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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

An Application of Maturana's Concepts of Objectivity in
Parenthesis and Language

BY

LEE WERTZLER

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1987

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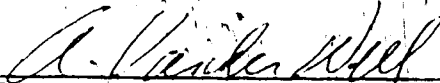
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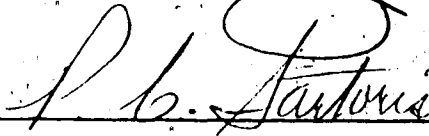
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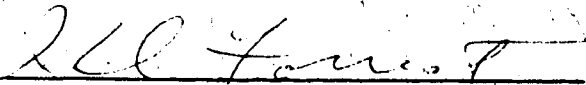


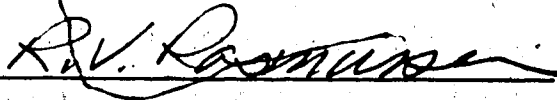
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ABSTRACT

The present study was designed as an application of Maturana's concepts of objectivity in parenthesis and languaging. An interview setting was used as a context in which to make observations concerning couples' interactions. A hermeneutical methodology was used. Four couples each participated in an in-depth discussion with the researcher concerning what was distinguished as their decision for the wife to remain at home after the birth of their first child. The study results included consideration of patterns of languaging and stances towards objectivity observed with each couple, and with the researcher, as well as similarities which could be distinguished among the study couples. The discussion of study results included the implications of Maturana's theory for distinguishing health, problems, or pathology in couples not seeking therapy, as well as implications of the theory for the therapist and the process of therapy. The applicability of these implications to interactive contexts which do not involve therapy was discussed briefly. A consideration of how the work of Bateson and von Foerster enhances that of Maturana in terms of the concepts of languaging and objectivity in parenthesis was included. Finally, a description of the study couples, a discussion of Maturana's epistemology concerning science, a consideration of the applicability of the hermeneutical approach to the interview setting, and a reflection on the nature of an application type of research project were presented.

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Framework for Presenting the Problem Statement

This chapter begins with a brief discussion of how the current study evolved. As such, the discussion is intended to provide a sense of how it was that the researcher decided on the final format of the study, that of applying specific theory to observing couples' interactions. At the same time, the discussion reflects some of the understandings which the researcher had when she began interacting with the couples. Some discussion of why a theory about biology was chosen for observing couples' interactions is presented, followed by a definition of the major research concepts. Finally, the importance of the study and the specific research questions are presented.

Evolution of the Study

The researcher's initial idea was to conduct a study which focused on a content area - that of how couples experienced their decision for the wife not to return to work after the birth of their first child. That topic was of interest for two major reasons. Firstly, it was recognized that societal practices and attitudes are changing rapidly concerning whether or not women should work when their children are young. For example, Pistrang (1984) noted that in the United States during the 20 year period from 1960 to 1980, the percentage of married working women with children

under six jumped from 19 to 45 percent. Secondly, the researcher noted that the process of becoming a parent is conceptualized as a life transition by many who study the family (Steffensmeier, 1982). Furthermore, some preliminary reading left the researcher with the impression that the decision about a woman's returning to work or remaining at home after the birth of the first child was a highly complex one. For example, Hock, Gnezda and McBride (1984) indicated that in the 317 mothers they studied, a conflict often existed between the mothers' beliefs about their infants' needs and their plans to work outside the home. Or, Pistrang (1984) reported that for the 63 women in her study who chose to remain at home following childbirth, those who were highly involved in their work before the baby was born reported problems such as greater irritability and lower self esteem than those women who had been less involved.

At the same time as the researcher was exploring the literature covering the transition to parenthood and the issue of working or remaining at home after childbirth, she was grappling with the cybernetic perspective presented by Keeney (1983) in the book entitled, Aesthetics of Change. Of particular interest was Keeney's discussion of double description, a term used by Gregory Bateson to indicate that a double view is necessary to give a sense of relationship. Keeney introduced the discussion in the following way:

When two people interact, each member punctuates the flow of interaction. If an observer combines the views of both individuals, a sense of the whole system will begin to emerge. There are several ways such a holistic description can be conceptualized. Firstly, the punctuation generated by each person can be presented in a sequential fashion, with the whole series seen as a representation of the dyadic system. For example, when the two descriptions 'he nags, I withdraw' and 'she withdraws I nag' are collectively viewed, they provide a quick glimpse of the interactive system. (1983, p. 37).

The researcher had also begun to explore the work of Maturana (1983) and was interested in the implications of his characterization of living systems as organizationally closed. Within the context of these explorations, the researcher brought forth three major observations concerning the literature regarding women returning to work or remaining at home after the birth of their first child. First, apparently there had been no study of the actual process by which the work/non-work decision was made. Secondly, within a wide range of studies that dealt with numerous aspects of the transition to parenthood and working and non-working mothers (e.g., Hock, Gnezda & McBride, 1984; Morgan & Hock, 1984; & Pistrang, 1984), the decision about working was treated as one made by the wife alone—even though it occurred within the context of a relationship. At best, the husband was referred to in a most peripheral way. For example, Pistrang (1984) stated that the husband's support for the wife's decision to work is an intervening variable which requires further research attention. The third observation brought

4

forth related to method of data collection. It was noted that several studies were conducted in which input was obtained from husband and wife concerning some aspect of the transition to parenthood. For example, Miller and Solite (1980) had husbands and wives complete separate questionnaires at various times during their study. Broom (1984) indicated that interviews were used as a part of her methodology. She used the term, interview, to describe a procedure in which the husband and wife were in the same room separately ranking some material in the presence of an "interviewer". Steffensmeier used an interview approach. In this case, the husbands and wives in her study were interviewed "separately but simultaneously by a male-female pair of interviewers" (1982, p. 322). Finally, Belsky, Spanier and Rovine (1983) conducted a face-to-face (although highly structured) interview of each couple as part of their data gathering repertoire. From reviewing various approaches to data collection, the researcher assumed that different relationship data would be obtained if she conducted a study in which each couple interacted in a dialogue with her.

The researcher's interest in doing a study which was an application of theory was solidified as she noted that Maturana's theory is becoming increasingly specific about the nature of families as systems (e.g., Maturana & Tomm, 1986). Therefore, the main consideration in deciding on the study in

its present form was the researcher's growing interest in understanding relationships and in applying a theory which views a human as a living system which is organizationally closed.

Purpose of the Study

Maturana's theory consists of a number of interrelated concepts which evolved from his work as a biologist. The central purpose of this study was to make an application of two of Maturana's concepts in observing couple's interaction in an interview setting. Thus, the interview setting provided a context for generating observations concerning each couple's interaction as they discussed a particular topic. Four couples were interviewed concerning what the researcher distinguished as their "decision" for the wife not to return to work after the birth of their first child. In summary, the research was designed to focus on the domain of the observer and her observations. In addition, since the study was designed as an application of theoretical concepts, it was intended that the researcher make observations of both a theoretical and a practical nature.

Definition of Major Research Concepts

Maturana's ideas are receiving attention in the field of

family therapy. For example, Keeney (1983) made considerable reference to Maturana's theory in his effort to describe an epistemology concerning change and to apply it to the family therapy situation. Further, Maturana's assertions concerning objectivity are noted in The Invented Reality, a collection of articles which discuss the constructivist view (Watzlawick, 1984). Dell, (1985) a family therapist with a reputation for conceptual clarity, recently published an article which directly compares Maturana with Bateson, a systems theorist whose ideas have had considerable acceptance in family therapy circles. Dell explained how many of the ideas of Bateson and Maturana are compatible but also described a major way in which Maturana's theory goes beyond that of Bateson - by delineating an ontology, or theory about our nature as humans. Finally, Tomm (Boscolo, Cecchin, Maturana, & von Foerster, 1984; Maturana, 1983; Maturana & Tomm, 1986; & Tomm & White, 1986) has done much to make Canadian therapists aware of Maturana's work.

Not all the reaction to Maturana's work has been positive. For example, Simon (1985) cited one senior family therapist who stated that when Maturana "talks as a biologist he is on safe ground. But I do not think he has much to say that is relevant to family therapy" (p. 34). However, at the other extreme, Dell has written that Maturana's "breakthrough in understanding living systems is comparable in magnitude to

Einstein's theory of relativity." (p. 34). In addition, interest in Maturana's theory is not limited to family therapy. For example, Simon (1986) notes that in about 1984, Werner Erhard, creator of est training, sponsored Maturana to do a lecture tour and a critique of the est training program. As a result of ideas from Maturana and others concerning such issues as how we know reality, the est training program took a new format called the Forum.

A good deal of the excitement about Maturana's work may rest on agreeing with Maturana's assertion that he has created a "'metatheory'.... Maturana contends his theory offers a general way of understanding the functioning of systems as diverse as amoeba, a pack of wolves, and the board of directors of IBM" (Simon, 1985, p. 34). The researcher chose to focus on two concepts from within Maturana's meta-theory—objectivity in parenthesis and languaging—since these two concepts were distinguished as being highly relevant for observing human interaction. These concepts will be discussed in considerable detail when the theoretical framework of the study is presented. For the present, a definition for each term will be given, beginning with objectivity in parenthesis.

Maturana asserts that there are two possible ways to explain the world. One can use objectivity (also called

objectivity without parenthesis) in which objects are viewed as existing independent of the observer, or one can use objectivity with (or in) parenthesis in which the stance is taken that "existence is bound to the actions of the observer" (Maturana & Tomm, 1986). In other words, in this second stance the observer is seen as bringing forth his world. The importance of these two epistemological stances is that they have different consequences for how one behaves. If a person believes that objects exist independent of him, he will resort to an independent object to validate what he says (his explanations). For example, a teacher may cite some ultimate reference book to show why a particular point is the truth. On the other hand, a person operating in objectivity in parenthesis will function in a way which accepts another's reality as legitimate for that person. This objectivity with parenthesis stance has an "acceptance of others" tone about it which does not seem new. What is unique is Maturana's argument concerning the biological impossibility that an objective world can exist for us as humans. This point will be pursued more fully in the literature review.

Maturana's view of languaging also has a uniqueness about it. Understanding that uniqueness may well depend on two points - seriously considering languaging as a phenomenon which arises out of interaction, and an understanding of one

term in Maturana's definition of languaging, that of consensuality. For the present, an overall definition of languaging will be presented.

Languaging is defined by Maturana in the following manner:

Languaging is not a means to transmit knowledge or information. Languaging is a manner of coexistence, a manner of living together in recursive coordinations of consensual actions such that the structure of the participants change in a manner contingent upon their participation in it Therefore, language is a social phenomenon in which the flow of the recurrent interactions between organisms that it entails, constitutes the domain of existence of the participants as the domain of their realization as living systems. (Mendez, Coddou, & Maturana, 1986, p. 18).

A key point implied by this definition is that languaging between humans is in no way restricted to words; in fact, Maturana points out that no single word or gesture is necessarily languaging. To identify languaging any person must observe a sequence of interactions and determine that consensual coordination of consensual coordination of actions is indeed taking place between (or among) the people involved.

At this point it should be noted that although Maturana's definition of languaging is in no way restricted to verbal interactions, the researcher chose to focus on verbal interactions in the interview analysis. The decision was made for

practical reasons due to the volume of data anticipated from the interviews.

Importance of the Study

The present study was an application of theory to the observation of couples as they reflect on a life transition which they are undergoing without having sought therapy. As such, the study extended application of Maturana's concepts to a domain other than therapy. Secondly, the context of the study was an interview setting; therefore, the study was designed to account for both the researcher as observer and for the couples being interviewed. Thus, a reflection on the researcher's characteristic stance on objectivity and her languaging during the interviews is considered to be an integral part of the study. The double focus—that of couple system and researcher—is reflected in the research questions.

The study questions which follow were designed to be as broad as possible so that the researcher would be open to the observations she could bring forth as a result of experiencing and analyzing the interviews.

General Research Questions

The general research questions which arise from the pur-

pose of the study are as follows:

1. What characterizes the verbal languaging used by each couple during the interview itself and in what they bring forth concerning how they arrived at their current situation of having the wife remain at home?
2. Can similarities be identified among the couples in terms of the verbal languaging they use during the interview discussion and in what they bring forth concerning how they arrived at their current situation of having the wife remain at home?
3. What characterizes the verbal languaging between the researcher and each of the couples?
4. Can a characteristic stance towards objectivity be identified for the participants in each interview?
5. Can similarities be identified among the eight husbands and wives in terms of their stances towards objectivity?
6. Does the researcher use a consistent stance towards objectivity throughout the study interviews?

Organization of the Remaining Chapters

The next chapter will present an overall theoretical framework for the study by considering various aspects of

Maturana's theory as it applies to the two study concepts. Next, the hermeneutical methodology and specifics of the research design will be discussed. The study results as they relate to objectivity in parenthesis and languaging in the study couples and the researcher will be presented in the subsequent chapter. The final chapter will provide a discussion of implications of Maturana's theory and a comparison of Maturana's work with that of both Bateson and von Foerster. The chapter will conclude with some final observations which were brought forth from the process of theory application.

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Framework for the Literature Review

This chapter is designed to focus solely on Maturana's theory. This approach was taken for several reasons. First, although the study relates to the application of two specific theoretical concepts, those concepts cannot be considered in isolation since there are several prerequisite understandings involved in fully comprehending them. Also, considerable explanation is required to treat the concepts themselves in an adequate manner. In addition, it was decided to leave the comparison of Maturana's work with that of others to the last chapter in order to highlight Maturana's theory as the basis for the project. Finally, as might be expected, there is no further discussion of the literature concerning the post-partum work decision since it was deemed that the introductory chapter presented the salient issues as they relate to the current study.

Maturana's Theory: Language and Objectivity in Parenthesis in Context

The following theoretical discussion is basically a reorganization and a clarification of material presented in the research proposal, with the exception of the addition of criteria for assessing objectivity in parenthesis and an expansion of the section on language and its relationship to emotioning.

It is important to note at the onset that Maturana's theory evolved directly from his work as a biologist. Early in his career, Maturana participated in experiments with frogs which were done at M.I.T. in the 1950's. That research set the direction for Maturana's work. Simon (1985) explained as follows:

In the process of studying the frog's retina, the M.I.T. team discovered that the frog's eye consisted of whole sets of specialized cells. Among these were some asymmetrical, edge receptors that could respond to flies moving across the frog's field of vision from left to right but not from right to left. It was as if the various structures in the frog's eye each had a 'mind of its own'. Perception was not a matter of a picture of the world somehow coming in and recording itself in the frog's brain. The frog had no access to the reality of the world, but only to reality as filtered through its sensory apparatus.

The M.I.T. experiment offered neurophysiologists a new kind of metaphor for understanding how perception takes place. 'It puts a gigantic question mark on the distinction we draw between perception and illusion,' Maturana says today. Instead of perception being understood on the model of a photographic camera conveying information to a receptor, a shift was made to see the organism as an informationally closed system which never 'takes in' information from outside in any direct way. Rather what it perceives is always determined by the nature of its own structure. (p. 34).

The preceding quote describes how Maturana's study of the frog's nervous system led him to conclude that perception is structurally determined. Such understandings are necessary to appreciate Maturana's view of languaging and objectivity in parenthesis. The discussion of such prerequisite understandings will continue in the subsequent sections.

Prerequisite Understandings: The Observer and
His Distinctions

The word reality comes from the Latin noun res meaning 'thing'. The fundamental operation that an observer can perform is an operation of distinction, the specification of an entity by operationally cleaving it from a background. Furthermore, that which results from an operation of distinction and can thus be distinguished, is a thing with the properties that the operation of distinction specifies, and which exists in the space that these properties establish. Reality, therefore, is the domain of things, and, in this sense, that which can be distinguished is real. Thus stated, there is no question about what reality is: It is a domain specified by the operations of the observer. (Maturana, 1978, p. 55).

The preceding quotation emphasizes that reality is brought forth by the observer, as was discussed when the concept of objectivity with parenthesis was introduced in the initial chapter. However, the quotation adds to the conceptualization of the observer by stating that the observer distinguishes things or entities. And, of course, these distinctions are made in language. According to Maturana, people function in objectivity without parenthesis because they do not recognize that the objects or entities which seem real were, in fact, brought forth by themselves in their languaging.

Maturana asserts that we can distinguish or bring forth two kinds of unities, simple or composite unities. A simple unity is a unity which we distinguish as a whole and, therefore, we don't enter into further distinctions about its

components. For example, we might say that the Smith family didn't wish to participate in a particular study. However, the observer distinguishes components when he distinguishes a composite unity. For example, we might comment that Mr. Smith was willing to participate in the study while Mrs. Smith was not. In this case, the husband and wife are components of the composite unity, family. Maturana (1984) commented that in a composite unity there are components and relations between components. The components remain as such only if they hold those relations that integrate the composite unity which was distinguished initially. In the last example given, the husband and wife do not exist as such outside the distinction "family".

