


University of Alberta

**The Power of Stories: A Narrative Inquiry into
Immigrant Children's and Parents' Intergenerational Stories of School**

by

Guming Zhao 

**A thesis submitted to Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

Department of Elementary Education

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring 2008



Library and
Archives Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-45640-8
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-45640-8

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

■ ■ ■
Canada

ABSTRACT

This research is a life journey. Thinking narratively, I positioned myself to live as an immigrant and a researcher on Canadian landscapes. I relived my past through exploring three immigrant children's lived and told stories of schools.

As I believed my lived stories shaped who I am and how I lived my life, I worked on the study with an attempt to understand immigrant children's experiences of school through a narrative inquiry into the intergenerational stories they lived and told. Story was the language and focus of this study.

Three immigrant junior high school students, Yang, Atoosa, Di, and their parents participated in this research. Eighteen months was the time frame for my living alongside the three participants and their parents in the field: their school and homes. Research texts were composed from the experiences I lived with them and the stories they told about their lives they lived in in- and out-of- school places.

In the final chapter, teachers and teacher educators were invited to join conversations around what we may do to work with immigrant children like Yang, Atoosa and Di in order to create spaces in which they can learn and also come to love learning and learn with delight so that they tell good stories of their experiences on Canadian school landscapes of diversity.

DEDICATION

To my mother,
for the life she lived with endurance, dignity, and hope

To my father,
for his big heart, his love for Chinese culture, and his belief in humanity

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The cover of the dissertation bears my name. In my heart bear many other names that helped to make this writing possible. My deepest gratitude goes to my supervisor, Dr. Jean Clandinin, for her multidimensional support and guidance. The five years of living alongside Jean was transforming. Jean taught me with her heart so that I could be a researcher who values past, appreciates present and imagines for future.

The dissertation would not be possible without the three wonderful children and their parents' participation. Thank you to Yang, his parents, Qin and Wensi; Atoosa, her mother, Ramesh; Di, her parents, Ting and Bo, for their time, trust, generosity and the lives they lived with wisdom. Thank you to River's Edge, the teachers and two principles who welcomed me and provided the opportunity for me to know them, their students and the school.

My thanks also go to my committee members, Dr. Joe Wu, Dr. George Buck, Dr. Ingrid Johnston, Dr. Denise Larson and Dr. Nathalie Piquemal, for their insights, comments, encouragement and smiles.

I wish to thank friends of the Center for Research for Teacher Education and Development (CRTED) for their responsiveness and attentiveness to my life stories and research narrative. And thank you to Lauren for her precise transcription from audio tapes.

Thank you to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) for the support to the cross-province research project, "Intersecting narratives: Cultural

harmonies and tensions in inner city Canadian schools". I am thankful for the opportunity to be part of the large research.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband, Yonghui, for his patience and belief in me. Very special thanks to my daughter, JJ, for her stories that inspired me so much and challenged me to think harder and narratively.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: SITUATING THE NARRATIVE INQUIRY	1
Searching for the Narrative Journey: Stories Told and Lived	1
Wondering about the Storied Worlds Beyond	13
Secret Stories of Immigrant Children	20
Storied Selves in Storied Worlds: Searching for Theoretical Ground	28
Family Stories Shape Who We Are	39
Shifting School Stories Shape Parents' and Children's School Stories	44
Attending to Parents' of School	46
Thinking Narratively about Children's Experiences in School	50
Chapter 2: METHODOLOGY	53
Narrative Beginnings	56
Living in the Field	57
Field Texts	62
Composing Research Texts – Yang	66
Composing Research Texts – Atoosa and Di	74
Ethical Considerations	77
Chapter 3: YANG: "I AM A CHINESE KID"	81
Living Chinese-related Stories	82
Living Competing Stories	94
Living Fitting-in Stories	108
Living Stories of Playing by Rules	118
Chapter 4: ATOOSA: "FRIENDS ARE LIKE MY NUMBER ONE THING"	128
Meeting Atoosa	128
Atoosa and her Family	130
Living Stories of "Who I Am"	134
Living Family Stories and Fitting-in Stories	142
Living Family Stories and Atoosa's Stories to Live By	150
Living on Shifting Landscapes	155
Plotline of Friends	159
Plotline of Marks	166
Chapter 5: DI: "I JUST WANT TO BE MYSELF"	173
Meeting Di	173
Living Family Stories	175
The Tension of Living between Stories	188
Living Relational Stories	199
Living Stories on Shifting Landscapes	211
A Changed Rhythm	213
Stories of Teaching and Learning Changed	216

Stories of School Culture Changed	221
Looking for Continuity in Discontinuity.....	226
New Stories to Live By	231
Complexity of Stories	237
Chapter 6: RESONATING NARRATIVE THREADS ACROSS THE LIVES OF YANG, ATOOSA AND DI	244
Narrative Thread One: Fitting-in	249
Narrative Thread Two: Friends	258
Narrative Thread Three: Living on Shifting Landscapes	264
Resonances across the Three Immigrant Children's Stories and Other Research	271
Chapter 7: FROM CHILDREN'S STORIES AND FAMILY STORIES TO THE CONVERSATIONS OF TEACHER EDUCATION	277
A Note on Shifting Landscapes	280
Joining the Conversations of Teaching and Teacher Education	282
Attending to Family Stories	282
Attending to Immigrant Children's Desires for Cultural Identities	285
Attending to Immigrant Children's Desires for Relationships	290
Attending to Immigrant Children's Lived Stories	294
Reanimating the Old and Gaining Knowledge of the New	299
REFERENCES	301

Chapter One

SITUATING THE NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Searching for the Narrative Journey: Stories Told and Lived

A few years ago in St. John's, Newfoundland, I stayed awake one evening because my husband was at the Canadian Embassy in Beijing applying for visitor visas for my daughter and himself. He had told me he would call no matter what the result would be. The phone rang at last, but the news was disappointing. They did not get the visas. "Everybody was sad except JJ, our daughter. She clapped her hands at the news," my husband said to me on the phone. JJ's reaction to the idea of going to Canada had changed at the age of ten. Years before, she was fine with the idea. I wondered what made her so upset about, and resistant to, the idea, which everybody else in the family considered a good one. Trying to understand her, I asked myself: "What would I have done, if I had been given a chance to go away with my parents to another country at her age? Would I have been happy? What stories had I lived that led to my decision to go to the United States and then Canada? What stories did I live that made me think it would be the thing to do for my daughter?" I had followed my brother's footprints to the US. He was pursuing his doctoral degree in Texas when I started my master's program in Kansas. However, JJ did not think that the decision I made for her to come to Canada was good for her. When her dad said to her that if they went to Canada, they could live with mom, and the family could live together, she replied: "Then mom can come back and join us."

“Experience is a moving force” (Dewey, 1936, p.38) that shaped and is constantly shaping who we are. According to Carr (1986), narrative is the form of experience and action. In order to understand JJ’s reluctance to come to Canada, I needed to tell the stories I lived in order to understand my experiences and action because thinking of “life as a story is a powerful way to imagine who we are, where we have been, and where we are going” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994, p. 149).

Unlike my daughter, I did what my father wanted me to do, that is, I pursued graduate studies abroad. When I got the admission letter from a US university, my father was already seventy-six years old. He insisted that he accompany me for thirty-two hours by train from the city we were living in to Beijing in order to apply for a US visa. At that time, there were several hundred applicants each day lined up at the US Embassy in Beijing waiting for interviews for visas. My father and I had to get up very early in the morning to stand in the line, hoping to be scheduled for an interview earlier so that we would not have to stay in Beijing too long. I was in the line but my father walked around and chatted with other parents for information that might help his daughter get the visa. Late November in Beijing was cold and the wind was strong. Yet the cold wind did not bother my father at all. He had a hope and dream in his mind: his daughter would be a graduate student and would have a chance to see the outside world. Several hours later, I was finally inside the US embassy building. I had to leave my father out in the cold. An hour or so later, I came out of the embassy and waved to my father, who was standing by a tall iron fence across from the US Embassy. Later he told me that he picked that spot because he could see me as soon as I came out of the door. I smiled at him and when I

showed him the yellow ticket--the visa pick-up notice, my father held me in his arms.

This was only a glimpse of the story of how I knew I did what my father wanted me to do and that my father supported me in the dream to study abroad. I had known for a long time that I would make my father proud by furthering my studies abroad. I could never forget the story about my father's cousin, which my father told me again and again. His name was Zhao Enshi, my father's favorite cousin. I knew he was a handsome young man from the few photos we had in our family. He had a master's degree in science from the United States and came back to China to teach mathematics in a middle school in his hometown. Sadly, he took his life a few years after the Cultural Revolution broke out because he could not bear the humiliation from the people who used to be his students and friends. My father was very sad because he lost a cousin and friend, and the family lost a well-educated man. From my father I learned that there were several other people in our family who, like Zhao Enshi, had degrees from abroad. However, the Cultural Revolution discontinued this opportunity and possibility for our family and, even though they had degrees, they were deprived of the right to contribute. Zhao Enshi was not the only one in our family who died in tragedy. My father's elder sister, a high school chemistry teacher, died in a labor camp around the age of forty. Nobody in our family knew the exact date she died and how. My father was an old man when I was studying for TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). There was no chance for him to be recognized as a sociologist¹; however, he wanted to see his dream as a professional realized in his daughter's life to resume our family tradition that valued education so

¹ My father's major in the university was sociology.

much.

When I finally picked up our family tradition, I felt proud of myself because I made my father proud. The stories of my father and my family made me feel that I had a responsibility to continue our family pride and tradition and help my father see that the future of the family would be the same as the stories he was told, lived and shared with me. On the one hand, my father's stories and the family stories touched me deeply in my heart. On the other hand, the stories I was living at the time were a strong force that helped me live out a family tradition in my actions. The first reality was that in the middle of the 1980's, due to the country's "open door" policy, individuals could apply for passports if they had appropriate documents such as an admission letter from a foreign university. There were stories about traveling to the US, Canada and other countries to do master's or doctoral degrees. What was more important was that these stories were told as success stories and as symbols of academic achievement. The second reality was that my brother was one of the ambitious people who were weaving the dream into personal reality. When the stories, family stories and social/cultural stories came together, I followed this plotline: to make my family proud through composing a success story for myself to prove that I was a hard-working person with an ideal, an image of me among my colleagues and friends. The following depicts how I reacted to my brother's lived story.

As I said earlier, I did what my brother was doing. My father in a sense influenced me mostly by telling his stories to me. My brother did not tell me many stories. He influenced me mostly by the stories he lived. He had only six years of elementary

education but through self-study, he passed the college entrance examinations to be a university student with only an elementary diploma. Studying for TOEFL and GRE (Graduate Records Examination) in his spare time while teaching at an agronomy college, he became a graduate student in the US. I thought I could do as well as my brother if not better. If my brother could be a graduate student, I could be one too. I was much luckier than my brother was since I had a high school diploma. I should have the courage and confidence shown in stories my brother had been living. I took TOEFL in 1989 for the first time. I did not apply for graduate studies because I got married and had my daughter. However, the dream was always alive in my mind. When my daughter was three years old, I took TOEFL again. I was so excited when, at last, I was admitted to Kansas State University as a graduate student in the College of Education.

I wanted my daughter to have a better and easier education. Both my brother and I worked long and hard, and when we finally started our graduate studies, we were already in our thirties. However, as my husband told me my daughter's joy at not receiving the visa, I realized my daughter did not want to do what I thought was the best for her. What was the "miscommunication" that made my daughter not "sing along" with me as I did with my dad? Why was I able to do what my father wanted to me to do, that is, to have as much as education as I could and, if possible, in another country while my daughter was so reluctant to leave China to be in a Canadian school? There are many ways to look for explanations for these puzzles. However, what I would like to do here is, from a narrative perspective, to try to understand these puzzles from stories, from telling stories, from attending to the living of stories and from hearing told and lived stories.

Earlier, I wrote about how I was so willing to do what my father wanted me to do and shared some of the family stories that I learned from my father. In the next few paragraphs I write more about the family stories I was told and the life I lived that helped me interpret the stories in ways similar to my father's interpretation, which made me be able to live out and through my family stories. I also write about the stories my daughter lived as a child and as an elementary school girl to understand her storied experiences and how she responded to these stories.

I believe stories played a role in my decision to leave China to pursue a degree. In my family, in a broad picture, all of us, my brother, my father and I, went through the ten-year Cultural Revolution, the most influential period of our lives, especially for my father and brother. We shared many experiences. My father's teaching career ended at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. Before that, he was an elementary school teacher. He was the only teacher who had a university degree in the school. My father graduated from the department of sociology in the early 1950's, when the People's Republic of China was just founded. His first job was in the General Association of National Relief in Beijing. A few months later when the association was dissolved, he got his second job in the Ministry of Water Power as a magazine editor. A few years later when the "Anti-rightist Campaign" broke out in 1957, ten years before the Cultural Revolution, he became the investigated target. He had to stop his job and accept the government investigation of him. Many years later, after the Cultural Revolution, my father told me about his experiences he lived in the time I was not yet born:

Every morning I told your mother I went to the office to work, I lied. Actually, I

went to be interrogated and ordered to confess about my words and deeds in the university when I was a member of the Youth League of the People's Three Principles², the opposite organization to the Chinese Communist Youth League. It was almost a year later when I was told that the investigation was over. In order to save my political life, the Party and the Government did not arrest me and send me to the labor camp. However, from the corner of my eye I saw a few lines in red on the file that bore my name: 'This man cannot be trusted and promoted.'

My father was only thirty-six then. He realized that with his personal file carrying a conclusion from the government investigation, that is, "this man cannot be trusted and promoted", he would have little chance to pursue a career in his life. He did not want to stay in Beijing any more. Under some invisible pressure, he volunteered to go to the water dam construction site out of the capital area. First, he went to Gansu, a northwest province, working as a worksite newspaper editor and later to Jiangxi province³, as editor and schoolteacher. My father's historical "problem", that is, he was a member of the Youth League of the Three People's Principles, was picked up again when the Cultural Revolution began. However, this time he was not let go. He was much more severely punished. He was taken away from home when I was five. He was not home for three years from 1967 to 1970. My father did not tell much detail of how he was treated during the Cultural Revolution, but it is not hard to imagine how hopeless he felt since 1957. In

² The Three People's Principles refer to Nationalism, Democracy and the People's Livelihood, which was advocated by Sun Yat-sen, who is respected by both the Nationalists and Communists.

³ I was born in Jiangxi province.

the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, he worked in construction sites, raised pigs and cattle. When I grew up, my father told me with pride that he could, with pliers, bend and break a size eight-iron wire, the thickest on the construction site. He also told me how much he enjoyed the sun and gentle, fresh view of the countryside while his only ox grazed on the grass-covered dike. However, he and I knew, despite all this, the jobs he was forced to do were to humiliate and punish him. At that time, his life was controlled by others. When he was finally “liberated” and was given back the teaching position in 1978, he was fifty-seven, only three years before the official age of retirement.

My brother just finished grade six in 1967, when the Cultural Revolution broke out. One moment I clearly remembered was when he came back home from town after attending the junior high school entrance examinations. Later I learned that he did an excellent job in the tests. He got the highest mark among all the examinees. However, he was rejected to move on to the junior high school. “All your family had education. Now it’s the turn for others,” my father was told by the principal. This was the only reason my brother had to stop his schooling at the age of twelve. I wonder what my father could say as a man accused as a “historical anti-revolutionary.” Could he have a voice? Even though I did not know the principal’s ridiculous remark until long after the Cultural Revolution, I knew the story had always been remembered and told. At that time, I knew my brother did not go to school like other kids. However, I did not know why he stayed at home and read anything he had his hands on. Ten years later when the government resumed the policy of the college entrance examination, my brother was almost past the eligible age to register for the exams. He was almost twenty-five when he

returned to formal education, but as an adult and a university student.

I was young, but the Cultural Revolution occurred during my childhood and elementary schooling. In the elementary school, I was marginalized. I remembered how sad and helpless I was to be rejected from the honor roll and the singing-dancing club.

For a self-study project for my master's degree, I wrote these experiences:

Since we had about 40 students in our class, I thought that I was sure to be on the honor roll having 33 votes. Here came the honor-report day at last. The school leaders went from door to door to present the "Five-Good-Student" certificates to the students. I could hear the gong and drum. When my mother and I saw the honor-presenting group pass our home, I knew I was not approved by the selection committee of the school. (Zhao, 2003)

In the same paper, I wrote:

During the Cultural Revolution, almost all units such as schools, institutions, factories, and communes had a performing arts propaganda team, whose duty was to give publicity to the Party (Chinese Communist Party) policies in the form of arts performances such as singing, dancing and drama. In the school, to be a member of the propaganda team was the best opportunity to be popular. I dreamed of being a member not only because I wanted popularity but also because I liked singing and could sing very well; however, I was not given the opportunity for the honor. "Why not let Zhao Guming try, Teacher Liu?" Maybe my classmate's word reminded Teacher Liu of something. She asked me to go for a try at last. The teachers were satisfied with my performance. However, a few

hours before the formal performance, I was told I could not participate. (Zhao, 2003)

The three of us, my father, my brother and I, lived our lives in the Cultural Revolution. We all had memories of our hard lives in this period: my father of being driven out of the school for ten years; my brother of being shut out of the school for ten years; and my experience of living a marginalized life in school. The similar experiences we lived in the Cultural Revolution and the stories told and retold in our family constructed a route of life for us, to pick up our family traditional way of life, that is, to enrich our lives with knowledge. We went through the hard times and had our own stories about hard experiences, which constructed a sharing space for us and made it easier for us to understand each other. The most important thing about this sharing space was the opportunity to tell the stories and, in that way, to keep the stories alive. I remember occasionally our family would take out family photos and my mother and father would tell my brother, sister and I the stories of these photos. Sharing and telling stories created a bond and closeness in my family that, even in the most difficult time, I was still able to be loyal to my father and my family. Telling and sharing family stories were important for me as I reflect on who I was and what I did. The stories also shaped who we were as a family and what to do. In the following section, I describe my daughter, her life and the stories she lived to find ways to understand her reluctance to come to Canada.

Born in the early 1990's, my daughter had a very different life from mine. She did not have such disturbing stories in her life as I had at her age. Instead, she had a

comfortable life. At three, she was sent to the kindergarten⁴ to start her institutional formal education. When she was in the elementary school, she had almost everything she needed for her life that matched the stories promoted by the mainstream media. She always did well in the school. She took part in math competitions at grade three and won a small prize for it. When she was at grade four, her cousin was admitted to a good university in Beijing. Her cousin, from her father's side, was the first grandchild in the family to go to university. She knew a lot about this cousin from her aunts, uncles and her proud grandparents. JJ knew her cousin was in a fine junior high school and graduated from the best high school in the city. In 2002, her last year in elementary school, JJ also took the municipal qualification examinations for entering top-ranked middle schools and she passed the highly competitive tests. With her test score, she automatically entered the few academic challenge classes in the school. After the first mid-term examinations in junior high, her average mark from four core courses was the 10th highest among over seven hundred students in her grade. She lived the stories children of the same age longed to live. She was living a life pretty much like her cousin's before she went to university. Why wouldn't she continue her success and enviable stories in the school and among her friends? Why would she give up the life she was enjoying and go to a different country? Based on her experiences, the stories she lived and her current life, JJ had a beautiful picture for her future. She said she would go

⁴ In China, elementary school starts from grade one. The preschool children attend is usually called kindergarten where children learn calculations, Chinese characters, singing, dancing and other fun things.

to Qinghua University, the best university in China in her mind and much more famous than the university to which her cousin went. Yet, if she went to Canada, all stories and her dream about her future would mean nothing to her.

Since I left her to go to Kansas when she was six, she lived with my husband and his parents. The family stories in my husband's family were different from the family stories I knew and lived, which shaped my life so much. In a way, similar to my following my brother's footprints, she might follow her cousin's footprints. Just as she was working hard to enter the academic challenge junior high school, she learned her father and mother planned to immigrate to Canada. To her it was interruption that would discontinue her stories as a good student with a promising future. Although her cousins, friends, the whole family and her teachers encouraged her to go to Canada, her lived past stories and her imagined future story were so substantial that she could not be convinced.

When my husband finally obtained the visa, he was frustrated because JJ did not want to pack for the trip for which he had waited so long. "We all tell her that it is good to go to Canada, and she can learn English well much faster. But JJ won't listen." my husband told me as he spoke of how difficult it was to make JJ happy about going to Canada. When JJ and her father finally arrived in Canada, JJ showed me the photos she took with her teachers and her friends in the classroom, by the tree, in front of the school gate and classroom building. She told me stories about each photo. I felt badly as I realized I tore her away from a life so dear to her. One of the few things she took out of her backpack she carried to Canada to personalize her desk was a photo of her with her cousins. As I looked at the photo, I realized they were more important to her than her

mom and dad now not only because they were so far away but also because they shared her stories of who she was and imagined herself to become in China.

I had been sure that Canada was a good place for JJ. Seeing JJ's resistance to coming to Canada, I realized I needed to think of JJ's unhappiness narratively. Thinking about JJ and myself, I tried to make sense of the central role stories play in people's lives, in children's lives. Making sense of life experiences narratively is one goal of this dissertation. Exploring immigrant children's and their parents' school stories is the second goal. To achieve these goals, my inquiry puzzles are shaped by questions such as: What are immigrant children's experiences of Canadian schools? What are the intergenerational stories of school in immigrant children's families? What are the intergenerational stories in immigrant children's experiences? How did/are lived stories shape/shaping who they were/are on shifting landscapes?

Wondering about the Storied Worlds Beyond

I was nervous and excited sitting in the classroom at Kansas State University. I was nervous because I was the only Chinese in the class and everything was so different. I was excited and proud because I had achieved my dream of becoming a graduate student in the US. However, I was confused and hurt after a conversation with a professor. She asked me where I came from and I said "from China." Maybe she saw my struggle with the reading and course work. She said to me in front of a few classmates that I was a brave woman being all by myself in a foreign country. She added that she would be scared to go to a foreign country to be a student. I do not think I was just

sensitive, but somehow I felt her comment was not a compliment. From the way she made the comment, I felt she meant I was brave in a naïve way. I was confused. I thought the American professors would act in a similar way as my colleagues and friends had, that is, by saying “Congratulations!” I was also hurt because I knew how proud my family was that I was able to be in this classroom. To them it was not merely “brave.” It was a hope that enabled a family story to continue. I wonder if the professor had known the stories behind my presence in the class would she have reacted differently. Probably my effort would have been appreciated a little differently if she had known how important it was for my father and I to prove that our family story could continue even though the Cultural Revolution deprived my father’s right to be a schoolteacher and my brother’s right to go to the junior high school.

The stories I lived have a great impact on me and my decisions for what I chose to do such as my determination to come to North America to pursue graduate studies. The stories my daughter, JJ, lived have a great impact on her and her feeling of what she wanted to do such as staying home in China to continue to compose her identity as a good student. The connection between the lived stories and the shaping of who we are and what we choose to do makes me think deeply about how much we need to know about others in order to respect who they are. As JJ’s mother, I took for granted that I could make decisions for her, a little elementary schoolgirl. I was sure I made the right choice to bring her to Canada, a country among the best in the world, as many people would say. When JJ was reluctant to accept the story I prepared for her to live, many family members and I simply thought she was just being tough. Was it true that she was

just being tough and giving us, the adults, a hard time? It would seem so, if we, the parents, only know our worlds, our stories, and do not attend to the existence of her world, feel her frustration of being dragged out of the stories of her life, to make her unable to continue to live them.

Because of my decision, JJ came to Canada. She started a new life in a different country, thousands of miles away from the home she was familiar with, a place where she lived many good stories. She started living new stories of herself in new and different schools. What were the stories lived as a Chinese girl in this new school, on this new landscape? What was her experience like of speaking Chinese to herself and struggling to respond in English in the class and to her new classmates? Could she continue she had lived in China? How much did she have to give up of the stories she lived in China in order to fit into the stories of the new school? As I believe the important role lived stories play in shaping who we are, I worried if JJ's difference as a teenage girl who had just arrived in Canada would be respected.

When reflecting on and writing about how stories shaped who I am, and about JJ's lived stories in China and her resistance to coming to Canada, I realized I neglected the existence of JJ's world. Delpit (1995) advocated that educators be aware of the existence of the world of others' children:

We educators set out to teach, but how can we reach the worlds of others when we don't even know they exist? Indeed, many of us don't even realize that our own worlds exist only in our heads and in the cultural institutions we have built to support them. (p. xiv)

As a parent, I was not aware of my daughter's world, that is, I failed "to see the world through the eyes of those with very different histories" (Delpit, 1995, p. xvi). As a result, I wasn't able to understand her well enough to respect the life she lived and appreciate her sacrifice to give up the stories she enjoyed. As an educator, if the professor in Kansas had been able to reach out to my world, the stories I lived, she might not have taken her world so for granted. If educators fail to be aware of the existence of other people's worlds, they may not be able to understand the people with stories other than the mainstream ones.

In order to understand, love and affirm cultural plurality, Lugones (1987) recommends that people travel to other's worlds to learn to love each other. People fail to understand, respect and love other people because they cannot identify with other people. They do not welcome the other's world (Lugones, 1987). Taking loving her mother as an example, Lugones (1987) wrote:

Loving my mother also required that I see with her eyes, that I go into my mother's world, that I see both of us as we are constructed in her world, that I witness her own sense of herself from within her world. Only through this traveling to her "world" could I identify with her because only then could I cease to ignore her and to be excluded and separate from her. (p. 8)

Lugones writes about how to get to know another's world -- traveling to another's world to identify with other people. In my case, I could understand my daughter better by traveling to her world to see how she positioned herself in her world and, in that way, I

could “cease to ignore her and to be excluded and separate from her.” In so doing, I would not have been so upset about my daughter’s resistance, and I would have learned her stories and been able to communicate with her in the language that fits in her world. Most of the stories JJ told to justify her resistance to coming to Canada were about her schools, her success in schools, her friends, her cousins and so on. She told these stories quite often whenever she felt uncomfortable about being different or about not being able to do well in the courses in her Canadian schools. She often said that she was not afraid of tests, sometimes even enjoyed the pressure in the school in her hometown in China. Here she had to skip many questions in the tests because she could not understand the meaning of the questions. Occasionally, she would let me see a little bit of her world in China: storybooks, music and cartoon series. She would tell me about the excitement she, her cousins and schoolmates shared. When I heard the stories JJ told me on various occasions, I worried about her because she seemed to be too much in her past stories. I considered her storied reasons to be insignificant because I thought she would soon get used to the change and to living new stories of new schools. Lugones’ idea of world traveling makes me realize that I do not have to worry about her telling of her stories as long as I do not neglect her storied world and do not take my stories and my reasoning for granted. My reasoning is based only on seeing myself and JJ from within my storied world. By traveling to her world, I disposition (Vinz, 1997) myself to know JJ in her world. Thus, her stories become my stories and I am able to understand and respect her stories, as I understood how she constructed herself and me in her world. It may be that JJ, like many other newly immigrated children, will get familiar and begin to story herself

within her new school landscape. As I traveled to JJ's worlds, I came to understand her and "identify with" (Lugones, 1987) her.

Delpit (1995) stresses the importance of the awareness of the existence of others' worlds. In my case, for example, my world is constructed by the stories I lived in different periods of time, the Cultural Revolution and the open door policy, and the family stories I learned from my father. In my experience with the American professor, she probably, as Delpit described, did not realize "our own worlds exist only in our heads and in the cultural institutions" (p. xiv). She neglected my world and did not realize the need to travel to my world to understand me. After so many years of being with kindergarten children, Paley (1990) realized that people should know and let the children know that it is all right, for example, for them to express emotions, to cry and to argue. This idea can be understood better by being aware of the existence of children's worlds and, in this way, teachers and parents can react to children's experiences in more resonant ways (Bateson, 1990).

What are the children's worlds? How can we travel to their worlds to know them? From a narrative perspective, the children's worlds are worlds of stories, their stories of who they are, who their friends are, who their parents are and who their teachers are. Paley's advice was to let children tell and play their stories because "[s]tory and stage provide a laboratory for every sort of child: Those who are sociable but not articulate and those who speak better than they play" (Paley, 1990, p. 34). When we listen to their stories and when children are allowed to tell and play their stories, we will learn about their worlds and have some answers about how to communicate and work with them

(Paley, 1990).

In her most recent book—“A child’s work: The importance of fantasy play”, Paley (2004) writes about children’s worlds, which are worlds of fantasy play. These worlds of fantasy play, according to Paley, are “the heart of the early childhood” (p. 1). To Paley and Miss Wilson, the director of a nursery school in New Orleans where Paley used to teach, fantasy play is the work of children. To better teach the children, the teachers need to pretend to play a role in children’s world of fantasy play. Thus, play should be the work of the teachers (Paley, 2004). Paley describes children’s worlds with their fantasy play stories. To me, Paley’s “call[ing] play the work of teachers” (p. 3) is to suggest that teachers travel to another’s world, to a child’s world and to pretend to be a child. Paley worries that teachers overlook children’s fantasy play worlds. They teach and see the children through their teacher eyes, rather than through the eyes of young children:

...today fantasy play is at the barricades with fewer and fewer teachers willing to step up and defend the natural style and substance of early childhood, the source of all this vocabulary building and image decoding and Socratic questioning. (Paley, 2004, p. 32)

When teachers are not able to see the world through children’s eyes, teachers judge the children “according to arbitrary scales that seldom include the unfolding of children’s imaginations as revealed in their play” (p. 25). Not able to recognize, respect and travel to young children’s worlds, “We no longer wonder ‘Who are you?’ but instead decide quickly ‘What can we do to fix you?’” (p. 47). Paley brings us back to Lugone’s ideas

about who a daughter is in her story of herself and in her story of her mother.

In small contexts such as a family, one like mine, or bigger contexts such as a school, one like Paley's nursery school, we cannot be independent from other family members or colleagues and children. Lugones (1987) states that "I am incomplete and unreal without other women. I am profoundly dependent on others..." (p. 8). In an interdependent world, we need to be open to and welcome others' worlds and, at the same time, travel to their worlds to understand and show love and respect, and eventually be able "to teach" (Delpit, 1995, p. xiv).

Stories are lived individually. Everybody has storied worlds. In order to understand the intergenerational stories of school in immigrant children's families, it is important to be aware of children's worlds of stories. I imagine traveling to children's storied worlds will help unfold my research puzzles.

Secret Stories of Immigrant Children

As I wrote earlier, as an adult immigrant, I made the decision to leave my country and live new stories in Canada. As a mother, I also made the decision for my daughter, then a grade six child, to come to Canada. Because of the decision, JJ had to leave China. After a year in Canada, she still misses the stories of her Chinese way of life at home and school.

"I've told you before I was very popular in the school back home." JJ could not hide her excitement when a friend of hers wrote to her that she was still remembered and teachers and classmates were still talking about her. I could tell that she really liked the

stories she lived in China because, when she said this to me, her face was shining with pride. She often said to me that she belonged to the other part of her class at school in Canada, the unpopular group. When she said so, she did not show she was interested in being a popular student in the new Canadian school. Yet, the pride she showed about being popular and liked in her Chinese schools made me realize that being popular was important to her. Being popular may be something to define who she was in China and who she is not in Canada. JJ had secret stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996) that she did not show until there was something that lit up the far away sparkle in the deep memory of her life back home. This seemingly common incident punches my heart as an immigrant mother who chose to live and bring up her child in Canada.

There must be many different stories for immigrant families coming to Canada. Perhaps many, like me, were self-motivated come to Canada because Canada was storied as a democratic country, a better place for their and their children's future. They, as I, might have believed that Canada would treat them fairly and they would be better off because of Canada's Multiculturalism Act (1988). Behind the policy story of multiculturalism, immigrant families live their individual storied lives. These lived stories can be different from their imagined stories about Canada and the stories they are living when they are in Canada. Children may find the stories in the new school in Canada different from the stories they had lived in their home country. The discontinuity of the stories the children had lived in the home country and are living in the new country leads to another kind of stories, the secret stories, which may or may not be told.

JJ's experiences in her school in Canada appeared to me to be fine considering the

progress she made in her schoolwork. For example, she was on the honor roll with the second report card. I was proud of her good work in Canadian schools. I thought JJ would eventually get used to the new stories. I thought it was only a matter of time. Thinking this way, I overlooked the complicated secret stories hidden in JJ's mind in the long process of fitting into new school stories. Only when JJ laid the two stories of being unpopular in the new Canadian school and being popular in China alongside each other did I start to think of her secret stories that I had overlooked. I started to imagine what her secret stories were.

I imagine Canada can be storied as a good place to be. I understand people's lives as accumulations of stories (Coles, 1989). For children, being transplanted from other cultures, I wonder if parents and educators paid enough attention to the stories immigrant children are living in Canada and their reorganizing of their lived stories.

Christa Igoa (1995) was an immigrant and a teacher of immigrant children. At the age of five, she left the Philippines for Los Angeles, and then for Central America and Columbia. A few years later, the whole family went back to the Philippines. When she was thirteen, Igoa's family returned to the US. As an educator, who had lived stories of being an immigrant child in Central America, Columbia and California, Igoa, from her own stories, understands that immigrant children have mixed feelings of being in a new world. Based on her years of being with immigrant children, Igoa published her work, "The Inner World of the Immigrant Child," in 1995. The main purpose of her work is to understand immigrant children's experiences of "uprooting" and adapting to the life in America. Igoa emphasizes the importance of listening to immigrant children's stories

about their experiences of being transplanted in a foreign school. She believes that with these stories of immigrant children, teachers can better understand these children's needs and feelings and facilitate their adjustment to the American way of school life. To achieve this goal, the first step is to let the children express themselves. In the ESL classroom, Igoa encourages the children to use the words they learned to write anything they wanted to express. With the story a child wrote, Igoa worked with him or her to draw it and finally to make it into a filmstrip. The children's filmstrips opened the doors for Igoa to enter these immigrant children's worlds and to facilitate these children to adjust to the American school life through integrating the cultural, academic and psychological dimensions of the whole child.

Igoa's work is valuable for my wonders about immigrant children's lives in Canada. I agree with Igoa (1995) that "[i]mmigrant children have individual histories and inner struggles as they wrestle with the changes in their lives" (p. 3). I understand as a mother that I need to listen to or even ask for a child's "individual histories and inner struggles", which, to me, are similar to what I call secret stories.

One of Igoa's (1995) stories is told by Alice, a little Chinese girl:

I didn't participate in a lot of stuff. I wanted to. You know, the other kids were doing certain things and I looked at them. I said, "Oh, they're having fun. I want to do that." But then, I was reluctant to do that because I felt maybe I couldn't do that, right? Maybe I thought I wasn't good enough to do what they were doing. It was really bad to just sit there and look at what they were doing with the feeling that I wanted to do it but just couldn't. (p. 83)

Alice's story reminds me of JJ's similar secret stories. Occasionally, JJ would say to me how much fun she had with her classmates at recess in China. But here in Canada, mostly what she did was to watch other children playing or to do her math assignments. She might want to be like her peers but, maybe, like Alice, JJ was not confident that she could be good enough for what her peers were doing. When Igoa provided Alice a space to express her feelings, Alice and Igoa could have a conversation. From that conversation Alice was able to understand herself better and Igoa was able to know Alice better and to better help her. I also believe that Alice and JJ would feel relieved when they could tell their stories to somebody who would listen to them and with whom they could talk about their secret stories.

To Igoa (1995), immigrant children's experience is an experience of uprooting. I think the metaphor of uprooting is expressive. I can imagine that when a child being uprooted, she or he is "uprooted from all signs of the familiar and is transplanted to an unfamiliar foreign land" (p. 39). To me, the "signs of the familiar" are not simply the visual signs but also the stories immigrant children lived. They do not want to part with the familiar because they want to continue the past stories. They miss the familiar because they are living different stories in new places. Igoa (1995) tells a Mexican boy's story of leaving the familiar and heading to the unfamiliar:

I felt sad when I had to leave. I was crying because I would not be able to ride horses, swim, or be with my friends..." (p. 41)

The boy's feeling was one of uprooting because he had to leave behind all he was familiar with. He could not take his friends, relatives and the school with him to a new

place. When the uprooted boy was transplanted in a new place, he found the people around him were different and the games and stories in the school were different.

When a plant is uprooted, in order to make a successful transplant, a handful of soil that supports its roots will also be taken to the new place. I wonder what the handful of soil is and what a gardener does with it. Technically, the gardener could provide the transplanted plant with similar soil, temperature and moisture. But I would imagine the handful of soil, a little bit of the familiar, helps to hold the plant's original messages to continue a new life somewhere, and the gardener carefully lets the handful of soil, the familiar, be honored and join the new soil. Technically, the new school could also offer the boy an environment of schooling: teachers, classrooms, playgrounds, books and classmates. However, immigrant children could still feel uncomfortable. A newly immigrated girl said to me that she liked the Canadian school, but she would have been much happier if all her friends had been here with her. For immigrant children, it is not the physical environment but rather the life, the familiar signs of life, and the stories lived with the familiar that make the transplant successful and comfortable. Like transplanted plants, immigrant children need the familiar and an experience that their stories are honored in foreign schools.

Thinking of immigrant children being uprooted and leaving their stories of the familiar behind, I imagine how much they would miss their lived stories, how much they would want the new stories to be like the stories they lived in their home country, and how many stories they would have and want to tell. The little girl's wish that all her friends were here with her in Canada and JJ's recollection of being a popular student in

China are the secret stories of missing the familiar, the lived stories with the familiar. These secret stories warn me that even though I may be one of the parents who “trust ... children’s resilience and flexibility” (Igoa, 1995, p. vii), this gift cannot be taken for granted that the process of finding balanced stories of the familiar and unfamiliar is easy for the children. Besides experiencing uprooting of the familiar lives in their home countries, immigrant children have one more struggle, which is to live a balance between their storied lives with mom and dad at home and the stories they live with peers and teachers in the school. When immigrant children have to stay on an unfamiliar landscape, I can imagine their secret stories are about making sense of new school lives and making connections to past school lives. At the same time, I can also imagine the immigrant children have different family stories, and I need to attend to how their parents’ stories of life and school might have shaped, and are shaping, who they are.

McCaleb (1994) states that “[s]tudents are part of a cultural and linguistic reality and all knowledge that is brought to school is valued” (p. 41). I would like to imagine a school in which immigrant children feel supported and confident to represent their familiar, their stories of who they are, their stories of who their families are. Helping children find connections between what they know from home and what they learn from school is important. Igoa (1995) suggests that educators be aware of “the importance of the feeling of having roots” (p. 10). In Igoa’s words:

In the transplant, it is customary for the gardener to take as many of the plant’s roots as possible to the new ground. In the uprooting experience, the children’s family must do the same. Teachers as “gardeners” of these seedlings need to

understand the importance of cultural roots. (p. 40)

The metaphor of roots is closely related to the metaphor of uprooting. When children are uprooted from the familiar, the important thing to do is to take as much of the familiar as possible just like the gardener who takes “as many of the plant’s roots as possible to the new ground.” Thinking narratively, I would say children’s roots of the familiar are the stories of their lives lived in their home countries. McCaleb (1994) believes that “[s]tudents will not be truly educated if they don’t receive an education that enables them to discover their own place in history” (p. 16). Again, thinking narratively I would say the stories of the roots allow the children to find a position on the landscape of new schools in Canada.

Children have many stories to tell. Based on my experience with JJ, I feel it is important that immigrant children find school to be a place where they can tell these stories. It is also important that there are people at home and school who are willing to listen to their secret stories. Last semester (2004), sex education was scheduled for grade seven children at JJ’s school. As her mother, I considered that JJ was not quite ready for the topic. I did not sign for her to go. She was fine with it. When she came back from school on the day the topic was discussed, she said it was OK to be in the library instead of at the presentation, but she did not feel comfortable to answer her peers’ curiosity about her not going. While I was sorry that I put her aside from the majority, I was glad that she expressed her feelings to me. It was an opportunity for me to communicate with my child about roots, family stories and individual choices. I wonder, when space is created and recognized for immigrant children’s secret stories to be told and listened to,

the distance between the stories lived with the familiar and with the unfamiliar may be narrowed.

It is pivotal to be mindful of, listen to, and attend to immigrant children's secret stories in order to understand the intergenerational stories of school in their families. Attending to their secret stories about their complex experiences on shifting landscapes, of a school, between home and school, from home country and Canada, deepened my inquiry into the intergenerational stories of school of immigrant children.

Storied Selves in Storied Worlds: Searching for Theoretical Ground

When I first encountered "thinking narratively" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), I was intrigued, yet, it was not until recently that I started to understand what it means to think narratively. To me the premise of narrative thinking is to look at the world as a storied one. People live storied lives in storied worlds. That is to say, we find ourselves in the stories we live out and live by. When we say that we live storied lives, we understand experience narratively. Clandinin and Connelly's belief in experience and in studying it narratively originates from John Dewey's work on experience: "For us, Dewey transforms a commonplace term, experience, in our educators' language into an inquiry term, and gives us a term that permits better understandings of educational life" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 2). Dewey (1938) points out two major principles of experience, continuity and interaction. Continuity of experience means that things that happened before have an impact on what is happening now and will continue to influence what is to happen in our lives. Thus, according to this principle, "every experience both

takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 35). In Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) words, continuity of experience is carried out through people “endlessly telling and retelling stories about themselves that both refigure the past and create purpose in the future” (p.24).

Dewey’s second principle of experience is interaction, which means that experience is both personal and social. Along with interaction between the personal individual and the social environment, and continuity, Dewey also raises the notion of situation, in which interaction takes place. Therefore, “[t]he conceptions of *situation* and of *interaction* are inseparable from each other” (Dewey, 1938, p. 43). To Dewey, the two principles of experiences, continuity and interaction, represent “the longitudinal and lateral aspects of experience” (p. 44). Based on the two principles of experience and the notion of situation, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) developed a frame of narrative thinking—the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space with the dimensions of the “personal and social (interaction); past, present, and future (continuity); combined with the notion of place (situation)” (p. 50).

Thinking of JJ’s resistance to coming to Canada within the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, I first think of interaction and situation. I think of her experience as an individual living happily with comfortable connections at home and school. I think of her being displaced in different schools in Canada, where she could not enjoy the same comfortable interaction in her new experience of Canada with her Chinese stories. Then I think of continuity of experience. JJ wanted to continue her experiences in the school in

China because she could imagine her future if she carried on the stories she lived and the life she was living. She often thought of her second cousin. In the spring of 2002, both of them had passed the competitive examinations to be in a key middle school of their hometown. When a story came to JJ from relatives in China, telling her how well her cousin was doing, she felt the discomfort of the interruption that discontinued her stories, stories her cousin continued to live. JJ believed she could do better than her cousin because she used to be ranked ahead of her cousin in examinations when they both were in the same school in China. She wanted to continue the stories she lived out in China, even in her imagined world. She saw her cousin's image in the story passed to her and, at the same time, she saw herself in a story she imagined.

Identities are expressed in told stories. At a conference on Narrative Matters, Crites (2002), a philosopher and theologian, demonstrated the relation between identity and narrative. Crites' friend, Homer, was in love with a hometown girl. He was experiencing love. However, he needed someone to tell about his experiences. Homer told Crites his love experiences so that he could figure out and make sure what was happening between him and his girl friend. To Crites, Homer's telling of his experience is making a story out of it. In the frame of narrative thinking, "the telling was his (Homer's) means of making the truth as clear as he could to himself" and, at this point, "[t]he story not only reshaped the experience but completed it" (p.1). From Homer's telling of his stories about his experiencing of love, I see that story and experience are inseparable and closely related. Thus, to understand human experience, stories lived and told need to be studied. To Connelly and Clandinin (1988), "[a] narrative is a kind of life

story” (p. 24). Experience is storied and narratively composed. Narrative inquirers study experience narratively. “Narrative is the study of how humans make meaning of experience by endlessly telling and retelling stories about themselves that both refigure the past and create purpose in the future” (p.24). When Homer was telling Crites his experience, he was telling and retelling his stories about being a boyfriend. He was “refiguring” what happened in the past and figuring out how or what he should do in future. Crites’ example of Homer fits into Connelly and Clandinin’s views on the narrative study of experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). As humans, we experience all the time, second by second, throughout our lives. When we tell about our experiences, we tell stories. There are many reasons for us to tell stories. To figure out who we are is one reason. Homer told Crites his story to make sure who he was in an experience of love. When JJ told me her story of herself as a good student in China, she was trying to think of who she was now in Canada. “Who am I?” is an identity query (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). According to Connelly and Clandinin (1999), trying to figure out “who I am” is a process of developing a story to live by. Developing, composing and sustaining a story to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) is a storied understanding of identity and an answer to the question “Who am I?” By telling and retelling his story, Homer could figure out who he was in the romance. While telling and retelling her stories both in China and in Canada, JJ was also looking for and constructing stories to live by so that she could live out a new life, as a Chinese girl in Canadian schools.

Storied lives are the focus of Connelly and Clandinin’s narrative inquiry into

people's experiences and the contexts in which they live and work. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state:

Education and educational studies are a form of experience. For us, narrative is the best way of representing and understanding experience. Experience is what we study, and we study it narratively because narrative thinking is a key form of experience and a key way of writing and thinking about it. (p. 18)

As stated earlier, the premise of thinking narratively is seeing the world as a storied one. Connelly and Clandinin (1994) write:

In our work we read stories of people's lives, lives of disruption and lives of humble straightforwardness. We study people's lives, teachers', students', and children's lives. In our courses we tell stories of our lives both in and out of the classroom, in and out of school. We tell stories of the professional and stories of the personal. (p. 146)

In what follows, I explore how scholars from other disciplines think of selves or identities and stories or narratives and the relationship between the two.

According to Kerby (1991), a psychologist, self-identity is expressed in narratives: "When we ask of someone who they are, this question generally comes down to a recounting of their passage through time, their autobiography or self-narrative" (p. 15). It seems natural for me to write about the stories I lived to figure out who I am. I knew that my father was happy when I entered a graduate program in North America. But when I started to think of writing about it, the stories came into my mind. I started from writing stories about my father's happiness. I thought further about the reasons he

was happy by recollecting (Crites, 1971) the stories he lived and told me. Later I figured out who I was through recollecting and telling my lived stories. Kerby (1991) links narrative and self-identity. For Kerby, our sense of identity presents itself to us from recollecting our lived stories. Identity is a result of our active interaction between present stories with our past experiences. "It is the narrative result that we take to be the structure and import of our past lives" (p. 31). Thus, time lets us have past, present and future. Memory enables us to remember our lived pasts. Telling stories with imagination weaves our temporal existence into a well-structured fabric of our identities.

Silko (1996), an Aboriginal scholar, writes:

The oral narrative, or story became the medium through which the complex of Pueblo knowledge and belief was maintained. Whatever the event or the subject, the ancient people perceived the world and themselves within that world as part of an ancient, continuous story composed of innumerable bundles of other stories.

(pp. 30-31)

To Silko, the Pueblo view of the world is in stories: "Standing deep within the natural world, the ancient Pueblo understood the thing as it was – Ancient Pueblos took the modest view that the thing itself would not be improved" (p. 28). To Silko it is "[t]hrough the stories we hear who we are" (p. 30). For Silko and Kerby (1991), self-identity is expressed in storied narratives. It is interesting to note that they both write about stories from different perspectives, but draw the same conclusion.

For Coles (1989), a psychiatrist, listening to stories is the best way a doctor can make meaning of a patient's life. Stories are where the mind is: "Do you see her mind?"

(Coles, 1989, p. 7), Dr. Ludwig, one of Coles' supervisors, asked Coles after a patient told him her stories. Resonating with Fritz's (1990) statement: "Everybody is a story" (p. 29), Coles (1989) recognized the significance of storied worlds, in which we make meaning of the people with whom we interact. He states that "[t]heir story, yours, mine—it's what we all carry with us on this trip we take, and we owe it to each other to respect our stories and learn from them" (p. 30). In my family there were storied worlds of my father's, of JJ's and of mine. Each of us both carries stories and lives stories. The more we are able to respect each other's stories, the more we will be able to understand each other and learn from one another. I listened to and respected my father's stories, and I understood my father. I learned how to live my life by living out stories I learned from him. I did not listen to my daughter's stories so respectfully. As a result, I did not learn from my daughter's stories in order to understand the meaning of her stories, to "see her mind."

Crites also wrote a number of articles on narrative and storying (Bruner, 2002, 1994, 1990; Carr, 1986; Charon & Montello, 2002; Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 1994; Coles, 1989; Greene, 1994; Kerby, 1991; King, 2003; Mitchell, 1981; Neumann, 1997). He considers narrative to be a form of experience, the foundation for a history and a culture. Crites (1971) illustrates two types of stories "the sacred story" (p. 295) and "the mundane stories" (p. 296). A sacred story is "the fundamental narrative" (p. 295) that has an established position in the society and is considered to be able to "orient the life of people through time" (p. 295). A sacred story "cannot be fully and directly told" and it expresses "the authority of scripture for the

people who understand their own stories in relation to them” (p. 295). Mundane stories refer to the stories that are “directly seen or heard” (p. 295).

Several years later, in another article, Crites (1979) wrote of another pair of stories, real stories and cover stories. People tell real stories, but also cover stories when they cannot face the real story. My high school Chinese language arts teacher read me through my written composition like an old man. Thinking now of cover stories and real stories, I wonder what kind of a story I wrote. I probably did not write a cover story. If I had, the teacher would not have been so surprised. I probably wrote a real story because I knew about such an old man as Confucius from my father and read about him in the influence from my family. If I wrote something about Confucius or referenced him in the composition, I probably wrote a story related to an untold sacred story that might orient my life. Thinking in the frame of Crites’ two kinds of stories, we live in a storied world. We write, tell or listen to mundane, real and cover stories. To Crites, stories accompany people throughout their lives. Stories are lives. The world, then, is inter-woven with different kinds of stories.

