the three forms. In a final experimental exercise, the author creates an original example of literary journalism on the same subject.

Although authors of all three forms exhibited difficulty in dealing with the tension between objectivity and subjectivity, the willingness of authors of literary journalism to reveal this conflict served to help resolve it. After comparing the three forms' techniques for illuminating subjectivity, the author combined techniques of literary journalism with techniques borrowed from both the life history and fiction to illustrate major ways by which literary journalism can achieve the illumination of subjectivity.

Literary journalism was proficient both at illuminating its authors' subjective realities and the subjective realities of the works' main actors. In a comparison of the three forms, literary journalism proved to be more powerful than the life history but less powerful than fiction at revealing authors' subjective realities. Conversely, literary journalism proved to be more powerful than fiction but less powerful than the life history at illuminating actors' subjective realities. The strong narrative voice within works of literary journalism proved to be the most effective of the literary techniques at illuminating subjectivity, although the controlling presence of

authors within works of literary journalism sometimes overwhelmed other important elements.

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Introduction

The media critic James Carey has emphasized the subjective side of journalism in his critical analyses. According to Carey, the journalistic report represents "a state of consciousness, a way of apprehending, of experiencing the world" ("Problem of Journalism History" 5). This view of the journalistic report sees it as "a cultural act, a literary act" that represents a highly idiosyncratic organization of social experience that depends largely on the subjective view of the world taken by a particular journalist at a particular time in history (5). Carey's view of journalism also recognizes the inherent tension between objectivity and subjectivity that exists within journalism, a tension that contemporary scholars in the Western world have also identified within an extensive variety of other disciplines.

Carey's view of journalism thus differed from the traditional view. He did not see the subjective element of the journalistic report as alien or dangerous, as did journalistic proponents of objectivity. Their traditional view regarded subjectivity as a dangerous interloper that must be expunged as soon as it is recognized. Rather, Carey viewed subjectivity as a natural and important component of the journalistic report, which he described as "a creative and

imaginative work," a "symbolic strategy" for apprehending reality. And, for Carey, journalism, as well as other forms that use the mass media, does not exist to transmit messages about reality but, rather, exists as one tool in a society-wide process for constructing reality, a "process by which reality is constituted, maintained, and transformed . . ." ("The Mass Media and Critical Theory" 30). In this context, the view of reality that emerges from various journalistic reports can differ radically, depending upon the form in which those reports are created:

> . . . there is a vast difference between what is taken to be an adequate report of the world by those who queue before Tom Wolfe and the new journalism versus those readers wholly satisfied with the New York Times. In fact, our failure to understand journalism as a cultural form has left us virtually bereft of intelligent commentary on the new journalism ("Problem of Journalism History" 5).

This dissertation, following Carey, will concentrate on that part of the world that queues "before . . . the new journalism" or, as it would later be called, the literary journalism. Literary journalism (new journalism) is a form of reporting in which literary techniques are combined with reporting techniques to produce factually accurate reports that

resemble fictional works in style and construction. The dissertation will focus particularly on this form's ability to illuminate subjectivity. Such a focus represents a divergence from much contemporary scholarship on journalism, which has as its focus the problems with objectivity in conventional journalistic practice and, therefore, with the traditional journalistic forms that emphasize objectivity. The focus here on literary journalism embodies an attempt to increase our understanding of the role of subjectivity in journalism by departing from the traditional line of inquiry to analyze the use of subjectivity in a journalistic form that emphasizes subjectivity.

The main purpose of this dissertation is to determine how literary journalism operates to illuminate subjectivity within its reports. However, because the concept of objectivity in journalism has so dominated journalistic practice, the first chapter of the dissertation will discuss the relationship between objectivity and journalistic practice and the tension between objectivity and subjectivity that this relationship has engendered.

Once we have examined this relationship, we can turn to the relationship which is of primary concern in this dissertation, the relationship between literary journalism and subjectivity. Chapter two will reveal the critical foundation of literary journalism and the role

that subjectivity plays in that foundation.

Chapter three will concentrate on the manner in which authors of literary journalism approach their work and how this approach affects the form's ability to illuminate both the subjective realities of its authors and the subjective realities of the people who appear within the reports. (I should indicate here that subjectivity and subjective reality are used synonymously in this study.) In chapter three, as well, I examine the manner in which authors of literary journalism deal with the tension between objectivity and subjectivity in their work. Because this tension is as much a factor within literary journalism as within other forms of journalism, a secondary purpose of this dissertation will be to understand better the manner in which literary journalism deals with this tension.

We cannot understand literary journalism in isolation. However, little can be gained by comparing literary journalism with traditional journalism, a form that emphasizes objectivity and rejects subjectivity. Such a comparison would not only represent a repetition of others' work but, more importantly, would ignore the central focus of this dissertation which is to study the illumination of subjectivity. In order to understand better how literary journalism illuminates subjectivity, we can compare it with other forms that also emphasize the illumination of subjectivity. Such an examination

will also allow us to compare literary journalism with these other forms in terms of the manner in which they approach the tension between objectivity and subjectivity. Through such a comparison, we can put literary journalism in perspective as a particular form of writing among other forms of writing that operate in specific ways to illuminate subjective reality.

One obvious form of writing with which literary journalism can be compared is fiction. Literary journalism is similar to fiction in that it uses literary techniques within its reports. Because of this similarity, the comparison between literary journalism and fiction has dominated the study of literary journalism from its beginnings. This similarity has caused confusion and concern among critics who have questioned the legitimacy of literary journalism because of it. In this study of literary journalism's ability to illuminate subjective reality, a comparison that attempts to discover the specific similarities and differences between the approaches that literary journalism and fiction take toward the illumination of subjectivity and toward the tension between objectivity and subjectivity seems useful.

Another form of writing which emphasizes the illumination of subjective reality, the life history approach to ethnography, also has intriguing similarities to literary journalism and should prove

most useful here in a comparison with literary journalism. Because these similarities have not been noted as persistently as the correspondence between fiction and literary journalism, I will include a more elaborate discussion here of the correspondence between the life history and literary journalism.

Used primarily by anthropologists and other social scientists who study human culture, the life history is a technique of ethnography that attempts to capture the lives of individuals as those individuals experience them (Langness and Frank 1). In general, material for life histories is gathered using the principles of social science fieldwork or ethnography, although life histories usually depend more on interviews with a single individual than other types of ethnography (32).

The work of the ethnographer and the literary journalist are often similar. Gene Burd wrote about the similarities between the work of the journalist and the sociologist engaged in fieldwork: ". . . the journalistic reporter is in many ways a type of qualitative sociologist, especially when the journalist uses participant-observer techniques" (2). The term participant-observation seems to fit as a general description for both the work of ethnographers and literary journalists. The anthropologist Michael Agar described this term to would-be ethnographers in the following manner: "The term suggests that you are

directly involved in community life, observing and
talking with people as you learn from them their view of
reality" (<u>The Professional Stranger</u> 114). The same
description could easily apply to literary journalists.

Thomas Meisenhelder also compared qualitative
sociology, sociology dedicated to participant
observation, with literary journalism:

> Both perspectives approach the study of social
> groups and social action from the point of
> view of the actors. Both describe the process
> of everyday life in order to point out the
> essential components of the phenomena-under
> observation (470).

Norman Sims made a similar observation in the
introduction to his anthology of literary journalism
when he wrote that literary journalism "might well be
called 'the journalism of everyday life'" (11).

If ethnography is dedicated to an understanding of
the everyday life of particular human cultures, then the
life history, as a specific tool of ethnography, is
dedicated to an understanding of particular individuals
who live within those cultures (Langness and Frank 154).
In addition, the life history has been regarded as a
technique well suited to helping ethnographers to gain
an understanding of those individuals' inner views of
life: "Most notably, the life history technique is able
to grapple with . . . the subjective reality of the

individual" (Faraday and Plummer 776). Thus, both literary journalism and the life history can be regarded as forms that are remarkably similar in terms of the phenomena they investigate and the information they produce.

In fact, a similar tension seems to exist between the life history and traditional ethnography as exists between literary and traditional journalism. This tension involves the degree to which each of these forms of inquiry incorporates individual subjective reality into its reports. Literary journalism has been accused of damaging its factual credibility by overemphasizing the subjective viewpoints of its authors. In the case of the life history, its detailed studies of single individuals has been criticized as producing results that are unreliable and vague (Faraday and Plummer 774). Some critics have argued that life histories should be used more to illuminate the larger culture and to develop cultural concepts rather than emphasizing the individual's life and personality (Langness and Frank 21).

Thus, the life history has been considered too subjective to be of much use in developing concepts in the social sciences and literary journalism too subjective to be considered accurate journalistic reporting. Yet, the proponents of both forms have concluded that one of their major values is this very

subjectivity.

Another factor that should make the life history valuable for comparison with literary journalism, given the similarities between the forms, is that authors of life histories use techniques different from the techniques used to write works of literary journalism. For example, authors of life histories rarely use literary techniques, but they usually follow standards of social science research in their reports. Such differences should make the life history an important alternative and complement to fiction for comparing with literary journalism and in revealing their respective abilities to illuminate subjective reality and to deal with the tension between objectivity and subjectivity.

Therefore, in preparation for a comparison of the literary journalism with the life history and with fiction, I will devote chapter four of this dissertation to a discussion of the life history as an illuminator of subjectivity and chapter five to a discussion of fiction as an illuminator of subjectivity. In each of chapters three, four, and five, I will include an example of a work devoted to a similar subject, the life of a mildly mentally retarded man. Thus, in chapter three, I will include a report on a mildly retarded man written in the form of literary journalism; in chapter four, I will include a report on a mildly retarded man written in the form of the life history; and in chapter five I will

include a story about a mildly retarded man written in the form of fiction.

In order to provide an example that illustrates some of the insights I have gained through this study, I will include, as chapter six, an original report on the life of a mildly retarded man. Although this report is written using the basic form of literary journalism, I will attempt to incorporate refinements into the report that I have learned through my work on this dissertation, including techniques from the other two forms that I believe improve the report without changing its status as a factual example of literary journalism. In order to protect this status, I observe one condition in choosing these techniques: I do not borrow any technique that would require me to use invented material within my report.

I have chosen this subject of mental retardation not because I wish to include research on mental retardation or to reach conclusions about mental retardation in this dissertation. I have chosen it, rather, because I want to study the illumination of subjectivity by comparing these three forms that include it. I hope that my comparison of the three forms later in the dissertation will be more lucid if I am able to compare examples written on a similar subject.

Nevertheless, I think that this topic is an especially apt choice, because the subjective realities

of retarded individuals are particularly difficult to illuminate and, therefore, provide an exacting standard for each of the examples to meet. I realize that no example I choose will represent the ideal for any of the forms. Therefore, if a particular example seems to be lacking in some way, I will discuss where that example may have failed to use important elements available to its form or how that example may have failed to realize the potential inherent in its form.

Some brief definitions of mental retardation should prove helpful in clarifying the guidelines I have used in selecting my examples. The American Association on Mental Deficiency has defined mental retardation as "significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period" (Grossman 1). The Association has established an IQ score of approximately seventy and below as the zone of mental retardation, although the association explains that such an exact figure is primarily intended for use in legal matters. An IQ of seventy actually represents a range of scores from sixty-two to seventy-eight (at 95 percent probability) when errors in measurement are taken into consideration. In reality, the determination of mental retardation is flexible and depends on the judgment of clinicians who use other behavioral measures in addition to test scores

to arrive at their conclusions.(20-24).

The association has established an IQ range of approximately fifty to approximately seventy as the zone of mild mental retardation (13). Researchers at the UCLA Mental Retardation Center who have studied mildly retarded adults for many years have focused on individuals with IQ's approximately in the sixties to low seventies who have potential for living independently in the community (Langness and Levine Introduction).

In the final chapter, chapter seven, I compare literary journalism with the other two forms with respect to its ability to illuminate individual subjective reality and with respect to its handling of the tension between objectivity and subjectivity. The dissertation ends with suggestions for further research.

Chapter One

The Tension Between

Objectivity and Subjectivity In Journalism

Objectivity in the news media has created widespread interest among researchers, who regularly try to discover what it means to journalists and how they apply it to their work. The historian Michael Schudson's simple description of the belief in objectivity in journalism would probably satisfy most journalists and researchers in communications:

> . . . the belief that one can and should separate facts from values. Facts, in this view, are assertions about the world open to independent validation. . . . Values, in this view, are an individual's conscious or unconscious preferences for what the world should be (5).

In this explanation, I take values to imply both opinions and attitudes, because the words "conscious preferences" suggest opinions while the words "unconscious preferences" suggest attitudes.

I will follow Schudson's description in this study. Objectivity will represent the segregation of facts and values, a condition in which facts are separated from opinions and attitudes (6). Subjectivity will represent the integration of facts and values, a contrasting

condition in which opinions and attitudes are included with facts. Thus, I am interested in subjectivity only as it contrasts with objectivity in journalism and the other forms of writing I will discuss in this dissertation. I will be concerned neither with subjectivity as a psychological phenomenon nor with the vast body of literature that this topic has inspired. Also, although I will concentrate on the tension between objectivity and subjectivity in journalism and other selected forms of writing in this dissertation, I am aware that a similar tension exists within a variety of other disciplines.

Researchers in journalism differ somewhat on the reason why the belief in objectivity came to dominate American journalism and what this dominance means in practice. In order to place what follows in perspective, I will briefly discuss the rise of the concept of objectivity within American journalism. I will then analyze the three perspectives that best represent the range of views within communications research on the difficulties involved in realizing this concept in contemporary journalism.

Donald Shaw suggested that the rise of objectivity resulted from the increased use of the telegraph in the middle of the nineteenth century. The telegraph eventually created a situation in which unbiased news reporting became the dominant value in American

journalism because it helped to create press associations that gathered news for many different newspapers. Because these newspapers represented a variety of political beliefs, the reports carried on the wire services had to be stripped of values, had to be constructed in a neutral form in order to be acceptable to the many different client newspapers. Gradually, reporters began to imitate the wire services' news style and this style became a convention in news reporting (Shaw 31).

Schudson and Dan Schiller, among others, attributed not only the rise of objectivity but also its continued dominance to a complex combination of social, economic, and political forces both within the journalistic establishment and within society. Schudson linked the rise of objectivity with several significant changes in American society during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. According to Schudson, the rise of the penny press in the 1830's marked the beginning of the change in emphasis in newspapers from editorial comment to news and from opinion to facts, a shift that in the twentieth century developed into the modern concept of objectivity (14). Previously, newspapers had existed primarily to serve a mercantile and political elite that had dominated the nation from its beginnings. The growth of American cities during the 1820's and 1830's gave rise to a new "democratic market society" that would

eventually supplant the old elite and their press (30).

Schudson argued that the rise of the penny press resulted from the growth of an urban middle class and working class, both with requirements that differed from those of the mercantile and political elite. The urban middle class needed facts to succeed in business where the mercantile and political elite had depended on family ties and political and personal loyalties. In order to sell manufactured goods to the people flocking to the cities, the middle class needed information about these new urban consumers; they also needed an outlet for advertising that would reach large numbers of consumers. In addition, the Jacksonian philosophy of egalitarianism fostered an interest in the lives of people regardless of social class.

Thus, a new kind of newspaper was needed to supersede the party press and mercantile press, a newspaper that could meet these new economic and cultural needs. The result was the penny press, a low-cost newspaper that emphasized the facts about daily life in the city, a newspaper directed at the urban masses. This knowledge had become more important for survival than family and party ties and included news about all social classes, although this news frequently appeared in a sensationalistic form involving crime and scandal.

Although the penny press exemplified a new brand of

journalism that emphasized facts over values, Schudson argued that two more powerful changes in American journalism would occur before the modern concept of objectivity would take its final form. The first of these changes began in the 1890's, ironically, at a time when sensationalism reached its peak in the yellow journalism exemplified by Joseph Pulitzer's New York World and William Randolph Hearst's New York Journal. According to Schudson, these papers represented the ideal of "story" journalism, an ideal that used the arbitrary selection of facts combined with a sensationalistic style to create an entertaining experience for readers.

At the same time, another ideal, the ideal of "information" journalism represented by the New York Times, was becoming popular. The Times reflected both the growing influence of the scientific method, with its emphasis on verifiable facts, and the trend toward professionalism in journalism, with its emphasis on accuracy and impartiality. Gradually, the information model became the more respected model in American journalism. However, this information model was not yet identical to the modern concept of objectivity for it did not include "anxiety about the subjectivity of personal perspective" (120).

According to Schudson, journalists who operated under the information model before World War I were

"naive empiricists" who believed that the facts they gathered were examples of unmediated reality, undeniable aspects of the world itself (6). Only after World War I did the modern concept of objectivity, "an ideology of the distrust of self," develop fully (71). Schudson argued that the modern concept of objectivity is not the ultimate belief in facts "but the assertion of a method designed for a world in which even facts could not be trusted" (122). A combination of factors including the use of propaganda during the War, the development of psychological theories that speculated about the unconscious, and the growth of the public relations industry convinced many journalists that so-called "facts" were often simply one individual's idiosyncratic interpretation of the world, an interpretation that had been shaped and manipulated to serve that individual's selfish interests. In Walter Lippmann's words, there was a vast difference between "The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads."

The modern concept of objectivity arose in the 1920's and 1930's as a response to this growing suspicion of the facts. The concept promised to overcome this suspicion by developing "consensually validated statements about the world, predicated on a radical separation of facts and values . . ." (Schudson 122). The concept of objectivity forced journalists to "openly acknowledge subjectivity as a factor" even in

so-called factual reports (144). Journalists began to become more specialized in the hope that reporters with expertise in the fields they covered would recognize the falsehoods masquerading as facts that others put forward.

During this same period, political columns which highlighted the opinions of columnists began to appear in newspapers. These columns emphasized the separation of such opinion from the news sections of the paper where reporters produced supposedly impartial, objective reports. According to Schudson, this emphasis on objectivity was accompanied by the growing belief among journalists that such objectivity was impossible (157). Thus, the concept of objectivity became a kind of desperate remedy for the loss of confidence in the individual's ability to remain impartial. Journalists were left with a paradoxical belief: although objectivity was impossible to attain, the responsible journalist must still strive to reach it:

> Journalists came to believe in objectivity to the extent that they did, because they wanted to, needed to, were forced by ordinary human aspiration to seek escape from their own deep convictions of doubt and drift (159).

However, by the 1960's, the concept of objectivity itself came under fire from journalists. The distrust of government during the 1960's spilled over into a

distrust of the conventions of objectivity which depended on official, usually governmental, versions of the facts. This distrust of official sources encouraged young reporters to try to remain as independent from official sources as possible and to place more faith in investigative journalism with its deep skepticism about official versions of events. Schudson suggested that the intense criticism of journalism has subsided since the 1960's and that no new concept has appeared to replace the concept of objectivity. He also argued that there continued to be "a simmering disaffection with objective reporting" (193).

Schiller's historical account agrees with Schudson's in most respects although Schiller put more emphasis on the economic forces at work in the rise of the concept of objectivity. Schiller went much farther than Schudson, however, in one major interpretation of the historical record. Schiller argued that his example of the penny press, The Police Gazette, first published in New York City in 1845, used objective reporting methods to create a legitimation of the American system of law which, at the time, was dominated by the rich and powerful. The Gazette's use of rigorous empirical fact-finding through investigation, attendance at trials, and explicit descriptions of criminal acts depended for its authority on the officials of the legal system whom Schiller called "the agents of the American Law."

By relying on official versions to bolster its
claim to objectivity, Schiller argued that the Gazette's
"account of reality would systematically echo the
judgments and perspectives of the power elite" (123).
Schiller argued further that the Gazette's dedication to
objectivity prohibited it from forming value judgments
of any kind, including value judgments about a justice
system that gave legal preference to the rich (149).
Schiller used this interpretation of the penny press to
create a model that he applied to the modern press. He
suggested that the modern press continues to rely on a
similar set of beliefs that ultimately provides
authority to the establishment, becomes a means for
"legitimating the exercise of social power over the
interpretation of reality" (196).

The implications of Schiller's argument are
important to this study. This argument implies that, by
witholding their own value judgments, journalists
prevented their readers from receiving an important
alternative insight into the nature of reality. The
version of reality most available to the public was the
version favored by the power elite, a version that the
elite provided as official spokesmen--and they were
almost all men--for the status quo and which contained
the values that they wished to propagate. The
journalists, who were careful to omit their own values
from their reports, therefore inevitably communicated

the values of the power elite instead. In Schiller's view, then, objectivity is a potentially negative standard while subjectivity has a potentially positive outcome.

The importance of Schudson and Schiller's accounts for this study primarily rests not only with the important background information they provide on this concept's emergence in the history of American journalism but also--and more importantly--with their recognition of the complexity of the concept of objectivity. In fact, their analysis seems broad enough to allow even for Shaw's thesis on the influence of the telegraph on the rise of objectivity. Surely, the telegraph can be included as one of the many forces that helped to bring about changes in the production of news.

A recognition of the concept's complexity helps to explain the difficulty that journalists have always had in putting the concept into practice and helps to prepare us for a more specific examination of how contemporary communication scholars view the concept of objectivity. In examining the relationship between journalistic practice and the concept of objectivity, this discussion will focus on three main areas of inquiry: the effect of journalists' values and ideological beliefs on the practice of objectivity, the effect of journalistic conventions and workways on the practice of objectivity, and the effect of journalists'

relationships with their sources on the practice of
objectivity.

The difficulties journalists have in preventing
their own conscious and unconscious values as well as
society's values from influencing the reports they write
is the most obvious starting point for this discussion.
Personal and social values represent journalists' basic
assumptions--about civilization, about politics, about
religion--that, with much variation, most of the people
growing up within a particular society have been taught
to believe. These predispositions are extremely
difficult to compartmentalize and ignore in order to
concentrate solely on the facts in an event.

The interest of scholars in communication with such
individual and societal values is in analyzing the
influence of those values on the production of news.
Such influences obviously would contradict the basic
principle of the concept of objectivity that journalists
must report facts without value. One focus of study in
this area has attempted to determine how dominant
political ideologies within democratic societies
influence both the journalists and the public. This
research has attempted to discover the frame of
reference that "governs the way we perceive our world
and ourselves . . . controls what we see as 'natural' or
'obvious'" (Samuel Becker 69).

Critics who have followed this ideological line of

inquiry have chosen the Marxist concept of "hegemony" to explain how these influences work, but they have redefined the concept not so much as the control of one nation by another as the control of the "cultural, intellectual and moral direction" of classes within a society by the dominant classes (Becker 69). This argument presents such control as not entirely a conscious conspiracy of one class over another but partly as a predisposition for the majority of individuals within a society to be socialized to think alike.

The media critic Stuart Hall argued that such control within the news media exists as a subtle process "by means of which certain events get recurrently signified in particular ways." By historical and cultural tradition, similar events are told and retold by journalists and others in similar ways until only certain interpretations are valid for certain events ("The Rediscovery of 'Ideology'" 69). According to Hall, the concept of objectivity has itself become a kind of ideology to which journalists subscribe, an ideology that expects those journalists to translate events into reports using methods that would guarantee that their reports are democratic and non-ideological. Ironically, these beliefs have the opposite effect--they result in a confirmation of the control of society by the dominant social and economic classes (Media Power 21).

This confirmation results from the journalists' belief that to communicate the facts properly, they must impartially present the views of all important sides of an event or issue. Although such a belief may seem innocent enough on the surface, in practice it results in a situation in which the dominant forces in society, such as the representatives of the major political parties, will routinely be heard on almost every issue. Such leaders become incorporated into a closed system composed of an elite list of opposing forces that journalists must routinely consult to ensure objectivity.

However, the ability to reach the public frequently is not the only advantage that society's elite enjoys. Because of the belief in impartiality among journalists, the elite are also ensured that their views will automatically be considered important, whether those individual viewpoints deserve such serious treatment on their own merits or not. When confronted with opposing viewpoints, the journalist simply applies the lowest common denominator, makes certain the opposing viewpoints are given an equal number of arguments to justify their positions, as if the opposing arguments were also equally convincing and valid:

> This symmetry of oppositions . . . has little
> or no relevance to the quite unequal relative
> weights of the case for each side in the real

world. If the workman asserts that he is being
poisoned by the effluence from a noxious
plant, the chairman must be wheeled in to say
that all possible precautions are now being
taken. This symmetrical alignment of arguments
may ensure the broadcaster's impartiality, but
hardly advances the truth (Media Power 22).

The implication of this process is to create the
expectation that the two sides will (and probably
should) develop a compromise to resolve their
disagreement. Because the commitment to objectivity has
already virtually assured that one "side" of the report
will consist of the viewpoint of the dominant forces in
society, the reasonable solution to any difference of
opinion becomes a compromise between the opinion of the
dominant ideology and the opinion of some other group in
society. The concept of objectivity produces a situation
that demands compromise no matter how unjust the
outsiders believe the position of the dominant classes
to be and no matter how unsatisfactory the compromise
may be to them.

The ideology of objectivity, finally, creates a
circular process which further affects the individual
journalist. Because the news media have always portrayed
events in particular ways, the journalists themselves
see the world partly in the way they have learned to see
it through the news media. These biases work together

with other social influences to make it extremely difficult for journalists to perceive facts without value. In this way, individual journalists become, at least to some extent, the unwitting creations of their own ideology of objectivity.

Thus, journalists do not operate, as the concept of objectivity implies, by presenting all the facts surrounding an event to a public that is then free to make an informed decision. In reality, journalists can only select a small portion of what they perceive and then must make sense of their perceptions by making use of their individual capacities before they communicate these perceptions to their readers. These journalists' capacities cannot be separated from the biases they received from their individual backgrounds, the cultural truisms and stereotypes they have accumulated throughout their lives ("Media Power" 23-24).

The concept of objectivity, however, is not only difficult to put into practice because of journalists' ingrained beliefs and values. Some researchers have argued that the workways and conventions that journalists routinely follow also often make the concept of objectivity difficult to implement in actual journalistic practice. According to the sociologist Gaye Tuchman, the concept of objectivity serves merely as a "strategic ritual," one routine practice among many, that journalists use to help them function with a

minimum of irritation. In this view, journalists use the concept of objectivity primarily to avoid being personally criticized for what they report: they can simply claim that they are only acting as messengers and reporting the facts.

According to Tuchman, however, journalists do not simply collect and report facts; instead, they are engaged in a process of "constructing reality" by following well-established "institutional processes in which newswork is embedded" (Making News 12). Tuchman argued that the "facts," the news that journalists gather, do not exist in the real world in the form in which they eventually appear. Rather, news organizations have developed rigid frames of reference for identifying specific types of news stories in order to synchronize their production schedules with the time schedules of the bureaucracies that provide the raw materials for their product. Events, which may vary considerably, are stereotyped to correspond to one of these predetermined types in a framing process Tuchman defines as "the social construction of patterned ways of looking at the world" ("Consciousness Industries" 331).

The rhythms and conventions developed by journalistic organizations construct a "web of facticity" out of the events in the external world, a process by which official sources are encouraged to create the facts that satisfy the conventions of news

construction (<u>Making News</u> 86). The web of facticity not only relies on official sources but on the form and style of news stories to eliminate much idiosyncracy from the facts, flatten them so they can be used in the conventional form of the news story.

The use of prescribed routines for gathering facts and stylized forms for presenting them "both guides the search and perpetually reconstitutes itself as the frame for news" (103). Indeed, one team of communications researchers concluded after surveying the literature that the concept of objectivity has worked most of all to convince newsworkers to ignore other characteristics of their sources as long as they are official: "...the majority of recent studies have suggested that, as a result of the historically constituted conventions of objectivity, the media side not with any particular party or elite but rather with official accounts in general" (Taylor and Condit 293).

Thus, in this view, the meaning of facts, which the concept of objectivity assumes to be present and obvious in the external world, is itself a creation of the journalistic process. According to Todd Gitlin, journalists develop certain stereotypes ahead of time which they can use to frame facts when those facts become available to them, a process which "consists of imposing standardized assumptions over events and conditions" (Gitlin 264). Gitlin argued that the use of

stereotypes has many advantages for newsworkers in terms of quickly processing quantities of facts into easily recognizable categories (264). Gitlin's example for such stereotyping was the category, "student activist." Used for campus events in the 1960's, this stereotype allowed newsworkers to simplify complex issues by applying standardized explanations to those events.

According to Herbert Gans, such stereotyping often occurs when journalists must make "reality judgments" about certain facts. When a journalist decides that a fact is newsworthy because it is unusual, that decision implies that the journalist has also decided what is usual or normal. When such decisions are made wholesale about a class of facts, such as the assumption most journalists make that fads from California are usually bizarre, such decisions become stereotypes, standardized explanations that defeat the spirit of objectivity, because they apply value judgments to new facts without analyzing them independently (201).

Certain types of information may not even be recognized as news, given newsworkers conventional view of the web of facticity. For example, in Making News, Tuchman uses the coverage of the women's movement in the 1960's and 1970's to illustrate how situations that do not fit the requirements of the web of facticity are often either ignored or trivialized by newsworkers. Tuchman argued that, for a variety of reasons, the

details of the women's movement did not satisfy newsworkers' definitions of newsworthy facts. First, because the leaders of the women's movement did not often hold recognized positions of power, they were not routinely recognized as sources for facts. When they were recognized as sources, they did not have the legitimacy of official positions to give their facts credibility. Betty Friedan, one of the early leaders of the women's movement, was a former reporter who attempted to receive attention from newsworkers by writing magazine articles and calling news conferences. Yet, because she was not recognized as a power holder, newspeople did not take her seriously.

In addition, the women's movement was oriented more toward issues than toward events while the web of facticity is designed to catch details about events and not details about issues. Issues demand "analytic explanations of the everyday world as a socially experienced structure," and newspeople rarely supply such analysis (139). Rather, newspeople gather facts about events and not about the structure behind the events. Therefore, the few situations that newsworkers defined as events, such as incidents of bra burning, were given a great deal of publicity, thus trivializing the whole movement.

Tuchman argued that the women's movement had little chance from the start to be taken seriously, because, by

long tradition, "male concerns" had been considered hard news in the web of facticity, worthy of front page treatment, while information about women was considered soft news and relegated to the feature section of the newspaper (138). Newsworkers were further confused by the women's movement, because its members often met at odd times when child care was available and in informal settings where members could conveniently gather. Newsworkers were not accustomed to gathering important facts in such circumstances. Slavishly following these definitions and work rhythms, newsworkers consesquently treated facts about the women's movement lightly.

The work of other scholars who have focused on the systems approach to studying the news media suggests that journalists' relationships with their sources also interfere with those journalist's attempts to be objective. The systems approach to the study of political communications establishes a framework for examining the various components at work in the process of political communication in liberal-democratic societies:

> If we look at a political communication
> system, what we see is two sets of
> institutions, political and media
> organizations, which are involved in the
> course of message preparation in much
> 'horizontal' interaction with each other,

while on a 'vertical axis,' they are
separately and jointly engaged in
disseminating and processing information and
ideas to and from the mass citizenry (Gurevich
and Blumler 274).

The importance of such a system's approach for this
study is the finding that the relationships that develop
between journalists and politicians often become more
important to the journalists than dedication to
objectivity. Blumler and Gurevich, who studied the
relationships between politicians and journalists during
election campaigns, suggested that a "shared culture"
emerges between politicians and the press (Blumler and
Gurevich 481). In this culture, the relationships
between journalists and politicians become regulated by
a number of norms, only one of which is objectivity.