Prerequisite Understandings Concerning

The Physiological Domain

Maturana defined organization as "the relations between components that define a composite unity as a composite unity of a particular kind (Maturana, 1980, p. xix). Maturana stated that living systems are composite unities characterized by an autopoietic organization. Autopoietic organization refers to the manner in which a living system maintains its autonomy (Maturana, 1981). The term autopoiesis was coined by Maturana and Varela (1980) and means "self producing". Therefore, what characterizes a living system is

a self producing organization. Maturana stated that "living systems are networks of molecular productions such that the molecules produced, produce the network that produced them. (Maturana, 1984). Therefore, the system is thermodynamically open but closed in terms of molecular production. This systemic closure can be thought of as a recursive condition because self production must go on for the organism to be distinguished as that system. Also, organization is an invariant because as soon as it changes, something else arises.

In Maturana's terminology, structure is defined as "the actual components (all their properties included), together with the actual relations that concretely realize a system as a particular member of a class of composite unities to which it belongs by its organization" (1971, p. 24). Several points about structure deserve further mention. First, Maturana noted that living systems are composite unities which are under continuous structural change. He stated that "Whether we are obviously interacting or not we are under continuous structural change because we are in a continuous process of autopoiesis" (Maturana, 1984). Second, because living systems are organizationally closed, any change they undergo is determined by their structure, i.e., the way they are made and not by anything with which they interact. This situation is called structure determinism. Third, a living system interacts through its components. For example, the

endocrine and nervous systems interact with each other to perform important regulatory functions. It is worth noting, however, that when a social system such as a family, work team, etc. is distinguished, the individual is a component of each composite unity distinguished. In the case of human interaction, it is most accurate to say that a composite unity (e.g., the family, work team, etc.) interacts through its components, i.e., the individuals who comprise the system brought forth by the distinction. Therefore, the term, composite unity, will be used when social systems are being discussed.

In conclusion, the understandings related to organization and structure will form the basis for the ensuing consideration of how humans interact and for much of the discussion of the implications of Maturana's theory which occurs in the final chapter.

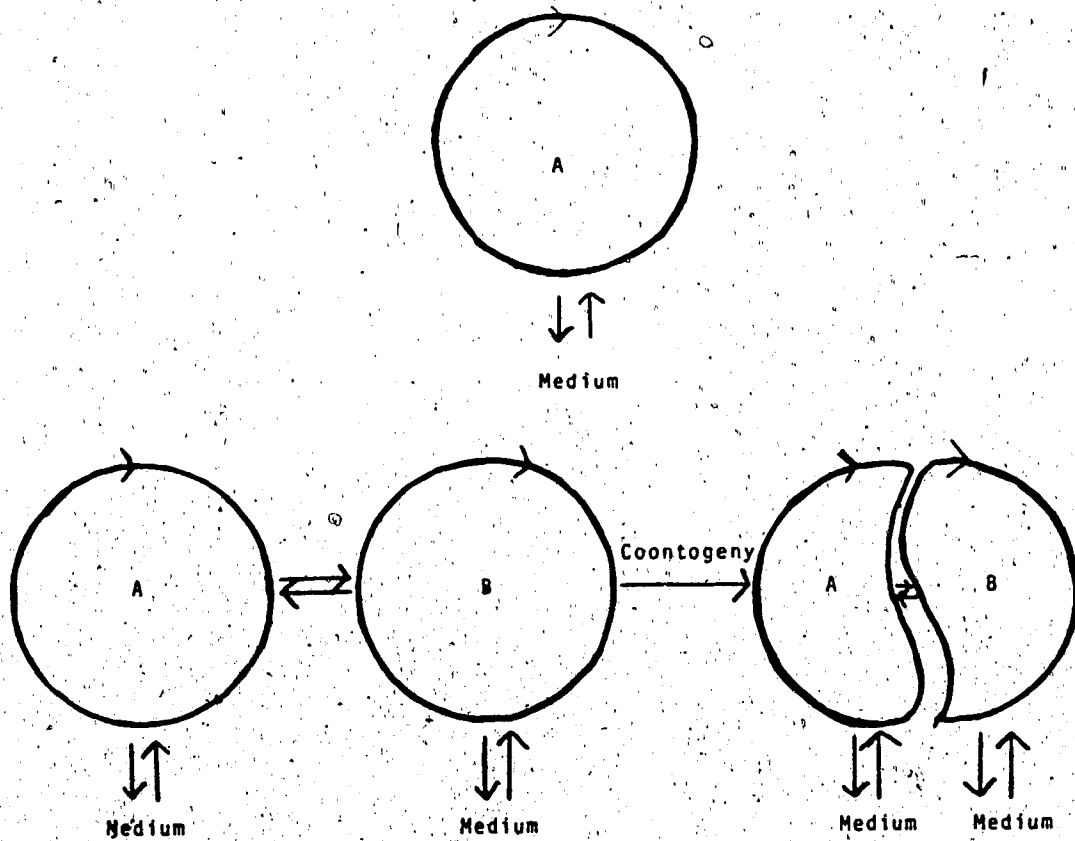
A Prerequisite Understanding Concerning

The Social (Interactional) Domain

Maturana (1986) discussed the term "ontogenic structural drift" and used the following analogy of a drifting boat to explain the concept:

It is said that a boat is drifting when it slides floating on the sea without rudder and oars, following a course that is generated moment after moment in its en-

FIGURE 1. The Processes of Ontogenic Structural Drift and Coontogeny



counter with the waves and wind that impinge on it, and which lasts as long as it remains floating (conserves adaptation) and keeps the shape of the boat (conserves organization) What happens with the generation of the course followed by a drifting boat is the general case for the generation of the course followed by the structural changes of any structure determined system that the observer distinguishes in his or her praxis of living. (p. 31).

Figure 1 is an illustration of the processes involved in ontogenic structural drift and in coontogeny as they apply to humans (Maturana & Tomm, 1986). The first circle represents person A interacting with a medium which does not include another person. A is conserving autopoietic organization and adaptation to the medium as indicated by the intact circle and the double arrows respectively. Maturana states that an organism's ontogeny is this history of interaction with conservation of organization and adaptation to its medium. Personal existence requires a history determined by structure and is contingent upon conserving organization and adaptation. If this conservation is lost, disintegration occurs.

The first pair of circles represents two people, A and B. Note that each is conserving organization and correspondence with the medium. If the structures of these people match, they will interact recurrently. They will be structurally coupled. Maturana described the process of structural coupling as follows:

Each element of the behavior of one organism . . . acts as a trigger or perturbation for another. Thus the behavior of organism A perturbs organism B, triggering in it an internal change of state that establishes in it a new structural background for its further interactions and generates a behavior that, in turn perturbs organism A which . . . perturbs organism B, which . . . and so on in a recursive manner until the process stops. (1978, p. 52).

Thus, A and B become part of each other's medium as represented in Figure 1 by the double arrows between the two. They change in a manner contingent upon their interactions with each other. The final shapes, A and B, represent people that have undergone structural changes (illustrated by their changed shapes and seen by an observer as changes in behavior) as a result of perturbing each other as part of each other's medium.

Coontogeny, then, is the history of interaction of two or more organisms which is contingent upon the organisms conserving their autopoiesis and their adaptation to the medium (which includes each other).

In the following discussion, Maturana described how structural coupling of individuals within a system leads to stable patterns of interaction or to the disintegration of that system.

Human beings change their behavior in a manner contingent to the interactions that they undergo as components of the social systems that they integrate, and the social systems that they integrate change as they change their manner of bringing them forth as a result of their

behavioral changes. All this occurs in a manner that either leads to the stabilization of some dynamic pattern of interpersonal interactions in the composition of a social system, or to the disintegration of this pattern because of the breakdown of such interactions and the appearance of something else. (Mendez, Coddou, & Maturana, 1986, p. 13).

This discussion of stability of interactional patterns and of disintegration will be taken up again when languaging and emotioning are considered.

At this point, the consideration of prerequisite understandings is complete. Maturana's description of how we bring forth entities, the nature of those entities, and how composite entities can interact and yet remain intact provides the background for further discussion of the concepts of objectivity in parenthesis and languaging.

Objectivity in Parenthesis: A Biological Perspective

As cited previously, Maturana's work in biology led him to conclude that the nervous system is organizationally closed; therefore, a person cannot take in or know an independent reality. As a result, as his thinking evolved, "the notion that we human beings do not and cannot refer to an external independent reality in our cognitive statement, through the operation of our nervous system, became not only a philosophical reflection, but a constitutive biological condition" (Mendez, Coddou, & Maturana, 1986, p. 8). This

is one of Maturana's major contributions—providing a biological rationale for the position that we are unable to know a world other than one we bring forth. If his work is considered seriously by philosophers and therapists (e.g., Von Glaserfeld, 1984) it may help to bring about a significant change in the perspectives which some of them hold. Mendez, Coddou, and Maturana stated the following:

The different intermediate models (structuralist, strategist, interactionalist, constructivist) of the systemic paradigm, put an end to the notion of open ended lineal causation. Yet, somehow they continue dealing with objectivity without parenthesis, and in all of them the justifications under which the power to decide is claimed continues being some pretended privileged access to an ultimate objective reality. Indeed, even constructivists who claim that reality is invented, propose fitness of experience as a way of 'knowing' what is correct and what is incorrect (in von Glaserfeld [sic] words 1984, 'breakdown in experience reveal the unfit, the invalid, and force us to correct our model'). Placing objectivity in parenthesis produces something qualitatively different from that. We, human beings, cannot make any claim about an objective reality because such a claim can only be made in language, which is where reality arises (Maturana, 1978), nor can we claim an privileged access to an objective reality independent of the speaker as a criterion of validation of what is the case (health or illness, normality or abnormality). For these reasons the notion of fitness of experience does not apply; it implies an objective reality (1986, pp. 37-38).

Maturana recognizes that objects arise in languaging. Therefore, rather than saying there is no objectivity, Maturana puts a parenthesis (for some reason, a single

bracket) around objectivity as a way of signalling that in any reference we make to objects such as "goodness", "apple", or "troubled family" these objects do not exist independent of us but are brought forth by us.

Observing Objectivity in Parenthesis

Mendez, Coddou, and Maturana (1986) distinguished several dimensions related to functioning in objectivity in parenthesis. First, the individual who is operating in objectivity in parenthesis will not validate his arguments by making reference to some objective reality. Second, that individual accepts responsibility for what he brings forth. Third, for the individual operating in objectivity with parenthesis, "different views or notions become legitimate even if their consequences are not equally desirable for all observers" (Mendez, Coddou, & Maturana, 1986, p. 11). Finally, the person functioning in objectivity in parenthesis "admits the multiversa with objectivity in parenthesis there is no need of mutual negation because there is no truth to defend, there is awareness that a disagreement can only be overcome by coexisting in another domain of distinctions where it does not arise" (Mendez, Coddou, & Maturana, 1986, p. 11). These four distinctions of objectivity with parenthesis will be used in the discussion of research questions dealing with the characteristic stances towards objectivity

in the study couples and the researcher.

Key Concepts Related to Linguaging

The Intended Meaning of Consensuality

Linguaging was defined previously as the consensual coordination of consensual coordination of actions. As such, it is a "coordination of coordination". However, because the adjective, consensual, is a vital part of Maturana's definition of linguaging, it will be dealt with first. In a March, 1986 workshop Maturana presented the following clarification of consensual:

Living together always results in coordinations of actions that I call consensual--consensual coordinations of actions. And I call them consensual intentionally because I can hear consensual in two ways. Of course, these are coordinations that have been going together in the same direction through the recurrent interaction. But I call them consensual also because this is what we understand in daily living by consensus. For example, in this room a consensus has been established through the process of being together this morning about the distribution of seats Just came about through living together. Is different from agreement. If you said to a friend 'I'm going to sit here. Let us agree that I'm sitting with you,' that's not consensus, that's agreement. The mechanism is different. In agreement, you require the explicit statement of what will be the case. In a consensus, the case results from living together. (Maturana & Tomm, 1986).

(This commentary could lead one to assume that consensuality is some sort of implicit agreement. However, that does not seem to be Maturana's intention at all. The more useful distinction arises from the statement that consensus results

from living together.)

To further clarify the term, Maturana stated that consensuality refers to the history of the interaction (Maturana & Tomm, 1986). If an observer sees coordinated behavior which results from two or more organisms repeatedly perturbing each other, that is consensual behavior. (This is as opposed to coordinated behavior which is the result of other things such as instinct). It seems like a fine point; however, if the term consensual is associated in any way with the idea of actual agreement among the organisms as opposed to understanding it in relation to the history of the interaction, as the observer sees it, considerable confusion can result. For example, a couple that comes for therapy stating they are unhappy because they argue frequently and have done so for the past 20 years are consensually coordinating their behaviors as much as a couple that lives together in what an observer would distinguish as a "harmonious" relationship. The process is the same for both couples i.e., as a result of living together, (their history of interaction) when the wife acts in a certain way, the husband now responds in a specific way and vice versa.

Linguistic Actions Versus Languageing

Maturana distinguishes between linguistic actions and

linguaging. When the observer sees a consensual coordination of actions, he sees linguistic actions. In other words, taking note of the meaning of consensuality as just discussed, two or more organisms are observed to be coordinating their actions as a result of their history of having interacted together. Bees working together in a bee colony would be an example. However, linguistic actions are not the same as linguaging because they do not involve a coordination of conduct about a coordination of conduct (Maturana, 1984). The recursion which must be noted in order to observe linguaging will be discussed now.

To Observe Linguaging You Must Observe a First Recursion

The nervous systems of human beings are complex enough to allow them to structurally couple in ways which the observer will see as a "coordination of coordination". This coordination of coordination is called a first recursion. In other words, if and when the observer notes consensual coordination of consensual coordination of actions, linguaging has occurred. An example may serve to illustrate. Suppose two siblings have come to repeatedly push and shove each other as a way of relating to each other. Their new stepmother arrives on the scene and raises her eyebrow at the first sequence of pushing and shoving. An observer notices that the boys simply look at the new stepmother as she does so.

The observer returns after the stepmother and boys have lived together for several months. If the observer notices that the boys begin to push and shove and then look at their stepmother, that observer would be seeing the three coordinating their actions by looking at each other. If the mother then raises her eyebrow and the boys stop pushing each other and sit down, another coordination of actions has occurred. The total process of (a) the three people's looking at each other and (b) the boys' sitting in response to the stepmother's raised eyebrow is an example of languaging among the three of them. It arose through their being together in repeated interaction and is seen as a coordination of coordination. (This example was designed to illustrate nonverbal languaging in order to emphasize Maturana's point that languaging is a phenomenon which arises in the interactive or social domain and is not restricted to words.)

From the initial definition given and the preceding discussion of languaging, it is readily apparent that Maturana's meaning is considerably different from the definition of language in common usage. He states that words are usually viewed as a means of communicating about things which are independent of us. However, this view is based on looking at the nervous system as being capable of building a model of or a representation of an objective reality (Maturana & Tomm, 1986). Of course, Maturana's work as a biologist led him to

assert that the closed nature of the nervous system would not allow for any such process. Instead, he proposed that languaging arises out of our structural coupling at the moment when that first recursion is observed (the coordination of coordination). Also, he noted that objects arise in language. (e.g., words such as tree, goodness, and hat). According to Maturana, words are tokens for the coordination of coordination which took place in evolving those words. For example, a mother and a very young child may be walking along and looking at things together. In the process the child may come to say the word, tree. If the child does, the word (or object) "tree" arises as a result of their having interacted together and represents that consensual coordination of consensual coordination of actions which were involved in the interaction.

Operations in Languaging:

Observing, Thinking, and Self Reflection

Maturana has had a keen interest in explicating how the phenomenon of languaging arises. However, rather than seeing too many instances in which verbal languaging arises, an observer would most often see us already operating in verbal languaging as we live our everyday lives. As previously stated, what we do when we function as observers, ourselves, is make distinctions about objects (unities, entities).

(These objects arose in languaging. The previous discussion of the word "tree" arising as a result of the coordination of actions between the mother and the child provides an example of that situation.) A distinction, then, is a "summary statement" (Maturana & Tomm, 1986). For example, if someone watching the previously suggested family situation (stepmother and boys) heard one child say to his stepmother, "you look angry", that would be an example of the child's functioning as an observer by making a distinction concerning the mother's facial expression. Therefore, to see observing you must see a second recursion. In such a situation we see someone distinguishing objects (and the objects themselves arose in a consensual coordination of consensual coordination which is languaging).