Self-identity, meaning, value, and culture are expressed in our stories. Everything can be a story (Silko, 1996). “Everybody is a story” (Fritz, 1990, p. 29). To Crites, it seems that stories are everywhere around us and in us. Carr (1986) helps me think about the nature of coherence of our life narratives, which resonates with one of Dewey’s principles of experience—continuity. Narratives of our lives are coherent, according to Carr. Life experience, understood narratively, has three dimensions: value, significance and purpose. Carr (1986) links value to the present, significance to the past and purpose

to the future. The three dimensions of life experience form the nature of narrative coherence, the foundation of the quality of narrative. Therefore, “we can get to know another person by learning his life-story—what he’s done and where he’s been” (Carr, 1986, p. 74). Carr (1986) believes our lives have a quality of narrative coherence:

Our lives admit of sometimes more, sometimes less coherence; they hang together reasonably well, but they occasionally tend to fall apart. Coherence seems to be a need imposed on us whether we seek it or not. Things need to make sense. We feel the lack of sense when it goes missing. The unity of self, not as an underlying identity but as a life that hangs together, is not a pregiven condition but as an achievement. (p. 97)

Narrative coherence in the unity of self is not a given but needs to be worked on. It is “an achievement” of narrative pieces together. Narrative inquirer’s work is to make sense of these pieces of our lives.

Continuity and interaction of experience, storied worlds and the nature of narrative coherence make the way for Connelly and Clandinin (1994) to think about experiences narratively and to make meaning out of stories.

Thinking of life as a story is a powerful way to imagine who we are, where we have been, and where we are going. In our view, people live lives and tell stories of those lives, and people are characters in their own and others’ lived stories.

This is a consequence of viewing life as a story. We live stories. When we talk to others about ourselves we tell life stories. (pp. 149-150)

Connelly and Clandinin put the ideas about and beliefs in stories together using the verbs:

living, telling, retelling and reliving. In this way, they see the storied world as a living, changing and interacting place in which meanings are constructed and new meanings are reconstructed in the process of living, telling, retelling and reliving stories.

We live our storied lives, and tell our stories. We tell our stories again at different times, to different people and on different occasions. As we attend to the stories we tell, and begin to inquire into them, we are retelling our stories. In this process of retelling, an "act of repeatedly telling" (Pennebaker, 1997, p. 97), we may have new understandings of the story we lived. Retelling is a process of learning and changing. Changing is living in a new way. It is a kind of reliving stories.

My daughter, JJ, was resistant to Canadian stories. In order to cheer her up in the cold Canadian winter, I, for the first time in my life, put up a Christmas tree in our small living room. However, I realized this did not make JJ happy. She did not even want to look at the tree or come near to it. This is a story JJ and I lived for our first Canadian Christmas. Almost one year later before she went to go "Trick or Treat" with her friends, JJ told me not to forget to distribute candies to the children at our door. She took out all the candies we had on the table and poured them into a salad bowl. I had bought a big pumpkin, while remembering her reaction to last year's Christmas tree, I said to her that I bought this pumpkin because she loved fine art. "Carving a pumpkin is creative art work." I said to her, trying not to connect the pumpkin with the Canadian Halloween. Out of my expectation, JJ was willing to be part of a Canadian Halloween. She took the flashing smiley pumpkin out and placed it by the door.

I told the Christmas tree story at Research Issues in the Centre for Research for

Teacher Education and Development to show JJ's struggle in Canada, to show the discontinuity of her lived stories. With this year's Halloween story, last year's Christmas tree story has more meaning to me. When I retell the Christmas tree story alongside the Halloween story, I see the power of stories in our lives. JJ was reluctant to go "Trick or Treat" when her friends invited her to go with them in their neighborhood. But when she came back, she looked like she enjoyed it very much, as I remember now. Last year's fun experience has become an enjoyable Canadian story she lived. Stories lived and told may change our lives. I see JJ, whose lived stories in China live so strongly in her mind, beginning to relive her storied life in Canada.

Thinking of my storied life alongside JJ's, "thinking narratively" became the way I worked on my research puzzles. Thinking narratively helped me understand JJ's experiences of her Canadian schools. I was able to see JJ as a whole person with a rich storied life. Respecting her stories is respecting her as a person. I am a storied person, a mother, who made many decisions that shifted the plotlines in JJ's stories. In a family, we live stories. In a family, I understand JJ by understanding her stories, by understanding how her lived stories shaped who she was, and are shaping who she is becoming on new landscapes in Canada. I see myself as a narrative inquirer trying to understand immigrant children by understanding them as storied persons.

The research puzzles I explored in this inquiry were explored narratively: What are immigrant children's experiences of Canadian schools? What are the intergenerational stories of school in immigrant children's families? What are the intergenerational stories in immigrant children's experiences? How did/were lived stories

shape/shaping who they were/are on shifting landscapes?

Family Stories Shape Who We Are

When I think about who I am and how I ended up here in Canada, it is impossible for me not to think of stories, family stories and the stories I lived. I know many of my former colleagues have been doing very well in China, and there is no doubt that I could do just as well. I have not regretted the decision I made years ago to go to North America. My father's relieved face when I showed him the visa always affirms that I did what I should do. I came here not merely for a better life, but for picking up and continuing a family story. In reflection, I know how much my family stories shape me. I remember one day after school I came across my high school Chinese language arts teacher. He stopped and said to me that he was confused why, as a seventeen-year-old girl, I wrote compositions like an old man. At that time while I was not thinking narratively, I knew the stories my family and I lived had a strong impact on me and on how I thought about myself and the world outside my family. Family stories made me feel that my family was somewhat different and I felt that our stories were a kind of a cacophony alongside the mainstream stories. I tended to think beyond my immediate life because I was not so comfortable in it. I was interested in moral and philosophical issues. If a name such as Confucius appeared even once in the composition, the Chinese teacher surely would wonder what was in the mind of a seventeen-year-old girl. But in my family these old men were often in the conversation and I knew my father admired them. The conversation was part of my family story, and I admired these old men as well.

Family influence is strong. Lieblich (1998) did research on the narratives of Jewish immigrants to Israel. To demonstrate the four modes of analysis of the transcripts of interviews: holistic-content, holistic-form, categorical-content and categorical-form, Lieblich (1998) shared one interview transcription. In the first three stages of the interview from birth to eighteen, an interviewee was asked twice about who were the significant people in the periods, and the answers were always family members such as grandparents and parents. From Neumann's (1997) "Ways without words: Learning from silence and story in post-holocaust lives", I also sense the power of family. Neumann wrote that her mother's story learned in childhood, stayed in her throughout her adolescence. She came to know more about these stories when she grew up. In the same chapter, Neumann mentioned that in 1992 she wrote her "autobiographical account of what and how I learned, about myself and about learning itself, from listening to my father's accounts of his life throughout the course of mine" (Neumann, 1997, p. 97). Lieblich's and Neumann's research helped me reflect on my first experiences living in western Canada. For the first few months, I lived with a Burmese family. Their 16-year-old niece came from Singapore to live with them to attend a college in the city. She could speak Mandarin, so I invited her to go to a Chinese movie with my daughter and I. While we were heading back, we passed by a Christian church. As I knew she spent most of her 16 years in Singapore, not in Burma, I asked her if she had ever been to church. She said without a second thought: "I think I will stick to my parents' religion." I was very impressed by her casual but firm response. Singapore is one of the busiest international harbors in the world. I imagine young children are exposed to various

temptations. The girl's answer made me realize family stories can be such a strong influence that they reinforce the young generation to hold on to family tradition.

Family stories are being told by those outside the family. Those stories that others tell of the family shape and may become part of the stories of one's family. For those who knew about me and my family, it was not a surprise when they knew that I was studying for TOEFL. They thought it was the right story for me. In this sense, people are likely to be judged by the stories told of a family. Put in another way, if I did not pursue an academic story for my life, I would be thought as living outside the plotline of those stories told of my family.

Neumann and her sister, as new immigrants to the US, knew their family stories were different. They wanted to fit into the life of the adopted country. They struggled "for semblances of meaning amidst American ways... that seemed oceans apart from the simpler, clearer, everyday knowing of our parents' lives" (Neumann, 1997, p.102). Neumann and her sister thought their family stories that they carried to school were so different from what they imagined American stories were and they tried hard to look like the American children's stories. Neumann and her sister judged themselves by comparing their family stories with what they saw as American children's stories. Neumann's account of family stories and my stories indicate that family stories can affect children and adults in various aspects of their lives.

Several forms of telling family stories were discussed by Neumann (1997). Neumann's mother's stories of her experiences of the Holocaust were first told in multiple fragments of stories as Neumann grew up listening to her mother. Neumann

remembered bits and pieces of the stories. The second form in which she heard her mother's stories was in an interview, tape-recorded at the request of Neumann and her husband. The third form in which she heard her mother's story was her mother's written text as a testimony. In all three forms, I understand from Neumann that family stories are told repeatedly in the family in different times, to different audiences, and for different purposes. I got to know some pieces of the story of why my brother did not go to junior high school almost at the end of the Cultural Revolution when I was considered mature enough to handle hard family stories. I knew that this story had been told many times before I first got to know it. When I passed the national entrance examinations to go to college, this story was told again. However, this time I knew more about the story and what the story meant to our family. I got to know what the elementary school principal said to my father: "All your family had education. Now it's the turn for others." Stories like this one in my family and Neumann's mother's story will surely continue to be told in the family in different forms, to different listeners, and for different purposes.

Neumann (1997) wrote about "wordless stories" (p.107). "People live their stories as much as they tell them in words. They live them in what they do not say" (p. 107). People certainly tell stories. However, people do not always tell the stories they lived. There are silent, wordless or untold stories. For instance, we live our lives in a family. We know the stories going on in the family even though there is no telling of the stories. We, as family members, feel the stories in the actions, emotions, tensions and come to know the family stories being lived. I saw this happening in the Burmese family with whom I first lived in West Canada. Because they were from Burma, I assumed they

were Buddhists. As I was there longer, I got to know how they practiced Burmese Buddhism. For example, in their family room, a Buddha statue was worshiped. Every morning the lady would clean the candle on each side of the statue. The lady meditated every day. She meditated more if she considered someone in the family needed special prayers. Later in a conversation, the lady said they did not celebrate Christmas. There were no Christmas trees, present exchanges, or light decorations. Christmas Day was just another day. Neumann's "wordless stories" remind me of the silent stories in this Burmese family. Their children, living in the family with their parents, sensed the family story of Buddhism and they lived this family story without the need to be told what Buddhism was about. As days went on, this family's "wordless story" about Buddhism, a different religion than Christianity, became the story they could tell and write about. Perhaps their niece learned her family's Buddhism the same way. When asked about religious beliefs, she told a family story in response. Family stories are told and retold in the family. Family stories are lived every moment in the family. Some are told and some are lived "wordlessly".

We live stories, tell stories and share stories in the family. There are also stories told about our family. We have family stories we want to live out and live by. Family stories shape who we were, who we are, and what we will be. Family stories helped me inquire into my research puzzles: What are the intergenerational stories of school in immigrant children's families? How do these intergenerational family stories shape children's stories of school?

Shifting School Stories Shape Parents' and Children's School Stories

When I was a student in China, communication between the school and my family followed a plotline of the school informing my mother what her daughter did and what she should do. The same plotline shaped the end of term report card, which listed my grades of all subjects. At the bottom of the card, it said what kind of student I was. From the teacher's comments, my mother knew if I worked hard, was disciplined, showed respect to teachers, showed love for the motherland, did what I was told, got along with my classmates. While I don't remember if the school expected a feedback note from my mother, I do not think there was one. When I had my daughter in the school in China, some of the school stories stayed pretty much the same. However, there were new twists in the stories on the school landscape. For instance, as a parent my husband was asked to sign JJ's test paper to ensure she showed the test paper to him. The plotline of the story of one-way communication now had a feedback loop to the extent that there was parental confirmation of having seen the report cards and test papers.

Since my daughter came to Canada, I have had many experiences signing papers to tell the school that, as a mother, I knew what I was supposed to know. However now, I also have an opportunity to tell the school what I would like my child to do. This was a new story for me. I was not used to it. Whenever JJ brought a form from the school, I would read carefully and made a decision of what to do. The old story that asked me to sign on a paper indicating that I had read the test paper and knew my child's score was an easier story for me. It was a tougher task for me if the paper from JJ's Canadian schools asked me to make choices about what I wanted JJ to experience at school. JJ's school

organized field trips each year and I was asked each time if I wanted JJ to participate or not. A Chinese mother suggested that I send JJ to another elementary school, one that organized fewer field trips. She said it was hard for her, considering their financial condition, to tell the school that her daughter would not participate in certain field trips. I shared similar feelings with this Chinese mother, but it was about more than just the cost. As I wrote earlier, one day JJ brought home a form asking whether I wanted her to go to a class on sex education. I considered the choice and, based on my experience, responded no. When JJ came back and told me only a few more than ten children did not go to sex education, and that she was one of two in her class that did not go, I did not feel good. I wondered if my decision had made JJ feel different. Even though I thought it was better for JJ not to go to sex education at grade seven, I was not sure that I had made the best decision, that is, having JJ feel a little different than most of her peers. I was not sure what I would do in the future facing similar decisions to make for JJ based on my experience and my experience being with JJ. As I reflected on this experience of living a story in which schools send communications home to parents and where parents have input into school programming I thought about children having two parts to their lives, one at home and one in the school:

Children live their lives in two worlds: that of the home and community and that of the school. When these two worlds fail to know, respect, and celebrate each other, children are placed in a difficult position. (McCaleb, 1994, p. vii)

Acknowledging at least two worlds, that is, home and school, suggests the importance of two-way communication between home and school. On the one hand, I appreciate the

opportunities to make decisions for some of my daughter's school activities. On the other hand, there are difficulties for parents whose school experiences are from different places than their children's school experiences. The Chinese mother and I may feel we are put in a difficult position speaking for what our children's school experiences should be. As it turned out, JJ felt she did not belong to the dominant story of school life by doing what her parents chose for her. This experience makes me wonder how to let immigrant children and their families feel that, while their stories are different, they are also valued in school.

Attending to Parents' Stories of School

McCaleb (1994) believes that parental involvement is crucial to student success. Her research questions, "How do parents view their own children's educational experiences in the contexts of family, community and school and [how] can educational bridges be built between the home and the school that validate and celebrate the home culture and community? (p.72)" are different but connected to mine. In my conceptualization, people live storied lives. Immigrant parents and children have lived stories before they came to Canada. When they arrive in Canada, immigrant children live storied lives on two landscapes, one at home and one in the school. In order to engage parents in their children's school experiences, I imagined that I would hear and understand children's stories as well as family stories about school and education. Hearing both children's stories and parents' stories may offer insight into how parents' stories shape the ways they understand their children's educational experiences. In my

research I explore how intergenerational stories shaped the stories children lived and told in their present day school experiences.

As I reflect on my lived stories, I see these interconnections. My father taught in a middle school in China in the late 70s and early 80s. It was a time when learning was seen as useful and important. High school graduates could take national college entrance examinations to be college students if their total scores on the examinations were higher than, or equal to, the minimum admission score. Students had a strong motivation to learn. The story told of my father was he had a good knowledge of classical Chinese. He was asked to give lectures on classical model prose or poems. Students, teachers and I wanted to know how to learn classical Chinese well. My father's answer was always simple. To him, what was needed was to read and recite the classical texts. Gradually, in this way, students would get used to the flow of the language. When I was in grade 12, my father also taught grade seven English. I remember he told me the same thing about learning English. His suggestion was that I immerse myself in English. I should read and listen to English as much as I could. My father believed, then and now, that language comes naturally if the learner practices with the language frequently. He did not think students should rely on grammar and sentence structures to learn a language. Now, when I recall my father's stories of language learning, I see that his idea of learning languages reflected his own experiences of learning at home with his governess.

My father did not go to school until he was about twelve years old. Before that, he and his sister learned classical Chinese texts, math and other topics from a governess. My father told me many stories about his governess. In my father's remembered stories,

she was a strict and kind lady. Even though she had a ruler, she seldom used it to punish him and his sister. He recalled learning classical Chinese texts by reading and reading aloud the texts in order to recite them even if he did not understand the meaning of the texts. He was a boy, while the texts he was learning were written by ancient Chinese thinkers, philosophers and Chinese language masters. As my father told me, the governess did not expect her young students to understand the meaning at the time they were learning. I do not know whether my father enjoyed this learning experience. However, I do know he believed it to be the right way to learn a language. His belief was affirmed when he got the highest mark for his written composition in classical Chinese for university admission. Now, as I metaphorically lay the story of my father's advice about learning languages alongside the stories of learning classical Chinese with his governess and of the story of writing in classical Chinese, I see that my father's view of learning and of certain school activities can be connected to his home school stories.

To me my father's stories of learning at home with his governess shape how he thought I could best learn English. Drawing on McCaleb's (1994) question—"How do parents view their own children's educational experiences in the contexts of family, community and school" (p. 72), I see that he drew on his experiences to help me. While I imagine learning in a "home school" is quite a different story from learning in the school with many other children, I imagine my father would tell me how to live my school experiences based on his home school stories.

Parents' stories of school shape children's stories. To McCaleb (1994), "[t]he passing down of heritage and culture was also part of the family learning experience" and

“[i]mportant values were transmitted through these teachings, and participants [McCaleb’s research participants] came to know both directly and indirectly what was expected of them as human beings” (p. 74). When I think of my father’s language learning experience, I see it to be part of my “family learning experience”.

I learned little classical Chinese when I was in the school. I picked up some after I graduated from high school and became a college student. For two summers in a row when I was in the university, my father selected his favorite classical Chinese masterpieces including “Great Learning” and “the Analects”, and taught me in ways similar to the ways he learned from his governess. From this learning experience I “came to know both directly and indirectly what was expected of” me from my father. This learning experience with my father is always part of who I am.

School landscapes shift from time to time and from place to place. Landscapes change as school stories change. When I was at school during the Cultural Revolution, being politically correct was most important. I remember my Chinese language teacher, who was also the teacher-in-chief (homeroom teacher), told my mother that I was a good student because in half of the academic year I wrote seven rhymes showing my support to the campaign—Criticizing Confucius. Years later, in China, the landscape changed as the stories changed. JJ was a good student in China because she achieved high marks. When JJ arrived at a Canadian school, the landscape changed and the school stories were different from the school stories in China. In China she knew how to live a story of a good student. In Canada she was dispositioned, uncertain, confused. For example, in China she knew those who got good marks were popular. In her Canadian school, she

was surprised to find girls did not need to have good marks to be popular. There were many ways to be good students. She began to wonder about the target of attention. She was disappointed that one of her Canadian friends did not seem to pay much attention to schoolwork. In China all her friends studied hard for good marks. The story was that good marks lead to recognition by the school, the teachers and their classmates. When choosing junior high options, JJ could not understand why her friend ranked home economics as her number one choice. For JJ, cooking could be fun, but was not “academic.” JJ was living on a landscape with new school stories and she was uncertain about who she was on that new landscape.

As JJ’s mother who is responsible for her coming to Canada, I wanted her to enjoy and go along with the new school stories. I saw diversity as beauty and I wanted JJ to see the beauty of diversity, to respect others’ choices and to know how to make her own choices. While I could have worried about JJ because of her sometime strong opinions of disliking the new school, I realized I needed to understand her experiences narratively. In this way, I could understand her much better. She is comfortable in her familiar stories, “loyal” to her past. For five and half years, she lived school stories in China, where getting high marks meant she was a good student. She is a wonderful child in that way. Why should I worry because she is now living on a new storied school landscape?

Thinking Narratively about Children’s Experiences in School

McCaleb’s (1994) other question: “How can educational bridges be built between

the home and the school that validate and celebrate the home culture and community” (p. 72)? directs me toward thinking narratively and valuing stories. I value JJ’s stories. I listen to her and try to think about how her lived stories in school have shaped who she is. I know my view of her also bears the marks of my lived stories. I believe these stories matter. Both the intergenerational stories and the school stories have shaped JJ. If I want to help JJ enjoy her life in a Canadian school, I need to attend to these stories she lived, is living, told and is telling. I was surprised to see JJ enjoy singing “O Canada” at the beginning of her school award night because, just one month earlier she said to her grandmother that she wanted to go to China with her. She learned “O Canada” a year ago in her first Canadian school. Singing “O Canada” has become a story in her Canadian school life. Perhaps JJ is feeling less dispositioned in the Canadian school.

In order to understand my daughter’s life at home and school as she moved from a Chinese school landscape to a Canadian school landscape I need to look for lived and told stories. Where we go, we carry our lived stories with us and we live these stories out on new landscapes. These landscapes shape us, and our stories shift and are changed, restoried in the living and telling. I came to know JJ by understanding her stories. As I try to attend to her stories, I realize that her stories have been shaped by my stories and my father’s stories, by her father’s stories and his family stories. Furthermore, as her researcher-mother, I realize I should attend to her stories in relational ways but I will say more about that in the methodology section.

We live storied lives. We live in others’ stories. Others live in our stories. In a family, we are characters in the stories of parents’, grandparents’ and children’s. Stories

in the family also shape who we are. To understand intergenerational stories of school, I listen to parents' school stories. I imagine their school stories have an important impact on how immigrant children live their lives in Canadian schools.

Therefore, the research puzzles I explored in this research are: What are immigrant children's experiences of Canadian schools? What are the intergenerational stories of school in immigrant children's families? What are the intergenerational stories in immigrant children's experiences? How did/were lived stories shape/shaping who they were/are on shifting landscapes? As I understood my research, I frequently revisited Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) straightforward statement:

Education and educational studies are a form of experience. For us, narrative is the best way of representing and understanding experience. Experience is what we study, and we study it narratively because narrative thinking is a key form of experience and a key way of writing and thinking about it. (p. 18)

The statement helped me focus on inquiring into immigrant children's and parents' intergenerational stories of school.

Chapter 2 details the methodology of narrative inquiry. It describes the process of how this research was conducted, from entering the field, searching for participants to composing field texts and research texts. It ends with "Ethical Considerations."

Chapter Two

METHODOLOGY

This research⁵ is a narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is a research methodology that studies human experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, 1994; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) restate the definition of narrative inquiry Connelly and Clandinin (2006) work out:

Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomenon under study. (p.357)

Dewey (1938) writes, “I take it that the fundamental unity of the newer philosophy is found in the idea that there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education” (p. 20). To him, education and experience are inseparable. As humans, we live to experience. We experience all the time. When “persons note something of their experience, either to themselves or to others, they do so not by the mere recording of experience over time, but in storied form” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p. 415). When lived experiences are made known to the self or others, experiences become story. Telling stories of experiences, therefore, is the process of making meaning for the people who lived these experiences. “You can’t understand the

⁵ This doctoral research is framed within Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly’s research project sponsored by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), entitled “Intersecting narratives: Cultural harmonies and tensions in inner city Canadian schools.”

world without telling a story” (Gerald Vizenor as cited by King, 2003, p. 23). Clandinin and Connelly (1994) write, “Experience...is the stories people live. People live stories, and in the telling of them reaffirm them, modify them and create new ones” (p. 415).

Narrative inquiry draws attention to story as both the phenomenon under study and narrative as the methodology for the inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). Thus “narrative is both phenomenon and method” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, 1994; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). While conducting narrative inquiry, narrative inquirers record phenomena, the story, and use narrative, the method, to study and understand the phenomena. Narrative inquirers “describe ... lives, collect and tell stories of them and write narratives of experience” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p. 416). In order to engage in narrative inquiry, one needs to think narratively, that is, to think of lived and told experiences narratively. Based on the two principles of experience: continuity and interaction (Dewey, 1938), Clandinin and Connelly developed a frame for narrative thinking—the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space: “our terms are personal and social (interaction); past, present, and future (continuity); combined with the notion of place (situation)” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000. p. 50). The three-dimensional inquiry space reminds narrative inquirers that the moments they, and the participants, share in the research process are contextualized in time, place and are both personal and social. As I engaged in this narrative inquiry, I reminded myself frequently of the three-dimensional inquiry space and to compose field and research texts in the three-dimensional space. The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space is the frame that allowed me to think of, and understand, participants’ lived and told stories of their lives: looking backward and

forward to inquire into the dimension of “temporality — past, present and future” (p.50) and inward and outward to inquiry into the dimension of “personal and social issues” (p. 50).

Relationship is pivotal in narrative inquiry: “It is people in relation studying with people in relation” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000. p. 189). Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) revisit the path that leads to narrative inquiry and identify four turns. One of the four turns identified is the recognition of the relationship of the researcher and the researched. They write: “[N]arrative inquirers recognize that the researcher and the researched in a particular study are in relationship with each other and that both parties will learn and change in the encounter” (p. 9). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) write: “Narrative inquiry is...a process of collaboration involving mutual storytelling and restorying as the research proceeds” (p. 4). Thus it is “a relational form of inquiry” (Huber & Clandinin, 2002, p. 788). It is an unfolding and evolving process as narrative inquirers live alongside participants and feel their lives by listening to their life stories and sharing their own with them. As a narrative inquirer, I respected the stories my participants lived and shared with me, and attended to the relational stories constructed between me and my participants. I return to this in the section “Composing research texts,” which details the relational experiences I lived with my participants in this research.

As narrative inquiry does not proceed to answer “carefully crafted questions” (Huber & Clandinin, 2002, p. 787), this dissertation is a result of a relational inquiry over time when I lived alongside three immigrant junior high students and their families over 18 months. The following sections, Narrative beginnings, Living in the field, Field texts

and Composing field texts, Composing research texts and Attending to ethical dimension in narrative inquiry, portray how this narrative inquiry unfolded and evolved as the research proceeded.

Narrative Beginnings

One of the starting points for narrative inquiry is the researcher's own narrative of experience, the researcher's autobiography. This task of composing our own narratives of experience is central to narrative inquiry... As we compose our narrative beginnings, we also work within the three-dimensional space, telling stories of our past that frame our present standpoints, moving back and forth from the personal to the social and situating it all in place. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 70)

As I decided to conduct my doctoral research with narrative inquiry, I started to think of my position and to name who I was, why I was here and why I did what I was doing. In Chapter One, I reflected "on the aspects of [myself] that most importantly influence [my] perceptions of the world and in particular the issues being studied" (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001, p.154). This autobiographical writing was done in the three-dimensional space. I attended to the personal, the social, temporality and place. The writing was a process of thinking narratively of my lived stories over the years that eventually brought me here and shaped the stories I am now telling in this research. As I was figuring out my standpoints through writing and thinking of how I was shaped by the stories I lived and

told as well as the stories I was told, I, at the same time, wondered about what stories might have shaped immigrant students and their stories to live by (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999). Thus, the autobiographical writing is my starting point to begin this relational narrative inquiry. To write about the inquiry process, from 2003 to 2007, I start with “Living in the field.”

Living in the Field

I first entered the field, River’s Edge⁶, a public junior high school, on October 27, 2003. The negotiated entry was an ongoing and unfolding process over time. Marilyn (a doctoral student and co-researcher), Jean (Marilyn’s and my supervisor) and I first negotiated with the principal that we were welcome to conduct our research in River’s Edge in order to understand students’ intergenerational stories of school. The principal helped us find a fine art classroom where we might meet possible participants. We thought it was a good idea because we imagined in such a classroom there were more interactions among students and we might have opportunities to move around to be close to the students while they were preparing or practicing their assignments. We approached the teacher, who allowed Marilyn and I to sit in his class two afternoons per week. As a researcher who had only post secondary educational experiences in Canada, my knowledge of Canadian public schools mostly came from my involvement with my daughter’s schools, one elementary school and one junior high school. Although these

⁶ The name of the school and the names of participants are pseudonyms.

experiences helped me identify River's Edge's physical appearance with JJ's school, the hallways, the lockers, the gym, and so on, being in a Canadian junior high school as a researcher, meeting the principal to talk about my research and negotiating with teachers to be a classroom observer, was overwhelming. In the field, I experienced and felt what the word "unfolding" meant, that is, I learned to work with what happened.

"Narrative inquiry in the field is a form of living, a way of life" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 78). Narrative inquirers need to be familiar with the landscapes where the inquiry is based. Regular visits to River's Edge were important to me. Besides sitting in the classroom, I negotiated to visit and observe in a fashion class and later in an ESL class. Along with Marilyn and Jean in early February 2004, I also attended a staff meeting and was introduced to the staff. I attended the school's open house, health education presentations, drama performance and graduation ceremonies in order to "become part of the landscape" (p. 77). Being in the school, sitting in the year seven and nine fine art classroom and listening to the stories of school as told by the principal and the teachers that were involved, were important ways to get to know the field in which my participants had been living.

Narrative inquirers see lives as storied and thus "a school at any point in time is viewed as a story" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). Students, including those who became participants in this study, were characters in the stories of the school. In the field, I was reminded constantly of multiple attention (Bateson, 1994), that is, that I needed to attend to not only the stories the participants told, the stories that were happening around them but also the stories they lived by. I began to understand that "life is not made up of

separate pieces” (Bateson, 1994, p. 108). Attending to the stories that happened on the school landscape helped me be familiar with the context of my participants’ lived stories.

For this narrative inquiry, I wanted to include three students and their families. From January to June 2004, after negotiation with the fine art teacher, I was allowed to sit in year nine and seven classes two afternoons a week. At the beginning of each new course, I introduced myself to the students as a graduate student and a researcher. They knew who I was and I got to know them and the landscape on and in which they lived their school stories. Several months after living alongside the year nine and seven students in the fine arts classroom, with the help of the teacher, I approached four year seven students and asked them if they would be interested in telling me their experiences of school. Three agreed to participate. A letter to parents from the principal, along with consent forms for child participants, consent forms for parent consent for child participants and consent forms for parent participants, were sent to the three students’ homes. Because the inquiry needed both the children’s and parents’ participation, the process of finding participation from both the child and his/her parents was complicated and took a longer time than expected. Although three students agreed to participate, only Yang, a student from a year seven class, brought back the signed consent forms for his and his parents’ participation. By the end of June 2004, I had only Yang and his parents as my participants. I needed to find two more participants. There was also another important unfolding story for me to live in the field, that is, in the fall 2004, the principal retired. I began negotiation with the new principal. He suggested finding participants through the ESL class. The ESL teacher allowed me to sit in the school’s ESL classes,

where I met my second participant, Atoosa. A relationship was established between Atoosa and me almost at the first meeting. I was an ESL teacher in China. Atoosa was in the ESL class. I related to Atoosa, an ESL student, and she related to me, an ESL teacher. Atoosa was interested in sharing her new life in River's Edge with me. Three consent forms: for child participation, parent consent for child participants and for parent participation were sent home with Atoosa. I also requested that a letter from the school be sent to Atoosa's parents inviting their child's and their participation in my research. Two weeks later, Atoosa brought me the signed forms and became my second participant.

My third child participant was Di. I first met her and her friends one day after school in February 2004. I recognized one of the girls from the year nine fine art class and went over to them. The girl I met in the year nine class introduced me to Di and another girl. (I described the meeting in my field notes and the field notes were used to describe the initial meeting with Di in Chapter Five.) Our brief talk impressed me as I remembered Di's name and her puzzled face. She reminded me of my daughter, JJ. Both of them entered their first Canadian school in the same year. Since that brief encounter, I continued to wonder about her stories of River's Edge. In September, 2004, when I asked an ESL teacher to help me find former ESL students, Di was one on her list. I immediately asked the ESL teacher to arrange a meeting with Di. A few days later, we met officially in the general office of the school. When she came into the office, Di realised it was me who wanted to see her. She smiled at me and said to her ESL teacher, "I know her!" Nine days later, Di brought back the signed consent forms for her and her parents' participation.

The three children joined me in the inquiry journey in different ways. To Yang, I was a regular visitor from the university. To Atoosa, I was like an ESL teacher, who might understand ESL students. To Di, I was a friend refound. The stories of finding my participants are part of the unfolding stories I lived alongside my participants. It seemed to take a long time to find participants, whose parents also were willing to participate in the inquiry. However, since this research explores immigrant children's intergenerational stories at home and in the school, immigrant children's parents' participation was of great importance in the inquiry. As the parents of the child participants signed for the permission of their child's participation, they also agreed to tell their stories of their lives in Canada and in their home countries. Their stories provided a temporal space to understand children's lives of tension, continuity and discontinuity (Bateson, 1994, 1990) as they lived their storied lives crossing home and school because "[w]e saw our research problem as trying to think of the continuity and wholeness of an individual's life experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 17).

Experience is not "exclusively inside an individual's body and mind" (Dewey, 1938, p.39). As immigrant children also lived their stories in the families with their parents, parent and family stories shaped their stories as well. These stories shaped who they were and influenced the ways they lived their lives in school. Sitting in the fine art and ESL classes allowed me to experience the rhythm of classrooms and the ongoing stories on the school landscape on which Yang, Atoosa and Di had been living their lives in River's Edge. Thus, in later conversations, when they told me about their stories, I could relate to the school landscape that was shaping their living and telling of their

stories of school. I could inquire into their lived and told stories in place.

Field Texts

Narrative inquirers compose various kinds of field texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). For this inquiry, field notes, photographs, personal artifacts, schoolwork, taped conversations of talks with children of their stories in and out of school, and talks with their parents were my field texts.

Field notes were written about every visit to River's Edge or to Yang's, Atoosa's and Di's homes. Field notes were context based. My field notes were the accounts of every time I was with the three immigrant junior high students in their in- and out-of-school places.

The second kind was photographs. In the proposal, I imagined I would ask participants to tell stories of their photographs. When the inquiry started with the three participants, Atoosa and her mother, Ramesh, were not comfortable showing me photographs. Qin, Yang's mother, however, showed me photographs of Yang and their family. Di, too, showed me the photographs taken when they were in China and later the photographs she took on her first camping trip in Canada. The photographs of Yang's and Di's showed the landscapes on which Yang and Di had lived and who they were in relation with in their lives. While I wanted to have the same experience with Atoosa, I respected her choice and her mother's in not showing their photographs.

Personal artifacts were a third kind of field text. They represented visual stories of

special moments in the participants' lives. Atoosa brought a little doll to school and told me the story of it: "This is a present my friend in Iran gave me..." (Atoosa's artifact story taped, November 11, 2004). The little doll and the story helped me understand how much friends meant to Atoosa and the memory of the doll later helped me write about the place of friends in Atoosa's life. On a visit to Di's home, she told me stories of all the beautiful things that decorated her bedroom. They all had a story and history that told who Di was in relation to the people who lived around her. Di also told the story of the two pieces of artwork on the wall in their living room, which her mother brought them from China. Like the bronze tea tray with which Atoosa's mother served me tea during my visits to her home, I understood the artifacts, Atoosa, Di and Ting brought to Canada were tokens of continuity while they lived in interruption (Bateson, 2004).

Participants' schoolwork was also an important field text. Yang, Atoosa and Di talked about their schoolwork. Because of the different relationships between me and the three participants and the different situations I lived with them in school, I experienced the three participants' schoolwork differently. I knew Yang's schoolwork by watching him in class. I saw him confront one classmate's comments on Canadian railway construction. Atoosa talked about her schoolwork, her ESL assignments, for example, at our meetings. Di, however, not only talked about her schoolwork, but also showed me a number of assignments for social studies and language arts.

Taped conversations with the children alone and with their parents were major field texts. They were tape-recorded and transcribed into texts, including five

conversations in Mandarin Chinese. As a narrative inquirer, I made sure that the conversations were open and stories were encouraged. Bruner (1990) criticizes the structured/question and answer kind of interview:

...in most interviews we expect respondents to answer our questions in the categorical form required in formal exchanges rather than in the narratives of natural conversation. We expect answers like "Meeting the financial strains" in response to "What were the hardest times early in your marriage?" As interviewers, we typically interrupt our respondents when they break into stories, or in any case we do not code the stories: They do not fit our conventional categories. So the human selves that emerge from our interviews become artificialized by our interviewing method. (p.115)

"Human selves" and their lived stories are what I looked for. Altogether, twenty-four conversations were tape-recorded from March 2004 to June 2005. Among them eight conversations were with Yang and his parents, eight with Atoosa and her mother and eight with Di and her parents.

While field notes, the first kind of field texts, were accounts of what happened in the field, when I was in in- and out-of school places and when my participants and I were together, I also kept notes of my reflections on conversation transcripts, participants' photographs, artifacts and homework. I wrote reflective field notes to capture the feelings I had at the moment when I experienced them, my participants, their words, their actions or the environments surrounding them. The following is an example of a reflective note I wrote about a conversation I had with Yang:

It seems to me that Yang is always confident and easy-going. He is comfortable with what he has. He and JJ are of the same age, but maybe because of the different story lines they follow to live their lives, their reactions to Canadian school experiences are different. To JJ, Chinese experience is the origin of feelings when she encounters new experiences in Canada. Chinese experience seems to be the lived experiences she refers to in order to make sense of new Canadian school stories and judges the things she sees and lives in Canadian schools. Yang has no experiences of schools in China. He told me before that Canada was a different country. He identifies himself as a Chinese. But because he does not have school stories in China like JJ, he uses other stories to tell about his school experiences in Canadian schools. He once told me that there are bad people everywhere. The implication was if there were “mean” kids around, he would not complain about his Canadian schools because “bad people are everywhere.” By this he meant that even if he were in China, his birth country, he would still meet “mean” kids anyway. (Reflective Note, Tuesday, Sept. 28, 2004)

Reflective notes were a practice I maintained throughout the period of composing field texts. It was an exercise that allowed me to “slide back and forth between the experience under study and the records of [myself] as a researcher experiencing experience” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 87). It is also an exercise I did to try to “feel” Yang, understand him in his world and “respond aesthetically” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 26) in relation to my lived experiences. Keeping reflective notes was a way to track my on-going conversations with my field experiences. It allowed me to attend to a

researcher's momentary responses to field experiences.

Composing Research Texts – Yang

It was an important transition from field texts to research texts. At one Tuesday's Research Issues Meeting⁷, Mary Young, a senior scholar of narrative inquiry, said research texts should be written in a way that readers can see "people." At that time, I had not started composing research texts even though I knew my experiences with my participants' lived and told stories were the center of my attention. When I finally reached the point of beginning the transition from field texts to research texts, I realized making "both stories and the humans continuously visible" (Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007, p. 7) was a challenge. I experienced the dilemma of what to do when "being there in the field" and how to represent it "being there in the text" (Geertz, 1988).

Field texts were relatively independent from one another by time, place and events. When retreating from the field and coming back to sit in front of the computer to compose research texts from the overwhelming amount of field texts, I experienced the tensions described by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) as whether the research texts "speak to our readers", "capture and represent the shared stories of ourselves and our participants" and "represent the situatedness of the inquiry within place" (p.139). Clandinin and Connelly (1994) explain a further dilemma, that is, "how lively our signature should be: Too vivid a signature runs the risk of obscuring the field and its

⁷ A weekly meeting facilitated by a Horowitz Scholar and Jean Clandinin, the director, at the Center for Research for Teacher Education and Development (CRTED).

participants; too subtle a signature runs the risk of the deception that the research text speaks from the point of view of the participant” (p. 424). Composing research texts from field texts was a challenging and difficult task. The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space guided my thinking inward, outward, forward and backward and within places (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) and I kept in mind ways to make my participants visible so their stories, their lives, would be seen through the texts.

I started composing research texts in late July 2005 when I finished my last conversation with Yang’s mother, Qin. The first thing I did was to pull out all the field notes I wrote about Yang when I observed in the fine art class; participated in the fashion class; conversed with him; visited his home, and met him in the grocery store and in the hallway in River’s Edge. I saved the field notes and the eight conversation transcripts with him and his parents in a folder and printed them out. Facing the stacks of paper, I wondered how I could also pull out a “whole” Yang from the field texts. I started by reading my words, the field notes and reflective notes about Yang, as well as his words in the stories he told me in the conversations, and his parents’ stories of him. I read the field texts to code for topics such as “Chinese school” and “marks.” In this way, I reorganized the stories Yang lived and told around topics such as friends, teachers, history of River’s Edge, sports and extracurricular activities, school rules, marks and report cards, academic challenge programs, schoolwork, study and play, bullying, discrimination, Chinese school and piano lessons. I started writing around some of these topics to see if the texts I composed “fit together” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 139). However, the texts turned out disappointing because they did not “fit together” to portray Yang as a

becoming person, with a past, present and future. Narrative inquirers do not seek to compose research texts around topics because, composing in this way, the temporality and connectedness of people's lived experiences do not become apparent.

After a meeting with Jean, I reread all the field texts and reorganized them to search for narrative threads in Yang's experiences that embodied continuities in his experience. I pulled out four threads in Yang's lived and told stories: "living China-related stories," "living competing stories," "living fitting-in stories," and "living stories of playing by rules." Composing research texts around these threads, I was able to position myself and Yang in the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space.

During the time I was composing research texts around narrative threads, I met Jean once a week to discuss my research texts in progress. During this time, the tension between me, a narrative inquirer, who honors lived experience and studies it as it is (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin, 2007) and me, the writer who is in charge of the writing, emerged on the surface from time to time. Most of the time, it was not because I forgot to "honor" Yang's experiences, rather I was not sure of how "vivid (my) signature" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 148) should be. The weekly meeting with Jean was important because I was reminded that it was about Yang's and my lived experiences. For me, a narrative inquirer, "a person's experience must be listened to on its own terms first" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). "Is that what Yang said or you said?" Jean would ask me to make sure that I wrote around what Yang had said.

During the time of composing research texts, I also wrote a couple of texts to help

myself understand narrative inquiry and live as a narrative inquirer.

In the third summer since I started teaching, I was eligible to join a free trip to Guilin, a well known tourist city for its beauty of hills dotted in and around the city and by the rivers. The climax of the trip was a boat tour on the Lijiang River. As the boat was moving forward, the green hills and mountains passed one by one with their shadows reflected in the clear water of the Lijiang River. The scene was amazingly beautiful. I was deeply intoxicated by the gentle breeze, shining water and luxuriant mountains. It was just a masterpiece of the most skillful scenery painter! My friend, a math teacher, and I took turns to help each other take pictures, hoping to capture the memories forever.

A week later, I got on the return bus. About half the way home, our bus pulled over at the foot of Hengshan Mountain, one of the Five Mountains that locate in five geographic locations: east, west, south, north and center. Hengshan Mountain is the mountain of the south. My colleagues and I got off the bus and I decided to climb up the mountain and to the top. As I stepped on the Hengshan Mountain, immediately I felt its roughness and authenticity. The rubble was under my feet. The withered leaves and dead twigs scattered by the side of the paths. Somewhere into the deep of the woods, birds were singing, and up high in the trees, cicadas were chirping. Half the way on the mountain slope, in a small pavilion, an old lady dressed in black was selling books of Taoism. I knew a little bit of Taoism, but had no idea that Hengshan Mountain was a mountain of Taoism. All of a sudden, I seemed to feel the spirit of the mountain. The charm

and beauty of it was not its look that pleased the senses. I suddenly felt the traces of the history of the rubble, the soil, the flowers in bloom and the withered life, which I touched and saw. They had lived different stories. They were the witnesses of the stories of the past and the present and will also be the witnesses the future of this mountain. Being in Hengshan Mountain, I was closer to it and everything I saw was enlarged so that I could see more detail. All became alive as if they were telling me their stories. As I stood in front of the "Gate of the Southern Heaven," I felt I was part of Hengshan Mountain. I was in the beauty of it and in the stories of it.

I always wondered why the excitement of the seven-day Guilin Tour faded after an hour in Hengshan Mountain. On reflection, it seems the one hour in Hengshan Mountain creates vibrant feelings when I was in the mountain experiencing its past and present. It was because when I was climbing up the mountain I was able to touch, see, hear, and feel the vividness, the "concreteness" (Greene, 1995, p. 29) of the mountain. Because I was in the mountain, I was able to tell stories about my experience of the rubbles, dust, and fallen leaves, which were components of the mountain. However I could not conceive their stories without being close to them, to hear, see and touch them. I could not have the experience of closeness to them without being in Hengshan Mountain.

Looking backward to, and reflecting on, how the experience of climbing Hengshan Mountain overtook the pleasure the beauty of Guilin provided, I understood how

particularities (Schwab, 1971) could contribute to constructing the landscape.

Composing research texts from Yang's lived and told stories was also a process of experiencing him, a particular Chinese boy, in his narrative world. Being close to the rubble and fallen leaves, I was able to tell the stories of Hengshan Mountain. Attending to Yang's lived and told stories, I was able to tell the stories of Yang and River's Edge. Writing this piece helped me understand that as a narrative inquirer I was composing research texts to see Yang big (Greene, 1995) and see him big narratively (Clandinin, 2005; Clandinin, et al, 2006).

I also wrote a piece about a metaphor of sweet potato vines for understanding immigrant children's experiences lived on shifting landscapes:

If China ... is the soil where the sweet potato was planted and took root, the vines of the sweet potato traveled and spread. And on the routes they touched down and grew new roots. Yang's first roots were in China, his birthplace. The life and stories he lived as a Chinese in Canada prepared for his new roots in a new soil, Canada. I imagine the birth-roots in China and newly developed roots living as a Chinese boy in Canada are like the sweet potato roots and vines that lined his way to compose his identity as a Chinese boy living in Canada. ... The sweet potato vine has roots and routes of new roots, with which young immigrants like Yang constructs a "fluid, contingent, multiple and shifting" (McLeod, 2000, p. 225) identity stories.

Writing the metaphor of sweet potato vines helped me understand that the quality of lived experiences were temporal and shifting. Immigrant children composed stories of who

they were along the way as they, following their lived narrative threads, lived their stories from place to place on shifting landscapes. Both roots and routes provided them meaning of life.

By the end of the fall 2005, the research texts composed around the four narrative threads for Yang were completed. They remained a draft until I negotiated the texts with Yang and his parents. While I imagined my larger audience was parents, teachers and teacher educators, my “first audience” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 173) was Yang and his parents, who lived and shared their stories with me. After the May 2006 visit to share the research texts with Yang and his mother, Qin, I wrote a letter to Marilyn Huber, my co-researcher:

I was so nervous that I made excuses to postpone the phone call to set a date to visit Yang and his parents. Last week, the date was finally set. I took the writing to Yang's home on Monday. My heart was beating fast and my palms were sweating as I rang the doorbell. Yang answered the door. Apparently he was waiting for me.

Yang was curious and had an expectation for what and how I wrote about him. He remembered most of his conversations. He admitted he saw himself in my writing: “That was me.” But he said he was not “childish” anymore. We took turns reading from the first page to the last. He said he did not expect it could be this long. He was somehow surprised that I wrote about “everything.” While on the whole, he was fine with the texts, he was not happy about how I wrote about his talking about “racism.” He said he was “offended.” He even doubted he ever

said that. The piece was written in the first thread. I said that was what he said, and I also told him it was a draft. We could fix it. When we finished reading, I turned on the recorder to ask about his feelings. He said he was fine with the research texts now. I asked about the "racist" part. He said it was okay to keep it. I think he understood more about how his stories were retold when we read the whole story of him. Maybe that was why he changed his mind.

It took Yang and me almost two hours to read the texts together. It took me two more visits to finish reading the research texts together with Qin. The experience of visiting to share the research texts was important, valuable and rewarding. I learned many things from the process. I was moved as the research texts made them appreciate themselves. Wensi, Yang's father, thought I was done with them when I phoned his home about sharing the texts. He later said to me: "You sure were serious. Yang said it was very long..."

Yang's mother had a busy life, two children and a full time job and no other families around. At first she said: Do we also need to read from cover to cover? I said yes. After reading about 10 pages for her, I noticed she became interested and wanted to know the rest of the texts about her life, her son's and her family's lives. She showed she was doing this because of interest rather than duty.

Qin proposed some minor suggestions and we discussed how I might revise the research texts accordingly. She never insisted that I must revise them and I promised that I would bring a copy of the final research texts to her home.

Composing Research Texts – Atoosa and Di

I followed a similar process of composing research texts for Atoosa and Di. After pulling out the field texts, I started the feeling process, reading every word I wrote about my participants, Atoosa, her mother, Di and her parents and every word they said in the conversation transcripts. Because of the experience of composing research texts for Yang, my focus, this time, was on reading to compose for Atoosa's and Di's narrative threads rather than topics. For Atoosa, research text was composed around "living stories of 'who I am,' "living family stories and fitting-in stories," "living family stories and Atoosa's stories to live by," and "living stories on shifting landscapes." Di's research text was composed around: "living family stories," "the tension of living between stories," "living relational stories," and "living stories on shifting landscapes."

After I completed writing the research texts, I phoned Atoosa to set a time to share the texts and found the whole family moved to another province. From her friend, I got her email address. I sent the research texts to her through email attachment. Four of the emails I got from Atoosa regarding the research texts are as follows:

Mon, 12 Jun 2006

Dear Guming,

I am really glad that you sent me an email and that you still remember us. We live now in a very beautiful city. I found many new friends. Over all I like it here. I am really interested to be your first reader. My mom says hi to you. Thank you so much for your email. Good Luck! Bye.

Wed, 28 Jun 2006

Hi Guming,

Thank you so much for sending me the stories. I am really glad to see them. I have a question though, did they get printed or something? Also I wonder if I have to rewrite it and send you or what is it done or not? Again thank you for sending me those and thank you for keeping in touch with me. I hope to see you. Love.