Other norms, including a privileged position for
those in power and established methods for resolving
conflicts, are seen as very significant components of
this culture. In fact, even "the needs of the audience
may be relegated to a back seat" by both politicians and
journalists in their preoccupation with accommodating
one another (490). These relationships create
expectations that both sides must respect unless they
wish to be victims of the other party's moral
indignation. In such situations, even the newsworthiness
of the facts can take a back seat to these normatively

prescribed relationships (Tracey 263).

A study by Rebecca Cline provides an interesting example of what can happen to objectivity when the relationship between a politician and a journalist becomes intensely personal. Cline's study focused on Walter Cronkites's nationally televised interview with former president Gerald Ford at the Republican National Convention on July 16, 1980, in which Cronkite and Ford discussed the possibility that Ford might become Ronald Reagan's vice-presidential running mate in the 1980 presidential election. After performing a detailed content analysis of the videotape of the interview, Cline concluded that the interview made no sense if it were analyzed in political terms as a fact-gathering news interview between a journalist and a politician.

Rather, the interview corresponded extremely well to the model of a relationship between a psychotherapist and a patient. Within this model, Cronkite functioned as an empathetic therapist attempting to help a client make a difficult personal decision. Cronkite, in this interview, was judged to be very uncomfortable with using probing questions that would have revealed the important facts concerning Ford's entrance into the presidential race, facts, for example, about the constitutional issue that had been raised because both Reagan and Ford were legal residents of the same state. Rather, Cronkite was judged to be almost exclusively

devoted to assisting Ford in a therapeutic sense. Cronkite even helped Ford to rationalize away the constitutional problems with his legal residence in the effort to assist Ford in resolving his personal problems about running for vice president.

Ford, in turn, functioned as if he were a patient in a therapy session who was willing to engage in self-exploration and self-revelation in order to resolve his problems. Cline argued that this interview did not make sense when viewed as an interaction between a journalist and a politician in a news situation but did make sense in terms of the close personal relationship that seemed to exist between Cronkite and Ford during the interview. Cronkite had apparently allowed his personal relationship with Ford to become so important that he assumed a therapeutic role with Ford, acting as facilitator in helping Ford to explore the personal dimensions of the decision about whether he should run as vice president. (28-32). This interview, thus, serves as a rather extreme example of how personal relationships between journalists and politicians can alter the objective stance that journalists try to maintain when reporting the news.

This discussion has demonstrated that much research can be cited to support the contention that a tension between objectivity and subjectivity exists within journalism and that the concept of objectivity has been

most difficult to incorporate within traditional journalistic practice. Because this research has demonstrated that the concept of objectivity is a flawed construct that is extremely difficult for journalists to observe in practice, there seems little reason to continue with this theme.

The intention in this dissertation is to turn this line of inquiry on its head, to acknowledge that subjectivity exists as an important component in journalists' work and that further understanding of subjectivity in journalism is of extreme importance to an honest understanding of the journalistic endeavor.

To help to achieve this understanding, I will no longer concentrate on the conventional journalistic forms that emphasize objectivity and distrust subjectivity. I will instead focus on the literary journalism, a form that exists within the journalistic genre as a legitimate object of study among scholars in communication but which emphasizes subjectivity in its reports. To understand properly how literary journalism operates to illuminate subjectivity, we must first become more familiar with the form.

Chapter Two

Subjectivity and Literary Journalism

Although the origin of the term new journalism
remains uncertain, several writers trace it to the
author Pete Hamill, who suggested to the editor of
Nugget magazine in 1965 that he write an article about
the emerging new journalism (Wolfe 23; Zavarzadeh 63).
One problem with the term new journalism was that some
early critics used the term to include forms much
different from the literary form which is the subject
here. One comprehensive definition grouped the literary
form together with forms that represented traditional
investigative reporting and the journalism that appeared
in anti-establishment underground newspapers during the
1960's (Dennis "The Magic Writing Machine" 4).

The term new journalism, however, soon came to be
understood by most authors, critics, and scholars "as a
nonfiction genre combining the techniques of literature
and journalism" (Murphy). Two other terms, literary
journalism or literary nonfiction, have been used
interchangeably with new journalism in discussions of
that literary form that is the central focus of this
study. For purposes of consistency and to avoid any
remaining confusion about the term new journalism, I
will use the designation literary journalism to refer to
the form (Eason, "New Journalism, Metaphor and Culture"

142, Sims 4, Weber 1). Whatever the origins of the term, several researchers have argued that the form is not new. The use of literary journalism in this country has been traced back to the penny press of the 1830's, to Mark Twain, to the post-Civil War newspaperman Julian Ralph and to James Agee, Lillian Ross, and John Hersey (Hough 116-117; Weber 14). However, although these earlier writers may have influenced contemporary literary journalists, literary journalism was never discussed and recognized by critics as a separate form or as a literary movement until the mid-1960's (Weber 13). Because the early history of the form has been researched by others, my references to literary journalism will include only the work produced from the mid-1960's to the present, the period in which literary journalism has existed as a recognized movement.

Tom Wolfe served as the self-appointed spokesman for literary journalism when the movement first began to arouse widespread interest. In his introduction to the anthology The New Journalism, which he edited, Wolfe traced the beginnings of the movement to a group of feature writers working in New York City during the early 1960's. These writers included Charles Portis, Jimmy Breslin, and Milton Schaap, all of whom worked along with Wolfe on the Herald Tribune, and Gay Talese and Robert Lipsyte who worked at the New York Times. According to Wolfe, the competition among these highly

skilled feature writers produced the first examples of literary journalism in which reporting techniques were combined with literary techniques to produce highly readable and entertaining articles, such as an intimate portrait of Joe Louis by Talese and an article on Teamster boss Anthony Provenzano by Breslin (Wolfe 11-13).

Wolfe did not consider this phenomenon a movement, because there were "no manifestos, clubs, salons, cliques..." (23). Nonetheless, the term movement seems appropriate, because Wolfe's description of the growth of the form satisfies one widely accepted definition of a movement, which is "a new development in literary activity or interest" (Holman 314). Wolfe wrote that soon after these first articles appeared, a large coterie of writers began to adopt the form. These writers included established authors such as Truman Capote, George Plimpton, and Norman Mailer as well as lesser-known writers such as Hunter Thompson, Joan Didion, James Mills, and Wolfe himself. As the popularity of literary journalism grew, the form began to attract a great deal of attention from critics (23-28). Wolfe attributed literary journalism's growing popularity to the widespread turmoil in society and to the need felt by readers to understand this turmoil better. According to Wolfe, the major contemporary novelists were either unable or unwilling to meet this

need, and so the task fell to the literary journalists (30-31).

Literary journalism may sometimes be associated with headline-grabbing, sensational subjects, but writers have consistently used the form as well to tell about ordinary people struggling to live ordinary lives. While Truman Capote was writing In Cold Blood in the mid-1960's, Tom Wolfe was writing about the aficionados of custom-made cars in Southern California in The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby and Joan Didion about obscure places and obscure people in the Sacramento Valley in Slouching Towards Bethlehem. Over a decade later, while Gay Talese was composing his bestseller, Thy Neighbor's Wife, about the sexual revolution in America, John McPhee was writing about life in the Alaskan wilderness in Coming into the Country and Jane Kramer about a modern American cowboy living in the Texas Panhandle in The Last Cowboy. Jon Franklin, writing in the mid-1980's, identified his own Pulitzer-Prize winning story about an operation on a woman's brain as a "non-fiction short story" and identified his work as part of the same "new genre of nonfiction drama" that began with Truman Capote's In Cold Blood (5).

Arguments about the tension between objectivity and subjectivity within the form have accompanied literary journalism from its beginnings. Dwight Macdonald

launched one of the earliest and most influential attacks on it in an article in which he coined the term parajournalism to refer to literary journalism. In this article, Macdonald referred to literary journalism as "a bastard form" that did not work successfully either as journalism or as fiction. Macdonald argued that literary journalism both distorted facts and debased literary techniques (223).

Macdonald thus presented two arguments against literary journalism for its lack of objectivity. One argument simply stated that literary journalism was a kind of fraud when it pretended to be true factual reporting and that it would only be acceptable if it admitted to being pure entertainment (228). The other argument maintained that literary journalism was too subjective, that its authors did not establish the kind of detachment needed to make them credible:

> . . . the parajournalist cozies up, merges into the subject so completely that the viewpoint is wholly from inside, like family gossip. . . . There is no space between writer and topic, no 'distance' to allow the most rudimentary objective judgment . . . (227).

Other criticisms of factual inaccuracy in literary journalism centered mainly on a character called "Redpants," who appeared in several articles by Gail Sheehy. Sheehy later admitted that this character was a

composite character developed from details about the lives of several prostitutes Sheehy knew in New York. Such use of composite characters was attacked by critics and generally judged as a distortion of the facts and so violated the principles of literary journalism (Rivers 242; Hellmann 18-19). Carl Van Dellan attacked the literary journalism for a lack of accuracy that blurred the line between "record and invention," a fault that Van Dellan claimed could contribute to the rise of totalitarianism, because totalitarian control depends upon the confusion between truth and falsity" (230).

Van Dellan also criticized literary journalism on the more familiar grounds that the form was too subjective, that it emphasized the egos of its authors so much that it becomes suspect (229). This criticism was echoed by others, who claimed that the authors of literary journalism were so visible within the form that their works were essentially about themselves and their views (Gold 289; Strozier 79). For some, this criticism seemed to be directed at the difference between literary journalism and conventional journalism. The literary journalists did not have "pride in dispassion" that traditional journalists had and did not use the proper language in their reports: "People aren't allowed to talk like this on the front page of the daily paper" (McGill 94).

Others saw the problem as more complicated.

According to Michael Arlen, literary journalism was part of an experiment by writers who wanted to go beyond the formula of traditional journalism that concentrated mainly on facts and official statements. However, he argued that literary journalism had gone too far by presenting the subjective views of its authors and that these authors distorted reality by insisting that we see it from their point of view. They had replaced the restrictions of conventional journalism with restrictions imposed by their own egos (254).

The obvious response to the criticism that literary journalism was factually inaccurate was to argue the opposite, which the supporters of literary journalism have done. First, there is general acceptance among critics of literary journalism that the writers who use this form are claiming, by its use, that the facts they present are accurate:

> The New Journalist adheres to a journalistic contract with the reader. He promises, in effect, that he will not invent 'facts' and present them as empirically verifiable when they are only figments of his imagination (Meyers 39).

Indeed, some supporters of literary journalism have argued that the facts that appear in literary journalism are often more accurate than the facts that appear in conventional journalism. According to John Hollowell,

for example, the tendency for literary journalists to
rely less on official sources may make their work more
accurate than conventional journalistic reports that
rely heavily on such sources. Hollowell argued that
literary journalists' tendency to investigate events
themselves and to delve inside the private worlds of the
people whom they cover often makes it unnecessary for
them to rely on "the official attitudes of those with
vested interests in how the news gets reported" (23).

Gay Talese, himself a popular literary journalist,
argued that literary journalism, although similar in
form to fiction, is not fiction:

> It is, or should be, as reliable as the most
> reliable reportage although it seeks a larger
> truth than is possible through the mere
> compilation of verifiable facts, the use of
> direct quotations, and adherence to the rigid
> organizational style of the older form"
> ("Author's Note" to Fame and Obscurity).

Talese argued that literary journalism is as
accurate as conventional journalism even though it is
journalism of a different kind. He attempted to explain
this difference by describing the manner in which he
gathered facts for his own reports:

> I try to follow my subjects unobtrusively
> while observing them in revealing situations,
> noting their reactions and the reaction of

others to them. I attempt to absorb the whole
scene, the dialogue and mood, the tension,
drama, conflict, and then I try to write it
all from the point of view of the persons I am
writing about . . . ("Author's Note").

Talese argued that he observed events and collected
facts for his reports as carefully as any conventional
journalist, but the facts he collected differed from the
facts that the conventional journalist would have
gathered. Actually, Talese seemed to be implying here
that his reportorial methods were really designed to
gather much more than facts. His goal seemed to be to
report about events in which other people were involved,
just as any journalist would be expected to do, but he
seemed to want to capture those events in a manner that
would permit the reader to understand the way those
events appeared both to the reporter and to the people
involved in the events.

He seemed to be saying that to report only what
occurred in the event from the point of view of a
neutral party, a detached observer, would not be
adequate, would not be capturing the "larger truth" of
which he spoke. He implied that he could not adequately
communicate what he wanted to communicate by simply
shining a light on the surface elements in the event but
that he must try to light up the entire scene from the
inside so that he could capture the points of view of

the people involved in the event. The implication is that the methods of the conventionally objective reporter captured less than his own methods.

Of what, then, does "less" consist? Again, the answer must be, at least in part, less of the subjective realities of the reporter and the people involved in the report. And, again, we see those subjective realities appear as positive rather than negative components of a journalistic report.

Dan Wakefield, in a very early article on literary journalism, argued that certain kinds of subjectivity, particularly the personal involvement of the reporter in the story, could represent a positive component of the story. This involvement, Wakefield argued, allowed reporters to be officially present, so they could present the story in an "imaginative" manner:

> . . . imaginative not because the author has distorted the facts, but because he has presented them in a full instead of a naked manner, brought out the sights, sounds, and feel surrounding those facts, and connected them by comparison with other facts of history, society, and literature in an artistic manner that does not diminish but gives greater depth and dimension to the facts (87).

Both Talese and Wakefield have suggested that

literary journalists are willing to take a chance by throwing off the cloak of invisibility in which journalists so often hide themselves. By coming forward to present an event, admittedly from their own points of view, the literary journalists are not distorting the facts about those events but are providing a perspective that strengthens the accuracy of their reports. Of course, both Talese and Wakefield's unstated assumption is that the individual literary journalist has the skill to recreate these events in a way that includes such a useful perspective.

These authors' arguments also suggest that another assumption actually lies behind each journalistic report of events, no matter how little or how much the journalist attempts to recreate the entire event. This is a common bias that all journalists bring to their reports. As Eric Heyne said in a doctoral dissertation on literary journalism, journalists are asserting their commitment to factual accuracy by merely presenting their reports in the first place: "Whenever an author claims to be merely reporting the story, or telling it like it is, or giving us the real truth, he is actually defending his own privileged standards of factual adequacy" (66).

According to Ronald Weber, these assumptions may be particularly suspect when literary journalists make them, because they employ techniques usually associated

with fiction. This association can raise doubts about the "writer's commitment to fact" (53). Weber suggested that literary journalists could combat this problem by providing some account of the methods they used to collect facts, by explaining within the text how the facts were collected or by including such explanations either in author's notes before the text (as Talese had done in Fame and Obscurity) or in explanatory afterwords.

Two critics of literary journalism, Mas'ud Zavarzadeh and John Hellmann, attempted to resolve the doubts that arose around literary journalism because of its use of literary and journalistic techniques together. Both critics built upon the differentiation that Northrop Frye, the literary scholar, made between types of writing. Frye argued that individual works of prose may refer both inwardly, to themselves, and outwardly, to the external world. However, Frye maintained, the overall or final direction of a work determines whether that work is "literary" (it refers primarily to itself) or "assertive" (it refers primarily to the external world) (73-74).

Zavarzadeh argued that contemporary society had become so confusing and overloaded with information that writers of neither fiction nor nonfiction could any longer communicate with readers. Fiction writers had to depend upon a shared understanding of reality with their

readers in order for those readers to accept the
fictional worlds the writers created, but, in the
chaotic contemporary world, no such shared understanding
was possible. On the other hand, the modern
technological world had become so complex that writers
who simply attempted to explain that world using
assertive or nonfiction prose also could not be
understood. Thus, Zavarzadeh argued that both of Fry's
directions of reference were invalid, because both
literary and assertive writing had become nonsensical
(21).

He claimed, however, that literary journalism could
take the place of these outdated forms of writing,
because literary journalism was "a distinct literary
genre, a unique mode of apprehending and transcribing
reality" (57). According to Zavarzadeh, literary
journalism could create an amalgam in which the two
directions of reference existed simultaneously in one
form. And, because literary journalism was a new genre,
a whole new vocabulary had to be invented to analyze the
form. In Zavarzadeh's discussion of literary journalism,
people became "actant" and "actee," narrative point of
view became "architectonics," plot became "actemes," and
so on (79-80).

Thus, Zavarzadeh largely avoided confronting doubts
about literary journalism's factualism (created by the
form's use of literary techniques) by claiming that

contemporary society's disintegration had made any differentiation between fact and fiction impossible. This position seems rather extreme not only because of Zavarzadeh's lack of evidence but also because such a claim, if true, would make the tension between objectivity and subjectivity in literary journalism disappear. These somewhat simplistic solutions to the issues that confront literary journalism plus Zavarzadeh's probably unnecessary invention of a new critical vocabulary casts doubt over his argument.

However, his point about the synthesizing capabilities of literary journalism is noteworthy. This idea that the techniques of fiction and nonfiction may be made to operate in concert to produce insights about contemporary society is an important one. Such a combination of literary and assertive writing might have a power that either type alone would not have. Frye wrote about the ability of the literary forms to produce a "structure of interconnected motifs" that bring meaning to the diverse elements included within an imaginative work (74). Perhaps, by combining the techniques of fiction and nonfiction, literary journalism gains the ability to establish interrelationships and similarities between events that would appear isolated and disconnected if represented in a form that used either the techniques of fiction or the techniques of nonfiction exclusively.

John Hellmann also used Northrup Frye's concept of direction of reference in an attempt to minimize doubts created by literary journalism's use of both fictional and journalistic techniques. Hellmann argued that works of literary journalism do contain a combination of assertive and literary techniques, but he did not believe that this combination violated Frye's distinctions between such techniques. He argued that the final direction of literary journalism pointed toward literature, because its assertive aspects are subsumed by its "aesthetic form and purpose" making its "final direction inward" ("The Nature and Modes of the New Journalism" 520).

However, Hellmann also argued that the literary journalism's status as a form of "fiction" did not affect its status as a factual form. He maintained that we must begin to think of the terms factual and fictional in a new way--not as respective examples of recording and invention but, rather, in terms of whether their primary meaning depended on their relation to the external world or to the world they created inside themselves. Once the determination had been made that a work is primarily "inward-pointing," however, we are then free to examine in what ways the work also points outward (521). Thus, Hellmann argued that the best way to differentiate genres of fiction is to determine the different relationships those genres have to the

external world.

In the case of literary journalism, although it ultimately points inward, it also points outward to a journalistic world in its use of journalistic principles of accuracy to gather information. According to Hellmann, the authors of literary journalism make a journalistic contract with the reader that they will report the facts accurately, and this promise is as much a component of the genre as its use of point of view or scenic description. In fact, the "aesthetic effect" of a work of literary journalism can be seriously altered if its author does not keep this promise just as it would be altered if the author made a confusing use of point of view (524).

Hellmann seemed to have been so involved in validating Frye's arguments on direction of reference that he downplayed his own insights into literary journalism. His use of the word "fiction" to describe a form that he identifies as primarily factual is confusing and actually distracts us from those insights. Hellmann seems to be saying that literary journalism is a kind of factual fiction, which appears to be a contradiction in terms no matter how hard he tries to explain away the contradiction. In the end, Hellmann's description of literary journalism adds up to an original form, one that cannot be accurately described using either one of Frye's directions of reference.

Hellmann's main contribution to the criticism of literary journalism seems to be his recognition not that literary journalism is fiction but that literary journalism has important similarities to fiction and, also, important differences. First, literary journalism is similar in form to fiction--both are created using literary techniques. Second, both forms have "an aesthetic form and purpose," a phrase that Hellmann seems to be using to suggest that both works of fiction and works of literary journalism strive to become an object of art that is both understandable and satisfying. The major difference between fiction and literary journalism is the assumption that authors of fiction invent at least some of the facts that appear in their works and that authors of literary journalism do not.

Thus, both Hellmann and Zavarzadeh have emphasized that authors of literary journalism use the techniques of both fiction and nonfiction to create a unique form whose power is attributable to both those other forms but which operates in ways different from either of them. Both critics have also suggested that authors of literary journalism seem to be attempting to unify these various elements within the form. However, neither Zavarzadeh nor Hellmann have demonstrated how, specifically, authors of literary journalism actually use this combination of techniques to achieve their

goals or, precisely, what these goals are outside of a general interest in creating unity within their works and in helping readers to understand contemporary society.

To discover these goals and how they are achieved, we must carefully consider the role of the author in literary journalism. According to Sandra Braman, such an examination is important because it focuses on the "locus of consciousness" in literary journalism which she defines as the "explicit recognition of the reporter's role in the shaping of reported facts, both as an actor in the reality being described and as a creative selector and framer of the data being communicated" (11). In essence, this recognition represents a recognition of the importance of subjectivity in literary journalism, in this case a recognition of the reporter's subjective reality. Such a recognition is central to this study and represents an important starting point for a discussion of the illumination of subjectivity in literary journalism.

Chapter Three

Literary Journalism

as Illuminator of Subjectivity

Once we have determined that literary journalists use a combination of techniques drawn from both fiction and nonfiction, we can begin to examine how they use these techniques to illuminate subjectivity. Central to such an examination is an understanding of the manner in which literary journalists view the events on which they report. This relationship helps to determine both how these journalists use the techniques at their disposal to portray those events and what kind of information they select to include in their reports.

The critic David Eason described literary journalism as a form that produced meaning by calling attention to the process in which reality is constructed. Eason argued that literary journalism, in contrast to traditional journalism, "calls attention to itself as symbolic construction, similar to but distinct from the events it signifies" ("New Journalism, Metaphor and Culture" 145). According to Eason, the use of the literary devices in literary journalism forces the reader to be aware of the process through which the author constructs reality while traditional journalism hides this process from the reader by pretending the report itself is part of the event. In essence, Eason

maintained that (1) literary journalism is a self-conscious form; (2) this self-consciousness draws attention to the "world views" or the subjective realities of both the reporter and others who appear within the report. The result of this emphasis on the process of the creation of reality, which is normally hidden in conventional journalism, is a more complete and more credible portrayal of the actual event (145-146).

Eason described literary journalism as a form that "chronicles the interaction between consciousness and events. The story that is told is not one discovered out there in the world but the story of the writer's efforts to impose order on those events" ("New Journalism and the Image World" 60). This portrayal of literary journalism as a form that intentionally creates individual versions of reality raises questions about the manner in which the authors of literary journalism approach their work. Are they aware of the importance of their own subjective appraisal of events as Eason claims? If they are aware of this interplay between their own consciousness and events, how do they construct their reports in order to reflect this interplay?

To address these questions and reach some conclusions about the identity of literary journalism, one can examine its philosophical underpinnings as they

appeared at the beginning of the movement in the 1960's when this form gained widespread acceptance. Three early practitioners of the form--Tom Wolfe, Truman Capote, and Joan Didion--are good choices for such an analysis for several reasons. Tom Wolfe served as a kind of spokesman for the new journalism when the movement first began to arouse widespread interest, and his writing about the form became the focal point of early critical and scholarly work. Truman Capote was the first writer within the movement to use the techniques of literary journalism to produce a book-length work--a book that he termed a "nonfiction novel" (Plimpton "The Story Behind a Nonfiction Novel" 188). Joan Didion argued for experimentation in journalism during this period and made an important contribution to literary journalism through her finely crafted short pieces in the form.

In this analysis I examine the principles and purposes of these three early practitioners of the form. I then examine selected examples from these authors' works in an attempt to discover what underlying principles or philosophy operate in the work itself. Taken together, the authors' stated purposes and the characteristics that emerge from my analysis of their work should permit a sharper focus on the form. By examining these authors' stated purposes, I am, in effect, assuming that their statements about their

intentions will be useful. I realize that there are limitations to any such use for the author, as Quentin Skinner has shown, "may have been self-deceiving about recognizing his intentions, or incompetent about stating them" (405). In addition, authors could purposely misrepresent their intentions to promote their work or for other self-serving purposes. For this reason, I may finally disagree with an author's statements if my analysis of a work differs with the author's own analysis of that work.

In spite of limitations, I still consider authors' stated intentions to be extremely important. Because I am attempting to analyze the principles or philosophical underpinnings of this form, I believe that the principles or philosophies of the early practitioners of the form are most important. For example, because this form is based on reports of actual events, the authors' methods for gathering facts and their attitudes toward the process of gathering facts are important considerations in determining the credibility of the work they produce. In this example, the authors' statements will often represent the primary evidence about these methods and attitudes.

Thus, in the case of this study, undertaking such an analysis of the authors' intentions conforms to Skinner's conclusion that a knowledge of such intentions is particularly important when one wishes "to criticize

or contribute to a particular tradition of discourse . . ." (404). In addition there is an ethical dimension to the use of an author's intentions in an analysis of his work as E.D. Hirsch, Jr. has argued:

> When we simply use an author's words for our own purposes without respecting his intentions, we transgress what Charles Stevenson in another context called "the ethics of language," just as we transgress ethical norms when we use another person merely for our own ends (90).

Hirsch discussed a practical as well as an ethical justification for the use of an author's intentions when analyzing his work by arguing that "when we fail to conjoin a man's intentions to his words we lose the soul of speech, which is to convey meaning and to understand what is intended to be conveyed" (90). For these practical and ethical reasons, I believe the use of these authors' statements of purpose are both significant and justifiable.

Because Tom Wolfe is one of the authors I will discuss in detail in this chapter, I will focus on Wolfe's analysis of the literary journalism that he included in the introduction to his anthology. Wolfe attempted to isolate the most important literary and journalistic techniques that he believed made literary journalism such a powerful form for reporting events.

Wolfe described literary journalism as a form that, in addition to using expository prose, also used literary techniques usually associated with fiction.

He included the following literary techniques in his discussion: (1) the use of scenes to structure the narratives rather than the relative importance of events or their chronological order--the two most common devices for structuring traditional journalistic reports; (2) the complete recording of dialogue within each scene; (3) the use of first and third person point of view, a device that allows the reader to experience the scene "through the eyes of a particular character, giving the reader the feeling of being inside the character's mind and experiencing the emotional reality of the scene as he experiences it"; (4) the recording of "status life," the careful accumulation of descriptive details that illustrate the social milieu of the actors included in the report (31-32).

Wolfe also discussed the journalistic techniques literary journalists use, techniques that he identified with the term saturation reporting. He said saturation reporting included the normal investigative legwork and research that journalists customarily use in gathering facts for their reports. However, his discussion of saturation reporting focused on the requirement that reporters spend a great deal of time observing and interviewing their subjects, that reporters become part

of those subjects' lives so that they know them in a complete way, similar to the way that novelists know their characters. However, while the novelist may simply invent scenes, characters, and dialogue, the literary journalist who wished to include such components in reports of actual events had to become intimately connected with those events (50-52).

Wolfe argued that this intense involvement encouraged a strong narrative voice that contrasted sharply with the neutral, detached, narrative voice that appeared in most traditional journalistic reports. Wolfe adroitly captured his attitude toward both the literary journalism and the traditional journalism in a single comment about this narrator. In this comment, Wolfe described his impression of readers' probable response to the traditional reporter's voice: "When they came upon that pale beige tone, it began to signal to them, unconsciously, that a well-known bore was here again, 'the journalist,' a pedestrian mind, a phlegmatic spirit, a faded personality" (17).

Wolfe said that he had adopted literary journalism partly "to avoid coming on like the usual non-fiction narrator, with a hush in my voice, like a radio announcer at a tennis match." Wolfe argued that this difference in style "had nothing to do with objectivity or subjectivity" in reporting but represented a simple difference between a dull monotonous tone and a tone

that was engaging and colorful (17-18).

However, Wolfe's own use of these techniques seems to result in more than a simple change in style and tone from a conventional journalistic report. Wolfe's "Radical Chic," a report on the fascination of New York's social elite with radical political groups in the late 1960's, offers examples of the techniques he discussed in the introduction to his anthology. The focus of the piece is a party that Leonard Bernstein, conductor of the New York Philharmonic, gave at his home for members of the Black Panther Party in 1969 (Radical Chic & Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers).

"Radical Chic" is an unusual blend of the techniques of fiction and non-fiction and, therefore, represents a good example of literary journalism. A concise, well-researched history of New York's social elite, the piece establishes a logical explanation for the strange socio-political atmosphere of the time--a climate that encouraged the city's social elite in 1969 to entertain lavishly some of society's most notorious outcasts. The main point of Wolfe's explanation is that New York's social elite in 1969 found a perfect complement to both their left-leaning political beliefs and their social pretensions in the exotic members of the Black Panther Party with their "Afros, shades, and shoot-outs" (42).

Throughout "Radical Chic," Wolfe's carefully-

wrought factual information is combined with a liberal use of the literary devices he mentioned in the introduction to his anthology. For example, the piece begins with a description of a vision apparently occurring within the mind of Leonard Bernstein himself. The piece also includes pages of dialogue that Wolfe obtained himself at the party, many examples of the elaborate descriptions Wolfe termed "status life," and a distinct, highly individual narrative voice.

The following excerpt from Wolfe's description of the food served at the Bernstein party for the Black Panthers illustrates his use of status life and the unique narrative voice he developed for use in this piece:

> Mmmmmmmmmmmm. These are nice Little Roquefort cheese morsels rolled in crusted nuts; very tasty. Very subtle. It's the way the dry sackiness of the nuts tiptoe up against the dour savor of the cheese that is so nice, so subtle. Wonder what the Black Panthers eat here on the hors d'oeuvre trail? (4)

Wolfe uses this description to create the impression of high society in the party's ambience and the incongruity created by the presence of the revolutionaries. As the piece continues, Wolfe attempts to illustrate that incongruity using more descriptive detail:

That huge Panther there, the one Felicia is
smiling her tango smile at, is Robert Bay, who
just forty-one hours ago was arrested in an
altercation with police, supposedly over a .38
caliber revolver. . . . And now he is out on
bail and walking into Leonard and Felicia
Bernstein's thirteen-room penthouse. . . .
They're real, these Black Panthers . . . real
revolutionaries. Everyone casts a glance, or
stares, or tries to smile, and then sizes up
the house for the somehow delicious
counterpoint (6).

This description not only demonstrates the party's
bizarre incongruity but also illustrates how Wolfe used
the ironic narrative voice to establish his own
subjective meaning for the piece: that the flirtation of
New York's social elite with the ideals of radical
groups like the Black Panthers was just as incongruous,
insincere, and dishonest as the high-fashion parties
this elite gave the radicals to obtain the most
vicarious of thrills. Wolfe further established this
meaning later in the piece when he pointedly described
how, at the first sign that their flirtation could
generate adverse publicity, the elite quickly severed
all ties with the radical groups and publicly denied
that they ever even socialized with them.

In the introduction to an abridged version of

"Radical Chic" that appeared in his anthology, Wolfe
carefully explained his methods for gathering dialogue
for the piece:

> I came to the Bernstein's party for no other
> reason than to write about it, arrived with a
> note-book and ballpoint pen in plain view and
> took notes in the center of the living room
> throughout the action described (378).