Our everyday experience with languaging is also that often we see people doing things more complex than just making observations such as "you look angry" or "pass the butter". When we see others distinguishing distinctions, for example, when someone talks aloud about the relationship among certain ideas, we observe a third recursion (a distinction of distinctions). It follows that if a person distinguishes distinctions, self reflection is occurring. When this is done aloud, again an observer would see a third recursion.

A summary chart of Maturana's overall theory as presented

at a recent workshop (Maturana & Tomm, 1986) is shown in Figure 2 in order to help conceptualize languaging as its meaning is intended by Maturana.

Languaging and Emotioning

One of Maturana's latest interests is in examining the relationship between languaging and emotioning. The preliminary explication of this relationship occurs in a recent paper by Maturana and two Chilean family therapists (Mendez, Coddou, & Maturana, 1986). In that paper, the authors did not speak of the phenomenon of emotioning as such but referred to emotional flow and stated:

We language through our bodies in the flow of interactions that constitute language, and our bodyhoods are in a continuous change that follows a course contingent upon our interactions in language: we become our conversations and we generate the conversations that we become (Mendez, Coddou, & Maturana, 1986, p. 19).

Maturana and Tomm (1986) are first to use the gerund, "emotioning". They use emotioning to mean a consensual coordination of emotions which can be observed in individuals. (Again, consensual refers to a coordination of emotions arising from recurrent interaction as opposed to from something else.) Their thesis is that two things are occurring in interaction—a continuous flow of emotions, and the consensual coordination of consensual coordination of actions

FIGURE 2. Overview of Major Concepts in Maturana's Theory of Cognition (Maturana & Tomm, 1986).

<u>Domain</u>	<u>Operation</u>	<u>Mechanism</u>
Effective Action (Cognition)	Physical Survival	Structural coupling with conservation of autopoiesis
Linguistic Action	Socialization	Consensual coordination of actions
Languaging *	1st Recursion	Consensual coordination of consensual coordina- tion of actions
Observing *	2nd Recursion	Distinguishing objects
Thinking *	3rd Recursion	Distinguishing distinctions

* These three domains occur in languaging

which is languaging. Assume that when person A makes a comment to person B (interactive domain) that comment is a perturbation of B's closed nervous system (physiological domain). B's nervous system will be in a certain state which an observer would see as a particular emotion. (In this respect, Maturana and Tomm (1986) commented that there are well known mechanisms in the nervous system so that when you change emotional domains it's like changing brains. They compared the physiological changes in the brain as being like switching a network of railway tracks so the whole operation of the system changes.) The emotional posture of each person (physiological domain) specifies the domain of operational coherences in which people can operate in languaging. So, B's response (languaging) will then act as a perturbation for A and so on so that an observer will see emotioning (a consensual coordination of emotions). Thus, their discussion of the braiding between emotioning and languaging adds to the understanding of how stable patterns of behavior develop in relationships.

To conclude, Maturana warned that it is important to keep the physiological and social domains separate in order to comprehend languaging and emotioning. He recommended that:

In order to understand the braiding of emotioning and languaging we have to keep these two domains separate and

realize that there are certain phenomena taking place in the social domain and certain taking place in the physiological domain and you are not reducing one to the other but you are showing the generative relationship between the two (Maturana & Tomm, 1986).

Languaging and Emotioning: Theory Concerning the Family

Recently, Mendez, Coddou, and Maturana have discussed the entity, family, and what constitutes its organization. They describe how the family is brought forth as follows:

A family exist [sic] only as it is realized in the domain of existence of families, and that, as we have said already, is an emotional domain, the domain of the passion (willingness, desire) for living together that we human beings (and many animals) have. Therefore, a family, whatever its characteristics as a particular kind of family, will be conserved only as long as this passion is conserved in its members. At the same time, it is this passion what allows a group of persons to constitute a new family of a different kind when the family that they originally integrated disintegrates. If this passion is absent or is lost, there is no possibility for a group of people to constitute a family (1986, pp. 34-35).

This passion for living together occurs through the languaging within a family. Therefore, the organization of the family is its "network of several kinds of criss-crossing conversations" (Mendez, Coddou, & Maturana, 1986, p. 35). Conversations can be considered to be patterns of languaging. By describing the family entity and its organization in this way, Mendez, Coddou, and Maturana have shown the relationship between emotions and languaging in the family.

One further aspect of their discussion is of relevance

to the study, that of the typology of conversations which they have begun to develop. Maturana and Tomm (1986) viewed the typology as a more encompassing description of languaging and emotioning. To date, the three types of conversations which have been distinguished are conversations for coordination of action which take place when the members of the family are in objectivity in parenthesis, and conversations of mutual characteristics, accusations and recriminations when the family members do not operate in objectivity in parenthesis. Mendez, Coddou, and Maturana (1986) indicated that the therapist must listen to the network of conversations which define the family and attend to the following:

If what is brought forth is a network of conversations for mutual characterizations, accusations and recriminations; that are deemed objective, what is brought forth is a family defined as a network of conversations that entail impossible demands that give rise to emotions that contradict the mutual acceptance that is the base of family coexistence through the passion for living together (p. 24).

Since the study was of couples who were not undergoing therapy, the conversations for coordination of actions will be described further. In this type of conversation, the languaging is about specific actions, for example, a question about whether or not supper will be prepared by a certain time is just that. It is not intended or seen as an accusation that supper will not be ready on time etc. Individuals who operate in objectivity in parenthesis don't have

access to the truth and, therefore, don't claim to know what another person is like or will do. Thus, "therapeutic success in the domain of human relations consists in helping the consulting person or persons to operate de facto or through awareness with objectivity in parenthesis in their domain of coexistence" (Mendéz, Coddou, & Maturana, 1986, p. 43).

The comprehensive discussion of Maturana's theory as it relates to the study concepts of objectivity in parenthesis and languaging is complete. As can be seen, these two concepts are embedded in a complex theory which evolves from understanding the nature of our biology. The specific discussion of the study will begin with a presentation of methodology in the next chapter.

METHOD

Overall Methodological Approach

The overall research methodology used can best be classified as an hermeneutical (interpretive) one. Palmer (1969) described the hermeneutical approach as follows:

(One) is not so much a knower as an experienter; the encounter is not a conceptual grasping of something but an event in which a world opens itself up to (one). Insofar as each interpreter stands in a new horizon the event that comes to language in the hermeneutical experience is something new that emerges, something that did not exist before. In this event, grounded in linguisticity and made possible by the dialectical encounter with the meaning of the transmitted text, the hermeneutical experience finds its fulfillment (p. 209).

In proposing the present study, the researcher made the following points as to why the study seemed to suit a hermeneutical methodology. Of major significance was that the researcher intended to function in objectivity in parenthesis which meant that the research questions were worded so as to reflect an interest in experiencing with the couples rather than in knowing what the couples should or would talk about in the interview setting. Also, the researcher intended to be open to the experience of each person during the interview. She recognized that the husband and wife would each have a legitimate reality concerning their situation and that also they would bring forth a reality together through their languaging. The study also seemed to suit the hermeneutical methodology because the researcher recognized that as she and each couple underwent a co-ontogeny during the interview, something new would emerge.

they would bring forth a new reality particular to them at that particular moment in time. Finally, it was recognized that the analysis and reporting of the data would be an interpretation and, consistent with the objectivity in parenthesis intent, that product would be because of the researcher's dialogue with the data. As such, it would necessarily be the result of who she is (her current structure) and would be the only analysis and interpretation possible with her current structure. Also, consistent with the objectivity in parenthesis intent, it was recognized that since the analysis and interpretation would be brought forth by the observer, they would be her responsibility. To conclude, the selection of the concepts of objectivity in parenthesis and languaging as the theoretical focus for the study necessitated the search for a methodology which would focus on explanation rather than on prediction and control; the hermeneutical approach seemed highly suitable for that purpose.

The Interview Criteria

Several criteria were established for the selection of families for this study. Couples were to be married, currently living together, and have a healthy first born infant between the ages of three to twelve months. This age range for the infant was chosen because it was felt that

each couple would have had adequate opportunity by this time to re-examine their employment decision in light of the now very real addition to their family. Finally, the wife must have worked at least twenty hours per week some time during the pregnancy or immediately before it. It was believed that establishing this criterion would help ensure that each couple selected would have had the best chance of experiencing a distinct change between the woman's previous experience of working outside the home and the childcare responsibilities.

All study couples met the criteria of being married, living together, and having a healthy firstborn infant between the ages of three to twelve months. Two of the women (Melanie and Veronica) worked at least 20 hours per week during their pregnancy. One woman (Anna) had worked before she married and moved to Calgary three months prior to becoming pregnant. She looked for work before and after ~~she was married~~. She discontinued her search after the first few weeks of her pregnancy because she felt ill due to the pregnancy. The remaining woman, Jill, left a full time job and worked part time for a period before and during her pregnancy but did not consistently meet the 20 hour per week study criterion. These four women and their husbands were included in the study because it was concluded that the criterion of at least 20 hours per week of employment was an

arbitrary distinction which did not affect the observation of languaging and objectivity in parenthesis in the couples and in the observer.

The Couples Interviewed

The study couples were obtained by approaching health professionals and asking them to inform appropriate families about the study. A brief information sheet concerning the study was provided. (The information sheet is included in Appendix I). Health professionals were used as the source for obtaining couples since, when the study proposal was in its preliminary stages, the researcher had used a more informal method of asking acquaintances if they knew of any couples who might be interested in being interviewed concerning their decision for the wife to remain at home after the birth of their first child. In all three cases the acquaintances who knew of suitable couples reported a hesitancy on the part of the couples to find out more about the proposed research study. Thus, it was decided that health professionals known to the researcher would be approached and asked to inform couples about the study and to ascertain their willingness to participate. Two couples were obtained from general practitioners and two from a Lemaze instructor. It seemed that the couples had established a trusting relationship with their health profes-

sional. In that context, when the study information was presented to them by that health professional, they were willing to be contacted by the researcher in order to obtain more information concerning the project.

A pilot interview was conducted in order to give the researcher experience with the unstructured interview approach. The pilot interview was included in the study results since it seemed suitable. Three other couples were interviewed. (The researcher had proposed that since each interview would be quite extensive, data from four couples likely would be sufficient to discuss the research questions adequately and this was distinguished to be the case.) When the interviews were being arranged over the phone, the husband or wife was told that the purpose of the interview was to help the researcher obtain an understanding of their experience as a couple of deciding to have the wife remain at home after the birth of their first baby. Each couple was interviewed in their home with their baby present and a time convenient to them. Before beginning the interview, the study was explained again and the couples signed a consent form for the interview to be audiotaped. (The consent form is included in the Appendix II). Each couple was told that since they may have discussed and/or reconsidered the decision before the pregnancy, during the pregnancy, and after the pregnancy, these three time periods would be used

by the researcher to guide the couple in reflecting on their experience. The interviews ranged from one and one half to two hours in duration.

At the beginning of each interview, the couples were asked to suggest names for themselves to be used in describing their interview. Two of the couples were asked for the suggested names at the end of the interview. One couple chose Billy (for Billy the Kid) and Veronica while the other couple suggested Jack and Jill. The other two couples were telephoned the day following the interview to request their names. One wife suggested Melanie and Joe; the other wife said she would leave it up to the researcher. The researcher chose to call that couple Anna and Andrew after considerable contemplation of names she felt would reflect the couple as they presented themselves to her. Andrew was chosen to reflect the stalwart spirit which she saw in the husband and Anna to reflect the gentle, supportive person which Anna seemed to be.

Data Analysis

Several steps were taken in order to conduct a systematic analysis of the interviews. Immediately after each interview, the researcher documented observations which might have relevance for the research questions, e.g., context of the

interview. Next, a verbal transcript of each interview was prepared and its accuracy was checked by a careful review of each audiotape. Each transcript was then reviewed to identify each interactional sequence. The languaging in each sequence was noted, including the languaging between the husband and wife and the languaging between the couple and the researcher. Patterns in languaging between the husband and wives were identified, as were patterns in the languaging of the researcher with each couple. Particular attention was paid to determining whether each participant (researcher, husband, and wife) had a characteristic stance towards objectivity which could be identified in his or her languaging. Finally, study wide patterns in terms of objectivity in parenthesis and languaging were ascertained.

This discussion concerning data analysis concludes the method chapter. The study results, as they relate to languaging and objectivity in parenthesis, will be presented in the next chapter.

THE STUDY RESULTS

Framework for Presenting the Study Results

The focus of the interview analysis is on languaging and objectivity in parenthesis. However, the overall theme of the interview was the researcher's distinction that each couple had made a "decision" for the wife to remain at home after the birth of their first child. Therefore, the discussion of the results will begin by a presentation of each couples' decision as they describe it. This is done as a concrete way to introduce the couples and because their description of the decision tells about how they interact together. Also, the context for each decision is described briefly to aid in obtaining a picture of the couples.

Rather than presenting each interview in full, transcript excerpts are presented throughout. This is done for several reasons. First, the researcher's task was to search for characteristic behaviors from the interview material and to present those in a clear and concise way. Secondly, by presenting selected transcript as it appears relevant, the researcher can illustrate the discussion through the use of examples. Thirdly, the reader has the opportunity to build a comprehensive picture of the interviews as the presentation of the results progresses. Finally, because transcript material is used to illustrate discussion points, the reader is able to decide whether or not the same conclusions would be made based on the interview content and the discussion.

presented. Page numbers for the transcript excerpts are included simply to illustrate approximately when in the interview the particular commentary occurred (the interview transcripts ranged from 19 to 25 pages in length.) The interviews are presented in the order in which they were completed.

The Decision: Billy and Veronica

Billy and Veronica were married for three years without her becoming pregnant and then consulted a physician to check if Veronica was ovulating. Much to their excitement, Veronica became pregnant after the fourth year of their marriage. They describe their decision as follows:

(Page 2)

Billy: So the decision for Veronica to stay home or not—I wasn't working at the time. I work in a contracting field where if you contract and you bid the jobs right, you get work, but we had not been working for about, what, heck a year, anyway, steadily. I had jobs in between—doing the odd little bit here and there but nothing steady. Veronica was the breadwinner at the time because she was working steadily with the X Company. So she said, well we just talked it over. As a matter of fact as soon as she found out that she was pregnant I said 'Veronica, what do you want to do?' Like when we got out of the doctor's office. She said, 'well I'd like to stay home if I could'. So, I said 'okay, so let's just set a date when you'd like to finish work'.

Veronica: Yes, that's what we did and we kind of held to it. We decided I should quit the end of June. The baby was due the end of July so that gave me a month to

fiddle around here and get things organized. People told me it would be the last holiday I'd have for 18 years, so to take it easy. So I took the month just to be 'slack' and relaxed and two weeks before I quit work they got a contract for some work and Billy's been working steadily since.

Lee: Wow! That worked out well, didn't it.

Veronica: So we haven't had to question our decision over it.

Lee: Not from a financial?

Veronica: Not from a financial point of view and we're used to living on one income because, like Billy said, when I was working, he was out of work and before that I was in school and he was working. So we've only ever had one income.

Billy: It's not like we're missing anything.

Veronica: Probably we don't know what we're missing!

Billy: (Lots of laughter from Billy). Yes right! That's it, so that's kind of it in a nutshell.

The Decision: Anna and Andrew

Anna and Andrew were friends for a period of several years. They felt that they knew each other so well that they only dated formally for a few weeks before they became engaged. Andrew moved to take a job in Calgary after their engagement. They were married the following summer, at which time Anna moved to Calgary. Anna became pregnant three months later. In response to the question of did they talk about having children much before Anna became pregnant they reply:

(Pages 1 & 2)

Anna: Oh yes (sounds enthusiastic). We both love kids and we both wanted kids. I'll let you talk. I'm talking too much (To Andrew).

Andrew: Anna had asked me if I would ever make her work after we had children.

Lee: Oh!

Andrew: This was a shock to me but I guess some men make their wives work.

Anna: Well that was the assumption I had anyway. I didn't know. I just felt there were some men who would rather have their wives working than staying home raising children.

Andrew: That's something very significant that I remember about just before we were married, while we were engaged, and actually this had happened to one of her sisters.

Lee: I see, so you had some personal experience with that Anna, in terms of a husband being very forceful or ..

(Anna then explains that the brother-in-law was not forceful as such, but rather it was his desire to have his wife work based on his point of view that "you have to work for everything you get and you won't get it if you stay home".)

Lee: So you were surprised at the make part, Andrew, is that right? Will you make me work if we have a baby.