Sat, 15 Jul 2006

Dear Guming,

How are you? ... Is it too cold or is it nice out there? Here we are having a nice weather though it rains sometimes. I will start reading whenever I got some time because right now I am so busy. But I will definitely set aside some time for it. I will let you know how I feel about it and if there were mistakes. Thank you so much. Love

Fri, 22 Sep 2006

Dear Guming,

I just read your email... Thank you so much for it. I read a little bit of the stories. However I am still continuing reading. Something that I would be really glad about if you please change my name in the writings. Here are some the Persian names if you might like to use: Atoosa, Afsaneh, but also feel free to use English names if you want. Thank you so much. I will let you know as I read through the thing but now I am really busy concentrating on my school work but I will read more whenever I had free time. Have a great time and say hi to your daughter for me! Thank you again. Bye.

I knew it was going to be difficult to get feedback from Atoosa through email. But Atoosa was responsive. I thought it was only a matter of time. Three months after she picked her pseudonym and told me she was reading the research texts, she stopped responding my emails. Despite many emails from me to Atoosa from October 2006 to March 2007, there was no further response from Atoosa. I understood being new to Canada, Atoosa had to move where her parents' jobs led. I know I will keep her in my thoughts. In an email she wrote that if there were mistakes she would let me know. I knew from spending time with her, Atoosa was a responsible girl both to this project and herself. I assumed if there was something she felt uncomfortable with in the research texts, she would let me know.

I visited Di's home in December 2006 to share the research texts. Both Di and Ting, her mother, were surprised that their "casual talks" and their stories could be field texts and could be turned into research texts, which represented who they were. Like Yang, Di remembered the stories she told me in conversations. Reading the stories of her past, she realized she had changed eighteen months later after our last tape-recorded conversation in June 2005. Responding to her stories I wrote around the fourth narrative thread – "Living stories on shifting landscapes," she said, "Now I can be friends with anyone no matter who they are." Like Yang, although she "changed" and maybe was "smarter," Di respected and accepted her past because the research texts enabled her to read herself in intertwined stories that moved backward, sideways and forward (Nelson, 2002). After a second of pondering, "It's profound," Di said it quietly almost as if to herself. I wonder if Di realized the complexity of experiences and the uncertainty of the

research texts composed in the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space.

I wish I had the same opportunity to read the research texts with Atoosa as I did with Yang and Di. The experiences of visiting the two families, Yang's and Di's, were encouraging for me as a narrative inquirer. I had high hopes that I would have a similar constructive experience with Atoosa. Composing research texts around narrative threads made me "faithful" to the participants' lived and told stories because the narrative threads followed a kind of narrative logic, continuity (Dewey, 1938; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Bateson, 2000, 2004) in living stories. Both Yang and Di realized, in some ways, they were no longer the same persons as represented in the research texts. However, they both accepted and respected who they were in the stories they told me about themselves and in the routes of their lives because they realized they were shaped and were continuing to be shaped, by their lived stories.

Ethical Considerations

Narrative inquiry is relational (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Huber & Clandinin, 2002). It is a caring process during which narrative inquirers show respect, understanding and appreciation of their participants and their own lived and told stories. As narrative inquirers, "our responsibility [is] not to cause harm to our participants" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 173). In the last section of this chapter, I explain how I tried "not to cause harm" to my participants during the inquiry through protecting their anonymity and appreciating their lives as composed in research texts.

Yang, Atoosa and Di were the three participants. They came into the researcher-

researched relationship in different contexts. As I described earlier in this chapter, “To Yang, I was a regular visitor from the university. To Atoosa, I was like an ESL teacher, who might understand ESL students. To Di, I was a friend refound.” As they started the relationships with me in different ways, they told different stories about the relationship with me. I realized I needed to live different relational stories with each of them so that I appreciated them as participants and danced with them in appropriate steps.

Being present in Yang’s fine art and fashion classes, I made myself known as a graduate student and a researcher to Yang and his classmates. Yang was comfortable having me around in the classrooms. Later when he was the only participant from his class, I was more careful not to make him visible in order not to harm a special relationship with me, a researcher.

At the time she became a participant, Atoosa had just entered the second semester in River’s Edge. River’s Edge was new to her and she was new to River’s Edge. Atoosa was learning new school stories of River’s Edge and was trying to fit into new stories of which she was not sure yet. On the one hand, she was happy to have a special relationship with a researcher to tell her stories with. On the other hand, she “distance[d] herself from the project” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 174) trying not to be different from her classmates by being with someone who was from outside the school. I was aware that she liked to meet and talk to me in the office or the ESL classroom. I respected her feelings and let her have a space to live stories with me in her way, and not to make her visible in other places in River’s Edge, such as in the hallway.

Di was comfortable as a participant in a research project that was conducted by

someone who was not part of the school landscape. She felt safe to tell her stories of school to me who, like her, immigrated to Canada from China. Di even invited her friend to witness that I taped our conversations. But I postponed the scheduled meeting to tell her that I wanted to keep her anonymous. I was also invited to Di's graduation ceremony. I went. I applauded when she walked onto the stage to receive her diploma in the purple dress she described to me earlier. I saw her parents and her friend, Lili. Yet, I decided not to join them to meet her classmates because I was not an observer in her classes. Instead I asked Di to tell me about the party after the ceremony in our next meeting.

I was aware of my responsibilities as a narrative inquirer to keep my participants' anonymity. Because of the different relationships with my participants, sometimes I attended to Atoosa's dancing steps to make her comfortable and sometimes I adjusted my dancing steps so that I did not interfere with Yang's and Di's rhythms. While living alongside my participants, I was mindful of my steps as a narrative inquirer in relation to their steps as participants. The relationship was sustained to carry on the inquiry in a way not to cause tension in the three participants' lives. While retelling and composing research texts, I was mindful of my responsibility to appreciate Yang's, Atoosa's and Di's lived experiences. Many years ago, my father taught me *The Analects*. As I was composing research texts, "The good man does not grieve that other people do not recognize his merits; his only anxiety is lest he should fail to recognize theirs"⁸ entered my head to remind me that I should not fail to honor my participants' lived experiences.

⁸ Confucius' teaching from the *Analects*, translated by Arthur Waley. All texts from the *Analects* cited in this dissertation are Arthur Waley's English translation.

As a narrative inquirer, I composed research texts not only to see “people”, but also to see them with respect. I would be afflicted if I was not aware of the “wellness” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 10) of my participants. Charon and Montello (2002) write: “In large part, the ethics in question are the ethics of ordinary life: how to fulfill life goals, to honor obligations, and to make sense of events in ways that make it possible to go on” (p. xi). In the retelling process, the process of composing research texts, “not to cause harm” was meant not to “rupture life stories that sustain [the participants]” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, pp. 173-174).

The following chapters (Chapter 3-5) are the research texts I composed through inquiring into the stories the three immigrant children, Yang, Atoosa and Di, told and lived.

Research texts were composed around narrative threads.

Chapter Three

YANG: "I AM A CHINESE KID."

Yang was born in a capital city in Northeast China. His parents were well-educated professionals. Mother, Qin, was a physician in China. Father, Wensi, was a biologist. In 1997 after he received his doctoral degree in a university in China, Wensi and three colleagues went to several US research institutions respectively to contribute to scientific research projects. Yang and his mother went to the US the following year when he was six years old. Since then Yang has not been back to China. When he and his parents were in the US, his mother gave birth to a baby girl. She invited Yang's grandmother to the US to help with the newborn baby. Having been away from China for two years, Yang met his maternal grandmother again in the US, who had earlier cared for him in China. His grandmother was rejected for a visitor visa to Canada. Therefore when Yang's family immigrated to Canada from the US in 2000, his grandmother had to go back to China. She also took the baby girl, Yang's sister, with her to China to save her daughter from working too hard starting a new life in Canada. Two years later, Yang's grandmother got the Canadian visitor visa. She took the little girl with her to Canada. Yang then was able to have grandmother living with him for another year or so. She left Canada in the year when Yang went to River's Edge, the junior high school, and her granddaughter was about to enter the elementary school. In 2004, Yang told me the whole family was planning to visit China. So far it is still a plan. Yang is now fourteen years old. He has lived more time in North America than in his home country--China.

I identified four narrative threads in the stories Yang lived and, maybe, is still living because this is how I understood him. I learned to appreciate his stories because “[t]he truth about stories is that that’s all we are” (King, 2003, p. 2). The four narrative threads that helped weave Yang’s intertwined stories. In this way I felt, in his life, continuity of experiences (Dewey, 1938; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000,) and narrative coherence (Carr, 1986). The four narrative threads are “living Chinese-related stories”, “living competing stories”, “living fitting-in stories” and “living stories of playing by rules”.

Living Chinese-related Stories

Yang identified himself as a Chinese boy. His lived Chinese-related stories were the source of his Chinese identity. At home, Yang spoke Chinese to his parents. He ate and enjoyed the Chinese food his mother cooked. On Saturdays, he went to Chinese school where his classmates were Chinese boys and girls. For quite a time, he went to group piano lessons with three other Chinese children. In the summer of 2005, his mother, Qin, signed him to three sports camps: tennis, badminton and ping-pong. It is easy to notice that among the three sports he, with his mother’s guidance, chose to go to, two were many Chinese people’s favorites, badminton and ping-pong. Yang first learned to play badminton with neighboring Chinese students when he was in the US. This time he went to the three sports camps with a Chinese boy, a very good friend of his. It seems, in many ways, Yang’s life lived outside River’s Edge bore some kind of Chinese taste and color.

When he was in the classrooms, in the gym and cafeteria, in the hallways and the playground of River's Edge, he was a student who lived many stories which seemed related to Chinese people. These stories helped him tell who he was in a Canadian school landscape, a landscape where he lived with other children with various cultural stories. "We're all different people here." (Tape-recorded Conversation with Yang, March 2004), Yang said to me when he was telling a story of racism and trying to ignore what he saw as stories of nuisance he lived at school. I imagined that when he said, "We're all different people here", he was telling me and himself that he was different because he was a Chinese boy.

Yang told me: "I don't need more practice on my English" (Tape-recorded Conversation, September 26, 2004). I understood this to mean he had no problems experiencing the shades of meaning in the Canadian school landscape, where the language of English was the language in which stories were lived and told. He could live stories and tell stories in English. However, he experienced the stories and told them from his vantage point as a Chinese boy. In telling school stories, he located himself in a Chinese boy's position in River's Edge, a Canadian school. He made sense of the stories he lived through connecting to his Chinese heritage. He told me "there's a lot of discrimination... as in racism sometimes. But I don't, but that's rare because I don't, I'm not really sure but I... this happened to me once but like and there's also people that calls names and everything" (Tape-recorded conversation, March 12, 2004). Here Yang did not tell me more specifically about his stories of discrimination or racism. I wondered, though, if students calling each other names might make a racist story to Yang if he

understood the intent of name calling was to hurt his feelings as a Chinese boy.

Since English for Yang was the language in which he lived his school stories and he could speak English as well as many of his classmates whose first language was English, he was well aware of the school life storied in English. On the one hand, he was experiencing River's Edge in English. On the other hand, he was experiencing River's Edge from a perspective of a Chinese life lived with his family. The feeling, experiencing and expressing of his experiences came from life of being a Chinese boy, from his lived stories at home and in other China-related places such as in Chinese school.

Yang identified himself as a Chinese boy because of the Chinese stories he lived outside the school. In the school, then, he defended those with whom he identified himself. The following words described Yang's speaking out for Chinese workers' contributions to Canadian railway construction:

For a sewing project, Yang was pinning. Ken was cutting. One boy just started measuring his fabric. The boys were talking pretty loudly. I had to intervene sometimes to warn them to quiet down... All of a sudden somebody mentioned railways... Ken said he did not like railways and it was not the Chinese who built the railways. Rather, it was the English who built the railways. The Chinese only built the last part... Yang refuted back immediately: The Chinese built the whole thing... Yang said at least two or three times: racism. The voice was not too loud, but I noticed that his cheeks turned red... (Field Notes, Thursday, May 6, 2004)

Later, in a recorded conversation, when I asked about the incident in the sewing class where he called his classmate racist, Yang said: "I like to rub it in. It's like you're a

racist” (Tape-recorded conversation, June 1, 2004). He said he knew his classmates were just “kidding”, but he liked to “rub it in” because “that’s really cool” (Tape-recorded conversation, June 1, 2004). I was surprised by Yang’s playful way of living out the situation in which he interpreted his classmates as not being respectful to Chinese he identified himself with. However, as I reflect back on the moment, I thought Yang was indeed upset. I remember as he said the word, “racism”, he turned away from Ken as if to avoid a confrontation.

I was also surprised when Yang took “racism” or racial experiences as “nothing” as shown in the following tape-recorded conversation. Since Yang had mentioned racial discrimination in River’s Edge, I asked him about his experience a couple of times. I thought it was a serious issue for immigrant children, especially when they were visible minorities. I asked Yang if he ever told his parents when such unhappy things, like being teased, happened to him, Yang’s quick response was:

I take it as nothing because I know they’re stupid so... so I just don’t talk really. And um I don’t get bothered really and I just ignore them because um well so what? Who cares? (Tape-recorded conversation, March 26, 2004)

Yang would not talk about it. Indeed, in a later conversation with his mother, Qin told me Yang expressed the existence of racism in the school. “But he did not tell me the detail” (Tape-recorded conversation, July 19, 2005).

As a Chinese woman researcher, I was surprised when Yang called his classmate, Ken, racist. I wonder how, on the one hand, Yang wanted to draw attention to racism, on the hand, “took it as nothing.” I wonder what I would do in a similar situation where

someone said something about China which I did not believe. Would I “rub in”? What would make me feel ready to “rub in”? Would I take racism as “nothing” if I felt I was discriminated against? I wonder why Yang would not talk these experiences.

It seemed the wonders and questions got cleared up bit by bit as I tried to understand Yang’s lived and told stories. Yang rubbed it in because, in the stories he lived in the school, he saw rubbing it in as a “cool” thing to do. He would rub it in to show he was able to be cool. He knew the stories of the school and the stories of his classmates. He knew that they were “kidding.” He knew Ken would not get angry if he called him “racist” in a “kidding” context. Being aware of the narrative context seemed to shape whether or not, and how, Yang took action.

Yang refused to tell his mother about his experiences of racism in the school. Did he think his parents did not know much about stories of racism because such stories were not told much in the family? On my three visits to his home, Yang’s parents did not say a word about racism. His parents encountered many difficulties, especially in seeking professional jobs. The stories they told of seeking jobs were related to language ability:

Qin and Wensi held a congratulations and farewell party for their friend, Jian, because he got a faculty position and would move to NYC. Qin said everyone (who knew Jian) thought his English was excellent. In Qin’s words, Jian wrote beautiful English. To Qin, it’s not a surprise that Jian got a faculty position because Jian spoke and wrote good English. (Field Notes, Tuesday, July 19, 2005)

Having a good command of English was a major story line in Yang’s parents’ stories of finding good jobs and living good lives in Canada. Their stories linked regrets or

complaints to their inability to speak and write good English. The plotline of who they were was shaped by their insufficient English. If racism was not a story told at home, I could understand that Yang might not tell it either.

In his storied world, Yang could tell who he was, who his friends/classmates were. Yang identified himself as a Chinese boy. Yang lived and told his stories at and out of school as a Chinese boy. Telling stories was a process of reasoning to figure out his position, a Chinese boy's position, on Canadian school landscapes. Knowing and telling the school stories helped him locate himself in relation to the school stories of River's Edge.

Yang had special feelings to things that were related to Chinese. For the first conversation after the summer of 2004, I asked Yang if he went to the Heritage Festival, an annual summer event in the city. He said he did and remembered "the tents." I asked what "tents" he visited. "I visited China definitely" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Yang, September 28, 2004) he answered without a second thought. "...I visited Greece, I visited Spain, I visited everywhere." he continued. When asked which tent was the most impressive, he said: "China."

I took my daughter to the Heritage Festival too that summer and we visited the Chinese Pavilion and many others like Yang and his family did. I did not ask my daughter if the Chinese pavilion was the most impressive, but I found it attracted Yang more than it did me. My daughter and I looked for the Chinese pavilion and hung around for a while waiting for shows on the platform. Yang went with his parents. They did similar things like we did, visiting the Chinese pavilion in order to be close to something

Chinese in Canada.

Until then Yang had been in China for six and half years, about two and half years in the US and about four years in Canada. Probably he would identify himself as a citizen of the world. For example, he said while watching the Olympic games, he would “cheer for everyone,” Chinese, American and Canadian athletes “because I went everywhere” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Yang, September 28, 2004). But the stories lived as a Chinese at home with his family shaped his identity to be a Chinese boy. “I’m a Chinese kid” he introduced himself at our first tape-recorded conversation. I wondered what made the Chinese pavilion the most impressive to him. I asked what the performers were doing on the stage when he visited the “Chinese tent.” He did not remember exactly what was happening: “I don’t know what they did, but it was kind of acting. ... I don’t know what it is. ... It might be their traditional Chinese like (dancing)” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Yang, September 28, 2004). Yang was interested in “Chinese like” things. It did not matter that much if he knew what was going on when “Chinese like” things were happening. It was important that he was to live a story that connected to him, his family and the place where his family came from.

As a Chinese living in Canada, I was happy to see a Chinese pavilion among many other cultural pavilions and thankful for the Chinese volunteers’ effort to make me feel part of the multicultural landscape. My stories lived in China might provide me with a vision about what I might want to show the Canadians about China. Thus, as I was visiting the Chinese pavilion, I was enjoying and, simultaneously, seeking connections to my stories about China; while for Yang, a boy who lived his Chinese life mostly outside

school, what interested him more was living a Chinese-related, a “Chinese like” story. Visiting the Chinese pavilion, I sought connections to my lived stories as a Chinese lived in China. Visiting the Chinese pavilion, Yang also sought connections. He sought connections to who he was as a Chinese boy living in Canada. He was living Chinese stories to shape his Chinese identity as he lived his life in Canada.

Yang lived Chinese stories in Canada as a Chinese boy. I imagine Yang would live different stories as a Chinese boy in China. I imagine he would interact differently with Chinese things as a Chinese boy in China and a Chinese boy in Canada. As a Chinese boy living in Canada, Yang lived Chinese things mostly at home; while the dominant stories were not Chinese outside home. However, what was important was that he related to these “Chinese like” things as a Chinese boy in Canada. The feeling of being a Chinese boy in Canada was like a growing vine of sweet potatoes. Yang was born in China. Like a sweet potato, Yang took his roots in the soil in China. As the sweet potato grew in the ground, its vine also grew and spread out. At the age of six, Yang traveled across the Pacific Ocean to the US. As the vine traveled away from where the sweet potato first took roots, it had different experiences every moment it reached out. As Yang lived more and more years away from China, Yang was no longer the boy he was when he first left China. He was no longer a boy who lived only Chinese stories in China. As he grew like a sweet potato vine from the soil where the first roots sprouted out, Yang traveled from China to the US and Canada. He became a boy who lived many stories as a Chinese boy in U.S. and Canada. He was a person being shaped and, in becoming, living different stories. “Chinese like” things might become more and more like “their” things.

Yet, they were always fascinating because no matter how far and how long he was away from China, while tracing back along the vines of the sweet potato, he always knew he was a Chinese boy. He knew he was from China and his stories lived as a person started from China.

The most important festival in the autumn on Chinese calendar is the Full Moon Festival. It is always in late September or early October, about a month after the fall semester starts. The first conversation with Yang in the fall of 2004 was on September 28, which happened to be the Chinese Full Moon Festival. I was curious if Yang would know anything about it. The following is an edited conversation between Yang and me about the Chinese Full Moon Festival:

GUMING: Do you know... today is the Chinese Full Moon Festival?

YANG: Yeah.

GUMING: You know it?

YANG: Yeah. ... My mom told me yesterday.

GUMING: OK, what are you going to do tonight?

YANG: Nothing too much. I still have to study for my test.

GUMING: How about your mom and dad?

YANG: They're going to do something definitely.

GUMING: Really.

YANG: They're going to do something.

GUMING: Do you remember last year, what did you do?

YANG: Yeah. I just looked out at the moon and then it looked different. It

looked big.

GUMING: Wow that's different. You will watch the moon tonight?

YANG: Mmmhmm. This time, I'll have to look at it from my window. I'll have to look outside...when I do my homework... (Last year) I chose the back spot. I should have chosen where my dad was... (Tape-recorded Conversation, September 28, 2004).

The Full Moon Festival is a special day for the Chinese people and is marked on the Chinese calendar. But it is a normal day on the Canadian school calendar. However, Yang knew the Tuesday night of September 28, 2004 was Chinese Full Moon Night because his mother told him and he remembered it and also remembered last year's full moon night. He regretted that he did not watch the moon from his dad's room. He would not repeat last year's mistake. He was telling his last Full Moon night's story. He was serious. He was looking forward to it and wanted to live the story carefully. He might not have any tangible memories about a Full Moon Festival when he was in China. 2004's Full Moon night was a normal night in Canada. Yang mentioned twice his homework. But the Full Moon Festival was special for him to be a Chinese boy in Canada. He would watch the moon while doing his homework. Who would watch the full moon on the Full Moon night while doing homework? Chinese children would do so. He would do so because he was a Chinese boy. I said earlier that the Full Moon Festival was special for Chinese people. In retrospect, I would add that the Full Moon Festival, to Chinese people in China, is both special and normal. It is special because it is a festival. It is also normal because it is the result of hundreds of years of history. To

Yang, a Chinese boy in Canada, it was only special. It was special just because the day was a normal day in his school in Canada. It was a special event for him to live as a Chinese boy, to feel different and to enjoy the difference. To live the full moon night, to Yang, was a story to tell "I'm a Chinese kid."

2004's Full Moon Festival was not his first time. From last year's experience, he was certain his parents would do "something" to celebrate a Chinese festival: "They're going to do something *definitely*." "Definitely" was such a confirmation he got from his Chinese stories lived in his home. The Chinese stories lived at home was the answer to the identity question: "I am a Chinese kid." He wanted to have a Chinese vision and taste, which came from the Chinese stories he lived and bore a mark of his own particularity. Although he did not quite remember what kind of dance the Chinese performers were demonstrating for the Heritage Festival, he still had a feeling of satisfaction because he had one more Chinese experience and one more Chinese story to tell who he was. For that day's field note, I recorded Yang's lunch:

Yang came in with his heavy back-bag and his lunch. Today his lunch was not a sandwich. It was steam rice, Tofu, and tomato fried with egg. (Field Notes, September, 28, 2004)

Many people know Tofu was a Chinese invention and a symbolic type of Chinese food. What is interesting to point out here is how Yang's mom cooked tomato. She fried tomato with eggs. Frying tomato and eggs together is also my way and I believe many Chinese mothers have cooked tomato as Yang's mom did. Yang did love his mom's cooking and Chinese food:

My mom cooks almost every meal, almost every meal. ... It's all Chinese, I like Chinese more than fast, the fast food. So every time I go somewhere to eat I choose Chinese more than fast food. (Tape-recorded Conversation, March 26, 2004)

Yang liked the Foods class at River's Edge: "I like foods and option foods" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Yang, March 26, 2004). "Who doesn't like food?" he said. In the school kitchen, he learned to make cookies, muffins and pizza. He liked them all, but he would choose Chinese food over pizza or hamburgers. He was in a non-Chinese kitchen making non-Chinese food at school. He enjoyed the foods he learned to make. But as a Chinese boy, he had different food he loved more.

Some Chinese stories like eating Chinese food Yang lived mostly everyday. Some Chinese stories like appreciating the full moon on the Full Moon Night he lived with his family as a special event. Some Chinese stories he chose to live like visiting the Chinese Pavilion during the Heritage Festival as an extra treat. Yang was attracted to things that were Chinese-related and was happy to be a participant or an observer. Living as a Chinese boy was his life.

Using the metaphor of the sweet potato vines, the lived stories as a Chinese boy in Canada were the sweet potato vines that grew and spread out on new landscapes. Yang constructed his identity with and by the vines. The sweet potato vines started from the soil in China. The Chinese things might be "their" things, but they shared the origin with him. Yang had special feelings to Chinese-related, "Chinese like" things with which he constructed and storied his Chinese identity.

Living Competing Stories

Yang's name first appeared in my field notes on February 11, 2004. January 15 was the first time that Marilyn, Jean and I were introduced to Yang's class, the grade seven fine art class. Although Yang's name was not mentioned in my field notes until after six visits to his class, he was in my head before February 11. I might not have known his name then, but I remembered his face and his performances in the class. Since February 13, 2004, when he accepted my invitation to be a participant in the inquiry, I had been "following" his "routes" in River's Edge, the school, and his home, fifteen minutes' walk from the school. With the permission of his teachers, I also visited his two other option classes. The five tape-recorded conversations were all in River's Edge, either at lunch break or after school. I visited his home three times. He was at home on my first visit. At this point, I think I could say, apart from JJ, Yang was the other lively storied figure in my vision. He became a boy I knew from my observation in the classrooms, in the hallways of the school and in the private room where the conversations were tape-recorded. I got to know him from our story telling: his storied life of school and home, and his parents' stories of him. He became vivid to me as I experienced him by visiting his home and his parents.

One Saturday in the summer of 2004, I bumped into his whole family in a local grocery store. I was surprised to see how tall he had grown. His mother said he was almost as tall as his father. I remembered he was about my height when he was in the grade seven fine art class. As I now recollect the images I have of Yang, I know Yang is a becoming (Vinz, 1997) individual. He must have changed a lot as he is heading to high

school next fall (2006). It is so wonderful with him and his parents that I have a sense of the passing images of him, which allows me to trace back down his “routes” and help to understand him then, at present and imagine his future.

I have experienced Yang in several dimensions: from his stories and stories of him, from being with him in the classrooms and other spaces in the school, and from field notes. As a narrative inquirer, I understand that persons have histories and stories out of which their storied lives come. Connelly and Clandinin (1994) state: “Thinking of life as a story is a powerful way to imagine who we are, where we have been, and where we are going” (p. 149) and “every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 35). As I prepared to write about Yang, I read and reread Yang from these stories and experiences. I read and reread for those “somethings”, the narrative threads, which in many ways shaped Yang’s becoming as a boy and Chinese boy in River’s Edge. In this section, the ‘something’ I follow is in the stories he told and his parents told of him. From these stories I read how he came to terms with competing stories: the stories his parents expected him to live, the school stories and the stories he wanted to live.

Yang in many ways amazed me. One of the things was that he seemed to be able to live up to his parents’ expectations of him and simultaneously live stories he wanted to. In Wensi’s and Qin’s stories, Yang was a good boy: “docile” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Wensi, April 2, 2005) and “reasonable” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Qin, July 19, 2005):

Yang has always been reasonable. Just tell you one story. When he was little (in China), we did not want him to watch too much TV for the sake of his health. We only allowed him to watch TV for one hour. One day, probably at 2:00 in the afternoon, he started watching TV. As I was engaged in doing something else, I forgot about the time. At 3:00, Yang came to me and said: Ma-Ma, how come you forgot to tell me to turn off the TV. It's already 3:00 o'clock! It seemed he considered not watching TV too long was right and should do accordingly. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Qin, July 19, 2005)

Yang was "reasonable" because he listened to his mother and did as he was told. Born in the generation of the 90s, millions of children in China lived their lives as the only child to their parents. Yang was one of them before he and his mother went to the US to join his father there in 1998. He was cared for with great attention by his mother and grandmother in China as his mother realized he was not a particularly strong child. His parents, Wensi and Qin, both of them told me later that Yang got ill easily. When Wensi was doing his doctoral program in another city, Qin had to rely on her mother to help take care of Yang. "I did not send him to the daycare because Yang might get ill" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Qin, October 24th, 2004). Grandmother looked after Yang at home while Qin worked in the hospital in the daytime. "For a long time (when Yang was little), we did not allow him to run and jump" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Qin, July 19, 2005), Qin told me. Yang was never left unattended when he was little in China. At a very young age, Yang had lived his stories following his mother's storyline.

My daughter, JJ, was the same age as Yang. She started school in the fall of 1997 when she turned six. In Yang's hometown, most of the children started school at the age of six. Yang should have been in grade one in 1997. But Yang was not sent to school when Qin found out she could choose to register Yang one year later, at the age of seven. Yang's parents made many decisions for Yang, for the sake of his health as Qin said. It seemed Yang felt his parents' care and love by living by the stories his parents prepared and expected him to live out. As we read Qin's story of Yang, at a very young age in China, Yang lived following the storyline he was guided to live. I imagine Yang's story line: Mom loved me and cared about me because I was not a strong child since I got ill more easily than other kids. What mom and grandma did was to protect me from falling ill and getting hurt. If I wanted to be well, I should listen to mom and grandma and live the way they worked out for me.

As a Chinese mother, who experienced many competitions for better grades, better programs and good universities, I wanted to know Yang's stories about marks in Canadian schools. In September 2004, Yang was in grade eight. At the first conversation of the new semester, I asked Yang if he was satisfied with the marks he got in grade seven. Yang said, "I didn't like it very much. I did way better this year. ... I got like a seventy-four. That sucks" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Yang, September 28, 2004). I asked him if he thought a lot about his marks because he seemed to have much to tell about his marks. "I have to get at least eighty-five or higher" Yang told me. From the way he told his stories about the marks he got for his last report card of the seventh grade, I felt he had an expectation that he had wanted to reach and was fairly vexed by

not being able to do so. He did have a goal, which was “partly me, like forty percent of it’s me. Mmm. Thirty percent is from my mom and thirty percent from my dad.” While he was telling me that his parents thought he should have done better, Yang also said to himself and me “seventies are not good. They’re not even B. I hate B’s. I must get A’s.”

Children may have different stories of marks. From this short conversation about marks, I see how Yang tried to live out the stories of obtaining good marks. He knew what his parents’ stories of his marks. He tried to live by their stories of his marks.

I guess Yang would not forget how angry his mother could be if his marks were not good enough. Qin was very angry with one particular report card, the final report card of grade four:

It came the end of second year and Yang’s report card was very bad. I was so mad... For a week, the atmosphere was tense at home... I was angry. I scolded him. The whole family was in a solemn mood. The atmosphere was choking...

Yang told his teachers and other people that his mother was very concerned about his grades. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Qin, July 19, 2005)

In Yang’s stories of marks, obtaining good marks was more of his parents’ story. He said so too: “Partly me, like forty percent of it’s me... Thirty percent is from my mom and thirty percent from my dad.” Even though he realized that the stories in which he had to get A’s were mostly his parents, he lived by them and made the story his own by adding a smaller portion. Marks, in Yang’s story, were also important; but much less so than in the story his parents told him, in which marks were *very* important. Qin was happy that Yang lived out her stories of earning good marks: “His next year’s grades were much

better. I remember the following two years, grade five and six, among the seven subjects, the four core subjects, math, LA, science, social and PE, music, Yang got 5 A's" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Qin, July 19, 2005). To Qin, Yang was "reasonable" because Yang lived out her reasonable stories of expectation of and care for him as she always did. The plotline Yang lived was living by his parents' stories of him, which came down from the days when he was little in China to the days when he was in Canadian schools.

Shortly after this conversation with Yang, JJ brought her report card home. It was interesting to read JJ's telling of her marks alongside Yang's telling of his. JJ got ninety-seven for math; but she was not happy because, to her, the math was so easy that she should get at least ninety-nine if not perfect marks. She said ninety-seven would be superb if she got it in China. However she could live with the mark story of seventy-four for her language arts because the course was a lot more difficult than the English subject in her school in China. I do not think JJ would tell her teachers, as Yang did, that her mother pushed her to get A's. Lived storylines directed her telling different stories about her marks, comparing the marks she got from the school in China, for example, so as to make meaning of school stories such as report cards. Reading JJ's telling of her mark stories side by side with Yang's, I see different storylines provided Yang and JJ with different ways of telling who they were in the stories of obtaining good marks.

The stories Yang lived with his parents told him his parents' stories of him were for his well-being. Because of this, Yang seemed to be willing to live out their stories of him. Yang said, his part of the mark stories was only "forty percent." What might be the

“sixty percent” of his stories that had been taken by his parents’ stories of him? How did Yang want to live out the “sixty percent” of his stories?

An important plotline in Yang’s storied life was going to piano lessons. This plotline first came to Yang from his parents. He then lived it out and finally it became one rhythm of his life. Qin liked singing. Her regret was she did not have the opportunity to develop her interest in music or other talents when she was young in China:

I like to sing very much. Sometimes I was invited to friends’ home for Karaoke. I like singing, but I don’t read music notes. I still feel sorry for that, not being able to play a musical instrument. You see, I can sing well and friends also think that way. I was fond of sports. When I was a child, I had a broad interest in a lot of things. But I did not have any special training. As a result, I was not able to excel at anything... I think we should invest in (children’s education). You’ll see the difference if a child is trained or not. Like piano, if you have never learned it, how do you know if you’ll like it or not or play it well? (Tape-recorded Conversation with Qin, July 19, 2005)

Qin’s storied experience was “training” can make a difference. Not having a chance to be “trained” in a music school or with a music teacher, she ended up not being able to read music notes or to play a musical instrument. No matter how she liked singing and could sing well, she was always an amateur. She did not want to see her regret be repeated for Yang:

We got here in September and Yang started piano lessons in October. I had a

long-term plan for him [in Canada] because we didn't have to worry about moving from one place to another. You know, in the States, only Wensi had a job, and I didn't. If he had a new contract, we had to follow him and move to another place. Actually if we had bought a house when we got here in the first year, it would have been much cheaper. But we felt the first priority should be Yang's education. Money should be spent for him so that he could learn something, like the piano. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Qin, July 19, 2005)

In the stories lived in Yang's family, education was important including learning playing a music instrument. Yang's parents had good educations in China. In Wensi's and Qin's stories, they had been good students in schools and universities. They lived out the stories of good students/children to teachers/parents. Although the good education stories they had lived seemed to be interrupted by an insecure life in the US, they quickly picked them up when they immigrated to Canada. Qin had a "long-term plan" for Yang. The availability to go to piano lessons awoke Qin's memory of the stories she could not live but had wanted to. She registered Yang for piano lessons almost right away after he came to Canada and the Canadian school. Yang has been living the piano story ever since.

The conversation with Yang on June 1, 2004 was in the afternoon. I thought it could be longer than the ones we had at lunch break. But twenty minutes later, Yang seemed to remember something and said he had to leave earlier. He told me he needed to practice piano because he had piano lessons that evening. He went to the teacher's home for a thirty-minute lesson every Tuesday evening.

A few months after the conversation, I visited Yang's home for the first time. I saw his piano in the living room, where it took almost one third of the space. I also noticed the sheets of music notes on the piano. I knew piano was a lived story for Yang and Yang also knew I knew his piano story. I asked him one day if he would like to play a piece of music on the piano for me on the next visit to his home. "No" he replied as if there was no room for negotiation. I was surprised and had thought he would be proud and happy to have a show time for his talent because, in my impression, Yang was open and easy-going. He did not seem to be a shy boy. I was puzzled why he would not give my request a second thought. Now I wonder how much he enjoyed playing the piano. I wonder if practicing the piano was a story he lived for his parents, himself or, like the story of marks, was partly his and mostly his parents'. I remember in another conversation, he did not seem to be so enthusiastic about practicing piano:

I don't have more time to practice. Sometimes I have so much homework. I do it till like ten, eleven. Like sometimes I just don't have enough time to practice every day. Sometimes I'll only practice like thirty minutes, forty minutes. Some days I can't practice at all. Too busy. My other friends are like that too. But some, they probably just squeeze it in their schedule. I have a life too. (Tape-recorded conversation, September 28, 2004)

Here I see at least three competing storylines: schoolwork, practicing piano and his "life." His homework took much of his time. Little or sometimes no time was left for piano practicing. He implied if he squeezed time for practicing piano, he would not be able to do something he enjoyed, which he called "life". He drew a clear line between

schoolwork and practicing piano, and his “life.” It seemed to Yang, schoolwork was mandatory and practicing piano was mandatory to a certain aspect. Both competed with the stories he liked to live, his “life.” In the same conversation, Yang said:

I study, I try to... I play a lot of Saturday though. Saturday I usually play. I don't like to put Saturday into piano. I like to rest on Saturday. And Sunday. Well, I do homework on Sunday. (Tape-recorded conversation, September 28, 2004)

It seems the “sixty percent” of Yang's stories was those he considered to be his “life”. He reserved a choice to live these stories on Saturdays.

Qin noticed Yang did not practice piano every day. She might not be aware that Yang did not practice every day because he had his own stories he wanted to live, which came out of his own interests as a boy. He had much work from school. He had school stories he had to live:

Well even if I don't do good, I can't blame myself now because I have no more time now. I have hardly any time. Mostly it's all homework. I study less than doing homework. I study way less than doing homework. I still study but sometimes when I have a lot of homework, I can't open my book. I won't, I won't be able to study on that day like, I have a test tomorrow... And I'm supposed to go over to my friend's house. We two study together... And he needs my help on homework sometimes. (Tape-recorded conversation, September 28, 2004)

From the above description, I see two competing plotlines: homework and study. I see

homework for Yang was the work he must finish before the due time. Study was what he wanted to study for, either out of need or interest. In his study-related stories, as he described above, there was one more plotline in which Yang was personally involved: "I'm supposed to go over to my friend's house. We two study together... And he needs my help on homework sometimes." I understand this was a story Yang called "life." For Yang, homework, study for the tests and practicing piano could be stories lived for "others," such as teachers and parents. Stories of being with friends, such as being with the boy who needed Yang's help doing math assignments, were those he lived for himself. Studying and practicing piano were stories to live, but he enjoyed some freedom to choose a "life" to live.

Seeing Yang practice less than she thought he should, Qin asked him if he would want to continue or quit piano lessons. Yang said he would not quit. He had lived the story of piano for many years. He lived out his parents' stories of him for years and it had become his story and a rhythm of his life. He might not feel practicing piano always to be an enjoyable story to live; but he might also like to stay within the story of learning, practicing and getting better at it.

In this section so far, I showed that Yang tried to live out his parents' stories of him such as getting good marks. In the stories of going to piano lessons and practicing piano, I see how the piano story came to him through his mother's telling of the stories she lived. From the piano stories, I also got to know how Yang lived out competing stories in his life. He had school stories to live such as doing homework and studying for tests. He had parents' stories to live out such as practicing piano. Apart from these

stories, Yang had a “life” he wanted to live, which was composed of the stories he wanted to live for his own happiness. Sometimes he had to balance his time on how to live competing stories. For example, when he had homework to finish or when he had to study for tests, he would do less piano practicing. It seems Yang would always save some time for his “life” as he said “Saturday I usually play.” Yang lived different parts in the three competing storylines, as a student, a son and a boy who had friends and interests of his own. In the remaining part of this section, I bring forth one story of Yang from Qin’s telling so that we see how Yang came to terms with competing stories.

Like many boys, Yang liked computer and computer games. “That’s a good thing because I get the computer” (Tape-recorded conversation, June 1, 2004). Yang took the advantage of being home alone while his parents took his sister to grocery shopping. He liked playing computer games. He could tell many stories about video games. Since the family moved to where they are now living, he made friends more easily because they lived closer to each other. He could visit his friends’ homes and they could visit him in his home. He and his friends lived stories together and he could tell the stories of his friends and his own of being a boy, a Chinese boy, and a student in River’s Edge. He told stories about who his friends were and what he wanted from his parents. One time, he asked his parents if he could own a video game by convincing them that all his friends had it. He wanted to have the same story told of himself. Qin and Wensi might not be so willing to spend much money on a computer game for Yang, but it seemed they had to:

The boys are crazy about it... Especially, a neighbor’s child... They had it a long time ago. Yang went to their birthday parties (and knew it)... Some of his

Chinese friends had it and his Canadian friends also had the game. So, I thought, well, since other families' children had, so should Yang. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Qin, July 19, 2005)

It was hardly Yang's parents' story of paying two hundred and twenty dollars for a video game. Qin negotiated with Yang if he could wait a few months till the Boxing Day sale when it might be sold at a discount as a friend told her. It seems Yang knew he could live his story of owning a video game easier if he accepted part of his parents' story. He agreed to wait till December. On Boxing Day morning, Qin and Wensi went out early, leaving their little girl with Yang. To their disappointment, the game was not on sale, but at the regular price. Qin phoned Yang and asked if he could wait one more week because she just got the following week's flyer, which said for a purchase of \$200, one family could get \$30 rebate. Yang had been waiting for three months. He could not wait any longer for a video game to tell the story of having it. He lived Mom's story of waiting three months, but not her story of saving \$30. He said on the phone: 'Mom, I have already waited so long. If you didn't buy the game today, I would be very angry.'

Qin could have pushed her story a bit harder, but she did not. At the moment she dispositioned herself and thought of Yang as a son in the family, who had done his share and deserved a story to live for his own:

When we just moved here, my daughter started her kindergarten. Since last year, last September, sometimes, Wensi and I worked late. Then none of us could go to pick her up. So I called and asking Yang to help pick up his sister. He was

fourteen and was eligible to do things like this. Yang helped me many times, not just one or two times. He helped us and we need him to be helpful. I thought we should award him for that. Then I said I would buy him the game. (Tape-recorded conversation with Qin, July 19, 2005)

Finally Qin bought the game as promised. She thought she did the right thing:

The child had already compromised. He agreed to wait from September till Christmas. He had been waiting for three months... I thought we could not disappoint him just for \$30... We promised and we prolonged the promise. It did not seem to be right... So we bought the game. (Tape-recorded conversation with Qin, July 19, 2005)

Qin probably could have been much happier if what Yang had asked for was a collection of piano tunes because that would have been the story she wanted Yang to live. But the reality was Yang had stories that sometimes went away from the plotline of his parents' stories. Qin and Wensi might prefer that Yang spent more time on schoolwork or the piano, instead of computer games; but their caring for Yang's happiness, respect for his "life" and being aware of Yang's contribution to the family, pulled them back from imposing some of their stories like saving \$30 over Yang's. By doing so, they prevented turning more healthy competing stories (Clandinin, et al, 2006) into more harmful conflicting stories (Clandinin, et al, 2006). Conflicting stories might hurt Yang and might be too much for him to feel willing to accept mom and dad's stories into his storied worlds. Accepting other's stories and avoiding imposing one's stories into other's

maintained a trustworthy relationship in Yang's family, which helped create a space for Yang to live out competing stories with a peaceful mind.

It would be lovely if there were no competing stories in the family. As I noted earlier, Yang was not physically strong when he was little. In Qin's words: "For a long time, we did not allow him to run and jump." But one day in the park, Yang insisted that he slide down the slide by himself. Qin did not encourage Yang to do that and she would rather Yang did not had such an idea. On second thought, Qin told herself: if Yang had not had the confidence, he would not have made the request. Qin gave Yang permission. She trusted him. Yang wanted to live a story of his own and Qin let him live it. This might be one of the very early competing stories Qin and Yang experienced. Here, I would like to believe one reason for Yang's being "reasonable" and "docile" in Wensi and Qin's stories for him is because Yang was trusted and allowed a space to live stories of his choice.

Living Fitting-in Stories

Yang came to the U.S. with his mother in 1998 to be with his father, who was involved in a post-doctoral research project there. In March that year, his parents for the first time registered Yang in school, an elementary school in a New England state. When Yang was in the school in the US, Qin and Wensi were not certain about their future. They had a few choices. Wensi came to the US with three of his colleagues from China. Two of them went back to China after their research projects were finished. Wensi could take the family back to China like them. He could also try to find other research projects

and stay for another year or another few years. Yang's parents quickly decided they would choose to stay in North America when they learned the stories of immigrating to Canada from their Chinese friends (Tape-recorded Conversations with Qin, October 24, 2005; Tape-recorded Conversations with Wensi, April 2, 2005).

Qin and Wensi *chose* for themselves and for their son, Yang, as well, to immigrate to Canada and live there. They chose to adapt to new stories they thought they needed to. Reading through Yang's and his family stories, I felt their efforts and sometimes struggles as he and his parents lived to adapt to new stories that were different in many ways from those stories they lived in China. Despite the difficulties, the stories they lived in the US and especially in Canada, where they have lived since 2000, seemed to be interwoven by a plotline of "fitting-into" these new stories with a positive attitude. The fitting-in stories they lived out were mostly by active participation. In this section, I will follow another "something", a thread in the stories Yang and his family lived to fit into new lives in the US and Canada.

Yang came to the US speaking no English. Qin's second language was Japanese. When they arrived in the US, only Wensi spoke English. When in China, Qin took care of Yang in almost every aspect. Yet, she found she could hardly do anything to help Yang when he was in the US school because she could not speak the language. "I could not speak a word of English" Qin told me. For the first six months in the US, Qin did not answer the phone: "I dared not answer the phone. I remember the first English sentence I had to learn was 'I don't know English'" (Tape-recorded Conversations with Qin, October 24). In China, Yang was always within the care of his mother and grandma. I

can imagine how hard it was for Qin to hear the story of Yang's first lunch in the school:

I remember I asked him what he had for lunch when he came back the first day. He said he had pizza. He might have asked for pizza by pointing to it. (Now Yang likes pizza the most, like the pizza from Pizza Hut. Then he had not got used to it yet.) He took a bite and wondered what it was, weird. It was different than Chinese food. He did not like it. He mustn't have enjoyed his lunch... We couldn't do anything about it. Just like this, you imagine, two months of grade one was over (from March to May). I really did not know what he had learned (in the school). And I could not help him anything because I knew no English at all. (October 24, 2004)

Qin could do little for her son just because she could not speak English. Because Yang spoke very little English at the time and knew almost nothing of the stories of food and lunch in his American school, he was not able to choose the food that he might have liked better. Because of their inefficiency of speaking English, both of them were not able to ask for help to make their life easier. Qin also worried that Yang would learn very little if he could not pick up the language quickly enough. It seemed learning English well was the decisive story to live in order to make life easier and comfortable. From the conversations with Yang's parents, the first "something" I read to "fit into" the stories of living in the US and Canada was to learn good English.

In the conversations with Qin and Wensi, I read their fitting-in stories as not negative and passive experiences. They lived the fitting-in stories in order to live a better life. In China, they lived many fitting-in stories such as studying hard to enter universities

and graduate schools, and even doing research abroad. In many ways, living fitting-in stories was the way to better lives. When Qin spoke of why she sent Yang to piano lessons, she said: "Both Wensi and I grew up in ordinary families. Maybe not only our families, I guess, in China 80-90 % families were not able to let their children to learn to play musical instruments..." (Tape-recorded Conversation with Qin, July 19, 2005). If it were in China, going to piano lessons would be a fitting-in story only for the privileged. To live out a fitting-in story like this would lead to a good life, if not a better one. It would not be a negative experience of coercion, but rather an effort to improve the quality of life. Qin and Wensi were voluntary immigrants. They chose to live and bring up their children in Canada. Thus, to them, learning English was a story they chose to live to better their lives in Canada. It was a fitting-in story of choice.

Qin and Wensi worked hard to learn and improve English and were also eager to see that Yang learned it faster and well. Wensi and Qin, in two separate conversations, told me how excited they were when they saw Yang on the stage playing an Apollo astronaut. Wensi remembered and described in detail Yang's role, a Mississippian and a crewmember of one of the Apollo moon-landing missions. Yang wore the astronavigation uniform, held an astronavigation helmet, and said his lines. Qin did not hide her pride and excitement: "In the play, Yang needed to say a very long passage. Really, I was excited that Yang was able to perform on the stage with other American kids" (Tape-recorded conversation with Qin, July 19, 2005). To be able to speak English and perform with American school boys and girls, to Qin and Wensi, seemed to be a successful fitting-in story that showed Yang could live the stories of the American school children

because his English allowed him to.

In the first few months in the US, Qin worried about Yang's English because she could not help him. After two and half months, when the school was over, Yang stayed at home and spoke Chinese. Qin worried that Yang practiced little English and his going "back to Chinese life" (Tape-recorded conversation with Qin, July 19, 2005) would slow down making progress in learning English. But Qin and Wensi were proud of Yang's "talent" of "picking up English fast":

Even though Yang went to school from grade one, English was not his mother tongue after all. In the beginning, he did not do language arts as well as the local children. But thanks to his talent in languages and coming here at a young age, he almost had no accent. I was not able to help him with the language. It was like he was thrown into the school. Half a year later, he could speak fluent English. When we moved to the south, he even picked up the southern accent. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Wensi, April 2, 2005)

Two or three months later (after Yang went back to school after the first summer vacation), he did not need his father any more. He did his schoolwork all by himself. (Tape-recorded Conversations with Qin, October 24).

To be able to fit into the stories of English schools, the primary and most important thing to do was to speak the language and use the language to live the stories that the English speaking children have been living. Qin and Wensi were relieved that Yang had a talent in languages and spoke English as well as the children for whom English was the first language. They seemed to believe a good knowledge of English

would surely help Yang fit into the stories of English-speaking schools.

Qin liked to see Yang be friends with Canadian children and fit into the stories because it meant Yang was *in* the stories. He was a player, rather than an onlooker in Canadian or American schools, which to her more or less were “their,” not “our,” schools. One time Yang brought his classmates home for a group project and it happened Qin was at home. As she told me the story, she emphasized that they were all Yang’s Canadian classmates and Yang spoke English with them. Of course, Yang spoke English at school. Qin must know that, but when she saw Yang speaking English with his Canadian classmates, she was impressed by Yang’s “fitting-in” well by doing a school project together with schoolchildren from a Canadian school. Working with Canadian children and speaking English were like a miniature of how to fit in in Canada. As Qin saw Yang was quite himself among his Canadian classmates, spoke the same language, and knew what he was doing and who he was and who his friends were, I imagine the Canadian school, River’s Edge, would become more and more like “ours” to Qin and Yang. She realized Yang fitted in and was in the stories.