Wolfe's comments suggest that he saw himself as a writer
with a strong commitment to accuracy. Wolfe assumed the
role of a reporter and seemed anxious to convince his
readers that he recorded the dialogue that appears in
"Radical Chic" conscientiously and accurately, that he
believed such determined devotion to the facts was
important to the piece and did not want readers to
believe that he had fabricated any of his material.
Thus, Wolfe seemed to be arguing again that accurate
reporting and the credibility of the reporter are
important elements in the success and effectiveness of
this work and other works of literary journalism. Here,
Wolfe was essentially reiterating the argument stated
earlier in the introduction to the anthology that
literary journalism has as its advantage "the simple
fact that the reader knows all this actually happened"
(34).

However, this devotion to accuracy seems to
conflict with Wolfe's handling of the opening scene in

this piece. In his introduction, Wolfe sought to explain this scene in which he reported Leonard Bernstein's thoughts. Wolfe justified this seeming lapse from facts by noting that the monologue represented Bernstein's own words, words that Wolfe had borrowed from another author's interview with Bernstein (377). Thus, he argued, the monologue represented Bernstein's own words. But, this assertion is certainly a curious defense of reportorial accuracy, for Wolfe cannot reasonably maintain that this dramatic literary device, which Wolfe called Bernstein's "insomniac vision" (378), represented an accurate portrayal of material that originally appeared as direct quotations in an interview Bernstein had granted.

Rather, this argument seems to be Wolfe's rather desperate attempt to justify granting himself all his desires: the wish to provide the reader with a glimpse of Bernstein's subjective reality, Bernstein's private thoughts and fantasies, and the wish to maintain a record of reportorial accuracy. Wolfe's statements here simply emphasize the conflict between his devotion to reportorial accuracy and his devotion to capturing the inner world of his main character, a conflict that, in this case, he resolved by subordinating his devotion to reportorial accuracy.

My examination of "Radical Chic" does seem to support Wolfe's claim that he would use the techniques

of literary journalism to report the facts. The examination also shows that he went far beyond his stated intentions in his efforts to communicate a subjective meaning for the piece. Wolfe used literary devices such as the strong narrative voice, scenic construction, dialogue, point of view, status life, and saturation reporting to a far greater extent than they are commonly used in traditional newspaper and magazine reports of actual events.

However, these devices seemed to be employed not only to report events more efficiently but also to illuminate his own subjective reality and that of the main characters in the piece. Wolfe's comment in the introduction to "Radical Chic" that he "depended heavily on details of status life to try to draw the reader inside the emotional life of the characters" (377) illustrates his conscious commitment to this goal. In addition, Wolfe's choice of the particular narrative voice in "Radical Chic" is an obvious and important presence throughout the piece. This ironic, almost sarcastic, voice strongly supports his earlier argument that such a personal voice is of utmost importance to the ultimate effect of literary journalism.

The difference between the narrative voice in "Radical Chic" and the detached reportorial voice common to traditional journalism is striking. This voice placed Wolfe himself, not some generic reporter, in a central

position in the piece. Perhaps Wolfe was correct when he said that the difference between the personal voice in literary journalism and the generic voice in the traditional journalism did not make one form more objective than the other. But the narrator's personal voice in "Radical Chic" does imprint the author's signature boldly on the piece while the neutral voice in the traditional journalism does not.

David Eason argued that literary journalism changes the meaning of an event "by stressing the role of the reporter in constructing a particular reality . . . <u>by calling attention to discourse as a mode of interpreting the real</u>" [emphasis added] ("New Journalism, Metaphor and Culture" 146). Wolfe calls attention to himself as a major force in creating the reality of "Radical Chic" both through his use of a strong narrative voice and through the use of the other literary devices. Wolfe's suggestion in his introduction to "Radical Chic" that he is functioning as a neutral recorder of information conflicts with the impression within the text that the author is very much a part of the story's meaning (378).

A similar tension with a similar result seems to emerge when one examines both the stated purposes and the work of Truman Capote's <u>In Cold Blood</u>. Published in 1965, the book became the first great popular success for literary journalism, with sales of 100,000 immediately after its release (Hollowell 63). The book

chronicles the events surrounding the mass murder of a Kansas farm family by two ex-convicts in 1959. The book's chronology begins with the events leading up to the murder, continues with the murder investigation and the capture and trial of the suspects, and ends with their execution in April, 1965.

In an interview with George Plimpton that appeared in the New York Times Book Review shortly after In Cold Blood was published, Capote said that the reason he wrote the book had little to do with his initial interest in the murder case but was motivated by his desire to experiment with a literary theory that he had held for some time:

> The decision was based on a theory I've harbored since I first began to write professionally, which is well over 20 years ago. It seemed to me that journalism, reportage, could be forced to yield a serious new art form, the nonfiction novel (188).

Capote defined this art form as "a narrative form that employed all the techniques of fictional art but was nevertheless immaculately factual . . ." (189).

Although Capote had recently completed In Cold Blood and may have used this interview both to promote his book and defend it from criticism, I cannot easily doubt his claim of devotion to that aspect of his theory that demanded that the work be "immaculately factual."

In the interview with Plimpton, Capote described how he
had spent much of the past six years in Kansas
conducting detailed interviews with practically everyone
who had first-hand knowledge of the case or who knew the
people directly involved in the case. He had received
permission to use the real names of all the people he
mentioned in the book except for three minor actors
(193-194; Hollowell 31.) Capote also took great care
within the text itself to provide detailed
identification of most of the sources of the factual
material included in the book. In addition to the
quotations and dialogue attributed to specific
individuals in the book, he provided detailed references
to police documents, court records, and newspaper
accounts quoted within the text. In an author's note
preceding the text, Capote said:

> All the material in this book not derived from
> my own observations is either taken from
> official records or is the result of
> interviews with the persons directly
> concerned, more often than not numerous
> interviews conducted over a considerable
> period of time.

Thus, Capote seems to have been quite determined
that the factual material included in the book be
accurate, and, also, that he be able to prove that
accuracy through careful documentation. However, in his

interview about the book, he seemed to be equally dedicated to the other half of the equation that demanded that he create "a narrative form that employed all the techniques of fictional art . . ." (189).

In Cold Blood was written and organized as if it were a novel. Capote presented the factual material he obtained from personal interviews and official documents through a succession of dramatic scenes which are organized in the book in an order that seems designed to create suspense and excitement. Capote used a number of other literary devices in addition to scene-by-scene construction to communicate the action in the book. These devices included the use of dialogue, the use of an omniscient narrator, and the use of detailed description to communicate the action in the book.

The book begins as a journalistic report might begin--with the most important aspect of the story, the murder of four members of the Clutter family in their farmhouse. Yet, this fact is related by means of dramatic, emotional language that uses words and images to create a mood of horror and foreboding. This highly personal language is delivered through the voice of a strong narrator. This narrative voice is much different from the neutral tone of the traditional journalist that Wolfe criticized in the introduction to his anthology. In this sense, the narrator in Of Cold Blood is similar to the narrator in "Radical Chic." Like Wolfe's

narrator, Capote's narrator has the ability to
illuminate the individual points of view of both the
author and the characters in the work. Together with the
other literary devices, this narrator strongly
influences the overall meaning of the work as did the
narrator in "Radical Chic."

The first pages of In Cold Blood illustrate the
power and influence of this narrator. The book begins
with a simple description narrated in a light, matter-
of-fact tone that emphasizes the small-town morality and
ordinariness of life in Holcomb, Kansas:

> The inhabitants of the village, numbering two
>
> hundred and seventy, were . . . quite content
>
> to exist inside ordinary life--to work, to
>
> hunt, to watch television, to attend school
>
> socials, choir practice, meetings of the 4-H
>
> club (15).

The tone of the description shifts abruptly, however, in
the next passage which contains the report of the
murders:

> But then, in the earliest hours of that
>
> morning, certain foreign sounds impinged on
>
> the normal nightly Holcomb noises--on the
>
> keening hysteria of coyotes, the dry scrape
>
> of scuttling tumbleweed, the racing, receding
>
> wail of locomotive whistles. At the time not
>
> a soul in sleeping Holcomb heard them--four

shotgun blasts that, all told, ended six human
lives (15).

Suddenly, Holcomb's ordinary sounds take on a fearful
cast. The description emphasizes the dark, eerie side
of the ordinary sounds. This particular evening in calm,
pleasant Holcomb is described in terms of "keening
hysteria," "dry scrape," and "receding wail." The
terror of the murders is heightened by the knowledge
that they were committed in a vulnerable "sleeping
Holcomb." This short passage even contains a subtle
foreshadowing of events to come since it reports that
six lives were ended although the murdered Clutter
family consisted of four people. Who are the other dead
and why are all the dead included together as if they
died in the same circumstances? These answers will come
much later.

After these beginning pages announcing the murders,
Capote organized the first section of the book through
the use of three different story lines. One story line
consists of scenes depicting the lives of the Clutter
family on the day of the murders; a second story line
consists of scenes of the two killers, Perry Smith and
Dick Hickock, as they gather the paraphernalia and
weapons to burglarize the Clutter home; a third story
line consists of scenes of the reactions of the
Clutters' friends and neighbors on the day that the
bodies are discovered.

These scenes are not arranged chronologically. Scenes from each of the story lines are interspersed with scenes from the others to create an exciting, suspenseful effect. One crucial scene, a description of the murders themselves, is not included in this section. The reader must wait until much later, toward the end of the third section of the book, after Perry and Dick have been captured following a long manhunt, to discover what actually happened on the night of the murders. This delay adds to the tension of the second and third sections of the book, which consist of scenes that trace the killers' travels across the country and scenes that describe the capture and interrogation of the killers.

The text itself definitely corresponds to that portion of Capote's definition that specified that the nonfiction novel consist of "a narrative form that employed all the techniques of fictional art. . . ." Yet, Capote's use of these literary devices seems to complicate his contention that this form must be "immaculately factual" just as Wolfe's use of these devices complicated his claim to factualism. For example, although the scenes in the book are often based on interviews with people who participated in the action or witnessed the action, Capote himself did not witness most of the action.

In such a situation, a traditional journalist would identify the source of the information, the witness or

participant, and simply report the information that the source provided in the interview through the use of direct or paraphrased quotations. Capote, however, determined to use literary techniques, did not follow such a procedure. Rather, he reconstructed dramatic scenes based on the information received from the interviews and communicated this information through the point of view of the omniscient narrator.

Using this point of view, Capote was able to recreate dialogue, report on characters' unspoken thoughts, and even draw conclusions concerning the motives of the people who appear in the scenes. For example, early in the book, Capote describes Nancy, the Clutter's sixteen-year-old daughter who was to become one of the murder victims, as she bustles about the Clutter farmhouse on the day of the murders:

> Now, upstairs, she changed into faded Levi's and a green sweater and fastened round her wrist her third-most-valued belonging, a gold watch; her closest cat friend, Evinrude, ranked above it. . . . Nancy was a pretty girl, lean and boyishly agile . . . but it was her eyes, wide apart, darkly translucent, like ale held to the light, that made her immediately likeable, that at once announced her lack of suspicion, her considered and yet so easily triggered kindliness (30).

Because Capote never met Nancy Clutter, the facts for this description had to come from people he interviewed who had known her. Capote allows the reader a glimpse of Nancy's own thoughts in this passage when he presents the ranking of her belongings as if that ranking were a product of Nancy's thoughts. The narrator describes her thoughts, and, in this case, there is no direct indication of the source of this information. However, the information concerning her belongings could easily have been obtained from one of Nancy's friends, and the essence of this information does not seem much changed through the use of the literary device.

However, the information that Nancy was likeable and kind because of the color and configuration of her eyes is less easily explained. These personality traits seem to take on the force of indisputable fact when presented in this way. Such a complex judgment would likely carry much less force were it shown to be the simple opinion of some person or even of several people who had known Nancy. In this case, Capote appears to have sacrificed somewhat his dedication to factualism in order to advance another aspect of his work, the subjective reality of one of the book's characters and its author.

In the passage, Nancy Clutter's personality and point of view are communicated through the omniscient

narrator's description. Because she is shown to be such a likeable young person, who loved life, her death becomes more pathetic and the circumstances of her murder even more cold-blooded. Presumably, Capote emphasized the injustice of Nancy's death so later he could more easily create an indictment against capital punishment by demonstrating that the state also committed an injustice by executing Perry Smith and Dick Hickock, that all six of the dead, the number that appears in an earlier passage, were murdered "in cold blood": the four members of the Clutter family were killed in cold blood on the night of the burglary, and the two men who killed them, Perry Smith and Dick Hickock, were later murdered in cold blood by the state of Kansas. Capote needed to equate the state's attitude with the attitudes of Dick and Perry, the human murderers in the book.

Capote developed this theme by concentrating on Perry Smith, who actually shot all the Clutters while Dick Hickock urged him on. Capote reproduced part of Perry's confession to the murders which he had given to the chief detective in the case. This passage provides a sense of Perry's subjective attitude toward the murders just as he was about to kill Mr. Clutter:

Just before I taped him, Mr. Clutter asked me--and these were his last words--wanted to know how his wife was, if she was all right, and I

said she was fine, she was ready to go to
sleep, and I told him it wasn't long till
morning, and how in the morning somebody would
find them, and then all of it, me and Dick and
all, would seem like something they dreamed. I
wasn't kidding him. I didn't want to harm the
man. I thought he was a very nice gentleman.
Soft-spoken. I thought so right up to the
moment I cut his throat (275).

The shocking juxtaposition between Perry's
expressions of compassion and his brutal actions
emphasize his cold-blooded attitude at the time of the
murders. Yet, Capote portrays society's attitude toward
Perry as equally unfeeling. Capote used much of the
final section of the book, titled "The Corner," to
demonstrate the injustices committed against Perry all
of his life. Capote carefully detailed how Perry first
was abused by his parents, how he was viciously abused
in foster homes and institutions when his family broke
apart, and how, finally, he was abused by the state when
his lawyers were prohibited at his trial from
introducing a compelling case that he was insane during
those moments when he murdered the Clutters. Just before
Perry was hanged for the Clutters' murders, Capote chose
to reproduce the following dialogue between a reporter
and a prison guard who had just witnessed Dick's
execution and were about to witness Perry's:

The reporter pursed his lips. "Nobody in
our office wanted the assignment. Me either.
But it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be.
Just like jumping off a diving board. Only
with a rope around your neck."

"They don't feel nothing. Drop, snap, and
that's it. They don't feel nothing."

"Are you sure?" I was standing right
close. I could hear him gasping for breath."

"Uh-huh, but he don't feel nothing.
Wouldn't be humane if he did."

"Well. And I suppose they feed them a lot
of pills. Sedatives."

"Hell, no. Against rules. Here comes
Smith."

"Gosh, I didn't know he was such a
shrimp."

"Yeah, he's little. But so is a
tarantula" (380-381).

This conversation between spectators illustrates
the callous attitude of society toward these executions.
This choice of dialogue also suggests that Capote
selected both the literary device and the facts that
were communicated through it at least in part because
they so dramatically illuminated both society's
insensitive attitudes and Capote's own negative
attitudes toward capital punishment.

Capote provided some interesting comments during his interview with Plimpton. Plimpton asked Capote how he was able to include his views about Perry Smith in a nonfiction book in which he, Capote, never appears. Capote's answer emphasizes the tension between his earlier commitment that the nonfiction novel must be "immaculately factual" and the commitment here to develop his own subjective point of view in the book:

> Of course it's by the selection of what you choose to tell. I believe Perry did what he did for the reasons he himself states--that his life was a constant accumulation of disillusionments and reverses and he suddenly found himself (in the Clutter house that night) in a psychological cul-de-sac. The Clutters were such a perfect set of symbols for every frustration in his life. . . . Now in that particular section where Perry talks about the reason for the murders, I could have included other views. . . . I could have added a lot of other opinions. But that would have confused the issue, and indeed the book. I had to make up my mind, and move towards that one view, always (195).

In this answer, Capote exhibited the same tension identified earlier in the text itself. If Capote believed that it was proper in the nonfiction novel for

him to carefully select details to support his own
viewpoint, "to move towards that one view, always" then
how could he claim that the nonfiction novel must be
"immaculately factual"? If he purposely omitted
important facts primarily because they differed from his
own viewpoint, he cannot make the claim of complete
factualism. The use of literary journalism provided
Capote with the power to illuminate his own point of
view as well as the points of view of his characters
through the use of the literary devices. As this
discussion has shown, Capote, like Wolfe, used this
power, but neither author satisfactorily addressed the
tension that developed between their desire to
illuminate individual subjective reality and their
dedication to factualism.

The work and views of Joan Didion seem, at first,
to present a somewhat different aspect of this tension
between the commitment to factualism and the dedication
to the illumination of subjective reality in works of
literary journalism. In the preface to her collection of
articles using the form of literary journalism,
Slouching Toward Bethlehem, Didion commented on the
failure of many readers to understand that these pieces
had a meaning that transcended the events they
described. Readers seemed, to Didion, to be viewing
these events as isolated incidents whose meaning did not
extend to the society as a whole. According to Didion,

she had written a piece on the Haight-Ashbury section of San Francisco as it appeared during the late 1960's to illustrate the rejection of society's dominant values by a significant segment of the younger generation. She was surprised to find that readers of the piece could not see beyond its locality and had commented mainly on the dirtiness of the Haight-Ashbury section or the probable duration of the hippie influence in that area. Didion said, "It seemed to me then that I had never gotten feedback so universally beside the point" (12).

Didion drew the book's title from a poem by William Butler Yeats, "The Second Coming," that strongly expresses a vision of society's disintegration. Didion referred to the lines from the poem (printed on the first page of her book) that, for her, best illustrated the view of reality that she had attempted to communicate through many of the individual pieces she included in the book: "Things fall apart; the center cannot hold."

Didion referred to this view as "atomization" (11), a general breaking apart of society's values, beliefs, and traditions. Yet, she complained that readers had interpreted her pieces in a most narrow manner, as journalistic reports that were valuable primarily for the information they provided about the actual events that appear within the pieces. Thus, Didion seemed to have been making a somewhat different argument than the

other authors that have been considered here. Rather
than emphasizing the factual credibility of her pieces,
she seemed to have been arguing that readers should look
beyond the particulars of these events toward her own
subjective sense of the universal principles that
underlay them.

This tension between the factual and subjective
components of her work may be less a misunderstanding by
her readers and more a tension within herself and within
her writing: that is, a tension quite similar to the
tension that affected Wolfe and Capote. Like those
authors, she seems to have assumed the role of a
reporter when working on the pieces included in this
book. She mentioned the reportorial role in the preface
to the book by referring to herself as a "reporter" and
providing an illustration of her dedication to the
reportorial role despite the discomfort that role had
caused her:

> I do not like to make telephone calls, and
> would not like to count the mornings I have
> sat on some Best Western motel bed somewhere
> and tried to force myself to put through the
> call to the assistant district attorney (14-
> 15).

Didion provided further proof of this tension in an
article that appeared in the <u>Saturday Evening Post</u> in
1968, a year just following the years in the mid-sixties

when she wrote most of the pieces that appear in
Slouching Toward Bethlehem. In this article, she
suggested that objectivity was important to producing
quality journalism but that quality also depended on the
reporter's developing a personal viewpoint toward the
events that she covered. She argued that the
"factitious objectivity" practiced by most American
newspapers left her in "the grip of a profound physical
conviction that the oxygen had been cut off from [my]
brain" (14). She said that the personal viewpoints that
reporters for underground newspapers developed toward
their subjects was a welcome alternative to traditional
reporting.

She included much criticism along with her praise
for the underground papers' reportorial methods and
style. She called the underground papers "amateurish
and badly written," and she said, "The information
content of an underground paper is low in the extreme. .
. . I have never read anything I needed to know in an
underground paper" (14).

While she leveled criticism similar to that of Tom
Wolfe's against the vapidity of traditional journalism
and, like Wolfe, argued that journalists develop a
personal narrative voice in their reports, she also
seemed, in this article, to be troubled by the lack of
dependable information in newspapers that personalized
their reports. Even in an article critical of

traditional journalism, Didion revealed her own commitment to the use of accurate information in reports of events.

In her anthology, <u>Slouching Toward Bethlehem</u>, Didion's dedication to reportorial accuracy may have caused her to emphasize the facts in the pieces more and emphasize her point of view and the points of view of the characters somewhat less than Wolfe and Capote. For example, in one of the pieces in this anthology, "Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream," Didion is careful to provide the sources for recreated scenes and to present dialogue as the product of interviews or transcribed tape recordings. But the recreated scenes and dialogue still work as literary devices. Perhaps Didion's more subtle use of these devices made the subjective aspects of her work less obvious to readers, and so the most important aspects of her work were overlooked by readers. However, an examination of her work reveals that Didion's use of literary devices to illuminate her own subjective reality and the subjective realities of her characters is a crucial component in her work, and I hope to illustrate that importance by analyzing "Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream."

"Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream," is, on a literal level, a report about the death of a dentist in an automobile fire on October 7, 1964, in San Bernardino, California, and about the subsequent arrest

and conviction of his wife for first degree murder in his death. However, Didion does not specifically report the murder until the fourth page of the piece. Rather, she begins the piece with a description of the story's setting and the setting's effect on the people who live there. In this description, the land itself becomes a kind of roadside warning of the emotional vacuum that will confront those who dare to enter the place:

> This is a story about love and death in the golden land, and begins with the country. The San Bernardino Valley lies only an hour east of Los Angeles . . . but is in certain ways an alien place . . . a harsher California haunted by the Mojave just beyond the mountains, devastated by the hot dry Santa Ana wind that comes down through the passes at 100 miles an hour and whines through the eucalyptus windbreaks and works on the nerves. . . . Every voice seems a scream. It is the season of suicide and divorce and prickly dread, wherever the wind blows (19).

This powerful and ominous beginning is certainly far removed from the lead paragraph in a typical report of a murder. In this passage, Didion introduces the strong narrator who will lead the reader through the piece and shape it in a highly personal way through the careful selection of description and frequent subjective

comments both on the meaning of events and on the overall meaning of the piece. Didion uses this strong narrative voice to create a style and tone, illustrated in the previous passage, that gradually creates an emotional atmosphere of alienation and despair.

In "Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream," Didion concentrates on the life of Lucille Miller, a woman convicted of her husband's murder. It soon becomes obvious, however, that Lucille's life is meant to symbolize the lives of all the other women who are striving for the American dream. The description that follows portrays these women as they pursue a garish middle-class dream that always turns perversely sour. The women, including Lucille, have typically migrated from the midwest and small towns of the west

> to the country of the teased hair and the
> Capris and the girls for whom all life's
> promise comes down to a waltz-length white
> wedding dress and the birth of a Kimberly or a
> Sherry or a Debbi and a Tijuana divorce and a
> return to hairdressers' school (20).

In this description, Lucille's life and the lives of the other women of San Bernardino are represented by means of a metaphorical device that creates a "typical" woman to whom they can be compared.

Didion uses a somewhat traditional reportorial style in narrating the story of "Cork's" death and

Lucille's eventual arrest, trial, and conviction. She generally supplied information about these events through quotations from officials and others familiar with the events and meticulously supplied these sources' names and, thereby, enhanced the credibility of the factual components of the piece.

She quickly dispenses with these factual elements in the piece in preference to the careful development of subjective meaning. Throughout the story, she uses the narrative voice to create a series of descriptions, images, and editorial comments that, together, establish the philosophy behind the middle-class dream, a dream which dominates Lucille and the other women in the golden land but which is so destructive to them--even when they achieve it. This narrative voice does not seem to be speaking for Didion herself. Rather, the voice seems to be speaking through Lucille, to be saying what Lucille would say were she perceptive enough to detach herself from the complexities of her life. The grim narration seems to be coming from both outside and inside Lucille. Thus, the narrative voice seems to be a combination of Lucille Miller's point of view and the author's point of view.

The impression the reader receives is that the narrator is an older Lucille reliving the time of her downfall years after it occurred. She is a wise and sad person, but the sadness is tinged with despair, because

all her insights have come too late. This narrator
speaks largely without anger but with a nettlesome
bitterness. In the following passage, the narrator
reports that in the year that Lucille was arrested for
murdering her husband, she

> had achieved the bigger house on the better
> street and the familiar accouterments of a
> family on its way up: the $30,000 a year, the
> three children for the Christmas card, the
> picture window, the family room, the newspaper
> photographs that showed "Mrs. Gordon Miller,
> Ontario Heart fund Chairman." They were
> paying the familiar price for it. And they
> had reached the familiar season of divorce
>
> (24).

This incisive, almost ruthless, description condemns the
middle-class dream by turning its most important dogmas
against it: the narrator clearly implies that Lucille's
eventual destruction is the result of her gains in
material possessions, her rise in social status, and her
ability to create a "picture perfect" family.

In another passage written in the form of a
rhetorical question, the narrator repeats this image of
the destructiveness of the middle-class dream to Lucille
by comparing the seeming innocuousness of the culture
with the savage effect it seems to have had on Lucille.
In the following passage, Didion uses the strong

narrative voice along with the careful placement of descriptive detail to greatly enhance the power of the message:

> What might move a woman who believed in all the promises of the middle class--a woman who had been chairman of the Heart Fund and who always knew a reasonable little dressmaker and who had come out of prairie fundamentalism to find what she imagined to be the good life-- what should drive such a woman to sit on a street called Bella Vista and look out her picture window into the empty California sun and calculate how to burn her husband alive in a Volkswagen (30).

This passage illustrates Didion's use of literary devices as powerful aids in creating a subjective meaning for this report. Although it is not always possible in this piece to separate the subjective reality of the main character from the subjective reality of the author, this subjective component seems to be as important an element in "Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream" as it was in both "Radical Chic" and In Cold Blood.

The three authors discussed in this chapter all began working in literary journalism in the 1960's when that form was being recognized both by critics and practitioners. This discussion has demonstrated that

each of these authors had similar principles about this form that they revealed in comments about their works. In addition, this analysis has shown that the authors revealed these principles in the works themselves. The benchnmarks of these principles are a commitment to the accuracy of the facts, a determination to infuse their work with their own personal point of view, and a desire to illuminate the subjective realities of the actors in their work.

This discussion has also shown that a tension arose for each of these authors between their dedication to factuality and their desire to illuminate subjective reality. This tension seemed to arise because all the authors, to some degree, used the power inherent within the literary devices to illuminate their own viewpoints and those of the characters in their work. The one difference may have been that Didion's use of the literary devices was less obvious than the other two authors' and, as a result, she feared that she did not communicate this subjective component to her readers.

I am not arguing here that the use of the literary devices must cause factual inaccuracy. I am suggesting, rather, that the authors of literary journalism seem to choose this form because they are interested both in illuminating individual subjective reality and in accurately representing the facts and that these goals sometimes conflict with one another. Perhaps, this

tension is an inevitable consequence for authors who use
this form, and, as Eric F. Heyne argued in his
dissertation on literary journalism, each reader must
ultimately recognize this tension and come to terms with
it to his or her own satisfaction (3).

Critics and scholars may have an additional role in
literary journalism as Heyne suggested:

> Real events do not come equipped with meaning;
> any account of or statement about real events
> must construct and assert a meaning. . . . one
> of the most important tasks for the critic of
> literary nonfiction is to examine the role of
> the author vis-a-vis his story . . . (178).

According to Heyne, the critic may be particularly
useful in interpreting works of literary journalism by
presenting an analysis of how the complex interplay
between the factual and the subjective elements within
individual works has been used to produce meaning.

With this background, I turn now to include a final
example of literary journalism, a report on a mildly
retarded man, that will be used later in the
dissertation to compare literary journalism with the
life history and fiction. Although a search of the
literature revealed few works about the lives of
retarded individuals written as literary journalism, one
piece, though not self-described as such, is clearly a
book of literary journalism written by a reporter for

the Washington Post. The book is about the life of the
reporter's mildly retarded younger brother, including
his brother's eventual marriage to a retarded woman in
1977 at the age of twenty-nine.

Although there is no indication that Robert Meyers
made a conscious effort to write his book, Like Normal
People, in the form of literary journalism, he clearly
used techniques of that form: Meyers used a strong
narrative voice in the book, reconstructed scenes to
describe events, often reported events from the points
of view of the books' main characters, used status life
description, and used saturation reporting techniques--
particularly in-depth interviews--to gather material for
the book. Although he cited many sources for the facts
within the text, Meyers used a journalistic rather than
an academic style. There are no footnotes or endnotes in
the book, and source citations are short, often
sacrificing completeness in favor of a free-flowing
style.

The book begins with a narrative description of the
wedding of Roger Meyers and Virginia Hensler at a
California church in June, 1977. Robert Meyers himself
assumes the role of narrator for the book, and he
describes the action at the wedding in detail as it
unfolds. In this passage, Robert describes how the
wedding party, which included him as the best man, made
its way down the aisle of the church:

We took long, slow hesitation steps, eyes
always forward, trying to be mature and
controlled and not laugh or crack a smile to
relieve the pressure. Roger was ramrod
straight, his arms at his side, and his eyes
glued to the flow of Pastor Ed's white
surplice. I was so knotted by anxiety that it
was all I could do to follow my brother (3).

Here, Robert recreates the scene at the wedding and, in
doing so, communicates his subjective reality as well as
his brother's at the time of the ceremony. He informs us
that both he and Roger are tense and that both he and
Roger are taking this ceremony quite seriously. In
essence, Robert describes a wedding scene that is quite
ordinary. The people involved in the ceremony are acting
and feeling the way people normally act and feel at
weddings.

Robert assumes a strong narrative voice from the
beginning of the book, and the reader is very much aware
of him throughout the text. Often, he expresses strong
opinions about society's treatment of his brother and of
retarded people in general. Early in the text, he
departs from the description of the wedding scene to
state his views about the meaning he expects the reader
to receive from the story of his brother's life and
marriage:

The success of Roger and Virginia Meyers,

their growing independence, their marriage, and their life together, is the result of their own stubborn intention to free themselves of the the shackles of labels, babying, social and parental mothering, and to wrap around them the mantle of normal life that except for "special people" is always taken for granted (4).

The first part of Robert's argument in this book maintains that retarded people have been treated as lepers by society. They have been separated from society more than any other group, warehoused in inhumane institutions, and rarely granted the right to try to live their lives in a civilized manner. In addition, retarded people have received this treatment in spite of the fact that they are human beings whose needs and feelings are essentially identical to those of other human beings. The second part of his argument maintains that retarded people, especially mildly retarded people, can learn to lead at least partially independent lives if they are permitted to experience life's problems and develop their own ways of solving those problems. Robert uses his brother Roger's life experiences to illustrate these themes and to provide evidence for them throughout the book.

Robert attempted to chronicle the rapidly changing treatment of retarded people between 1948 and 1977--the

year that Roger was born and the year that he was married--by weaving factual information gained from his research in the field of mental retardation with descriptions from Roger's life that exemplified these facts. For example, Robert first provides a general explanation of the treatment available for retarded individuals in the period before and immediately after World War II when parents found few options available for their retarded children. He then provides an account of his own parents' frustrating experiences in attempting to find diagnosis and care for Roger when, as an infant and young child, he exhibited motor and speech difficulties. He is diagnosed as having an I.Q. of 75, a "borderline level of intelligence," and as suffering from "mental deficiency and retarded development" (25). Doctors advise Roger's parents either to warehouse him because he has little chance for a productive life, to have him undergo risky experimental operations, or to wait and hope he will grow out of his problem.