Andrew: Yes, I was surprised at that because I thought and I still think with the girls I know at work, and stuff like that, that the majority of girls would like to work up until they have a baby and then most of them would like to stay home if they can. Now, sometimes financial considerations don't allow it, but if they allow it. (Andrew then discusses this as his experience in growing up in a small town and with most of his relatives.)

Lee: So you were surprised, what did you say?

Andrew: I just chuckled and I don't know exactly what I said. But the answer is the same as what I'm saying here. Unfortunately finances seem to come into it but as long as there's a minimum amount that comes in on one

salary, then I would prefer and she would prefer that she stays at home until the youngest--whoever that would be--is a certain age and really that's a couple of corners around, a couple of miles down the road. We're not there yet.

(Anna then volunteers what her experience has been with her friends and co-workers. In response to the question of whether they talked with each other about such experiences, Andrew replies as follows.)

(Page 3).

Andrew: Not really that much in depth, Lee. Once we found out we both shared the same, there really isn't that much more to talk about. It's more what you will do with Anna at home; what she will be doing at home; but once the issue is established, and that was very simple in our case, there's not that much more to discuss, only the particular issue.

Lee: So you had the, 'big talk' about what each other expects when you have a child and that seemed to be, that was that.

Andrew: I only remember the one question that I had stated before. She asked me, would I make her work, and I just remember being kind of surprised and chuckling and assuring her that no, I wouldn't make her work as long as we didn't have to have her working and so as I remember it, that was about the end of it.

Lee: So it wasn't a tough, a tough

Anna: No, because I think we knew each other well enough.

The Decision: Jack and Jill

Jack and Jill had known each other for about three years. Early in their relationship Jack's mother, a chronic alcoholic, was diagnosed as having terminal cancer. His siblings had been unwilling to be involved with their mother for several years so Jack had cared for her by taking her shop-

ping, providing most of her entertainment, etc. Jill had had a disruptive home life and had left home some ten years earlier at the age of 15. The couple were living together when Jill became pregnant. They decided to marry. Their baby was born several months after Jack's mother died. The names "Jack and Jill" were suggested by Jack. Jill agreed to them because she felt they had been "up the hill" together during their relationship. Their decision can be summarized as follows:

(Page 1)

Lee: And before you were pregnant did you talk about, "gee we'd like to have kids If we had kids we'd do whatever"

Jill: Well I don't think that—I'm not a great planner, you know. Certainly I thought about whether or not we'd ever get married, if we'd have children, and basically what our life would be like, but it's not to say that—I think that Jack and I communicate quite well but a lot of things go unsaid. What do you think about it?

Jack: Yes, that's about the size of it. We certainly—we talked about getting married and I think we always assumed children would follow marriage, but it sort of worked the other way around in this case, but I don't think we ever—I can't remember having a conversation about actually having children. I think its something we both assumed would happen.

Lee: So, Jill, you assumed you would?

Jill: Yes, I think so.

Jack: It wasn't actually a conscious sort of thing. Then Jill became pregnant and we sort of took it from there.

Jill: Yes, I guess so.

Jack: I'm sure that among people that are already married,

pregnancy becomes a more planned thing, but if it happens to occur in the sequence that it did, then that makes it a lot different.

Lee: Yes.

Jack: Right from the start.

Jill: Yes, I guess it would be a little difficult, you know, when you're not married. Like I said, we had that decision to make but I think when I—well, when I found out that I was pregnant, it wasn't a worry.

(Jill then discussed how she felt secure that Jack would not leave her once he found that she was pregnant and also the extra involvement and responsibility that getting married entailed for her. They both discussed the overwhelming influence Jack's mom had on their relationship and how difficult it was for Jack to do any planning while his mother was dying.)

(Page 6)

Lee: So from the time that your mother died until the baby was born you did a lot of sorting and sifting.

Jack: And then with the impending event of the baby's birth, there was a lot to be thought about. You know, what type of father you'd be and whether or not I'd be able to provide for the baby although I was left a small inheritance and that took the edge off that. That is why we find ourselves in this house today and so that certainly helped out. That helped. That made the decision about buying the house and that sort of thing easier, but after that I didn't ever really think consciously about Jill going back to work. Certainly not right away and maybe not ever because I know what it is like to only have one parent and she had to raise three children by herself, and what it's like to not have someone around. And she was a teacher, so there's a lot of extra work involved and, in order to bring in extra money she tutored people and one thing and another. She always taught at summer school and marked papers during the summer, so she wasn't around very much. I know what it's like to not have your parents around, if income has to be got. I can't say I arrived at any conscious decision about this, but I just thought that it would be better for the baby to have Jill around, or certainly have one of us around. And Jill's trade wasn't all that wonderful, and I had a

steady job, so it just seemed like I would be the one that would provide. Actually, had I been out of work, it could just as easily gone the other way. I could have been at home with the baby and Jill could have been the one that was bringing home the bacon, at work.

Lee: And you would have felt comfortable with that, Jill?

Jill: Oh yes. It was one or the other. But that wouldn't have bothered me at all, to have Jack at home and myself out to work. Mind you, it's much easier said than done. It's not something that ever happened, so I don't know how I would have felt if that's the way things were to be because well, the bonding with the baby and what not, you know. It makes you wonder if a father could do the same things that a mother could do. Could he settle the baby? Would the baby be secure, etc.? Certainly, it was never really a consideration. Something I didn't have to worry about because Jack had a full time job, but that definitely would have been a possibility. You need an income and that's all there is to it.

Jack: Yes.

Jill: And Jack and I work quite closely together. If there is a problem quite often its resolved one way or another.

(Jack and Jill then discuss the importance that being home with the baby during the formative years has for them.)

(Page 8)

Jill: I think basically, Jack and I, we've come from marred backgrounds.

Jack: You see, we didn't have to do a whole lot of talking about this sort of thing. It was always—when you know what the other side is like, and you've lived with it all your life, then it doesn't require a great deal of decision making and talking and stuff. Things go more without saying.

Jill: Well, that's how it was for us. I don't know how other people resolve these problems. Oh I can see it more in situations, especially, if two people were bringing in big hefty incomes or maybe in the other case that the male partner was not bringing in as large an income

and if his wife was not going back to work, then that could really seriously affect them. We had gotten along on one income for a while.

Lee: So you're saying in a way that some people make the decision from a practical point of view in terms of who can bring in the most money or that sort of thing, but for you, Jack, it sounds like your part of the decision was more from an emotional point of view, like, 'I didn't have this as a kid and I want something different for mine'.

Jack: Yes, that was part of the consideration and we'd also set our minds on the idea that we'll just make do and there will be some little things that you have to do without. But overall it will be a lot better.

Lee: So, during the first half of the pregnancy you were thinking about this kind of thing and you got some information or input from the Morningside program

Jack: And newspaper articles and magazine articles, that sort of thing.

Lee: And eventually some time in the middle, you said, 'I don't want you to work'.

Jack: We'd had no real sitdown discussions, but I'd mentioned that—I remember we were both busy in the bathroom when we were going out or something and I think it popped into Jill's head to say, 'do you think I should go back to work', and I said, 'no, I don't want you to go back to work', and that was pretty well it. There were a few more times that same sort of scenario was played out but it wasn't sit down and have an in-depth discussion.

Lee: It was sort of a passing conversation?

Jack: We were both of the same mind so it's a lot easier to arrive at a decision.

Lee: Do you remember what you said?

Jill: In regard to

Jack: This is just something that sticks in my mind. I can remember being in the bathroom one day and having you ask whether or not I thought you should go back to work and I said that I definitely didn't think that you

should go back to work.

Jill: What did I say?

Jack: I don't really think—I think we were both busy and sort of, well, that was fine and we just took it from there. There were a few other times that it was mentioned and I never changed my mind about it, so—and that was the way that things were.

Lee: Do you remember saying anything or thinking anything about . . . ? (To Jill)

Jill: Well, no, not particularly. Certain decisions are made by Jack and certain decisions are made by myself and it's not to say that it's what Jack says is what is done in the household.

Jack: Not by any manner or means. I'm not very dictatorial.

Jill: But I was pregnant and I was finding sometimes that it was tough to cope with being pregnant. And I wanted everything to turn out properly so, as Jack mentioned, certainly that's the way it was. I never felt like it was the time to think about it when I was pregnant. Anyways I probably thought about it more before I became pregnant. In terms of, 'where's my life going to go'.

The Decision: Joe and Melanie

Melanie and Joe were married after knowing each other approximately two years. They conceived their first child almost immediately. At the time of the interview that child was twelve months old and Melanie was expecting a second child within approximately six weeks. They describe their decision as follows:

(Page 1)

Melanie: We wanted children. Well, we weren't even married and we wanted children. Being Catholic and all, we

decided to wait till after. So we got pregnant right away.

Joe: And we prayed for children. And one of the reasons why we got married was to have children. The underlying motivation of our marriage was to have children. We loved each other very much but marriage without children I think is a waste of human relationships. I feel quite strongly about it. Frankly, I don't see any purpose in marriage if it isn't for the purpose of procreation, and I think that marriage is a very important prerequisite for meaningful procreation. Not necessary, but a meaningful prerequisite.

Lee: And were you that clear about that, Melanie?

Melanie: Not as clear. Joe had it very clear in his head what he wanted. Because of my working environment for many years, which was very feministic, I had not thought of Well, I was also getting on in life and I never thought I was going to get married. But I never met the right man. When I met the right man, everything started to tumble. My ideas changed. And then with Joe, we were talking and we found we had a lot in common. All he had to do was talk about it and give me his point of view and I felt that I had the very same.

Joe: Well, you always wanted children. There was no doubt that she always

Melanie: But I would not have had them as a single mother, and because I was single, that was it, as far as I was going. But, when I met Joe everything really changed and I decided that I was going to have children. But it was going to be soon because I didn't want to be having them when I was fifty.

(Melanie and Joe then discuss their interest in children and their recognition that having two children so close together is a burden for Melanie.)

(Pages 3 - 4)

Lee: So it sounds like, if we look at the time period before you were pregnant and your relationship, you were very clear in terms of—first of all, loving each other and, secondly, deciding that 'if we're going to have children, then we should marry!' Did

you talk during that time about—'when you get pregnant, Melanie, then you won't work or you will work, or you could work, or you might work?' How did you come about deciding? Usually with couples, I've said pre-pregnancy and during pregnancy and then after pregnancy—because those are basically three time periods when a decision could change. Pre-pregnancy, it's sort of a discussion without experience you know. A woman says 'I want to stay home, husband, what do you think about that'—'or I wouldn't like to stay home', or what ever! Pre-pregnancy what was yours

Melanie: I was going back to work.

Lee: You were going back to work.

Melanie: I'd worked for twelve years and I didn't think I could ever stay home and adjust to motherhood. And during the pregnancy, at four months, I found a French nanny

Lee: So you

Melanie: I was going back to work, and the baby was born and there was no way

Lee: That's quite a change. So, before pregnancy, when you said, 'I'm going back to work, and that's how I feel', how did Joe respond? What kind of talks did you have? And how firm were you about that?

Joe: I didn't think Melanie was quite as adamant about it as her last discourse indicated.

Lee: About going back to work?

Joe: I always thought, I'd hoped that mom would stay at home. That's always been my—I have very traditional notions about parenting and lifestyles, and I had thought that Melanie would stay home. And would certainly stay home if we could afford it.

Melanie: Yes, that was the biggest

Joe: It's turned out that we could, in a sense, afford it, although it would be more convenient financially for her to work. We would have other kinds of worldly things. I don't think we'd be any happier and we might be more unhappy. It had occurred to

me clearly by the sixth month that Melanie would not likely work after the baby was born. I had come to that conclusion that she'd not work afterwards.

Lee: How did you get that? I mean you had a sense of that, in a way, it sounds like. Just a feeling. Or was it more verbal? Had you talked or had you come to that feeling?

Joe: It was a combination of just realizing that it was a bigger workload than I had anticipated, just her being pregnant, and I came to a very firm conviction that she couldn't handle both. If she found pregnancy and working very difficult, how was she going to find motherhood and working? It would be practically impossible.

Melanie: But, in my head, I was still going back to work per se. I never thought I would ever stay home. Though Joe's right—I had tremendous pain through my pregnancy and yes it was really hard doing both. Consciously, I hadn't made up my mind that I wasn't going back; subconsciously I had.

(Melanie and Joe then talk about the adjustment Melanie has undergone in staying home—e.g., the challenges which work offered etc.)

(Pages 5 - 6)

Lee: So that was quite a change for you. So you decided you'd have children. You got married and conceived right away. You talked about, and, in your mind said, 'yes, I'll go back to work', even to the point of looking for a nanny. But Joe kind of sensed that you were changing and

Melanie: Yes, Joe's very perceptive and Joe will let me do what I have to do, because I have to deal with it. So when I said 'Joe, I'm not going back to work', I don't think it was that big of a shock for him. Though he might have felt it coming along, he would never say to me, 'Melanie, you're not going back to work when baby's born'. Do you follow me? Because he was on his own for years and I was too and he wouldn't have come along and said all of a sudden, 'we're going to have kids and you're going to stay home'. But if it came from me, that was a different ballgame.

Lee: So when did you say that, in fact?

After the baby was born.

Lee: Pretty quickly after?

Melanie: Yes, it didn't take long.

Joe: Although, I knew. There was no 'heavy' when it happened.

Lee: You were both communicating with each other about that, but not talking, not so many words.

Joe: It wasn't a definitive thing. A lot of things in our relationship flow without an overly conscious decision of sitting down and adding up the pros and cons. We never sat at the table and made a list of —if we do this, then, this, this, this, and the con of that is this, this, this. We've never gone through that process as a couple although I've done that as an individual. But most of our decisions are things that grow over a period of time. Like moving to Alberta was not something we sat down and decided all of a sudden. I went and told my boss in Ottawa that I was leaving to go back to Alberta, and moving day came and Melanie's goods were packed with my goods but the decision to pack her goods was not actually made that day. It was made the day we ordered the mover. It was not really made that day either because at some point before that we had decided what date we would resign from our positions. Everything was obviously flowing. So that everything grew and each step was taken in a series so that it was never irrevocable, although the day we left for Alberta was irrevocable. In a sense, it was no more irrevocable than the day we sent the goods with the mover, which was four days before, or the day we phoned the mover, or the day we decided to resign. It was all a process. I hope I made sense.

Lee: Yes, you did.

Melanie: We really believe in timing and I think what Joe just said explains that, timing.

A summary has been presented for how each of the couples

describe themselves as coming to their decision that the wife would not work after the birth of the first child. The languaging of each couple will now be examined.

Characteristics of the Languaging of Each Couple

Each interview can be seen as a dialogue which involved distinctions of a distinction, or a recursive process. From the moment each study couple and the researcher began to interact, they were in languaging together, making additional distinctions about the initial distinction the researcher made that the couple had "decided" to remain at home after the birth of their first child. Thus, an observer watching the dialogue would see this interaction as a third recursion. With this overall distinction, the characteristics of the languaging of each couple will be presented.

Languaging: Billy and Veronica

One of the most striking features of the languaging observed between Billy and Veronica was their frequent use of humor. The pseudonym Billy, (for Billy the Kid) which Billy suggested and which Veronica appreciated (as evidenced by her enthusiastic laughter and her comment "great") is a good example of their playfulness. Veronica used the word "kibbitzing" to describe the way they "argued" about things

such as the number of children they would have and the other "issues" around which no serious conflict existed.

Backed by this playfulness, one observed a willingness on the part of both Billy and Veronica to be assertive in terms of having his or her point of view heard and to hear the point the other is presenting. For example, in the following excerpt Billy is clear that having the baby provided Veronica with the reason she needed to stay home:

(Page 5)

Veronica: We both had in our minds things that we wanted out of me being at home. So I think it was quite an easy decision to make, not only because of the baby. Maybe this is putting words in your mouth — it was almost like the baby justified the decision to stay home.

Billy: For you.

Veronica: For me.

Billy: Yes you always wanted

Veronica: I always thought I liked being at home but I couldn't very well say, 'Well I'm just going to stay home, Billy'. You know, even if I had nothing to do. But having the baby and starting our family gave me a reason to stay home.

In the following excerpt, Veronica expresses an opinion somewhat different than Billy's. Billy has been stating that it doesn't matter to them what people say concerning their decision for Veronica to stay home:

(Page 13)

Billy: If all our friends were career oriented women, like husbands and wives both into careers and they had daycares for the kids, or nannies, or what have you, it wouldn't have influenced us either way. We'd made the choice and it wasn't going to bother us what other people did.

Veronica: That's easy for you to say that.

Billy: Why, do you think otherwise?