From the stories Yang and his family shared with me and through the time I was with them, I knew the English language, especially to Qin and Wensi, was like a lifelong effort. They did not want to see English to be a setback story for Yang to live in Canada: “I hope [Yang] will work hard so that he won’t have any language problems. I don’t think he will have any problem at a job interview. I hope he participates in more activities” (Tape-recorded conversation with Qin, July 19, 2005). Earlier I touched the thread of “participating” in the stories of Yang’s piano lessons Qin signed him in. In

Qin's stories, to learn music instruments or sports was a kind of fitting into stories of the privileged, because the majority of Chinese when she was of Yang's age would not have a chance to participate in training lessons (Tape-recorded Conversation with Qin, July 19, 2005). She herself missed the chance of being trained in music and sports in which she felt she had interest and talent for. She believed unless one tried something, like piano, out, he wouldn't know if he would like it or do it well.

As in River's Edge, Qin and Wensi encouraged Yang to be part of almost all school-related activities. I remember I did not let my daughter "participate" in a sex education program. As a result, she was among the few grade seven students in the school library that whole afternoon. She later told me she was embarrassed being asked why she did not go. My thought was that a sex education program was too early for her. Just about the same time, I was in River's Edge doing fieldwork. One afternoon, in the school library, I saw a girl I knew from the fine art class. None of her classmates were around. She told me that all her classmates went to the sex education lecture. In a later conversation, I asked Yang about the sex education program. He said it would be the following week for his class. I asked if his parents would give permission before he could go. "They already signed" he said, "Mm ah ah aha ha..." (Tape-recorded Conversation with Yang, June 1, 2004). My thinking paused and I started to ponder. I did not allow JJ to go to a sex education lecture. I would certainly have done the same for a boy if I had had a son. I knew the girl's family immigrated from Hong Kong and I knew from JJ that most of the children who did not go to the sex education lecture were like her, of Asian heritage. I then thought of Yang's parents. I wondered who they were because at that

time I had not met Qin and Wensi. Now as I am rereading the stories of Yang and his parents' and thinking in the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, I see how the plotline of Qin's participating helps me understand the school stories Yang lived. His "Mm ah ah aha ha" told me the topic was somewhat embarrassing, but he needed to live the school story and his parents' "participating" story as well.

Yang had interest in sports: "...really I want to get involved in [school sports teams] too because there's a lot of cut outs and I, really I was really thinking of getting like more people into teams and everything..." (Tape-recorded Conversation with Yang, March 12, 2004). His mother noticed that: "I found he developed his interests in various aspects. Like, he got interest in volleyball and badminton. River's Edge had volleyball team and badminton team. He always wanted to join the team" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Qin, July 19, 2005). But Yang was not a strong child to Qin and Wensi. For this reason, they were careful about what sports activities Yang participated in. It seemed to hurt Qin's feelings that Yang was not on any of the school sports teams, especially when she knew Yang "always wanted to." As Qin realised Yang was growing stronger physically, she could not wait to encourage him to participate in school's cross-country race. Qin was not at all disappointed that Yang was not among the fast, instead she was just happy that Yang finished the race. Qin was glad to see Yang get stronger and "participate in more activities." In the summer of 2005, Yang was registered in three sports camps: tennis, badminton and table tennis. I met Wensi, his father, one day on the bus and learned that Yang also had piano theory lessons to attend to. I thought it would be too many "activities" for Yang. Qin definitely did not think so. She told me Yang

wanted to go to these summer sports camps. Yang had told her his classmates participated in more after school sports activities than he did. It seems it was a story from outside for Yang to go to summer sports camps, but it was also a story that Yang wanted for himself. It then became a fitting-in story of joy to live for Yang.

Yang lived many fitting-in stories his parents considered would help him live a good life. As Yang just arrived in the US, the fitting-in stories to live were to learn English so that Yang could get involved in the everyday stories such as choosing a tasty lunch like everyone else. Qin and Wensi were glad to see that soon Yang could speak English well and handle the schoolwork all by himself. But they knew English was not Yang's first language and they still paid close attention to Yang's marks for language arts. Under the thread of "living competing stories" I know Qin made a big fuss over Yang's final report card in grade four. At the teacher-parent conference, Qin asked Yang's language arts teacher how Yang could improve his English and do better for the subjects. From the story, Yang learned how important it was to do well for schoolwork and he did better and better in his marks after that. When Yang and his family immigrated to Canada, their life became stable. It seemed they started to live stories as Chinese Canadians. They were Chinese living in Canada. The fitting-in stories for Yang then were not only learning English to fit into Canadian schools better, but also learning Chinese to fit into the stories of being a Chinese boy living in Canada. While Yang was improving his English, Yang started to learn Chinese language from a Chinese school with other children of Chinese origin. Before Yang participated in the summer sports camps, Yang had been an active participant in the camps organized by the Chinese

Community Center: "... except this Saturday I'm gonna go camping so I'm not gonna go [to Chinese school]... I have to though because it's a community affair (the Chinese Community Centre)... I go with other kids (Chinese kids) because only kids go. And then we stay there for a day. I went camping a lot with um, the community centre" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Yang, June 1, 2004). To Qin, participating in Chinese Community's youth camps could help Yang "build confidence, develop interpersonal and self-reliant skills" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Qin, July 19, 2005). On the one hand, Yang was involved in the activities with the Chinese Community Centre to fit into stories living as a Chinese boy. On the other, a sense of self-esteem and interpersonal and self-reliant skills were stories to live to fit into a competitive free market. To his parents, Yang seemed to need to live these stories as they imagined future job interviews. From the participating stories Yang lived, I saw Qin's "fitting-in" stories were meant to help Yang live a good life.

The major "fitting-in" stories Qin and Wensi lived when they were of Yang's age were the stories of working hard to gain excellent marks and go to universities and graduate schools and eventually live stories told to be a good life. They successfully fitted into the stories encouraged and praised by media, teachers, friends and parents. Their efforts to live "fitting-in" stories were positive experiences. By living out the fitting-in stories, they made themselves experts and earned enviable titles as prestigious professionals. Yang was guided to live out fitting-in stories with a positive attitude. He once told me, "Every Chinese family expects you to have good marks" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Yang, March 12, 2004) so that I could understand his parents who

helped and encouraged him to do well in the school. It seems he also expressed the way he lived his life, which was to live and fit into stories being from a Chinese family. The fitting-in stories Yang lived were mostly from Qin and Wensi's belief that they would lead Yang to have a good life and that was also their experiences lived from China. They believed getting involved and being an active participant were to bring bright futures. To Qin and Wensi, this was a principle for living "fitting-in" stories. They seemed to have lived their kind of fitting-in stories with positive attitudes and by active actions. I see they guided, and may still guide, Yang to live fitting-in stories.

Living Stories of Playing by Rules

I understand Yang as a child who lived out many of his parents' stories such as getting good marks and going to Chinese school and piano lessons. Although Yang also wanted to do well in the courses, he knew his parents were very concerned with his studies in the school. However, learning Chinese and the piano were stories arranged by his parents for him to live. These stories started from his parents and Yang lived them out. Yang went to River's Edge and did homework and other things to live school stories. For example, he once expressed his idea about "studying" and "doing homework". To him sometimes the two competed against each other because he would not have enough time to "study" for a test, if at the same time he had a fairly large amount of homework to do. In the section of "living competing stories," I wrote that Yang had his *own* stories he wanted to live for himself such as doing homework with a friend who needed his help. To live these stores was, to Yang, was his "life". In these

stories, Yang was the initial player in the worlds of lived stories.

It seems I have come closer and closer to Yang from reading the plotlines of the stories he lived: “living as a Chinese boy”, “living competing stories” and “living fitting-in stories.” In this section, I will follow one more “something”, a thread I read to be “Yang’s stories of playing by rules.” It seems to me Qin had a *principle* for Yang to live fitting-in stories, which was to “participate in more activities.” Through Yang’s stories and the stories of Yang from his parents and my experiences with him, I read a “principle” Yang lived in his stories. It was “playing by rules.” The principle also served as a plotline I follow to understand his experiences of school. Yang shared his lived worlds with me and allowed me to be present in some of his classes. As just described above, Yang had a world of stories in which he lived his life with joy and his own initiatives. He lived these stories from “within”, which were somewhat different from the stories he lived from “outside”. In telling the stories of marks, Yang thought sixty percent was from “outside”, from his mom and dad. No matter the stories he lived were from within or outside, I felt his plotline of playing by rules.

In my field notes about Yang, on several occasions I described Yang’s backpack to be “big and heavy”. He carried it to the classes and to meet me in the chat room where we did our tape-recorded conversations. In our first conversation, Yang told me he carried “his heavy sack all the time” (Tape-recorded conversation with Yang, March 12, 2004) in case he would forget things. I wrote the following in a field note when I was observing in Yang’s grade seven fine art class:

The classroom assignment was finished a few minutes before the bell rang. The

teacher said the students should take the time to finish their journals. Bob, Yang, Carl, Ken, etc soon started writing. But Gary did not have a pen. He took a pencil from a nearby pencil box. It happened to be Yang's. Yang took the pencil away from Gary and told the teacher that Gary took his pencil from his pencil box without asking his permission. The teacher did not interfere. Gary really did not have a pencil to write with. Reluctantly, Yang let Gary use the pencil. The bell finally rang and the children rushed to the door. Yang came to collect his stuff. He said to himself or maybe to me: "I wonder whether they (Gary and another boy) returned the pencil. I don't trust them." I did see a boy (don't remember who) put a pencil back to the pencil box and said to Yang one boy returned a pencil to his pencil box. (Field note, Friday, Feb.20, 2004)

This piece was written at an early stage of this research. It was the third time that Yang appeared in my field note. I wrote it down because I felt the tension. At the time, I was concerned how Yang as a Chinese boy got along with his classmates. As a Chinese boy, Yang lived different stories, which might cause tension, I thought. This situation reminded me of my daughter's stories of her Canadian school: JJ was very uncomfortable if her classmates asked to use her pens. She did not mind her classmates using her stationery. What bothered her was the lent stuff seldom came back to her. It bothered her more because sometimes it was her friends that came to borrow but forgot all about it. In this case she had to say bye to her pens. She would not ask her friends to return the borrowed ballpoint pen because she thought doing so would ruin their friendship and she would not ask for her borrowed stuff from other children because doing so she would be

storied as a “stingy” girl. When JJ told me these stories, I tried to think narratively: In China, JJ’s story was that pens or pencils were bought one or two at a time. They would be with her for quite a long time. But here in Canada in the supermarket, pens and pencils were mostly purchased by packages. Children might not use them as carefully as JJ did and might easily forget about borrowing and returning. Thinking narratively of JJ’s lived stories in China helped me understand how she was living her Canadian school stories. To understand Yang, I needed to be patient to experience a little more about him. The recorded event might mean more than the surface meaning I was observing at that moment. Now, as I go through the conversations and field notes again, I read something else about Yang, which was different from JJ’s lived stories that helped me understand her confusing experiences in Canada. The “something else” was his stories of playing by rules. In the field note, I recorded that Yang was offended because Gary took his pencil from his pencil box without asking his *permission*. If Gary had done so, Yang might have lent him the pencil more willingly. Here I read some of Yang’s rules. First, students should have everything needed for school. He did so by carrying his heavy backpack “all the time”, to all classes. Second, one should not take things from somebody else without asking permission. Third, when conflict occurred, he went to the teacher for solution. It seems Yang had had similar unpleasant experiences that his classmates borrowed or took his things and did not return them to him. So he did “not trust them.” Not returning borrowed things and taking things away without asking permission were disturbing stories for Yang to live because children who had done so did not respect rules. The same would be true if Yang had lived such stories that his classmates asked for his permission

for using his belongings and returned with appreciation. Yang would have been satisfied. After all, it was a world of order in which stories were lived by rules.

Yang was concerned with rules and told his version of the school stories of rules:

And um well sometimes the school has some rules that I really think are ridiculous. Like some rules as in 'don't throw snowballs'. Even though I know it's dangerous, even, I really think snowballs are fun and if we do not throw it at their face I think it would be alright. But some people don't follow those rules so I still think it's part OK and part not OK. Some other rules such as... like not going to our lockers..., even though I don't go in my locker because I carry a heavy sack all the time, um I really think we should get a little bit of a, like a 30 second break to the lockers because that way we could get prepared and then we like don't forget as much, because there's a lot of kids that forget things... (Tape-recorded Conversation with Yang, March 12, 2004)

Yang told his stories of playing by rules in our first conversation. In the telling, Yang questioned some rules of the school. He picked up a particular rule story of the snowball. He cared about rules because they guided him on how to live stories in River's Edge. To him, an important "principle" in living stories seemed to be to follow rules. If they were bad, they could be "ridiculous". Since he respected rules, he wanted the rules to be good and reasonable: Why ban throwing snowballs completely? Why not change it by not allowing snowballs to be thrown at people's faces? But he knew some stories about some students who did not follow rules closely. He then accepted the rule but with reservation: "... it's part OK and part not OK."

Another story he told about bad rules was “not going to lockers.” As I was in River’s Edge, I knew Yang was talking about the transition between classes when students only had time to run from one class to the next. In order to live by the rule, Yang carried “his heavy sack all the time” in case he should forget things. It might be because of the rule that Yang lived some unpleasant stories like the one I discussed earlier. He realized “a lot of kids that forget things.” I imagine Yang would wonder: Why not fix it? Thirty seconds might solve the problem. If so, I would not have to carry the heavy sack all the time and students could have time to fetch things from their lockers.

From Yang’s telling stories of playing by rules in the school, I see rules created an important plotline for him to lead his life and live his stories. The following two incidents show the plotline of Yang’s living out stories of playing by rules. I observed Yang’s fashion class for several times. One afternoon, a few boys, instead of using scissors to cut their fabric, played with them. It seemed dangerous to me. I stepped in and asked them not to. As Yang was not far from me, he said to me: “They won’t listen” (Field note, Thursday, May 6, 2004). My immediate reaction was, because I had a special relation with Yang, he was trying to comfort me if the boys ignored me. He might care about me for that. But by reading this story alongside other stories and the following one, Yang’s warning meant more than my first reaction. A couple of weeks later, I wrote another piece about Yang in my field note:

Yang was sewing and Carl and Bob were sewing opposite to him. About 5 minutes before the end of the class, the teacher reminded the students of their

duties, some responsible for cleaning, some putting things back together... Yang asked: "Who is doing the floor?" (Field note, Tuesday, May 18, 2004)

This note tells me that Yang cared about rules and also about the rules being followed by everyone. Reading the previous field note again, I saw another facet of Yang's warning: "They won't listen". He was telling a story about his experiences of rules and living by rules. He had experienced some children in the school who did not take rules seriously and they did not respect rules they were supposed to. Because Yang lived his stories of playing by the rules, he paid attention to rules and rule-related behavior and stories. My first reaction probably was right because he might not have said something to me if I did not have this special relation with him. However, I would have missed the then untold stories about how much rules meant to him in living stories on the school landscape. I sensed a tension in Yang's living rule-related stories: On the one hand, he always lived by rules; on the other, some students just ignored them. He wanted so much a world of rules that he did not care if he was being nosy: "Who is doing the floor?" He certainly was not on duty that day because the field note continues: "When the bell rang, the instructor let the kids out. Yang went out of the classroom with his big and heavy backpack" (Field note, Tuesday, May 18, 2004). Yang's concerns with rules were not determined by whether or not he was involved. Living by rules was very much his *principle* of living stories in the school that could make sense to him.

At our first conversation, Yang told me stories about rules in River's Edge. He picked up two examples to explain his stories of bad rules of the school: "no throwing snowballs" and "going directly from class to class." A few places in my field notes,

discussed earlier, also showed Yang living his stories of playing by rules. Yang did not tell me living by rules was his principle of living stories. I sensed that living stories of playing by rules was a plotline within which Yang lived his stories through the stories he lived, told and my observation. I traced the plotline further to the stories he lived at home and at younger age. I felt continuity of this plotline. In the second conversation with Qin, she focused on Yang. In the conversation, I followed up Qin's story of Yang that he adored her little sister by saying "Yang is a good child." Qin could not agree more and said "Indeed." Then she quickly told me another story of how Yang did what he was told. "He trusted your words" I said when she finished the story. "He minded the rules. For example, while in playing games such as poker... if he realized someone was cheating, he would be badly hurt because he would not do things like that" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Qin, July 19, 2005). It is interesting when I read Yang's stories of rules and his mother's stories of him as a son who "minded the rules," I felt the continuity of stories lived in the family. However, at that time, I had not studied all the stories yet. I did remember in the first conversation with Yang, especially his story about snowballs. "You remind me of the 'rules' Yang told me about. It seems to him people should abide by rules and he would do so." I said. My words seemed to remind Qin:

He is like me in this aspect. I taught him this way. My daughter, Ying, and I had not lived together for two years. In my mother's opinion, she was a baby. As a grandmother, my mother was tender to her. But she used to be strict with us, her sons and daughters, the four of us. But now... in China... the only child [for a couple] is spoiled... My mother told me: Your brothers' and sister's children were

all like Ying. They did not criticize them if they did things wrong. My mother tried to tell me big kids were spoiled, so there was nothing wrong with Ying. Sometimes on the phone, I told them (mother, brothers and sisters) Ying needed my discipline. Of course, she is much better. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Qin, July 19, 2005)

Qin was telling me she used to discipline Yang the way she was doing to Ying. In the previous discussed stories under “living competing stories”, there was one about “rules” of watching television. Yang was only allowed to watch TV for an hour when he was younger in China. When Qin forgot about the time, Yang himself called his time up realizing he had watched for two hours. The stories of rules Yang lived had good reasons and they were from his mother. It seemed Yang understood the rules. He followed the rules and respected the person who set them. At our second tape-recorded conversation, Yang said: “I don’t need their (Mom and Dad’s) help because the homework is already easy. But um I get help, I get um a lot of encouragement um and I get discipline and I get um, yeah and they expect me to do good” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Yang, March 26, 2004). Yang said this to follow my wonder if his parents were very much involved in his schoolwork. That Mom and Dad helped him when he needed it and encouraged him to do well in school could have answered my wonder about Mom/Dad and his schoolwork. But in the stories lived at home, besides care and help, there was *discipline*, which was as important as the stories of getting from help Mom and Dad. Yang’s stories of discipline were his stories of living by rules and he had been living them for a long time.

Yang had started living stories of rules at the time from when he was little. Living stories of playing by rules was a plotline and that “something” in Yang’s lived stories. The plotline can be traced to the early stories Yang lived when was at a young age. Qin might say she would not do like her brothers and sisters, who “spoiled” their children. Instead Qin might “criticize” or even “scold” her children if they had done things wrong. To her, this was a way to set rules for proper behavior. Qin felt Ying “was better” because she was living the stories of playing by rules like Yang used to. Looking into the future, Qin could see Ying becoming more and more like Yang, “docile” and “reasonable” because she was teaching the same way she had taught Yang. As for Yang, I wonder, having lived stories of playing by rules since a young age, how stories of rules would shape him living in his storied worlds as a person and Chinese living in Canada.

Chapter Four

ATOOSA: "FRIENDS ARE LIKE MY NUMBER ONE THING"

Meeting Atoosa

I first met Atoosa on September 15th, 2004, about ten months after I entered River's Edge. While I initially had several children interested in participating in the research and talking about their experiences of school, only Yang was able to continue. The others either lost their enthusiasm or told me their parents were too busy to participate. In the fall 2004, I continued to seek interested children and families as participants. I used to teach ESL in a college in China. When I learned River's Edge had ESL programs for students who came with limited English, the school principal, Jean and I agreed that I found interested students in the ESL class. The principal introduced me to Nora, the ESL teacher. Jean explained briefly our idea that I could meet students in her ESL classroom, who might be interested in participating in the research. Nora said she remembered seeing us in the school. My frequent appearance on the school landscape seemed to pay off when Nora welcomed me into her classroom. She listed a number of names of students she thought I might be interested in talking with and asked if I wanted to come immediately to the ESL classroom, explaining there were students there. I was more than happy to follow her to the classroom.

The ESL classroom was in the general office area. No other classrooms were around. It neighbored the principal's and vice principal's offices. Two ESL students were in the room. As I was asking Nora about her schedule, several more students came in.

One of them was a tall girl. Nora introduced her to me. She was Atoosa, a grade eight student from Iran. "Do you live with your parents?" Nora asked. Atoosa said "Yes." Nora told me in the back of the classroom there was a smaller room where I could have a private conversation with Atoosa. It was a nice place, in which there were two chairs and a desk. I asked Atoosa to sit in a chair. My first notes of Atoosa were as follows:

Her smile was sweet. Her eyes were shining with expectations. Atoosa seemed to be enthusiastic about being needed. I introduced myself and explained what I was trying to do in the school. When Atoosa realized I was looking for students' experiences of the school, especially the experiences of students of other cultures than the mainstream one, she expressed her eagerness to tell her stories. She said it was hard to have friends because she could not speak English well enough. I explained to Atoosa that this project also needed parents' participation. I asked if it would be possible for her mother and/or father to talk about their experiences of school with me. Atoosa was quite positive. She said her mother was a medical doctor but also a teacher. "She shouldn't have problems talking to people..."

Atoosa said. I said to her that consent forms would be prepared for her and her parents soon if she felt comfortable. She happily said "Yes." Atoosa wrote down her full name and home phone number for me at the end of the conversation

(Field notes, in River's Edge, Wednesday, September 15, 2004)

The first meeting with Atoosa was beyond my expectation. I was very happy that it seemed Atoosa trusted me at first sight. Two days after the first meeting with Atoosa, a letter from River's Edge was requested and a set of consent forms were prepared for her

to take home. Atoosa took the letter and forms home on September 21st and, three days later when I was back in the ESL classroom in River's Edge, Atoosa returned the forms to me with her and her mother's signatures.

Atoosa and her Family

In the first research conversation (September 24, 2004), Atoosa told me her whole family came to Canada from Iran in January 2004 because her father was invited to join a medical research project with a major academic institute in Western Canada. Atoosa's parents were both graduates from medical schools. Her mother, Ramesh, was a medical doctor. Later, when I spoke with Atoosa's mother, she told me she was very proud that she had a position that was usually for men in her country: "I had a very, very good position, I think, because I take a position that belongs to men" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Ramesh, October 13, 2004). In later individual conversations with Ramesh and Atoosa, I learned Atoosa was very close to her maternal grandparents. Atoosa's grandmother was an elementary teacher and retired from the position of the school principal. In Atoosa's story of her grandfather, he was interesting and capable of many things. He tried many jobs. Atoosa told me she was surprised to know her grandfather once owned a store. Atoosa was the third of three children in the family. When Atoosa and her brother and sister arrived in Canada in January 2004, her brother was registered in a senior high school. She and her elder sister went to River's Edge. Atoosa was in grade eight and her elder sister in grade nine.

Atoosa seemed to be close to her parents, sister, brother and her grandparents.

Later in this chapter, I will say more about Atoosa and her family through hers and her mother's telling of their lived stories. In what follows, I use Atoosa's words to describe who Atoosa's parents were:

The father--

He loves to help people and he always likes to be [with] his children and his wife. And he says... when we go to shopping, he buys whatever we want. And he said, 'Well, this one is better.' and, bought the expensive ones and he always wants we have the very best. Yeah, he always works, always works... and like till seven o'clock or something and he says, 'I work just for my children and for my wife because I want them to have best life so they don't feel bad or uncomfortable...

(Tape-recorded conversation with Atoosa, October 8, 2004)

It seems, in Atoosa's eyes, her father was a family person. He liked being with his family. The major plotline of his story of life was taking good care of his family. He wanted his wife and children to have the best of life. He worked hard to reach the goal. I could imagine that, Atoosa, as a 14-year old girl, when she described her father's words: 'I work just for my children and for my wife because I want them to have best life', felt her father's love for her, her brother and sister and her mother. Atoosa seemed to have felt caring and working for a good life were strong threads in her family stories.

The mother--

OK I think my mom is, well I mean here she doesn't work but in Iran she worked... She came home before us and when we came (from school), she was at home and [when we came home,] the table was ready for us and, and she made,

she made everything ready and when we came back and wash our hands and change our clothes and come and eat... But when we moved to a northern city, my mom came home very late about 4, 4:30, 5 but uh we, we came about 1, 12:30 something like this and everyday my mom make, made lunch ready for us and, and wrote a letter or whatever. Everyday she called and told us about what to eat for lunch. Yeah... [When] we moved to the new place, we didn't eat our lunch and we just ate chips or candies we had in Iran. We didn't eat our lunch and when our mom came home she was very sad. She said, 'Why you didn't eat your lunch, you can't get energy or something for you are students, you are growing, you have to eat.' And then we changed... and everyday ate lunch first and then we ate all the candies. Then my mom came home and she always had something for us like our favorite magazines, candies or some food... and my mom mostly always had something when she came home and that made us happy. And we really liked her. We loved her. And she was very good... (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 15, 2004)

In Atoosa's eyes, her mother was a loving and caring person, just like her father. But her mother was described in more detail in how she cared about the daily lives of Atoosa and her brother and sister. Atoosa picked one particular story to tell about her mother's love for them. No matter how difficult her work schedule, Atoosa's mother cooked lunch for her children. She called and left notes to make sure they ate properly to get "energy" to be students. Another interesting detail Atoosa told about her mother was she brought home reading materials, their "favorite magazines." I was impressed when Atoosa

commented that her mother's bringing something home was to make them "happy."

When Atoosa was telling the story of her mother, at the same time, she was telling it with appreciation. Atoosa storied herself as living in a family where the stories of caring were lived and also told. In this way, stories of caring became what the family valued.

From Atoosa's telling of her father and mother, I imagine Atoosa lived in a family where she could get the support she needed in order to do good work in school. Now, of course, Atoosa and her family live in Canada. Ramesh told me they would be happy to stay in Canada:

So because of my children uh, we decided to stay in Canada and... we'll do something about staying here at least if I couldn't be uh successful for immigration or something like that... Actually I'd like to have some visa from Ottawa. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Ramesh, October 13, 2004)

In Ramesh's stories, Canada would be a place for her children's future and a place to which she and her husband would try to immigrate.

This chapter is about Atoosa. By tracing the threads of the stories she lived in Iran and Canada, at home and school, I explored her lived stories in the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) to understand Atoosa, an Iranian girl who just started to live in a new school, River's Edge, in a new country, Canada. In my reading of my field texts, I wrote around the following narrative threads: "living stories of "who I am", "living family stories and fitting-in stories", "living family stories and Atoosa's stories to live by" and "living on shifting landscapes".

Living Stories of “Who I Am”

In Iran, Atoosa was a good student. She worked hard and did well in the courses. Getting perfect marks was her way of being a good student. Being a good student, she was a popular girl: “I was friends with all of [my classmates] and I think there was nobody that didn’t know me in school” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 15, 2004). Living the stories of a good student with good marks was her life and who she was in Iranian schools. Shifting from Iranian school landscapes, Atoosa started living new stories in River’s Edge, a new school landscape in Canada. Living out a life of a good student was still in Atoosa’s plotline of life in River’s Edge:

Language is not a big problem for me in math; but I’m trying to, to be good at it. I may have no problems in math because it’s just numbers. But I have problems in social. There are so many words I don’t know. I use my dictionary and that’s very good, that really helps. Social is very hard because the words are so hard. I just don’t have much of that vocabulary. The textbook has lots of words and sentences. That’s why it is hard. I don’t have language arts since I have ESL instead. And I do my science in ESL class. But they say they may transfer me to regular science class after Christmas. I don’t like it because science is very hard because social is already hard. If they send me to science regular and now I have social regular, it will be very hard. I can only do one of them in regular class. If I do both in regular classes, I will get a very low mark for social and I will not understand science well. That’s why I don’t like them to transfer me. Also, I think the thing that can’t happen to me about school is low marks. That will be

very, very sad. I may talk with them about it. Yeah. It's so hard if you have low marks and if you can't pass tests. That's very bad. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 8, 2004)

Marks defined who she was. Atoosa found she could do math well in River's Edge. But some other subjects like social studies were difficult because she had to learn new vocabulary. Atoosa appreciated the ESL program because she could get better marks if she could do the courses in the ESL class. She worried that she would get low marks for science because there was talk about transferring her to the regular class for science. She thought it was too hard for her to do both social studies and science in regular classes. She worried she would get low marks for both of them. Having low marks was not part of her stories to live by. It was a story that did not belong to her as she said: "I think the thing that can't happen to me about school is low marks." There might be various reasons for students whose first language was not English to be in the ESL class. But Atoosa's reason was to live out stories of a good student with good marks. She was a new student, an ESL student who was not yet familiar with the complexity of the stories of River's Edge. But one thing was clear for her, that is, she needed stories to identify herself as a good student. "I may talk with them about it" she told me and herself. She was thinking of "talking with them", the teachers, the principal, and whoever she thought might have made that decision to send her to the regular class for science.

In one conversation (October 15, 2004) in River's Edge after school, Atoosa began the conversation by telling me about a volleyball game: "Today I went to watch a volleyball game in the gym and I spent all my lunchtime in there. I really enjoyed it. I

liked the B's team. They played amazingly well." Suddenly she changed the topic and said, "Today we got our report cards and I didn't really like it. I should have got ninety or more." Since it was the first time she had talked about sports, I ignored her comment about the report cards and asked if she liked playing volleyball:

Actually I love basketball, but I can't be in team because they practice long after school till very late like 7 or 8 o'clock sometimes. Then I can't study like for quizzes or my homework and that makes my marks come down. So, I didn't go to the basketball team. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 15, 2004)

Atoosa "enjoyed" watching the volleyball game. But it could not prevent her from thinking of the report card and her marks.

I once asked Atoosa to do a drawing for me about her life. The drawing was of geometrical shapes and lines. Scattered through the drawing were several recognizable objects: a ball, a book, an artist's palette, piano keys, and an honor roll with a prize ribbon on it. Atoosa loved the fine arts. She told me that for all the courses, core courses and options combined in River's Edge, she had the highest mark in drawing. Her mother told me Atoosa went to piano classes in Iran and could play very well. Atoosa's interests in arts, music and sports were all part of who she was. It seemed, however, the most important story to live as a good student was to get good marks. Being a good student, a prize-winning student, was the story with which she identified herself. The prize ribbon seemed to be the strongest thread in Atoosa's lived stories as a student in Iran and at River's Edge. She loved sports and basketball in particular and might join the team only when it would not interfere with her studying for tests to get good marks of "ninety and

more”.

Atoosa was concerned about her image as a good student:

In here like I don't know like some [English] sentences. This may make everybody think I don't know. But if I went to like somebody that he or she was Persian and I went to his office and I knew many Persian sentences, I could speak fast without making any mistakes. I knew the right words to ask for what I wanted to ask. It would make people imagine like I am, like being very good. But in here I don't know any of those kind of sentences and I can only say, 'Hello I'm so and so, an ESL student. I want to, I need to talk to you about this subject'.

You know I just know these sentences to say who I am and what I want. (Tape-recorded Conversation, December 10, 2004)

In Iran, she knew how to present herself in her mother tongue and how to speak for her needs and her classmates: “In Iran we didn't have like exams on the same day. If this thing happened, one person in class and usually that person was me because I was a very good student, would go to the main office to negotiate with the teachers” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 26, 2004). But in River's Edge, Atoosa worried what the teachers would think of her if she could not speak good English. She worried she might be storied as a student who could not speak a language well. She worried she would be storied as an incompetent student who she was not and had never been.

In order to learn well and get good marks, Atoosa preferred to stay in the ESL class. When “they,” her teachers, were talking about having her take science in the regular class, Atoosa was frustrated. She thought doing social studies in the regular class

was already hard. If she had to be in the regular class for science, she might have low marks for both social studies and science. She was thinking of “talking with them about it.” Atoosa later expressed how she was troubled by her experiences in regular classes:

I don't want to be like in the regular class. I don't like to be a student who needs special help. I really don't like that. I want to be like everybody else. I don't want to be treated as an ESL student in regular classes. It just, like before in my social class there was a teacher sitting beside me and yeah I was like so special. I don't want to be like that. Yeah and because if I say I'm an ESL student, then [the classmates] won't think I know a lot of English. I'm not afraid to say I'm an ESL student, only not in the regular class. I don't want to be like a special student. I want teachers to give me extra help with my studies like at lunchtime or after school, but I don't like this to happen in the class. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, May 19, 2005)

The dilemma Atoosa faced was being who she comfortably wanted to be. She wanted to be who she had always been in Iran, a good and respectable student. In River's Edge, she tried hard to fit into the plotline of being a student who did a good job in schoolwork. Being an ESL student and in the ESL class were fine because she knew it was a way she could compose a life on the new school landscape close to the one with which she was familiar. She could get good marks because, in the ESL class, she got the needed help and attention from teachers. She needed extra help and wanted to be helped because she could learn better and get better marks this way. However, if the help made her visible in front of non-ESL classmates, she would rather not have it. She did not want to be storied

differently from the rest of the class. She did not want to be storied, among her classmates, as an inferior student, an image that conflicted with her story of who she was. Atoosa needed help, as she said, at lunchtime or after school, but not in the classroom, in front of the non-ESL classmates.

Atoosa had her favorite teacher, her social studies teacher:

My favorite teacher is my social teacher and I think she's very, very amazing.

Yeah. She tries to speak easy. But like my other teachers, not all of them but some of them, speak very hard even though they know I'm an ESL student. Some teachers can't speak easy like my social teacher. I don't know. Yeah. My social teacher is wonderful. Yeah I don't know if I can say but I just know she's amazing. She tries to speak very easy. She's very kind and like even though I think social is the hardest. But this teacher makes it easy for me. Like, now I'm trying to study my social by myself like at home. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, December 10, 2004)

Even though "social is already hard" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 8, 2004), Atoosa liked her social studies teacher. She was Atoosa's favorite teacher because she attended to her needs as an ESL student, who wanted to do well in the course even if it was a totally new one. Atoosa had "problems in social" because "[t]here are so many words I don't know" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 8, 2004). The social studies teacher made the subject less hard by "speaking easy" which, for Atoosa, allowed her to understand the new subject. Atoosa wanted to learn courses well

to be a good student in River's Edge. She appreciated her social studies teacher for being "kind," "wonderful" and "amazing" as she tried to make the course comprehensible for her when reading was daunting because of "so many words I don't know." Atoosa wanted all her teachers to be like her social studies teacher and to teach in ways that helped her learn well.

In Iran, school ended at noon. Students then went home to study by themselves for the rest of the day. Atoosa was happy that she could now study social studies at home just as she had done in Iran. I would imagine studying at home was a familiar story for Atoosa. She had lived in Iran as a conscientious student who was good at learning.

I wonder if Atoosa did go to "talk with them about it." In our conversation after Christmas 2004, Atoosa was in the regular class for science:

The hardest subject is science now. They sent me to the [regular] science class for this unit. It was pretty hard for me in the regular class. Well, usually [in ESL class] we didn't have any homework because I used to do it in the class. So it was easier. Like, it's so good, like so open because ah, well the teachers would work with you and explain for you. But [in the regular class] like the students ask questions in the class. I was afraid if I did so, everybody knew the answer except me. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, May 19, 2005)

Atoosa's stories of her experiences in the ESL class and in the regular class were different. The ESL class, in Atoosa's words, was "good", "open" and "easier". The teacher worked with individual students. In the regular class, students seemed to be more confident in what they were learning. They asked the teacher questions without hesitation

in the class. Atoosa was afraid she might make a “fool” of herself by asking questions to which everyone knew the answers except her. While she took her social studies in the regular class, the social studies teacher was Atoosa’s favorite. Atoosa was happy that she could now study the course at home by herself. Because of the social studies teacher’s attentiveness, Atoosa was able to do the homework for social studies at home by herself. Doing homework at home or doing courses in regular classes did not bother Atoosa when she was able to learn the course well. She might not need to ask “stupid” questions if the other teachers in the regular classes were like her social studies teacher who “tries to speak easy.” I imagine how frustrated Atoosa was when she wanted to live out her stories of being a good student that she believed she should be and that she had always been in Iran because to live out stories to be who she thought she had been in Iran and wanted to be in River’s Edge was so important to Atoosa.

Last semester, after being in River’s Edge for one and half years, Atoosa finally entered a math contest:

We (she and her friend from the ESL class) took the math contest, which I couldn’t do it last year and I was really sad about it. I did it this year and my parents really encouraged me to do that. And so did my math teachers and my brother and sister too... I think I did well in it but we don’t have the results yet. I really wanted to do something like that. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, May 19, 2005)

Being able to participate in the math contest seemed to be a relief for Atoosa. Finally, in River’s Edge, she could live a story that told so much of who she was in her Iranian

schools. Atoosa won many prizes for the excellent work she did in subject matter contests in Iran. That was who she was in Iran, a prize winner. In the first year at River's Edge, Atoosa did not participate because her English was not good enough. In the second year, her last year in junior high school, she finally did. It was like a full circle for Atoosa to live out the stories that composed who she was as a student. Atoosa worked hard to learn and to live out the stories of being a good student, stories she had lived in Iran. She learned new stories to do well, look good and appreciate teachers.

Living Family Stories and Fitting-in Stories

Similar to how Yang and his family's experiences, Atoosa and her family came to Canada because her father was hired to contribute to a research project. He could have come alone to Canada to work on the project and have gone back to Iran when the project was finished. But Atoosa's parents made the decision to take Atoosa and her brother and sister to Canada. Before the decision was made, Atoosa and her family had many stories they composed about living in Canada. They imagined their stories of living in Canada from what they learned about Canada from friends, relatives and the Internet. I imagine there were stories about how they would "fit in" in Canada. Atoosa and her family may have imagined living in Canada as living out the most attractive stories, that is, the stories of Canadian education. Even though there were many good stories about living in Canada, it was not an easy decision to make for Atoosa's mother, Ramesh, a medical doctor:

I had a very good position in Iran. At first, I couldn't decide to come to Canada.

My relatives in Canada told us Canada was much better for children's education.

My husband and I finally decided to come to Canada and bring our children.

Because our culture is so different from Canadian culture, I didn't know whether my children would feel comfortable in Canada. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Ramesh, October 2, 2004)

Ramesh was uncertain if her children would feel comfortable in Canada. But the one thing that seemed sure was that Canada had a better educational system. She and her husband had been told many of these stories about Canada and Canadian schools. Even though the stories were mostly institutional, they became the decisive stories for Ramesh to leave her job and to help her children pursue better educations in Canada. Children and their education were the most important story to live in her life, "My children are so important. They are all of my life. I live because of them." In Iran, she and her family seemed to live their lives centering on children's education. Ramesh told me, "In Iran we paid one million Iranian rial for Atoosa and her brother and sister to go to private schools" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Ramesh, October 2, 2004). I can imagine how attractive Canada looked to them when they were told stories that there were no entrance examinations that high school graduates needed to take and pass to enter universities, and that public schools were available without tuition fees.

Atoosa lived many stories in her home country, her schools, friends and relatives. She was a very good student at school. She had many friends. She won many prizes from taking part in subject matter contests. I imagine it was hard for her, too, to leave the good stories behind:

Ah, when we were in Iran my parents were very happy that they were taking us to Canada to go to school. They thought my brother was happy too, but me and my sister were thinking about family. We wanted to be able to visit our families (grandparents and other relatives) because in Canada, we haven't relatives to visit. Except for my mother's cousin's family, we haven't anybody in Canada. They are just in Iran. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, September 24, 2004)

Atoosa had her concerns and worries about leaving home and going to Canada, a place which only existed in her imagination. But she knew her parents were happy because she and her siblings could go to good schools in Canada. Atoosa and her parents told the same stories, that is, they were going to Canada to have better education. Giving up stories of school life lived and enjoyed in Iran might be sad, but the sadness seemed to be made up by the possibility of living better and more comfortable stories of school in Canada. Leaving home was not easy. While Atoosa and her sister knew they would miss other stories about home, including visiting their relatives, especially their grandparents, whom they visited quite often, schools and education were the most important stories. She would have to learn to live without her grandparents living close by, and she was convinced by the good stories about Canadian schools:

My parents or anyone who once studied in Canada said in Iran the high school was very, very hard, and in Canada high schools were easier and going to university wasn't so hard... And something very, very good about Canada was students did not have to take entrance exams to go to universities as long as you were very good students. Iran was different. You couldn't go to universities

unless you passed very, very hard exams. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, September 24, 2004)

The meaningful stories about Canada to Atoosa were those stories of “easy” schools and no entrance examinations to universities. Although there were many things about Iran she did not want to part with, going to schools and universities were the major plotline of her and her family’s lived and told stories. If Canada was storied to be a place that provided good education, she would give up some happy stories of living in Iran such as visiting her families.

Atoosa, her brother, sister and parents seemed to have no regrets coming to a country of different languages and cultures because they knew the reason why they chose the route. They came to Canada because they wanted to live their lives in new ways. They came to Canada to continue living school stories on a new landscape that was storied as better for their children and future. It seemed they had to fit into the new storied landscapes of schools. Living stories with a fitting-in plotline became a family story:

On the first day (to school) I told [my children] not to wear the clothes they wore in Iran such as the thick and long jacket and the socks, and also not the scarf. And my children were frustrated not knowing what to do, ‘If people see us wearing differently, what would they say about us?’ (Tape-recorded Conversation with Ramesh, October 2, 2004)

Ramesh worried that her children might look different if they wore the clothes they wore in Iran. Atoosa and her brother and sister were “frustrated” not knowing what to wear to

school. Atoosa's mother imagined stories of being dressed right in order that Atoosa, her brother and sister could fit into the new school landscape. Atoosa was confused because it seemed that she had not lived such stories in Iran where she did not need to think about dressing right in order to be accepted. One way to think about Atoosa's frustration is to see that in Iran she just knew these stories so well that it had not bothered her before about what to put on to go to school, parties or meet friends. I imagine Atoosa might not have been worried about what to wear to fit into River's Edge so much if the story of fitting-in was not a family story being lived. Ramesh reminded her of it. Fitting-in stories lived at home seemed to be new in her life. In a conversation with Atoosa, she told how she became Atoosa, a new name to go by in River's Edge:

The second day after we got to our home in Canada, my dad took me and my sister to River's Edge. We were asked to take an English test so that they knew how much English we knew. And on that day they gave us a piece of paper to write the names we wanted to be called in the school. We had to choose my name and I said, 'I want to think about it', but my father said we should choose it very quickly. And because we chose very quickly, we just picked Atoosa, shorter and easier to pronounce in English. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 8, 2004)

This was another fitting-in story Atoosa lived, but this time she lived it with her father. For the past fourteen years, Atoosa lived her life with her Iranian name. Her name seemed to include the stories of who she was. Atoosa wanted to consider the matter seriously. She might need some time to understand the situation. But her father was

thinking more from the school's position, that is, they wanted his daughter to have an easier name. Atoosa's Iranian name seemed to be too long. The spelling and pronunciation seemed to be different. Atoosa's father might have thought, with an "easy" name, Atoosa would avoid being visible in embarrassing situations when her Iranian name was pronounced awkwardly. Atoosa might fit in more easily with her an easier name. Later, in another conversation, Atoosa told me that nobody she knew in Canada could pronounce her Iranian name correctly. But the story showed how ready Atoosa's father was for new stories for his children in Canadian schools. He hoped in this way Atoosa could fit into the new stories of River's Edge comfortably.

I phoned Atoosa many times. For several times, it was her brother who answered the phone. Every time he called out Atoosa's original Iranian name indicating the call was for her. But in conversations with Ramesh, she referred to her daughter to me, an outsider, by her new name. "Atoosa" was part of a fitting-in story, a new identity to be built as an Iranian girl living Canadian school stories. To Atoosa's parents and Atoosa, the fitting-in story that Atoosa had a new name was a story of hope and, perhaps, a compromise. Atoosa accepted living the fitting-in story with encouragement from her parents, who hoped it would help her live a success story as a student in River's Edge. With her original Iranian name, Atoosa lived family stories and Iranian stories in Iran and at home in Canada. The new stories lived under the name of Atoosa was a sign of Atoosa's new life shifting from Iran to Canada.

Atoosa's parents encouraged their son and daughters to get involved in Canadian school stories because it was the reason they brought their children to Canada:

But ah, me and my sister were in ESL together... Because me and my sister never were in the same class before; so that was very cool. Ah, at first everybody ... in our family said to us not to be together, be with others in the school. It's good for English: 'Your English will improve that way.' (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, September 24, 2004)

In order to fit into the new storied landscape of school, Atoosa's parents wanted her to improve her English. She needed to practice it with those who spoke English. That meant she should not be with her sister all the time rather with other classmates. However making friends and speaking English were not easy for Atoosa even though she wanted very much to do both.

Atoosa and her sister became friends in River's Edge⁹, Atoosa was happy that she found her sister to be her friend in the Canadian school. She could share her secrets with her sister. I wonder if Atoosa was negotiating between composing stories. One set of stories was about having close friends to share secrets with and the other stories she was supposed to live were to spend more time with English speaking classmates.

Ramesh also told me that Atoosa liked music. In Iran Atoosa went to music classes to learn to play the piano. But she could not resume taking piano lessons in Canada because she had homework to do in English. Speaking good English could help Atoosa negotiate a way between the competing stories and continuing to live past stories. She seemed to have to give up the stories such as being friends with her sister and going to piano lessons in order to live the "fitting-in" stories, which her parents thought to be

⁹ Atoosa's stories of friends written under the heading, "living on shifting landscapes," have more detail.

necessary for future success.

It seemed to Atoosa's parents that living fitting-in stories meant living out new stories. They encouraged their children to be part of Canadian school stories as much as possible:

Last night I went to [msister and brother's high school] at seven o'clock because their school had a Thanksgiving Party. There was singing and dancing. That was very cool. In this high school every year there's Thanksgiving celebration party. They sing in German and perform German dance. [My brother, sister and I] went together. We got there at six o'clock because my brother's friend was supposed to be there waiting for us, but he wasn't because something happened... So when we were there, there was nothing yet... and we didn't really like it. Then we went home... And my father said, 'Why did you come back?' We went back to the school and found things were getting more interesting... The dances had started and [so did] singing and eating. It was very fun. The party was over, I think, finished at nine o'clock. We stayed as my father told us until the end. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 8, 2004)

The children made an effort to live new stories of school because they were encouraged by their parents, because these school stories were stories their parents thought would be good for their futures. Atoosa, her sister and brother went early to meet a friend whom I imagined had lived this story of the school Thanksgiving party before. They might feel comfortable if they were with an insider who had more experience than they did. They were disappointed that their friend was not in the school waiting for them. They did not

really know what to do and what to look forward to. They did not like the situation they were in, knowing little about what was going on. The three went back home. But their father did not expect them to be back so soon. His question seemed to encourage them to return. They went back to the school at the time the party started. To Atoosa, the Thanksgiving party turned out to be “very fun.” It seemed that they liked the new experience and “stayed till the end” as their father had told them.

Atoosa and her family might give up something such as long Iranian names to “fit in” to what they saw as the dominant stories in Canada. This “something” given up was believed to bring forth something more important to their future stories to be lived in Canada. These fitting-in stories that Atoosa was living seemed to agree with what the family storied about living out Canadian educational stories. They gave up something to fit in. Yet, there were still stories they would try not to give up and would try to continue to live.

Living Family Stories and Atoosa’s Stories to Live By

In later sections, I describe how it was not an easy decision for Atoosa’s mother to make the decision to go to Canada because, as a medical doctor, she had an important position in Iran. Her mother, Ramesh, finally decided to leave her job and came to Canada because Canada was storied as a place in which her children, Atoosa, her brother and sister, would have good educations. In the previous section I described how Atoosa’s mother and father seemed to encourage Atoosa to live “fitting-in” stories in Canada. Atoosa’s parents seemed to want their children to fit into the Canadian school landscape,

to dress right and to have the right names. It seemed to them these fitting-in stories might help their children live better lives in Canada. Atoosa and her family had lived many stories in Iran before they came to Canada. However, the fitting-in stories were helping their transplanted roots grow well in Canadian soil, the roots of the Iranian stories were also nurtured and lived in Canada in the family. For the second visit, I wrote:

At 10:00 a.m., I was at the door. Ramesh opened the door as the doorbell rang. Leading me to the living room, she asked me to make myself comfortable. She said she would be back with me because she was in her kitchen clothes. The kitchen clothes looked nice to me... Ramesh told me she was baking in the kitchen. I asked if I could visit her kitchen. She said "Yes, but it may not be so tidy" as I followed her to the kitchen. In the kitchen, Ramesh said she was also making tea and proudly showed me a copper tea tray. She said she brought it with her everywhere. It was oval in shape and had two handles. It was different than typical round trays I knew in China. Ramesh made some tea and brought out a Persian New Year treat, baklava, a pastry of walnut, almond and coconut. Ramesh told me her mother mailed it to her grandchildren. This pastry (baklava), Ramesh said, was made and served particularly for the celebration of the Iranian New Year... Ramesh looked to be more comfortable and prepared for my second visit and knew what she wanted to say. "I want to tell you about our customs" she said. And then she started from baklava, the special pastry for the Iranian New Year. (Field Note, Wednesday, October 27, 2004)

I once asked Atoosa if she brought special things, presents or gifts, to Canada. She said

she wanted to bring her books and all the gifts her friends gave her to Canada, but because of the limitation of the weight of luggage, she had to pick only a few. I imagine the copper tea tray must be very special for Ramesh. Perhaps it was a symbol of “continuing identity” (Bateson, 1994, p.78). When we were at the table, she treated me Iranian tea and baklava, and started telling me about food, making pastry and celebrating Iranian New Year:

I want to tell you there are more than twenty kinds of pastry we make for the celebration. A major treat is called Samanoo, which may take more than ten hours to make. But I love making Samanoo because it is all about happiness... And everybody, poor people and rich people, makes the special pastry. Everybody celebrates the New Year. It's a tradition of more than two thousand years. It belongs to everyone. Yeah, it's the most important celebration. (Tape-recorded Conversation October 27, 2004)

Ramesh enjoyed being part of the celebration. Making a special pastry might be time consuming, but she liked living out a cultural story of that tradition. She emphasized the New Year celebration was every Iranian's holiday. It is a tradition for everyone, rich and poor. The New Year celebration seemed, to Ramesh, to bring the country together and the family together as well.