Robert continued to develop his twin themes--the persecution of the retarded and their potential for independence--by describing society's frustratingly slow progress toward decent treatment for Roger and other mentally retarded people and by describing Roger's attempts to establish a dignified existence as an individual. Roger first attends an expensive private school in New York City and then enrolls in some of the

earliest special education classes offered in the city's public schools. Gradually, a portrait of Roger emerges as a boy and young man who is struggling desperately to find a place for himself in a world that is largely insensitive to his plight. In one incident, a stranger takes advantage of Roger's friendly and unsuspecting nature and attempts to abuse him sexually. Roger manages to escape from the man and run home to his mother. When his mother becomes too upset to deal with the situation, Roger himself goes to the phone and calls the police, surprising his mother who did not realize that Roger knew how to dial the phone (68).

Robert is careful to report his parents' very real fear about Roger's future as Roger grows up. At first, there seems to be no alternative for Roger except to go to an institution when his parents can no longer care for him. However, as Roger reaches adulthood, Robert describes how society too has grown up in its treatment of the retarded. In his early twenties, Roger is able to enter a residential facility for the mentally retarded (111). Here Roger first meets Virginia, another resident of the facility, and begins a program in independent living that eventually leads to a largely independent life for him in the community. Robert describes Roger's progress as he obtains a part-time job as a busboy at a restaurant, moves to a semi-independent living arrangement, moves into his own apartment, and, finally,

marries Virginia, who moves into Roger's apartment with him after their marriage (161).

For the most part, Robert communicates these events using literary devices similar to but not as elaborate as the literary devices that appear in the other examples of literary journalism described earlier. For example, his descriptions of scenes are not usually as long or as elaborately detailed as the scenes in the other literary journalists' work. In addition, Robert's descriptions of such dramatic situations often include a liberal use of direct quotations and paraphrased quotations. However, Robert does not always arrange these quotations so they resemble dialogue.

One good example of Robert's choice of scenes is his description of an incident in which Roger forgets he has left pancakes cooking on the stove in his apartment, because he is distracted by a television program. The burning pancakes send clouds of smoke through the apartment, and a neighbor calls the fire department. When the fire company arrives at his door, however, they find that Roger has the situation under control. Robert follows this description with the comment that such an incident does not indicate that retarded people cannot live independently, but that it is an example of the kind of difficulty "they face every day and of what can happen when . . . ordinary procedures are forgotten or skipped. . . ." Robert ends his comments by assuring

the reader that Roger does not make these kinds of mistakes any more (166-167).

Robert uses many such descriptions in the book. They seem to be included to provide evidence for Robert's contention that retarded people can learn to handle everyday difficulties if they are permitted to confront such difficulties themselves. These descriptions usually provide a clear indication of Robert's point of view, but they do not always provide so complete an understanding of Roger's appraisal of the situation. For example, the reader is left wondering what Roger thought about his experience with the stove fire. Perhaps, Roger's subjective view of this situation would have been made clear to the reader had Robert used literary devices more liberally in order to provide a more detailed recreation of the situation. Such a recreated scene might allow the reader to hear Roger's conversation with the firefighters through a recreation of the dialogue in that scene. Of course, such a recreation may have raised questions about a conflict between factualism and the illumination of subjective reality. Robert would have had to take the risk that his recreation of the scene would not be completely accurate, despite his care in investigating and reporting the event. However, it seems likely that such a risk would have produced worthwhile results in terms of illuminating Roger's point of view.

Robert does use creative methods to capture Roger's perspective in the book. For example, each chapter begins with a poem that Roger has written. Some of these poems are expressions of love to different people and leave the reader with an image of Roger as someone who feels deeply about other people. Also, Robert provides important insights into the brothers'relationship. During a discussion of Roger's poetry, Robert reveals that Roger's interest in writing arose from Roger's desire to be a writer like his brother. Robert says, "Roger and I were jagged images of each other" (101). In addition, Robert complains that, as a teenager, his parents made him feel like a second father to Roger (62); that he often held himself back in school so he would not "too greatly outdistance" Roger (65); that, as a young adult, he avoided his parents so he would not be caught up in their anguish over Roger (102).

Roger's hatred of his status as a retarded person is an important issue in the book. As Roger is waiting for his wedding to begin, he tells the minister, "Getting married is like coming out of retardation" (10). At another time, Roger informs Robert of how angry he felt when he heard a doctor tell his father that he was retarded: "It made me mad. But that's why I work so hard to learn the things I don't know, and so become not retarded" (101). Robert provides another interesting insight into Roger's view of reality after he, himself,

has angrily condemned the bullying and ridicule Roger was subjected to as a teenager. In this passage, Robert describes Roger's reaction to this treatment:

Roger handled these scratches at his personality by absorbing them within the overall context of his life: He shrugs now when asked about them. If he was troubled by encounters with "rough kids" at the schoolyard, he avoided schoolyards. If older boys liked to tease him, he focused his attention on the younger children of his parents' friends to whom Roger was a kind, shy, nonjudgmental adult, and one whom they could manipulate for the use of his toys. They did not threaten him physically, an immeasurable relief (99-100).

Robert is sometimes so intent on describing his own concerns, his anger at society's insensitivity to the retarded, that he neglects to provide insights into Roger's view of life. But, here, Robert provides us with an example of Roger's viewpoint that he admits is different from his own. These and other images of Roger in the book portray a gentle, caring man who has found his own way to overcome the stigma of retardation and to create a dignified, remarkably normal place for himself in society.

Like Normal People provides a good impression of

how literary journalism might be used to illuminate
subjective reality in a book about a mildly retarded
man. The strong narrator that so often appears in works
of literary journalism emerges in this book in the
person of Robert Meyers, the book's author and the
brother of the retarded man, Roger Meyers. Robert Meyers
narrates the book in his own voice. This technique
proves to be effective in illuminating the author's
perspective--his views about society's treatment of his
brother and other mentally retarded people and his views
about the capabilities and aspirations of his brother
and other mentally retarded people.

Robert also uses a number of other literary
devices--the recreation of scenes, quotations similar to
dialogue, point of view, and status life descriptions--
to illuminate Roger's view of reality and that of the
other actors in the book. The reader does receive a
definite impression of Roger's view of the world, but
this view is not always conveyed as forcefully as
Robert's own view. Robert probably could have better
balanced his point of view with Roger's if he had used
the literary devices to a greater degree in his
portrayal of Roger.

In summary, literary journalism is a form of
reporting in which literary techniques are combined with
reporting techniques to produce factually accurate
reports that resemble fictional works in style and

construction. The major literary techniques include the use of a strong narrative voice, scenic construction, dialogue, point of view, and the careful recording of status life details. The reporting techniques, termed saturation reporting, include investigative reporting combined with long periods of observation and interviewing. Literary journalism first appeared as an identifiable form in the 1960's, a period of social and political turmoil in which a number of writers began to work in this form in the attempt to combine the narrative power of fiction with the factual credibility of journalism.

Tom Wolfe, Truman Capote, and Joan Didion, three authors who began working in the literary journalism early in the movement, all demonstrated a commitment to both factual accuracy and to the illumination of subjective reality that the use of the techniques of literary journalism brought to their work. All three authors used these techniques to reveal their own viewpoints and those of the actors who appeared in their works, and all three exhibited a tension between their dedication to factualism and their dedication to capturing this subjective dimension. For Wolfe and Capote, this tension arose because they employed the subjective dimension boldly in their work. For Didion, the tension arose because she feared she had not used the subjective dimension enough. For all three authors,

the tension demonstrated their dedication to the difficult challenge that the form itself placed upon them, the challenge of shaping their work so that it reflected their personal points of view without neglecting their commitment to the facts.

This discussion has shown that literary journalism can be a powerful tool for the illumination of both authors' and actors' subjective realities. The use of literary devices, particularly the strong narrator, allows authors to emphasize their own points of view. The combined use of the literary and journalistic devices allows authors to create multifaceted portraits of characters, portraits that can capture those characters' inner realities, often in their own voices. In addition, the use of these devices calls attention to the reports themselves as constructions of reality and to the authors of those reports as the architects of those constructions. Thus, in the end, the locus of responsibility for the reports settles where it belongs--on the authors.

Chapter Four

The Life History as Illuminator of Subjectivity

Like literary journalists, ethnographers who write life histories concern themselves with the viewpoints of the individuals who appear within their works. Ethnography consists of the description of a particular culture that usually includes the perspective of the people who inhabit that culture. The life history consists of an ethnographer's attempt to describe an individual's life through interviews with that individual. The life history has been used successfully as an ethnographic tool to help illuminate the subjective realities of individuals living within various cultures. (Agar, "Stories, Background Knowledge, and Themes" 223; Spradley and McCurdy, 30-36).

The life history is a type of "personal history" like the case history, the biography, and the autobiography (Crapanzano, "The Life History in Anthropological Field Work" 3). Yet, the life history usually differs from these other types of personal histories. Both the case history and the biography are normally written from the viewpoint of the author, not the subject, while the life history is commonly written from the viewpoint of its subject or informant. Similarly, the autobiography is written from the viewpoint of its subject but does not normally involve a

third party who functions as an interpreter of the subject's life as the ethnographer functions in the life history (4). However, when autobiographies are composed with the help of another person, particularly a writer, the resulting autobiography may resemble a life history (Stone 7-8).

According to these definitions, the life history seems to represent a legitimate instrument for ethnography. Yet, the anthropologists Watson and Watson-Franke have argued that the life history has not been accorded its proper place as an ethnographic tool, that it has existed "as an unwanted stepchild" in anthropological research (1). These authors argued that anthropologists have too easily dismissed the life history, believing that it could not be made to serve as evidence in making generalizations about culture or in building theories about human behavior because of its reliance on subjective experience: the idiosyncratic experience of one individual could not easily be generalized and the memory and motives of that individual were too unreliable to provide dependable, representative data that could be used in building theory.

In Lives, Langness and Frank traced the use of the life history in anthropological research back to the publication in 1926 of Paul Radin's Crashing Thunder, the life story of a Winnebago Indian whom Radin

identified as representative of Winnebago culture (18).
Although there have been exceptions, Radin began a trend
with Crashing Thunder in which the life history has been
used for the information it can provide about cultures
rather than for the information it can provide about
individuals. Important research that focused on the
methodological problems in doing life histories, such as
John Dollard's Criteria for the Life History published
in 1935 and Clyde Kluckhohn's "The Personal Document in
Anthropological Science" published in 1945, helped to
reinforce this trend by emphasizing the importance of
life histories in developing cultural concepts (21-22).

Watson and Watson-Franke expressed serious
reservations about this historical trend that emphasized
the notion that the life history should be used
primarily to understand cultures rather than
individuals. They also objected to another more recent
trend that viewed the life history as a form of raw data
that can only be understood through complex psychosocial
theory rather than as a valid subjective document that
directly provided "the individual's personal view of his
experience as he understands it" (30). Watson and
Watson-Franke further articulated this objection in the
following passage:

> The problem with using the life history to
> talk about "personality," "motivation,"
> "repressed conflict," and the like is that the

> investigator imposes or infers constructs that
> are frankly alien to the life history as a
> subjectively experienced phenomenon. . . . The
> problem, therefore, is this: the life history
> is a subjective product, but one that is
> approached by another subject who himself
> interprets (31).

Another way to state this problem would be to ask how
the life history could be used to provide useful
information without forcing the subject's version of
reality to conform to academic concepts completely
foreign to that subject's view of reality.

Watson and Watson-Franke suggested that one way to
correct both these trends was to use an "emic" rather
than an "etic" approach to the life history. According
to the authors, an emic approach "concerns itself with
the specific and unique richness of a phenomenon, so
that we understand the particular (the individual, the
subjective) rather than the general" while the etic
approach "emphasizes generalizing and model building in
an abstract frame of reference that is externally
imposed on phenomena" (26). For example, an etic
approach may interpret an individual's behavior by using
Freudian theories of personality while an emic approach
would be unlikely to use such theories. While the emic
approach can include generalizations, these
generalizations must spring from an analysis of the

individual's own views rather than from externally imposed criteria. These authors argued that the emic approach to the life history was needed to bring "some much-needed balance to the runaway tendency in the social sciences to reduce people to categories and abstraction in the service of model building and model testing" (27).

To illustrate the difference between the emic and the etic approach to the life history, Watson and Watson-Franke provided examples of comparatively recent life histories that they said illustrated the etic approach. Through two examples in particular, Watson and Watson-Franke said they could demonstrate the distortions produced by the etic approach and the advantages of interpreting the life history through its own "subjectivity and uniqueness" (140).

In Eskimo Boyhood: An Autobiography in Psychosocial Perspective, the author, Charles C. Hughes, used the life history of Nathan, an Eskimo boy, to serve as evidence in illustrating certain concepts about role theory that he had postulated. Watson and Watson-Franke insisted that this interpretation was too narrow, that by emphasizing Nathan's role as a hunter, Hughes' missed the crucial part that the boy's relationship with his father played in his life (143). Similarly, James Spradley used the life history Guests Never leave Hungry: The Autobiography of James Sewid, a Kwakiutl

<u>Indian</u> to serve as an example of cultural adaptation. He argued that the subject, James Sewid, had learned to adapt to both Indian and white culture. Again, Watson and Watson-Franke disagreed, arguing that Sewid had not balanced conflicting cultural contexts and bridged the gap between the white and Indian cultures but, actually, simply reflected the assimilation already present in his partly assimilated culture (152).

The authors said that Spradley had committed two errors. First, like Charles Hughes in his life history on the Eskimo boy, Nathan, Spradley had concentrated too much on the external scientific concepts that he was studying and had forced the life history into a preordained framework rather than focusing on the subjective reality that sprang from the life history itself (154). Second, Spradley's work lacked information concerning the relationship between Sewid, the informant, and Spradley himself, which may have helped the reader to understand better all the influences that had helped create the life history text, "the hidden forces that organized experience into its published form" (154).

The overall argument that Watson and Watson-Franke have made is that the authors of these life histories approached them through the wrong end of the binoculars. The individuals in these life histories appear as small points at the end of social systems that have created

them. The emphasis and focus of these life histories is on the social systems' influence on the individual while the life history is much better suited to examining the subjective reality that the individual has created out of his or her own interaction with society (156).

Watson and Watson-Franke argued that the goal of the ethnographer in interpreting the life history must be to analyze the individual's world by beginning with the information supplied by the individual and not by beginning with scientific categories. Once the ethnographer understands the individual's life from the individual's point of view, then the ethnographer can begin to develop insights into all the individual's relationships including the relationship with the culture. However, the ethnographer must realize that the life history creates a world in which the individual and that individual's culture are inseparable (158-161).

Watson and Watson-Franke, however, did not discourage the use of scientific categories in interpreting life histories. Rather, they argued that theoretical categories could be used provided that those categories could be made emic--that is provided that the author could demonstrate that the subject of the life history used similar categories when analyzing his or her own life (187). For example, Watson and Watson-Franke suggested that, under certain circumstances,

self-identity theory and, particularly, the concept of "ideal self" could be used as a basis for interpreting life histories. They reasoned that, although the concept of "ideal self" is etic or external to the life history, the concept would have an emic equivalent within the life history if the subject of the life history expressed sentiments about ideal behavior (188).

Watson and Watson-Franke claimed that, through such concepts, their emic approach to the life history might still be used to make comparisons between individuals in the same culture or between individuals from different cultures. Because such concepts are developed through the subjective reality of the individual, researchers could use these concepts to generalize about individuals from different cultures without violating the emic approach to the life history (190). Watson and Watson-Franke create an interesting contrast within their own work by embracing the importance of scientific generalization in the life history when they had earlier complained that difficulty in producing scientific generalizations from life histories had unfairly kept the form from more widespread use. Thus, they have argued that the life history is important both because it focuses on the individual's subjective reality and because it can be used to make theoretical comparisons.

The extent that the ethnographer's own perceptions influences the life history and the extent that the

relationship between the ethnographer and the informant
influences the life history are important issues for
researchers who support the emic approach to the form.
In an analysis of the various disciplinary approaches to
ethnography, John Caughey argued that the ethnographers'
influence on the information they collected could no
longer be ignored:

> In the past, it was often assumed that the
> ethnographer was an objective recording
> instrument whose job was merely to describe
> honestly the social world studied. It has
> become increasingly clear that the
> ethnographer's own concepts and experiences
> have an important effect on what gets
> described (240).

Watson and Watson-Franke agreed that the ethnographer is
as much involved in defining what information is
important to the life history as the informant and,
therefore, that ethnographer's own preconceptions as
well as his or her relationship with the informant
should be explained in detail (17-19).

Vincent Crapanzano has focused particularly on the
issue of the relationship between the ethnographer and
the informant in the life history. Crapanzano argued
that the life history is a "negotiation" between the
ethnographer and the informant and that their
relationship must be considered in interpreting the life

history. He criticized several life histories that explore the informant's life from a variety of perspectives but ignore the relationship between the ethnographer and the informant. Crapanzano argued that such details as the money or gifts the ethnographer gives the informant are crucial to an understanding of the life history itself ("Life Histories," 956). Crapanzano maintained that the ethnographer is the ever-present "other" in the life history who causes the life history to be "doubly edited." That is, ethnographers edit informants' stories during the interview by virtue of the questions they ask and then edit the stories again when they create the texts. ("The Life History," 4).

Crapanzano argued that the life history is a collaboration, a "creative mutuality" and insisted that the ethnographer's part in this collaboration must be made clear within the life history itself (6). Crapanzano illustrated this point in his life history of a Moroccan tilemaker (Tuhami: Portrait of a Moroccan). In his "Introduction" to the work, Crapanzano discussed how the need for such collaboration became obvious in his early interviews with Tuhami: "We were both jostled from our assumptions about the nature of the everyday world and ourselves and groped for common reference points within this limbo of interchange" (11).

According to Crapanzano, the power of this

collaboration made it impossible for him to maintain a
scientific distance from Tuhami. He reported that he
gradually moved from the role of the scientifically
curious field worker to a therapeutic role in which he
served as "curer" to Tuhami (142-143). Tuhami claimed to
be possessed of certain demons who controlled his life,
a situation that Crapanzano found to be not uncommon
among other Moroccans he met. Crapanzano's efforts to
help Tuhami cope with these demons seems to have aided
him in posing theoretical questions about the role the
demons played for Tuhami and, perhaps, for others in
Moroccan culture: Might these demons be performing a
similar function for Tuhami that Crapanzano's
interpreter played for him? Might these demons be
functioning as mediators between Tuhami and the other
people in his life, perhaps giving those relationships a
continuity they may otherwise not have had? (150-151)

Crapanzano never attempted to provide a definitive
answer to these questions, but the fact that he raised
them may make his life history more similar to other
anthropological life histories than he himself intended.
Although the primary focus of Crapanzano's work here
seems to be to emphasize the importance of the
relationship between the ethnographer and the subject to
the life history, he also engaged in theorizing
consistent with his training as an anthropologist.
Although the theoretical questions that he introduced

are compatible with Watson and Watson-Franke's emic approach to the life history, they still represent constructs from the social sciences which are offered complete with bibliographic references in the academic style common to the social sciences.

Although their works more closely resemble studies in the social sciences than works of fiction, these anthropologists have associated the emic life history with fiction. Crapanzano compared his portrait of Tuhami to the modern novel ("The Life History" 7), and Watson and Watson-Franke suggested that imaginative portraits of individuals created in works of fiction might be more useful for understanding the individual's unique world than more abstract scientific studies (97).

Some anthropologists have even attempted to combine ethnography with fiction. Langness and Frank suggested that the ethnographic fiction that has resulted from these attempts has allowed its authors to add a dimension beyond standard ethnography: . . . "ethnographic fiction has as a conscious and integral part of its goal the accurate description of another way of life, but unlike ordinary ethnography, it does this through the addition of character and plot" ("Fact, Fiction and the Ethnographic Novel" 18).

This addition of character and plot to standard ethnography raises many interesting questions about the relationship between ethnography and fiction, such as

how similar is the use of a "composite character" in a work of ethnographic fiction to the use of a "modal character" in a work of standard ethnography (21). Because ethnographic fiction involves the use of invented material, its study goes beyond the scope of this inquiry into the life history. However, anthropologists engaged in research on ethnography might find ethnographic fiction a worthwhile object for comparison with the standard ethnographic text.

Janet Alison Hoskins (1985) extended Crapanzano's approach to the life history by arguing that the life history was not complete unless the informant's view of the life history, including the informant's perception of the ethnographer, was included in the text. In Hoskins' life history of Maru Daku, a Kodi resident of Sumba Island in eastern Indonesia, she included Maru Daku's own versified portrayal of Hoskins herself and his version of their work together. According to Hoskins, this text, which comes near the end of a life history, represents an innovative use of a traditional Kodi poetic form. The innovations, Hoskins argued, were directly attributable to Maru Daku's familiarity with anthropological research that he had gained through his work as an informant (147).

Hoskins said that to see the life history in context, one must see it "as the conjunction of the two separate lives of informant and researcher. Whenever the

researcher is not explicitly included in the scene, the primary audience and catalyst of this act of self-creation is concealed" (148). The structure of Hoskins' life history of Maru Daku is indicative of her commitment to this view.

After a brief introduction, she provided a detailed description of her ethnographic interactions with Maru Daku. She described her first meeting with him as a complex negotiation in which Maru Daku succeeded in arranging for her to come to his village to meet him since his traveling to meet her would indicate a "subservient status" (149). For the remainder of this section, she traced the development of her professional relationship with Maru Daku as well as a carefully wrought description of Maru Daku's personality.

The next section of the text consists of what Hoskins' considered her side of the life history (154). Hoskins interpreted Maru Daku's life as one torn between the traditions of his ancestors and the Western worldliness and religion brought by the Dutch colonialists. As a child, Maru Daku attended a Christian school until his grandfather decided to train him in the Kodi tradition of oral history, oral poetry, and customary lore. Maru Daku then married and settled in his native village (155).

Maru Daku, however, continued to be interested in the outside world and converted to Christianity in 1933.

He began to work as an evangelist for the Dutch Church, a mission he continued until the early 1950's. During this time, however, Maru Daku gained the ability to look beyond any one religion or tradition. Hoskins wrote: "He told me that the need for spiritual mediation came to all men at these times: only the names of the deities addressed and the language used had to be changed" (155).

In 1952, Maru Daku had a quarrel with church leaders over a conflict between his allegiance to traditional Kodi ritual and church teachings. After this incident, Maru Daku began to become more involved with traditional Kodi rituals and ceremonies. Eventually, he rejected Christian worship in favor of his ancestral rituals. At the same time, Maru Daku's knowledge of Western anthropology gave him a novel insight into the range of beliefs and customs practiced by his people (161).

Throughout her life history of Maru Daku, Hoskins presented him as a man who suffered because of his attraction both to the Western world and to his traditional beliefs. However, Hoskins seems convinced that this suffering was caused more by the inability of other people to accept Maru Daku's broad-minded outlook than any internal conflict between contradictory belief systems (157). Hoskins continually portrayed Maru Daku as one who could rise above such contradictions to see

the value in Christianity, in Kodi traditions, and in the outlook of the anthropologist who could examine the strengths among a variety of beliefs. At the end of this section of the text, Hoskins turned the life history over to Maru Daku himself. This last section of the text presented Maru Daku's own version of his life through a personal narrative in verse form. Hoskins recorded and transcribed this oral presentation for which she supplied an English translation.

Curiously, however, Hoskins did not seem content to allow the readers to interpret Maru Daku's testimony for themselves. She chose to end the text with a commentary and notes about his poem rather than with the poem itself. Although the commentary and notes provide the reader with important information on the background of this poetic genre and on obscure references within the poem, they also go beyond such explanation to interpret the meaning of the poem itself for the reader. Also, Hoskins' interpretation of Maru Daku's poem ignores his rather warm personal references to her in favor of a more detached analysis.

Hoskins had argued for a radical departure from the traditional life history in which anthropologists "proclaimed neutrality" (147), and she largely succeeded in creating such a departure. However, she seemed unable to set aside, even temporarily, her role as ethnographer even though she had argued convincingly

that the text would only be complete if both sides of the life history dialogue were presented on equal terms. In addition, she did not include information on her personal relationship with her informant as Crapanzano did with Tuhami.

There can be little argument, however, that Hoskins used the emic approach to the life history in the sense that Watson and Watson-Franke developed that concept. She did not use external theoretical concepts in her descriptions and analysis but developed concepts that evolved from Maru Daku's own experience. She drew her discussion of Maru Daku's use of poetic expression directly from his experimentation with a traditional form of verse. Thus, this use of traditional poetic expression represents an emic basis with which to compare Maru Daku with informants in other life histories.

Barbara Myerhoff is another anthropologist who used the emic life history approach in her study of a group of elderly Jews living in southern California. Number Our Days, Myerhoff's study, is particularly intriguing since the text often seems to be a hybrid that sometimes resembles a standard anthropological life history and sometimes more closely resembles a prose narrative. It is routine for ethnographers to include the voices of their informants in their life history texts. Yet, Myerhoff's use of these voices--in monologues and in

snatches of dialogue--often seems to be designed to provide dramatic effect as much as ethnographic information.

Number Our Days begins with a monologue in the voice of an elderly woman, Basha, who was one of Myerhoff's informants:

> Every morning I wake up in pain. I wiggle my toes. Good. They still obey. I open my eyes. Good. I can see. Everything hurts but I get dressed. I walk down to the ocean. Good. It's still there. Now my day can start. About tomorrow I never know. After all, I'm eighty-nine. I can't live forever (1).

Here the voice changes. The factual voice of Myerhoff the social scientist takes over and provides the reader with the facts of Basha's condition: Basha's life is similar to the lives of the other informants within the book. She is an elderly Jew who spent her youth in a small village in Eastern Europe, called a shtetl, mostly inhabited by other Jews. Now, she lives near the ocean in a neighborhood that, at one time, housed about ten thousand elderly Jews who had retired to this beachfront community in the 1950's. This community had been reduced by urban renewal and skyrocketing real estate values to several thousand people, mostly poor retirees in their mid-80's or older. Many of these people depend upon a Jewish day center

called the Aliyah Center for their daily social
contacts. Myerhoff focused on this group in her study
(1-8).

Along with this factual information on her
informants, Myerhoff included comments about her
personal involvement in the study. Myerhoff first
provided a general explanation of the process of
anthropological field work. She discussed the
paradoxical role of "participant-observation" in which
the anthropologist attempts to experience the culture
from the inside and, at the same time, maintain
sufficient distance to be able to analyze the culture
objectively (18). Myerhoff acknowledged that her
position in this study was more difficult than that of
the anthropologist in an exotic culture, because she was
Jewish herself and traced her ancestry to the same roots
in Eastern Europe as her informants. She wondered
whether she was engaged in "anthropology or a personal
quest" (12). Finally, she confessed that she had
functioned ". . . as an anthropologist . . . as a
friend, and sometimes as a family member" in this study
(17).

After much agonizing, Myerhoff said she had decided
to give up most pretense of scientific detachment and
recognize her singular role in this study. She said, "I
wanted my people to be loved and admired as a result of
my study. . . . But finally I accepted the necessity for

sacrificing that desire" (28). She did not wish to diminish the dignity of these people by making them heroes or saints. "Since neutrality was impossible and idealization undesirable, I settled on striving for balance" (28).

Although Myerhoff did not attempt to hide her strong personal feelings in the text, she did attempt to analyze her information as a social scientist. Her analysis of her informants focused on their identity as survivors of the Holocaust. Although they were not all actual survivors of Nazi persecution, Myerhoff argued that most of them had a sense of having experienced the Holocaust personally even though they may have escaped it through emigration. According to Myerhoff, their identity as survivors gave them a need to find meaning in their lives so they could justify their having been spared (25). In addition, their survival gave them a powerful desire to "serve as witnesses to what has been lost" (34). Myerhoff soon discovered that this need to leave an enduring record of their culture before the Holocaust was central to her informants' lives.

The concept that Myerhoff used to analyze her informants lives--their need to serve as witnesses of the Holocaust--is a concept that definitely falls within the emic approach to the life history that was articulated by Watson and Watson-Franke. Myerhoff does not need to impose this concept on her informants,

because it seems to arise effortlessly from the centers of the informants' own lives. The concept's emic nature is nowhere more obvious than in Myerhoff's most comprehensive life history in this study, her life history of Shmuel Goldman, a retired tailor whom she had met at the Aliyah Center. She devoted an entire chapter ("Needle and Thread") to Shmuel and quoted him often in other parts of the book.

Shmuel is eighty years old and a nonconformist among the people at the Aliyah Center; he does not believe in God and is not a Zionist. Yet, Myerhoff chose him as her "key informant" because he is self-educated and has thought more about his experiences than most of the other elderly people (42). Myerhoff provided an indication that this would be an unusual life history early in the chapter on Shmuel. At first, Myerhoff attempted to win Shmuel's consent to the project by describing the anthropological model of participant-observation upon which the life history would be based. Shmuel was not convinced until Myerhoff appealed to him with a personal request: her grandparents were dead and she had not learned about Jewish life from them. He could be her personal link to the past (43). By emphasizing her personal stake in the life history, Myerhoff relinquished much of her right to claim a measure of objectivity as an ethnographer. As she had done before in this study, Myerhoff freely admitted to

an emotional involvement with her informant.

There are other indications early in the text that this life history would be different. Although Myerhoff introduced the life history by stating that the text was based on conversations she had reconstructed from tapes and notes, the text has a seamless quality that is unusual for life histories. Often, ethnographers present the life history through transcripts of the informants words. In "Needle and Thread," the life history proceeds, at least partly, through literary devices. The text often includes dialogue between Shmuel and Myerhoff which is placed within the context of the immediate environment. She reconstructed scenes for their encounters which have them walking down the boardwalk arm in arm as they talk or sitting at his kitchen table over a cup of tea. She is careful to include detailed descriptions of the physical surroundings in each scene as well as dramatic details such as the non-verbal actions of the participants.

Myerhoff even included the dramatic literary device of foreshadowing. Early in the chapter, we learn that Shmuel has a heart condition and that these interviews with Myerhoff are taxing for him: "'My doctor tells me not to have emotions,' he said. 'I should damp down everything. Is this a philosophy? To live longer by not being so much alive? Now, in honor of your tape machine, I take one of his pills'" (45).

These literary devices are not so prevalent, however, that the life history reads as if it were a piece of fiction, a novel or a short story. Although Shmuel's life history is directed personally to Myerhoff under the guise of conversation, Shmuel actually delivers this information through monologues that sometimes go on for pages at a time. The overall impression of the life history is of a teacher (Shmuel) using the life history to teach a student (Myerhoff) about the lives of the Jews in the European shtetls.

Shmuel's language is quite lyrical as he describes his childhood. He portrays the Jews as huddled together in a small village surrounded by powerful forces that could hurt them and often did. Yet, inside the village, Shmuel pictured a sweet, complex, nourishing culture for Myerhoff in which Judaism was a way of life more than a religion. The people spoke Yiddish, a language that separated them from the hateful neighbors, but through which they celebrated their special and separate culture that meant everything. Shmuel said, "'Culture is the simple grass through which the wind blows sweetly and each grass blade bends softly to the caress of the wind'" (60).

In this way, Myerhoff portrayed Shmuel as her patient teacher about the Jewish culture of Eastern Europe. But, as the life history proceeds, Shmuel becomes increasingly aware that this culture was lost

forever, swept away by the Holocaust, and the life
history becomes increasingly painful for him. Still,
Shmuel seems driven to continue, to serve as a witness
of the lost culture. Myerhoff, herself, said that she
became concerned about Shmuel's "growing inclination to
probe his wounds" (69). She stays away, feigning
illness, so he will not have to continue. Again, we see
how Myerhoff's personal involvement with Shmuel affected
her work as an ethnographer.