Veronica: No, but your peers do have an influence on you, hon. I mean, if everyone we knew was working, it probably would have influenced us a little bit. It would have influenced me. I think that I would have stayed home, but I think I might have thought, 'gee, am I the only one that's doing this'. But, a lot of our friends are home with their children.

A third characteristic of the languaging between Billy and Veronica is the sense of relationship which they have. For example, in talking about Billy's initial hesitancy to go to Lemaze classes, Veronica suggests that maybe he is shy. The discussion continues as follows:

Billy: Yes, maybe a little shy. I always was kind of an introvert even when I was going to school. I never really was an outgoing kind of guy.

Veronica: That's why he married me.

Billy: Yes, me and Veronica are exact opposites.

Lee: ~~Do you both see you as opposites—Veronica?~~

Veronica: As far as that goes, once we're out, Billy's a very friendly, outgoing fellow, but if it's something that he's not sure he's going to like, he'd maybe rather pass, or have me go and I can tell him about it. But then once we get there, he usually has a good time. I'm more likely to say, hey, you've never done this before, let's go try, or I'd like to try this, let's do it. Whereas wouldn't you agree?

- Billy: Yes
- Lee: So you kind of initiate things. But Billy, once you get in there
- Billy: Once I get the ball rolling it's like
- Veronica: He's much more committed.
- Billy: Sometimes its hard to turn me off.
- Lee: I see, yes.
- Veronica: I tend to be a good starter and not very good at finishing and he is very set on following things through once he gets started. They balance.

One further example will be given to illustrate Billy and Veronica's sense of relationship since it is a key characteristic of how they language together. In this example, they have been discussing the point that although the decision for Veronica to stay at home was made with ease, they are still clarifying expectations for what Veronica's role should be while she is at home.

(Page 7)

- Billy: It's come to a point now where I'm not as fussy as I was and Veronica's moved. You see Veronica and me, we're kind of moving towards the middle ground where I'm not sticking over here being really strict about being neat and tidy and Veronica's moved in a little bit and does do a little bit of cleaning now and again and looks after the house to a certain degree.

In summary, the verbal languaging between Billy and Veronica seems to be characterized by assertiveness, use of humor, and a sense of relationship.

Languaging: Anna and Andrew

One characteristic of the languaging between Anna and Andrew is the extent to which they do language together through words (talk). Anna summarizes their situation as follows:

(Page 3)

Anna: Yes, we always talked about everything. Like Andrew is a deep thinker. He would think and think and I always have to say, 'What are you thinking?' And then he'd share and then we'd get into a conversation about that. Or sometimes it would be something very casual and we'd end up talking about it for two hours. That's the way we've always been with our friendship and now in our marriage.

Secondly, a strong sense of commitment characterizes how they enter into interactions with each other and with others. Thirdly, this sense of commitment seems to facilitate an exceptional ability to coordinate their actions by planning. The following discussion illustrates that they are able to do what could be distinguished as "realistic" planning:

(Page 7)

Lee: So do you talk about that a lot? 'How can we live within our means because we've made the choice for Anna not to work?' Is that something you ...

Andrew: I don't

Anna: Well, we set ourselves a budget, in fact, and we say 'here's the money and this is the way we're going to spend it. We can still have savings and still have a house and the necessities, but the things we see so necessary are so small that'

Andrew: Yes, there's some things, like the house is rather modest. Although there's more modest houses I'm aware of that And there are certain—you just go by your mortgage, your utilities, and your food. But even clothes, if we don't put those as necessary, and call those extras, I mean sooner or later you're going to need them. But, if you attack it with that sort of philosophy—that what you don't need to live on this month is not necessary, then you're really running on a tight budget and if you have savings running with that tight budget then you can say, pull out of that savings to buy your clothes, to buy your, oh, I don't know.

Anna: A new pair of shoes.

Andrew: Yes, a new pair of shoes perhaps. Stuff like that which sooner or later is necessary, but if you had to you could live without for another month or two, or a year. But, there are certain things which just have to be dealt with now like the bills.

The detailed nature of their planning is again illustrated in the following discussion: (Andrew had recently indicated that he had just lost his job in the oil industry about a week earlier.)

(Pages 12 and 13)

Lee: So with your current reality, I guess you just need to see how things go in terms of if you can find a job fairly quickly.

Andrew: Yes, well, we could change, but we don't want to get rid of the house. That's our own business and all that but if it comes down to it, it could go. Like I say, we've decided she'll go part-time, but the house would go before she takes full-time. And then if I can't find, say we get in a real bad situation, we're in subsidized rent or something like that, and I still can't find—then she can take a full-time job and I will stay home. I will be 'Mr. Mom' then, (laughs) but that one we haven't really thought out. We just discussed that one kind of in passing. That one is kind of the most extreme position to go to.

It shouldn't be that bad—I know jobs are tough to find right now, but even if I have to take two or perhaps three part-time jobs, I still think there's a way to live and have Anna at home most of the time, and to have at least one of us at home all the time.

Lee: Well, it sounds like even the extreme option of 'Mr. Mom' has one of you at home all the time.

Andrew: And in this case, where our baby is no longer a newborn, it's a little more plausible. Like if she were two months old, it would be a little more scary, but it doesn't bother me because she's past, she's still breastfeeding but I mean if we had to, we could just say 'OK, no more, you're weaned, whether you like it or not'. But right now that's an extreme and we're not really looking at that. We've just discussed it as kind of a

Anna: In passing, you want to know what's going to happen. You've got to look ahead. You can't just bang and it happens. You have to look ahead and I just hope that never happens.

Andrew: Like when you're going down a hill in a car and the passenger says, 'well, what happens if the brakes fail', and you say, 'well they're not going to fail' and they say, 'well what happens if' You still have to plan.

In summary, Anna and Andrew's distinction of the importance of communicating with each other, and their sense of commitment to each other and to their values characterize their interactions. Additionally, they describe their verbal and non verbal languaging in the particular activity distinguished as planning. A comment by Andrew might be used as a metaphor to provide some sense of how they relate together. He said "situations change and you adjust to a new situation and then you live by your decision" (page 17).

Languaging: Jack and Jill

When Jill said "I think Jack and I communicate quite well, but a lot of things go unsaid," she gave a clear summary of how they interact. In other words, the couple coordinates their actions with an economy of words exchanged between them. For example, the previous presentation of how they evolved their decision for Jill to stay home showed that they did so without any "sitdown discussions". Another example from later in the interview provides perhaps an even clearer example of what seems to be their style. The following discussion arises in the context of the couple's talking about the hypothetical situation of how they would interact if Jill went back to work and Jack stayed home: (Interestingly, the example also illustrates the researcher's struggle to understand a communication style different than her own, but that consideration belongs to a later commentary.)

(Page 22)

Jack: That's right but it would certainly be an interesting switch that's for sure. I don't really know whether I'd be—it'd take quite a bit of getting used to, doing all the housework and that sort of thing and keeping things organized along that line. Taking care of the baby. Well, actually its quite demanding and the trouble is with the working and everything else you have to do during the day—I definitely think its a full-time job for Jill.

Jill: It's funny, we had a little situation this morning. Usually I get up with the baby. I have been lately and

then I do the dishes, his bottles, plus I watch him at the same time. The only reason I can do that is because I'm used to it. I know

Jack: And I'm not, so I have difficulty doing that.

Jill: You know I got up and none of this was done. Well I was pretty upset about it. I thought, oh, I can sleep in and everything because we had a really late dinner last evening and so all the pots and everything were still out. And then I stopped to think about it after I had said what I said. Jack isn't used to doing that. He's not used to functioning under those circumstances. It wasn't until after it happened that I thought about it and I realized that he doesn't have to do that very often, and there was a time when I

Lee: You actually said something or thought something?

Jill: No, I said something to Jack. Yes, it was a verbal discussion (laughs).

Jack: Yes, she wasn't too happy about that, but I always hope that, it's not really the saying that is the main thing. The main thing is that you eventually see someone else's point of view or think about it later and realize that not everyone has quite the same capabilities.

Lee: So you did that thinking and then you said something, did you? (To Jill)

Jill: No, usually I say something first and then I do the thinking

Jack: Over. She says first

Lee: You say something and then you think about it. Did you say something like, 'well I can understand Jack that you haven't done this much lately, or that you haven't juggled this kind of thing'

Jill: No, no. You see, this all goes unsaid—until it would happen again and Jack did the same thing. Well I wouldn't say anything and then he'd know that I'd thought about it.

Lee: You've said the "unsaid" business a few times and I see what you mean now. That's a specific example. So it's almost unfinished in the sense that well, you make a

change but you make a change without talking about it.

Jill: Yes.

Jack: Yes.

Lee: You know what I mean. You said your initial thing (to Jill) 'can't you handle this?' or whatever it was, then you thought about it and thought, 'oh well, of course not. That's not something I can expect'. But then there's a little gap there—in the sense that you didn't say anything.

Jack: Until the next time.

Lee: Well, the next time you just change your behavior though. You wouldn't say 'I feel like getting mad at you, but, based on what I thought about last time, I'm not going to'. It's just—so there's a little interesting gap in terms of not saying but changing your behavior.

Jill: That's enough for Jack and I. To know that something's gone on in between, that it's been thought through.

Jack: Yes, the main thing is that someone has thought something through and changed their behavior, changed their

way of thinking and its not necessary to apologize. It doesn't all come about in the saying—Actions speak louder than words.

In a sense then, according to how they see their languaging, Jack and Jill each do a considerable amount of languaging with themselves, (i.e., self reflection). When they do speak together they seem to do so with clarity and simplicity as evidenced, for example, by Jack's report that he simply told Jill that he thought he did not want her to go back to work. Also, each of them views himself or herself as being flexible. This flexibility helps makes their type

of languaging possible. The following example illustrates how Jill views herself in terms of her flexibility:

(Page 12)

Jill: so I became adaptable to the new situation, but certainly in the last few weeks I have a little more time to think about myself and eventually I will go back to work. But right now it's very difficult to say whether or not the time would be right now, because the baby is learning and experiencing new things and I kind of like to be around for that. But I'm a very pliable person and there's really no set route that I decide to take and then do it. I just kind of wait, wait for things to happen and if the day should come that I decide I want to go back to work, well then I will. But it's certainly nothing that I spend a whole lot of time thinking about.

Languaging: Joe and Melanie

Joe and Melanie's discussion of how Melanie came to the conclusion that she would not go back to work represents the most striking feature which characterizes their languaging — an ability to reflect on process. Two more examples will serve to illustrate this point. The first dialogue came immediately after Joe and Melanie had discussed how Melanie concluded that she was not going back to work. They comment as follows:

(Page 6)

Lee: As I said, somehow you seem to communicate with each other without the words, so that things fit into place.

Joe: Yes, like the engagement process—deciding that we were going to marry each other was one that

started out by walking by a Birk's store and going in and looking at engagement rings. 'What ones do you like?' It was a gradual process, so that when the day came to actually give the ring, it was really just a culmination of a decision that had been made in reality a long time before. Although you can't point your finger at it and say, 'there's where the turning point took place'.

Lee: So you didn't say one day 'Will you marry me?'

Joe: I formally popped the question but I knew what the answer was before.

Melanie: On our engagement day he did—'will you marry me?'

Lee: But you had looked at rings and you

Melanie: Yes.

Joe: The answer was known for a long time. There was no doubt about it as to what the answer might be.

Melanie: We felt a lot, we could just feel it. A sixth sense.

The third example to illustrate the couple's ability to reflect on process occurs at the end of the interview and is a kind of summary statement made by the husband. In the following excerpt, Melanie and Joe are discussing their analogy of marriage being like a garden which needs constant tending:

Joe: There's times when I think we've strayed but also probably the background is important in determining

Melanie: Why we're like this.

Joe: How we came to these types of conclusions. What we did. The constant thing that I find that may be a golden thread is that none of our decisions, as I indicated to you earlier, is a momentary thing.

something that we sit down and decide as of now. Everything evolves, and there's a consensus-building as the decision is being made. So that finally, it's anti-climatic when the actual realization comes. Like, when the last unemployment insurance cheque came the realization of that was quite anti-climatic, because the decision was made so long ago in so many different forms before that was done, that it would have been a radical conclusion or decision to go in the opposite direction.

Lee: It wouldn't have fit.

While it is Joe who verbalizes the sense of process, Melanie seems in agreement with his distinctions, as evidenced by her verbal comments and also by her behaviors such as head nodding. Another way to talk about Joe and Melanie's sense of process is to say they have a sense of their languaging. Without being aware of the term, languaging, what they are reflecting on is their consensual coordination of consensual coordination of actions. In addition, some evidence of the flow of their communication can be observed in the following excerpt in which they complete each other's sentences:

(Page 11)

Melanie: It's funny, I think it was two nights ago, we went for a walk and I said to him—how did I put that to you—about were you happy about my decision of staying home rather than going back to work. Now that we know what its like?

Joe: And we were looking at the baby and thinking

Melanie: How fast she changes and how

Joe: She may be a much more secure child in a sense. But

you never know. She may be completely the same if we had walked out the door

Melanie: Every morning.

Joe: A good business associate of mine, a woman, she

Melanie: Did we lose you there?

Lee: No.

Similarities in Language Among the Couples

The first similarity noted among the couples is what can be distinguished as a comfort in having either person speak with the interviewer. For example, because the interviews were done in the couple's homes with the baby present, at least twice in each interview the husband or wife would be attending to the baby's needs and it seemed as though the couple was comfortable with what the remaining partner would say.

Another similarity is something which the couples distinguish as they reflect on their experiences together. Each couple describes themselves as having done a considerable amount of talking early in their relationship. In the case of Anna and Andrew for example, the excerpt cited earlier indicated that long talks characterized their friendship and now their marriage.

Another similarity in the language of the couples is that they distinguish the decision as one made with relative

ease and describe factors in their individual histories which account for the apparent ease of the decision. For example, Veronica states that one of the reasons she chose the occupation she trained for is because it was one which would allow her to work at home if she chose to do that while her family was growing up. Or, Andrew's comment, as previously cited, about his experience of women as wanting to work until they have a baby also reflects this notion. An additional example is that Jill describes her and Jack as having come from "marred backgrounds". Jack makes a similar distinction himself and talks about how it would be natural for him to want to give their son what they didn't have in terms of a "loving" family. Finally, the following excerpt from the interviews with Melanie and Joe demonstrate Melanie's understanding of how her history "affected" the current decision:

(Page 20)

Melanie: Well, my mom never thought I was going to have kids. But also, I have two sisters and they would say to me 'You're never going to have kids and, if you do, you'll never stay at home.' So that's what I came from.' And so, when Joe says, 'I think she knew', as I said a while ago, consciously, no I hadn't made up my mind but I think subconsciously maybe. Because boy, as soon as the baby was born it didn't take me three hours to make up my mind. It was just there.

Joe: Because her mind wasn't made up in those three hours.

As expected, one additional similarity in the distinc-

tions made by each of the couples is in the reality they bring forth concerning the importance to them of their raising their own child. For example, three of the four couples refer specifically to the "formative years", indicating the importance for them of being around to influence their child's development during those first few years of life.

Another similarity among the couples is their willingness to talk about conflicts which they have and also their distinction of conflict as normal within a relationship. For example, Anna describes their early marriage as an adjustment and says "we still have struggles on and off and we still have to constantly talk and constantly work out those problems" (p. 5). Jack and Jill talk about the situation they had earlier in the day with Jack's not having done the housework while caring for their son. Joe and Melanie describe their previous evening during which Melanie was "letting off steam" and Joe handled the situation by remaining with her and letting her express herself. In this context, Melanie makes the comment that they are quite a normal couple. Billy and Veronica argue/discuss in their interview about what Veronica sees as an ongoing bone of contention between them, —Billy's expectations for how Veronica will keep house now that she is at home. In the end they comment as follows.

(Page 7)

Veronica: This is how we discuss—a lot of times. And sometimes we get angry.

Billy: Yes, we fly off the handle. We're only normal.

As will be shown, the separation of the research questions into those concerning languaging and those concerning objectivity in parenthesis is an arbitrary distinction made so that the two research concepts would each receive considerable attention. Therefore, the discussion of similarities or patterns among the couples in terms of their languaging will end with one major distinction. Each couple will be given a label in order to try to highlight what stands out the most about their languaging: Billy and Veronica—playful; Anna and Andrew—planful; Jack and Jill—action oriented; and Melanie and Joe—process oriented.