Ramesh started the second conversation telling about Iran, the birthplace of her and her family. She said, if I did not mind, she could tell me the whole story of Zoroaster, the founder of Zoroastrianism. From baklava to Zoroaster, from family to social change, Ramesh shared with me the stories of her roots: her culture, history, home

and family. The copper tea tray and grandmother's baklava and her trying to help me understand where the family was from and who they were let me see another narrative thread other than the one of "fitting-in" in Atoosa's storied life. Stories of the values the family cherished and "fitting-in" stories interwove into each other and mingled together in her telling. About six months after the second visit to Ramesh, Atoosa described a joyful story she lived to celebrate Iranian New Year in Canada:

[The Iranian New Year] was March 21st... And then we were lucky because it was really, really close to spring break. So yeah, it was just like my country. And like after that we had holidays. On that [the New Years Day] everybody ah, woke up in the morning like at the time. Like we didn't change the time. We just celebrated it [according to the Canadian calendar]. It was really, really good. And then everybody, the friends we have here, came to our home, and because my father and my mother are the oldest ones, everybody came to visit us first and then later we went to visit them. [In our tradition] the younger ones go to visit the older people and then after that older people go to visit the other ones. Yeah. Or like if we want to phone ah, we call all my uncles and my aunts first because in my father's family he is the youngest. But my mom is the oldest person in her family, like among their sisters and brothers, so we got calls from my uncle and my aunt and my mom called my grandmother. It was pretty fun. We had lots of good things and then in the spring break we went outside to enjoy some pretty places in here. Being with our friends [to celebrate the Iranian New Year] was fun. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, May 19, 2005)

It might look like a fitting-in story that Atoosa, her family and friends celebrated Iranian New Year by the Canadian calendar. However, as I listened to Atoosa, I thought it was more about living out a story of an Iranian tradition practiced in the family. It was “really, really good” to Atoosa. The celebration was like in Iran, a lot of “good things”, friends visiting, phone making and good wishes coming in from, going to families. Atoosa even brought Canadian school’s spring break and Iranian holiday for the New Year celebration together to feel a harmony of living Iranian stories in Canada. Atoosa knew many details of the stories of celebrating the New Year in her family because she had lived such stories many times in Iran. While she might live or have lived many stories to fit into the Canadian school landscape, I imagine stories of wishing other families the best on Iranian New Year’s Day was a story for Atoosa to live by as an Iranian girl living in Canada. She and her family composed their lives to live these stories in Iran and these stories continued to be lived out alongside the other stories of fitting-in.

Responding to my question if she had any concerns about Atoosa and her other two children living in Canada, Ramesh said:

I don’t worry about my children’s future in Canada. No. I’m sure that they can go to universities or colleges. I’m sure. I know my country is different, but my children, I think, can understand. They would respect some of our values. I don’t have anything to worry about them [living in Canada]. I know my children. I think they have good personality. For Iranian culture, I would like my children to always respect their parents, have good relationship with the family, love their

families. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa's mother, Ramesh, October 13, 2004)

Here, Ramesh tells me two major plotlines she wanted Atoosa, her brother and sister to live out, that is, getting an education and "having good relationship with the family." To do well in schools and go to universities, the children might need to fit into new stories of school such as making friends, keeping friendships, handling marks and so on. Atoosa and her brother and sister were good students in Iran and Ramesh trusted that her children could go to universities in Canada. The other plotline was composed out of familiar Iranian stories in which they would be as responsible family members. Ramesh seemed to have imagined competing cultural stories her children might encounter in Canada as she said Canada and Iran have very different cultures. She wanted to teach Atoosa, her brother and sister to "always respect their parents, have good relationship with the family". Ramesh's, and her husband's, lived and told stories involved caring for each other, their children, and their extended families. As Ramesh spoke, she said how she wanted her children to continue to live stories in which they would value family. These were the family stories they had lived in Iran and did not want to lose but to sustain.

Living on Shifting Landscapes

Before I move on to the plotlines of friends and marks that I follow to explore her experiences she lived on shifting landscapes, I revisit and retell part of Atoosa's lived and told stories in a few paragraphs.

The stories Atoosa told me were mainly about her school life in Iran and Canada.

In her stories of her family, the main thread was also about her stories of school. I can imagine as a teenage girl, her whole life was about school: her classmates, friends, teachers, courses, tests, marks and going to universities. The stories she dreamed most about as she planned to come to Canada were stories of better and easier education. These stories about Canada were also told in the family. When Atoosa's parents decided to go to Canada, the story they told of Canada was centred on living stories of education. Atoosa and her family sought to live out these stories.

Atoosa's parents were medical doctors in Iran. Their education and professional knowledge enabled them to live a good life. Ramesh said "Um, ... I had a very nice job, satisfying job in my country and our life was very, very good uh, comfortable and we had two houses in our country and we had lots of things..." (Tape-recorded Conversation with Ramesh, October 13, 2004). When Atoosa's father got an opportunity to work for a research project, the whole family came with him to Canada. Atoosa's mother with little regret giving up the job she was proud she was trusted to do. She said she had to be with her family: "Because of my children uh, we decided to stay in Canada" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Ramesh, October 13, 2004). She wanted to be with her children in Canada because, in her story, Canada was a place where her children, Atoosa and her brother and sister, could have good education on a less competitive landscape, and they could live good lives with that education.

Ramesh and her husband worked hard for their good life in Iran. As a medical doctor, Ramesh also knew stories of less fortunate women, who "had no right to choose the hospital and their doctors" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Ramesh, October 13,

2004). She considered herself to be lucky to have a “special” husband, who “understood me very well” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Ramesh, October 13, 2004). But luck could not be planned. Canada was storied to be the place that had a better educational system around going to universities. Canada was certainly not storied to be a place where women could not decide where to deliver their babies. Stories of how institutions shaped people’s lives seemed to be more dominant than stories of luck and personal hard work. Ramesh's lived stories told her education led to a good life. The stories she lived and heard were that Canada provided better and less competitive education than Iran. She was imagining that her children could have more fun in schools and, at the same time, go to universities.

The stories about going to Canada for Atoosa and her brother and sister had plotlines of going to good and internationally famous universities. Atoosa was a grade seven student in Iran at that time. Her older brother was in grade eleven. Atoosa knew a lot of her brother’s stories of studying for passing the entrance examinations to enter universities. In later conversations about her life in Iran, Atoosa told me she also lived her stories of taking all kinds of tests just as practice for the big ones. Studying hard and passing tests with good marks seemed to be the most important parts of Atoosa’s life as she told her stories of living in Iran. Atoosa might feel sad leaving Iran behind to go to an unknown country. She said: “Except a relative in Vancouver, we haven’t any family here... And we were lonely... and ah, when we were in the airplane me and my sister were crying...” Before they left Iran for Canada, Canada was a country that existed only in imagination and in cyber space. “When we were in Iran, my mother was always

searching Internet for Canada. What the weather was like in Canada. One day she... said, 'now in Canada is negative forty'" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, September 24, 2004). However, expecting to live a better and easier story of going to universities in Canada was the hope and comfort for Atoosa to leave her home country, Iran: "We came to Canada because we can study here and go to better school and university" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, September 24, 2004). Living in Canada made sense to Atoosa when the imagined stories of living in Canada were connected to her lived stories in Iran.

Before Atoosa and her family moved to Canada, they, together, storied Canada to be a place of better education and better life. Atoosa and her family came to Canada with their lived stories of Iran. Atoosa came to Canada with lived stories of Iranian schools. She was sad leaving her home country, her friends and grandparents. She and her sister cried on the plane. Because they were prepared for changing stories to live in Canada, Atoosa tried to learn to live different stories in Canadian schools. Canadian schools were different landscapes for living stories even though the stories were all stories of school. Thinking narratively in the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, I saw how Atoosa's past storied life influenced her present and might influence her future behavior. Atoosa was prepared to come to Canada for education. Canada was positively storied to her and by her. On the one hand, she looked forward to new stories of school; on the other, she lived her new stories as a person who had lived many stories in Iran. These new stories were on a different landscape than her earlier ones. With the "moving force" (Dewey, 1938, p.37) of experience, Atoosa imagined to live her past stories on a new

landscape. Atoosa also learned to live new stories on the shifting landscapes as she moved from Iran to Canada. Now, in the next section, I explore Atoosa's lived stories on these shifting landscapes by following two plotlines: plotline of friends and plotline of marks.

Plotline of Friends

In Iran, a very important plotline of school stories to Atoosa was friends: "Friends are like my number one thing." Friends meant so much to her that she said, "I really cannot live without a friend" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, May 19, 2005). Friends were the centre of Atoosa's school life in Iran. Atoosa loved being friends with her classmates. In her world of friends, they were close: "I had friends and they were very good and kind to me but ah, I think I should be closer to them to say my secrets" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, September 24, 2004). Atoosa needed close friends to share her world and her stories:

We were always together and we knew each other's secrets. If we were sad because of a teacher or other classmates, we would turn to each other and help and if something good happened, we would share that together... That was very good. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, September 24, 2004)

Her close friends were good students who studied as hard as she did: "...when I say my friends, I mean my close friends. They were hard workers like me" (Tape-recorded Conversation, October 15, 2004). Atoosa made friends with those who studied hard and had good marks as she did. In this way she was always encouraged to study harder:

If you were friends with somebody whose marks were not very good, your marks would come down too. But if you were close to those who wanted to get perfect marks, you would be likely to do the same. (Tape-recorded Conversation, October 15, 2004)

The memory of the lived stories of school in Iran often came back to Atoosa when she was in River's Edge: "[In Iran], me and my friends I mean me and my two other friends stayed in the school until twelve and we just talked, laughed and then that was so cool" (Tape-recorded Conversation, October 26, 2004). Atoosa described her "cool" stories of friends in Iran. She always had friends spending time together, "talking" and "laughing", and with whom, she happily composed her storied life of school. In the afternoon when school was over, Atoosa and her friends went home. They called each other to tell stories of their lived stories. Atoosa described one of her days in Iran:

I went to my home and [my friends] went to their homes and when we were at home at noon, we did homework, and then we phoned each other and we spoke about one hour and on until our parents [came home]. ... First we asked about questions ... like I had a question on that page. We talked about school, teachers, students or like what happened that day. Every day you could find something [to talk about] (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 26, 2004)

However, Atoosa realized her lived stories were not the same on the new school landscape. For example, Atoosa told me in one conversation that students in River's Edge could be friendly, but it was hard to develop a friendship to become close friends: "...some people in here were nice and I was kind to them too. But a few days later, they

wouldn't be with me anymore" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 16, 2004). I would imagine she had no friends with whom she could "talk" and "laugh" together for hours as she was new in River's Edge, a new school landscape. Atoosa looked forward to living similar stories to the ones she lived in Iran: "In here I don't have such close friends yet, that's why I miss them so much. I don't have any [close friends like I had in Iran]" (Tape-recorded Conversation, September 24, 2004). The stories of friends in River's Edge happened to be different. Atoosa did not have stories of close friends. The "cool" stories she and her friends lived in Iran could only be revisited in her memory. She longed for living stories of close friends. She missed her friends because she wanted to live similar stories in the new school. She hoped she could live the "cool" stories she enjoyed in her schools in Iran in River's Edge. She was a good student and had many friends and close friends. In Iran, she had no problems making friends: "I was friends with all of [my classmates], and I think there was nobody that didn't know me in the school" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 15, 2004).

Atoosa looked forward to living similar stories of friends in River's Edge. Yet, she found it was not easy to make friends. She storied the difficulty as arising from the language:

We don't know the language and then you don't know the language of some people, you, and you can't make ah, conversation with them and so it's hard to find friends... For example, I can't just say to my friends, 'Hi, how are you? What do you have next? How much homework do you have?' Just this, nothing else. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, September 24, 2004).

In Iran Atoosa had friends and also close friends with whom she shared her secrets. She knew she did not just say “Hi” to her friends, her close friends. She knew it did not work that way to make friends and keep a close relationship with friends. Friendship was composed of sharing stories with more than superficial information. Friends were what she enjoyed so much about school in Iran when she and her friends spoke the same language. She could share any feelings and stories with her friends in Persian. On a new school landscape, she found she was not able to enjoy school as much as she realized making friends was hard: “...some people in here were nice and I was kind to them too. But a few days later, they wouldn’t be with me anymore”. Atoosa had lived stories of having fun with friends in Iran. River’s Edge was “hard” to her “because everywhere humans need somebody to be with” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, September 24, 2004) and she did not feel she had people to be with. To be with somebody was a basic “human need” for Atoosa. It was not supposed to be so difficult because, in Atoosa’s lived stories in Iran, it seemed natural and easy to make friends.

Atoosa did not tell me she felt she was intentionally excluded out of a group in River’s Edge even though she felt confused that “[b]ut a few days later, they wouldn’t be with me anymore”. She was trying to live her stories of being with friends in the Canadian school. Atoosa found she and her sister were closer on the new landscape. Her sister had always been one grade her senior in school in Iran and never in the same class. In the new Canadian school, she and her sister were in the same ESL program and in the same classroom. Her sister became her close friend like the friends she used to have in her schools in Iran. Her sister was more than a sister in River’s Edge. She was a close

friend with whom to share secrets. She had a new story of friends, that is, Atoosa found a friend in her sister, who seemed to be merely a sister in Iran. It was a new story of “being with somebody.” Atoosa was excited she had her sister as her close friend in River’s Edge: “We were like very close friends and everybody in the [ESL] class was like . . . ‘They are lucky they are always together’. Like when she was in Iran, Atoosa now had a close friend, her sister, to whom she could tell her secret stories: “We know each others’ secrets” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, September 24, 2004). Being friends with her sister and sharing her secrets with her were a new story Atoosa learned to live out “being with somebody” on a new school landscape. Atoosa’s sister had already moved to senior high school when Atoosa was a participant in my research. She said: “We are not just sisters. We are friends to each other and now me and my sister love each other. Now, my sister tries to help me in everything and I try to help her in everything” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, September 24, 2004). On a shifting landscape, Atoosa not only lived new stories of friends but also new stories of herself and her sister. Stories of who could be friends shifted as Atoosa shifted from Iran to Canada.

In Iran, Atoosa’s close friends were those who, like her, were good students and well recognized in the school. Living her stories in River’s Edge, Atoosa found new meanings about who could be friends. Her sister became her close friend. She also learned to find friends among those who were not so visible as good students. She made friends with ESL students in her class. She tried to be close them. Instead of having lunch in the school cafeteria, Atoosa ate lunch in the ESL classroom because “...they eat their lunch in ESL room too so we talk and we laugh...” (Tape-recorded Conversation

with Atoosa, October 26, 2004). I imagine the closeness with classmates talking and laughing was similar to the stories she lived in Iranian schools. I imagine Atoosa might feel it “cool” to talk and laugh with classmates in ESL classroom.

At the conversation on May 19, 2005, five months after the previous one, Atoosa could not help telling her most exciting story she had been living in the past five months:

In the past few months, I found a really, really, really, really close friend and ah, she's Chinese. And we are now so close together. Well, now I feel really, really better than the past and well, then you have a friend in the school and then it makes things really easier than before. I get help and stuff. We usually spend lots of time together. Like after school and in the morning. (Tape-recorded

Conversation with Atoosa, May 19, 2005)

Till then Atoosa had been in River's Edge for seventeen months. In a few weeks, she would leave River's Edge for the senior high school. Having been in the Canadian school for three semesters, finally Atoosa felt that she was living out a story of being close to someone. The “really, really, really, really close friend” seemed to remind Atoosa of “cool” stories of being with friends, of spending “lots of time together”, of talking, laughing, sharing secrets, and helping each other when she was in Iran. She learned new stories about friends on her new school landscape, but she did not give up her hope of living a story of having close friends in school. She was excited and happy to reconnect the story of her new friend with the stories of friends she lived in Iran. New stories of making friends and being a friend sometimes might be frustrating and confusing, but Atoosa learned to live new stories of friends and to understand the new

stories. In Iran, she was a popular student and “there was nobody that did not know her in the school”. In River’s Edge, she shifted her orientation of living stories of close friends. The close friend she made was a Chinese girl from the ESL class. The Chinese girl was close to Atoosa but seemed also to belong to a Chinese group: “... we have a Chinese group and everybody is Chinese in it except me”. Atoosa was the only non-Chinese in the Chinese group. Atoosa learned to be close to her friend in a way that was not the way she experienced in Iran:

They speak mainly Chinese but I don’t feel bad among them. Like it’s really weird if you are with someone who are speaking the other language and like you are the only [one who does not understand a word]. But I don’t feel like that at all. Like, if you are really together. Like, now everybody knows I belong to that group. We don’t visit each other and meet outside. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, May 19, 2005)

To Atoosa the Chinese girl was special and, like the close friends she used to have in Iran, she could share her feelings and secrets. I imagine that Atoosa’s experiences in River’s Edge would lead her to tell different stories of who a close friend was. For example, Atoosa storied the Chinese girl differently than her close friends in Iran. Atoosa might do different things with her and the Chinese group from what she did in Iran. But there was no doubt for Atoosa that this Chinese girl was her very good friend: “I tried [to make friends]. ... But this Chinese girl is special.” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, May 19, 2005). With the Chinese girl, Atoosa learned to live new stories of who made a close friend. She might not speak Persian. Like Atoosa, she

was learning to speak English well. Atoosa also learned how to be a close friend. Atoosa stayed close to her good friend, hanging out with her friends to belong to a group. As the landscape shifted, Atoosa shifted her way of living stories of friends and of making new meaning of living school stories.

Plotline of Marks

Having good marks was another major plotline of Atoosa's stories in school in Iran. Marks were part of the storied school life. In her stories of school, good students had good marks: "... We (Atoosa and her friends) loved to get good marks and we were good students" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 15, 2004). If anything could make her happy, having good marks certainly did:

The thing that always makes me happy in a class or something is my mark. If I get high marks, I'm so happy. This is something that makes up for all the unhappiness. When I'm tired, I'm going like... 'Yeah anyways my mark is very high in school.' (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 8, 2004)

Good marks comforted her, gave her confidence and meaning in school life.

In Atoosa's stories, marks were not secret stories. She knew her friends' marks and she would tell her friends her marks. On the one hand, it seemed to be a way to tell who they were and how they might want to study for coming tests. On the other hand, it was a major part of her and her friends' school life:

I like to have that in here too (that you could talk about marks). Like in Iran if I asked whoever's mark for a math test, she would tell me what she got and I would

tell her my mark. (If my mark was a good one), she might say 'that was very good'. In River's Edge if you asked people's marks, they might think you wanted to know everything about her or him. That's not like that (In Iran). If you were asked, 'What did you get?' You would sit on your seat and say your marks... If you get a hundred, everybody would say, 'Well, she got a perfect mark'... I liked everybody knew me (to have good marks)." (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 15, 2004).

Good marks defined Atoosa as a good student in her school in Iran and she storied herself as popular because of that. She was confident that everyone in her school knew her because she was a good student and always earned good marks. On the Iranian school landscape, marks were lived as a major plotline. Atoosa and her friends talked about marks. She knew how she had been doing in the courses by knowing her marks and her friends' marks.

Atoosa found the past lived stories of marks were not the same on the new school landscape in River's Edge. Marks were not supposed to be asked about and shared with classmates and friends as they used to be in her Iranian schools. But marks were still important stories of school for Atoosa. She, therefore, tried to understand new stories of marks in River's Edge from talking about the experiences with her brother and sister:

They (Atoosa's friends/classmates) told me nothing. But my brother, my sister and I were at home and we talked about our experiences ... We understood that they (students in Canadian schools) don't really like that if you ask, 'what was your mark' or something ... (If they have to say marks)... they have secret names.

You choose a secret name for yourself and when they want to say your marks they use your secret names... (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 15, 2004)

Atoosa might have many secret stories she would want to share with her close friends. Marks seemed not to be a secret story in Iran. But in River's Edge, they seemed to be. Stories of marks used to be lived as something that defined who you were in the stories of your friends in Atoosa's Iranian schools. In talking about marks, one might use secret names. This was a new story to live for Atoosa in Canadian schools. Atoosa had to learn to live new stories about marks. She still (when the conversation was taped) hoped she could talk about marks and tell stories of marks: "I like to have that in here too [that I could openly talk about marks]" as she used to in Iran. She tried to understand new stories about marks on the new school landscape so that she could live and tell stories of marks in a new way by using secret names or some other ways to reflect new shades of meaning in telling stories of marks.

Atoosa also had to learn new stories other than marks from quizzes and tests to tell stories of good students. She had to learn what stories of school to live by. In Iran, various levels of subject matter contests were organized all year round. Atoosa's father used to register her to participate in the contests:

We had national contests in math, science, history, geography etc. In Iran, you did not have to go to these contests. But it was for everybody as long as you paid the registration fee. If you win, you get prizes. In the summer, there will be a big festival, and the winners will be presented the prizes in front of everybody,

parents, students, teachers... My best prize was (I missed one because I came to Canada and couldn't go to the festival) a calendar music box. If you press the button, you will hear that day's music and that was so cool. My father paid lots of money for me and my brother to go to the contests because this way we could practice for formal entrance exams to good high schools and universities. I liked to be busy with contests like this because I enjoyed when I was first or second or my name was on the winners' list... (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa October 15, 2004)

Contests, exams and prizes were stories for Atoosa to live in Iran to be a student. She lived the story of being a prize-winner with her family. She enjoyed being storied as a winner at the festival and to have her name on the winners' list. Atoosa found in Canada there were only math contests for junior high students. But Atoosa still wanted to live similar success stories in River's Edge so that she could, like before, construct who she was becoming by living these success stories. In the second year in River's Edge, when her English was better, Atoosa was thinking of going to the math contest in the final year in junior high. Although she was not sure if her English was good enough to allow her to do well in the test, she did go for it because she wanted to and her family and teachers encouraged her to do so. Atoosa was proud to tell me that she and her best friend, described earlier, went to the math contest. She did not know the result when the conversation was taped. But I could see Atoosa was satisfied that she took the math contest in English. She "really wanted to do something like it" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, May 19, 2005). It seemed to me that Atoosa was happy

because after a year's interruption, she finally resumed a story that had told so much of who she was in Iranian schools and that she could now live in River's Edge. Reliving the story of participating in a subject matter contest, to Atoosa, reflects Carr's (1986) three dimensions of life experience: value to her present to tell who she was, significance to her past as a good student and purpose to her future becoming as good as she used to be. I also imagine, however, that although there were math contests when she was in River's Edge, the story was not lived the same for Atoosa. She might not be as competitive as she had been in Iran because the contests were in English. She might feel it was not an important story for students in River's Edge to live and define who they were. She might feel that taking the math contest was not an anxious story for students to live in River's Edge as it was in Iran. Atoosa might be happy that she could continue a story that was a part of her life in Iran and that meant so much in shaping who she was in Iran. While in River's Edge, a new landscape, Atoosa might also have new experiences to tell new stories of math contests and prizes. They might not be as compelling as they used to be in Iran because the students in River's Edge might tell different stories about subject contests. Their many other stories of school might dilute the excitement Atoosa might have about subject contests on shifting landscapes.

Participating in contests, exams and earning good marks were stories for Atoosa to live to be a good student and eventually a university student. The plotline for Atoosa was very clear in Iran. Atoosa had always been in the plotline of studying hard to go to good universities. This story made contests, exams and good marks meaningful stories to live. From her parents, brother and sister and other friends and relatives, Atoosa storied

going to universities was easier in Canada “because you don’t have to take exams for universities” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 15, 2004). It was a new story that Atoosa had been looking forward to.

Also from her brother and sister, Atoosa learned about the International Baccalaureate (IB) program in Canadian high schools. The story of passing with high scores in the examinations to go to good Iranian high schools or universities was shifted to have an average of eighty or higher in the core courses finishing grade nine in River’s Edge to enter the IB program in senior high schools. Atoosa said, “For your last report card (of grade nine), you should have eighty” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 15, 2004). However, on the one hand, Atoosa was excited that the IB program could even lead her to well-known universities outside Canada: “IB students might go to universities in California ... because the curriculum was similar” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 15, 2005). Atoosa went to the high school principal to ask about the IB program because she and her father, who used to pay for Atoosa to practice on testing skills, wanted to continue to live the academic stories. On the other hand, she found new stories of school in the high school in non-IB and regular classes appealing:

But if you don’t, if you don’t choose IB, you can have lots of fun for school life. You can take easier things and also you can have like construction technology, cosmetology, fashion... If I don’t choose IB, I can have these much fun and if I, for example, cannot be a doctor... I can do these things and make a living out of them. But if I choose IB, I will have a very, very, very hard time in high school.

But everybody who says 'I enjoy high school' is the one who is not in IB program. [These words] make me think about: hard work or fun? (Tape-recorded Conversation with Atoosa, October 15, 2004)

The new school stories on the new school landscapes were shaping Atoosa's stories to live by. She was a hard working student in Iran. She took every effort to study for good marks, schools and universities. Being a doctor like her mother and father might be the story she wanted for her future. Universities in California might be a goal to work for. But the new story of fun in school seemed to be shifting Atoosa's plotline of working hard. The story of choices seemed to reshape Atoosa's lived stories of school, which had long been shaped around working hard for high marks to enter good universities. The story of fun in school, which seemed to be never lived in Iran, was making sense to Atoosa on a new school landscape.

Ramesh said to me: "[To be a fashion designer] is okay in Canada, but in Iran, not" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Ramesh, October 13, 2004). It seemed also to Atoosa's mother, stories to live would shift from landscape to landscape. Atoosa and her family learned new ways to live past stories such as in the stories of marks. They also intended to adopt new stories to shift away from past lived stories such as in Atoosa's telling of non-IB programs in high school. It might not be that Atoosa did not want to be a hard-working student, but rather she found stories of having fun in school meaningful on new storied school landscapes.

Chapter Five

DI: "I JUST WANT TO BE MYSELF"

Meeting Di

In the afternoon, the students were dismissed. The hallways turned into the six o'clock highways, busy and noisy. At the corner by the main entrance, I caught sight of Su, whom I met in the grade nine fine art class, and two other girls sitting on the floor. I waved to Su and walked over. Su introduced her friends to me. They were all from China. Lili came here five years ago. Di and her parents immigrated to Canada only a few months ago. She is already in the regular class. She could be in the ESL program, but she was told it was OK for her to take courses in the regular classes. She is now in grade 8. She looked sad. She did not smile like the other Chinese girls. Di looked upset. She said she missed her home, school and friends in China. She had so many friends at home because she had been in the same school for seven years. All of a sudden, she was placed in a different and unknown school landscape. "People live far away from each other and it's difficult to visit friends you make in the school." Di turned to Lili: "Lili, I haven't been to your home yet." (Field note, Thursday, Feb. 5, 2004)

This was the first piece I wrote about Di. Because she was not in the fine art class, I did not meet her again until October 2004. When I turned to the ESL class seeking student participants from newly immigrated families, Nora, the ESL teacher, introduced Atoosa to me. Mrs. Jones, a teaching assistant in the ESL class, recommended that I see Di. The

following field note described the “official” meeting I had with Di when I invited her and her parents to be research participants:

It has been eight months since I first met Di in February when she was with Su and Lili. Today’s meeting was an official one. Mrs. Jones had told her about the meeting, but in case Di forgot, Mrs. Jones called her over the speaker at 12:30 PM, assuming Di had finished her lunch somewhere with her friends. A few minutes later, Di came to the general office with a friend. Di recognized me immediately. It seemed we did not need an introduction. I thanked Mrs. Jones and she left the office. I tried to find a quieter place, but couldn’t. Well, since Di knows me, the talk can be short. We spoke in Mandarin. Di nodded her head when I explained my research intentions. In this conversation, I told Di about consent forms that she and her parents needed to sign in order to be participants in my research. I had her home phone number and told Di I would phone her parents. (Field note, Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2004)

I had hoped Di would remember me and would want to share her stories with me. When she accepted my invitation without hesitation, I was happy and touched at the same time by her trust in me. I felt my responsibility to listen to her stories. Di came in with a friend who was neither Su nor Lili. I imagined Di’s life would have changed since the first time I met her. I was also eager to know her and her parents and her family stories that brought her here to live her new stories in Canada.

Our first conversation was tape-recorded during a lunch break in River’s Edge on November 4, 2004, two weeks after our “official” meeting. Over the next months, there

were six tape-recorded conversations, one in the school, four in Di's home and one in my home. The last conversation was in Chinese and tape-recorded on June 28, 2005. During this time, over three hours of conversations with Di's parents were tape-recorded in April and June 2005. Reading Di's and her mother's telling of their lives, I seemed to see many ways Di followed in her mother's footsteps.

Living Family Stories

Di and her parents immigrated to Canada in the summer of 2003. The immigration process took them about three years. Di's mother told Di about the family plan to immigrate to Canada when Di was still in the elementary school. When the whole family received immigrant visas, Di was already a grade seven student. In June 2003 when Di arrived at River's Edge, she was a grade eight student. The first notes I wrote about Di were sad. She was quieter than Su and Lili. She did not smile. She looked confused on a new and different landscape. "Lili, I haven't been to your home yet" was a cry for connections. Listening to her mother's stories enabled me to understand Di and how family stories shaped Di's lived stories.

Five months after my first conversation with their daughter (October 20, 2004), I visited Di's parents, mother, Ting and father, Bo. The conversation was mainly between Ting and me. Bo joined in when I asked him if, like his wife, he also went to the schools that were run by the municipal education bureau. Bo said: "My school was run by the factory for its staff's children" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Ting, April 22, 2005). Ting's and Bo's schools were different in the sense of who went to the school. Ting's

school was for children who lived close to the school, while Bo's was for the children whose parents worked in the same factory. Bo continued his school stories, when Ting and I were talking about our school experiences during the Cultural Revolution. The Cultural Revolution had an impact on Bo. In the school he took part in writing big character posters as coursework. In senior high, like most of his peers, he became a red guard. Writing big character posters shaped his school stories even though he did not know much about politics. He remembered he was appointed as a newspaper reader who read editorials in order to get involved in political campaigns. As for learning things other than politics, he and his classmates went to school-run workshops. He dismantled a diesel oil engine to find out how the four strokes worked. Unlike Bo, Ting went to learn farm work in the suburbs. She learned to transplant rice seedlings and other work in the water rice fields. She felt working on the farm was fun. Although during the Cultural Revolution the school seemed to be fun, having little homework and thinking little about marks, the issue with this period, for both Bo and Ting, was "no quality in education." An example Bo gave was, when he graduated from this school in the early 1980s, only two or three percent of the high school graduates could go to colleges.

The first conversation (April 22, 2005) with Ting was one hour and thirty-two minutes. Ting had been a science teacher all her life before she immigrated to Canada. In the family stories she told, stories of education dominated the first conversation and the later one. Education was also the main plotline of her lived stories and they were also the main stories of life in her family. Alongside Ting's telling, I began to see why Di was sad and disappointed when she was not able to live happy school stories in River's Edge.

“In my family, my father valued education” Ting started her family stories.

“Maybe I was four years old. My father brought home the elementary textbooks. I learned Chinese characters at home. Therefore I learned to read at a very young age” (Tape-Recorded Conversation with Ting, April 22, 2005). Ting’s telling of the stories of her father centered on the plotline of education:

If my grandfather had not died that early (when her father was nine years old), my father could have had many more years of education and could have got a much higher education. Because my father was the only son in the family, he had to help his mother, my grandmother, raise his two younger sisters. He was a very good student and got good marks. He was attending a private school at that time. Because he had to make money for the family, he quit school and worked in a store, helping the owner to look after the shop. In this way, he made money to support the family. He was heartbroken that he had to leave school. The principal even came to his home to persuade him not to leave school and told him his tuition could be waived. “I want to learn, but I have two little sisters. We have to live” he turned down the principal’s kind offer... After the liberation (1949), he worked in a big chemical factory. Later he was promoted as an accountant. For this position, he took classes in his spare time in a financial university. He was a self-taught accountant. To understand him, I think [he quit school to learn to be an accountant] was because he was the only son and he had the traditional view that education was the most important of all. This view was deep-rooted in his head. (Tape-Recorded Conversation with Ting, April 22, 2005)

Ting understood her father's success in his career was related to his several characters: responsibility, self-reliance and valuing education. While working to support the family, her father always believed education could bring a decent life. Even though he could not live the stories of education in school, he tried to live it out in other ways, that is, through taking accounting courses after work. Ting had always admired her father's self-reliance in shouldering the responsibility of helping his mother bring up his younger sisters, both of whom finished high school and followed his vision to lead the family on the route of "valuing education."

Ting lived her father's stories of "valuing education" from a young age. Her father brought home elementary textbooks when she was only four years old. She then entered the elementary school one year earlier than most children. When she graduated from high school, the policy of going to colleges and universities through taking the national entrance examinations had been enacted for several years. Ting took the entrance examinations, but her total score was not high enough to go to the dreamed prestigious universities. Her father supported her to return to high school for one more year so that Ting could go to one of the storied best universities the next year. Ting, indeed, did better the second time and realized her dream of education from a better university. Sadly, her father did not live to see her graduate from the university. When her father was alive, Ting lived the stories of education her father valued very much. As the only child in the family, after her father passed away, Ting also lived the stories of self-reliance and responsibility her father had lived out. She graduated from university and kept her promise and went back to her father's chemical factory that had supported her

university education after her father passed away. She became a teacher to train factory staff. Although the factory provided good salary and welfare, a few years later the seemingly carefree life was boring for Ting. The factory, to Ting, was a small and isolated world. She did not want to “live like a frog in a well” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Ting, April 22, 2005). She found a job in downtown and, as Di reached the age to go to school, Ting started preparing for the examinations for graduate programs. Like her father who took night classes to learn to be an accountant, by means of education, Ting climbed out the “well.” With a master’s degree from another well-known university, she became a faculty member in a college, a bigger and more demanding world.

In our over three hours of conversations, Ting’s stories were also all centered around education, self-reliance and independence. When Di was born into the family, these plotlines of education, self-reliance and independence became Di’s family stories, told and lived. In the remainder of this section, I explore how Di lived out these stories and how she was shaped by them.

In our second conversation (November 11, 2004), Di told me the lived stories of her family:

I think my family is a hardworking, and actually a very happy family. In New Year holidays or sometimes any holidays, we just like to get together, playing and having dinner. Yeah [when in China], my cousins were really nice. There are lots of people. I have two older cousins. One’s twenty and the other’s eighteen. And I have lots of younger cousins. Some of them are boys, some of them are girls.

They're in the elementary school and some of them are in the kindergarten and I have two cousins that I've never met because they're just born. Both of the older cousins are in universities. One of them is in liberal arts. And the other is learning chemistry. Their marks were not very good. I think I can do better than them when I'm in university. (November 11, 2004)

Di's lived stories of her family were of a family that was hardworking and happy. Her family stories included her extended family. "We" included her, her parents and members of her extended family. Apart from her parents, her cousins seemed the most important people of her life. Di's stories of her cousins were school-related. She knew who she was in the family as a cousin and student: "I can do better than them when I'm in university".

Di's mother was an important person to her:

I think my mom is important to me... Sometimes, not very often, she gets mad at me. But still she's a really good advisor. She's a really independent woman. I would say that, and really strong. Yeah. Like she has her own ideas. As my mom told you like when she was very young her family wasn't that good. Like my grandfather died from an acute illness. Yeah, so she had a really hard time because of her father's passing away. I think those hard experiences made her really strong. And she has really independent ideas. She is kind of [a role model]. Yeah, I want to be independent. That's why I want to go to a university in another province. Like I want to live by myself. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005)

Ting was "important" to Di. She let Di know what she should or should not do. Di

learned to respect her mother's advice and live in the storyline her mother wanted for her. Di seemed to see herself in her mother's lived stories. In Di's telling, her mother was a "really strong" woman and had "really independent ideas." Ting's lived stories made Di want to be like her mother to live stories of being independent: "Yeah, I want to be independent. That's why I want to go to a university in another province. Like I want to live by myself." Di understood that to be independent was a plotline in her mother's lived stories. Although she did not live her mother's hard stories, Di knew her mother's hard stories by being told these stories when she grew older:

Like before when I was younger my mom or my grandparents didn't tell me much about their lives. But when I got kind of older, like thirteen or something, they kind of started to tell me what's the life like before. And sometimes I kind of even imagine that the life they had before. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005)

In the family, stories were told. Di heard more about the stories lived in the family as she grew older. When family stories were told, Di seemed to understand her mother more and know who her mother was: strong and independent. From the told family stories, Di seemed to understand from where her mother's strength and independence came: "When she was very young her family wasn't that good. Like my grandfather died from an acute illness. Yeah, so she had a really hard time because of her father's passing away." When she knew her mother's lived stories, the stories her mother wanted for her made sense to her. Thus when Ting "got mad" at her, Di understood the stories behind the anger. Therefore, her mother was "still a really good advisor" and an "important" person in her

life.

On shifting landscapes, family stories seemed to be Di's grounding for living life.

From the family stories she knew who she was and was becoming:

I worry about my marks. Yeah, because uh, you know, my mom wanted me to go to that [academic challenge school]. Yeah, if I go to that school, my average mark should be like higher than 85. And I want to go to that school too, yeah, although it's hard. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 4, 2004)

She knew what she should do. She had an expectation for her performance in River's Edge. She should get eighty-five or higher because that was what she needed to go to an academic senior high school. "I wanted to go to that school." Di was certain that was the right thing to do because her mother wanted her to be there, too.

I don't know [if I could go to the academic challenge school]. I'm really not sure. [My mom wanted me to go,] but I want to go there, too. That school, she said, "If you go there, like ninety percent of the students there go to university. Some of her coworker's children go to that school. Yeah, like they say that school is kind of like Chinese schools. Like teachers give you lots of work to do. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 11, 2004)

In the first semester in River's Edge, Di had already looked forward to entering the academic challenge high school. She "worried" and "was not sure" if she could get the required score for grade nine core courses: language arts, social studies, science and math in order to be recommended to go to the school. She also worried if she could do the entrance examinations well enough to be admitted into one of the most challenging senior

high in the city. But her mother's story was compelling that "ninety percent of the students there go to university." Even though she was not sure if she could make it to the school, it certainly was her imagined story to live: "I want to go there, too." And there was no hesitation because it was also her mother's story of her.

As I noted earlier, her mother's lived stories were a thread that helped Di understand her mother's expectations for her. From her mother's lived stories, Di figured out that her mother's suggestions and encouragement had well-rooted reasons. "I can never imagine that was my mom's kind of life." (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005). Di said that when she and I talked about a photo Ting showed to Di and that Di emailed to me. It was a photo of school children having lunch, standing in front of a worn-out building. In the center of the photo was a boy eating from an enamel mug:

It was just as the life [I lived]. Each of us had an enamel mug, which was a little bigger than the ones [in the photo]. And each of the mugs had a number.

Everyone remembered the number [to claim the mug to have her meals]. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Ting, April 22, 2005)

It was hard for Di to imagine her mother's lived school stories. But she tried to imagine her mother's life from the stories her mother told her. The telling of the stories seemed to justify the mother's expectations for her the daughter. Ting told me and, perhaps many times, to Di, about her one year experience in a rural school:

The result from my first entrance examinations could allow me to go to a university. In another word, I had a university to go to for post secondary education. But it was not a good university that matched my dream. My father

said: 'No. It is not good enough. You go back to a senior high for another year and take the exams again.' (laughs) I felt my experience of my returning-school was quite special. The school I went back to was one in my ancestors' hometown, which was nicknamed as the home of "the Number One Scholar" (A title conferred on the one who came first in the imperial examination). The school in that town produced the highest score winners of the national college entrance examinations... The proportion of students entering colleges from the school was 95% to 99%... Going Beijing University and Qinghua University (the most prestigious universities in China) was the goal for many of the students.

So I went to the home of the number one scholar, a rural county and stayed for a year and did not even go home to visit my parents for the whole year. I lived in the school dorm. (Sigh) You just can't imagine. I felt it was more crowded than in jail. It is not an exaggeration. It was very dark. Every bunk bed had four students to sleep on, two on the upper bed and two on the lower. My meals were from the school kitchen. I showed [Di] a photo of it just now. It was just as the life [I lived]. Each of us had an enamel mug, which was a little bigger than the ones (in the photo). And each of the mugs had a number. Everyone remembered the number [to claim the mug to have her meals]. Turnip or pumpkin was cooked in a big wok with little oil. [The food] had little flavor... It was really bad. At the end of the year, I had dozens of empty bottles of Shanghai pickles my parents mailed to me during the year.

... ..

I thought I could only see this kind of classrooms in the movie. But I saw it with my own eyes. In a not bright classroom, a leather shoe was hung on one side of the blackboard and a straw shoe on the other. The two shoes were teachers' caution to the students: Just look at the two shoes in the classroom, 'Which shoe you want to wear?' (Chuckle) And the test papers and books were piled up [on the desk] higher than my head, which made a window. I looked ahead through them. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Ting, April 22, 2005)

Ting did not have to go back to a senior high for another year. She did so because her father told her she should go to a better university. Ting knew her father's stories of education as her family tradition. She accepted her father's suggestions and advice and lived out a family story of "valuing education." For a whole year, she did not go home to visit her parents, living among her new classmates who, unlike her, grew up in the rural area. She endured hard living conditions: sharing a single bed and eating tasteless food. She lived dull and depressing classroom stories: working on piles of test papers and facing one leather shoe and one straw shoe in a dark classroom. In the telling, Ting laughed and chuckled. She did not tell the story just to complain. She told Di her lived school stories as success stories: "I was proud of myself being able to live in a rural school away from the city and mom and dad" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Ting, April 22, 2005). And, finally, Ting went to her dreamed university. I imagine Di respected her mother more and also understood hard stories as blessings in disguise: "Sometimes I kind of even imagine that the life she had before. I think her experiences were really... I cannot say that's fun, but I think that's a really good experience" (Tape-

recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005).

Before coming to Canada, Di had taken very competitive entrance examinations in order to go to a foreign languages senior high school. She entered the second round of competition and, in the final, was only three scores short of being accepted. I imagine her mother's lived stories of studying for better universities and of taking examinations to the best senior high school in the city prepared Di's determination to take the tests for entering an academic challenge senior high school in Canada, even though she had only been here for two years:

I did the test. I felt kind of good although I have no idea [if I could be accepted by the school]. All the questions were like knowledge-based questions, like memory stuff and patterns. But they only give you a few minutes to do those questions, so I really had to be fast. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, March 31, 2005)

Di "did the test." It was a relief. She lived a story she and her parents wanted her to live even if it was not an easy story. She told her favorite teacher in River's Edge, Mrs. Jones, that she would take the test to go to the academic challenge school. To her surprise, Mrs. Jones was not very encouraging. She said that school would be too hard. Di was puzzled: "I don't know why" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di March 31, 2004). She had hoped Mrs. Jones would praise her courage to take the competitive test. When the result arrived, Di was disappointed and cried. However, Ting told me:

I let her cry. I think it was a way to lessen pressure. It's good. I thought there should be a good way to face problems. It is not always good that everything goes so smoothly. Some setbacks are good for children to grow mature... And of

course, it was also good to take the effort to do the test. It was an experience to feel what the testing here was like. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Ting, June 29, 2005)

Ting was, again, telling a story of blessings in disguise. Ting's comments that "[s]ome setbacks are good for children to grow mature" is very much like Di's interpretation of her mother's hard stories: "I cannot say [my mother's experiences were] fun, but I think that's a really good experience." It seemed both the mother and daughter were telling a story of being strong, hardworking and self-reliant. I imagine Di's story about the type of questions and time limitations of the Canadian test could fit with Ting's story that Di had "an experience to feel what the testing here was like."

Di might have expected Mrs. Jones to say encouraging words like her mother. But Mrs. Jones expressed concerns that the academic challenge school might be too hard for Di. Mrs. Jones was an important person for Di in River's Edge, like Ting was at home. Because of the lived and told stories in the family, Di did not turn away from to her family stories. She only wondered why Mrs. Jones was not excited for her. Her lived family stories were powerful for Di. They shaped, and were constantly shaping, who she was and who she wanted to be.

Telling family stories was a lived family story for Di. She talked about her problems with her mother and her mother helped her by telling something about the family:

She always talks to me at dinner, yeah, something about my family in China. Like my uncle's and aunt's job, like something like that my uncle had a new baby.

Yeah, those things made me feel better sometimes. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 11, 2004)

Telling stories about family for Di helped her reconnect with families in China. Telling family stories was to tell stories of hope and roots. The telling provided something for Di to tell stories about her, her life, and her family life no matter where she was. I imagine, when she encountered confusion and difficulties, the roots of the lived and told family stories gave her strength.

The Tension of Living between Stories

Di was from Central China. She was born to well-educated parents. Her mother, Ting, was a faculty member in a prestigious university in China. Her father, Bo, was an engineer in a major chemical industry in their province. When Di was in grade five, her mother submitted the application for immigrating to Canada. Di was excited: "I'm going to another country, yeah, another part of the world" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 4, 2005). I imagine Di was thinking of traveling during summer vacations with her parents to see beautiful scenery in other parts of China. It was a travel indeed, but different from a tourist trip. While she was excited to leave her country to live in Canada, she, like Atoosa, worried: "I was very scared like I didn't know anything about Canada." She tried to recollect the stories related to her knowledge about Canada: "Canada is right beside the United States. America is more famous. They are together. So, [Canada] must be a good country" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 4, 2005). The telling seemed to make Canada lively to Di as she related Canada to the

US. But soon she became convinced Canada was a good country to go to and to live in when her mother told a story of specifics: “‘The schools there are much easier than schools in China.’ Then I said, ‘Okay, I will go’” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 4, 2005). With her mother’s story, Di was fully convinced: “Okay, I will go.”

Immigrating to Canada was a long process. About three years later when Di was in grade 7, her mother told her they were leaving in two months. “What?” Di was not so excited this time because she had almost forgotten about immigrating to Canada:

I was very excited hearing the news three years ago. But I like um, wait for too long time. I kind of forgot it, like you know, yeah, not so excited any more. And then I was like, ‘What?’ like really surprised. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 4, 2005)

Three years was a long time for approval but two months for packing for an immigration journey seemed to be just too quick for a change. Di arrived in Canada in June. Thus it was April when she knew that, in two months, she and her parents would fly with Air Canada. She was leaving China and her new school where she was just starting her junior high school life. In a later conversation Di said, “In my memory, the happiest things that happened to me were when I was in grade seven” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, April 7, 2005). I imagine that, in the middle of the second half of grade 7, being told she was leaving the school and her best memories in just two months was somehow shocking to Di: “What?” Giving up all the happy stories of grade 7 was hard. But soon Di started shopping for moving to Canada: “I did lots of shopping and bought lots of CDs of pop music and TV serials” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di,

November 4, 2005). I wonder what made Di so sure of her family's choice.

During the three years of application process, Di occasionally heard stories of immigration. Di's mother's friends also were trying to immigrate to other countries: "Yeah, and they were planning to go to England. Yeah, and um, while we are here, they are still in China. So I feel we are lucky" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 4, 2005). It seemed being able to immigrate to Canada or England composed a story of success and luck. It was a good story to tell to friends and families. In the beginning one family member thought immigration was a bad idea because it was difficult and impossible. But when friends and relatives knew Di's family was approved for the visas, they all congratulated Di and her family: "My friends, like they said that I was lucky. At that time, I really felt I was lucky" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 4, 2005). Even though she lived good stories in grade 7, Di was confident that she would live, perhaps, more good stories by immigrating to Canada.

Before coming to Canada, Di learned and was told many stories about going abroad to live a presumably exciting life. Her fear of a strange place and meeting strangers in the school was overpowered by exciting stories and being storied as a lucky girl. The strangeness became more positive newness. Among her friends, she was storied as the lucky one, which made her feel so too: "At that time, I really feel I'm lucky." After two months of preparation, she and her parents arrived in a Western Canadian city. A family friend helped rent an apartment and their new life began. To Di, Canada was not no longer a place in her imagination and in her telling. Now it was a place in which she lived stories:

In the first day of school, I was standing in front of the school. And I was like OK, 'that's the school?' It's like only one, one floor. I was surprised. I told my Chinese friends [in China]. They said, 'Well, it's fun'. Maybe because they were not actually here, they don't know this kind of buildings. They were different, very different. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, April 7, 2005)

At first, the physical look of the school was not like what she had imagined. She had thought of tall buildings like the schools with which she was familiar in China. Not only the look but also the experiencing was not so appealing to Di:

In the first day, I went to the homeroom. The teacher gave us timetables or some kind of forms. And I didn't know what they were for. One girl in my class was from Hong Kong. She spoke a little Mandarin. But not very much. The first period, I remember, was food studies and she told me where to go and something like that. Yeah, the second period was music. I lost my map, you know, and, I went here and there. Finally I found the music classroom, but I was late, twenty minutes late. When I walked in, everyone was playing and I stood there... It was so embarrassing. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 4, 2004)

The first experience of River's Edge was "embarrassing." Di was lost in the school, which was supposed to be her world. In China, it was not possible to be lost in a school. But Di knew it was possible because in the new Canadian school, it was the students who walked from one classroom to the next, not like in the Chinese school, in which the students stayed in their classrooms waiting for teachers to show up. Di found the food studies classroom in time because a girl who spoke a little Mandarin told her where to go.