In the end, however, Shmuel has to play out his
role as a survivor. He describes his life in the shtetl
up to the time that his family was forced by the
persecution to make their sad, reluctant departure. When
he's finished, Shmuel reveals his personal grief at the
final outcome: "All this I give you was broken up, torn
out, and thrown into the ovens. . . . I cannot say good-
bye to all that" (73). And he also reveals the terrible
burden on himself as a survivor:

Why have we bothered to live? All this is
at an end. For myself, growing old would be
altogether a different thing if that little
town was there still. . . . Even with all that
poverty and suffering, it would be enough if
the place remained, even old men like me
ending their days would find it enough. But
when I come back from these stories and
remember the way they lived is gone forever .

. . then it means another thing altogether for me to accept leaving this life (74).

But Shmuel does leave. Myerhoff informs us that Shmuel died in his sleep the night after their last interview. The implication is clear: Shmuel was able to die only after he had finished his witness. It is also clear that the emotional strain of completing the life history may have hastened his death. So the question remains for the reader. Was Myerhoff's personal approach to the life history worth the consequences?

Of all the life histories that have been discussed to this point, Myerhoff's life history of Shmuel has gone the greatest distance toward becoming like the literary work that both Crapanzano ("The Life History" 7) and Watson and Watson-Franke (97) suggested might be the best way to reveal the individual's true portrait. Myerhoff took a risk by abandoning the neutrality that social scientists have often claimed enhances the credibility of their work. However, she indicates in the life history itself that her personal relationship with Shmuel was an important factor in her decision to make him her primary informant and was an important factor in Shmuel's decision to reveal his past to her (42-43).

By including detailed information about her personal relationship with Shmuel, Myerhoff changes our perceptions of the life history. We must decide how this relationship may have affected the type of information

she collected from Shmuel and how it may have affected her interpretation of this information in her final text. It is reasonable to assume that when an ethnographer becomes personally involved with the subject of a life history, that involvement will affect the creation of that life history. However, when the ethnographer admits to such involvement and reveals in specific terms its exact nature, as Myerhoff has done, we are much better able to make judgments about that involvement than when the ethnographer remains silent.

The life history of the retarded man (Kernan et al.), which I will later compare with literary journalism and fiction in this dissertation, is a more traditional life history than "Needle and Thread," but "Living in the Real World: Process and Change in the Life of a Retarded Man" clearly belongs within the tradition of the emic approach to the life history.

This life history of Tim Anthony, a twenty-four-year-old man living in the Los Angeles area, established its emic intent from the outset. The life history's title seems to have been chosen to capture a major dichotomy that Tim had created within his own life--a dichotomy that consisted on one hand of the "real world" in which Tim desired to place himself and on the other to the "fake world" in which others had tried to place him (91). The authors seemed determined to present Tim's experience using the standards that he had established:

"Our study is guided by those points of change which are considered by Tim himself to have been significant and meaningful in his life" (82).

This is not to say that the authors did not detach themselves from Tim and make an independent analysis of his life. In particular, the authors focused on his adaptation or adjustment to life in the community. They were careful, however, to explain that they believed that adjustment could not be considered as a "static" state that is measurable by "objective" means such as tests or inventories. Rather, adjustment must be understood "in terms of process and change." The authors argued that only by examining the processes that the individual uses to achieve goals can they make a determination of how successful those processes have been in helping the individual with the challenge of adjustment (81).

According to Tim, his childhood was spent in the fake world. He and his siblings lived with a schizophrenic mother when she was able to care for them. When she was not, Tim lived in a series of residences for the mentally retarded. At school, Tim was placed in special education classes which he disliked. As an adolescent, he often found himself in trouble for stealing or fighting. Yet, it was during his adolescence that Tim began to catch a glimpse of the real world. For Tim, living in foster homes and attending special

education classes where he had few friends proved to
have its positive side. Tim began to develop a tendency
to look within himself, to be introspective, and to
believe that through such thinking, he could gain
control of his life and change it. In the following
passage, Tim describes how this inner debate with
himself helped him to decide to stop stealing:

I was layin' in the bed . . . I was just
thinkin', and this is what I said to myself .
. . it just all occurred to my mind. "Stealin'
is gonna get me in a lot of trouble. Plus,
it's bad anyhow, and I know it's bad. And the
only reason I steal is because. . . ." I
wasn't talking to myself, I was just thinking,
I was just layin' there, lookin' straight up
at the ceiling, you know. So . . . I was
sayin', "This right here, I don't like doin'
it. I don't like doin' it for one thing." And
then while I was still thinkin', I said, "I
don't like doin' it and it can mess me up for
quite awhile and I know it's bad." So about a
year later, or just before I turned seventeen,
I stopped doin' it (87).

This tendency toward introspection proved
particularly influential in Tim's life when, at
seventeen, he left Los Angeles for Utah where he was
enrolled in the Job Corps. During this period, Tim

discovered the real world and decided that he wanted to be part of this world. Tim concluded that with careful thought and force of will, he could change enough to become part of this normal or real world. The one aspect of his life that he wanted to change most was his status as a mentally retarded person. Tim had analyzed his life and had decided that he was not mentally retarded, that his problems had been caused by forces outside himself such as his family, and that to be accepted into the real world, he had to convince others that he was not retarded. In the following passage, the authors explain that, again, Tim was convinced that he could achieve this goal through a process that included intense thought as well as the force of his own will:

> This was a period, then, when he not only came to believe that what was wrong with him was caused by external forces, his mother and his "messed up" family, but that he could alter his life. He came to believe that he could think about himself, could understand his actions, and, if he wished, could change them. . . . He realized that he could be "normal" and that he enjoyed being so. He has made that his goal and has devoted much of his time and effort, from then until the present, to achieving . . . or, at least, appearing to have achieved it (89).

To explain away his mental retardation to himself
and to others, Tim had to explain away much of his life,
including the disability income he received from social
security, the classes in special education he had
attended as a child, the foster homes for the mentally
retarded in which he had lived, and the training program
in independent living from which he had graduated as an
adult. The most difficult problem for Tim to explain
away was the fact that he could not read, although he
had expended a great deal of energy in trying to learn.

Tim's evidence that he was not retarded rested
partly on the fact that he had scored seventy on an IQ
test which placed him on the borderline of mental
retardation in terms of test scores (Grossman 11). Also,
he argued that his life style and aspirations placed him
in the real world of competence and self-improvement.
Tim was living independently in Los Angeles and had
found employment as a kitchen worker to supplement his
income from social security. He avoided relationships
with the mentally retarded individuals he had met, and
he also avoided contact with his family. His goals
included earning a college degree and becoming a
psychologist (91). His greatest challenge, and one that
caused the most disruption in his life, was his
inability to read.

Tim had taken courses to help him read and had
hidden his inability to read in numerous situations.

Although he could not totally hide his illiteracy from himself or others, Tim was obsessed with keeping it secret. This obsession had made Tim's life an unusually lonely one. He preferred to do without personal relationships rather than to risk the possibility that another person would discover that he could not read. In particular, Tim found himself in a kind of double bind where his relationships with women were concerned. He wished to form relationships with college-educated women, because such relationships would help identify him as a part of the non-handicapped real world. Yet, he was reluctant to get too close to such women for fear they would discover he could not read (94). However, Tim did not sink into despair over these difficulties. In his usual manner, he attacked them through serious efforts at self-improvement, by continually taking courses and spending time in the library (84).

Despite his problems, the authors of this life history concluded that Tim had developed a unique and largely successful process for adjusting to adult life in the community. He had accomplished much of what he intended to accomplish. He had overcome an unstable childhood and troubled adolescence to become a largely independent, responsible, law abiding adult--a status that he had achieved through his own efforts. For the authors, Tim's process of adjustment was as important as the actual goals he had reached.

This process consisted of Tim's introspective questioning which resulted in his creation of the dichotomy between the real world and the fake world. This dichotomy led to his denial of any handicap and his active attempts at self-improvement to further distance himself from the hated label of "mental retardation." In the following passage, the authors explain how Tim's passion for self-improvement meant more to him than simply a method for improving his skills. The passion itself became proof of his normality:

> The principal dimension that distinguishes residents of the real world from those in the fake world is the individual's attempt to help and improve himself. There are, of course, positive consequences of trying to help one's self, but in Tim's mind it is the trying itself that distinguishes people who are worthwhile from those who are not (97).

Although Tim's process of adjustment creates problems for him that are difficult to overcome, the authors argued that, overall, it has served him well in becoming a functioning member of the community:

> The changes that have taken place in Tim's life may be seen as a series of steps that have given him control over his life and his behavior. Indeed, they are viewed this way by

Tim himself. Moreover, Tim believes that this control was brought about through his own volition and through insights he has gained by thinking about himself and the causes for his behavior. Tim is in his own mind, and to a large degree in fact, a self-made man (85).

The authors of "Living in the Real World" followed the emic approach to the life history in their treatment of Tim Anthony, making certain that their basis for interpreting the life history originated in the informant's own subjective views. Although the authors developed concepts such as the process of adjustment in their interpretation of the life history, the particular process of adjustment which they identified in the life history was quite evidently an important conscious process in Tim Anthony's own life. In addition, such concepts as Tim's denial of mental retardation and his resentment of labeling, concepts which represented Tim's own standards, could be used to compare Tim's life history with other life histories of similar individuals.

The authors' use of the first person plural to refer to themselves, their frequent bibliographic references to other researchers, and their use of the word "data" to refer to the information they collected about Tim's life give the life history a detached, scientific flavor. As the passages quoted from the

article indicate, however, the authors seemed to have a genuine interest in Tim, an interest which prevented the tone of the life history from becoming cold or uncaring.

The authors of "Living in the Real World" tell us very little about themselves. This life history appears in a collection of life histories on retarded individuals which informs us in its introduction that the researchers who wrote the life histories in the collection are connected with the UCLA Mental Retardation Research Center. The authors' silence concerning their relationship with the informant differentiates it somewhat from the other examples of emic approaches to the life history.

On this subject, the reader receives only intriguing hints such as the comment that the research project may have been successful partly because Tim "was willing to spend long periods of time talking about himself to a researcher because he had no one else to talk to" (96). This lack of information concerning the relationship between the researchers and the informant does more than make it impossible for the reader to make a judgment on the effects of that relationship on the life history. The lack of information removes this relationship from the total equation that is the life history and forces the reader to assume that the relationship of the researchers to the informant had no effect on the final version of the life history. The

researchers who produced "Living in the Real World" decided, in Janet Hoskins words, "to proclaim neutrality and even invisibility" (147). Although this decision does not nullify the important insights and conclusions that the authors reached in the life history, the decision must remain an important consideration when "Living in the Real World" is compared with other similar documents in this dissertation.

The reluctance of the authors of "Living in the Real World" to reveal themselves makes it an exception to the other emic life histories studied here. The authors of these life histories differ from authors of traditional life histories in their willingness to appear within the texts. Such emic life histories can fairly be seen as part of the "subgenre of ethnographic writing" that has emerged since the 1960's in which ethnographers have deliberately revealed themselves (Clifford 13-14).

However, the authors of emic life histories seem hesitant to assume a profile as consistently high as the literary journalists assume in their reports. Less visibility does not necessarily mean that the subjective views of the ethnographers are less influential in shaping their life histories. The ethnographers' decisions concerning what materials to include and how to include them may shape their texts every bit as much as literary journalists shape theirs. But, because

ethnographers do not use methods as obvious as the literary devices in the literary journalism, their subjective realities usually remain more hidden within their texts.

Although the emic life histories may reveal less about the subjective realities of their authors, the same cannot be said about the subjective realities of their informants. These authors' intense efforts to see the world from the point of view of the informant make the life history a powerful tool for illuminating the informant's subjective reality and for discovering that individual's "fundamental project" or reason for living (Langness and Frank 109). In fact, their use of concepts drawn from the social sciences seem to help them to focus more sharply on the subjective realities of their informants than is possible in the literary journalism, where such organizing principles are rarely used.

Chapter Five

Fiction as Illuminator of Subjectivity

Literary journalism and the life history both have been shown to operate as illuminators of subjective reality. However, both of these forms place limits on the illumination of the subjective views of authors and actors because of their dedication to fact. This need to report facts, to provide an account consistent with external evidence, and to include the viewpoints of the actors involved in the reports provides a common ground between literary journalism and the life history.

However, because literary journalism uses literary techniques to compose its reports, it also is quite similar in form to prose fiction. Fiction's ability to illuminate subjective reality is limited and regulated by _form_ in the way literary journalism is limited and regulated by form while fiction is not limited by factualness as is the literary journalism. Thus, while literary journalism shares with life history the limitation imposed by the need to report facts, it shares with prose fiction the limitation imposed by the need to create an aesthetic form. By examining the manner in which fiction illuminates subjective reality, I hope to provide a necessary and valuable perspective on the manner in which literary journalism illuminates subjective reality.

Once our attention turns to works of fiction, we are confronted with a deceptively simple situation, because the characters in fiction are no longer assumed to be real human beings as were the people who appeared in works of literary journalism and life history. The temptation is to declare that the tension between objectivity and subjectivity no longer exists: the characters in works of fiction are solely the inventions of the author and must simply be instruments of the author's subjective reality. But such a declaration would ignore the fact that, in order to be understood, authors of fiction must create events and characters that are, at least, somewhat believable.

To avoid confusion, I must define some of my terms. In this chapter, when I use the words "believable" or "believability," I will be referring to the requirement that all works of fiction be at least translatable into real world terms, whether those works are written using the style of realism or a style that uses fantasy. I will not use these words to refer to the internal coherence or the degree of plausibility or probability within the work. When I use the words "reality" or "real world," I will be speaking only of the generally accepted understanding of what the external world is like and not any individual author's idiosyncratic conception of the real.

The requirement of believability is particularly

serious for authors who write in the style of realism, because they must make the fictional world inside their works seem to correspond exactly to the external world. However this requirement is important for all works of fiction, whether those works use the style of realism or are extremely fantastic. Characters and events must be translatable into real world terms, must have some degree of referentiality to the external world, if they are to be believable and if the ideas they represent are to be applicable to our lives. The problem for authors of fiction is to achieve this degree of believability; the problem for their critics is to determine whether or not those authors have achieved it.

Authors who use realism can seek to resolve the dilemma by attempting to create a pure rendering of unmediated reality. According to Wayne Booth, such extreme proponents of realism expect the author to "give the illusion that he does not even exist" (<u>Rhetoric of Fiction</u> 50). Such a view ignores the power of authors to select those components of reality that they wish to have appear in their work. Barbara Foley described this power as the ". . . crucial role in conceiving, selecting and shaping the imagined world which is projected in the text" ("Fact, Fiction, and Reality" 391). Works of fiction must finally be perceived as an imagined world removed from the world of everyday reality and the author's subjective consciousness

perceived as the mediator between reality and the reader: "In short, the author's judgment is always present, always evident to anyone who knows how to look for it. . . . [W]e must never forget that though the author can to some extent choose his disguises, he can never choose to disappear" (Booth 20).

However, even if we concede that authors cannot serve up unmediated reality, we still need to decide what the relationship is between the imagined, subjective world presented in a work of fiction and the external world. And, even more important to this study, we must analyze how authors create this relationship between their subjective worlds and the real world if we are to use fiction to help us understand its relative-- literary journalism. Before we can analyze this relationship, however, we must make clear exactly who this figure is that we call "the author" in works of fiction and how this figure exerts its influence over those works. A good starting point for this analysis is the concept of the implied author as it is formulated by Wayne Booth in the Rhetoric of Fiction.

For Booth, the implied author is the "official scribe" whom we perceive as the creator of the work of fiction in its entirety. This implied author is different from the author's real-life person, different from implied authors in other writers' works, often different from the implied author in other works by the

same writer, and different from the narrator--the speaker who leads us through an individual work:

> Our sense of the implied author includes
> not only the extractable meanings but
> also the moral and emotional content of
> each bit of action and suffering of all
> of the characters. It includes, in short,
> the intuitive apprehension of a completed
> artistic whole; the chief value to which
> this implied author is committed,
> regardless of what party his creator
> belongs to in real life, is that which is
> expressed by the total form (73-74).

Implied authors act as real authors' personas in works of fiction. To avoid confusion, the implied author will be referred to in this discussion by the real-life author's name or simply as "the author." However, the term author and the use of the real-life author's name will not refer to the flesh and blood author but to the implied author, the insinuated consciousness that exists within the work as its creator.

Authors serve as combination composers and conductors in the orchestra of fiction, using all the instruments at their disposal to play out their compositions. This analogy serves well in its implication that authors are restricted in how they can use the different instruments at their disposal.

Composers or conductors cannot use a cello to produce
the effect of a trumpet and authors cannot force the
different elements in the form of fiction to do anything
they wish. The elements that make up the form of
fiction--including narrators and characters--restrict
authors by their own limits. Thus, although authors may
want to use the fictional form to illuminate their own
subjective realities, they can achieve this goal only by
using the individual elements in the form, elements that
demand that their own properties not be violated.

Narrators in works of fiction are powerful figures
whom authors can use to illuminate those authors' own
points of view, because narrators serve as the reader's
connection to a work's fictional world. Although
narrators may often seem to be closely linked to their
authors, they are usually not identical to those
authors, because, even when narrators seem to know as
much about the characters or events as authors, they do
not have the control over those characters or events
that authors have. In fact, authors may purposely create
closeness or distance between themselves and their
narrators to affect those narrators' credibility within
works of fiction. Booth refers to an individual narrator
as "'reliable' when he speaks for or acts in accordance
with the norms of the work (which is to say the implied
author's norms), 'unreliable' when he does not" (158-
159). Authors may use reliable narrators to reinforce

the authors' beliefs or use unreliable narrators to highlight those beliefs through contrast or irony.

In addition, authors can choose to make narrators privileged or limited in terms of what they are allowed to know (Booth 160). Limited narrators may be allowed to know only what they can logically infer, while privileged narrators may know the thoughts of one or more characters as well as the outcome of events. By manipulating their narrators' range of knowledge, authors can control readers' understanding of events as well as the narrators' reliabilities.

Like narrators, the characters in fiction have their own beliefs, their own subjective realities which are developed to the extent that the characters themselves are developed. Thus, authors can use characters in many ways to illuminate the authors' own subjective views. For example, by creating characters who share or oppose the authors' values, authors can subtly establish those values in a work by making the characters sympathetic or unsympathetic while, at the same time, the authors seem to remain neutral themselves. Such neutrality should not be mistaken for objectivity. If the characters in a work of fiction establish values of any kind in that work, those values must be the result of the author's manipulation of those characters whether or not the author openly indicates sympathy toward those values.

For example, authors can create greater compassion for just those characters with whom they agree simply by spending more time developing those characters: ". . . in centering our interest, sympathy, or affection on one character, he [the author] inevitably excludes from our interest sympathy, or affection some other character" (Booth 78-79). Such a result is especially true for characters who are central to a work's narration either because they serve as first-person narrators or third-person point-of-view characters.

However, these uses of narrators and characters may also present authors with complex problems. Once the personalities of narrators or characters are well-established, authors must make the subjective views of those narrators and characters consistent with those figures' personalities. In addition, for narrators and characters, or events or objects for that matter, to be considered plausible, they must be identifiable with similar elements in the real world. Even if fictional narrators or characters are drawn in a fantastic or otherworldly fashion, they must be understandable in real-world terms which, after all, are the only terms available to the reader. Fantastic or not, once they are established, narrators and characters must behave in a manner that corresponds to the way real people would be expected to behave in a similar world (Sparshott 152).

Thus, we are assuming that, even though narrators

and characters are the subjective creations of authors, they must correspond to individuals who could exist in the real world. We are also assuming that this real world exists and that there is agreement about its characteristics. The critic William Ray maintained that these assumptions are not only correct but necessary. Ray's argument rests upon the concept of resymbolization developed by David Bleich. Bleich argued that an initial experience, a symbolization, becomes a resymbolization when there is an attempt to interpret or explain the symbolization (Bleich 39). According to Ray, such resymbolization corresponds to the activity of interpreters or critics of literary works.

When these interpreters agree on a reading of a work through "intersubjective negotiation," that reading "is validated as the satisfactory explanation of current phenomena" (Ray 79). The interpreters of works of fiction, who compose a community of critics or scholars, decide through discussion within that community whether or not the world to which a work of fiction refers is plausible enough to be considered real: "If something appears objectively so, it is merely because all parties agree that it is so . . ." (79). In this way, critics can create a means for judging the degree to which narrators and characters in literary works, the fictional creations of authors, correspond to their counterparts in the real world: "Thus, although the

literary object can only manifest itself through the intuitive experience of the subject, it is paradoxically inevitable that such experience presents itself as an objective structure of reference" (104).

These concepts not only establish a justification for passing judgment on the effectiveness of the techniques authors of fiction use to illuminate their subjective views but also provide arguments against charges that literary criticism is simply a kind of subjectivism. One such charge claims that criticism is worthless because "the value of any work is the value any reader sees in it, and there can be no disputing of taste in values" (Booth, Company We Keep 84). The idea that a community of critics exists to analyze one another's opinions establishes a much more exacting standard than the taste of a single reader. A similar argument accuses critics who are interested in the subjective components of fictional works of concentrating only on the emotional aspects of those works.

Louise Rosenblatt, a student of reader-response criticism, argued that such a charge is unwarranted, because it is impossible to separate referential or cognitive uses of language from affective or emotive uses of language in works of fiction. She concluded that the reading experience "fuses the cognitive and emotive, or, perhaps more accurately, apprehends them as facets

of the same lived-through experience, thus giving it its special meaning and quality" (46). (Although reader-response criticism is currently a popular subject in literary criticism, it will not be discussed here, because its focus on the effects of fiction on the reader goes well beyond the scope of this study's emphasis on the views of authors and real-life subjects in literary journalism.)

Although fictional works may contain objective-like components as well as subjective-like components, critics must experience these components together if they are to understand the works. Wayne Booth responded to arguments that equate criticism with subjectivism by asserting that value judgements are justifiable in analyses of works of fiction simply because every work must either succeed or fail at realizing its own objectives. Whether a work's ambitions are to become an epic or a parody, critics can intelligently apply the appropriate criteria to judge that work, to "discriminate degrees of success in exercising a determinate human skill" (Company We Keep 119).

The tension between objectivity and subjectivity is, thus, very much alive both for authors of works of fiction and the critics of those works. Authors can be judged by the degree to which they seem to be complying with fiction's need to meet standards of referentiality and critics can be judged by the need to use specific

criteria consistently in their criticism. Authors who fail to meet standards of referentiality can be accused of destroying the plausibility of the fictional worlds that they create. Critics whose judgments seem to be based on purely idiosyncratic criteria can be accused of subjectivism.

In my evaluations of works of fiction in this chapter, my primary interest will be in determining how authors have used fictional techniques to illluminate subjectivity in those works. However, before attempting these evaluations, there must be some discussion about the meaning of "objective structure of reference." Does the use of this term mean that only the most realistic fiction, works that seem to correspond directly to concrete aspects of everyday reality, can be considered successful? This standard would seem to be especially difficult for much of contemporary fiction to meet, because contemporary fiction so often emphasizes fantasy over strict realism. But, if we concentrate on the focus in this chapter--the illumination of the subjective realities of authors and characters through fiction--we see that such pure realism is not necessary.

Subjective reality refers to the total world view of authors and characters and such a view must include the emotions of these figures as well as their ideas and beliefs about their daily lives. So, if the author of a work of fiction is able to communicate these views to

the reader, that author must be judged successful. This concept of success is similar to T.S. Eliot's explanation of the use of the "objective correlative" to communicate emotion to the reader:

> The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked (124-125).

If authors of fiction manage to communicate a sense of their subjective realities or the subjective realities of their characters to the reader, it does not particularly matter if the characters, events, or objects the author uses to achieve that communication are realistic, expressionistic, or fantastic. This freedom of choice represents an advantage that authors of fiction have over authors of literary journalism and life history. While authors of non-fiction must use the materials present in actual events to communicate their subjective views or the views of people in their works, authors of fiction can choose just those materials that

work best at communicating the subjective views that they wish to communicate.

Barbara Foley made a similar point in her discussion of the apocalyptic nature of modern documentary fiction. She argued that many writers of contemporary historical fiction have subverted historical fact in order to create their view of the horrific quality of contemporary life in their work: " . . . writers committed to a full imaginative recreation of the past have moved in an increasingly apocalyptic direction, subordinating fact to a mythic or highly personal view of history" ("From U.S.A. to Ragtime" 101). These authors, Foley claimed, have reinvented historical "facts" solely for their shock value. Such a use of historical materials seems similar to the use of characters and events that was discussed earlier in relation to the objective correlative. Both these concepts seem to suggest materials can be used in fiction, not for any worth in themselves, but solely because they help authors to communicate their beliefs. Thus, obviously fantastic material may often be quite effective at revealing authors' conceptions of truth. Such material can help an author to create what Peter Berger called a "reality-shattering effect" in their fiction, an effect that can explode readers' taken-for-granted view of everyday reality and replace it with the author's personal perspective (221).

To the question of how authors of works of fiction use the techniques available to them to communicate subjective meaning through that form, we can answer that they do so, at least in part, through a use of narrators, characters, objects, and events to illuminate their subjective views. By examining a particular work of fiction, we can provide examples of how these techniques can operate. I have selected Bernard Malamud's short story, "Idiot's First," the title story in a collection of short stories published by Malamud in 1963, to serve this purpose. I chose this work, because it operates on different levels of engagement with the real world, and so allows me to illustrate how an author can use both realism and fantasy to communicate subjective reality in a work of fiction.

This story relates the difficulties an elderly, dying Jewish immigrant in New York City encounters in his attempts to send his retarded son to live with an elderly uncle in California. The story is concerned with the old man Mendel's attempts to raise the money for train fare for his son, Isaac, during one cold, dark night in the city.

The story can be divided into two levels of meaning. First, there is the level of meaning which emerges from the basically realistic adventures Mendel experiences in his attempts to raise the money for Isaac's train fare. The other level of meaning emerges

from the fantastic setting of the story, "a vaguely surrealistic dream landscape" (Hershinow 127). By using these two levels of meaning simultaneously, the author is able to anchor the story in the real world but still able to set his imagination free to use the power of fantasy to create a more universal meaning for the work.

In this way, the author solves the problem of referentiality. The fantastic elements of the story are not set adrift in a world of unreality, existing as finely made imaginative structures that have no objective structure of reality to which to refer. Rather, these elements can refer to an objective structure which already exists within the story, the real-world lives of the story's characters. Malamud uses the realistic level of the story to illuminate the subjective realities of the narrator and characters-- realities which Malamud has also created--and uses the fantastic level of the story to illuminate the author's subjective reality. Let us see how this process works by examining the story in detail.

The narrator in this story is a limited omniscient narrator who uses Mendel as the point-of-view character. However, this narrator remains somewhat distant from Mendel--he does not often reveal Mendel's thoughts and feelings, and he does not use Mendel's Yiddish-inflected style of speech to narrate the events in the story. The narrator's impersonal style gives the narration a

detached quality. This narrative style contrasts with
Mendel's nearly hysterical state of mind, which serves
to exaggerate the desperation of his plight. The opening
of the story illustrates the narrator's individualistic
style and introduces the palpable fear that accompanies
Mendel throughout the story:

> The thick ticking of the tin clock stopped.
> Mendel, dozing in the dark, awoke in fright.
> The pain returned as he listened. He drew on
> his cold embittered clothing, and wasted
> minutes sitting at the edge of the bed (3).

Mendel has only until midnight to get the money
before he must report to a man named Ginzburg, who
stalks Mendel and Isaac throughout the evening. The
other characters in the story seem quite realistic on
the surface--immigrant Jews who speak English with a
strong Yiddish inflection. Their indifference to
Mendel's plight seems to mock his desperately powerful
desire to find a haven for Isaac and makes his
loneliness and despair seem even more extreme.

Mendel's first encounter is with a pawnbroker to
whom Mendel and Isaac come for money. The dialogue
between Mendel and the pawnbroker illustrates Mendel's
estrangement from other people. When Mendel pleads for
enough money in exchange for his watch to buy Isaac's
train fare, the pawnbroker's answer is, "So go to
Rothschild" (5). Mendel settles for eight dollars for

the watch. The author's choice of dialogue and action in Mendel's next confrontation reinforces the sense of the world's harsh, unyielding quality and Mendel's alienation.

Mendel comes to a rich man, Fishbein, to ask for charity and even begs on his knees when Fishbein refuses. Fishbein will not agree and gives Mendel only the stubborn fact of his "policy" for an excuse: "Private contributions I don't make--only to institutions. This is my fixed policy" (8). This confrontation is somewhat melodramatic, but the author strives to lessen that melodrama with some deft touches. He is careful not to draw Mendel simply as a wretched beggar but indicates that Mendel may be willing to fight for his son, that he is a dignified and prideful man who has been driven to desperation. When Fishbein laughs at Mendel's plan and calls Isaac a "halfwit," Mendel interrupts him with a flash of anger and a warning: "Please, without names" (8).

Also, Malamud does not allow these characters to appear as completely one-dimensional, heartless individuals. He includes in each characterization a saving hint of humanity that makes them seem more three-dimensional so that they confirm Mendel's subjective belief that one should have enough hope to keep on going, that there exists another, less severe side to life. The effect of Mendel's encounter with the

pawnbroker is softened when the pawnbroker refuses to allow Mendel to pawn his hat and coat on this cold night (8). Also, although the rich man, Fishbein, refuses to give Mendel and Isaac the money, he asks them several times if they are hungry and offers to feed them.

Mendel finds more kindly treatment from the next stranger he visits, a sick, elderly rabbi. The rabbi listens sympathetically to Mendel's story despite his wife's objections, but he has no money to spare. Instead, the rabbi appeals to Mendel's faith: "God will give you," he says. Mendel responds, "In the grave. I need tonight. Come Isaac" (11). Here, the author provides Mendel with another aspect of his personality, a cynicism about religion. Ironically, Mendel's sarcasm moves the rabbi to impetuously hand Mendel his new fur coat with which Mendel escapes after a brief struggle with the rabbi's wife. Mendel manages to pawn the coat and races with Isaac to the train station to buy Isaac's ticket to California. Here, a few minutes past midnight, he finds Ginzburg, whom he believes to be the Angel of Death, posing as a railroad ticket agent and has his last and most difficult confrontation.

Up to this point, Malamud has maneuvered Mendel, his point-of-view character, to exhibit both a belief in himself and a belief in others. Despite the hopelessness of his situation, Mendel has shown that he has faith that he can make a difference, that his persistence can

pay off, that he should keep trying. In addition, Mendel
has shown that he believes that truthful appeals to the
kindness of others can produce results. Despite his
desperation, he has not turned to robbery or trickery to
raise the money he needs. Even in his final, terrifying
confrontation with Ginzberg, Mendel reveals that he
still holds to these views.

Ginzburg will not allow Mendel and Isaac onto the
platform although the train has not left the station. He
tells Mendel that he is late, that he was supposed to
report to him by midnight: "Favors you had enough
already. For you the train is gone." Despite Mendel's
pleading, Ginzburg proves hard to sway. The following
excerpt from Mendel's argument with Ginzburg's
illustrates that Mendel still has faith enough to appeal
to the humanity even in the coldest of individuals:

> "Whatever business you in, where is your
> pity?"
> "This ain't my commodity. The law is the
> law."
> "Which law is this?"
> "The cosmic universal law, goddamit, the
> one I got to follow myself" (13).