Verbal Languaging Between the Researcher and Each Couple

As indicated earlier, the context of the study was an interview in which the couple and the researcher reflected on the distinction made by the researcher (and accepted by the couple) that the couple had made a decision together for the woman to stay home after the birth of the first child. The researcher's intent was to elicit a full picture of how the couple described themselves as arriving at their current decision and to ask action oriented questions (e.g., "what

did you do" as opposed to "how did you feel") in order to have the couple reflect on their past behavior and also interact together in the interview setting.

To a considerable extent the couples looked to the interviewer to take the lead, particularly since the interviewer provided structure by saying that she wanted them to discuss their decision from the time periods of before, during, and after the pregnancy (if those time periods were relevant to them). Each couple seemed to have an understanding that this is what happens during an interview i.e., the interviewer takes the lead and provides the structure for the interview. (This observation will be followed up further in the discussion chapter.)

The presentation of the researcher's verbal languaging with the couples will deal with two major topics, a classification of the researcher's verbal behaviors and a discussion of the nature of the interactional sequences under the topics of (a) a classification of verbal behaviors used by the researcher, (b) smooth interactional sequences, (c) interactional sequences with hiccoughs, and (d) the evolution of new understandings.

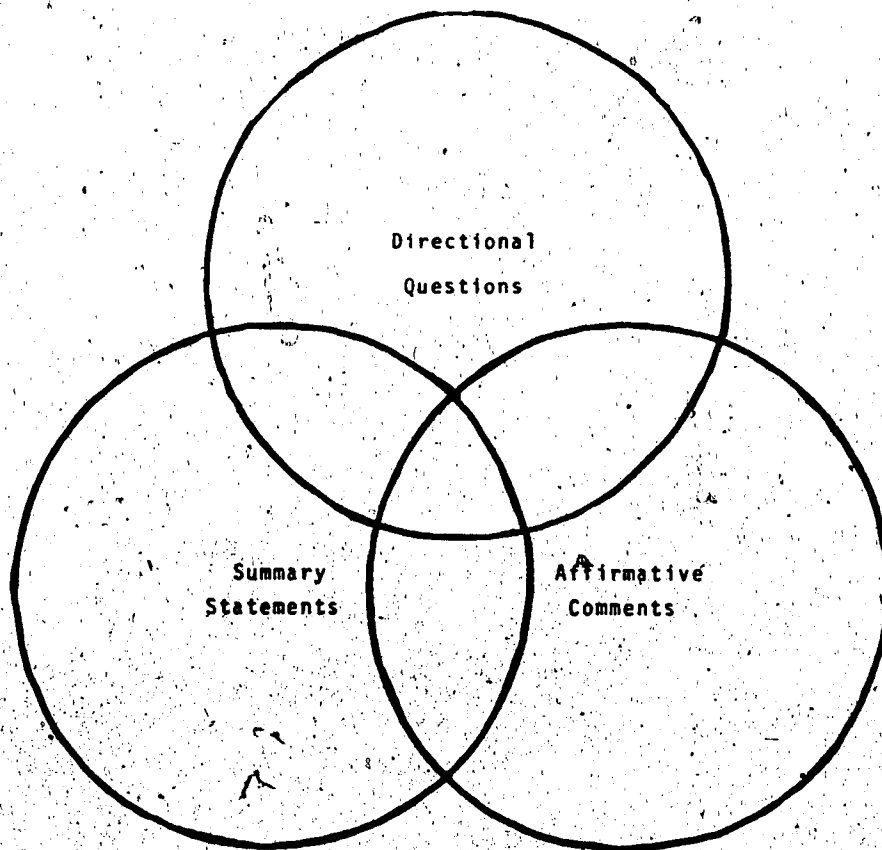
At this point, it becomes awkward to continue the discussion using the third person, particularly since one of the dimensions of functioning in objectivity with parenthesis is

accepting responsibility for the world one brings forth. Therefore, the first person will be used for sections that deal with the researcher directly.

A Classification of Verbal Behaviors Used by the Researcher

When I began to review the four interviews in the order in which they were completed, I noticed that the first interview (Billy and Veronica) differed from the other three in that Billy and Veronica talked together more than any of the other three couples. I decided to analyze each of my interactions with the couples to help answer the specific question of why the interviews seemed to differ. In doing the review, I was able to distinguish approximately an equal number of each of three major types of verbal behaviors which characterized my interactions. The three types were labelled directional questions, summary comments, and affirmative comments. Directional questions were questions which oriented the couples and I in a particular direction during the interview. For example, questions such as whether or not the couple talked about having children while they were dating, or if anyone, outside the home had influenced them in the decision about staying home. Summary statements were of a paraphrasing nature and had the intent of helping the couple to hear that I was understanding what they were saying. For example, early in the interview with Melanie

FIGURE 3. Classification of the Major Types of Interviewer Behaviors.



and Joe they were talking about how important having children was to them and I commented that "it sounds like it was a serious decision for both of you, yet one which was made with ease" (p. 2). The third type of verbal behaviors was distinguished as affirmative comments. Those comments were intended to get at the couple's "specialness" as I saw it and to show my respect for them. Some of these comments seemed to be exclamations such as "boy, that was quite a change". Or, for example, at the beginning of the interview with Anna and Andrew, Anna commented in what seemed to be an enthusiastic and playful way that she had told her roommate that she would not go out with Andrew because he was too tall. I simply said "too tall?" in a questioning and equally enthusiastic way.

The three major verbal behaviors just described should not be thought of as totally different in nature. Rather they can be conceptualized as overlapping, as shown in Figure 3. For example, the "purest" directional questions were perturbations which led the interview in a new direction. However, many summary comments seemed to overlap with directional questions i.e., they seemed to integrate my picture of what the couple was saying and also to orient us in a certain direction. Or, the overlap between summary and affirmative comments was most apparent when summary comments were accurate in terms of how the couple also saw themselves

and, at the same time, seemed to have the effect of affirming the couple to some extent.

Parenthetically, the question of why the couple in the first interview interacted more than the others cannot be answered, of course, because the behaviors of the couples were determined by their structures. However, if I examine my directional questions in that first interview, I notice that more of my questions seemed to be action-oriented e.g., "what did you do" and "how did you talk about that". Also, in the first interview while I ask questions which initially do not directly refer to the couple, I more often follow up those questions with an action oriented question which is directed specifically to the couple. For example, I asked Veronica and Billy if anyone outside the home influenced them in the direction of going back to work or staying home. Then Veronica commented about the reactions of some of the women she was working with and I ask if she came home and told Billy about these experiences. In summary, in the first interview (Billy and Veronica) the couple interacted more than in the other interviews which were more of an "interview" in the sense in which the term is traditionally used i.e., I led the interviews and the couples responded by expressing their opinions. I am able to look at my role only in the interviews and note that my perturbations seemed somewhat different between the first and the subsequent

interviews.)

Smooth Interactional Sequences

Many times during each interview the interaction between the couple and myself seemed to go well—like the back and forth nature of a tennis match—as we made particular distinctions. Two examples will be given to represent times in the interview when two or three of us seemed to be having such synchrony.

In the first, Anna is commenting that she was looking for work when she became pregnant:

(Page 5)

Anna: But then we moved from where we were and we bought this house and I like to do a lot of sewing and stuff like that and so I thought well, instead of finding a job I might as well stay home doing the things I would have to pay twice as much for if I was working. So I just stayed home and sewed and did stuff as much as I could. Like I stripped the old crib and did it over for her, stained it.

Lee: You found a lot of things to do to 'prepare the nest'?

Anna: It was exciting, those months. I'm glad that I was able to do what I did.

Lee: It really sounds like it helped you to get into the 'role' if you like.

Anna: It really made me feel excited and also just 'I'm going to be a mom'. Just the thought of it.

In the second example, from about two-thirds through the

interview with Billy and Veronica, we are talking about their situation of having many family and friends where the wife is staying at home with the children. Again, Billy and Veronica "kibbitz", to use Veronica's word, about Veronica's interests other than in keeping the home clean.

(Page 15)

Veronica: So we really have a lot of stay-at-homers around us.

Billy: That's what I mean when I say, 'Veronica's got to watch out for her friends'.

Veronica: There's a lot of them!

Billy: My sister-in-laws, my side of the family, plus she has all her friends from around the neighborhood here as well as her high school friends that she keeps in touch with. So, you see what I mean when I say she goes out and visits quite a bit. Because all the other girls are home as well.

Lee: So you could spend your whole day

Veronica: And then some

Lee: With your friends.

Veronica: But I don't.

Billy: No, no. She doesn't do it.

Veronica: We have some sense of responsibility.

Billy: Yes, right (laughing).

Lee: It's very nice, though, to be in that kind of a situation where you've got a family that you enjoy and where they're your age and in your situation.

Veronica: Lee, it is.

Interactional Sequences with Hiccoughs

In a recent workshop (Tomm & White, 1986), Michael White spoke of the post therapy course as sometimes involving hiccoughs. A hiccough is certainly an interruption in the smooth flow of our individual physiological functioning. In the same way, some of my interactional sequences with the couples can be characterized by hiccoughs. From the analysis of the interviews alone there is no way to reflect on when the couples would have felt the interview to be going less smoothly. From the perspective on my verbal behavior, (or my verbal perturbations) the times when the interviews appeared to go less well was when I functioned less in objectivity in parenthesis and when my use of words differed from those of the couple. As mentioned previously, the discussion concerning objectivity in parenthesis will occur in a later section.

In relation to differences in the use of words, the interview with Anna and Andrew can be distinguished as the clearest example. For example, as previously cited, early in the interview I ask Anna, "I see so you had some personal experience with that Anna, in terms of a husband being very forceful or" (page 1) That certainly was not the way I had intended to word the question! In the early interview my use of words with Andrew seemed too casual and did not match.

his precise way of speaking. For example, in a previously cited excerpt he described Anna's asking him if he would "make" her work and that he simply chuckled and said no. Later in the interview I refer to that as "the big talk" and his next response is that he only remembered saying the one thing. I intended "big talk", in the sense of an important talk rather than a long one; however, this was not understood by Andrew. Another time in the interview I mentioned the adjustment they had to make to living on one salary and he reminded me that Anna had not worked since they were married so they had no adjustment to make. I had intended to mean adjustment in the sense that the two of them each had a salary before they were married. I remember these interview times as being like a hiccup, a small bump in the smoothness of our efforts to come to understand each other. As Maturana says, languaging is not an abstract dance; it is body touching (Maturana & Tomm, 1986).

The Evolution of New Understandings

New understandings evolved many times during each interview. Gadamer spoke of this as the "something new which emerges" (Palmer, 1969). Three examples will be presented. In the first example, Jack and Jill and I have been discussing the previously cited situation regarding Jack's having cared for the baby and not cleaned house. I talk to them

about how they seem to have an "actions speak louder than words" style, so that rather than talking about problems in great detail they expect the other person will do some reflection and make a behavior change. The dialogue is as follows:

(Page 23)

Jill: Yes, you see it more than we would because you've probably talked to a few people, and, it's funny. I didn't really realize that we had a style. We're sitting here and talking about it and now I can see that we do have our own style and that we arrive at certain decisions in our own way and it's maybe not the way that everyone would arrive at them but

Lee: It works.

Jill: It works for us anyway. It does. And I think that I'm very sensitive to the way Jack feels, and, I know that he's only going to do so much changing in a certain period of time. You can't ask for anything more than that. So there's really no point in us beating certain topics to death because in our heart of hearts we know that change will occur. We don't know when it will occur but we know that we'll do some changing and like I say, it's very difficult for me to apologize and say, 'look, I made a mistake'. What's more important to me is that I make a change, that I learn to change that behavior.

As a result of our dialogue, Jack and Jill can view their interaction as having a style or pattern. For me, the particulars of their style represent a new understanding. In the next example, Andrew and I are talking while Anna is settling the baby:

(Page 11)

Lee: Yes, it seems from my perspective that a woman should be able to handle a child and the house, but sometimes it doesn't work out that way.

Andrew: Well she can, and she could do it by herself, but I think if she takes a few hours off, she can do a better job and — that's just what I've seen.

Lee: You've observed the difference between when you've given her that time to rest?

Andrew: Well that's kind of the honorable reason. The unhonorable reason I would do it as well is because she's easier to get along with too if she's had a few minutes sleep. Not that she's really that difficult, just she's not quite herself. I think you know what I mean. She gets tired. She's just not quite herself.

Lee: One of the adjustments I see is that you have to adjust to being a family, from being a couple to having a baby, and therefore being a family. But also somehow to retain being a couple. So you call it the "unhonorable", but the — 'what's in it for you', if she gets some sleep, then she's more pleasant for you.

Andrew: Yes.

Lee: So there's multi targets you have at the same time.

The final example of shared understandings involves my follow-up on a comment made by Veronica early in the interview about when they were having difficulty becoming pregnant. She commented, "Billy's from a big family and we had the whole family sending us articles on infertility and how to solve things and how to overcome problems (page 1). I followed up on that comment (thinking that personally I would have considerable difficulty with that situation.) I asked the following:

(Pages 3 and 4)

Lee: So you had the idea that yes, we want kids and we'll joke about the number, seven or eleven.

Billy: Exactly.

Veronica: Yes, thats right.

Lee: And as you tried to have kids and had trouble then your family was sort of trying.....

Veronica: To help us.

Billy: Help us out. Trying to show us the way.

Veronica: It wasn't a pressure thing like an 'if you don't have children how awful its going to be'. Or 'we're going to look down on you. You're going to be black listed.' It was just they knew we wanted to have kids and they were just trying to help.

As mentioned, in the actual interviews and in the analysis of the interview transcripts, times such as these stood out for me as particularly meaningful examples of the effectiveness of dialogue.

Stances Towards Objectivity: The Study Couples

In the presentation of the theoretical framework for the study, characteristics to look for in an individual who is operating in objectivity in parenthesis were presented (a) validation of assertions without referring to an objective reality, (b) appreciating the legitimacy of other people's realities, (c) not entering into negation of another based on some privileged access to an objective reality, and (d)

accepting responsibility for the reality which one brings forth. Each interview will be discussed in terms of the stances towards objectivity as reflected by each couple in their languaging.

Billy and Veronica

Veronica was the more verbal of the two in terms of this particular interview. She can be characterized as functioning in objectivity with parenthesis as her primary mode of operating. Particularly evident is that when she speaks, she speaks for herself. Also, when she reflects on how Billy might feel she does so in a tentative manner. For example, during the interview she prefaces a particular comment with "maybe this is putting words in your mouth" (p. 5).

Billy also functions in a way in which he assumes responsibility for his actions and recognizes the legitimacy of another's reality. For example, in commenting about how other people have reacted to their decision, Billy says that people can say what they want and he and Veronica don't hold any grudge because "that's just their opinion, that's the way they feel" (p. 13).

Billy and Veronica also demonstrate the importance they attach to attempting to understand each other's world and the worlds of people outside their relationship. This effort is

summarized in the following excerpt which occurs while they are discussing the adjustment they have made in their expectations for each other since their baby was born.

(Page 9)

Billy: What's that old saying?

Veronica: Walk a mile in my moccasins before you judge me, walk a mile in my moccasins.

A highlight of the interview with Billy and Veronica is observing how they interact together in terms of objectivity. For example, the following excerpt shows how Veronica initially demonstrates some negation of other people's reality and the interesting subsequent interaction:

(Page 16)

Lee: What do you think of 'if I could stay home I would' in terms of finances. You folks, at the time you weren't too financially stable and yet you said....

Veronica: No, I think for a lot of couples its a bunch of junk. Not everybody. I think for some people to put groceries on the table they both have to work. But, I know one couple — she's working but they just bought an 1800 square foot house. I mean, there's no reason that they had to buy that house at that time. If they really wanted to be home she could have.

Billy: You come down pretty hard.

Veronica: No, I'm saying that if I mean, its a matter of priorities. If she really wanted to be home and if her husband really wanted her to be home, they could get by on one salary. —

Billy: You look at what our parents got by on. I slept with three guys in one bed. My two brothers and

myself slept in the same bed when we were growing up. Its all a matter of your priorities. Nowadays, some people say they'd like to have their 2000 square foot house, their car, you know everything bought and paid for before they'd even start a family and that wasn't important to us. What was important to us was just being able to have a baby because at that time we were having a tough time conceiving one so we just said that if we have one, we'll get by, like we'll get by.

Lee: You seem to have quite a bit of confidence in each other to say 'well we'll do it somehow'.

Billy: Were not strapped like a lot of people are. We have some investments as well. I have my own backhoe.

Veronica: Maybe, -I'm being a little — I don't know whether I'd say I'm being a bigot but we've never really been put to the test, do you know what I mean? Like we say, hey, even if we were financially strapped, I'd stay home and we'd do it, but we've never really been tested as far as 'oh there's only \$100 left in our bank account, now what do we do?' So Billy's probably right, I'm coming down a little bit hard on other people.