But she was not so lucky to have someone help her for the next class. What made things worse was she lost her map. As a result, she was twenty minutes late for the music class. As all her family and friends told her, Di felt she was lucky. However, she began to double this as she lived her own stories of River's Edge:

But two or three months after I came here, I felt I was not that lucky. Here, I had no friends and I did not speak English and I was very lonely. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 4, 2004)

Di was disappointed because the stories she was told and imagined about Canadian schools and about living in Canada were not like what she experienced. She doubted if it was a lucky thing for her to leave her friends and familiar stories in China and come to Canada. Di was a good student in China. She had good marks and lived stories of being disciplined, smart and hardworking. She did well in the English course in China. Going to the best middle school of her city, a foreign languages middle school, was her big dream. She took the municipal entrance examinations. It was very competitive: "About two thousand students took the exams and only the top two hundred could be accepted." On the day she went with her parents to River's Edge for registration, Di passed the English assessment test. Because of this English test, she did not have to be in the ESL class. But passing the English test did not seem to make learning easy for her in River's Edge:

The social studies is the hardest. Well, last year in social we were studying Canadian history. I didn't know anything about it and my English was bad and I couldn't read the text, the textbook. So, that was really hard. I had no idea. [I

struggled] half a year. Sometimes I feel like really upset about my mark. Those are really low. And I always need help from the ESL teacher. I feel mad about myself. Yeah like 'why can't I learn a little faster' or something like that. Sometimes I really want to go back to China. And I really, really want to.
(November 11, 2004)

Di was a good student in China and could learn any subject well. She was upset that she could not get good marks in River's Edge, especially in social studies. She was upset that she always needed help for her studies. She wanted to learn faster because if she learned faster, she would be able to live the good stories of good marks earlier. If she could not do well in courses, what was the point of coming to Canada? She wanted to go back to China.

In the new school in Canada, Di lived unexpected hard stories:

I got no partner for group projects. I got like left out. The teacher had to put me in a group. I felt pretty bad about that. I have never experienced being left out. Like when I was in China because I was a top student I got a lot of friends and was sociable and you know, and if we had a group project or something, lots of people would come to me. But in here, no. I got left out. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, April 7, 2005)

Canadian schools were storied as happy places for students before Di came to Canada. Ting did some research about the Canadian educational system and from friends she had an idea about Canadian schools. Ting liked the stories she learned about Canadian schools. One reason for immigrating to Canada was for Di so that she could "escape the

harsh competition” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Ting, June 29, 2005). Di was told the stories that Canadian students did not have to take college entrance examinations in order to go to universities. They were true. However, in River’s Edge, she lived different types of harsh school stories. No one wanted to have her in group projects. She was left out. She felt excluded. In China, her stories were just the opposite. Being a good student, she was the one her classmates came to for teamwork. The stories told to her about Canada and stories she lived in Canada were different. I imagine good stories told about Canada pushed Di to come to Canada eagerly, while the harsh stories she lived in Canada turned her around and she wanted to go back to China.

Di told her lived stories to her friends in China:

I told my friends. I emailed them about my problems I had in River’s Edge. Well my friends just like, ‘It’s OK you can get through it.’ Yeah like something like that. I was a good student when I was in China and my mark was really high. But when they said that, I actually felt upset because they don’t understand me. They don’t know how I feel. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 11, 2004)

It seems Di could not get much help from her friends in China. They still told the same good stories about Canada. Di was “upset” when her friends in China told her not to give up the good stories about Canadian schools because, to Di, the lived hard stories were not easy to get over. Di felt sad that her friends could not understand her lived stories in River’s Edge. I imagine Di’s friends would not tell her that going back to China was a good idea.

Di also told her mother about her problems and difficulties in the Canadian new school:

I told my mother. I remember that was in November last year (2003). And that night I was crying really loud. Yeah, really loud like I was so sad and uh so mad like 'I want to go back to China'. Well [My mom] was worried and sad and also mad. I think my mom was trying to let me understand. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 11, 2004)

Di was very upset one day and she was crying. She said to her mother "I want to go back to China." Ting was worried and sad because Di was unhappy. She was mad because there seemed no other way to tell stories about Canada and the decision she made to immigrate to Canada. Ting wanted to help her daughter "escape" Chinese school stories of too much competition. She thought Di should understand her decision. Di was once again pushed to accept her lived stories of River's Edge with a troublesome story of the Chinese educational system and a better story of the Canadian educational system. The told stories from friends and her mother pushed Di back to River's Edge's new stories. She, therefore, shifted her attention and learned to tell compatible stories with her friends' and sometimes her mother's stories about Canada and Canadian schools. In this way, she could do what her mother told her to, that is, "experience new things":

Last Saturday, I went camping. Do you (Guming) know? Did I tell you? I went with the friends from the bakery and church. There were ten of us. We went to a place, north of a National Park. The scenery was very nice too. Well, it was my first experience, a pretty good one. The pity was it rained continually for two days

there. It was my first time sleeping in the tent, too. It was so cold, cold to death. I caught a cold. I still have a little of it. We climbed a mountain, saw a river and a lake. There was also a stream. I took a lot of photos. And I can also email you some. It was fun. I had little opportunities camping in China. Yes. It was pretty good. Yes. I was preparing to write to my friends, but had not done so because I had exams. So I did not have time. And there were lots of mosquitoes and it rained most of the time. It was terrible. But it was really fun. We also saw an elk.

It was a nice experience. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, June 28, 2005)

Camping was a new experience to Di. She was excited because “[t]here are little opportunities camping in China.” She experienced something different, but interesting and meaningful. She was able to be close to nature: climbed a mountain, saw a river, a lake, a stream and an elk. Even though “[t]here were a lot of mosquitoes; it rained; it was cold sleeping in the tent, I caught a cold,” it was still a good experience. She said three times about the experience. They were all positive: “It was my first experience, a pretty good one”, “It was pretty good” and “It was a nice experience.” She said she was going to write to her friends. I imagine she would pick the very best pictures to share with her friends. She would chat with her friends in China about her first and nice camping experiences in Canada. I also imagine when she wrote her good stories about living in Canada, she must feel good about herself because she was in the same plotline again with her friends, telling good stories about living in Canada.

When Di told her friends that she was going to Canada, her friends “all envied me” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005). I imagine it would be hard for

Di to tell a convincing story for her and to her friends to go back to China to give up the enviable stories told among her friends in China. Although she could not say having no partners for group projects was a good story, being in between the told good stories and lived hard stories, Di learned to find and appreciate good new lived stories in Canada, such as the camping experiences. She also began to tell good stories in River's Edge.

The following was a story about her first Halloween party in River's Edge:

The best thing last year, I think, was the Halloween party we had at school. That was really fun and in China I had never had those kinds of parties. Not in the school like all dressed up and played games. I was a vampire. I did not do anything to my teeth because I didn't like to put like things into my mouth. But I had lots of scars on my face. Later in the evening, I went to "treat or trick" with my mother's friends' children. They're little. One is in grade four and one is in grade five. We got lots. Yeah lots of candies. It took me and my father a week to eat them all. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 11, 2004)

Halloween was a new experience. Having a Halloween party in the school was even more impressive because in her lived school stories in China, there were no such things as costume parties. The Canadian school was fun for Di. Like camping in the woods, sleeping in the tent and having a costume party at school were interesting stories to live and tell about Canada and Canadian schools. These stories and the "memorable experience of graduation ceremony" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, June 28, 2005) were lived out visibly when Di found these stories were in her friends' and her parents' storyline of living in Canada.

Di found she changed:

I changed a little. When I just came here, whenever I wrote email to my friends, I just complained a lot. You know like ‘I don’t like Canada.’ But now I write more about the fun things about Canada. Yeah like that. I think maybe my attitude has changed a little too. Sometimes I talk to my mom. And sometimes she gives me some advice. For example, she says something like, ‘actually the Canadian kids are really easy to get close to.’ But they will not come and find you. So, you should go and find them to talk to. But well, I don’t do that very often. Like if we say, there’s a new kid in our class, a Canadian, I still can not just go ahead and talk to her. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005)

Di found she changed. She wrote more about good things she lived in Canada. It was not that she did not live hard stories in River’s Edge any more. In a conversation in 2005, two years after she went to River’s Edge, she said she was still among the last to be picked for team work, especially in gym. She changed because she chose to tell positive stories to her friends about her life in Canada. Di felt good that she could change because in this way she fit within the plotlines of her friends told of her life in Canada. She knew it was within the plotlines her parents hoped and wanted for her. “Actually the Canadian kids are really easy to get close to” her mother told her. With her mother’s encouraging story, Di tried to change to take initiatives to make friends in Canadian schools although it was not an easy change.

Living Relational Stories

Previously I used sweet potato vines as a metaphor to help me understand uprooted immigrant children's experiences in new soil. Like sweet potato vines growing and reaching out to search for proper spots to hold on to, when Di, an immigrant girl, arrived in Canada, she also started searching for something to hold on to. This something for Di was the relational story that connected her to the new soil in Canada. In the conversations with Di, I felt her yearning for friends and connections in River's Edge. In this section, I follow another thread in Di's stories to live by, that is, living relational stories.

In the Helping New Immigrants Center, I made a friend and her name was Audrey. She was a university student and a volunteer. We kept in touch for a while but not anymore. She's a teacher now in a junior high school. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 4, 2004)

Di and her family landed in Canada in June 2003. In the summer, Di and her parents attended the provincially supported programs in the Helping New Immigrants Center. For the first two months' experiences of Canada that summer, Di only told me about Audrey, the first friend she made in Canada. The first relational story Di lived with Audrey connected her with something Canadian. I imagine the relationship with Audrey was important to Di. The lived relational story with Audrey was that something that Di, an immigrant girl from China, held on to in a new soil in Canada.

In the fall of September 2003, Di was registered in grade eight in River's Edge. She had hoped to make friends in the new school. I remember the first time I met Di with

Su and Lili. While she should have been proud of herself for her passing the English assessment tests for students whose language was other than English, Di was not happy. She did not smile. She wanted to visit Lili. She wanted to live stories of closer relationships. When she was new in River's Edge, Di's relational stories were to "listen to music" and to revisit the presents from her friends in China:

I'm really glad I brought the music here because when I just came here, I had nothing to do. I had no friends. So, I just listened to music all day. Before I came here, my friends bought me lots of presents. I also brought them here. I put the cards in a box. Sometimes I take them out and read them. I still do. I email them. And sometimes I phone them like on their birthdays and during New Year holidays. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 4, 2004)

The music and the presents reminded Di of the relational stories she lived in China. When she had no friends in Canada, the relational stories lived in China reminded Di she was not alone as a person in this world. She had enjoyed relational stories before. When this conversation was taped, Di had been in River's Edge for over a year. She had made some friends in the new school. But she still wrote and phoned her friends in China to keep the past relationships alive.

Di told me school stories about China. Many of them were about being with friends:

In China, we phoned each other and actually we never did those study things together. Me and my best friend liked roller-skating. On Sundays, we went roller-skating. We liked those little things, you know, like dolls. So we would go

shopping together. I met my best friend in grade two. We have been friends for about six years. We lived in the same neighborhood. When I just came here, I thought of her everyday. I cried a lot. Well now, not everyday, but I still miss her a lot. When I was in China, we kept diaries. And before I came here, we put our diaries together. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 4, 2004)

The friendship between Di and her best friend started in grade two. It was a long relationship. They were neighbors and went to the same school, from elementary school to high school. The girl was Di's best friend and they shared their stories in and out of school. They developed shared interests, roller-skating, shopping and keeping diaries. It seems school became meaningful and enjoyable to Di because of the relational stories she lived with her best friend. Sharing each other's diaries was a symbol of unbreakable friendship. Thus when Di had no relational stories to tell of her life in River's Edge, she cried. She cried because she missed her friend in China. She also cried as she yearned for relational stories in this new school in Canada.

When in China, Di went to school early:

[My best friend and I] took the bus and went to school together. When we were in grade seven and in the elementary school, we loved to be early. Like usually we were the earliest in the whole grade. I didn't know why. Maybe it's because it was very quiet in the school early in the morning. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005)

Di and her friend went to school together and went early. She said maybe they liked the quiet morning in the school. I imagine she might have liked the feeling of being the

earliest student *with her friend*. I wonder if Di would try to be the earliest in a school without a relational story to live with a friend.

But here the school starts much later in the morning. Although I get up early, I can't go to school very early. And I think the second reason that I don't go to school early is I don't have a very good friend like ah living close to me to go to school with. I miss those days very much: getting up early and going to school with my friend. We are still friends. Sometimes we chat on MSN. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005)

Di found the new Canadian school was different. It started much later in the morning. She could not live the same story to be early in River's Edge. She did not have a friend to live the story of arriving early at school. To be early in the school with a friend seems to have two layers of meaning: the first was to be with a friend from the school; the second was being early in the school. I imagine, for a moment, Di and her friend owned the school. That moment created the connections with the school. There seemed no way for Di to do the same thing as she did in China. She said she missed her friend. She missed the lived relational stories with her friend and her school.

Di had looked forward to making friends and living relational stories in the new school in Canada as she did in China. She thought she could make many friends because she had many friends in the school in China. However she found making friends was harder than she thought:

Before I came here, I thought I could make lots of friends and I even thought some day I didn't need my old friends anymore. But that's not true though. I am

making friends, but not as fast, you know. Now I think I have two or three close friends. But they are not that close as my friends in China. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 4, 2004)

Di thought she could make many friends in the new school, but she found it was not true. Firstly, it took some time to make friends. Secondly, she could not make “a lot of” friends. Thirdly, the few friends she made were not as close as her friends in China. Having friends and close friends made big differences in Di’s living and telling relational stories. She needed close friends to share her life with, telling stories of feelings, spending time together and being comfortable together.

Before she came to Canada, Di imagined starting new close relationships with her classmates in Canadian schools. While in River’s Edge, she lived different stories of relationships. She found her classmates were friendly. They “helped me with my schoolwork.” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 11, 2004) and “I can do projects together with my new classmates or if I have any questions I can ask them” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, March 31, 2005). Di’s lived stories of relationships were not like this in China. “We never did those study things together” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 4, 2004). What made her friends in China special was they played together and did fun things together such as shopping. The friendship was so strong that they combined their diaries. The relational stories Di lived in China were more than studying and doing homework. They made up her whole world as a girl and a student in her Chinese schools. I imagine without these kinds of relational stories, to Di, school was less like school.

“I feel I belonged to my school in China. I had so many friends there” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, March 31, 200). Friends and the sense of belonging were closely related in Di’s life. She had friends in the school. She then felt the school was hers. Alongside the relational stories with friends, Di also lived relational stories with teachers in China:

The relationship I had with the teachers in China, I think, was much closer than the teachers in River’s Edge. Maybe that’s because I had good marks in China, teachers always asked me to do important things for them and the class. I felt I was trusted and I felt important. But in here now it’s November 11. I’ve been in the class for more than two months, but I don’t think some teachers like my social teacher know my name. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 11, 2004)

Di’s relational stories lived in her schools in China was that she was recognized by teachers because she was a good student with good marks. She was therefore entrusted with “important” duties. I imagine for Di being visible as a good student was a relational story that made her relationship to teachers and school closer. In contrast, she did not feel about River’s Edge the same way as she had to her school in China. Having been in the school for fifteen months and over two months in grade nine, some teachers did not even know her name. She felt invisible as a student in the class to some teachers. “It’s sad” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, April 7, 2005). Being invisible and having no relational stories were not part of the life Di used to live in China as a student. Di was “quiet” (April 7, 2005), but it did not mean she liked to be alone and “left out.” She tried

to live relational stories in the new Canadian school. She found a relationship with Mrs. Jones, “the nicest teacher I first met.” “And she helped me a lot with my English” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, March 31, 2005). Because she passed the English assessment test, Di did not have to be in the ESL class. At the same time, as an ESL student, she still needed help with her schoolwork. Mrs. Jones’ kindness invited her into a new relational story in River’s Edge. To Di, Mrs. Jones was a teacher with whom she lived relational stories because she not only helped her with English, but also cared for her “life”, her emotional desire:

The girl accompanied me to see you (Guming) at the office was Mei. She came here one year before I did. That was last year. I was sitting in the ESL room. She came in and Mrs. Jones told her ‘here is a new girl’ and pointed her to me. ‘She’s Chinese too and you can talk to her.’ (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 11, 2004)

Di felt closer to the teachers in her schools in China because she was acknowledged as a good student. In River’s Edge, Mrs. Jones became Di’s favorite teacher because she cared for her as a new student. Di needed friends. She needed to live and tell relational stories. Mrs. Jones introduced Mei to Di. She helped Di live relational stories with friends. At the same time, Mrs. Jones herself was a relational story for Di to live on the landscape of River’s Edge. Mrs. Jones was so important to Di that she told her secret story:

I told Mrs. Jones I wanted to go to the academic challenge senior high school because she is the nicest teacher I first met. Really nice. And she helped me a lot

with my English. Yeah like, with my school. Everything. That's why I think of the relationship between me and teachers, Mrs. Jones is the closest. That's why I told her first. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, March 31, 2005)

Mrs. Jones was special to Di. She helped Di with "English", "school" and "everything." Di needed help in English. She also needed to live stories other than learning English. Mrs. Jones was "the nicest teacher" to Di because she created opportunities for Di to live stories that she used to live in China. Mrs. Jones also opened herself to Di to live close relational stories with on a new school landscape. School, to Di, was not only a place to learn, but also a place to live relational stories. School was her world of lived stories. School was a place to share stories. School was "everything." Di needed to live relational stories. As well she tried to live the relational stories. She visited Mrs. Jones in the ESL class to "chat" with her:

Now maybe sometimes, I showed [Mrs. Jones] my report card. And she always says like I improved a lot or something like that. Sometimes we chat a lot. Yeah, you know like chat about my mark, how I study, if I have a lot of stress and how my family is doing. I think last year she gave me more help in my study. But this year I got more help from her by telling her about my life. You know if I have nothing to do, I just walk around the school. Yeah maybe at this moment, I want to chat with her. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005)

Di wanted to have somebody to talk with, to share her feelings and stories with in the school. Apart from living stories with friends, Di tried to be close to Mrs. Jones, a teacher, on the school landscape of River's Edge. Di needed this relationship to feel

connected with her new school. She once told me that because of the connections she had in the school with friends in China, pressure and severe competition became less important. Connections and friends made school and schooling enjoyable. She needed that relational plotline of school in River's Edge. She needed it to feel engaged and involved in the school. Di said many times she liked being busy, living a rich life. Mrs. Jones might initiate the relationship with Di as an ESL teacher. Di developed the relationship by visiting her in the ESL classroom and showing her report cards. Mrs. Jones became closer to Di by listening to her stories and asking about her studies and family. By the time Di finished junior high in River's Edge, Mrs. Jones was not merely a classroom teacher. She was a teacher friend with whom Di told her life stories. I imagine the relational stories with Mrs. Jones made River's Edge unforgettable as a school for Di.

To have friends and live relational stories with friends was Di's plotline in China. She had friends to be together with both during and after school. She might be a quiet girl, but not among friends:

I was kind of quiet in China. But if I was around my friends, I could talk to them like ah, forever. Like talk, talk, talk and, you know, never stop. I think when I came here, I became quieter. I didn't have friends and I didn't know English. So during that period of time, I didn't feel like talking to people... If I were alone in the school, walking through the hallway, I would not talk to anybody. You know just walked and yeah just like that. And not like other students, they walked and said hello or something to other people. So I got like more and more quiet... It's

sad. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, April 7, 2005)

Di had friends, many friends in China. She said she was “kind of quiet.” I imagine she attracted her classmates and made friends with them because she was an acknowledged good student. She enjoyed being with them, “talk, talk, talk and never stop.” But when she had no friends, no relational stories to live and tell, in River’s Edge, she was forced to be quieter. It’s “sad” with no one to live relational stories. But Di noticed students in River’s Edge, like her in China, enjoyed relational stories. They were not alone. They seemed to have a lot of friends. They said “Hello” walking in the hallway. Di wanted to live relational stories badly, but not know how to do so on a new school landscape.

Because relational stories were so important to Di, she tried to adjust to new stories of relationships. Not long after she entered River’s Edge, Di became friends with Lili, also from a Chinese immigrant family. The relationship with Lili was important to Di. Since Lili had lived more Canadian stories than Di, Lili was a person of know-how in River’s Edge. Sometimes, however, Di found Lili was different from her friends in China:

Lili is my friend. She has been here for four years. I think she changed a little bit, yeah, I think so. Girls in China when they are sixteen, they have too much schoolwork to do other things. But here, she sometimes dresses herself like an adult. I think that’s something I didn’t see in my friends in China. If my friends were sixteen, they wouldn’t be like her. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 4, 2004)

Lili’s interest was not always Di’s. But she still was a good friend. Although Di thought

she “changed,” “dresses like an adult” and was not like her friends in China, who were too busy to think of how they looked, she learned to accept Lili’s differences in order to keep a relationship because, for Di, it was important to have friends and live relational stories. For her graduation ceremony, Di asked Lili to help her dress up. Lili was the only friend Di invited to her graduation ceremony. In order to keep living relational stories, Di learned to adjust to new relational stories in Canada.

Di had friendships in China and still keeps in touch with her friends in China by emailing them or phoning them on special occasions. She was confused and disappointed on the last day in River’s Edge:

Yesterday was the last day in school. In the morning we took the exams. We went home in the afternoon. I don’t know. Maybe it’s because I don’t have a lot of Canadian friends in the school. After the exams, we went to the locker and took our stuff and left. We did not even say good-bye to each other. I have been in the school for two years after all. In the evening, I chatted with my friends in China on MSN. The day before yesterday was their last day. They told me after the exams and before they left the school, they all said they’d write to each other and keep in touch. I feel the relationship among the classmates was deeper/stronger than that in here. It’s a big, big, big difference. I don’t know. It happened so quickly. I felt like it’s over without emotions. So we went home and left the school and we were gone. I just felt it should not be so easy to leave the school.

(Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, June 28, 2005)

The last day in River’s Edge was like an ordinary school day, no good-byes, no wishes

and no promises. It was different from Di's imagined last day of school. It was different from the stories her friends told her about their last day of school in China. She was disappointed that classmates did not do something to mark the ending of three years' of junior high. For her, two years in River's Edge was special. She not only survived in the new school, but also did well enough to be admitted into the academic challenge program in senior high school. I imagine the two years in River's Edge for Di was as memorable as the graduation ceremony (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, June 28, 2005). When her classmates left without leaving contact information, it seemed to Di that she lost connections with the past lived stories in the school. She lost that something to hold on to as the sweet potato vines of her reached and grew in River's Edge. "It should not happen so quickly." It might be OK that no classmates came to say goodbye to her since she did not have many friends. But, at least, they, her Canadian classmates who had been in the school for three years, should say something to each other. Di was confused that it seemed it was hard for her to hold on to the relational stories she valued very much when shifting to new school landscapes in Canada.

Di lived and enjoyed relational stories in China. She tried to live new relational stories in Canada. She was thinking of future relational stories in senior high school and how to keep living past relational stories in River's Edge:

And in senior high, there won't be even homeroom. I saw on Lili's exercise books, she just put on her name and grade. No such thing like class and grade... I think the senior high will be a lot of work. I may miss the fun in junior high, not much pressure from the courses, relaxing... Particularly, I may miss my teachers,

good teachers such as Mr. Chan, Mrs. Jones, and the LA teacher, Mrs.

Richardson. I like them. I think I will visit them when there is a break from school. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, June 28, 2005)

Di once said that in China because each class had a fixed classroom, she felt she “belonged to the class” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, April 7, 2004). She wondered how to keep close relationships if, in senior high school, there were no home classrooms like in River’s Edge. She said she would miss River’s Edge, the “fun” of junior high school. But what she said she really wanted to do was to visit her favorite teachers, Mrs. Jones, the math teacher, Mr. Chan and the LA teacher, Mrs. Richardson to revisit her lived relational stories with them. I imagine Di would do the same to her classmates if they had said “keep in touch” and left their addresses because Di’s stories to live by were relational stories.

Living Stories on Shifting Landscapes

Di immigrated to Canada with her parents. While the whole family was waiting for approval of their application, Di imagined her stories of living in Canada: “Before I came here, I thought I could make lots of friends and I even thought some day I didn’t need my old friends anymore”. Di’s imagined stories of Canada like this were appealing and she looked forward to living them. At the same time, her parents also imagined less competitive school stories for Di:

When [Di] was in the elementary school, I did not send her to after school subject enhancement classes. Instead, I sent her to classes of interests to take painting

lessons. I had some issues with Chinese educational system. While she was in the junior high, I thought she had enough pressure from her regular schoolwork.

However, if I had not come here, I would have been forced to do like others to register her to subject enhancement classes so that she would be able to compete with other children. Yes, I would have to do so. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Ting, June 29, 2005)

Ting learned from the web, her friends, and some other sources that Canadian schools had less pressure and offered more time for “children to be children” when reflecting on hers and Di’s lived school stories: “Studying under high pressure [for national entrance college examinations] might force learning, but I thought it suppressed human needs. Children didn’t have time to be children. They ended up learning for learning’s sake” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Ting, June 29, 2005). Ting imagined more relaxing school stories for Di in Canada maybe because she could not imagine Canadian schools could be more competitive and stressed than the ones she had lived in a middle school in her hometown, nicknamed as “Number One Scholar Hometown.” I imagine it was because of her school experiences, Ting later “had some issues with the Chinese educational system.” She thought in Canada she did not have to send Di to take lessons after school in order to prepare for colleges, but she would have had to do so if they had stayed in China. She thought in Canada Di would have time to enjoy her personal interest in painting, for example. Di and her mother had imagined Canadian school stories. They had hoped for better stories on a new school landscape in Canada.

Shifting to River’s Edge, Di started experiencing different stories of school. It

was more complicated and different than she had imagined. In this section, I explore Di's lived stories of shifting schools from Chinese school landscapes to Canadian school landscapes. I try to reveal a course of life Di went through on shifting landscapes as an immigrant girl from China to Canada. With her lived stories, I try to understand how her roots and her routes shaped her route of living her stories in River's Edge.

A Changed Rhythm

At first, I really couldn't get used to it. But now it's OK. Like the first day at three o'clock, my classmates told me the school was over. I was like, "What?" It's so early. Now every day I get up maybe like seven-thirty. But when I was in China, I usually got up at five-thirty. When I was in China, I was the first to leave home everyday in the morning. And then I went to school. There were five periods in the morning, but each period was shorter, forty-five minutes. But here every class is fifty-two minutes... At lunchtime, sometimes I went to a nearby restaurant with my friends to have our lunch. But usually we had faster food, like hamburgers. I miss those days very much, too. Here the lunchtime is just fifty minutes. But in China the lunchtime could be two hours. Usually after lunch, we walked around the school, you know, having a walk and chatting. Yeah, that's really nice. In the afternoon we had three classes. Our school ended at 5:06 in the afternoon. But here the school is over a little over three o'clock. Yeah that's really different. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005)

The first difference Di experienced in River's Edge was the changed rhythm. She got up

two hours later than she did in China. She “couldn’t get used to it,” to be dismissed from school at about 3 o’clock which was another two hours earlier than in her school in China. Di described in detail the rhythm of her school day in China. She had eight periods each day in China, five in the morning and three in the afternoon. Although each period was eight minutes shorter, her day in the school was much longer. The two-hour lunchtime recess was enjoyable. She had lunch with her friends. Compared to the fifty minutes lunch break in River’s Edge, she had much more time chatting with friends and walking around the school during the two-lunch break. Based upon Di’s description, it seemed after the two-hour lunchtime recess, three o’clock might be the time to begin the second period of the afternoon and she had one more class to go. It was not a time for Di to go home in China, but it was in Canada.

The rhythm changed and Di needed to adjust her body and mind to the new rhythm of school stories in River’s Edge. “Although the life was kind of busy [in China], I was really happy. In here maybe sometimes I feel kind of boring, though, because I really don’t have much to do” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005). Shorter days in school seemed to be her reason for being bored. I imagine that when she got home at 3:30 in the afternoon and if there was little homework and no friends to hang out with like in China, Di felt bored: “don’t have much to do.” In “living relational stories”, I felt Di’s “yearning for friends and connections.” In field notes, I wrote about Di’s yearning: “Lili, I haven’t been to your home yet”. (Field note, Thursday, Feb. 5, 2004). While in China, it was a very different rhythm of life. When she got home around 5:30 in the afternoon, Di carried her school stories home because she usually had plenty

of homework to do. "...in China, it's really normal [to have lots of homework]" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5th, 2005). On the one hand, homework kept Di too busy to feel "bored." On the other hand, she could hang out with her friends all the time, in and after school because her friends were either classmates or neighbors. Di loved to be with friends. As a good student with good marks, Di experienced no problems having friends in school. For Di, the most compelling school stories seemed to be "a lot of work" and "severe competition," not friends because friends usually came along easily. Di was not afraid of competition since she had been successful from the first day of school. However, as a child and teenage girl, she had dreams. She also experienced her mother's unfavorable telling of the Chinese educational system, which, to her, imposed too much pressure on children. Thus I imagine when her parents told her that they were immigrating to Canada where she would have less homework, Di was excited because less homework meant less pressure. Yet, because she was used to the rhythm, spending hours living school-related stories each day with her friends, the pressure was not that unbearable. While in River's Edge, a relaxing school rhythm turned to boring because she could not live school stories with friends like she used to in China. Visiting friends here in Canada was just too hard. But she could visit friends almost any time she wanted in China.

"After school, my friend and I went home by bus. Sometimes we bought snack on the way home. But now here after school I take the bus and go home by myself because no friends live really close to me" (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005). Di's mind also needed to adjust to River's Edge's rhythm: Going home alone, at a much

earlier time in the middle of the afternoon and without friends to hang around, Di needed new stories for this “emptiness.” It took a while for Di to get used to living this new rhythm: “At first, I really couldn’t get used to it. But now it’s OK.” On a new school landscape and living school stories with a new rhythm in River’s Edge, Di had to learn how to take advantage of the free time without friends:

As I said in China there’s more pressure. In here I have more free time. But sometimes maybe I’ve got used to the way in China. So sometimes I even give myself pressure. Yeah you know like tell myself to get higher marks. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005)

The rhythm of her Chinese school life was a rhythm of pressure, while in River’s Edge, the rhythm was one of “more free time.” Di said she had got used to “the way in China,” a rhythm of pressure. I imagine when she pushed herself to work harder and longer hours to get better marks, she was trying to live a new rhythm of school that was closer to her familiar Chinese school rhythm, a busier and more pressured school rhythm.

Stories of Teaching and Learning Changed

Di experienced a new rhythm of school in Canada. She lived many other new stories shifting to River’s Edge, a Canadian school landscape. These new stories were different from her lived school stories in China. Getting comfortable with the new stories in a new and different school needed a bit effort. Di tried hard to live the new stories and made them come to terms with her lived stories in China.

The school is really different and uh the way teachers teach us is different too.

And the homework is different. At first it's really hard because I didn't understand anything well to do my homework. Yeah that was really hard. And I remember that in the first month (September 2003) everyday I came home and when I did my homework I didn't know how to do it. Everyday I worked on homework till like midnight. It's so hard. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 11, 2004)

Living school stories was hard for Di when she realized River's Edge was "really different." Not only did the language make learning difficult but also the way teachers taught and the way students did assignments. These were all new but difficult stories Di had to live in River's Edge. If there was homework, Di spent hours trying to figure out how to do it rather than doing it. "It's so hard."

It seemed to Di that she did not learn much in River's Edge because teachers did not teach much from textbooks. Thus she did not know what she learned. It was a different school experience:

In China, we learned new things every day and when we went home and we needed to review and I still study like this... Well the teachers here sometimes don't teach that much. They just like hmm, give you some assignments and you read a book and do something about it. And they give you like projects and while you do the projects, you learn things, you know, like that. It's kind of more like to learn it by yourself. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 4, 2004)

In our first conversation, Di described in detail how the teachers taught and how the students learned on two school landscapes, China and Canada. Her teachers in China

were more straightforward in terms of teaching answers to questions. Everyday or for every lecture, the teachers delivered something new. Listening to the lectures, doing homework and preparing for tests were Di's lived stories of learning and rhythm of learning in her Chinese schools. In River's Edge, Di's teachers "did not teach that much." Di realized that the part the teachers did not teach in the classroom was the something left for students to discover for themselves so as to finish assignments such as projects and book reports. Di realized there were different stories of teaching in China and in Canada. However, she still tried to live her past stories of learning and with her past rhythm in River's Edge because those stories were easy for her. In a later conversation, Di said:

My math teacher is Chinese (laughs) and he's also really a good teacher...

Sometimes I solve his math problems in my way that I learned in China. He could understand but my classmates couldn't. They were like, 'OK. What the hell is that?' Yeah, they didn't know. That's OK. I think anyways the teacher knew my way of solving the problem was right. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, March 31, 2005)

While she was solving math problems in the way she learned from her Chinese schools, Di was trying to relive a Chinese story in River's Edge. It was a different story, one her Canadian classmates did not understand: "What the hell is that?" Di wanted her Chinese way of doing math to be accepted because she did solve the math problems. I imagine, if the story was lived in her Chinese school, her classmates would have reacted differently. They would have applauded her as a math master. Di was somewhat disappointed and

puzzled that her knowledge was questioned: “What the hell is that?” She received comfort from her math teacher, who, some time ago, was also from China. He understood her and made Di’s Chinese story of doing math eligible on the new school landscape. Her math teacher, Mr. Chan, soon became her favorite teacher, who was not only a good math teacher, but also someone who understood her Chinese stories.

Di wanted to keep her way of learning. But it was not easy for her to do so because she found the teachers in River’s Edge taught differently than her teachers in China. They did not “teach that much” as her Chinese teachers did; therefore, she could not get ready answers from her Canadian teachers. She needed to search for her own answers for assignments. It was a different learning process for Di. Even though she said she still studied in her old way, it was not the same any more when she was a student living and learning in River’s Edge. In River’s Edge, for instance, assignments were different:

In China our homework was like to do questions from one to four on page twenty-one, for example. But now in here homework is more creative. We do projects. We need to do research from the Internet. We make posters. We use PowerPoint to do presentations to show the class what we found. In China, my teachers taught things. But in here I need to discover things for myself. (Tape-recorded Conversation, March 31, 2005)

This conversation was taped in Di’s last year in River’s Edge. By then, she had been in Canada for almost two years. She had two parallel stories of school regarding doing schoolwork. Her lived stories of doing homework in China were question and answer.

What she needed to do was to follow the instructions and give answers. She realized school stories of learning and teaching changed in River's Edge. Having been in River's Edge for two years, Di seemed to be shifting to new stories of teaching and learning in River's Edge. She understood because teachers taught differently, as a student, she also needed to learn in a different way and do homework in a new way. She needed to "discover" answers for herself because in River's Edge, teachers did not teach to give direct answers. For assignments such as projects, she could not look for the right answers as she used to in China where her teachers taught her what the right answers were.

While she was packing and preparing for a new life in Canada, I imagine Di expected change and new experiences. But the stories of change and difference sometimes were complicated as she was experiencing them on new school landscapes. The rhythm of school was changed and stories of teaching and learning were "really different." And the way to deliver what was learned was different:

I'm not comfortable to be the center of attention. That's why I hate presentations.

When I speak in front of a lot of people, I get so nervous that sometimes I can't even speak as I normally do. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, April 7, 2005)

When she was in China, learning was a more private matter. The students got the questions and then worked out the answers. They did the homework and examinations this way. That was how they were marked. That was how school stories were lived in Di's Chinese schools. She did not have to be "the centre of attention" to present what she learned to get marks. She showed the teachers what and how she learned by writing tests and exams. While in River's Edge, Di had to live different stories of getting good marks.

She had to make what she learned public. She had to speak and speak loudly and clearly in the front of the classroom, a place that belonged to teachers. Di had not lived stories of sharing and representing knowledge before in China. I can see how hard it was for Di to live a story she had not lived before: "... sometimes I can't even speak as I normally do." It seemed she was trying to live a story that needed to transcend herself. But Di knew she had to shift to River's Edge's stories of learning because this was how she was marked and there were no other stories to live to get good marks.

Stories of School Culture Changed

Shifting to River's Edge, a new school landscape in Canada, was not easy for Di. The rhythm of school changed. Stories of teaching and learning and doing assignments were different. Yet, it was not only about studying. She found many differences around other aspects such as school culture, friends and relationships with classmates.

Students here in Canada are like more open you know than my classmates in China. And some often wear like makeup and they look more like adults to me. And the students in China thought the mark was the most important thing. Yeah but the students here, some of them, don't think so. They don't think the mark is that important. But I still think marks are important and I think fashion is not that important. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 11, 2004)

In China, the plotline of learning for good marks was for all students no matter if one could or could not live the story of being a student with good marks. It was accepted by everyone: students, teachers and parents, that good students were those who got good

marks. Therefore, to Di, “students in China thought the mark was the most important thing.” It was quite a different experience in River’s Edge where good marks were not the most important thing for “some” students’ stories to live by. Di was puzzled that, at school, stories other than marks could also be important to students. In Di’s lived stories in China, there was some “fashion.” For example, she told me she and her friends liked to shop together. They liked the “little pretty things.” In the conversation, she could not find English words to describe the “little pretty things.” I understood the little pretty things were things like address books, bookmarks, hair clips and so on because I remembered the treasures JJ brought from China. I also remember how Di’s bedroom was decorated by the “little pretty things” such as puffy teddy bears and sandalwood fans. Shopping for the “little pretty things” with her friends was a good and meaningful story to live for Di to feel connected and keep friendships. These stories seemed to accompany Di and help her live stories of good marks as she knew she could only go to good universities with good marks. Her stories of school in China were not, and could not, be centered on “fashion”, although she liked shopping with her friends and doing things that were not directly related to schoolwork. Di seemed to have brought the idea of her “good marks” stories to live in River’s Edge. She puzzled that for some students in River’s Edge, “fashion” was important and marks were not as important. I imagine what puzzled Di more was that “wearing black chains or wearing makeup” was a fine story in River’s Edge. It was a symbol of “being cool” (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005). Before she could understand the new school stories, Di tried to hold on to her past lived stories that made sense to her. She tried not to be affected: “I still think marks are

important and I think fashion is not that important.” She still wanted to live by the story that studying was the top priority for her as a student.

However, living by the stories of good marks was not the same anymore on this new school landscape. Di might be able to choose to continue to live stories of good marks in River’s Edge, but she could not avoid living on a school landscape where “some” students lived stories of “wearing black chains and makeup” in order to be storied as “cool”. I imagine Di had to make an effort to try to live the stories of good marks, which in her schools in China were non-negotiable and taken for granted.

Di did not want to live the “fashion” story and tried not to be affected by it; but she found her best friend sometimes surprised her and puzzled her:

Lili is my friend. She has been here for four years. I think she changed a little bit, yeah, I think so. In China when girls are sixteen, they had too much schoolwork to worry about to think of other things. But here, she sometimes dresses herself like an adult. I think that’s something I didn’t see in my friends in China. If my friends were sixteen, they wouldn’t be like her... Last time I went shopping with her. She was looking for those clothing and uh hairstyle, something like that. I wasn’t very interested. But, yeah, she’s my friend. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 4, 2004)

In “living relational stories”, I wrote that being close to people, friends and teachers, was very important for Di. She could be quiet but with her friends she could talk on and on. Lili was a friend and very important to Di in River’s Edge. She spoke Di’s mother tongue, and like Di, immigrated from China. Being new in River’s Edge, Di hung around

with Lili and Lili's friends. Lili told Di many stories of River's Edge, but Lili puzzled Di sometimes because she "changed a bit." Lili was not quite like Di's friends in China because Di and her friends in China did not "dress like adults." They had "too much schoolwork to worry about to think of other things." Since working for good marks rather than dressing like adults was her lived school story in China, Di had not expected Lili, a girl immigrated from China like her, could shift from the plotline of being a student in China. But Di still wanted to be friends with Lili although she was living in ways Di and her friends in China did not share. Di knew Lili immigrated to Canada a few years earlier than she did. I wonder if Di wondered if she would be more like Lili as she lived longer in Canada. In River's Edge, Di made friends with people she might not have if she had been in China. On a new school landscape, Di made friends who cared about different things.

The story Di took for granted, as a student in her Chinese schools, that the most important thing to care about was studying hard for good marks, became more complex in River's Edge. Lili, Di's best friend in River's Edge, was fascinated with "fashion." Di was puzzled that Lili lived some stories that she and her friends in China did not experience. To Di, relational stories with classmates and friends were as important as stories of marks. Di found Lili different from her friends she made in China. She also experienced different relational stories in River's Edge:

I feel I belonged to my school in China. I had so many friends there and they were all really close friends because we went to the same elementary school and then to the same junior high. We had really long time of friendship. We were all Chinese

there and we all spoke the same language. And everybody's involved in everything. So I really felt good. But in River's Edge, there's fewer friends and they are not that close friends. And we are not very involved with them, the Canadian kids. The relationship I felt with the Canadian classmates is different from that with my Chinese friends. Like with Chinese friends, we can like joking you know, and like laughing together. We go to movies and you know like we do everything together. Well like with my Canadian friends, we can do like project together or if I have any questions I can ask them... But I can talk with my Chinese friends about anything. Like I didn't tell any of my Canadian friends about my birthday. But I told every Chinese friend of mine. And they celebrated for me. It is really a different feeling. The relationship between me and my Canadian friends and that with my Chinese friends is really different. I don't know what kind of feeling that is. But it's really, really different. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, March 31, 2005)

Di felt she belonged in her Chinese schools but not as much in River's Edge. The reason seemed to be that she had many close friends with whom she was comfortable to be who she was in China. In River's Edge, however, she felt she could not live all her stories with her classmates. Conversations with them were limited to schoolwork. Di's lived stories of being with friends were that she was able to "laugh" with them. It seemed that if she could not laugh and share her life stories with her friends and classmates, school was not like the story of school she had lived in China. She tried to look for friends with whom to share her life stories. Di had a few close Chinese friends in River's Edge. She

found Lili and a few other girls. They were important for her because they helped her connect the two school landscapes, the Chinese and Canadian, even though they were not the same. Di relived relational stories in River's Edge with her Chinese friends in Canada. They shared some of her lived stories in China such as music and readings. She wondered why she did not feel like telling her Canadian classmates about her birthday. On the one hand, Di was happy that her Chinese friends "celebrated" her birthday. On the other hand, she was puzzled that she could not "involve" her Canadian classmates to live stories with her. The "really, really different feeling" was not what she had anticipated in a Canadian school when she was packing for going to live in Canada. Di had to live stories with experiences like this, puzzling ones, for some time while her stories to live by shifted within the new plotlines on her new school landscape.

Looking for Continuity in Discontinuity

Di lived different school stories on a new landscape from learning as a student to keeping relationships as a person. In the first half of this section I wrote about her experiencing the differences shifting onto a new school landscape in Canada. For the proceeding section, I focus on Di's dealing with, and living with, River's Edge's school stories that were new and different from those stories she lived in her schools in China.

Di knew Canada was different. The students there spoke a different language than she did in China. From her mother, friends and movies, she pictured Canadian schools not as difficult as her Chinese schools, where she and her classmates must work very hard in order to do well in the national entrance examinations to go to universities.

For the past seven years in her Chinese schools, studying hard was her major plotline of school stories. As a student, Di was successful in this plotline, doing well and having good marks. Although the school was demanding and difficult, being acknowledged as a good student, Di enjoyed her school stories in China. She was in the well-accepted successful stories of school. It seemed her way was the right and successful way of living school stories.

Although in China it was hard for high school graduates to get into universities, it would not be a problem for Di. She was confident that she could do better than her cousins and go to better universities. Immigrating to Canada might be like what Di's mother said to "escape competition," but it was certainly not to escape education. Instead it was a chance to get better education. While in River's Edge, it was not the tension Di experienced to compete for entering universities, but rather the tension to live comfortably as a person and student from another country in the stories on new school landscapes. Di sought to live the familiar stories she had lived before she came to River's Edge so that the sweet potato vines could hold on to nutritious and meaningful soil in Canada:

After Christmas, it's very busy because that was term two. And in term two, the mark was very important for senior high school. You know I am trying to get into the academic challenge senior high school. In order to get in, my average score from the four core courses has to be above eighty. For term one, my average was like eighty-two. That's above eighty but not very high. So in term two, I kind of worked harder to get better marks. And at the end of term two, my average mark

was eight-six. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, March 31, 2005)

For all the time I was with Di and from reading back and forth across our conversations, I sensed Di's struggle in living different stories in River's Edge. In the first half of this section, I wrote River's Edge was difficult for Di because she had to get along with the stories of doing homework in new ways and of being a Chinese girl in a Canadian school with new classmates and teachers. Presentations made her nervous because she was not used to speaking loudly and in English in front of the classroom, the teacher's territory. Group projects made her nervous because her classmates were reluctant to invite her to be a partner. These stories were hard. But these stories fit in her familiar plotline of studying and studying for good marks. I see here she relived the familiar Chinese story of learning to earn good marks in order to go to good schools in the story that she needed an average of at least eighty to get into an academic challenge program in senior high school. Experiencing continuity of her lived stories in China in River's Edge was important. She found focus and purpose of living her stories in River's Edge, which was to pass the minimum score and higher. She felt better that for the second term her average was eight-six.

Connecting to her past lived stories, for Di, was to recollect who she was and used to be before shifting to River's Edge. Because of the new and different school stories, she had to un-know many things in order to do things right on a new storied school landscape. She had to change to fit into new stories of doing assignments in "their" ways, new ways. On a new storied school landscape, Di did not feel like who she used to be. She referred to her lived stories to find a place to live who she was in River's Edge:

I feel not many people are paying attention to me because, you know, I am kind of quiet and walk down the hallways by myself. I don't like to catch many people's attention. So, like only a few people know I exist (laughs). Yeah really, like last week one girl from an option class even asked: "Are you new here?" (Laughs). I was like, OK (laughing). Like she didn't notice me in the class we have been in for two terms. Or maybe it's a big class, and she has a lot of friends to hang around. She never stops talking to people around her. You know, so she's kind of too busy to notice me (laughs). (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, April 7, 2005)

Di said to me before that she was quiet. Usually she was not the person to initiate a conversation with people she did not know. But it was not a problem in China. Di laughed several times while telling the story of how a classmate did not know that she and Di had been in the same class for two terms. She laughed because she knew who she was in China. In China, she was quiet but not forgotten for being quiet. Di seemed not hurt so much because she remembered who she was in China. Although in River's Edge she was not able to continue the same story she used to live, referring the good memory enabled Di to hold on to good stories to live up to on a new school landscape. Here I revisit her told stories discussed in "living relational stories":

The relationship I had with the teachers in China, I think, was much closer than the teachers in River's Edge. Maybe that's because I had good marks in China and uh there were teachers who always asked me to do important things for the class or the teachers. I was trusted. I felt important. But in here now it's

November 11. I've been in the school more than two months but I'm not sure if some teachers like my social teacher know my name. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, November 11, 2004)

Di lived "important" stories in China. She was acknowledged as a good student. She was trusted with important duties because of that. In River's Edge, she felt she was invisible. Di might wish to continue to live similar stories in River's Edge to those stories lived in China. But she was not obsessed with the idea. Her lived stories were important to remind her of what kind of a student she used to be. These past stories portrayed an image of who she had been and what stories of her she could live out. She learned that she could live in River's Edge by recollecting her old stories to live by. Even though she felt invisible in River's Edge, she could go on.

Di might feel River's Edge was a "rough" place. She could not live as comfortably as she used to in China as a member of the class. She knew who she had been but wondered who she was in a Canadian school. Again I revisit Di's told stories discussed in "the tension of living between stories":

I got no partner for group projects. I got like left out. The teacher had to put me in a group. I felt pretty bad about that. You know, yeah. I have never experienced being left out. Like when I was in China because ah, in China I was a top student, and I got a lot of friends and was sociable and you know, and if we had a group project or something, lots of people would come to me. But in here I got left out. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, April 7, 2005)

Di was upset that she was left out. It was a story she never lived before in China. As she

said she was quiet. But in her schools in China, it was the mark that defined who she was. She was a student with good marks, therefore, she had many friends. If there was a group project, she was the one who could make significant contributions. Her classmates knew that and wanted to be with her in a group. Being left out in the school in Canada was not a happy story to live. On the one hand, Di was upset being left out. On the other, she knew her potential as a good student in River's Edge when she revisited her past lived stories that told her she used to be important. Lived stories as a recognized good student in China came alive in her memory. These past lived stories continued to live with her to give her hope and confidence when she was living hard stories on new and different school landscapes.

New Stories to Live By

On the school landscape of River's Edge, Di lived many different stories from those she was familiar with or even those she might take for granted such as stories of good students with good marks:

When I was in China, yourself, your friends, your teachers and your parents, all cared about your schoolwork, your marks. In here maybe the teacher thinks seventy or eighty is good enough. And maybe sometimes even yourself thinks the same way. You and your friends don't care very much about what your marks are. They just care if you are a nice person. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005)

Di lived different stories regarding what story to live by to be a student in River's Edge.

In China, doing well in courses was the leading story to live for almost everyone, friends, teachers and parents. Other stories than this were just not as important. Working hard to get good marks was Di's school story to live by in China. In River's Edge, Di realized students had a different orientation in living school stories as students. It seemed in River's Edge to be "nice" was more important than having good marks. Being nice was not necessarily those who had good marks. It seemed Di had to shift to living the stories the students in River's Edge valued. Living stories of being a nice girl was a new story Di figured out in River's Edge. I imagine Di would like to fit into the stories of being nice so that she could be liked as a student and friend. She was liked in her schools in China where she was storied as a good student with good marks. I imagine the plotline of being liked as a student and friend could continue as Di shifted to live appropriate stories of popularity in her new Canadian school.