Finally, in frustration, Mendel grabs Ginzburg by
the throat. "You bastard, don't you understand what it
means human?" (14). At this, Ginzburg looks into
Mendel's eyes, sees the intensity of Mendel's emotion,

and relents. He allows Mendel to take Isaac to the train and send him off to California. Because we cannot know Ginzburg's thoughts, Malamud must use dialogue here to illustrate the difference between Mendel's and Ginzburg's subjective beliefs concerning the importance of human kindness in administering life's laws.

At the end of the story, Mendel is rewarded for his perseverance and for his belief in humanity by achieving his goal--he is able to send Isaac to safety. It is important to note that this victory is a victory from Mendel's point of view. The author is careful to indicate through Mendel's dialogue with the other characters that this victory is far from complete: Mendel's uncle in California is an old man who is likely to leave Isaac alone before long. But this limited enthusiasm represents the author's subjective view, not Mendel's. Mendel has truly been victorious from his own point of view. For him, the ending is a happy one.

This realistic component of the story is effective at establishing a real world reference point for the story and at communicating Mendel's subjective reality. The reasons for both Mendel's desperation and his hope are clear and understandable in terms of everyday reality. And, although most of the other characters seem cold and uncaring in contrast to Mendel's passionate intensity, their behavior is characteristic of people who are often asked by strangers for help. There is a

strong implication that Ginzberg possesses otherworldly powers, but he plays the role of a ticket taker authentically; Malamud has been careful to give even Ginzberg a believable role in the real world.

However, Malamud's use of realism in this story seems to conform to Booth's argument that authors can use realism for different purposes: "There is a radical difference between those who seek some form of realism as an end in itself and those for whom realism is a means to other ends" (57). Malamud does not seem to use realism for its own sake but to serve as counterpoint for another level of reality. This other level of reality represents the level of the fantastic in the story which the author uses to illuminate his own subjective reality. Although the author's subjective views are different from Mendel's, they are not totally independent of Mendel's experience. The author needs Mendel's realistic experience to reinforce his own views, because those views are presented mainly at the level of fantasy. Malamud seems to want to create a reality that exists beyond the level of everyday reality in the story, because the meaning he needs to convey itself exists at a more universal level.

Malamud skillfully uses a literary technique, the description of the setting for the story, to create this level of fantasy in the work. The story is supposedly set in New York City, but the desolate, ominous place

where the action occurs is unrecognizable and nightmarish. Mendel and Isaac scurry through dark, empty streets on a cold November night in search of the thirty-five dollars that Mendel still needs to send Isaac to California. The wind blows "mournfully" (8) and "the whole sky is white" (9). Eventually, the reader's "sense of a real world...is utterly absorbed by a dreamscape, a never-never-land New York City" (Bloom 93).

This hostile environment emphasizes the lack of sympathy and understanding that Mendel experiences in his quest, but it also creates an expressionistic background for the action "by placing comparatively real characters in wildly imaginary gardens" (Bloom 94). This technique forces the characters to act out their drama in a different, more universal level. This setting, then, seems to work like an objective correlative in the story by taking readers beyond everyday reality to make them aware that they are witnessing a basic human struggle against the overwhelming forces of the universe. Malamud uses the setting of the story to communicate his own subjective view of universal injustice, what one critic called "Malamudian anger directed at divine indifference in the face of human suffering" (Salzberg 2).

Thus, "Idiots First" presents us with a story which skillfully communicates both the main character's

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subjective reality and the author's subjective reality. Mendel believes he has overcome the world's cruelty and indifference through appeals to others for humanity and justice. The author seems to be suggesting that, while one person may make some impression in a universe that has arrayed its great power of indifference against him, that impression might be limited to the ability to make some sense of that power, that "he can--at least at odd moments--impose meaning where God has not" (Friedman 291).

Malamud created these differing levels of realism and fantasy and the differing subjective views they engender by using several techniques, including point of view, characterization, dialogue, and setting. Although these techniques allowed Malamud great freedom in communicating his views, the fictional form required him to respect its requirements. Without Mendel's realistic and moving existence in the story, including his subjective views, the author's views would have lost their reference point in the real world and, also, much of their power.

Coincidentally but interestingly, "Idiot's First" includes a retarded person among its characters, Mendel's retarded son, Isaac. Isaac does not speak in the story--he only makes pathetic sounds--and he is given no real personality. He is portrayed as inferior and burdensome, useful only in moving the story's plot

along. In contrast, <u>Flowers for Algernon</u>, the next work of fiction we will consider, makes a retarded person its center of interest.

<u>Flowers for Algernon</u> by Daniel Keyes is a novel that purports to represent the thoughts, feelings, and life story of Charlie Gordan, a mildly retarded man in his early thirties. The entire novel is told in the first person from Charlie's point of view through chronologically arranged progress reports, similar to diary entries, that Charlie writes during a nine-month period when he is part of a scientific experiment on human intelligence. The scientific experiment, designed by a psychiatrist and a psychologist at Beekman University, is an attempt to do for Charlie what it has already done for a white mouse named "Algernon"--triple his intelligence.

At the start of the novel, Charlie's life revolves around the tests he is given at the University and his job at a bakery where he does menial work and is used as the butt of the other employees' cruel jokes. Charlie begins his progress reports before he has been given the surgical operation to increase his intelligence. The following is an excerpt from Charlie's March 8 progress report which he wrote just prior to the operation:

progris riport 6th Mar 8

Im skared. Lots of pepul who werk at the collidge and the pepul at the medicil school

came to wish me luk. Burt the tester brot me
some flowers he said they were from the pepul
at the psych departmint. He wished me luk. I
hope I have luk. I got my rabits foot and my
luky penny and my horshoe. Dr Strauss said
dont be so suerstishus Charlie. This is
sience. I dont no what sience is but they all
keep saying it so maybye its something that
helps you have good luk (9).

Keyes uses the spelling mistakes, elementary
syntax, and superficial level of understanding to reveal
Charlie's simple view of the world at the beginning of
the novel. After Charlie undergoes surgery, his
intelligence quickly increases, and he is promoted to a
more skilled job at the bakery. Keyes makes dramatic
changes in the progress reports to illustrate Charlie's
newfound abilities: Charlie's spelling and grammar
improve, the syntax of his sentences become more
complicated, his thought processes become more complex,
and his insight and understanding become deeper. Charlie
discovers that his difficulties have also increased,
particularly his difficulties with human relationships.
He had expected that people would be proud of him if he
became smarter, but, instead, he finds suspicion and
jealousy:

April 22--People at the bakery are changing.
Not only ignoring me. I can feel the

hostility. Donner is arranging for me to join the baker's union, and I've gotten another raise. The rotten thing is that all of the pleasure is gone because the others resent me (47).

In addition, Charlie has begun to remember details from his childhood, a time when his mother refused to accept that he was retarded and berated him cruelly when he could not learn like a normal child. Charlie also finds it difficult to decide ethical dilemmas that have appeared in his life, to deal with his newly discovered romantic interest in women, and to come to terms with his life before the operation. He decides to enter psychotherapy with one of the psychologists with whom he is working. However, even the psychologist belittles his existence before the operation. In the following conversation, Charlie becomes angry when the psychologist compares his retarded self to an object that people simply used to accomplish goals:

"But I'm not an inanimate object," I argued. "I'm a person." He looked confused for a moment and then laughed. "Of course, Charlie. But I wasn't referring to now. I meant before the operation." Smug, pompous--I felt like hitting him too. "I was a person before the operation. In case you forgot--" (63).

As Charlie's IQ jumps from 68 to 185, he realizes

that what he values most about himself is not his
growing knowledge but his intrinsic worth as a human
being and what he continues to resent most in others in
their tendency to concentrate only on his intelligence
and to diminish his worth before the operation. In the
following passage, he expresses his anger at the
attitude that Dr. Nemur, one of the director's of the
experiment, has toward him:

> It may sound like ingratitude, but that is one
> of the things that I resent here--the attitude
> that I am a guinea pig. Nemur's constant
> references to having made me what I am, or
> that someday there will be others like me who
> will become real human beings. . . . He makes
> the same mistake as the others when they look
> at a feeble-minded person and laugh because
> they don't understand there are human feelings
> involved. He doesn't realize that I was a
> person before I came here (101).

Charlie's subjective views have changed. He now values
himself as a human being and expects to be treated with
respect. This feeling of self-worth even extends to his
life before the operation, and he has begun to resent
the way people treated him in the past.

Later in the novel, Charlie becomes drunk at a
party and engages in a bitter argument with the
directors of the experiment, an argument that Keyes

relates through extensive dialogue and description. During this argument, Charlie sums up the meaning that the experiment has had for him:

> . . . I've learned that intelligence alone
> doesn't mean a damned thing. Here in your
> university, intelligence, education,
> knowledge, have all become great idols. But I
> know now there's one thing you've all
> overlooked: intelligence and education that
> hasn't been tempered by human affection isn't
> worth a damn (173).

Keyes uses this scene to allow Charlie to expresses the view of life that he develops when his intelligence is at its highest level: human beings are not to be valued for their intelligence or any other single attribute. Intelligence only has value when it is considered as just one part of a complete human being, a person who is capable of sharing love as well as ideas. This view is supported when the effect of the operation wears off and Charlie's intelligence regresses to its level prior to the surgery; Charlie remains a sympathetic figure, nonetheless, until the end of the novel, reinforcing the view that his value is not determined by his IQ score alone.

In this novel, Keyes used fantastic circumstances much as Malamud used an expressionistic setting in "Idiot's First" to transcend the realistic level so he

could communicate his subjective views about human existence through his fiction. In Flowers For Algernon, however, Keyes did not use setting as Malamud did to create fantasy. The environment remains starkly realistic throughout the novel.

Instead, Keyes manipulated Charlie's intelligence to create a fantastic situation in which Charlie's level of intelligence begins at a low level, rises, and then falls again to its previous state. The result of this manipulation is that Charlie's degree of percipience changes as his IQ changes. As his intelligence increases, his insight into his life broadens and deepens, a process that actually changes Charlie into different characters during the course of the novel. This is not to say, exactly, that Charlie is not a realistic character, for, at any given level of intelligence, Charlie's individuality is believable. Thus, Charlie's character acts as a realistic reference point at the same time as it is being used by the author to create a non-realistic situation of changing perspectives.

Keyes seems to use the distance between the narrator (Charlie himself) and the author to illuminate different subjective realities in the novel. Because Charlie, whose subjective views change as the novel progresses, is also the novel's narrator, Keyes is able to use him to reflect different viewpoints by varying

the distance between Charlie and the author. When Charlie is retarded, the distance between him and the author is quite large. Keyes has Charlie include information in the progress reports that indicates there is a great deal that Charlie does not know. However, in his intelligent phase, the distance between Charlie and the author seems almost to disappear. As the passages quoted earlier illustrate, Charlie often seems to be speaking in a didactic, even somewhat preachy manner after his intelligence has increased, as if he were being used to communicate the author's point of view. Perhaps, it is difficult to differentiate the author from the intelligent Charlie in the book, because they are practically the same person, the author himself.

The author uses the intelligent Charlie to illuminate his subjective views while allowing the less intelligent Charlie to illuminate the subjective views of the retarded character in the novel. In this way, Keyes gives us both an intellectual view of retardation through the character of the intelligent Charlie and a dramatic experience of retardation through the character of the retarded Charlie. However, because these two characters are used to represent different facets of the same character's life in the novel, each of their lives becomes a foil for the other's life. That is, the intelligent Charlie becomes a foil for the retarded Charlie and vice-versa.

Thus, Keyes not only uses the technique of varying Charlie's intelligence to illuminate his own views but also to create a character that can provide insight into the inner life of a mildly retarded person or, more accurately, into what the author thinks might be the subjective reality of such a person. At the same time, the life of each of the two main sides of the Charlie character acts as a foil to illustrate and illuminate the life of the other side.

This aspect of the novel is rather complex since Charlie is only retarded during part of the novel--at the beginning before the operation to increase his intelligence and at the end when the effects of the operation wear off. However, the retarded Charlie is a believable individual who speaks with an authentic, often moving voice and who represents an impressive contrast to the intelligent Charlie. For example, at the end of the novel, Charlie, who is once again retarded, explains why he has decided to commit himself to the Warren Home, an institution for the mentally retarded:

> I dont want Miss Kinnian [Charlie's former teacher] to feel sorry for me. I know evrybody feels sorry for me at the bakery and I dont want that eather so Im going someplace where they are a lot of other pepul like me and nobody cares that Charlie Gordon was once a genus and now

> he cant even reed a book or rite good
>
> (215).

In this passage, Charlie is convincing, but not only as a retarded man. He is also convincing as a sensitive, caring, and prideful retarded man, because the author has developed these traits in him through the course of the novel. Although Charlie may be a fictional character, his revelations about the feelings and experiences of a mildly retarded person still seem valuable.

Unlike the other forms of writing discussed in this dissertation, fiction allows its authors to break free of factualness. This freedom permits authors of fiction to predetermine events to a degree that is impossible for authors of the other two forms who are limited by the facts. This freedom from factualness, however, does not completely free authors of fiction from the tension between objectivity and subjectivity. These authors must consider the degree to which their creations refer to the real world. If their creations are fantastic and have little in common with the real world, they must find "subtle correspondences" between their fictional worlds and the real world in order for their creations to be believable (Scholes 8).

As we have seen, however, authors who can make this connection with the real world can use the techniques of the fictional form--including the use of the reliable

and unreliable narrator, point of view, characterization, dialogue, and setting--to illuminate their own subjective views and those of their characters. In addition, these authors' ability to invent different characters who undergo similar experiences or to dramatize different facets of the same character's experience allows them to illuminate these similar experiences through various types and levels of consciousness. We must remember, however, that these subjective views in works of fiction are inescapably the creations of their real-world authors.

Although we have used the terms <u>author</u> and <u>implied author</u> interchangeably in this discussion, we cannot forget that the real-world author is separate from the implied author in a work of fiction. Authors of literary journalism and the life history do not enjoy this separation, because they are personally identified as the creators of their works. However, in a sense, the implied author in a work of fiction is simply another fictional invention and, as the critic David Carroll has written, a single consciousness resides behind all fictional inventions: "What ultimately guarantees the integrity of the house of fiction . . . is that behind the window is another figure, this one, supposedly 'real' and present in the 'real world'--the author himself . . ." (56). The "authority" for everything that appears in a work of fiction must be the real-world

author. Although authors of fiction have more freedom to
explore their own subjective worlds than authors who use
the other forms considered in this study, all the
subjective realities that are illuminated in works of
fiction are, finally, products of those real-world
authors' creative minds.

Chapter Six

An Original Version of Literary Journalism

In the preceding chapters, I have analyzed the manner in which authors use literary journalism, the life history, and fiction to illuminate subjective realities--their own as well as those of the people who appear within their works. Because the primary purpose of this investigation has been to discover how authors of literary journalism reveal subjective views within their works, I will now apply the information gained so far. I am presenting my own version of a report about a mildly retarded man, a factual report written in the form of literary journalism using techniques identified as fundamental to that form. Thus, the report is based on information gathered using information obtained both through research on the subject and through saturation reporting. This information is presented in a text written as literary journalism, that is, a text that uses straight expository prose together with such literary techniques as the strong narrative voice, scenic construction, dialogue, point of view, and status life details to communicate the information.

However, I also include in this report selected techniques from both the life history and fiction that have proven effective in illuminating subjectivity, with the single exception that these techniques do not

include the use of invented material. At the conclusion of this report, I analyze my rationale for choosing the techniques from the life history and fiction that I selected, and I also analyze their usefulness in writing the report.

My report, entitled "Talian Pie," is based primarily on interviews with a mildly retarded man who lives in a group home for the mentally retarded in the suburbs of a mid-sized city in southeastern Pennsylvania. Although I have known this man, whom I call Dan, from February, 1986, to the present, the material in this report is based primarily on information I gained through research, interviews, and observations I completed between February-May 1986. The boldfaced sections in the report contain material taken from my own life that is meant to put related material on Dan's life in perspective. Except for my name, all the names of people, places, and organizations in the report are pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of people and organizations that appear within the report. Nothing else in the report is invented.

Talian Pie

The first time I met Dan he was standing on the steps that led from the bedroom hall of the group home into the living room where I was waiting. He was smiling broadly.

"You must be Paul," he said in a booming voice. He marched down the stairs toward me, arms and legs pumping, head bobbing, hand outstretched toward me--like a crack salesman approaching a promising client for the first time. He shook my hand with enthusiasm.

"Glad to meet you, Paul," he said. "I'm Dan."

He was not what I expected at all. Not at all.

Dan's file, which I obtained from the agency which operates the group home where he lives, noted that he is a 26-year-old white male who receives monthly disability income from the Social Security Administration and is in need of services for the mentally retarded. His "Principal Presenting Problem" was listed as:

Down's Syndrome

Mild Mental Retardation

According to the American Association on Mental Deficiency manual for professionals entitled Classification in Mental Retardation, Down's Syndrome is defined as follows:

Syndrome in which the majority of affected individuals are trisomic for chromosome number 2; clinical manifestations include epicanthal folds, oblique palpebral fissures, broad bridge of the nose, protruding tongue, open mouth, square-shaped ears, muscular hypotonia, often congenital heart disease, and varying degrees of mental retardation (Grossman, 169).

Dan's file indicated that he does not suffer from congenital heart disease although the file contains no information on his genetic makeup. Dan's eyes do slant upward slightly (oblique palpebral fissures). Also, his tongue does seem to be somewhat large causing him to keep his mouth partly open. However, Dan has a rather high bridge to his nose rather than a broad bridge, his ears are not square-shaped, and his little fingers do not turn inward. I have never had the opportunity to observe Dan's feet or toes.

I made a special effort to observe Dan's physical characteristics during one of our lunch meetings at a Pizza Hut restaurant, when I thought he was so absorbed with his meal that he would not notice what I was doing. Dan was eating from a plate piled high with macaroni salad, cole slaw, and cottage cheese. I turned away from him and pretended to study the desert list while I observed him. When he seemed to be concentrating solely on the food, I raised my gaze above the desert menu so I could glance sideways at his face and hands without his knowledge, I thought. Within a few seconds, he stopped eating and lifted his head to one side so he was looking directly at me.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Nothing," I said. "I'm just looking at the desert menu."

"Do you want desert?"

"No," I said. "I'm just looking at what they have."

"Are you mad at me?"

"No," I said. "Of course not."

I, too, have a protruding tongue. My tongue is too large for my mouth and caused me problems as a boy, because it pushed my front teeth forward. I had to have orthodontia work. I remember my first visit to the orthodontist and my alarm when the doctor said it was possible I would need part of my tongue cut off, although fitting my teeth with braces would probably correct the problem without such a drastic measure.

I supposed he was joking but wasn't sure, because he was such a cold and humorless man. I remember how I resented the clinical, officious way he treated me during visits--speaking only to his assistant in technical terms about the condition of my bite and speaking to me only to deliver curt orders to open wide or turn my head. He never used my name or talked to me directly except in the condescending manner adults often take with children.

I remember once, though, I got his attention. He had just put a whole set of braces on my upper teeth making me extremely uncomfortable. As soon as I got home from his office, I took a pair of pliers and pulled all the braces out of my mouth. My parents were irate

when they discovered what I had done, and the orthodontist stopped me on the street one day to lecture me. He said that, in his entire ninety years as an orthodontist, no patient had ever removed his own braces with a pair of pliers and that he would never allow me into his office again if I were ever to repeat such a stunt. Even today, I feel an odd sense of pride whenever I remember that time I yanked those braces off my teeth with a greasy pair of pliers.

Dan lives in a group home called a CLA (Community Living Arrangement) with two other mentally retarded male adults. The house, a single-family split level, is located on a tree-lined street in a suburban area of a mid-sized city in southeastern Pennsylvania. An employee of the agency (called Helping Hand Inc.) that operates the home is always present when the three male residents are home. Dan and the other residents all work at sheltered workshops during weekdays.

According to Susan, a social worker at Helping Hand with whom I spoke, each client at the home works on an individualized program to help him gain independent living skills. These programs try to modify behaviour through "goal plans" that encourage clients to learn to care for themselves. The philosophy of Helping Hand, Susan said, is to help each client live as independently as he is able. Clients who complete their goal plans can

move to a higher level of independence. For example, clients who complete all their goal plans can move to their own apartments where they receive much less supervision.

Dan described his own goal plans to me during an interview at the group home. Dan likes to use his hands to help express himself as he talks. As he enumerated his goal plans, he wrapped one hand around a different finger of his other hand to represent each goal plan.

"I have a personal hygiene goal plan, an exercise goal plan, a dieting goal plan, and a chores goal plan. This is how I follow my hygiene goal plan: I get myself up in the morning. I'm a big man. I do my morning hygiene."

"Do you dress yourself?" I asked.

"Oh yes. Yes, yes, yes. I like you for a friend," Dan said. "You're the one I like the best, because you comb your hair and have a nice sweater; you stand straight."

"Do you think we get along with each other?"

"Oh yes. You are a nice handsome man."

In order to help me understand Dan's life as a citizen in the community, I sought out information on the lives of other retarded people in similar situations. I found that Robert B. Edgerton had conducted an anthropological study in the 1960's that examined the adjustment problems of retarded adults. He

published the results of this research in a book entitled The Cloak of Competence: Stigma in the Lives of the Mentally Retarded. Edgerton compiled detailed reports on forty-eight mildly retarded individuals who were attempting to live as ordinary citizens outside of institutions. Edgerton found that the greatest challenge for these people was keeping their mental retardation secret both from themselves and others: the label was so disturbing to them that they could not admit either to themselves or others that it could apply to them.

Every one of these informants had been a resident of an institution for the mentally retarded. Edgerton discovered that the stigma of the label became a heavy burden once they took up residence in the community. Edgerton reasoned that this label was so burdensome to them because our society places such a premium on an individual's competency and intelligence. According to Edgerton, each "ex-patient must take his intelligence very seriously, for he has been accused and found guilty of being so stupid that he was considered incompetent to manage his own life."

Edgerton found that, to compensate for this "shattering" accusation of mental retardation, these people constantly struggled to deny the accusation both to themselves and others, and, once they were living in the community, attempted to pass as normal, non-retarded individuals. Edgerton discovered too that this struggle

proved to be exceptionally difficult. First, the fact that they had been institutionalized was often difficult to hide. Second, life in an urban environment required knowledge and skills of such complexity that these people often failed to conceal from both themselves and others "that their competence in many aspects of everyday life is clearly less than that of the normals with whom they must associate."

Although Dan has never been institutionalized, he has also had to struggle with the stigma of mental retardation. In fact, he seems to be trying to deal with the problems this stigma has caused him in the past, to lessen the impact of the stigma on his own thinking so he can construct a positive and more comforting self-image. Also, he is trying to find a practical way of living in the community that is pleasant for him despite the problems that both the stigma of mental retardation and his own limitations cause him.

I discovered that there are three main aspects of Dan's life that he considers most important: his love for his family and friends, his desire for independence, and his enjoyment of food. Yet, the stigma of mental retardation deeply affects his ability to find fulfillment in each of these areas.

Dan communicated this dilemma to me in several ways. During our interviews, Dan did not like to remain with any subject for too long. He talked about the

subjects he enjoyed talking about in short bursts. When other subjects that he did not enjoy talking about came up, he either refused to talk about them or would not volunteer information about them except for a surprise trickle now and then, although he would sometimes answer a few direct questions about these areas that troubled him.

His method of answering questions provides a good example of Dan's style of expressing himself. Dan's answers to my questions often followed a consistent pattern; that is, I soon realized that the specific words and expressions he used indicated the degree of emotion behind his answer.

He would often answer, "Oh yes," to my questions dragging out the syllables with a kind of wistful sigh. If he felt even more strongly about his answer, he would say. "That's right," curtly and directly. His strongest expression of agreement was, "Correct," always pronounced in two distinct, elongated syllables. The subjects Dan talked about, the subjects he refused to talk about, and the style in which he spoke--all of these components of Dan's communication--gave me an entry into his view of himself and his view of the society to which he was trying to adjust.

During one of our first interviews, Dan talked about his love for food and enumerated some of the dishes he could prepare himself:

"I can make pizza, spaghetti, tacos, T.V. dinners, hoagies, brownies, cakes and angel food cakes, blueberry pancakes, eggs benedict, omelettes, western omelettes, hot cereal and cold cereal, coffee, tea, hot chocolate, home-made chicken pot pie."

Once, Dan invited me for dinner at the group home on the day he was scheduled to cook. Dan is able enough in the kitchen so that cooking is not one of his goal plans. Mark, one of the staff members who works at the group home, told me that Dan requires little help when he cooks, but the staff is helping him to learn to measure the ingredients he uses.

Dan seemed quite sure of himself as he prepared the evening meal. Although he knew I was watching him, he worked efficiently and methodically, describing his methods to me in a running commentary as he prepared each dish--Shake and Bake pork chops, broccoli, apple sauce, and a commercially precooked package of Italian potatoes.

He also set the table and mixed a soft drink for the six people who were eating at the house that evening.

"What kind of drink do you want?" he asked. "I like grape."

"What else do you have?" I asked.

"Orange," he said.

"I'd like orange," I said.

"We'll have grape."

Dan hinted several times during our interviews that he wanted to be invited to my house for dinner. Once, when he visited my home, he talked to my wife about the foods he enjoyed.

"Your wife asked me what kind of food I like the best," he said. "I told her spaghetti and meatballs with garlic bread."

During our first interview, Dan told me that his favorite restaurant was Pizza Hut. "I love pizza," he said and rubbed his hands together. "I like mushrooms, pepperoni, sausage, and black olives all on the same pizza. There are two different kinds of pizza--pan pizza and supreme pizza."

Dan is on a diet goal plan. According to staff members at the group home, the diet is not a strict one, but Dan is supposed to be careful that he does not eat too much or eat foods particularly high in calories.

"When I'm on a diet," Dan said, "I can't have any toppings on my ice cream-- just plain ice cream."

Do you like being on your diet?" I asked.

"It makes me feel lousy," he said. "I've got to follow my goal plans." He emphasized the words "goal plans" in a sarcastic tone of voice.

Yet, Dan seemed to have mixed feelings about his diet goal plan. His main objection to the plan seemed to be that he doesn't like people telling him what to

do.

"You don't like people to tell you what to do?" I asked him.

"Cor-rect," he said.

Would you like to decide what you can eat yourself?"

"Yes, Paul," he said.

However, whenever I took Dan to Pizza Hut, he was careful to order only a salad from the salad bar, a diet soft drink, and a small pizza. "Pepsi is my favorite drink," he told the waitress at one lunch meeting. After she left, he said, "I can't eat too much because of my diet."

I asked him why he was on a diet.

"Because I want to lose weight," he said.

Dan had been certain of the kind of pizza he wanted at the restaurant--"a small crispy pizza with mushrooms, onions, and green peppers." When the waitress brought the pizza, he smiled at her in a dignified manner and said very softly, "That is my favorite dish."

When I was at the group home for dinner, Dan told me that he would be given a soda if he had finished washing all the dishes and had begun his evening hygiene by eight o'clock. Dan mentioned the soda several times during the evening, but after he had carefully washed the dishes, scrubbed the caked-on food from the pots and pans, and dried and put all the dishes away, it was ten

minutes past eight. Dan and I left the kitchen to join the others in the living room. Mark told Dan that he could not give him his soda because it was past eight, and he had not begun his hygiene.

Dan argued that there were two extra people for dinner that evening, and he should have extra time to finish the cleanup. "I want a soda so bad," he said.

When Mark said no again, I waited for the explosion of temper to come. Instead, Dan turned to face the others in the room, shrugged his shoulders, and smiled a wide, amused smile. "No soda tonight," he said.

Dan's first memory is a happy one about his grandparents. "My grandparents were alive," he told me, "and Grandpa used to take me to lunch at their house. I liked them. My grandmother made my favorite macaroni salad."

Dan grew up with his family--his parents, a brother and sister--and did not leave home until he moved into a group home at age sixteen. According to information in his file, he attended public school as a child where he was enrolled in special classes for the mentally retarded. In his early teens, he spent several years at a day-care program for the mentally retarded that he calls, "the boarder home." At sixteen, he moved from his parents' home to a children's group home for the mentally retarded. When he was eighteen, he was accepted by Helping Hand, Inc. and has since lived in

several adult group homes operated by that agency.

Dan often expressed his affection for his immediate family. During one interview, he spoke about his relationship with his family in detail. Dan was visiting me at my home during this interview. He sipped a glass of soda as we spoke.

"I like my parents a lot. I'm going home for Easter. I like my brother and my sister and my brother-in-law."

Dan smiled when he told me that his parents don't visit him "too often." He said they visit him about once a month. "I go home for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter," he said.

"Would you like to go back to live in your home town?" I asked.

"I wish. I can't."

"Why can't you?"

"I don't know."

"Why do you want to go back there?" I asked.

"Because my family is there," he said.

"Did you ever ask your parents if you could move back?"

"No."

"Do you think you can't move back because you're an adult now?"

"I think so," he said.

"What makes someone an adult?"

"I don't know."

"Are there a lot of people who care about you?"

"No."

"Who are the people who care about you?"

"I'm sorry," he said. "I can't mention them. I'll get upset."

"Why?"

"I don't want to talk about that, Paul. I really like this root beer."

Only once did Dan voice some criticism of his parents and that was in the context of a question I asked him concerning his dislikes.

"What do I hate most? I don't like people telling me what to do. I don't like it when my parents say, 'Do this, do that.' I feel mad and lose my temper sometimes when people tell me what to do. It bothers me to talk about this."

Dan also talked lovingly about his friends. "I like friends and neighbors," he said. "The people in the group home are important to me. I know three people around the neighborhood. I know Robert. He goes to college. He's my dearest, best friend. I see him every morning. He calls me 'old pal, my friend.' I like it when he says that. I feel gentle inside."

Dan reserved some of his most unqualified praise for me. "Only one person is my special friend," he said during an interview at my home.

"Who?" I asked.

"You. You are a special friend of mine. I like you; I like your daughter; I like your wife. I like you so much. You and I get along with each other."

"No fighting, right?" I said. "You don't like fighting."

"I don't want to talk about that," he said. "I like you because you don't tell your daughter what to do."

Once, when Dan and I had just come to my house, I kissed my six-year-old daughter. Dan said, "That makes me jealous." Often, Dan would arrange to sit beside me when we were in the car or sitting in the living room at the group home with the others. Sometimes, I had the feeling that he wanted to hug me--give me a great bear hug like the one I once saw him give Mark. I think, though, that he sensed that I would not be comfortable with such displays of affection. Instead, he would sometimes gently stroke the back of my hand as we sat together during our interviews.

On several occasions, Dan indicated that there was a strongly negative side to his attitude toward others. I think that this negative attitude is a response to the many people who have related to Dan primarily as a "mentally retarded" person. His distaste for being told what to do, even by his parents, seems to be the result of his sense that he has seldom been treated as

an adult.