In this example, Veronica initially makes a comment which seems critical; however, Billy's perturbation about coming down hard seems to trigger a more moderate response in her, a response more typical of the acceptance of other people they demonstrate in the remainder of the interview.

One final observation concerning Billy and Veronica is that they talk rather extensively about their faith and how it has affected their values and communication. The discussion occurs within the following context:

Lee: You'd go to great lengths to figure something out rather than to compromise your decision, you know what I mean — if you were out of work tomorrow you'd figure something out. You'd go back to your previous job or something.

Billy: Exactly. Something would arise that I know I'd be able to get into — some work somewhere. It wouldn't be like I'd have to be unemployed for the rest of my life. I know I could get into something again.

Veronica: I think a lot of that comes from our faith too. I think we've both kind of grown to the conclusion that God is really up there and He really is looking after us. And, He's not going to let us starve, you know, and so there's kind of been a relaxation about it that way too, that we often have said, 'gee, we're looked after.' Things just seem to click.

Billy: We were hesitant to maybe fill you in on that but now that Veronica's kind of broken the mold, we really have a firm faith.

In a sense, Billy and Veronica exhibit objectivity without parenthesis in terms of their distinction concerning religion. However, at the same time, they show some of the other characteristics of objectivity with parenthesis. For example, Billy's hesitancy about bringing up their religion seems to be in the interest of recognizing other people's realities as legitimate. One gets the sense that these people are speaking for themselves; their religion is right for them and they present it as such. In the interview setting they don't show any inclination to negate another's reality concerning contrasting beliefs.

Anna and Andrew

In reviewing the interview transcript to determine Anna and Andrew's typical stances towards objectivity, what is striking is that the couple are very clear about what they want. This point will be expanded upon since it seems central to understanding how they function. As with Billy and Veronica, Anna and Andrew have religious beliefs about which they are firm: For example, Andrew is discussing the importance, to them of raising their child themselves and states as follows:

(Page 12)

Andrew: It is written in the Holy Scriptures 'train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it' and so we believe in this as well. It is in early childhood that (a child's personality develops) but you can argue that its two or three or seven. I don't know, but it certainly is. And we're not opposed to a daycare, that they are anything bad but we would have to rate them second, third or fourth best, certainly not number one.

Anna makes a similar comment in stating that her point of view is that "motherhood is a real gift from God and I don't want anyone else to raise the children He has entrusted to me" (p. 1).

Besides attempting to follow their religious beliefs, Anna and Andrew seem to make comparisons to others, but as a way of helping to affirm their particular approach. For

example, Andrew states that they are very fortunate to be allowed to have a house while others must rent and also have the wife work. Also, he says that although their home is modest, it is much more than their parent's generation would expect. Or, in the following excerpt, Anna and Andrew are describing the importance of communication and how they spend considerable time talking with their infant. Anna states that in her church nursery there are several young babies and that she notices her daughter seems very alert compared to the others. She believes this is because they do spend a considerable amount of time talking with her. They continue as follows:

Andrew: Because we've seen this first hand in our daughter and, whether we're wrong or not, we think we're right. So this does deepen our convictions on the daycare issue because again, wherever she is she is going to be learning and we would like as much as possible to control to a degree what she is learning. And just because they may be good I think her mother would be better.

Lee: Yes, you have to feel committed to what you are doing.

From the description to date, Anna and Andrew seem to be functioning in objectivity without parenthesis in terms of their viewing their religious beliefs as being separate from their distinctions and in terms of their emphasis on "right or wrong" in relation to their ability to influence their daughter's "proper" development. However, some other

excerpts modify this point. For example, when Anna made the comment about her daughter's alertness compared to the other church nursery children, she ended it with "Anyway, that is a mother's biased opinion" (p. 16). Or, at another stage in the interview, Andrew discusses the reaction of other people to their decision as follows:

(Page 6)

Andrew: . . . I can remember the older women, older meaning about 50 or over, 50 to 80 or 90. I can remember a lot of people would ask and some would be surprised and yet, in that age group, they would always smile at her as if they were pleased with the decision. But still, they were surprised . . . The older generation still remembers their day and they were pleased with her. And in our generation, its mixed. Some people would say good, some people would kind of raise their eyebrows, other people wouldn't say anything but it was written all over their faces that 'its your decision, you do what you want'. They would mind their own business (laughs). So I guess we got about every possible reaction.

Andrew seemed to be open to and interested in the responses of others, or, in other words, able to accept their realities concerning his and Anna's decision. Finally, the following description by Andrew of the kind of wife he was looking for seems to be characteristic of how he might deal with other people.

(Page 15)

Andrew: I'm pretty strong on it that as long as we're capable to have a home that she stay home, but I didn't want to fight with anyone about it so that was really one of my prerequisites in my wife. Like if I, I mean I

know enough about girls to know that if a girl had to go out when by my standards it wasn't necessary financially, if we could live without it, and she still wanted to go out, we would probably differ on a bunch of other things and she would not be suitable. Of course, there are other criteria in choosing a wife. That was a major one because I'm quite strong on it. That's one thing and the other thing is that I didn't want to fight with anyone on it.

It seems that Anna and Andrew function in objectivity without parenthesis in the sense of looking for the right way to be. However, the clarity they seek is for themselves. Andrew's previous comment about not wanting to fight with anyone seems typical of how the two of them would likely function in other situations. While searching for clarity for themselves they would not likely "fight" with someone in the sense of attempting to negate another reality or see it as less legitimate than their own. Instead, they may reinforce that the choices they have made seem right for themselves but may not be right for other people. Also they would likely see other points of view as different rather than wrong. Finally, with their ability to plan effectively, they may describe themselves as structuring their lives to avoid situations which would go against their beliefs and values.

Jack and Jill

The most striking observations about Jack and Jill's

stance towards objectivity is their acceptance of other people's realities as legitimate and their unwillingness to negate others. For example, in the following excerpt Jill talks about her parent's marriage:

(Page 20)

Jill: ... But, I said to them many times, if things aren't working out after this many years—they've been married for about 28 years—if after this many years things aren't working out I think you should definitely decide whether or not it would be a good idea to part and be happy people. But they're basically happy with the situation because it's all they've ever known. So when I speak of happiness, my happiness is totally different than theirs.

Lee: They don't know what you mean.

Jill: Yes, and that's totally understandable. I can't expect them to understand what I'm trying to get across to them. After all, I'm just a little sprout compared to them in many, many ways but, its funny, its only been in about the last two weeks that I've finally started to ask them questions about my childhood and why they did certain things and what made these things occur. Their answers are extremely interesting. I can see that a lot of it was force, but now its become old hat, you know, habit. Its very engrained and its scary to take a new path, to try something different when you've been married to somebody for so many years and you're used to their responses and how they're going to react. I think it would certainly be healthy for them, for both of them, if they parted but I don't even know if that's the main issue. I think the main issue for myself is to see them happy—and I may never see the day but also, in the same respect, I want to be happy and that's top priority for me.

Similar to other couples, Jack and Jill speak of concepts such as "bonding", "formative years", "alcoholism", etc. in objectivity without parenthesis in the strict sense. i.e., as

entities existing separate from themselves as opposed to brought forth by them. However, like the other couples discussed so far they use those terms to explain their worlds generally. For example, Jack speaks of his mother as a chronic alcoholic and says his mother used him for a crutch "and, of course, this is the last thing an alcoholic wants is to lose their crutch--and she made things very difficult for Jill." (p. 3). His comment is an explanation of his world which seems to help him understand and accept his mother. Or, several times during the interview, Jack and Jill comment that they are from "marred backgrounds" or use terms similar to that to explain their childhoods. Again this is not done in any blaming way and one senses that neither of them would argue if someone else did not see the situation that way. The distinction simply serves an orienting function and helps them to reflect on their behavior as an effort to carve out a different life for themselves and their child.

Melanie and Joe

Melanie and Joe seem to function in objectivity in parenthesis to a considerable extent. A classic example would be the manner in which Joe dealt with his growing feeling that Melanie would not return to work after the baby was born. As previously cited, he didn't tell her she was going to stay

home though he sensed that would be the case. He respected the reality she was presenting him as being legitimate and waited until she felt comfortable to express herself. Joe seems to function with great intentionality in terms of his objectivity with parenthesis. For example, my telephone contact prior to the interview was with Melanie. Near the end of the interview Melanie commented that I have three children. (She knew this because I had to cancel an interview due to the birth of my third child.) Joe stated, "I didn't know and I deliberately didn't know because I didn't want to get into this thing of saying 'you know'. I didn't want to start that 'you know' stuff (p. 18). One final example which serves to illustrate Joe's functioning in objectivity in parenthesis is his willingness to accept differences in the way in which he and his wife function. He comments as follows:

(Page 6)

Joe: A lot of the development of our relationship had to do with the recognition that we had a lot in common, but significant differences too—and the recognition of those differences. I'm a relatively calm person. Melanie is not always a calm person and is prone to peaks and valleys.

Later in the interview, Joe demonstrates how he accepts the differences between he and Melanie (particularly as currently she is having some emotionally and physically difficult periods in the last several weeks of her pregnancy).

In fact, Melanie comments as follows:

(Page 18)

Melanie: He understands me. He tries really hard to understand whereas its easier to say 'oh no, there she goes again'. The man will take off or do his own thing or something but Joe will never do that. He'll say, I think that is what he will say 'poor woman she's going through all this' and so he's very empathetic. I feel that, it's not just me saying it, I feel it. If he would say to me 'oh babe, I know what you're going through' and not feel it I would know it because I'm so sensitive.

Melanie too appears to function in what one would distinguish as objectivity in parenthesis. For example, in the following excerpt she is describing the reaction of one particular female friend who is a veterinarian and comments:

(Page 9)

Melanie: We were going out one night and the vet says 'you're going to stay home?' It was as though she threw a knife in my heart because my decision wasn't acceptable to her--I really had to think what to say to myself. 'There's nothing wrong with her reaction. For all I know she may be feeling guilty because she's going to work, who knows, and its not up to me to analyze that either. I just have to stick to my decision and feel good about it. Once I don't feel good about it then I'll have to consider another option.' But, yes, guilt.

In this example, Melanie acknowledges the legitimacy of her friend's reaction. Also, by her comments that it's not up to her (Melanie) to analyze why her friend reacts as she does, Melanie shows her willingness to accept a "multiversa". Later in relation to this same friend, she comments, "what-

ever works for you, then go for it" (p. 9).

Melanie and Joe also find a way to function with people whose values are similar or different from their own. Melanie comments that "Joe and I, think the same a lot and maybe if these people think too differently from us—that's fine and we can be friends, but you know how there are different levels of friendship—that's what I mean." (p. 8).

In the following comments, Joe and Melanie also reflect on their feeling that sometimes they don't get the same kind of openness from their friends as they themselves extend:

(Page 14)

Joe: So its very difficult often for people to say 'look, times are a little rough right now', or 'gosh, my wife is having a hard time'.

Lee: So in your circle of friends you don't get that kind of honesty—that sense that there's pluses or minuses, you know, that they're good days and bad days.

Melanie: That there's normality! And then I sit back and say to Joe 'Why do I feel so awful?' And he'll say 'sweets, it's normal'

Similarities in Stances Towards Objectivity:

The Study Couples

Three of the characteristics mentioned by Maturana (1986) as being descriptive of a person who is operating in objectivity with parenthesis effectively describe the eight

husbands and wives who participated in this study. In particular, they were fairly consistent in appreciating the legitimacy of other people's realities, didn't tend to negate others based on some privileged access to an objective reality, and took responsibility for the reality which each of them brought forth. As discussed, although the participants did at times validate their assertions by referring to an objective reality such as a religious diety, those assertions were made in a responsible way in the sense that they helped the participants to explain their worlds and to clarify what felt right for them. This assessment of their stance towards objectivity is, of course, based on observations of their languaging. For example, when one person expressed what was thought might be the other's opinion it was done with considerable tentativeness and with an openness to the response of the other. Additionally, their mutual perturbations seemed to have the effect of keeping them in a stable pattern of interaction which can be described as objectivity in parenthesis (or of reorienting them if one of them began to "stray" from that world view as evidenced in the excerpt cited earlier from the interview with Billy and Veronica, for example).

A final comment concerning the couple's stances towards objectivity is that they do seem to engage in the type of conversations which Mendez, Coddou, and Maturana (1986)

described as characterizing a family which functions in objectivity in parenthesis—i.e., conversations for coordination of actions. In the interview dialogue and in the description, each couple made of their decision, one notes discussion oriented to the present, an absence of blaming, accusation, etc. In fact, openness and acceptance seem to be the pervasive features of their conversations.

Stance Towards Objectivity: The Interviewer

My intention was to function in objectivity in parenthesis during the interviews. Occasionally, I was aware of doing so with considerable deliberateness. For example, while Veronica was preparing a hot drink for us prior to my beginning to tape the first interview, she and Billy asked me a question about childrearing, prefacing it with a "you've got kids, tell us what you think" type of comment. I told them that I hadn't any professional expertise in the particular area and then talked from my personal experience in terms of what I had done with my children. I felt it was like an "acid test" at some level to see if I would talk from my experience the way I wanted them to do. For the majority of the interviews, far from sensing such deliberateness in my responses, I felt immersed in interacting with the couples and in wanting to understand their experiences and how they interacted together.

The research question related to the interviewer and objectivity asked if the researcher used a consistent stance towards objectivity throughout the study interviews. In reviewing the interview transcripts, I distinguish myself as having functioned more consistently in objectivity in parenthesis than not. The more interesting question may well relate to what characterized my verbal languaging (since the study is restricted to this area) when I distinguish myself as having functioned most and least in objectivity in parenthesis. Responding to that question provides direction for the remainder of the discussion.

My interview behavior can be conceptualized as being on a certainty/tentativeness continuum. At the certainty end were those interactions in which I sounded most sure about what a couple's experiences were or should be. For example, in a previously cited excerpt from the interview with Jack and Jill, I declared that the behavior they just exhibited represented a style of interacting which they had. This was done with more certainty than I intended or liked. Or, near the end of the interview with Anna and Andrew, Andrew asked what I have found from interviewing other couples. I indicated that I'd interviewed only one other couple so I didn't have much sense of the study couples' experiences to date. I stated (based on my review of the literature in the area) that I thought the degree of commitment which couples have to

their decision certainly would vary. As might be expected, Anna and Andrew then talked about themselves and their degree of commitment. Responses of mine which could be placed on the certain end of the continuum were perturbations which seemed to have the effect of making it more difficult for the couples to respond on the basis of their unique experiences. The responses need not be classified as either bad or good but rather as providing a direction or framework when perhaps so much direction or that particular framework wasn't required.

Responses at the tentative end of the continuum can be distinguished as expressing more openness to hearing the couple's experience and to claiming the reality I was bringing forth as my own. The comments, "I might be reading into it" (Jack and Jill, p. 9) or "you were experimenting—that's my word" (Jack and Jill, p. 12) are examples of the latter. Perhaps the most interesting observation regarding perturbations of a tentative nature is that at least once in each interview either the couple or I initiated a discussion about whether or not we were meeting each other's expectations. For example, in a break in the taping of one interview, Melanie was caring for the baby and Joe and I were talking as he prepared tea. He comments that he hopes they have been answering my questions satisfactorily. The following dialogue with Andrew is typical of how I answered

such questions:

(Page 10)

Andrew: Have we been answering your questions properly?

Lee: Oh yes! Well, there's no proper (laughing)... I haven't got a 'properly'. It's just that I want to know about your particular experiences.

The couples can be distinguished as responding with increased openness following interactions of the type just mentioned. For example, shortly after the preceding interaction, Andrew commented that he'd lost his job a week before. This was a very significant experience for him yet he did not bring it up until well into the interview. (One can conjecture that he might have expected I would pick up on some of the cues (perturbations) he gave earlier in the interview in his comments about finances or that perhaps our differences in the use of verbal languaging as discussed previously made this disclosure impossible before this time.)

The discussion of the study questions related to objectivity in parenthesis is complete. The four dimensions of operating in objectivity in parenthesis as proposed by Mendez, Coddou, and Maturana (1986) have been used to examine whether or not a characteristic stance toward objectivity could be distinguished in each study participant. Some consideration was given to how each husband and wife perturbed each other to keep objectivity in parenthesis as a stable

manner of interacting as a couple. Finally, a certainty/tentativeness continuum was used to discuss the languaging of the researcher as it related to objectivity in parenthesis. The conclusion of this discussion marks the end of the consideration of study results. The final chapter will include the presentation of an organizational framework for the ensuing discussion, consideration of implications of Maturana's theory, a computation of Maturana, Bateson, and von Foerster, and, lastly, a discussion of some final observations which arose from the process of theory application.