Being nice and having good marks were not contradictory to Di. She could be both. But how to be nice and what was storied as nice were new to her and sometimes confused her:

Here being a nice person maybe is easy to get along with, not getting mad easily at somebody or sometime maybe like kind of helping people. Some students think being nice is cool, you know, like those cool students. Actually some of them are cool, but not nice in my opinion. Actually being cool usually is like wearing black chains or maybe, you know, really dark makeup. Maybe some people think that's cool. But actually those people are not necessarily nice. Well, I want to be a nice girl, but not that kind of cool. While in China, people thought more about

marks, but here maybe more about how much fun one has with you. When I was in China, a student was judged maybe by how many hours spent on studying each day. But in here, if you study long hours every day, maybe some people will think you're boring because they think you are a bookworm or something like that. Like maybe in here being nice is to let others feel you are fun to be together with.

(Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005)

On a new school landscape, school stories were different. Di came back and forth from her lived school stories in China attempting to make sense of new school stories in River's Edge. She learned new stories about being a good student such as "being nice." Different language was used to tell stories of students. Being nice was not new to Di but it was not understood the same way. "Being helpful" might be easily related to "being nice." However, that "being nice is being cool" was not so because Di had not lived that kind of story before in China, wearing makeup and black chains, for example. On this new school landscape of River's Edge, Di learned new school stories. At the same time, revisiting her lived school stories in China, she was figuring out her own new stories to live by. Di learned that to fit into the school stories of "being cool" in River's Edge, one needed to be "fun" and not a "bookworm." She might like the idea of being a fun person to classmates and friends although being fun was not so much of her experience in China. Because in China spending a long time on studying did not mean one storied as a bookworm but rather as diligent, I imagine Di might continue to work hard to be a good student with good marks as she used to in China since in River's Edge there was still the soil, the grounding for her Chinese plotline. To be cool was a fine story to be in.

However, if it meant to wear “dark makeup” and “black chains,” Di would rather live away from this kind of story of being cool. In River’s Edge, Di lived new stories and tried to figure out her stories to live by in a new school alongside living her remembered lived stories in China in memories.

Di was shaped by her past lived stories and was being shaped also by new stories in her new school in Canada. On shifting school landscapes, she constructed her own world of stories. She lived stories, learned new stories and by shifting herself in a new storied school landscape, she chose to stick to stories that she had lived for years before she came to Canada and also chose to change to fit into new stories that made sense to her according to her lived stories in China:

At first I didn’t like the school here. Sometimes the teachers really try to help.

You know like they helped me get into groups. And then the team-mates talked to me or something. But the teachers just got me into the groups. They could not help me when I was in the group. So if I want to get involved in a group project, I think, I need to change to be more active. So I think it’s my problem. Well maybe

I think I should change... (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005)

Di did not like River’s Edge in the beginning because there were stories she had not lived before. She did not find it easy to get into some stories, to be a team member of a school project, for example. Di understood group projects were a common type of schoolwork. She needed to do well to get good marks. She appreciated that her teachers stepped in and helped her get into groups. At the same time, she realized that her teachers could only help her this much. “They could not help me when I was in the group.” On a new

school landscape of new stories, Di realized that it was she that needed to change. She could change herself to be “more active.” It might not be easy because she was a quiet girl in her Chinese schools. But she thought that was a way to “get involved.” She could not wait for things to happen to her even though, in her Chinese schools, usually her classmates came to her if there was a group project. On a new landscape she needed to create opportunities for herself. She needed to change. I imagine she might think, “I’m the different person, the mixture. I am a person to change because nobody would change for me.” Di shifted, lived new stories and figured out new stories she thought would be hers to live by in River’s Edge.

As an immigrant girl from China, Di was a knower of, and player on, her Chinese school landscapes. Shifting to River’s Edge, Di learned to live new stories to become a knower. Being in River’s Edge for two years, Di seemed to be a knower, but not so much a player yet:

Now I think everything’s OK (laughs). Yeah. I can’t be certain part of the school culture, but I don’t feel guilty about it because I still have a lot of friends. They share my feelings. Yeah, so I think it’s OK. You know like those kinds of fashions. I don’t want to be part of it. But also I don’t hate the exotic fashions. So I think I will just be an audience maybe to be that kind of person. And I think that’s enough. Yeah, so yeah, I just want to like be the person I want to be. I don’t change myself to get involved [in those things I don’t want to be]. I just want to be myself. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, April 7, 2005)

Living on the new school landscape for two years, Di seemed to become a knower of the

stories of River's Edge. She seemed to have passed the time when she was overwhelmed by new and different stories in a new school. She felt better at this moment: "Now I think everything's OK." Being a knower of the school stories, Di could make her decisions on what school stories to live. She thought of becoming "more active" so that she could do well in group projects and presentations to get good marks. She wanted to continue to be in the plotline of being a student with good marks. She made decisions to live without some school stories. She felt comfortable with her decisions: "I can't be certain part of the school culture, but I don't feel guilty about it because I still have a lot of friends." Di was shaped by lived stories in her schools in China as to who she was. When she was not sure about the school stories in River's Edge, she was not confident to be different. She was not sure if she could live her old stories in a new school. When she found out she had friends in River's Edge and with them she could choose to live meaningful stories together and to stay away from those stories such as pursuing "fashion," Di figured out her new stories to live by as an immigrant Chinese girl in River's Edge. On a new school landscape, Di learned to live as a player or an outsider. At the same time, she was also being shaped by new stories. She learned to be open-minded: "I don't want to be part of it. But also I don't hate the exotic fashions." Di learned not to judge her classmates by her lived stories as to what stories should be lived as students. On a new school landscape, Di learned to be who she had been and who she was. I wonder as she moves on to the senior high school, who she will become.

Di seemed to have sensed the uncertainty of her future since she lived stories that reshaped her:

Maybe for the near future, my goal is to get an average of ninety for all the courses in grade ten because now my average is eighty-eight or eighty-seven. And now I am thinking of going to a university outside this province. But maybe in three years, during the high school, I may change my mind. Who knows? But I really don't think that I'm certain about what I want to do after school you know. But my parents wanted me to be a medical doctor. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005)

In River's Edge, Di was not sure of her future. She seemed to be only certain about her short-term goals. She could not be certain about who she might become even she knew her parents would be happy to see her become a medical doctor. On shifting landscapes, Di sensed her own shifting among different stories and she imagined it would be so in planning her future. I wonder, living on shifting landscapes, how differently Di might value her family stories and her mother's story of her.

Complexity of Stories

Di immigrated to Canada after living thirteen years of stories in China. Most of the time, she enjoyed living Chinese stories as a girl and student although her school stories were compelling, demanding and not always easy to live. When her parents told her that they were to immigrate to Canada, she also looked forward to living new stories in Canada, a country she imagined inherited ancient European civilization. She packed her Chinese stories with her and traveled with them to Canada. On a visit to her home, I saw how Di exhibited her lived stories on her bedroom walls and on her bookshelf. With the lived

stories in China, she started her new stories in River's Edge. Different stories, sometimes confusing and unappealing, occasionally contradicted her imagined stories of Canadian schools. Hoping to "escape" Chinese competitive stories, Di encountered new difficult stories:

In China there's competition even among friends. Like we talked about our homework, but we tried not to tell each other how hard we were going to work on the homework because we would not want to get behind our friends in marks. The reality in China, maybe, was kind of cruel, yeah tough. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005)

In River's Edge, Di felt the complexities of lived stories. On the one hand, the experience of "being left out" made her cherish the closeness with friends in her schools in China:

I feel I belonged to my school in China. I had so many friends there and they were all really close friends because we went to the same elementary school and then to the same junior high. We had really long time of friendship. We were all Chinese there and we all spoke the same language. Everybody's involved in everything. I really felt good. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, March 31, 2005)

On the other hand, the competition for better marks among classmates and even between her and her friends was "cruel" and "tough". In River's Edge, Di missed the closeness with friends because she "felt good" to be "involved in everything" with her friends in the school. "Being left out" became another kind of "cruel" and "tough". However, in River's Edge, Di felt less competition among classmates and friends in terms of marks. I

imagine the complexities of experiences shifting from China to Canada was shaping Di as a person, new to herself, her parents and her friends in China and Canada.

The following is another excerpt from a tape-recorded conversation that demonstrates Di's experiencing complexities of stories on shifting landscapes:

I still think the way I used to in China. So like when I got seventy for a test, I was upset. But when my teacher here told me that I did good, actually this made me really sad because this made me feel like my teacher thought this was the best I could do. But actually I knew I could do much better. Yeah, you know, because it's like my teachers thought that's the best I could do. One time, I got sixty-eight on my LA test. My teacher told me that I did good. I know she was trying to praise my effort. But actually I felt really upset and when I got home, I actually cried because, you know, I really thought I could be better. I was asking: "So what do you think? I'm good enough? What? That's not good." Yeah, yeah, like that. But in China if I got kind of low marks, my classmates and my teachers would say that I really did bad and I needed to improve. Actually this, sometimes, made me uncomfortable, too. But when they said that to me, I knew I needed to work harder. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005)

Di still judged herself by marks. Eighty and higher for all the courses was her story to live by as a student. That was who she was in China and who she thought she should be in River's Edge. Di was puzzled by her teacher's story of as a mediocre student.

Although she understood that her teacher was trying to be gentle, Di was hurt because she knew her past stories. She was a much better student than the one who got a mark of

sixty-eight. She was so hurt that she went home and cried. She admitted it was hard that in China if she got a low mark, her friends and teachers told her directly that she should do better. Yet she understood they had a high expectation of her because she had always been a good student with good marks. That was how she was storied and lived her life. I imagine trying to be always on the top would be a story of pressure and Di might have sensed that. But sixty-eight was just too low. She would not appreciate her teacher to story her as a mediocre student who did not have potential to do better work.

On shifting landscapes, Di lived different stories of being a student. These different lived stories were not only different, but also confusing and contradictory. She enjoyed being storied as a good student in her school in China. She could appreciate her language arts teacher's gentleness and recognition of her efforts in learning English in her second language. Being told "you did bad" was hurtful. At the same time, it was equally hurtful to be told, "you did good" when she just received a mere pass score. On the conversation taped on April 7, 2005, almost two years after she entered River's Edge, Di thought "everything is OK." She thought she had figured out her own stories to live by on a Canadian school landscape. I imagine she worked hard trying to understand old and new stories and figure out stories to live by out of the complicated experiences. Di did so by revisiting her past lived stories and alongside her lived stories in Canada. She understood new stories which also shed new light on her lived stories in China:

Yeah, as I said, in China, there's more pressure. In here I have more free time. But sometimes maybe I've got used to the way in China. So sometimes I even give myself pressure. Yeah you know like tell myself to get higher marks. (Tape-

recorded Conversation with Di, May 5, 2005)

From her lived school stories, Ting was concerned with too much pressure on students from the schools in China. She believed that young students should have time to be themselves. Di, like her mother, preferred “free time” than “pressure.” Shifting to River’s Edge, however, Di wanted some pressure to make herself busy and work harder to get better marks. She thought if she did not give herself some pressure, her marks would go down. More free time and little pressure were the stories told about Canadian schools before Di and her parents immigrated to Canada. Limited free time and too much pressure were lived school stories in China, which both Di’s parents and her had wanted to avoid. Shifting to a new school landscape, Di understood “pressure” in a new light by living new stories in River’s Edge. Sometimes pressure was needed to get self-motivated to study harder for better marks. Di did not have much “free time” in schools in China, especially when she was in junior high. Di had “more free time” in River’s Edge, which was new and had been expected. Yet until she had known ways to make good use of “more free time,” Di would be upset idling around and having little to do. Having little to do was not a story for Di in China. Remembering her lived stories in China, Di seemed to consider free time not so attractive. She thus gave herself pressure so that she could spend “free time” reasonably.

Di was living new school stories in River’s Edge. At the same time, she constantly referred to her lived school stories in China to help understand new stories. In this way, she retold her lived stories in a new way:

I think like a long time ago I already told you (Guming) like something about the

teachers here right? Yeah, the teachers are really different. And I think I like both ways. The teachers here, you can get really close to. Like you can feel you're friend with them. In China the teachers kind of keep a distance, you know, 'I'm the teacher.' You have to think like the teachers are teachers. You have to respect them. It's not like no joking around. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, April 7, 2005)

Di once told me she felt she was closer to her teachers in her Chinese schools. Here she said in this paragraph that students could "get really close to" teachers in River's Edge. Yet, she was not contradictory. By living new stories and visiting past lived stories, Di was telling new stories of "closeness." She felt Chinese teachers were close because she felt they shared social, cultural and historical stories, the same language. The closeness between teachers and students in her Canadian school was understood by comparing stories she lived in China regarding teacher-student relationships. Another layer of the stories of teacher and student relationship in her lived stories in her Chinese schools was teachers "keep a distance" to show their authority as teachers. I imagine in a way, sharing the social-cultural code, Di understood the story that her Chinese teachers "kept a distance" to their students. Thus it did not interfere with Di's feeling of the closeness to her teachers, especially when she was a good student and was entrusted with responsibilities. I imagine, without living the stories that her teachers in River's Edge could be students' friends and maybe share a little joke sometimes, Di might be able to tell only one side of the story of teacher-student relationship about her teachers in China. Di's lived stories shaped how she lived new stories on a new school landscape. She

composed her own stories to live and tell, the past and the present, old and new. She found meaning in the stories she lived with her teachers in River's Edge. She figured out the reason that students did not joke around in her Chinese schools.

In the complexities of stories on shifting landscapes, Di revisited lived stories to live new stories. Her family stories were also visited and revisited when Di composed her own stories to live by. Di had said many times that she was the one to change. She *relied* on herself to live the stories that were not easy for her to live. I saw her mother, Ting, in Di. To Di, her mother was a strong and an independent woman. Being strong and independent became Di's story to live by. That was her plotline to follow and the nutrition for her sweet potato vines living on shifting and changing landscapes.

The following chapter (Chapter 6) was composed to reveal how the three immigrant children's lives reverberated across each other's lived stories.

Chapter Six

RESONATING NARRATIVE THREADS ACROSS THE LIVES OF
YANG, ATOOSA AND DI

For the past two years, I lived alongside Yang, Atoosa and Di, three immigrant junior high students, in various ways and on various occasions. I sat in their classrooms and watched their classroom performances. In River's Edge, I encountered them in the hallways and on the playground while they were socializing with their classmates. I talked with them and recorded our conversations in the private interview room at lunch breaks and after school. I went to Di's and Atoosa's graduation ceremony and witnessed their achievements. I visited their homes to see and talk with their parents. I talked with them on the phone, on the bus and in the grocery store where I met them. As an immigrant and a mother of a teenage daughter, I often saw myself in their lives and them in mine. At the same time, the experiences of living alongside Yang, Atoosa and Di and the stories they shared with me shaped my understanding of the lives of immigrant children.

I first started writing about Yang in the summer of 2005. When I finished writing about Di, another year had passed. Yang, after reading the stories I wrote about him, said: "I changed." When Yang said he changed, at the same time, he was also telling me he changed from what he had been. Change was not water without a source. It was from his living in an "already existing repertoire of roles" (Carr, 1986, p. 84) and from being constantly shaped by the stories he lived. During the time of the research, as I shifted

from composing field texts to research texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), Atoosa and her family had moved to another Canadian city where she attended the high school. Di and Yang still live in the same city but left River's Edge for different high schools. They shifted to new landscapes again. Yang said he changed. Di felt her changed as well. Atoosa might have similar feelings. They will continue to be shaped as they live on new storied landscapes.

The three students came to Canada from different places and at different ages. Yang immigrated to Canada via the US. Di was from China and Atoosa from Iran. Di and Atoosa started their first Canadian schooling in grade eight in River's Edge. Yang's education was all in North America. River's Edge was Yang's junior high school and prior to that he had attended elementary schools in the US and Canada. When I met them, like the sweet potato vines, they had traveled from somewhere to River's Edge. When I started writing this chapter, Yang, Atoosa and Di had moved on to different senior high schools. No matter whether they feel it or not, the routes their metaphorical sweet potato vines created will always, in one way or another, leave messages on their becoming as they live on new landscapes. While they left River's Edge to go to different schools and will meet and live with new classmates and teachers, they won't leave their families as they did not when they followed their parents to Canada. Their unfolding stories lived out on shifting landscapes shaped who they were to their parents at home and who they were to classmates and teachers in schools.

I wrote Chapters 3, 4 and 5 about my experiences respectively with Yang, Atoosa and Di. They lived in their own storied worlds in both in- and out-of-school places. From

their lived stories, I saw how unique they were as students in River's Edge: Yang's stories to live by as a Chinese boy; Atoosa's stories to live by as a good student with good marks; Di's stories to live by as wanting to still be a Chinese girl. As students from different social and cultural landscapes than the Canadian one, they were aware of their differences and found meaningful soils in which to touch down as their sweet potato vines spread and grew as they shifted to the school landscape of River's Edge.

Yang, Atoosa and Di are three unique individuals. They lived their own stories in their own worlds following their "story-line[s] constituted by [their] protentions, retentions and intentions" (Carr, 1986, p. 75). Atoosa's sister was one year older than Atoosa was. She was fascinated by the many options in her Canadian high school and wanted to be a fashion designer. Atoosa, however, was not sure. She said she might take the "harder" route to finish her high school in the academic challenge program. She said her father would be happy if she took a different route from her brother's and sister's because she had more time in junior high to catch up English that would prepare her to be successful in the academic challenge program in the senior high school. Atoosa was considering living her senior high school stories from a different route. Atoosa was unique within her own family. As I finished writing about Yang, Atoosa and Di tracing their narrative threads, I found that each of them had their own wisdom shaped in, and from, living their lives. Yet in many ways, I could also see some of each of their stories in the others' stories. In some measure, Yang's story was in Atoosa's and Di's, Atoosa's in Yang's and Di's, and Di's in Yang's and Atoosa's.

Bateson (2000) wrote:

Wisdom comes not by accumulation of more and more experiences but through discerning pattern in the deeper mystery of what is already there... Wisdom, then, is born of the overlapping of lives, the resonance between stories. To become human our species had to evolve a distinctive rhythm of development that allowed for this interaction... (pp. 242-243)

Searching for overlapping lives and resonance between stories is a way to wisdom. For Bateson, we, as humans, need this interaction to be wiser. There were moments when I saw myself in Qin's, Ramesh's and Ting's lives and them in mine while I heard and read their stories. Qin was proud that Yang played an astronaut in Yang's American school. I, too, clapped my hands and cheered JJ as she walked onto the stage to receive awards for excellent performances in her Canadian school. In Atoosa's Thanksgiving story I saw how I, too, wanted JJ, like her classmates, to enjoy stories such as Halloween. When Ting told me why she brought her family to Canada, I nodded my head for her and for myself. Like her, I also came to live in Canada with a dream for JJ. These were the moments of resonance, when I felt, in Bateson's words, overlapping lives among us, as immigrants and mothers. These were the moments when I saw me in their stories and felt they or I lived out each other's stories. That is how I understood Bateson's "resonance between stories."

In "Composing a Life", Bateson (1990) wrote about five women's lives, an engineer, scientist, artist, scholar and administrator. Each of them composed her life in her way and lived her life following a unique path. In writing and thinking of the four women and herself, Bateson (1990) recognized "composite" (p. 15) patterns of these

lives. When she laid these life stories side by side, Bateson found that these women's lives resonated with each other as they made sense of what Bateson saw as interruption and discontinuity in their lives. These resonating stories were illuminating: "All of us are increasingly torn between conflicting loyalties, yet our lives are longer and more full of possibilities than ever before" (Bateson, 1990, p. 15). From the composite patterns of the lives of these five women, she hoped readers would become wiser and more hopeful as they realized their own lives were full of possibilities.

In my doctoral research, I encountered three young lives. Feeling and touching the narrative threads in their lives, I wrote about them in three chapters. In "Composing a Life", Bateson, by laying the five women's life stories side by side, identified patterns in how they lived their lives, that is, with interruption and discontinuity. In this chapter, I lay Yang's, Atoosa's and Di's stories side by side in order to feel their patterns, which I identified to be their narrative threads. As students from immigrant families, Yang, Atoosa and Di sought ways to make sense of their lives at River's Edge. In this chapter, I pull out three narrative threads that resonated across their lived stories, one from each of the three immigrant students, "fitting-in" from Yang, "friends" from Atoosa, and "living on shifting landscapes" from Di. As I lay their lived and told stories side by side as Bateson laid the five women's stories side by side, I hoped to show "resonance" in their overlapping stories.

Narrative Thread One: Fitting-in

Living fitting-in stories was a strong narrative thread in Yang's life. At the age of six before he had a chance to start school in China, Yang went to the US where his father was engaged in a scientific research project. Yang's parents were well-trained professionals in China before they came to North America. Yet, the language barrier was a high threshold for them to cross in order to find jobs that would match their professional knowledge. It also limited their chances to become involved in the lives of their American and Canadian colleagues. In the beginning, Yang's fitting-in stories were shaped by his parents' lived experiences that English was important for a good life in Canada. Wensi, Yang's father, did not hide his pride that Yang had a talent in language noting that Yang picked up the language quickly and spoke just like the children whose first language was English. Yang's parents were pleased to see Yang play an astronaut with his American classmates and to speak his lines in English on the school stage. Years later in Canada, Qin, Yang's mother, was filled with joy to see Yang speak fluent English and act as an equal partner in practicing a group school project.

In China, Yang's parents lived their lives fitting into the social-cultural stories of that landscape. They fitted in well in these stories and were successful in China. After high school, they both entered universities and lived a competitive but enviable story that was promoted in the society. When graduate studies became promising stories, they took the entrance examinations and earned their master's degrees. Wensi earned his doctorate before he went to the US to work on research projects. Qin and Wensi's experiences were

lived within the plotline that fit into the dominant landscape stories that prepared people for better education. I was not surprised that, in the three one-hour tape-recorded conversations, Qin and Wensi did not challenge the authority of River's Edge and other schools Yang attended as long as the schools were trying to educate Yang to be successful in Canada. Yang was encouraged to participate in school activities including the sex education curriculum of grade seven. Qin not only let Yang fit into a Canadian school story, but also let her and Yang fit into a Canadian social-cultural story that includes sex education as part of Canadian schooling. Fitting-in to societal stories was not necessarily negative to Qin and Wensi. They believed it was part of living a good life in both China and Canada.

Unlike Atoosa and Di, Yang did not have any experience of living stories in schools in his home country, China. His schooling started in English speaking schools. As Wensi said, Yang picked up English very quickly and soon English was not a problem for Yang to live school stories as his English-speaking classmates did. To Wensi and Qin, their son's performing on the stage with the American children was a perfect fitting-in picture. They were more excited than Yang because Yang did something they could not. Yang's fitting-in stories were mostly guided by his parents through showing their satisfaction in his achievement and support for curriculum requirements. Yang felt able to be a full participant in school. Sometimes he picked his own fitting-in stories to live. He was more than happy to live out his mother's story of him to be registered in summer sports camps to learn tennis and badminton because his Canadian classmates were active in after school sports games.

Yang's fitting-in stories were embedded within Wensi's and Qin's fitting-in stories. With the fitting-in stories, Yang knew his parents supported him to participate in school activities and programs. When Yang and his classmates came to his home to work on the group project, Qin not only welcomed them, but also made room for them and invited them to drinks and snacks. To her, being nice was a way to help Yang fit in and be accepted. Yang's good command of English allowed him to be a full participant in school stories and a knower (Vinz, 1997) of school stories, which prepared him to live fitting-in stories that were, in some ways, different from his mother's. He could choose to be nice if he wanted to be liked. He could also choose to express his opinions. For example, he did not hide his disagreement with the rule that students in River's Edge were not allowed to throw snowballs at recess. I wonder if Qin and Wensi would be surprised again or if they would encourage Yang to do so had Yang told them about it. Yang's lived school stories were a shift from his mother's stories of how to fit in. His mother's story was to fit in through being nice to classmates. Yang's story was one of expressing his own opinions while still being nice to classmates.

Atoosa left Iran and came to River's Edge with her family. Her father, like Yang's father, was invited to contribute to a research project. Atoosa's mother, Ramesh, left her professional career in Iran believing that Canada was a place where her children could get good educations. Before the whole family decided to go to Canada, they liked the stories they had heard about Canadian schools. In Iran, Atoosa was a competitive student in a competitive educational system. She won many prizes for subject matter contests sponsored by independent examination agencies. She had to do so because she needed, as

her brother had, to practice her testing skills so that she could perform well in college entrance examinations. In one conversation, Atoosa told me that in Canada there were a lot more good universities that she could choose to go to. Although Atoosa was successful and fitted in well in the stories in Iranian schools, opportunities in Canada were more attractive. Atoosa and her family looked forward to new Canadian stories and to fitting into them.

Atoosa was the youngest in the family. When Atoosa registered in grade eight in River's Edge, her sister was in grade nine and her brother in a senior high school. Ramesh and her husband's hope was that their three children would go to universities in Canada. They hoped Atoosa, her brother and sister to fit in well on the new Canadian school landscapes. Atoosa's fitting-in stories were shaped around this future storyline. On the second day in River's Edge, it was suggested that Atoosa choose an easier name because her Iranian name was long and difficult to pronounce in the English phonetic system. It was a request that Atoosa had not expected. She thought she needed some time to think about it. Realizing that they needed to pick one right away for the English assessment tests, her father did accordingly by picking the few three letters from Atoosa's Iranian name. Later Atoosa seemed to have become used to her shortened name and the family seemed to have no hard feelings that Atoosa's Iranian name was changed. Yet, at that moment of the request, she was not prepared. While Atoosa's father might not have been prepared either, I imagine she saw his cooperation as an impressive fitting-in experience.

Atoosa's parents, like Yang's parents, supported her and her siblings to be

successful in Canadian schools. They encouraged Atoosa to speak English and fit in. In their first semester when Atoosa and her sister were at River's Edge, both of them attended the ESL class. For the first time, the two sisters were in the same class. But Ramesh encouraged them to be friends with their classmates in order to have opportunities to speak English. As Qin was happy to see Yang speak English, Ramesh was proud that Atoosa could speak English well in a short time: "I cannot believe my children could speak so well in such a short time." For Qin and Ramesh, their children needed to speak English to be successful in Canadian schools.

Fitting-in was a visible story lived and told at home. Atoosa and her siblings were told that they should make an effort to participate in school activities. Because Atoosa had a brother and sister, she lived fitting-in stories along with them. She went to the parties in her brother's and sister's school. She, then, experienced her siblings' fitting-in. Because at home fitting-in was encouraged by her parents, Atoosa learned to try to fit in, even when it was not easy. For Yang, fitting-in was not so difficult by the time he was at River's Edge. For Yang, it was a question of when and how to fit in. He wanted to be like his classmates in learning more sports as well as to fit in through forming his own opinions. For Atoosa, fitting-in was harder and more complicated because she was a newcomer and had just begun living her stories in English in River's Edge. In many ways she was not a knower of the stories of the new school landscape and thus was not able to fit in with Yang's confidence about choosing when and how fit in:

As usual, Atoosa came to the ESL room to have lunch. Unlike some of her classmates, she was not in a Halloween costume. I saw puzzles and uneasiness on

her face for not knowing a proper way to be in the story. (Field Notes, Friday, Oct. 29, 2004)

Yet, just two weeks earlier (October 8, 2004), Atoosa told me the exciting experience of her first Thanksgiving party in her brother and sister's high school. Although she knew her parents encouraged her to participate, sometimes she could not fit in by herself without her brother and sister around. Both Yang's and Atoosa's parents supported their children to live fitting-in stories for the sake of their education and success in Canadian schools. In River's Edge, as a knower of the school stories, Yang had different experiences of living fitting-in stories than Atoosa did.

For Di, the narrative thread of fitting-in was not shown as strong as in Yang's and Atoosa's narratives of experience. Immigrating to Canada was a three-year process. During these three years, Ting and Bo, Di's parents, decided not to pay a large registration fee for Di to go to the best senior high school in their hometown. They gave up something which might guarantee a good university for Di for they had hoped for a different education for Di in Canada. For Di and her parents, the three-year wait was an imagined process of fitting-in. Ting learned from her experiences that education should give students freedom to be the persons they wanted to be. She pulled herself and her family out of China to immigrate to Canada for the freedom she thought they could not have in China. She believed that Canada had more reasonable paths and more than one path for success. I asked her how she found out about Canadian public schools such as River's Edge. She said, "It's the same as I had imagined before coming here." She meant Canadian public schools like River's Edge opened up more space for students to develop

their own interests and creativity. Ting, therefore, did not hesitate to support Di to fit into the school stories of River's Edge.

Like her parents, Di had also hoped for a different but interesting educational experience for herself. She imagined she would like Canadian schools which, in her imagination, were like what she read in novels and saw in movies. Instead of her Chinese name, Di registered by her English name she had already received in China. She registered in River's Edge in September 2003, four months earlier than Atoosa. River's Edge, however, surprised her in many ways because it was not like what she had imagined. She found the school different, interesting but also difficult. She had difficulty in getting used to the new stories on the new school landscape, for example, the new stories of how teachers teach and how students do assignments, make friends and keep friendships. Although she was prepared for fitting-in, Di was frustrated by her new experiences. She asked for her mother's advice about making friends and was told "Canadian kids are really easy to get close to." Ting advised Di to speak to her classmates and not to wait for them to come to her. Like Qin and Ramesh, Ting encouraged her child to fit in to the already existing Canadian school stories.

Di told me she was quiet. To start a conversation with someone she did not know was not her lived experience in China. She had been quiet in China but popular because she was storied as a student with good marks. If there was a group project, her classmates came to her. In River's Edge, things were different. She was left out for being quiet. At several times, Di said to me she was the person that needed to change if she wanted to get involved in group projects: "I need to change to be more active... I think it's my

problem.” Di thought she needed to follow her mother’s advice on how to fit into Canadian school stories.

However, Di was not always willing to change for the sake of fitting-in. I revisit her words discussed in “living on shifting landscapes”:

Now I think everything’s OK. I can’t be certain part of the school culture, but I don’t feel guilty about it because I still have a lot of friends. They share my feelings. Yeah, so I think it’s OK. You know like those kinds of fashions. I don’t want to be part of it... So I think I will just be an audience maybe to be that kind of person. And I think that’s enough. Yeah, so yeah, I just want to like be the person I want to be. I don’t change myself to get involved [in those things I don’t want to be]. I just want to be myself. (Tape-recorded Conversation with Di, April 7, 2005)

Like Atoosa, Di also took the English assessment tests and passed. Di then went to regular classes and sometimes she went to the ESL teachers such as Mrs. Jones for help with her assignments. Di seemed to have more opportunities than Atoosa to make friends with those who spoke her mother tongue, Chinese. Belonging to a group of friends who shared her stories as a Chinese student in River’s Edge shaped Di’s fitting-in experiences. It gave her space to be the person she thought she was and needed to be. She, therefore, did not feel she had to fit into some school stories since she lived comfortably in stories with a group of friends who were part of the school landscape. I wonder if Di would have had to force herself to change to fit into “those kinds of fashions” without that particular group of friends. It seemed belonging to a group directed

Di away from the frustrations of living the fitting-in stories that were not in line with her lived stories as a Chinese girl. She did not talk much about trying to fit in. Rather she talked about living as a Chinese girl in River's Edge.

Yang, Atoosa and Di all lived fitting-in stories. Their lives resonated across a narrative thread of fitting-in. Their parents came to Canada with expectations to live and fit into Canadian stories. They wanted their children to be part of the storied Canadian school landscapes so that their children would be successful in schools and have good lives in Canada¹⁰. Yang, Atoosa and Di were three unique individuals. Their uniqueness shaped how they lived their fitting-in stories. Their parents' experiences and beliefs in living good lives in Canada also shaped how they lived fitting-in stories in River's Edge. Their own lived stories also shaped their own way of living fitting-in stories. Yang, guided by Qin to fit in, sometimes did not realize he was living fitting-in stories. Di and Atoosa were mostly aware that their parents encouraged them to live fitting-in stories and sometimes they, themselves, made efforts to fit in. While the parents were all encouraging and helping their children to live fitting-in stories, they also had their own ways of helping their children hang on to family stories. Yang was registered in Chinese school to keep up with his ancestors' language. Atoosa, who already spoke and wrote good Persian, participated in celebrating Iranian holidays with family members and family friends. Di, who spoke and wrote good Chinese, was suggested to take Chinese painting classes after school. Fitting-in to Canadian school stories was one part of

¹⁰ All three students were strong students and could fit into an academic plotline of success in River's Edge. I wonder what happens to immigrant children who do not have access to the academic plotline in Canadian schools.

Yang's, Atoosa's and Di's stories to live by. Yet, they also had stories to hang on, their family stories. They continued to live their stories of who they were in their families and communities while living in Canada.

Narrative Thread Two: Friends

The important stories that Atoosa tried to live out in River's Edge were stories of friends. In her telling, friends were Atoosa's "number one thing." Atoosa had shorter school days, which ended every day around noon. In the afternoon, Atoosa was home doing homework and preparing for school the next day. Before she started doing homework, Atoosa and her friends called each other to tell school stories and discuss assignments. Although in her Iranian schools, obtaining good marks was her story to live by as a student, Atoosa lived out the story with her friends. School became enjoyable when Atoosa had close relationships with her friends.

Shifting to River's Edge, Atoosa, maybe for the first time in her life, did not take friends for granted. She realized that friends did not come as easily as they had when she was in Iran. At the same time, keeping close relationships with classmates was not the same in this new Canadian school. She found some girls were nice to her. She thought that was a sign to start friendship. But a few days later, "they were not with me anymore." She was puzzled. She thought it was her English that limited her chance to make friends: "I can't just say to my friends, 'Hi, how are you? What do you have next? How much homework do you have?'" because her lived stories in Iran were that she and

her friends shared secrets and “laughed” together. Atoosa thought in order to develop friendships with her classmates and to share secrets with them, she needed to enlarge her English vocabulary that would allow her to understand the complexities of the school stories.

Being a new student in River’s Edge, Atoosa needed to “be with somebody.” To her it was a “human need.” Her sister became that somebody to be with. Atoosa was surprised that her sister could also be her friend. Chinese girls from the ESL class also became her friends. Atoosa told me that she had not met a Chinese person in Iran. At first I wondered what brought her close to girls who had to communicate in their second language. Later, I wondered if it was their shared experiences as immigrant students taking courses in ESL classes together. Living stories as new immigrants together may have brought them closer.

Atoosa was a good student in Iran. She worked hard to be a student with good marks. She was happy when she earned high marks. Her parents, brother and sister knew when she did well in tests, because, if she did not, she would not want to talk. During my six tape-recorded conversations with Atoosa, she spoke constantly about her marks. She did well in most courses. She was confident she would do better as her English improved. While she was happy that she was on top in math and fine art in River’s Edge, she was most happy when she talked about the new friends she made. “I found a really, really, really, really close friend. She is a Chinese... we are now so close together... I feel really, really better.” Atoosa talked about this close friend at our last scheduled conversation near the end of grade nine, on May 19, 2005. It seemed having a close

friend was her most important achievement as she finished her first Canadian school. At the end of the last semester of grade nine, she had a “really close” friend to live stories together. “We usually spend lots of time together... after school and in the morning.” To have good marks was important for Atoosa, but she also needed to have friends with whom to live and tell stories about her life, her stories of marks.

Atoosa was looking for relationships and friends from the beginning. She talked about girls who were nice to her. She talked about a girl who could speak a little Persian. Atoosa anticipated, wanted, and tried to be friends with her classmates in Canadian schools. But to her puzzlement, she could not develop close friendships with them where they could tell secrets. The relationship with her Chinese friend was the relationship she dreamed about. She spent “lots of time together” with the Chinese girl, “after school and in the morning.” I remember the moment Atoosa told me about her “really, really, really, really close friend.” She just could not hold back her joy. Finally she found a friend that fit her definition of friendship and “had somebody to be with” and to “laugh” together.

Atoosa’s narrative thread of friends resonated in Di’s narrative thread of living relational stories. While Atoosa obtained ideas about Canada from the Internet, friends and family, Di’s ideas about Canada were partly formed from novels and movies. An imagined relation with Canada brought Di to Canada with good feelings. As soon as she landed in Canada, Di started seeking relational stories. She first developed a relationship with Audrey, a university student and summer student volunteer in the Helping New Immigrant Centre. While I imagine she was nice to all new immigrants including Di and her family, Di developed a relationship with her as Audrey responded to Di’s desire for

friendship. After reading the research text together with Di and Ting, Ting said that all the persons I wrote about were important to Di: Audrey, Mrs. Jones, the ESL teacher, Mr. Chan, the math teacher and Lili, Di's best friend.

Similar to Atoosa, Di needed friends. Like Atoosa, Di wanted to have close friends. Atoosa was excited to tell me she found a "really, really, really, really" close friend because they stayed together "after school and in the morning." Di, too, wanted to visit Lili. Atoosa missed the laughs she shared with her friends in Iran. Di also missed the laughs she shared with her friends in China. To Atoosa, friends meant she could tell her secrets. To Di, friends meant she could say anything. They both looked for deeper personal relationships on new landscapes. Atoosa realized she needed a larger vocabulary so that she could say more than "Hi". Di was not satisfied that her conversations with her classmates were mostly about school assignments. Di and Atoosa looked for friends to live stories with and to tell stories about their lives.

Compared to Atoosa, Di told me more than yearning for friends. Her plotline of friends was within a storyline of living relational stories. Audrey, Mrs. Jones and Lili were all important to Di. Di made friends with Lili, girl from China. She developed a friendship with Audrey, a university student. She also made efforts to keep a close relationship with Mrs. Jones, her ESL teacher. She visited her in the ESL classroom to chat with her and showed her the report cards. Di said she would come back to River's Edge to visit her favorite teachers: Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Richardson and Mr. Chan. I imagine Di's relationships with them were all different. Lili was a friend with whom Di might say anything and could spend time together after school. Audrey was a friend from whom Di

asked for advice and information about living in Canada. The relationship with Mrs. Jones was that of mentor and student. To Di, Mr. Chan and Mrs. Richardson were respectable teachers. Different relationships shaped Di's world of stories. She went camping with friends from a church although she told me several times that she was not interested in religion. Di yearned to have friends and multiple relationships in order to feel connected with school and a country in which she and her family chose to live their lives. She needed relational stories in order to feel she belonged.

Even though Atoosa's and Di's lived stories were different, as new immigrant students, they both longed for friends and relationships and lived out relational stories in their own ways. The narrative thread of friends and relationships was not as strong in Yang's lived stories. Atoosa and Di wanted to make friends because they both came from landscapes where they felt connected and knew where to go, what to do and how to do things. They had friends to hang around with in and out of school. They felt lost and isolated because these past connections were cut off in the sense that they could not live school stories with their friends in River's Edge. Yang, on the other hand, had fewer connections with friends and schools in China because he had neither attended preschool nor had other school experiences in China. When he and his family immigrated to Canada via the US, he had finished grade three. Even though Chinese was Yang's first language, three years of living in America and American schools had made English comfortable for Yang to live school stories when he immigrated to Canada via the US. Coming to Canadian schools was a shift, but the language was continuity. Yang did not feel lost in the same way as Atoosa and Di did in a new school. He knew the language

and did not, as Atoosa did, feel he needed to learn more English words.

Friends were important for Yang, too, although making friends seemed not to be his “number one thing” in his telling. When I visited River’s Edge twice a week, I never saw Yang alone. At lunch break, I saw him play soccer in the soccer field and chess in the hallway. His father, in a recorded conversation, said he was impressed by how Yang comfortably socialized with his classmates. As a knower on the landscape of River’s Edge, Yang could navigate comfortably among classmates. He was able to manage different types of relationships. Yang said to me he had friends come over for his birthday. I asked if Bob and Carl were there. Yang said they were not his friends. I referred to them as his friends because they did three options together and they occasionally did projects together. Yang was very particular in distinguishing friends from classmates.

Even though in Yang’s telling, developing and keeping friendships did not seem to emerge on the surface in living school stories, he still enjoyed friends. When he said Bob and Carl were not his friends, I asked who his friends were. He said I did not know his friends because they were not in the fine art class and the other two classes I visited. He said he had friends in grade eight and even in other junior high schools. He explained he could not go to the same junior high school with the friends he made in the elementary school because his family moved. Like Atoosa, who had her sister and her Chinese friend, and Di, who had Lili and Mei, Yang had close friends. He was happy to spend time with them after school. Yang was excited about his 13th birthday party because, for the first time, he was able to have his friends sleep over in his new and bigger home. I

saw the excitement was not just that his friends came for his birthday and stayed for the night. It was also an excitement that he could do the same thing his friends did for him, that is, to have sleep overs. He finally was able to show his friendship in the same way his friends treated him. In “living competing stories”, I wrote about Yang and his commitment to his friend. He needed to study with his friend who needed his help. Like Atoosa and Di, Yang needed friends and made an effort to keep good relationships with his friends. In their home countries, like Yang, Atoosa and Di did the same thing as Yang did to be with friends and to keep friendships with them. Atoosa phoned her friends after school and shared school stories. Di went roller skating and shopping with her friends.

The three children, Yang, Atoosa and Di, experienced their immigrant parents' care about their relational stories in Canadian schools. The storyline of friends resonated across the three immigrant students' lived and told stories that they should be friends with classmates in Canadian schools. Atoosa's mother, Ramesh, encouraged Atoosa to spend time with Canadian girls. Di's mother, Ting, suggested that Di take the initiatives to make friends. Yang's mother, Qin, showed her satisfaction that Yang brought his classmates home to do projects. Their immigrant parents encouraged their children to be close to the people they chose to live with.

Narrative Thread Three: Living on Shifting Landscapes

Bateson (2004) wrote:

We all live as immigrants. We are strangers in a strange land. We're going to be

strangers for the rest of our lives, not just when we decide to travel or go out on the Internet. (p. 87).

Bateson helps me see that we are all strangers because we live on constantly shifting landscapes on which we meet new people and deal with new inventions. We do not have to travel to realize we live as strangers and immigrants because of our constant new encounters. Bateson (2004) suggests that we keep on learning from people living around us, that is, we learn from our landscapes and the people on them. Yet, Di, Yang and Atoosa also traveled. They traveled from China and Iran to Canada. They found they lived stories as immigrant students in River's Edge, a strange place to them. They learned new stories on shifting landscapes.

"Living on shifting landscapes" was Di's strong narrative thread in living school stories in River's Edge. In December 2006, I visited her to read with her and her mother the research texts of their lives. After the reading, Ting said, "[Di] really had a hard time in the first few months in River's Edge." I agreed with Ting but I also knew Di continued to be puzzled by her experiences at River's Edge, even after her ninth grade graduation ceremony. She wondered why her Canadian classmates did not do or say something to show emotions to their classmates and the school. My conversation with Di on June 28, 2005 marked her two-year anniversary of immigrating to Canada. Even after two years in River's Edge, Di was still trying to understand and learn the school landscape of River's Edge.

After Di, Ting and I finished reading the last sentence of the research texts, I looked at Di, waiting for her comments. She did not respond right away. Her eyes were

still on the pages. She was thinking. A moment later, she said, "It was profound." I asked if she saw herself in the text. She said she did but had also changed. I asked in what way. "Now I can be friends with anybody." Di was responding to the texts written on her lived stories of shifting to Canadian school landscapes. She was responding to a process of living through the new landscape.

More than half of the research texts were written about the stories Di told me about making sense of the new school landscape. She wondered why the buildings were one-story and had few windows. She wondered how to fill the time she was alone when she got home from River's Edge three hours earlier in the day than she would have in China. She realized she needed to "change" if she wanted to perform well in presentations and group projects because of new ways of teaching and learning. The students she met in River's Edge had different interests. She was puzzled how, for some students, marks were not important and how they cared more about following the latest fashion. Di made an effort to change to fit into new stories. She also tried to hold on to the stories that made sense to her according to her lived stories in China. She looked for continuity in new stories of school to make sense of discontinuity. She knew the stories of being a good student and she was one. She lived out the stories as a good student being liked and praised by teachers, classmates and friends. She found she could still live out the stories of good marks in River's Edge, and she continued to live this story. On shifting landscapes, Di struggled with figuring out new stories to live by. She knew who she had been and what the stories of school were in China. In River's Edge, she wondered whom she could be in order to be accepted into new school stories, while at the

same time she was trying to understand who her classmates were and who could be her friends. When she felt she had figured out new stories to live by, Di found peace in mind. She smiled again. She laughed to tell me: "Now I think everything's OK." She became a knower of the stories of the school and of who her classmates were. She figured out she could choose to live stories that made sense to her. She found friends with whom she could live stories that were meaningful both to her and her friends. She could choose to be the person she wanted to be.

Living on shifting landscapes for Di was a process of making sense of her new life as an immigrant Chinese girl. She was aware of the differences. While experiencing the differences, she tried to understand and come to terms with the differences. The differences she encountered on shifting landscapes made her uncertain about her career, something she seemed so sure of before: "But maybe in three years, during the high school, I may change my mind... I really don't think I am certain about what I want to do after school..." She realized she had changed as she lived on shaping landscapes. She realized she was a person of becoming on shifting landscapes.

Yang lived stories on shifting landscapes. He had two big moves in his life, at six from China to the US and at nine from the US to Canada. Before he went to River's Edge, he lived his elementary stories in three different schools, two in the US and one in Canada. Yang experienced living on shifting landscapes, moving from school to school and from country to country. He showed his awareness of experiencing living stories on shifting landscapes. He said he felt he was a citizen of the world. He could cheer for everyone, the Chinese athletes, the American athletes and the Canadian athletes. He took

it as an advantage that he lived his stories in the three countries.

Unlike Di, Yang did not focus on telling his experiences of making sense of shifting landscapes from China to the US and Canada. He shifted back and forth from a China-related landscape to a Canadian school landscape. On Saturdays, he went to the Chinese language school to learn his mother tongue. He was a Chinese boy living Chinese stories with boys and girls who shared his cultural heritage. Living stories with family friends, he knew who he was and he told relational stories with Chinese students that “all Chinese families wanted their children to do well in schools.” Shifting to River’s Edge, Yang lived Canadian school stories. His lived China-related stories shaped how he lived school stories in River’s Edge. He was not convinced by his classmate’s story that he did not have a chance to practice Laotian. Yang went to Chinese language school to learn and practice his mother tongue. What he learned from the Chinese school and the stories he lived as a Chinese boy in out-of-school places made him proud of his heritage. He was offended that his classmates said Chinese laborers only built the last part of the cross Canada railway. “They built the whole thing!” I imagine in the Chinese language school or when he was with his Chinese friends, he might not confront this kind of challenge.

Di had a strong sense of who she was as a Chinese girl from the stories she lived in China. Di developed a new sense of who she was as an immigrant girl in River’s Edge. For Yang, his sense of being a Chinese boy came from living China-related stories in out-of-school places, his home, the Chinese language school and the homes of his family friends. His shifting landscapes were out-of-school places and school landscapes. Coming

back home from school, Yang experienced his parents' stories about how English limited their chances to have the positions that matched their professional training. He comforted his mother by telling her that she should not blame herself. Qin was surprised and impressed that Yang told her to believe in herself: "It was the employer's loss for not hiring you." Qin was surprised and she seemed to realize that her son brought in a new way of telling lived stories from a different storied landscape. At the same time, I imagine Yang also realized the different stories he experienced on shifting landscapes from home and school. As immigrant students in River's Edge, Yang and Di lived different stories of shifting landscapes. However, they both experienced stories on shifting landscapes.

The shifting landscape stories Atoosa told were from Iranian school landscapes to Canadian school landscapes. Her lived experiences on shifting landscapes resonated with Di's experiences. Atoosa went to River's Edge knowing who she was in her Iranian schools. She was a good student. She realized school stories in River's Edge were different from school stories she lived in Iranian schools. She realized the story of her was different too in River's Edge. She was an ESL student in River's Edge. Like Di, Atoosa also tried to learn new school stories so that she could live to fit into the stories of River's Edge. She tried to understand who her new classmates were in order to figure out who she could be as an Iranian girl in a Canadian school. Similar to Di's experiences, Atoosa searched for connections between her lived stories in Iran and River's Edge. Atoosa played basketball and volleyball in Iran. At one lunch break, instead of going to the ESL classroom, she took her meal to the gym to watch a volleyball game. At a later

conversation, she told me stories of the Iranian sports curriculum and how she hurt her wrist while playing volleyball in Iran. Visiting the scene of the school volleyball tournament was a different experience from playing in the game. But, to Atoosa, it was a story that connected two school landscapes.

Living on shifting landscapes was a strong narrative thread in Atoosa's lived stories in River's Edge. Atoosa did not tell as much as Di did about living out her stories on shifting landscapes. However, in her telling, there were clearer plotlines within this thread: making friends and earning good marks. She was eager to make friends but frustrated that it was hard to make close friends to whom she could tell secrets as she had with her friends in Iran. On a new landscape, Atoosa needed to live familiar stories in order to tell who she was. She learned that there were subject matter contests in River's Edge. She was proud that she took part in a math contest. Living on shifting landscapes, it was important for her, an immigrant student, to realize that she could be involved in something related to her past lived experience.