Susan, the social worker at Helping Hand, said that people tend to treat retarded individuals as they would treat children--perhaps because some of their abilities are at a level similar to the abilities of children. However, she said that this similarity often did not imply a similarity in levels of maturity. "They may have a deficit in adaptive skills," she said, "but that doesn't mean they are immature. We have people who are very deficient in adaptive skills, but who are very mature." She added that such people would be as insulted as any other adults when others spoke to them or behaved toward them as if they were young children.

Dan seems to greatly resent this condescending attitude that others often take toward him. This resentment does not seem to be reserved only for people who are deliberately cruel but also includes well-meaning people who tell him what to do--even in contexts such as work where one might reasonably expect to be told what to do.

"I like some friends and people who don't be so mean," Dan said. "People I work with are mean. My boss is mean. When he talks to me, he says '25 minutes late or 15 minutes late.' All the bosses, I don't like."

"Because you don't like being told what to do?"

"Cor-rect. That's right, Paul."

"Why does it bother you when the bosses tell you what to do?"

"I don't want to talk about that," he said.

"Why not?"

"Talking about it makes me mad using my head." He pressed his hands to the sides of his head and grimaced as if to show that his head hurt. "I don't enjoy life too much. It's boring for me. Uncomfortable. I think it's work. Up and down the halls and go in the restroom and drink water. All that is boring."

"What would you like to do if you didn't have to work?" I asked.

"I don't want to talk about that. I don't like that word."

"What word?"

"Work," he said.

Dan indicated several times to me that he preferred to be alone rather than with people. Dan had completed a goal plan for staying alone in the group home and, when the others went to the movies, he usually chose to stay home alone--despite the fact that he said he enjoyed movies and enthusiastically described to me the plots and all the characters in several movies he had seen.

I'd rather be alone than with people," he said. "When I'm alone, I don't feel uncomfortable."

"You feel uncomfortable with people?"

"Yes, yes. I don't know why. I do writing and drawing at home by myself."

Once, when Dan was visiting at my home, I asked him if he was looking forward to going back to the group home.

"Only if there are no people there."

"Why?"

"Because I don't like people. I don't care about people," he said.

Now that I am in my forties, I find that it is no longer easy for me to make new friends. I find it difficult to rekindle the feelings of trust and warmth with people that I often felt when I was younger. Now, I am more wary of others. I find it difficult to be comfortable with the complex relationships I have with my colleagues at the college where I teach, relationships that seem to combine a kind of friendship with a kind of competitiveness. Who's on top? Who has the advantage? Be careful. Don't give yourself away. Trust no one. I sometimes feel as if my good will toward others is turning into something else, something like bitterness. Much of the time now, I want only to be alone.

Despite his occasional expressions of dislike for others, Dan is outgoing and often charming--even with

strangers. He seemed always to make an effort to please and win over the people we met when we were together. Although such outgoing qualities don't necessarily contradict Dan's comments about disliking people, he often seemed genuinely to enjoy interaction with others, and I sensed that he recognized and was proud of his social skills.

When he first visited my house, he told my wife that he was "very happy" to meet her. He talked to my daughter and asked her to tell him the names of her stuffed animals. He complimented us many times on our home and furniture. Whenever Dan and I went to a public place, he made an effort to make friendly conversation with the people we dealt with. Once, when were paying our bill at Pizza Hut, Dan struck up a conversation with the cashier.

"I've met you," he said to the man. "I used to live on Shelby Street and we came here."

"You used to order pizza to go," the man said.

"Oh yes," Dan said.

Dan's relationship with the people he lives with seems uncommon to me. In fact, all the residents of the group home seem to recognize that they comprise a distinct group within the world and their behavior toward other members of this group is unlike the behavior I have witnessed among any other such subgroup.

I asked Dan what he thought of the other group home

residents.

"They put people in the group home to learn goal plans," he said.

"Are the people in group homes different from other people?" I asked.

"Yes," he said. "They do things different ways."

"How do they do things differently?"

"People are different. I don't know why."

"How are the people who live at the group home different from the staff?" I asked.

"I don't want to talk about that. I want to talk about good things."

When I try to analyze the behavior of the group home residents toward one another, I always think of them as performing a kind of dance. They move about one another as if each was surrounded by a sort of weak magnetic field that both keeps them apart, but not too far, and that draws them together, but not too close.

They do not seem to speak to one another as often as one would expect of people who live together. They often seem to relate by simply standing at a comfortable distance form one another and smiling or simply saying, "Hello." I have noticed, though, that they are able to communicate specific messages in this way. One resident standing near another in a room often seems to be saying to the other person: I have something to do in the place where you are now, and when you leave, I will come there

and do it.

The response of the other resident is often a quickening of activity to show that the message has been received and then a friendly, deliberate departure from the place where the first person wants to be.

One evening when I was invited for dinner at the group home, I met a temporary resident, a young woman named Debby, who was staying at the group home for a few days, because she was having some difficulty at her permanent residence and needed a respite. Debby seemed upset. When she first arrived at the home, she sat alone on the couch in the living room and cried quietly with her face in her hands. The other three residents treated her in a tender way and not, I think, just because she was the only woman among them.

"Don't be sad, Debby," Dan said as he was setting the dining room table for dinner. The other residents also seemed to be trying to make her feel better by taking turns sitting on the couch with her for a while-- always a comfortable distance away.

At dinner, the other residents were gently solicitous toward her. "Do you want some potatoes, Debby?" one said. "How about another pork chop, Deb?" another asked. By the end of the meal, Debby had cheered up and was eating heartily.

After dinner, all the residents were in the kitchen together, either to help with cleanup or to wash their

hands. Here they talked together more than I had heard them talk before. Their dialogue consisted mainly of a gentle kind of teasing. "Ha, you don't have a dishwasher here, do you?" Debby said.

"I'm the dishwasher," Dan said.

"You'd better watch out," she said and moved toward him. For an instant, I thought she might hit him. Instead, she laughed and flicked her fingers toward his face, and a few drops of water left on her hands after washing flew into Dan's face. He rubbed his hands across his face in an exaggerated manner as if he were wiping a great deal of water away. He grinned at Debby. "C'mon Debby. You always pick on me," he said.

Dan's desire to be alone seems to be related to another need he spoke about often--his need for greater independence. Although Dan sometimes expressed negative feelings about his job, at other times he expressed the belief that holding a job is important and that he must not take his work lightly. On one such occasion, we were talking about a person who had lost his job at the sheltered workshop.

"I don't like to get fired from a job," he said.

"Why?"

"I don't know why. It makes me feel bad."

Although Dan never said so directly, he often implied that he realized that employment was related to adulthood and independence. Perhaps, the reason for his

mixed feelings about his job is that a large part of Dan's desire for independence stems from his dislike for being told what to do. This aversion is reflected in his choices of activities and in his feelings about his activities outside of the group home.

"I like to go to lunch and to the laundromat," he said. "I like to do it by myself. Shop by myself. I can buy tablets, notebooks."

"You don't want other people to go shopping with you?"

"I want people to do the things I like to do."

"You don't like people to tell you what to do?"

"Nobody."

Dan sometimes expressed pride in his achievements in regard to his goal plans. At other times, the goal plans seemed to represent another source of constraint in his life.

"I don't like to have to follow my goal plans," he told me once.

"You'd rather just do what you want?"

"That's right."

"Who makes the goal plans?" I asked.

"People from the office make the goal plans," he said. "They have machines."

But Dan also could see the goal plans as a means toward achieving greater independence.

"If I got all my goal plans done," he said, "I

could move to an apartment."

"Would you live in an apartment by yourself?" I asked.

"With my roommate." Dan said he likes his roommate because he doesn't tell him what to do. "He'd better not," Dan said.

"Could you take care of yourself in an apartment?" I asked.

"Oh yes. My parents don't want me to move to an apartment." He said his parents didn't think he could take care of himself in an apartment.

"Why do they think that?" I asked.

"I don't know," he said with a disgusted tone.

The side of Dan that enjoys socializing with others was evident when he talked about a workshop for retarded people that he attended one Saturday.

"I liked the workshops," he said. "We had lunch-- macaroni and cheese, cole slaw, bean salad, and cauliflower. I had coffee and diet soda. They had diet sodas out there."

"What did they talk about in the workshops," I asked.

"They talked about raping, tearing your clothes off," he said.

"Why did they talk about that?"

"For safety. We had supper. I had four pieces of chicken, mashed potatoes, roll and butter, and corn.

Then we had small sundaes with toppings--strawberry and butterscotch. After that we danced. I danced with all the females. I like dancing but my stomach jingles."

"Do you like to go out with girls?"

"No. Too much people on your case. My girlfriend's name is Barbara Martin. I go out with her parents and her."

"Do you ever go out by yourselves?"

"I'd be uncomfortable to go out with my girlfriend alone," he said.

"Why?"

"We fight with each other."

Dan's social identity as a mentally retarded person has definitely had a profound effect in each of the areas of his life. And so, in my interviews with Dan, I attempted to discover how he deals more personally with the issue of mental retardation.

During several interviews, I approached the subject by asking Dan if he recognized any similarities between people who lived in group homes. Dan always cut off this line of questioning once he recognized what I was driving at. Once I asked him directly about the connection between the group homes and mental retardation.

"Are the people who live in the group homes mentally retarded?"

Dan shook his head.

"Are you mentally retarded?"

"No."

"What does the word 'retarded' mean? I asked.

"I don't know."

"Has anyone ever said that you were retarded?"

"People call me dumb, weird, stupid. I hate that kind of stuff."

"Why do they call you those names?"

"I don't know."

"Have you ever heard the word 'retarded'?"

"Nope. When I hear that word I want to make a fist."

"Why?"

"I don't know."

"Have you ever heard the words 'Down's Syndrome.'"

"No."

Dan's refusal to discuss this subject may be a result of unpleasant memories of childhood experiences. Dan was reluctant to talk about such experiences, but he occasionally would let slip comments that indicated he had suffered a great deal as a child from the stigma of retardation. During one interview, I asked Dan about his experiences at school as a child.

"I went to school in Manorville," he said. I can remember the writing and the math."

"Did you like school?"

"Not too much," he said.

"Did people pick on you at school?"

"Always."

"How did that make you feel?" I asked.

"Uncomfortable."

"What did you do when people picked on you?"

"I don't know."

"Did all the kids pick on you?"

"I don't want to talk about that. Some kids did and some kids didn't."

Dan's most painful memories of his childhood seem to be connected to the day care center for the mentally retarded where he spent his early teens. Dan called the day care center "the boarder home" and spoke about it with bitterness.

"They made me wear diapers in the boarder home. I was embarrassed and lost my temper. I hated it."

"Were there many other people in the boarder home?"

"There were a lot of people in the boarder home. They would just say, 'Go in the room and play with your toys.' I didn't like the boarder home. Please don't talk about it."

Since Dan has lived in the group homes, he has followed a personal hygiene goal plan and no longer has a problem controlling his bowels or bladder. He refused to discuss the day care center after this conversation except for one other occasion. We were riding in my car and Dan suddenly brought up the subject.

"I have a tooth missing. See," he said. "This tooth." He pointed at a space where a front tooth should have been. In the boarder home, someone grabbed my hair and smashed my tooth against the table."

"Who did that to you?"

"I can't say their names."

I remember it as being a quiet and lonely place, the field where the city dump trucks would come with loads of snow, more black than white and mixed with cinders, that had been plowed up downtown along Glen Street where the parking meters were. What I remember most about it was the way they talked so calmly about what they were going to do to me--the terror of it as I looked from one to the other as they talked.

"Want to make him into the abominable snowman," he said to Gerald? Like we did to what's his name?"

"Should we?"

"Yeah, we'll stuff his whole head up."

We had been walking home from school together. They were in the eighth grade, one year ahead of me. I knew they were from South Street, the bums part of town, but they didn't seem bad when we'd come out of school together, the three of us alone because we'd all stayed after. It was getting to be late in the afternoon, the gray winter sky getting darker, and we'd started fooling around, throwing snowballs at one another, and then

naturally walking together down Broad Street and past the snow dumping field.

"Let's go into the fort," Mike had said. Gerald followed him, and Mike had waved his green shiny mitten back at me when I hesitated at the sidewalk. "C'mon."

The plows had made high snow walls around the field, banked the snow up high at the borders of the field so there would be room to heap new mounds of snow. The kids called it "the fort" because the snow banks circled the whole field except for a break on the street side that was left for the trucks to come through. When you climbed up the bank and down the other side into the fort, all you could see were the snow walls surrounding you. It was always quiet in there as if the sounds from Broad Street had disappeared along with the sight of the street. We were standing at the top of the snow bank looking down into the fort when he said that about stuffing my head up.

I remember I let out a small laugh to let them know that I understood it was a joke, because they were talking so matter-of-factly about it, without any anger or really paying any attention to me. But I saw then that it didn't make any difference what I did or what I said. Talking wouldn't mean anything to them. It was like I wasn't even there.

I must have turned to run because Mike yelled, "Grab him," though it sounded soft and far away. Then

there was the "thack" as Gerald hit me in the mouth and the numb, tingling in my lip, a sick tingling as if my lip had grown huge and heavy. What I remember of the rest of it is mostly the cold and the feeling of falling and the certainty that there was no help, that I would forever be lost in the cold and the falling.

Although Dan said that he is seldom picked on any more, he seems to have developed methods of coping with such situations if they occur.

"Sometimes people pick on me and sometimes they don't," he said. "When they pick on me, I walk away like an adult."

Through this emphasis on adulthood, Dan seems to have resolved, to some degree, his anger at the treatment he received as a child. By separating his present self, with its enhanced ability to deal with such treatment, from the self that suffered helplessly from the unpleasant incidents of his childhood, Dan seems to have created a healing emotional distance between himself and those painful memories of the past.

Like the people in the Edgerton study, Dan seems to recognize the destructiveness of the label of mental retardation both to his own image of himself and to the image that others have of him. His refusal to accept the label is similar to the response of the people in the Edgerton study. Dan not only rejected the label

whenever I introduced the subject, he also sought to contradict it.

Once, during a conversation that focused on the lives of the group home residents, Dan said, "I'm smart."

"Who said you're not smart?" I asked.

"I am smart," he said forcefully and smiled a satisfied smile as if he had just accepted the truth of this idea for the first time.

Despite his resentment of the label of retardation, Dan does seem to recognize that he has certain limitations. His grudging acceptance of the need to complete his goal plans and his occasional pride in accomplishing aspects of his goal plans, such as his success with his goal plan for hygiene, suggests an awareness that he needs to make up for deficiencies in certain areas of his life. During one interview, Dan said he hoped someday to work as a busboy in a restaurant. Dan's comments about this possibility indicated that he understood some of the difficulties he might encounter in obtaining a job outside of the sheltered workshop.

"I'd like to be a busboy," he said. "I'd work two jobs and make more money. I'd like to work in a restaurant."

"Do you know how to do that kind of work?" I asked.

Dan nodded. "Clear my tables, take the trash out, put tables in order. I worked as a busboy once. I don't remember when. The hard part about getting a job is filling out the application. I have to sign my name. Color of hair--brown. Color of eyes--green. Color of skin--white."

Dan seems to be attempting to cope with his limitations and, perhaps, a feeling of inadequacy, by developing a realistic image of himself that includes his limitations but with which he still feels comfortable. Once, I asked him what he would like people to know about his life.

"That I'm not perfect," he said.

"Why?"

"People are not perfect, and I'm not perfect."

"Do people expect too much of you?"

"Not always. Sometimes. I don't like people fighting each other. It's my problem not being perfect."

I discovered that the label of mental retardation has been a significant force in Dan's life. This characterization has largely determined the form of his social relationships: his relationships with family, friends, and acquaintances, his treatment by those who manage educational, governmental, and social agencies, his relationships with employers and potential employers, his negotiations with Helping Hand staff members to obtain greater independence and to eat the

foods he enjoys--all these relationships have been profoundly affected by society's definition of him as a mentally retarded individual.

Although his own limitations have certainly contributed to the kinds of experiences Dan has had in each of these areas, the power of the label of retardation has sometimes seemed to overwhelm a realistic and fair appraisal of his abilities and his personality. For example, the administrators of "the boarder home" assumed that Dan was similar to a small child: he could not learn to control his bodily functions so he needed to wear a diaper; he should be required to spend his day playing in a roomful of toys. They assumed that this infantile role was the appropriate one for Dan. Yet, Dan felt humiliated by this treatment. Under different circumstances, he has proven that he is quite capable of caring for his personal hygiene, that, in fact, he is a rather neat and clean person. In addition, Dan has proven that he can function efficiently and more comfortably when he assumes more adult roles.

One wonders if Dan may still be unduly limited by the label of mental retardation even in the more enlightened environment in which he now lives. Dan has excellent social skills; he relates well to people, can, in fact, be quite charming. However, no one seems to have considered the possibility that Dan could work

at a job in which he deals directly with the public. I suspect that Dan would enjoy and could function quite well in many such jobs, but I am doubtful if most employers or many of their customers could accept a man in such a job who is identifiable as a victim of Down's Syndrome and, therefore, carries the label of retardation. The negative effect of the label of retardation on Dan's own self-image is fairly obvious. His passionate denial that he even understands the terminology surrounding mental retardation, his desire to avoid people despite his naturally outgoing nature, and his deep resentment at being told what to do, all, I think, reflect his dread that he must accept the portrait that society has painted for him as his own true self. On the other hand, I think that Dan has begun to develop an image of himself that he can accept and that is also realistic. This new, more comforting self-image does not force Dan to identify with the humiliating stereotype of the mental retardate yet still accepts the fact that he may be limited in some ways that others are not.

In this regard, I remember an incident that occurred one time while Dan and I were having lunch at Pizza Hut. At one point during our meal, Dan glanced out the window at the Pizza Hut sign.

"See," he said, "the sign says 'Italian Pie.'"

"But they forgot to put the 'I' in the 'Italian,'"

I said. "The sign says 'Talian Pie.'"

"Who forgot?" Dan asked.

"I guess the people who put up the sign."

"Well," he said, "nobody's perfect."

#

In this report, I used the reporting and literary techniques common to literary journalism to describe Dan's life from his own point of view. I openly assumed the role of narrator in this report in order to establish a strong presence for myself within the text. As we have seen earlier, such a presence seems to be an important characteristic of literary journalism that tends to separate it from other forms. I also obviously used saturation reporting techniques and, in addition to the strong narrative voice, literary devices such as scenic construction, dialogue, point of view, and status life details throughout the piece.

My style in this report was consistent, I hope, with the style of most reports that take the form of literary journalism, a form whose authors strive to produce reports that are both accessible and interesting to the lay reader. For example, because literary journalists attempt to use language that does not assume the reader has a specialized or advanced education, they carefully translate unfamiliar language and concepts into non-specialist's terms, and they do not use

academic conventions such as footnotes or endnotes in
their texts. References to published sources of
information, if included at all, are made as
unobtrusively as possible within the text itself.

I suggested in chapter three that Robert Meyers may
have better illuminated his own rather than his brother
Roger's subjective views in Like Normal People. I
suggested that he might better have illuminated Roger's
views had he used literary devices more extensively. I
hope that I have not overwhelmed Dan's views with my own
and that my frequent use of literary devices in this
report succeeded in illuminating Dan's subjective views.
I also hope it is clear that this report is, in part, a
report about the relationship between Dan and me and
that any such report that ignores the relationship
between the report's author and its main actor will be,
in an important sense, incomplete.

In addition to using techniques of literary
journalism, I also used techniques borrowed from the
life history and fiction in writing this report. For
example, I attempted to organize this report using
concepts drawn from the social sciences that are
commonly used in emic versions of the life history. Such
concepts seemed particularly effective at focusing
attention on the subjective elements of the life
histories we have studied. The important prerequisite
for such concepts is that they not be foreign constructs

that are forced on an informant's life but must, in some way, be part of the informant's own consciousness. For Dan, the concept of self-image seemed to be a genuine element in his own life.

The concept of self-image as it is being used here is derived from theoretical discussions about self-image and identity (Caughey, "Personal Identity and Social Organization" 188-189; Hallowell 76; Wallace and Fogelson 380-381). In Dan's case, the concept can refer to several different conceptualizations that Dan has of himself. On one hand, the concept can refer to Dan's self-hatred and rejection of a "feared" self-image, a self-image of what he does not want to be, that is based on the label of mental retardation. On the other hand, the concept can refer to Dan's yearning for an "ideal" self-image, a self-image of what he would like to be, that is based on his potential to take care of himself, to be totally responsible for himself as an adult. Finally, the concept can refer to Dan's "real" self-image, a self-image that is based on what he actually believes himself to be (Caughey 188).

In this report, I showed how Dan, in each important area of his life, strives to escape a self-image that portrays him as a dependent, mentally retarded person who constantly has to be told what to do. Dan is also striving to acquire a self-image that portrays him as an independent person who can take care of himself, a

person who is smart. At the same time, Dan seems to be trying to accept himself as he his, a man with both strengths and weaknesses. For Dan, these different self-images are a very real part of his own subjective reality: he energetically denies the label of mental retardation; he also seeks independence in his relationships with others, looks forward to independence in his living and working arrangements, and cultivates independence in his efforts to eat responsibly. In the midst of this struggle, Dan also seems to have decided that he must live with himself as a person who is not perfect.

Similarly, because authors of fiction often use different levels of meaning to help illuminate the subjective components in their work, I decided to attempt to establish such levels in my report. In *Flowers for Algernon*, for example, we have seen how Daniel Keyes used fantasy to create an intelligent Charlie who could act as a foil for the retarded Charlie. While I could not use fantasy in my report because, unlike fiction, literary journalism is dedicated to factual accuracy, I could use events from my own life to act as a foil for Dan's life, a technique which I hoped might, like fantasy, increase understanding of incidents from Dan's life.

Including such incidents could also serve another purpose in the report. By illuminating relevant aspects

of my own life and relevant aspects of my own subjective views, I hoped to remove the author further from the shadows to reveal, at least partially, how his experiences and views may have influenced the report. The boldfaced sections in the report are meant to serve these two functions. In these sections, I attempted to use incidents from my life, experiences of insensitivity or brutality for example, that could serve to put Dan's experiences in perspective, to illustrate by comparison how such incidents may have affected him.

In this way, I hoped to add a level of meaning to this piece of literary journalism that is similar to the levels of meaning that authors of fiction can include in their works through their use of fantasy or through their greater ability to separate the narrator from the implied author. At the same time, I am aware that authors of literary journalism risk overwhelming other important aspects of their work when they insert themselves boldly into their reports. I hope that my desire to add meaning to Dan's experiences and my desire to acknowledge my presence as the author of the report do not overemphasize that presence.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

The main focus of the dissertation thus far has been in discovering how each of the three forms-- literary journalism, the life history and fiction--have operated to illuminate the subjective realities of both the authors who use these forms to compose their works and the actors, the people who populate those works. Now, we must carefully examine the distinctions among these forms to understand this power from a broader perspective and, in particular, to understand better the individual power of the literary journalism, which is the major focus of this study.

To accomplish this goal, I will again concentrate on each of the two areas of subjectivity studied throughout this dissertation--the illumination of the subjective realities of the authors of the works and the illumination of the subjective realities of the actors within the works. I will compare literary journalism with fiction and with the life history to make these distinctions among the three forms in these two areas of subjectivity. The works on the mildly retarded men included in chapters three, four, and five will figure prominently in this comparison.

The authors of the works of literary journalism have each used a strong narrative voice to help

illuminate their own subjective views. This strong narrative presence seems to be central to the power of literary journalism to illuminate the subjective realities of its authors. Only Joan Didion seemed to believe that she had not asserted herself enough in Slouching Toward Bethlehem, and her belief seemed to stem from a fear that her views did not come through clearly enough in this work. Actually, the analysis of Didion's report, "Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream" showed that Didion's voice was a powerful element in this report and did help to establish the meaning that she hoped the report would produce.

On the other hand, strong narrative voices were not so evident in the life histories. Although both Vincent Crappanzano in Tuhami: Portrait of a Moroccan and Barbara Myerhoff in Number Our Days established a personal narrative presence, they seemed uncomfortable with this presence and felt the need to confess that they had partly abandoned their roles as social scientists in these studies. Although Crappanzano continually emphasized the importance of the ethnographer's collaboration in the life history, he seemed most confident and most comfortable when he was theorizing as an anthropologist about the role of demons in Tuhami's life. Myerhoff agonized about the effect of her personal involvement in the lives of her informants in Number Our Days, apologized for this involvement, and

finally decided that she had to relinquish openly all pretense of scientific detachment, a detachment that she ordinarily found extremely important to her work.

The place of authors in works of fiction proved to be the most complex of the three forms. These authors used the greatest array of tools to illuminate their subjective views. The freedom from factualness that authors of fiction enjoyed enabled them to influence the illumination of their own views by giving them the ability to predetermine their conclusions and to manipulate their narrators and their point-of-view characters, who could be either close or distant from one another and from the implied authors in the works. The narrator and point-of-view character in Bernard Malamud's story, "Idiot's First," served as examples of this distancing ability. By maintaining a distance between the narrator and Mendel (the point-of-view character in the story), the implied author helped to reveal Mendel's fear and foreboding to a degree that would have been impossible if the narrator were closer to Mendel. By creating a fantastic setting in the story, the implied author further increased the distance between himself and Mendel, a distance that allowed the implied author to establish a level of meaning in the story beyond the level of meaning available to Mendel.

Authors of works of literary journalism did not have the same leeway in creating narrators, point-of-

view characters, and implied authors who were different from themselves. These figures in works of literary journalism were almost always identifiable as one person--the author--although, at times, the author-narrator got so close to one of the actors in a work that we seemed to be seeing events through that actor's point of view.

The strong presence of real-life authors within works of literary journalism may be partly responsible for the apparent strength of the narrative voice in the form. Perhaps, authors of literary journalism have been criticized for dominating their reports and emphasizing their own egos over the facts _because_ critics expect all literary works to resemble works of fiction in which authors are able to separate themselves from their narrators, point-of-view characters, and implied authors. Critics may understandably feel the authors are dominating their works, when, in works of literary journalism, these critics are confronted by real-life authors who often assume the identities of all three of these figures.

Like Normal People, for example, emphasizes its strong narrative voice boldly. From the beginning of the book, Robert Meyers places himself firmly in the center of his report about his mildly retarded brother Roger's life and ensuing marriage to a retarded woman. In addition, Robert is not the least apologetic about his

strong presence within the book. Robert uses first person narration and offers forceful opinions about the treatment of retarded people throughout the text. In fact, Robert outlines the major points he intends to establish early in the text: that retarded people have historically been discriminated against by society and that they are capable of living much more independent lives if they are simply given the chance.

Although he does not drown out the other important voices in the book, Robert's strong narrative voice dominates Like Normal People, and his viewpoint is the strongest in the book. There is seldom much doubt about where he stands on the issues of his brother's treatment or his brother's potential. This dominance does remind one of the criticism that the literary journalists place so much emphasis on their own views that their egos sometimes become barriers to a proper understanding of their subject matter. In Like Normal People, this problem seems particularly severe when Robert's emphasis on his own views and reactions to Roger's life seem to overshadow Roger's insights into his life as a retarded man. In my discussion of this problem in Like Normal People, I suggested that Robert might have better balanced his point of view with Roger's point of view by using literary devices to portray Roger's actions more frequently in the book.

However, although Robert did not use literary

devices, with the exception of the strong narrative voice, to the extent that the other literary journalists used them, we found in our discussion of _Like Normal People_ that these devices did work effectively to illuminate Robert's views. Thus, the use of literary devices in _Like Normal People_ and in the other examples cited in chapter three demonstrated that literary journalists are able to manipulate the literary devices such as the strong narrative voice, scenic construction, dialogue, point of view, and status-life descriptions so they represent powerful tools for the illumination of those authors' subjective realities.

"Living in the Real World," the life history of Tim Anthony, a mildly retarded man, contrasts sharply with _Like Normal People_ in its use of narration. No individual narrator in "Living in the Real World" is ever identified specifically. The only references to the narrative voice in the article is first person plural references such as "we" or "our," references which are obviously meant to refer to all three of the article's authors. This first person plural narration creates a detached, scientific tone in the article. This tone, however, does not seem cold or uncaring, probably because the article deals with the personal, even intimate, details of Tim's life.

In addition, the authors work diligently to communicate the facts about Tim's life as he saw them in

an attempt to provide "the flavor of his life," to the article, an attempt which is, generally, quite successful. However, although the authors succeed in capturing Tim's subjective views in the article, they do not provide a sense of their own personalities or points of view. Their absence in the article makes the conclusions they draw about Tim's approach to life seem to have emerged almost without their involvement. They even refer to the details about Tim's life that they include in the life history as "data," a term that further separates their involvement in the life history and the influence of their views on it from their text.

"Living in the Real World" is different from the other examples of emic life histories discussed in chapter four in terms of the paucity of information provided about the authors' participation in the life history and of their subjective views about it. Yet, in some ways, this lack of information is representative of the spirit of even the most forthcoming of the other ethnographers. Both Crappanzano, who emphasized the importance of the ethnographer as a collaborator in the creation of life histories, and Myerhoff, who admitted that her personal feelings about her subjects had influenced the life history she produced, often seemed troubled and uncomfortable when discussing their own views and their own involvement in the life histories they wrote.

Both these ethnographers seemed much more
comfortable when describing the subjective realities of
their informants or the concepts drawn from the social
sciences that emerged from their analyses of the
informants' views. Perhaps, these reactions arose from
the same conviction that kept the ethnographers in
"Living in the Real World" from revealing their own
subjective views, a deeply-rooted conviction that social
scientists must maintain detachment in their work. This
conviction combined with the rare use of literary
techniques in the life history, techniques which had
provided authors of literary journalism with many
opportunities to reveal their subjective views, makes
the life history less effective than literary journalism
at illuminating the subjective realities of its authors.

Authors of fiction, on the other hand, seemed to
have more techniques available to reveal their own
subjective views than authors of either of the other two
forms. An examination of Flowers for Algernon,
illustrates the range of techniques that Daniel Keyes
had available to illuminate his views. Keyes used a
first person narrator (the main character, Charlie) to
tell the story. By making Charlie retarded for part of
the novel and intelligent for part of the novel, Keyes
was able to manipulate his narrator to an extraordinary
degree in order to reveal his own (Keyes') subjective
views. When Charlie is retarded, he functions, in some

ways, as an unreliable narrator. The reader is aware that Charlie is being treated cruelly and unjustly by other people in his life while Charlie himself is not aware of this ill-treatment. Thus, the implied author is able to communicate his disgust at Charlie's treatment by providing the reader with insights into Charlie's life that Charlie himself does not have.

However, when Charlie becomes intelligent, he also becomes aware of the ways that others have used and abused him. The intelligent Charlie reacts with anger at the way people treated the retarded Charlie and continue to treat others like him. In this section of the novel, the distance between the implied author and Charlie practically disappears, so that the intelligent Charlie is representing the norms of the implied author when he argues that all people should be treated decently regardless of their intelligence. Thus, Keyes was able to use these essentially different narrators, who exist at different distances from the implied author, to communicate his subjective views in a way that Robert Meyers and other authors of literary journalism could not.

Among authors of the three forms, authors of fiction had the greatest ability to illuminate their own subjective realities, because they could use either reliable or unreliable narrators, they could vary the distance between their narrators, implied authors, and

point-of-view characters, and they could make the most extensive use of the literary devices. Primarily because narrators and implied authors are virtually identical with the real author in literary journalism, literary journalists could not manipulate these figures as could authors of fiction and, thus, were less effective at illuminating their own subjective views. However, literary journalism still proved to be a powerful form for revealing its authors' subjective realities, because those authors could create a particularly strong narrative voice to communicate their views and could manipulate the literary devices to emphasize their views. The life history also could be used to illuminate its authors' views, particularly the views of those authors who were most dedicated to the emic version of the form in which the author is seen as a collaborator with the informant in creating the life history. However, even these authors seemed reluctant to violate the principle of scientific detachment by establishing a personal presence within the life history and thus were the least effective among authors of the three forms in illuminating their own subjective realities.

Thus, a model of the three forms that visualizes the ability of each form to illuminate the subjective realities of its authors could be depicted by a horizontal line that represents a progression of values as shown in Figure 1. The left side of this continuum

would represent the least ability to illuminate authors'
subjective realities and the right side of the continuum
would represent the greatest ability to illuminate
authors' subjective realities. The three forms would be
situated along this continuum with the life history at
the left, literary journalism in the middle, and fiction
at the right.

Ability to Illuminate Authors' Subjective Realities
least   greatest

Life History   Literary Journalism   Fiction
Fig. 1. Authors' Continuum
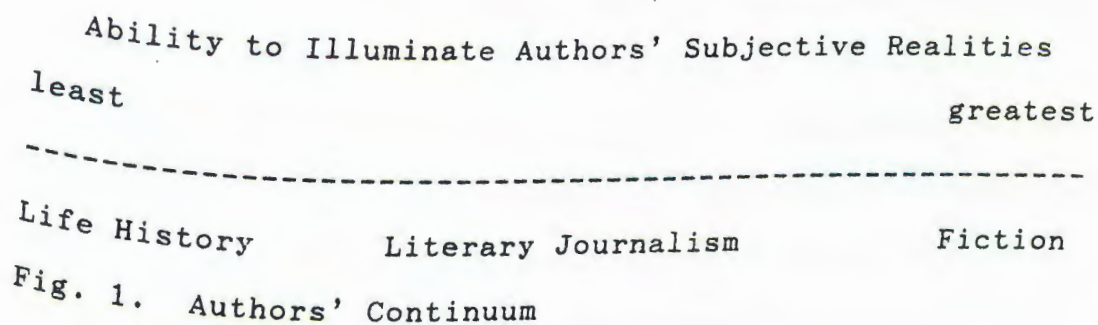
The conclusions are different when we analyze each
form's ability to illuminate the subjective realities of
the actors within the works. We are most struck by the
purity and dedication of the life history's approach to
the illumination of its informants' subjective realities
and how the ethnographers seemed to have spared no
effort to get inside the skin of their informants and to
communicate those informants' views about their lives.

For example, in Vincent Crappanzano's <u>Tuhami:</u>
<u>Portrait of a Moroccan</u>, we read with skepticism about
the Moroccan tilemaker Tuhami's conviction that his life
is controlled by demons. And then, as we read on, we are
astonished by Crappanzano's efforts to understand Tuhami

and to make us understand what these demons mean to him. Through Crappanzano's patient and gentle work with Tuhami, we begin to see how the demons actually protect Tuhami from insanity when it had seemed all along to us that they must be driving him insane. Only Crappanzano's intense focus on Tuhami's subjective reality above all else in the life history could have produced this insight into the way Tuhami himself perceived his world and then lived a life based on those perceptions.

In Janet Hoskins' life history of Maru Daku, a Kodi man of Indonesia, we see again how the emic approach to the life history attempts to shape everything within it by using what Watson and Watson-Franke called the individual's "subjectively bounded existential reality" (143). Maru Daku is a man much more in the mainstream of his society than Tuhami was in Moroccan society; in fact, Maru Daku is a leader of his people. As Hoskins carefully relates Maru Daku's story, we empathize with his struggle to embrace what he believes are the truths of Christianity without tearing away from his traditional beliefs and alienating his kin. We can feel his pain when, despite the fact that he has managed to integrate both sets of beliefs into his own life, he is forced by the Dutch Church to choose between its teachings and his deep allegiance to his traditional beliefs and customs. Hoskins' determination to discover Maru Daku's conception of his own life provides the

vitality and surprise to this moving creation of an individual's life.

Both Crappanzano and Hoskins insisted that no life history can be complete without an understanding of the ethnographer's role in that life history, and their efforts to supply this understanding certainly added an important dimension to their life histories. However, despite their stated commitment to revealing their own subjective views, they often seemed as reluctant and troubled about revealing those views as they were anxious and gratified to reveal the subjective realities of their informants. Perhaps, ethnographers who write life histories need to attain a high degree of self-effacement in order to focus entirely on the subjective realities of their informants.

In fact, these ethnographers' devotion to illuminating the subjective realities of their informants was so complete that even the concepts drawn from the social sciences that they used in their analyses of their informants' lives seemed to increase our understanding of those informants' subjective views. These authors made certain that they did not impose external scientific generalities on their informants; rather, they sought only to use emic concepts, concepts similar to those that the informants themselves perceived as affecting their lives.

Authors of literary journalism were also quite

effective at illuminating the subjective realities of the people who appeared within their works, accomplishing this goal both in ways that were similar and in ways that were different from the life history. The literary journalists' methods for gaining information for their reports, the use of saturation reporting that includes both research on their subjects and intensive interviewing and observation, did not seem significantly different from the techniques of participant-observation used by ethnographers to gather material for their life histories. The stated goals of literary journalists and ethnographers who write life histories also seem compatible--to capture the lives of the real actors they include within their works from those actors' own viewpoints.

The literary journalism does differ significantly from the life history in form. While life histories usually report on their informants primarily through verbatim transcripts of those informants' comments or summaries of their comments, literary journalists, in addition to expository prose, use an array of literary devices to reveal the details of people's lives. These literary devices, in addition to the use of the strong narrative voice, include scenic construction, dialogue, point of view, and the inclusion of status life details (intensely detailed descriptions). As we have seen, these literary techniques provide literary journalists

with the means to dramatize their subjects' lives effectively.

For example, in Joan Didion's piece, "Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream," we discover that certain of Didion's recreations of scenes that used numerous, carefully selected status life details are particularly revealing of Lucille Miller's "happy" middle class life. These scenes seem to have originated from within Lucille's own bitterness years later when she has lost her standing in the community and is serving a life sentence for her husband's murder. Didion used this ability, inherent in the narrative form, to perceive the world through Lucille's point of view in order to create a devastating portrait of the effects of the middle class American dream on a woman who believed in that dream. Through this portrait, we realize that Lucille is destroyed, not by greed or lust as the prosecutor in her trial claims, but by her belief in her family, in success, in love, in the promise of the good life in the golden land of California.

Didion's use of point of view and status life details in certain passages in this report are extremely effective at creating images that seem to be coming from inside Lucille. However, we are never told that these passages came directly from Lucille herself. Rather, we are given the impression that these passages would probably be the kind of descriptions that an older,

wiser Lucille would have used when she looked back on her younger days. We are never sure, however, which views Lucille would have supplied and which views originated with Didion herself. In fact, these passages often seem to be a combination of Lucille's subjective reality and Didion's subjective reality.

This confusion again reminds us of the critics of literary journalism who complain that authors' egos often overwhelm the other components in works written in the form. However, in this case, it seems that it is the author's desire to emphasize the subjective views of her main actor, rather than her ego, that makes it difficult to separate the author's views from the views of the main actor in the work. Didion seems so anxious to establish the effect of the middle class dream on Lucille that she may have sometimes obscured Lucille's views in order to express that effect. The ability that authors of literary journalism have to manipulate the literary devices, in this case the use of point of view, the strong narrative voice and status life descriptions, seems to have helped Didion in her attempt to emphasize Lucille's viewpoint in her work, although, at times, that ability may also have caused Didion to overemphasize her own presence in the work.

The ability of authors of fiction to illuminate the subjective realities of the people in their works was qualitatively different than that of the authors of the

other two forms. Because authors of fiction are able to invent their characters, they are not limited by the need to portray real people authentically as are the authors of both literary journalism and life history. Thus, authors in works of fiction can illuminate the subjective realities of their characters using fabrications. They can invent the characters' personalities and subjective realities and then use the literary devices in many ways to reveal those characters' subjective views. For example, they can use point of view to report characters' thoughts and feelings, they can invent dialogue for characters to speak, they can vary the amount of time devoted to each character in order to influence that character's relative importance in the work, and they can use fantasy to depict characters' behavior in extraordinary situations.

In Bernard Malamud's short story, "Idiots First," Malamud chose a limited omniscient narrator who uses the main character, Mendel, as the point-of-view character. This narrator is able to read Mendel's thoughts and feelings, but he remains somewhat distant from Mendel. This narrator not only reveals Mendel's subjective views by sharing some of Mendel's thoughts and feelings but, because of the distance he maintains from Mendel, he is also able to provide a contrasting voice to Mendel's often hysterical voice which further reveals Mendel's

personality to us. Throughout the story, Malamud illuminates Mendel's subjective world by documenting the way Mendel thinks, talks, and acts as he confronts the various situations that come his way.

By the end of the story, Malamud has managed to help us to know Mendel very well. We have a thorough appreciation of Mendel's view of life, and we are even aware of the limits of Mendel's understanding and how this limited understanding contrasts with the implied author's more far-reaching understanding. However, although we have gained this knowledge of Mendel's subjective reality, we still cannot forget that this knowledge was engineered by Bernard Malamud. Mendel and all of Mendel's world are the author's creations, and we realize that Mendel's subjective reality has arisen from Malamud's subjective reality.

The life history chosen for comparison here strongly reinforces the view that the life history is the purest of the forms in its dedication to the illumination of its actors' subjective realities. Although "Living in the Real World" was found wanting as an illuminator of its authors' views, its power to illuminate Tim Anthony's views is impressive. "Living in the Real World" captures the essence of Tim's existence with its recognition of the dichotomy that Tim has created in his life by dividing the universe into the "real world" and the "fake world." In the "fake world"

Tim would be mentally retarded, he would not be able to read, he would have a family that was unacceptable, and he would have to associate with mentally retarded people. In the "real world," Tim is normal, he can read and pursue further education, and he can have satisfying relationships with college-educated women.

The authors indicate that, to the outside observer, Tim's rejection of the "fake world" and acceptance of the "real world" is not rational, because it forces him to reject aspects of his life that are difficult to avoid. He has to reject ties with his family, he has to avoid revealing to himself and others that he cannot read, he has to remain lonely and isolated, so he will not have to associate with most of the people who have been a part of his life, and he has to get along without female companionship, because he has difficulty in sustaining relationships with college-educated women. Yet, the authors also make clear that creating this dichotomy seems to give Tim the strength to cope with his problems and to gain the self-confidence he needs to maintain a largely independent existence. Rational or not, realistic or not, Tim's determination to live in the real world seems to be working.

Even the concepts drawn from the social sciences that the authors used in "Living in the Real World" help to reveal more about Tim's subjective reality. The

authors used the concept of the <u>process of adjustment</u> in this life history, a concept they hoped could help them to determine how successfully mentally retarded people have adapted to life in the community. However, this concept was not foisted on Tim's life, but, rather, the authors analyzed Tim's life to discover what processes he used to adapt to the community. The authors found that Tim's creation of the dichotomy between the "fake world" and the "real world" represented a conscious process of adjustment in his own life, and then they analyzed this process from Tim's point of view. The result was that this concept became an extremely effective organizing principle that could be used to analyze Tim's life. It enabled the authors to write the life history so that it could be used to compare Tim with similar individuals in other life histories, and, most important here, it enabled them to create a distinctive perspective on Tim's subjective reality.

In <u>Like Normal People</u>, Robert Meyers often made an effort to capture the subjective views of his mildly retarded brother, Roger. Robert included Roger's comments on a variety of subjects and included descriptions of Roger's behavior that allowed us to gain insight into his subjective reality. For example, Robert recreated scenes in which Roger is shown on the day of his marriage to a mentally retarded woman, scenes in which Roger is shown reacting to mistreatment or danger,

and scenes in which Roger responds to his status as a
mentally retarded person. In addition, Robert began each
chapter in the book with a poem that Roger had written,
and these poems also help to illuminate Roger's thoughts
and feelings.

Yet, Robert's own presence in the book is at least
as strong as Roger's presence. We learn early in the
book that Robert has strong feelings both about what he
considers the poor treatment of the retarded in our
society and about the untapped potential for greater
independence that many retarded people have. At times,
Robert seems so intent on illuminating his own views
that he does not provide us with a complete enough
portrait of Roger's views. Yet, when Robert realized
that Roger disagreed with him on some subject, he was
careful to include Roger's viewpoint. In one situation,
after Robert has railed against the bullying that Roger
had to face as a child, Robert provided Roger's view of
such treatment. Roger seems to be less indignant about
this mistreatment than Robert is; he seems to view
occasions of bullying more as examples of practical
problems he can solve rather than as reasons for
outrage.

In <u>Like Normal People</u>, we have again discovered an
author of a work of literary journalism who seems so
anxious to capture both his own views and the views of
the main actor in his work that he created a strong

presence for himself within the work to help communicate those viewpoints. Robert Meyers' strong presence in Like Normal People contrasts with the role of the authors in "Living in the Real World." Although the authors' failure to acknowledge their presence in this life history was criticized earlier for providing incomplete information on those authors' subjective views, their lack of presence may enhance the authors' ability to illuminate the subjective views of their informant. In "Living in the Real World," there is no obvious authorial presence to overwhelm or muddle the subjective views of the informant as may have occurred at times in Like Normal People.

Daniel Keyes used a variety of techniques to illuminate Charlie's subjective reality in Flowers for Algernon. Because Charlie is the narrator in the book as well as the point-of-view character, Keyes not only depicted Charlie's thoughts and feelings, but he also used other techniques authors of fiction have available for manipulating the narrator to reveal Charlie's views. When Charlie is retarded, Keyes used him as an unreliable narrator so that Charlie reveals more about himself to the reader than he realizes he is revealing. In this case, the implied author discloses details about the mistreatment that Charlie suffers even when Charlie himself is not fully aware of that mistreatment. This use of the implied author to reveal Charlie's subjective

reality represents a technique that authors of fiction can use much more effectively than authors of the other two forms, because, in the other forms, the narrator and the implied author are assumed to be identical.

In addition to the use of narration and point of view, Keyes invented scenes that were designed to reveal the details of Charlie's subjective reality and also used fantasy to reveal Charlie's subjective views. The change in Charlie's intelligence during the course of the novel represents a fantastic event that Keyes manipulates to create essentially two separate characters, the retarded Charlie and the intelligent Charlie. Not only does Keyes use these two characters' subjective views to create different perspectives in the novel, but, because they each represent separate aspects of the same person's life, each can serve as a foil for the other's life. Thus, the contrast between the retarded Charlie's life and the intelligent Charlie's life helps to further define each of these characters.

Perhaps, the most noteworthy aspect of this discussion about <u>Flowers To Algernon</u> is the number of times we have referred to Keyes as the inventor, the manipulator, the controller of Charlie's subjective reality. Although Keyes has created a fictional character that does seem lifelike, the term <u>lifelike</u> underscores our knowledge that Charlie is an invented character, a component of Keyes' own subjective reality.

This is not to say that Charlie's subjective views and the subjective views of other fictional characters are invalid or unimportant, but that works of fiction do not embody the subjective realities of actual individuals in the way that the subjective realities of such individuals are embodied by the other two forms. However, portraits of fictional characters are valuable artistic creations that can help us to understand recognizable types of individuals in familiar circumstances. Also, an awareness of the manner in which Keyes has manipulated the techniques at his disposal to create Charlie's subjective views is particularly relevant for this study in which an understanding of such techniques is so important.

Among the three forms, the life history seemed to be the most powerful at illuminating the subjective realities of actors within the works. The ethnographers' single-minded dedication to portraying the world from the point of view of their informants, their self-effacing detachment, and their use of emic concepts drawn from the social sciences in organizing their works all combined to make the life history extremely effective at capturing its informants' views.

Literary journalism also proved to be a powerful form for illuminating the subjective realities of its actors. The use of literary devices to depict individuals within the works often provided dramatic

penetration into their subjective lives. In addition, the willingness of authors to include their own views along with the actors' views provided valuable insights into the collaboration between the literary journalists and those actors, a collaboration that was essential for the creation of the works. However, this same willingness to establish a personal presence in their works sometimes caused the author's views to overwhelm the views of the main actors in works of literary journalism. Because authors of life histories did not obscure their informants in this way, the life history must be judged as more effective than literary journalism at illuminating actors' subjective realities.

Fictional works did not illuminate the subjective realities of actual people as effectively as works written using the other two forms, because the characters within the works of fiction represented manifestations of their authors' own subjective realities. However, authors of fiction could use a wide variety of literary and stylistic devices to forcefully depict the subjective realities of their characters who could exemplify remarkably lifelike figures.

Thus, a model of the three forms that visualized the ability of each form to illuminate the subjective realities of actors within the works could be depicted by a horizontal line that represents a progression of values as shown in Figure 2. The left side of this

continuum would represent the least ability to illuminate actors' subjective realities and the right side of the continuum would represent the greatest ability to illuminate actors' subjective realities. The three forms would be situated along this continuum with fiction at the left, literary journalism in the middle, and the life history at the right.

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          Ability to Illuminate Actors' Subjective Realities
                                                    greatest
least
----------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------
                                              Life History
Fiction               Literary Journalism
```
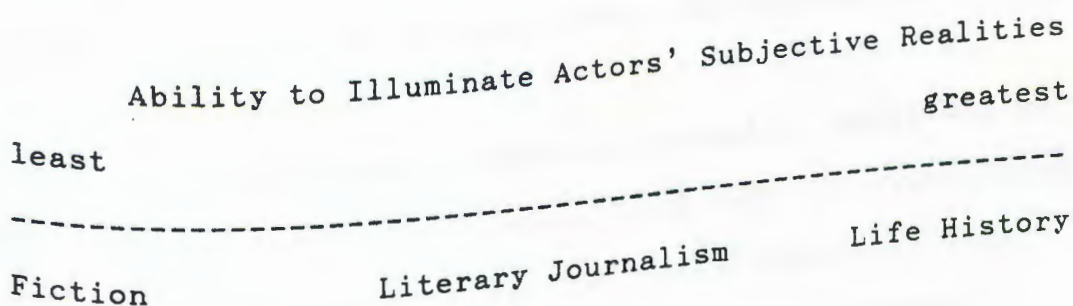
Fig. 2. Actors' Continuum

Literary journalism has proven to be the most effective of the forms when it comes to illuminating both the subjective realities of its authors and the subjective realities of the actors who appear within the works. However, the strength of the authors' presence within the works of literary journalism also reminds us of our earlier discussions about the tension between objectivity and subjectivity. The authors' strong presence within works of literary journalism demonstrated in this study reinforces the conviction that these authors are not communicating real world events, but, rather, are creating their own sense of those events within their works. However, as we have

seen, the same tension has troubled critics of conventional journalism, and also has proven to be a difficult problem for authors of the other two forms we examined in detail in this dissertation. And the problem remains: how can authors portray events in the real world without either distorting those portraits by overwhelming them with their own views or distorting those portraits by ignoring their own undeniable influence on them?

As we have seen in this dissertation, there can be no one answer to this dilemma. Each form of writing must approach the problem in its own way. However, literary journalism seems to be one form that has seriously confronted the dilemma by daring to recognize it, even to accentuate it within the form itself. By emphasizing the strong narrative voice and using the other literary techniques, the literary journalists self-consciously call attention to their presence within their works; they accentuate their role as the agents who organize and give meaning to the portraits based on real-world events that they create.

Literary journalists, unlike conventional journalists, cannot disappear within the vortex of objectivity, and, unlike ethnographers who write life histories, cannot withdraw behind the veil of scientific detachment, because their personal involvement is obvious. Their strong, self-conscious narrators and

their use of the other literary techniques loudly announce their participation. And literary journalists, unlike authors of fiction, cannot create an implied author, a diaphanous wizard who presses all the literary buttons at a comfortable distance from themselves.

Perhaps, a good way to illustrate the presence of the authors within all these forms is to compare that presence with Jean Louis Baudry's incisive discussion of the nature and effects of the cinematic experience. Baudry explained that adjacent frames in a strip of film contain almost identical images. The viewer can only recognize the changes within the strip which create movement and meaning when the film is run through the Projector (the "apparatus"). This situation, Baudry argued, produces a basic paradox: "In this sense we could say that film--and perhaps in this respect it is exemplary--lives on the denial of difference: the difference is necessary for it to live, but it lives on its negation" (42).

In a similar manner, forms of writing which conceal or confuse the author's presence in their works, in effect deny that this presence is essential for creating meaning in that form and, therefore, unjustifiably deny the existence of the tension between objectivity and subjectivity. Thus, we are normally not even aware that the apparatus--the authors' manipulation of meaning in such forms--even exists. Unlike these forms, however,

literary journalism seems to be closer to Baudry's
example of the nature of cinema when the apparatus
breaks down than when it is running smoothly:

> We should remember, moreover, the disturbing
> effect which results from breakdowns in the
> recreation of movement, when the spectator is
> brought abruptly back to discontinuity--that
> is, to the body, to the technical apparatus
> which he had forgotten (42).

The literary journalists' acknowledgment of their
presence within their works creates a constant awareness
that they are responsible for the creation of movement,
for the production of meaning in their works. By
acknowledging their responsibility, the literary
journalists call attention to the tension between
objectivity and subjectivity rather than concealing that
tension, thus encouraging readers and critics to decide
for themselves what influence the authors' views have
had on the report. Other forms which are less revealing
about their authors' presence may not risk
overemphasizing that presence as sometimes occurs in
literary journalism and may be extremely effective at
communicating meaning, but those forms may also make
less progress toward resolving the tension between
objectivity and subjectivity than literary journalism.

In "Talian Pie," my original version of literary
journalism, I hoped to provide an illustration of this

form in which the author had consciously attempted to deal with the tension between objectivity and subjectivity as well as the other issues that have figured in this dissertation. The experimental nature of this project allowed me to take risks in my effort to exemplify these issues in the report. At the same time, I realize that the creator of such an experiment becomes attached to that experiment in a way that limits his ability to act as its critic. Thus, I am aware of these limitations as I approach the analysis of my report and acknowledge that I must depend on the reader to supply much of the evaluation concerning the report's effectiveness.

In this discussion, I will analyze "Talian Pie" from the three major perspectives that I have analyzed the other works in this dissertation. The first perspective will deal with the report's attempt to illuminate the author's subjective reality, the second perspective will deal with the report's attempt to illuminate the main actor's subjective reality, and the third perspective will deal with the report's attempt to illuminate the tension between objectivity and subjectivity within the piece. I hope that my ability as the author of the piece to share my intentions, as best I understand them, will add a level of interpretation to this analysis that was not possible in the analyses of other works in the dissertation.

This conclusion has shown that the use of the strong narrative voice represented a powerful literary technique for authors of literary journalism. This strong narrative voice served both to illuminate the authors' subjective realities and to underscore the importance of the authors' presence in the works. In "Talian Pie," I tried to establish my own voice at the beginning and to make that voice a consistent presence throughout the piece. I am Paul who assumes the role of the first person narrator in "Talian Pie," who functions as one of the two main actors in the piece, and who is also the author of the report.

When I compared Dan to a "crack salesman" at the opening of the piece, I was attempting to establish for the reader at the outset that my views would be an important element in this article. For the remainder of the piece, I used the narrator to reveal my views both directly and, I hope, in more subtle ways. For example, when, after meeting Dan, I included the comment that he was not what I expected, I hoped to indicate directly that Dan's outgoing manner did not satisfy the preconceptions I had about retarded people.

In the next section, I tried to communicate my views in a more subtle manner. I included the textbook definition of Down's Syndrome, because it is so impersonal, and I was hopeful that the reader would notice the contrast between this detached, objective

style of writing and the more personal prose style that
predominates when I am describing Dan's life. In the
remainder of this section, I tried to include a hint of
irony in my physical description of Dan--for example, in
my comment that I never observed Dan's feet--to
communicate the superficiality and archness of a
description that views Dan as an object, that ignores
the complexity and richness of his personality.
Immediately after this description, I constructed a
small scene to illustrate the contrast between an
attitude that views Dan simplistically and an attitude
that includes all his humanity. In this scene, I
attempted to reinforce the point that Dan is a sensitive
human being, not an object, by including dialogue that
indicated that my surreptitious spying was insulting to
him.

In other sections of the article, I attempted to
use the strong narrative voice and the other literary
devices to illuminate my subjective views in the piece.
For example, I used scenic construction, status life
descriptions, and dialogue to indicate my growing
respect for Dan's abilities in my description of one
evening meal Dan cooked for me and the other residents
at the group home. Throughout the article, but
particularly in the boldfaced sections about my life, I
used first person point of view to capture my thoughts
and my feelings. I am somewhat embarrassed by the

intimacy of these sections, the degree to which I used the narrator to reveal my own thoughts and experiences. However, I think such intimacy is justified because it acknowledges that a journalist whose close relationship with an actor in his report is central to that report must be as willing to reveal himself as he is to reveal the inner life of his source.

Throughout the report, I used literary devices to illuminate Dan's subjective reality. I set scenes at the group home, at my home, and at the Pizza Hut restaurant in which I could use the narrative voice, dialogue between Dan and me, point of view, and status life details to communicate Dan's views. For example, I tried to capture Dan's enjoyment of food by having the narrator carefully describe the manner in which Dan prepared his meals, by including dialogue in which Dan described his favorite foods to me, and by including actual lists of foods Dan liked--status life details--to reveal Dan's pleasure in his favorite dishes. When I discussed Dan's attitude toward the other people who live at the group home and the unusual relationship they seem to have with one another, I tried to use point of view to get as close as possible to the way Dan and the others seem to feel about one another. When I described the behavior of the people who live at the group home as similar to a dance and when I showed the tender care they provided Debby, the woman who was staying at the

group home temporarily, I tried to capture these moments
from the point of view of the group home residents
themselves.

I also experimented with a technique that had been
used effectively by ethnographers to explain, interpret,
and organize their informants' subjective views within
the life histories they had written. This technique
involved the use of concepts these ethnographers had
drawn from the social sciences for use within their life
histories. One important prerequisite that these
concepts were required to meet before they were used in
the emic life histories was that they be part of the
informants' own conscious existence, not foreign
concepts that were forced upon the informants' lives.
For my report, I used the concept of self-image to help
reveal Dan's views, a concept that seems to be very much
a part of Dan's life. However, I did not borrow the
specialized vocabulary normally used to describe this
concept both because Dan did not understand these terms
and because most lay readers, for whom reports of
literary journalism are intended, would not be familiar
with them.

Instead, I tried to show that the label of mental
retardation, which portrays him as a dependent, almost
infantile creature, represents Dan's feared self-image
and that much of his life is devoted to coping with that
hated label. I also tried to show that Dan has a

yearning to be an autonomous person who can manage his own life--who can stay home by himself, can shop for the things he needs himself, can decide for himself the kind of work he would like to do. This independent figure represents Dan's ideal self-image. Finally, I tried to show that Dan is working to accept himself as a person who is competent in some areas and less competent in others. He is striving to see himself as a person who, while not perfect, is still worthy of his own respect and the respect of others. This figure represents Dan's real self-image.

The boldfaced sections in "Talian Pie" were intended to duplicate a technique in fiction that authors used to create contrasting levels of meaning within their works. In works of fiction, authors were able to create these contrasting levels by using fantasy, a technique that I could not employ in a work of literary journalism. However, I hoped that by juxtaposing events and emotions from my own life with similar events and emotions I was describing in Dan's life, I might create another level of meaning in the report that would highlight and reinforce the meaning of the events and emotions in Dan's life. For example, when Dan discussed the pointless cruelty he had been subjected to in the boarder home, I discussed a similar incident that had happened to me when I was young. Because Dan would not discuss his experience in detail,

I hoped that a detailed description of my experience at the point in the report where he mentioned his might act as a foil for Dan's life that would increase the understanding of his experience.

I included these boldfaced sections in the report as well as other material that described the relationship between Dan and me for another reason as well. I wanted to make certain that my presence in this report was obvious, that readers understood that I was not masquarading as a neutral recording machine, that the tension between objectivity and subjectivity was a very real element throughout this report. When Dan refers to me in the report as his "special friend," he is saying a great deal, because it is unlikely that he would have shared the same information with another person in the same way. Surely, "Talian Pie" is partly about the relationship between Dan and me, and the relationship that developed between us was the result of the kind of person I am as much as it was a result of the kind of person he is.

Because our personalities and our relationship were fundamental to this report, the tension between objectivity and subjectivity, fact and value are also fundamental to it. I could not have removed the subjective elements from this report any more than I could have removed my relationship with Dan from the report. The objective and subjective components of this

report are interconnected and inseparable. What I hoped to do and what I tried to do was to bring as many of the objective and subjective elements that were part of the report into the open for readers to see so they might judge what effect these elements had on the report itself.

Now that we have identified the methods that literary journalists use to reveal their own subjective realities and the subjective realities of the actors in their works and have attempted an experiment to illustrate and refine those methods by creating an original version of literary journalism, we might take a moment to examine some possibilities for future research on literary journalism. Perhaps, in the next step in the exploration of this form, scholars could begin to examine if the subjective realities within individual works of literary journalism begin to change when new facts have emerged or the original facts have been reinterpreted. Critics could analyze the effect of facts on values and the effect of values on facts within works of literary journalism. Such explorations might prove particularly useful in closing the gap between fact and value by determining how each of these components influences the other within the works. The resulting understanding of the interdependence between facts and values within an individual work could assist in demystifying the tension between objectivity and

subjectivity within that work.

Another fruitful sphere of study in literary journalism could involve further experimentation, similar to what I attempted in chapter six, with combining techniques of literary journalism with techniques that have proven useful in other forms to discover how these techniques influence the effectiveness of literary journalism. Lee Wilkins has argued that literary journalism is on the cutting edge of such experimentation when it has used point of view to communicate the thoughts of real-life actors who appear within the works, thus bringing subjective reality into the world as a reportable subject and making internal reality as important as external reality for the reporter (21). Further experimentation with this use of point of view together with careful analyses of that experimentation could help to determine the effectiveness and credibility of this use of point of view.

Such experimentation is related to a much broader area of intellectual inquiry. This area of inquiry, which encompasses both the tension between objectivity and subjectivity and the weakness of objectivity as an epistemological principle, not only is central to the literary journalism and the other two disparate fields included in this dissertation but also has aroused much debate in the Western world among scholars who represent

a wide range of other disciplines. More interdisciplinary studies are needed to assess common concerns about these problems and to share possible solutions between disciplines. For example, studies of the ethnographic novel could analyze how works of fiction which are based on anthropological fieldwork actually differ from ethnographic reports which are based on the same fieldwork.

Finally, scholars could focus on the relative effectiveness of literary journalism with various types of subjects. In this dissertation, I chose to compare works that dealt with the lives of mildly mentally retarded men, partly because the subjective views of such individuals are often difficult to obtain. Perhaps, the ability of literary journalism to capture the subjective realities of both authors and actors would be especially well-suited to subjects similar to mental retardation in which authors must collaborate extensively with actors in order to illuminate those actors' views. Such collaborations might prove particularly useful, because they would allow individuals, who often lack the means to reach others, to communicate their views to a wide audience. In such cases, literary journalism might represent an exceptional opportunity for self-expression to people who have been denied that precious gift.

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