Di and Atoosa experienced confusion in River's Edge. Di was confused that for some students, marks could be less important than "fashion". Atoosa was confused that students in River's Edge generally did not share marks with one another. Di was confused by a changed rhythm with a shorter school day. For Atoosa the school day was longer. Di was frustrated with the lonely hours after school. For Atoosa, it did not seem to be a problem. Although they were concerned with similar issues, such as friends and marks, they lived their own versions of living on shifting landscapes. While their stories were different, they all experienced shifting landscapes. On a new landscape, they were

strangers. However, they did, as Bateson suggested, learn to make sense of new landscapes as they restoried their lives.

The five women's lived stories in "Composing a Life" resonated around patterns of living with interruption and discontinuity. To Bateson, these patterns appeared in different contexts. Bateson (2004) described the importance of searching for patterns and learning new patterns in order to attend to each other. To me, I saw the three immigrant students', Yang's, Atoosa's and Di's, lived stories resonated in narrative threads. They wanted to fit into new stories. They needed friends with whom to live new stories. They tried hard to understand new stories and themselves on shifting landscapes. Within the resonating narrative threads, Yang, Atoosa and Di composed their own ways of living through. They had their own "patterns" because each of them had her/his own roots and routes.

Resonances across the Three Immigrant Children's Stories and Other Research

Living to fit in, yearning for friends and experiencing shifting landscapes also resonate in one way or another in many other researchers' studies and writings on children's and families' immigrant experiences (Ahmed, 2002; Xue, 1995; Druley, 2002; Chang & Rosiek, 2003; Kirova, 2001; Hurlock, McCullagh & Schissel 2004; Minichiello, 2001). To Ahmed (2002), fitting-in, for immigrant children and their families, is seen as human capital assimilation. In Xue's (1995) studies, her teenage

Chinese immigrant participants "try to be like Americans" (p. 9). Hurlock, McCullagh and Schissel (2004), for their Calgary based research project, identified fitting-in to be a priority among immigrant youths' needs. Druley (2002) told immigrants' stories as she wrote about the complexities of immigrant youths' and their parents' experiences of fitting-in: a Latino girl refused to speak Spanish in school in order to fit in; a Norwegian parent's experiences were that parents stopped teaching their language so that they would not interfere with their children's fitting-in; a Cambodian father insisted on speaking Khmer to his children at home so that they could communicate with their grandparents in Cambodia. Chang, a Hmong-American teacher, did not question his "tools" (Chang & Rosiek, 2003, p. 278) of becoming a storied successful Hmong living in America as a high school science teacher until a Hmong student asked him: "You don't really believe [that virus causes people to feel ill], do you?" (p. 261). For a long time Chang took for granted the ways he fit into the western ideology of science.

Fitting-in seems to be an experience that resonates across many immigrant children's and families' lives. However, understanding fitting-in experiences within the narrative threads of children's lives allowed me to see the complexities of three immigrant children's fitting-in experiences. Druley's (2002) stories showed the complexities of fitting-in experiences in three families. Yet in a narrative thread of living fitting-in stories, I felt the complexities of living fitting-in stories in *each one* of the three children's lives. Yang, Atoosa and Di wanted to fit in. For example, they wanted to learn English and study hard through the curriculum in Canadian schools. Yet they also reserved spaces to live stories for whom they wanted to be. They did not want to just live

to fit into the dominant stories of school. They also lived to fit into the stories of their families and communities.

Making friends was another priority need for immigrant youth (Hurlock, McCullagh & Schissel, 2004). Minichiello's (2001) study showed her foreign-born Chinese immigrant participants needed friends to share lives with. Kirova (2001) wrote how friends affected immigrant children's school experiences. In her study, friends were the source of joy and also the cause of loneliness if without. In Xue's (1995) study, all her 22 new Chinese immigrant teenage participants responded that having friends was important. Xue (1995) discussed three cases to show the difficulties that teenagers from immigrant Chinese families faced in making friends. Case one showed an isolated situation after school. Case two showed the unstable situation of a new immigrant family resulting from constant moving to new jobs. Case three showed the puzzling situation of wanting to make friends of the same cultural background.

Similarly, reading the lived experiences of Yang, Atoosa and Di within narrative threads allowed me to see how they lived their stories of making friends and keeping relationships through the difficulties and puzzlement when friends seem to be a common desire for immigrant children. Within the narrative thread of making friends, I was able to see the process of making friends, which was both bumpy and full of surprises in Atoosa's, Di's and Yang's lived lives. In order to live relational stories, Di and Atoosa made compromises and learned new meanings of being a friend and being with friends. For example, for Di, friends had a new meaning while she was living her stories in River's Edge, which expressed in her words: "I can't be certain part of the school culture,

but I don't feel guilty about it because I still have a lot of friends. They share my feelings." From her telling, I learned friends gave her strength and confidence to be different. In River's Edge, Di found herself telling a new story of friends.

Language played a role "in regaining the joy of friendship" (Kirova, 2001, p. 5). Understanding Atoosa's experience within a narrative thread, I felt something other than language nurtured her friendship with the girl from China. As shown in Xue's case three, starting and keeping cross cultural friendships may not be easy. Atoosa, too, had not thought of making a friend with a Chinese girl in Canada. Thinking narratively and within Atoosa's narrative thread, I understood how sometimes lived stories rather than cultural awareness shaped living out cross cultural friendships.

"I feel that my cross-cultural experiences in Canada stimulate [the change in my way of thinking] every day, every minute" (Wu, 1993, p. 112). I may understand the "cross-cultural experiences" that Wu felt changed his way of thinking were the experiences he lived on Chinese and Canadian landscapes. The stories he lived on Chinese landscapes shaped his telling of the stories he lived in China and Canada. Stories he lived on Canadian landscapes also shaped how he retold his lived experiences in China. And later on, the stories Wu lived on shifting Canadian landscapes shaped his retelling the stories he lived at the stage of "initial euphoria" (Johnson as cited in Wu, 1993, p. 114) in Canada.

Dissertations such as Wu's (1993) and other research such as Xue (1995), Minichiello (2001) and Buki, Ma, Strom and Strom (2003) show facets of how shifting landscapes might have shaped new stories immigrant students lived. For example,

Minichiello (2001) found some of her participants who identified themselves as Chinese thought that having fun was more important than academic success. Their behavior seemed to be "atypical" (Minichiello, 2001, p. 84) to some researchers from their Chinese immigrant participants. As a narrative inquirer, I wonder about their lived experiences and the new landscapes they moved into that might have shaped these Chinese immigrants' telling of their school stories in Canada. Reading different research findings found in immigration experiences from within narrative threads help me better understand immigrant experiences. Xue (1995) wrote "[immigrant teenagers] definitely more flexible than their parents in accepting new things and are more easily assimilated by the new culture" (p. 18). Buki, Ma, Strom and Strom's (2003) research on Chinese immigrant mothers was based on the assumption from many other researchers' (Agbayani-Siewert, 1994; Baptiste, 1993; Garcia Coll; Meyer, & Brillon 1995; Uba, 1994; Ying, 1999) conclusion that "[i]n any family, the pace of individual acculturation varies with children usually adjusting more rapidly than parents" (Buki, Ma, Strom & Strom, 2003, p. 128). As I thought about the stories of my participants, both the children and their parents, I saw new layers of complexity. Qin, Yang's mother, was surprised that her son comforted her by saying something she thought was very Canadian, "It was the employer's loss for not hiring you;" when she blamed her English for an unsuccessful job interview. In this interaction between mother and son, Yang was "quicker" than his mother in retelling the story that she was an equal player in the society or at least the Canadian job market. He told the story in a way that showed the storied landscape, not his mother, was where the problem was situated. Qin was surprised again that Yang

showed little interest when she told him the family was about to apply for Canadian citizenship. Perhaps this time, the mother was “quicker” in telling a story of change.

As I laid my narrative inquiry alongside the other research into immigrant children and their families’ experiences, I saw resonances across the research. However, I also saw that in my narrative inquiry, I showed the complexities of living these intergenerational stories over time on shifting landscapes. I saw the interwoven dimensions of sociality, temporality, and place as the participants lived out their experiences and as I attended to their lived and told stories. For me, being mindful of the complexities of experiences is a step forward to wisdom. Wondering in narrative threads helps me keep a mindful mind.

Chapter 7, the final chapter of this dissertation, was composed to invite teachers and teacher educators to join conversations on teacher education. The final chapter took the narrative journey back to the beginning inquiry: the power of stories.

Chapter Seven

FROM CHILDREN'S STORIES AND FAMILY STORIES TO CONVERSATIONS OF TEACHER EDUCATION

The truth about stories is that that's all we are. 'You can't understand the world without telling a story,' the Anishinabe writer Gerald Vizenor tells us. 'There isn't any center to the world but a story.' (King, 2003, p. 23)

To King, the center of the world is a story. The center of a person's life is a story. We live stories and tell stories. "When we talk to others about ourselves we tell life stories" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994, p. 150). When we tell stories, we are reflecting on the lives we lived to understand who we and others are. As I was narrating my journey to my doctoral research, I realized how the intertwined stories I lived led me here on this narrative journey. Through telling family stories, social-cultural stories and school stories, I narrated my path here to the US and Canada and also brought my daughter here to Canada. Through writing and reflecting on my storied life, I also realized how I was shaped by the stories that I lived on storied landscapes. My narrative journey was my starting point for this narrative research. In the final chapter of this dissertation, I continue to focus my attention on the shaping power of stories in the lives of Yang, Atoosa and Di. On the one hand, I was moved by their strength, courage and openness. On the other hand, I experienced the tension, confusion and struggles they experienced as they lived their lives in River's Edge, a culturally and linguistically different school landscape. Their strength, courage and openness remind me that immigrant children are not only children who need to get an education from teachers and parents, they are also

becoming persons to whom we owe our respect because we can learn from their lived and told stories of their lives in school and at home. The tension, confusion and struggles Yang, Atoosa and Di experienced became forward-looking stories (Nelson, 2002) in this chapter as I think about and compose possibilities for future action by teachers and teacher educators.

It has been three years since I first met Yang. Now he is a tenth grader in a high school. Atoosa and Di, eighth graders when we started our relationships in this narrative inquiry, too, have moved on to high schools. Yang and Di told me they “changed.” From the emails Atoosa wrote me, I felt her confidence in using English to communicate, which I did not see during the conversations we were engaged in two years ago. They are not the same Yang, Atoosa and Di I experienced when they were in River’s Edge junior high school. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe the situation as narrative inquirers leave the field, “[Participants’] lives do not begin the day we arrive nor do they end as we leave” (p. 64). I know as I left River’s Edge and my participants, “[t]heir lives continue” (p. 64). In this final chapter, I use a narrative language that “will permit us to talk about ourselves in situations and that will also let us tell stories of our experience” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p.59), which is “temporal, located in our past, present, and future” (p. 60).

As a teacher and teacher educator for many years in China prior to my present life as an immigrant, mother of a teenage girl and narrative inquirer, experiencing my three participants and their families was multi-dimensional. In this final chapter, drawing on backward-looking stories (Nelson, 2002) and with a focus on what I learned from

Yang's, Atoosa's and Di's lived and told stories of school, I compose forward-looking stories (Nelson, 2002) for teachers and teacher educators situated on changing demographic landscapes in Canadian schools. According to Statistics Canada (2006), "immigration is now the main component of population growth, accounting for more than 66% of our population growth from 2000-2004." I hope to suggest conversations around what teachers and teacher educators may do to work with immigrant children like Yang, Atoosa and Di in order to create spaces in which they can learn and also come to love¹¹ learning.

Nelson (2002) describes backward-looking and forward-looking stories:

But understanding how we got "here" is crucial to the determination of where we might be able to go from here, and this is where narrative is indispensable. The story of how the participants of the case came to their present pass is precisely a story, as is the narrative of the best way to go on in the future. The backward-looking story is explanatory; the forward-looking story is action-guiding. (pp. 39-40)

The research texts that I composed from the lived and told stories of Yang, Atoosa and Di have become the backward-looking stories, which I hope may be "explanatory" for me as I compose the forward-looking stories that can be "action-guiding" in conversations for teachers and teacher educators.

¹¹ Confucius said: "To prefer it is better than only to know it. To delight in it is better than merely to prefer it".

A Note on Shifting Landscapes

The research texts of this dissertation were composed in the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), that is, participants' lived and told stories were inquired into within the dimensions of time, place and sociality. Therefore, the texts of the dissertation are context-bound and have qualities of temporality, sociality and place. Landscape is the metaphor that helps me think of the three-dimensional space:

A landscape metaphor...allows us to talk about space, place, and time.

Furthermore, it has a sense of expansiveness and the possibility of being filled with diverse people, things, and events in different relationships. Understanding professional knowledge as comprising a landscape calls for a notion of professional knowledge as composed of a wide variety of components, and influenced by a wide variety of people, places and things. Because we see the professional knowledge landscape as composed of relationships among people, places, and things, we see it as both as an intellectual and a moral landscape.

(Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p.4)

A landscape composed and shaped by stories has been the metaphor in my dissertation to think of my participants' worlds in which they lived their stories and composed new stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) on shifting landscapes in in- and out-of-school places.

We live on shifting landscapes all the time no matter whether we feel it or not or how strongly we feel it. In the second week of her second year of junior high school, my husband and I went to meet my daughter's grade 8 teachers. Knowing we were JJ's

parents, the physical education teacher, who taught JJ in grade 7, told us how tall JJ grew in the summer. She continued to tell us how she was surprised that all her former seventh graders had grown taller as they were entering a new semester. That children grow, come and go, may be one of the most visible changes that remind teachers, like JJ's physical education teacher, of the shifting landscapes of school. When noticing that students grow physically and move to a higher grade, teachers may accommodate their practices to the shifting landscapes their students shape for them. The teachers' accommodative practices may be like the piano tuners who tighten the strings to make the keys produce symphonic performance. The kind of accommodation of tuning may not need to be fundamental because the tuning is basically done on the same piano. Yet, for new immigrant children, the shifting landscapes I refer to in this chapter and previous ones are much more dramatic because they were "uprooted" (Igoa, 1995) from one country and transplanted to another, from China and Iran to Canada, for example in my research. Atoosa and Di came to River's Edge, their first Canadian school, bringing their lived stories of their home country schools and their imagined stories of Canadian schools. They shifted to new school landscapes where students and teachers spoke a different language, teachers taught by different curricula, and students studied in different styles. Students and teachers lived and told different school stories from they experienced in the past.

Immigrant students themselves are able to shift landscapes. They weave new stories into school landscapes. Because immigrant children do not come to a school such as River's Edge at the same time, the shifts they create, therefore, may not be as visible as the shifts created when a whole grade leaves the school after graduation. Yet, when we,

as teachers, attend to shifting landscapes, it is not hard for us to be mindful of fitting into shifting landscapes to accommodate our practices to new stories when one or two immigrant students appear in our classrooms.

To travel to immigrant children's worlds is to think of the experiences they live on shifting landscapes, from schools, places, countries they have lived their stories to schools, places, countries they come to as they follow and live out their family stories. We need, as teachers and teacher educators, to position ourselves in ways so that we can imagine immigrant children's multiple tasks they perform as students, sons, daughters on shifting landscapes from their home country to Canada, and from in- and out-of-school places.

Joining the Conversations of Teaching and Teacher Education

Attending to Family Stories

Many researchers emphasize the importance of students' family lives to be attended to in order to make good practices. Kidd, Sanchez and Thorp (2004) write:

[G]reat care must be taken to ensure that diverse family cultures are recognized, validated, and celebrated in order for teachers to create links between home and school and build upon the strengths, values, beliefs, and practices of the home and community. Through gathering family stories, teachers have the opportunity to shape their instruction in a way that responds to the diverse beliefs and practices of children and their families. (pp. 64-65).

Miller and Mehler (1994) points out the importance of attending to children's personal

storytelling because they realize that children's lived family stories shape how they live school stories.

The stories Yang, Atoosa and Di lived and told also make me wonder how teachers and teacher educators can attend to family stories because family stories have the power to shape the lives of family members (Stone, 1988). As the title: "The power of stories: A narrative inquiry into immigrant children's and parents' intergenerational stories of school" indicates, my dissertation seeks to understand immigrant children's stories of school through exploring the told and lived intergenerational stories in each child's family. In the first chapter, I took a journey back to my own stories. Thinking backward, I realized how the family stories told and lived in my family and the family stories I lived shaped me as a daughter, student, teacher, mother and a becoming person who traveled from China to the US and Canada, pursuing graduate studies. Some of my family stories such as the stories my father told me about his sister and cousin are the generational stories in my family, which I continue to tell to my daughter. Looking backward from the stories I heard and lived while living alongside my participants, Yang, Atoosa and Di, I see how family stories and stories they lived at home and in other out-of-school places shaped how they lived and told stories of themselves and others in school.

Family stories (Stone, 1988) are told about the experiences of family members. Family stories are told to younger generations so that they may tell who they are by telling who their parents and grandparents are. Atoosa told stories of her parents and grandparents. Her maternal grandmother was a school principal and the stories of her

maternal grandfather were that he was a smart person who did many different kinds of jobs before he retired. Di's maternal grandfather died long before she came to the world. She knew his stories from her mother. Di respected her mother for her "independence" and "self-reliance" from her mother's telling of her lived stories. Family stories are not necessarily told to children as bedtime stories. Yang, as well as Di and Atoosa, did not tell me about a particular family story time. Yet they all knew, in many ways, who their parents and grandparents were because family stories were told frequently when there was a trigger that awakened a family story. Ting, Di's mother, told her daughter about the school lunch at the "boarding" school in her ancestors' hometown. The trigger for that telling was a photo she saw on the Internet. She emailed the photo to Di and told her lived stories. These stories became Di's family stories.

Family stories are told because they are ways of telling life experience. They are told because they have "value to the present" (Carr, 1986). Thus, most of the time, family stories are defining stories that tell who we and our families are. Yet, family stories can also be stories we live out in our daily lives. To Yang, going to piano lessons was to live a family story. To Atoosa, practicing test skills was a family story. To Di, working hard to go to the best schools was a family story. Similarly, living family stories shaped how Yang, Atoosa and Di lived their stories in school to define who they were in River's Edge. Through living the family stories of taking piano lessons, participating in subject matter contests and going to the best schools, Yang, Atoosa and Di knew their parents' expectations of them and who they were to their parents.

The family stories they lived in many ways defined the stories they told of who

they were and framed the plotlines of their lives. Family stories told and lived shape immigrant children's like Yang's, Atoosa's and Di's stories to live by. In this sense, immigrant children do not come to school only to be shaped by new school stories and to accept what they live and are taught in the mandated curriculum. Their family stories, in many ways, shape how they experience new landscapes. Schools and teachers may open up space for immigrant children to look backward to reflect on their family stories that have shaped who they are. Attending to immigrant children's family stories helps teachers understand immigrant children and creates meaningful and responsive practices (Miller & Mehler, 1994; Kidd, Sanchez & Thorp, 2004).

Attending to Immigrant Children's Desires for Cultural Identities

Martha Martinez (Lyons, 1998) learned to be a reflective practitioner by keeping a portfolio of her ideas obtained from reflecting on her teaching experiences as an intern teacher. One of the three "particularly powerful" (p. 108) observations was how to make her Mexican-American cultural background visible in her teaching. Her awareness of her Mexican-American background was aroused from her students' curious faces wondering who she was. Martha reflected:

... I tried to make them feel very open about talking about things like that, if they wanted to, and at one point they asked, "Well, just what are you?" ... I actually felt good that they felt comfortable enough to ask. And that they were honest enough about it to ask, and that when I told them that, they were curious, they wanted to know more and that they made me see it as a positive experience. (Lyons, 1998,

p. 110)

Martha's reflection is inspiring. It shows students are curious about cultural stories of the people who are around them, the teachers who teach them and, I imagine, their peers who learn together with them. If students want to know who their teachers are, I imagine they also are wondering about of who they themselves are. Martha attended to her students' curiosity of wondering who she was. She reflected that she felt good that her attentiveness opened up a plotline in which she and her students could comfortably tell stories about their cultural identities.

From the stories Yang, his parents, Atoosa, her mother, Di, and her parents, I learned living Chinese-related stories to Yang and Di and living Iranian-related stories to Atoosa were important. I therefore wonder how teachers and teacher educators can attend to immigrant children's developing cultural identities. For the three immigrant children, Yang, Atoosa and Di, living fitting-in stories was one of their plotlines of living school stories. Yang was encouraged to fit into the stories of his American and Canadian schools. He was encouraged to learn English and participate in River's Edge. Atoosa, too, was encouraged to be friends with her Canadian classmates so that she got involved and learned English. The same was true for Di. She wanted to be close to her classmates. Her mother, like Yang's and Atoosa's mothers, encouraged her to make the first move if she wanted to make friends with girls in River's Edge. Immigrant children and their parents may want to live as Canadians in order to fit in. "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" may be the right thing to do and the right way to live for children from immigrant families. Yet cultural stories, at the same time, are held on to in order to

sustain cultural identities. On new school landscapes they negotiate "their cultural identity [to find] their place in the new school" (Kirova, Mohamed & Emme, 2006, p. 73) and "balance between maintaining home culture and adapting new cultural practices" (Ngo, 2004, p. 20). Yang went to the Chinese school on Saturdays to learn his parents' and grandparents' language. His mother made sure the Mid-Autumn Festival was a special day in the family. Atoosa marked the Iranian New Year in Canada in the spring. She stayed up late that evening waiting for her turn to say "Happy New Year" to her grandparents and other relatives in Iran. Di picked up Chinese painting when her mother found a Chinese painter in Canada.

Yang, Atoosa and Di want, in many ways, to be Canadians. However, their cultural identity is something that makes them special and different as visible immigrant children. Yang identified himself as a Chinese boy and said so in English with no foreign accent. While attracted by new Canadian experiences, Atoosa lamented how beautifully different Iran was from Canada particularly because of the ancient buildings in Iran. No matter how she wanted to master English and excel in the curricula in River's Edge, Di was proud of her Chinese heritage. She would not trade her Chinese identity for the sake of popularity in River's Edge.

The sense of cultural identity is with them as they live cultural stories at home and in other out-of-school places. Immigrant children such as Yang, Atoosa and Di had a "sense of cultural continuity" (Piquemal, 2005, p. 531). In this research, I found cultural identity is not necessarily something immigrant children try hard to sustain. Sometimes they tell stories of their cultural identity especially when they feel they do not belong or

are not welcomed in new school stories. Similar expression was found in other contexts: "... many Turks who came to Germany as atheists have become practicing Muslims in Germany as a result of the conflicts over identity which they experience there" (Elsas, 1983, as cited in Glenn & de Jong, 1996, p. 209). Di, for example, identified herself as a Chinese girl who had different stories to tell of what was nice and cool when she felt she could not live the "cool" stories of River's Edge as she understood them. Immigrant children in this study were willing to fit in when they believed the fitting-in stories were meaningful. I wonder if teachers can be attentive to both of these plotlines in immigrant children's lives: fitting in to "earn their portion" (Handlin, 1951, as cited in Glenn & de Jong, 1996, p. 28) in Canadian school stories, and holding on to family and cultural stories of who they are. I understand that teachers may shape immigrant students' stories to live by by making them visible as immigrant students because, in certain situations, they want to be like their Canadian classmates. Yet, teachers may shape immigrant students' stories to live by by neglecting the cultural stories because they also have a sense of cultural loyalty (Piquemal, 2005).

Living in the plotline of cultural stories is important for immigrant families and the children so that they tell stories about their roots. Chan's (2006) research on Canadian middle school teachers' experiences also shows that children and their parents in many ways cling to their ethnic identities. Yet having a plotline of living fitting-in stories is also important in order that immigrant children at the same time tell stories of their routed identities (McLeod, 2000; Gilroy, 1993) as Canadians. Like Lin Yutang, a linguist and writer, who once said that in the US he taught the Americans about China,

while in China, he taught the Chinese about America, immigrant children live stories of both plotlines on their shifting landscapes.

An article from the Globe and Mail began, "It's disturbing to discover the extent to which second-generation immigrants of colour feel less Canadian than their white counterparts in the same generation of immigrants. The divide between racial minorities and whites, almost nil when they arrive, actually grows among their children" (January 15, 2007, p. A16). It seems the author(s) is concerned that visible minorities' strong ethnic identity would be a problem for Canadian national unity. The article continued with Pierre Trudeau 's opinion on national unity, "National unity, if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense, must be founded on confidence in one's own individual identity." I learned from the lives Yang, Atoosa and Di lived that cultural identity for them was personal and the stories they lived shaped how they told about their cultural identity. On a Canadian landscape of diversity, as visible minorities, Yang, Atoosa and Di, were aware of where they came from and who they, and their ancestors, were. According to Martha Martinez's (Lyons, 1998) observation, being a visible Mexican-American, as she entered a classroom where the majority were white students, she felt her students would want her to tell her cultural identity. She did not turn away from speaking about her cultural identity. Rather, she opened up a space for the possible conversations around "Well, just what are you?"

Visible minority immigrant children like Yang, Atoosa and Di also need Martha's attentiveness to feel comfortable to express their cultural identity in the ways they choose to and to live with "confidence" of their "own individual identity" in their chosen home,

Canada.

Attending to Immigrant Children's Desires for Relationships

"[T]hose of us who work from an ethic of care regard moral life as thoroughly relational. ... A relational view weakens and blurs the distinction between egoism and altruism, because much of what we do for others strengthens the relations of which we are part and, thus, our selves." (Noddings, 2003, p. 158)

To Noddings (2003) and Poetter (2006), relationship builds up the foundation of happiness. "Human relationships are perhaps the most important single ingredient in happiness" (Noddings, 2003, p. 179). "Joy [of teaching] is embodied in the acts of teaching students and forging relationships with them" (Poetter, 2006, p.271). The joy of teaching and learning occurs when teachers build a sense of connection, "pure relationship in a complex web of interactions that bring joy to the knower and known" (Poetter, 2006, p. 158).

I also wonder if teachers and teacher educators can attend to immigrant children's desires for relationships. Living relational stories was a major plotline for both Atoosa and Di in River's Edge. Atoosa and Di, both new to River's Edge, came to Canada not to abandon their past relational stories in their home countries. They came to Canada hoping to live out new stories of relationships. Being good students who earned good marks before they came to Canada, Atoosa and Di had confidence that, in no time, they could catch up with their classmates in the curricula in Canadian schools so that they could continue living stories of being good students. In River's Edge, however, the unexpected

challenge they met was to live relational stories. They found making friends and living relational stories was different than they had experienced in their previous schools. Sometimes they felt confused. On their new school landscapes, they realized friends and relationships did not come easily. In their home countries they took for granted that, as good students, they had friends and comfortable relational stories to live and tell. Atoosa had hoped to make close friends with whom she could tell secret stories and “laugh” together. Di had expected to make as many friends as she had in China. Both of them experienced tensions, confusions and struggles within their plotlines of living relational stories. Di did not expect that making friends would be a slow process. She took initiatives and made compromises in order to make friends. Atoosa, too, made efforts to live relational stories. She learned English and tried to make sense of the new stories on the River’s Edge landscape in order to live new stories of relationships. Learning to build relationships became their major concern and strained their energy.

When they could not easily live relational stories, Atoosa and Di missed their past relationships much more. Di cried over emails from her friends in China on her first birthday in Canada with no friends and classmates around. As I imagine the emptiness Di felt in her life, I can also imagine the emptiness Atoosa felt when she had “secret” stories but no “close” friends to tell them to. In their home countries, immigrant children were born into a web of relationships. In a new country, immigrant children like Atoosa, Di and Yang had to establish new relationships on landscapes of different stories in a non-mother tongue language. Several times Atoosa started our conversations by telling stories about her sister’s visit to River’s Edge. She liked to tell me about her happy days

of meeting nice girls even though sometimes it turned out they were not her friends the next day. Di most enjoyed telling about her friendship with her newly made friends who spoke her language. Di's favorite teacher was Mrs. Jones, the first teacher she felt connected to. Di and Atoosa taught me that they were often intentionally observant as they watched for signs that could lead to possible relationships. Atoosa was impressed when teachers in the general office were "kind" and "helpful" to her and answered her questions she asked in English, her second language. The teachers in the general office might not remember at all the story Atoosa lived and told about their kindness. They did a normal thing on a normal day. Yet, to Atoosa, the experience was special. She told a story in relation to a new school landscape. If the teachers in the general office helped Atoosa in a routine manner, Mrs. Jones, in some ways, attended to Di's desires for relational stories. She talked to Di and asked about her family. As a teacher in the ESL classroom, Mrs. Jones introduced Di to other ESL students for her to live relational stories. Both Di and Atoosa were appreciative. What is important to notice is that the two children were mindful of how they were treated and they tended to appreciate "minor" things. I put quotation marks on *minor* because, for Atoosa and Di, new to the River's Edge landscape, they were not minor. From the stories Atoosa and Di told about these experiences, I also learned that they sought stories of relationships on their new school landscape. They carefully lived their stories so that they could tell relational stories to themselves and others about their lives in Canadian schools.

Wang's (2007) research shows that her participants, international graduate students, were more concerned about relational experiences than academic learning

situations. Similar to the experiences of Atoosa and Di, their frustrations and confusions mostly emerged from building relationships and living relational stories instead of from the situations in which they were learning in English, their second language. The children I worked with, in many ways, came to fit in, to come to terms with their new life experiences on new landscapes. They also came to fit into new experiences of relationships. If, as teachers, we show our care for their yearning for relationships and open up a bit of ourselves for them to live relational stories with us, like Mrs. Jones had done, perhaps immigrant children will feel more connected to school landscapes. Perhaps they will have happier experiences and be less confused. Perhaps they will appreciate both schools and their lives more.

Many immigrant children immigrated to Canada at a younger age. For example, Yang started his immigrant experiences at six years old. He had lived stories in English-speaking landscapes for seven years prior to experiencing River's Edge. River's Edge was new to him as he moved from the elementary school to junior high school. His experiences of River's Edge were different from the experiences of Atoosa and Di. His desires for relationships might also be different from those of Atoosa and Di, who started living stories in Canada in grade eight. Although he did not tell as many relational stories as Atoosa and Di, Yang had a space for his friends, a boy who was his junior. I imagine keeping relationships and feeling connected were important to Yang. In Atoosa's words, having friends is "a human need." From the lives of the three immigrant children shared with me, who are new to culturally and linguistically different school landscapes, I believe teachers, by attending to immigrant children's desires for relationships, can shape

school landscapes to which they can feel connected and experience the “joy” of school and tell stories of “happiness.”

Attending to Immigrant Children’s Lived Stories

Story is the phenomenon (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, 1994; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) that narrative inquirers inquire into in order to understand people’s lived experiences. “To think of life as a story” has been “a powerful way” for me to think of my participants’ lives, to “imagine who [they] are, where [they] have been, and where [they] are going” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 149). Inquiring into their stories, lived and told, allowed me to travel to the worlds of three immigrant children, Yang, Atoosa and Di, to understand their lives and how their lives were shaped by the stories they lived.

Following the work of Clandinin and Connelly (2000), immigrant children, like all of us tell and retell stories, live and relive stories and are shaped by the stories they live and tell. Lived and told stories comprise their worlds of meaning. For more than three years, every time I was with Yang, Atoosa, Di and their parents, they told me stories of their experiences. I see how their lived stories shaped their telling of their relationships with the landscapes they lived in. For example, when Yang said he “cheered for everyone”, while watching the Olympic Games, his reason was “I went everywhere.” His reason came from the stories he lived in the three countries. These experiences brought Yang a bigger picture of the world in which he felt related. He cheered for *everyone*, including Chinese, Canadian and American athletes. Yang introduced himself to me as “a Chinese kid.” Again, it was related to his China-related stories he lived: born

into a Chinese family, celebrating Chinese festivals, going to the Chinese school, and visiting family friends from China were the stories Yang lived for him to tell a story of himself as “a Chinese kid.” These are the two examples from which I learned that lived stories shaped how Yang told who he was and his relationships to his storied landscapes.

As I learned how lived stories shaped Yang’s telling of who he was and how he was living his life, I understood the importance of attending to lived stories. Therefore, finally I wonder if, in order to work better with immigrant children, teachers and teacher educators can find ways to attend to their lived stories.

We refer to our lived experiences for many decisions we made for our daily lives. “Once bitten by a snake, for ten years a person may be afraid of a piece of rope.” This old Chinese saying also tells that past experiences have a long time of impact on future behavior. In many ways, we do understand lived stories shape who we are and how we live our lives. However, what we do not usually do, perhaps, is to *attend* to lived stories to understand what is seen and heard. For teachers and teacher educators, whose work is to nurture children, it is particularly important that immigrant children’s lived stories be attended to so that they feel less confused and frustrated on new storied landscapes. I understand that it will not be possible and practical for teachers to attend to all the lived stories of immigrant children in their classrooms. I suggest attending to immigrant children’s lived stories when necessary, for example, when tensions emerge. The suggestions Chang and Rosiek (2003) made to science teachers speak well for me:

[Teaching science] requires some knowledge of the student's cultural community and the history of that community. This cultural knowledge need not be

comprehensive, nor does a teacher have to be a cultural insider to have it [though that *certainly* helps]. But it is essential to understand some of the stories students bring to the classroom. It is only through such knowledge that teachers can avoid falling into the trap of easy and uncharitable oversimplifications of immigrant experience, which in turn inhibit the truly responsive science teaching that reaches *all* their students. (p. 286)

Atoosa was a good student with good marks. Being popular and having many friends were her lived stories in her schools in Iran. Atoosa was trying to continue the same plotline of being recognized as a good student with good marks. She knew it was not easy on a new school landscape, in which she needed to learn and communicate in a new language. In the fall of 2004, when we started our conversations, Atoosa was in the ESL program for most of her courses. The subject of social studies was the only subject she did in the regular class. Atoosa started worrying when she heard her teachers were planning to let her take the subject of science in the regular science class. Atoosa worried that doing two courses in regular classes would make it difficult for her to do well and earn good marks. "I think the thing that can't happen to me about school is low marks", Atoosa said. Tension emerged when a twist came in that made it hard for her to live out her lived school stories to be a good student.

The lived stories Di told me about her schools in China were similar to Atoosa's. Di was also a top student and had many friends. She also talked about her lived stories regarding learning, such as the types of assignments she did for courses in her Chinese schools. In her schools in China, group projects were much less frequent than in River's

Edge. Yet, as a top student, she never had to worry about having no partners if there was one. Tension emerged when in River's Edge she had no partners for group projects. That her teacher "put me in a group" did not help Di. She "felt pretty bad" because she had not lived stories of being left out for her school experiences in China. Her lived stories as a smart student shaped how she told a story of having no partners for group projects. Di's experience helped me better understand why "teaching must allow for the teacher to learn from the student's learning" (Britzman & Pitt, 1996, p. 117).

Living competing stories was one plotline in Yang's storied life. The competing stories were those Yang wanted to live for his own interest as well as those shaped by his parents' and the school's expectations of him. To live out his parents' planned stories, he went to the Chinese school and piano lessons on the weekend and after school. To live out the expected school stories for him, he went to school every week day and did the required assignments. Trying to live out the competing stories, Yang did not have much space to live his "life." He struggled with how to live his life within these competing stories. He wondered about the relation between homework, study and studying for tests. His lived stories shaped how he told and lived school stories. Tension, therefore, emerged when it was hard for him to balance his life within these competing stories.

As I wrote earlier, lived stories in many ways shape how we live our lives. When tensions emerge in storied lives as in the situations discussed above, attending to the lived stories can be a way of understanding how these tensions were formed. Sometimes teachers have already eased the would-be tensions. For example, for Atoosa, the subject of social studies was the "hardest." One reason was she needed a large enough

vocabulary to understand the texts. Yet, her social studies teacher was “amazing” because she attended to Atoosa’s lived stories by “speaking easy” so that Atoosa could follow her. The social studies teacher attended to Atoosa’s need for special attention in making learning in a new language a little easier. While I imagine it is not too difficult for a teacher to notice her/his student is struggling learning in a second language, in Atoosa’s telling her social studies teacher seemed to be the only teacher that attended to her struggle as an ESL student: “But like my other teachers, not all of them but some of them, speak very hard even though they know I’m an ESL student.” The social studies teacher may not have focused on her attention on Atoosa’s story to live by as a good student with good marks, but Atoosa was thankful that her teacher created a possibility for her to live out her stories as a good student.

As a narrative inquirer, I narratively attended to the lived stories of my participants in order to understand their lives. In many ways, I learned to respect their lived lives. Through the work I did with my participants, I learned that being attentive to lived stories was a way for me to understand my participants. I also knew my participants appreciated my being attentive to their stories just as Atoosa appreciated her social studies teacher.

Earlier I discussed the tension each of the three immigrant children encountered. From my experiences of being attentive, I believe attending to lived stories can ease tensions. I imagine Atoosa would be happier if her teachers talked with her and listened to what she had to say about taking courses in regular classes or in ESL classes. Although Di did not complain that her teachers put her in groups, I imagine Di would be

more appreciative if her teachers had attended to her lived stories as a smart student and not just as a new immigrant girl, struggling with English. As for Yang, I wonder what a difference it might make if his teachers did not just give him a number to mark his grade but also inquired about the competing stories he lived.

Landscapes shift all the time. Shifting landscapes shape how we live and tell stories of our lives. On shifting landscapes, I know from the experiences I lived with Yang and Di in sharing the research texts that their storied lives continued to shift. Thus I know on shifting landscapes, if I continued working with them, I would attend to different stories. As a narrative inquirer and former teacher, I believe lived stories have the power to shape how we live and tell stories. I believe lived stories need to be attended to understand immigrant children's lives. Attending to lived stories help teachers compose curriculum that responds to diversity (Blades, Johnston, & Simmt, 2001).

Reanimating the Old and Gaining Knowledge of the New

“He who by reanimating the Old can gain knowledge of the New is fit to be a teacher” is a household teaching from the *Analects* in China and Chinese families. It has become a commonplace and perhaps has lost in “gaining knowledge of the new.” In the first chapter, I wrote about my family stories and the stories I lived with my father. “He who by reanimating the Old can gain knowledge of the New is fit to be a teacher” for me was not just a commonplace I picked up in conversations and reading. When I was in my early twenties, I learned it in the *Analects* from my father. It became one of my lived family stories. Like many other lived stories in my life, it lingers along the way nurturing

my roots and shaping how my routed roots grow as my metaphoric sweet potato vines spread.

Lived stories constantly shape my life and also linger on reminding me of one principle of experience – continuity (Dewey, 1938). A few months ago as I was reviewing the research I conducted with the methodology of narrative inquiry, “reanimating the Old and gaining knowledge of the New” shed new meaning of its own. Thinking narratively, I understood it to mean the process of telling, retelling, living and reliving. “Reanimating the Old” is telling backward-looking stories and attending to lived stories; while “gaining knowledge of the New” is composing forward-looking stories by reflecting on the Old and reliving in new ways. As I wrap up my dissertation, Confucius’ teaching I learned many years ago serves well to speak for this section as well as the whole dissertation. It is a lived story, a family story, an intergenerational story, a relational story and a story that tells of my cultural identity.

In this dissertation I sought to understand immigrant children’s lives by “thinking of life as a story” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 149). Attending to the lived stories, including cultural stories and generational family stories, I traveled to the worlds (Lugones, 1987) of my three participants, Yang, Atoosa and Di. In “He who by reanimating the Old can gain knowledge of the New is fit to be a teacher,” reanimating the Old and gaining knowledge of the New was Confucius’ criteria for being a teacher. I imagine Confucius speaks in the modern language suggesting that teachers disposition themselves (Vinz, 1997) and “imagine the experiences of children” (Gomez, 1996, p. 2) to compose new stories of teaching for children, including immigrant children.

REFERENCES

- Agbayani-Siewert, P. (1994). Filipino American culture and family: Guidelines for practitioners. *Families in Society*, 75, 429–438.
- Ahmed, N. (2002). *Fitting in: The human capital assimilation of children in immigrant families in Canada*. Unpublished dissertation. Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS.
- Baptiste, D. A. (1993). Immigrant families, adolescents and acculturation: Insights for therapists. *Marriage and Family Review*, 19, 341–363.
- Bateson, M. C. (1990). *Composing a life*. New York: Penguin Group.
- Bateson, M. C. (1994). *Peripheral visions*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Bateson, M. C. (2000). *Full circles, overlapping lives*. New York: Random House.
- Bateson, M. C. (2004). *Willing to learn: Passages of personal discovery*. Hanover, New Hampshire.
- Blades, D., Johnston, I., & Simmt, E. (2001). *Cultural diversity and secondary school curricula*. Toronto, ON: The Canadian Race Relations Foundation.
- Britzman, D. P., & Pitt, A. J. (1996). Pedagogy and transference: Casting the past of learning into the presence of teaching. *Theory Into Practice*, 35(2), 117-123.
- Bruner, J. S. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, J. S. (1994). Life as narrative. In A. H. Dyson & C. Genishi (Eds.), *The need for story*, pp. 28-37. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English.

- Bruner, J. S. (2002). *Making stories: Law, Literature, life*. New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux.
- Buki, L. P., Ma, T.-C., Strom, R. D., & Strom, S. K. (2003). Chinese immigrant mothers of adolescents: Self-perceptions of acculturation effects on parenting. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 9(2), 127-140.
- Carr, D. (1986). *Time, narrative, and history*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Chan, E. (2006). Teacher experiences of culture in the classroom. *Curriculum Studies*, 38(2), 161-176.
- Chang, P. J. & Rosiek, J. (2003). Anti-colonialist antinomies in a biology lesson: A sonata-form case study of cultural conflict in a science classroom. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 33(3), 251-290.
- Charon, R. & Montello, M. (2002). *Stories matter: The role of narrative in medical ethics*. London: Routledge.
- Children of immigrants and the issue of identity. (2007, January 15). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A16.
- Clandinin, D. J. (2005). Lives in school: The interwoven lives of children and teachers. Keynote speech addressed at the Australian Curriculum Studies Conference, the University of the Sunshine Coast, Mooloolabah, Australia.
- Clandinin, D. J. (2007). *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Clandinin, D. J. & Connelly, F. M. (1994). Personal experience methods. In N. K.

- Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Clandinin, D. J. & Connelly, F. M. (1995). *Teachers' Professional Knowledge Landscapes*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Clandinin, D. J. & Connelly, M. F. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publisher.
- Clandinin, D. J., Huber, J., Huber, M., Murphy, M. S., Murray-Orr, A., Pearce, M., and Steeves, P. (2006). *Composing diverse identities: Narrative inquiries into the interwoven lives of children and teachers*. London: Routledge.
- Clandinin, D. J. & Rosiek, J. (2007). Mapping a landscape of narrative inquiry: Borderland spaces and tensions. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*, pp. 35-75. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Coles, R. (1989). *The call of stories: Teaching and the moral imagination*. Boston: A Peter Davison Book.
- Connelly, F. & Clandinin, J. (1988). *Teachers as curriculum planners: Narrative of experiences*. Teachers College Press, New York: Columbia University.
- Connelly, F. M. & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2-14.
- Connelly, F. M. & Clandinin, D. J. (1994). Telling teaching stories. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 21(1), 145-158.
- Connelly, F.M. & Clandinin, D.J. (1999). *Shaping a professional identity: Stories of*

- educational practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Connelly, F.M. & Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative inquiry. In J. Green, G. Camilli, & P. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* (pp. 375-385). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Crites, S. (1971). The narrative quality of experience. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 39(3), 391-411.
- Crites, S. (1979). The aesthetics of self-deception. *Soundings*, 62, 107-129.
- Crites, S. (2002). A love story. Paper presented at Narrative Matters 2002, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. <http://www.stu.ca/conf/narrative/>
- Delgado-Gaitan, C. (2001). *The power of community: Mobilizing for family and schooling*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC.
- Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children*. New York: The New Press.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Druley, L. (September 23, 2002). Immigrant youth walk middle ground. Minnesota Public Radio. Retrieved on August 27, 2007 from:
http://news.minnesota.publicradio.org/features/200209/23_druleyl_fittingin-m/
- Frits, J. (1990). The teller and the tale. In W. Zinsser (Ed.), *Worlds of children*. (pp. 21-46). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Garcia Coll, C. T., Meyer, E. C., & Brillon, L. (1995). Ethnic and minority parenting. In M. H. Bornstein (Ed.), *Handbook of parenting: Applied and practical parenting* (pp. 189-209). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

- Geertz, C. (1988). *Works and lives: The anthropologist as author*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Gilroy, P. (1993). *The black Atlantic*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Glenn, C. L. & de Jong, E. J. (1996). *Educating immigrant children: Schools and languages minorities in twelve nations*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, INC.
- Gomez, M. L. (1996). Telling stories of our teaching, reflecting on our practices. *Action in Teacher Education*, 18(3), 1-12.
- Greene, M. (1994). Multiculturalism, community, and the arts. In A. H. Dyson & C. Genishi (Eds.), *The need for story*, pp. 11-25. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts, and social change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Huber, J. & Clandinin, D. J. (2002). Ethical dilemmas in relational narrative inquiry with children. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(6), 785-803.
- Igoa, C. (1995). *The inner world of the immigrant child*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Hurlock, D., McCullagh, K., & Schissel, C. (2004). Conversations for change: An overview of services for immigrant children and youth in Calgary. Retrieved on August 27, 2007 from:

http://www.ciwa-online.com/pdfs_other/June11FinalReport.doc%201_conventions_for_change.pdf

- Kerby, A. P. (1991). *Narrative and the self*. Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Kidd, J. K., Sanchez, S. Y., & Thorp, E. K. (2004). Gathering family stories: Facilitating preservice teachers' cultural awareness and responsiveness. *Action in Teacher Education*, 26(1), 64-73.
- King, T. (2003). *The truth about stories*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press Inc.
- Kirova, A. (2001). Loneliness in immigrant children: Implications for classroom practice. *Childhood Education*, 77(5), 260-267.
- Kirova, A., Mohaned, F. & Emme, M. (2006). Learning the ropes, resisting the rules: Immigrant children's representation of the lunchtime routine through fotonovela. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 4(1), 73-96.
- Lieblich, A; Tuval-Mashiach, R. & Zilber, T. (1998). *Narrative research--Reading, analysis, and interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lugones, M. (1987). Playfulness, "World"-traveling, and loving perception. *Hypatia*, 2(2), 3-19.
- Lyons, N. (1998). Constructing narratives for understanding: Using portfolio interviews to scaffold teacher reflection. In N. Lyons (Ed.), *With portfolio in hand: Validating the new teacher professionalism* (pp. 103-119). New York: Teachers College Press.
- McLeod, J. (2000). *Beginning postcolonialism*. Manchester, UK: Manchester

University Press.

- McCaleb, S. P. (1994). *Building communities of learners: A collaboration among teachers, students, families, and communities*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Miller, P. J. & Mehler, R. A. (1994). The power of personal storytelling in families and kindergartens. In A. Dyson & C. Genishi (Eds.), *The need for story: Cultural diversity in classroom and community* (pp. 44-45). Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Minichiello, D. (2001). Chinese voices in a Canadian secondary school landscape. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 26(1), 77-96.
- Mitchell, W. J. T. (1981). *On narrative*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nelson, H. L. (2002). Context: Backward, sideways, and forward. In R. Charon & M. Montello (Eds.), *Stories matter: The role of narrative in medical ethics* (pp. 39-47). London: Routledge.
- Neumann, A. (1997). Ways without words: Learning from silence and story in post-holocaust lives. In A. Neumann and P. L. Peterson (Eds.), *Narrative research—Reading, analysis, and interpretation* (pp. 91-120). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Neumann, A. & Peterson, P. L. (Eds.) (1997). *Learning from our lives*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Ngo, H. Van. (2004). *Immigrant children in focus: A map of needs, strategies and*

- resources*. Calgary, AB: Coalition for Equal Access to Education.
- Noddings, N. (2003). *Happiness and education*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Paley, V. G. (1990). *The boy who would be a helicopter*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Paley, V. G. (2004). *A child's work: The importance of fantasy play*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Pennebaker, J. W. (1997). *Opening up—The healing power of expressing emotions*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Pinnegar, S. & Daynes, J. G. (2007). Locating narrative inquiry historically. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*, pp. 3-34. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Piquemal, N. (2005). Cultural loyalty: Aboriginal students take an ethical stance. *Reflective Practice*, 6(4), 523-538.
- Poetter, T.S. (2006). Recognizing joy in teaching. *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue*, 8(1-2), 269-287.
- Schwab, J. J. (1971). The practical: Arts of eclectic. *The School Review*, 79(4), 493-542.
- Silko, L. M. (1996) *Yellow woman and a beauty of the spirit*. New York, NY: Touchstone.
- Statistics Canada (2006). Population and demography. Retrieved on September 13, 2007

from: http://www41.statcan.ca/2006/3867/ceb3867_000_e.htm

- Stone, E. (1988). *Black sheep and kissing cousins: How our family stories shape us*. New York: Times Books.
- Uba, L. (1994). *Asian Americans: Personality patterns, identity, and mental health*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Vinz, R. (1997). Capturing a moving form: 'Becoming' as teachers. *English Education*, 29(2), 137-146.
- Wang, H.Y. (2007). Memory, vision, and daily praxis: Teachers' lives illuminated by currere. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) 2007 Annual Conference, Chicago.
- Wu, Z. (1993). *Language, consciousness and personal growth: An autobiographic study of a second language learner*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta.
- Xue, S. S. (1995). *Understanding new immigrant teenagers: Their psychological and emotional situation: The case of Chinese immigrant teens*. Report. New York: Long Island University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 394 095).
- Ying, Y. W. (1999). Strengthening intergenerational/intercultural ties in migrant families: A new intervention for parents. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 27, 89-96.
- Zhao, G. (2003). *Thinking and teaching for a narrative perspective*. Unpublished master's project. Memorial University of Newfoundland.