DISCUSSION

Implications of Maturana's Theory: Distinguishing Health, Problems, or Pathology in the Study Couples

This section will present a framework for distinguishing health, problems and pathology and will discuss how that framework evolved from the process of theory application which was entailed in this study. This approach is deemed appropriate because the nature of the theory application process is to use something and to see what parts of it one can make one's own. As with the presentation of the study results as they related to the researcher, again I will use the first person as one way of claiming the distinctions I make as my own.

Preconceptions, the Interview Process and Interview Analysis

In the presentation of the problem statement, I described how the research project evolved into its current form. At that time, I commented that such a description would, among other things, reflect some of the understandings which I had when I began interacting with the couples, i.e., my current structure. As suggested in that initial discussion, I expected to see some problems. For example, I expected the decision to be a complex one and the adjustment to staying home to be a situation which would involve considerable conflict for the wife (and perhaps the couple). These

expectations coexisted at some level with the understanding that these couples were undergoing a life transition without having sought therapeutic assistance and that they had volunteered to be interviewed concerning that experience.

In the first interview, I was surprised at the ease with which the couple described themselves as making the decision. As presented earlier, when asked, Veronica said she'd like to stay home if she could. Billy simply agreed and they proceeded to set a date. Also, I enjoyed being with the couple and the openness with which they interacted. The other three interviews were basically the same. In a way, the issue of deciding if the wife would return to work after childbirth was a very much a "non issue" and I questioned what in their history of interacting together could account for such ease.

The question was not a simple one for several reasons. For example, I could have characterized each couple as experiencing a considerable degree of stress at the time of making the decision and/or at the time of the interview. Billy and Veronica made the decision at a time when Billy had no job. Anna and Andrew were facing the current situation that Andrew had just lost his job. Jack and Jill had experienced the pervasive influence of Jack's alcoholic mother early in their relationship and her relatively recent

death, as well as an unexpected pregnancy before they were married. Lastly, Melanie and Joe had a 12 month old and were expecting a second child in a few weeks. Another difficulty involved in attempting to determine why the decision was made with ease is that some of the couple's behaviors might have been categorized as problem behaviors in a traditional sense. For example, fairly frequently they finished each other's sentences. At other times, they spoke for each other. Finally, the question seemed complex because the couples related in different ways, which I attempted to at least bring forth partly in my description of their languaging. For example, Billy and Veronica were characterized as playful while Anna and Andrew were described as playful; or, Jack and Jill languaged well together without talking everything through, while Joe and Melanie seemed to have a clear sense of their process.

In search of an explanation for my observations, and because of my limited experience in dealing with families, I asked two experienced therapists what they saw as characterizing a healthy couple. One replied that a healthy couple is a couple that can solve problems in their relationship (M. White, personal communication, November 7, 1986). Another responded that a problem isn't a problem unless it's a problem (J. Amundson, personal communication, November 7, 1986). These distinctions, a thorough rereading of the

Mendez, Coddou, and Maturana (1986) in particular, and my experience in analyzing the interviews led to my distinguishing the following framework and its explanation as it relates to the study couples.

Framework For Distinguishing Health, Problems, or
Pathology in Couples Not Seeking Therapy

The framework for distinguishing health, problems, or pathology consists of two statements which Maturana put forth—simply, that a composite unity can have any structure as long as it maintains its organization (i.e., identity as a system) and that "for a problem to exist someone must specify it and someone must accept it" (Mendez, Coddou, & Maturana, 1986, p. 2).

The first statement is a fundamental notion about the relationship between organization and structure (e.g., Maturana, 1986) which I had known for some time. However, the full impact of that statement became apparent only when I reflected on the issue of health and pathology as it related to the couples in my study. My interviews were of four couples who interacted in four idiosyncratic ways. (If I had interviewed 100 couples, I would have had transcripts of 100 couples operating in idiosyncratic ways.) But what was significant is that all these ways worked—each couple

distinguished themselves as a couple. Furthermore, they accepted my distinction that they had made a decision together.

To deal with the second statement in the framework, the couples did not specify themselves as having a problem in their relationship; therefore, a problem did not exist. In fact, that corresponded with my feeling that in each interview I was dealing with highly functioning couples even though I couldn't say why by fitting the couples into neat theoretical categories.

The two statement framework is a simple one. In my case, it had ~~the~~ effect of stopping my search for some sort of norms regarding healthy couples. Instead, I could focus on appreciating both the similarities between and the uniqueness of each couple as they danced in their languaging as that couple.

Implications of Maturana's Theory: The Therapist and the Process of Facilitation

Recently, Efran and Lukens (1985) presented an excellent article on Maturana's theory and its applicability to family therapy. In addition, the Mendez, Coddou, and Maturana article (1986), previously cited in the literature review and in the discussion of study results, has much to say about

the process of family therapy and the therapist. The following discussion is designed to (a) highlight the previously mentioned articles, (b) present six biological tenets drawn from the presentation of the theoretical framework for the study, (c) show which implications for the therapist and the process of therapy arise from each tenet, (d) draw parallels between the therapist as a person and the process of family therapy, (e) emphasize a self acceptance/responsibility dimension which can be brought forth readily from specific biological tenets, (f) discuss how the implications arising from the biological tenets can be used to a large extent to view the nature of how any individual who accepts Maturana's theory might function, and (g) make a point for retaining the distinction of therapist as facilitator.

Table 1 was designed to present a visual conceptualization of the major biological tenets of Maturana's theory and the implications for the therapist and the process of therapy as they arise from each of those tenets. Three dimensions related to structure are presented separately in the theoretical framework in order to emphasize specific implications which arise from each of them. Also, another individual formulating this type of table could place different implications under different tenets equally well; the intent of the table is to provide a comprehensive picture when the entire listing of implications is considered.

Table 1

Implications of Maturana's Theory: The Therapist and the Process of Therapy

Biological Tenet	Implications For The Therapist	Implications For The Process of Therapy
A living system is organizationally closed	<p>Recognizes his biological limitations and accepts epistemological stance of objectivity in parenthesis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ doesn't validate arguments or negate others on the basis of an objective world. ◦ Recognizes his reality is no more legitimate than anyone else. 	<p>Recognizes people usually function on the basis of an objective world.</p>
A living system is structurally determined.	<p>Accepts self as being how he must be due to his structure.</p>	<p>Recognizes he can't know what is right for the family.</p> <p>Deals with the problem which the family brings forth.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ takes full responsibility for his reality and his actions. 	<p>Accepts family members as being how they must be due to their structures.</p>

Table 1 (Con't.)

Biological Tenet	Implications For The Therapist	Implications For The Process of Therapy
	Recognizes problems in relating to others are due to structural differences	Recognizes problems in interacting with family members are due to structural differences (versus resistance etc.).
	Recognizes he can't make people change.	Selects perturbations (language) he hopes will act as orthogonal interactions. Recognizes actual changes determined by the family's structure.
A living system undergoes continuous structural change.	Views self as changing continuously.	Recognizes family members are changing continuously.
	Views self as (deliciously) unpredictable.	Views others as (deliciously) unpredictable.
A composite unity* interacts through its structure.	Recognizes he is a component of various composite unities which he integrates e.g., family, therapy team, etc.	Recognizes he interacts with family members and not "the family" per se.
Existence is an ontogenic drift.	Recognizes meaning, purpose, function, etc. as descriptions which he and others bring forth.	Does not view family function in terms of meaning, purpose, function, rules, etc.
	Recognizes the relationship between stability and change.	Recognizes the conservative orientation of the family system.

* Composite unity is used because the implications focus on social systems.

Table 1 (Con't.)

<u>Biological Tenet</u>	<u>Implications For The Therapist</u>	<u>Implications For The Process of Therapy</u>
Emotioning and languaging: Braiding of the physiological and interactive domains.	Views languaging as an interactive phenomenon which involves more than words.	Observes for patterns of languaging and emotions between family members.
	Views emotional postures as determining what languaging can occur.	Chooses languaging with care.

Tenet #1. A Living System is Organizationally Closed

The notion of organizational closure and the dimensions of operating in objectivity in parenthesis were discussed in the preceding chapters. To add to those understandings, the first point to be made is that the therapist who is in objectivity in parenthesis is most probably operating from a different epistemological stance than the people he sees. A major implication of this situation is that likely the family will see the therapist as an expert, but the therapist must be clear in his mind that he has no more access to the truth than does any other human. In regards to this, one therapist talks to other helpers in staff education programs about "truth and beauty" in therapy. When asked what that truth and beauty is he replies, "yes" (Jon Amundson, personal communication, January 15, 1987). The alternative to the therapist's seeing himself as an expert is outlined by Mendez, Coddou, and Maturana (1986) as follows:

If we put objectivity in parenthesis we must recognize that we can only act under the authority, and, hence, with the power, granted to us by the implicit social consensus or explicit social agreement that defines certain behaviours as pathological or problematic in the domain of interactions in which they take place. Indeed, putting objectivity in parenthesis entails the explicit recognition that the desirability or undesirability of any given behaviour is socially determined, and that we cannot go claiming that something is good or bad, healthy or unhealthy in itself, as if these were intrinsic constitutive features of it (pp. 12 & 13).

The quotation deals with the therapist as a specific case of someone who is socially empowered to bring forth either health or pathology (as was discussed in the preceding section on implications of Maturana's theory for distinguishing health, problems, and pathology.)

A second implication arising from the biological tenet of organizational closure is that if the realities of the family members are equally legitimate, then the therapist deals with their distinctions regarding the problem and the "cure". Efran and Lukens (1985) make this case well as follows:

Note, too, that the form of a problem—the domain in which it exists—determines the form of its 'cure' If an unhappy spouse is no longer displeased with the marital relationship, a 'cure' has been achieved, whether the person is or is not having sex more often and whether or not the person's partner is still having affairs. Why? Because the person says so. While other criteria may fascinate the researcher or therapist, they are irrelevant unless or until the person adopts them as his or her own. (p. 28).

Although not new the therapy, the notion of dealing with the family member's distinctions regarding health and pathology now has an explanation based on the biological limitations of the therapist.

Tenet #2. A Living System is Structurally Determined

Both self acceptance and acceptance of others as being how they must be can be a direct result of understanding Maturana's concept of structure determinism. If the therapist combines self acceptance with the ethical view of being responsible for all actions as outlined in tenet one, the therapist can bring forth a self acceptance/responsibility way of thinking and acting. Another implication which can be brought forth from this tenet is that when a problem in interacting with others is seen as due to structural differences, that puts the problem in a relationship context rather than attributing the problem to one or more individuals involved. The advantages of a relationship view will be explored more in the ensuing section which deals with Maturana in context. Still another point related to structure determinism is that as the therapist deals with the family members, recognizing that actual changes will be determined by the family structure (i.e., the family members and their relationships). This view can lead a therapist to query why anyone should bother to attempt change (Colapinto, 1985) or it can lead to a reassessment of what the therapist can be responsible for in dealing with an organizationally closed, structurally determined system. Maturana's answer to that question would be that the therapist is responsible for perturbing and that perturbations must be selected which

will act as orthogonal interactions to disintegrate the particular system which has been distinguished as a problem. Mendez, Coddou, and Maturana (1986) described an orthogonal interaction as an interaction with members of a system that does not entail their participation as components of that system. By contrast, non orthogonal interactions "are part of the dynamics of a system and confirm it" (p. 25). For example, if a husband and wife come to a therapist distinguishing themselves as unhappy and the therapist observes that they blame each other repeatedly in their languaging, he would interact with the family concerning something other than their blaming, in the hope of triggering a change in one or both of them so that they could no longer enter into blaming sorts of conversations. In other words, the specific type of family, distinguished as an unhappy family, would disintegrate if the orthogonal interaction was successful, and, a new type of family would arise. In the process, if the family disintegrates as a family because the emotion which constitutes the family disappears, (i.e., the passion for living together in close physical or emotional proximity) the therapist cannot be responsible for that disintegration. If this perspective is combined with the ethical notion of the therapist as being fully responsible for the world as brought forth, the result can be that the therapist will examine the intent of interactions closely and select all

linguaging with care. In fact, Mendez, Cobdou, and Maturana stated the following in this regard:

The great responsibility of the therapist that puts objectivity in parenthesis, as well as his or her greatest asset in the consultation, is that he or she is not innocent in the use of language as his or her instrument for eliciting structural changes in the consulting individuals. (p. 31).

Tomm (Tomm & White, 1986) accepted this distinction of the importance of languaging in the therapeutic interview and has developed an interview approach where he entitles "interventive interviewing" and defines as "an orientation in which everything a therapist does and says and does not do and does not say is regarded as an intervention which could be therapeutic, non therapeutic or counter therapeutic.

To conclude the discussion concerning the mechanism of their orthogonal interaction, it can be seen that the notion provides both direction and latitude for the therapist. The therapist must be clear about the problems as brought forth by the family, look at what characterizes their conversations and interact with one or more family members in a different direction. At the same time, there are many possible perturbations which may act as orthogonal interactions with any particular family.

Tenet #3. A Living System Undergoes Continuous
Structural Change

In a way, this dimension concerning structure provides a different view of the tenet that change is determined by an individual's structure. For example, while a therapist recognizes that the change in a family member (one component of a family) will be due to his structure, yet, he is aware also that the individual is undergoing constant change as a result of his interactions with others, including the therapist.

One additional comment concerning continuous structural change as an aspect of a living system is that living systems are unpredictable. This feature of us as humans can generate a sense of frustration in the therapist. Alternatively, it can trigger excitement and curiosity as reflected in Maturana's (1984) comments "that the delicious uncertainty of human life can go on because predictability is not possible".

Tenet #4. A Composite Unity Interacts Through its Structure

This point has been dealt with to some extent in the discussion just completed. What this tenet does is draw attention to the individuals who constitute a social system rather than to the system itself. For example, a therapist who works within a large system and has this perspective

would see that a change in self or one other individual can, in fact, make a difference. In relation to the process of therapy, Efran and Lukens (1985) make it clear that the notion of family is a description brought forth by the therapist. They state that "you cannot join a family, fix a family, or even objectively define a family" (p. 28).

Tenet #5. Existence is an Ontogenic Structural Drift

As discussed in the theoretical framework for the study, individuals can be seen as in a drift in which they are conserving their autopoietic organization and their correspondence with their medium. The most immediate implication is that for the therapist and the individuals with whom the therapist works, terms such as meaning, purpose, function, system, rules, etc. are descriptions brought forth about the social system and do not describe the actual operation of that system (i.e., the processes of ontogenic structural drift and coontogeny). Again, this highlights the significance of dealing with the individuals in a system. The second implication of viewing existence as an ontogenic structural drift is that the relationship between stability and change can be kept more readily in mind. For example, Maturana (1984) used the analogy of a tight rope walker who must constantly be in motion in order to remain balanced to describe the nature of the continuous structural change which

is entailed in conserving the organization of an individual. In addition, as has been discussed in other chapters, the concept of ontogenic-structural drift explains why stable, interactional patterns evolve over time and continue unless some type of orthogonal interaction occurs. In this regard, Efran and Lukens (1985) pointed out that it is useful to find out what the family is trying to conserve and to participate in their attempts to conserve it. It seems that Mendez, Coddou, and Maturana (1986) have since explicated what it is that families are trying to conserve by their description of the family as being constituted in the emotional domain by the passion for living together in close physical or emotional proximity.

Tenet #6. Emotioning and Language: Braiding of the
Physiological and Interactive Domains

The nature of the braiding between languaging and emotioning was discussed in the presentation of the theoretical framework for the study. In addition, the importance of attending to one's languaging in therapy was considered when the implications of structure determinism were discussed. The final point to be made is that we appear rational in the words we use; however, according to Maturana, (Maturana & Tomm, 1986) we interact on the basis of our emotional postures. Therefore, the fundamental element in social

interaction is emotional and not rational.

The discussion of the six biological tenets and the implications for the therapist and the process of therapy is complete. This section will conclude with the presentation of two observations. First, from the preceding discussion of implications which can be brought forth from the biological tenets, it seems that Maturana has much to say which is of interest to therapists. However, except for the dynamic of the orthogonal interaction which arises because the individual, family or organization invites the therapist or other type of facilitator to help with the problem as brought forth by them, the implications can be seen to have much broader scope. Therefore, by thinking in terms of "others" rather than the family specifically, Table 1 can provide a framework for an individual who wishes to function explicitly from an objectivity in parenthesis epistemology. For example, by making the change mentioned, Table 1 could be used as a conceptual guide for conducting an interview for purposes other than therapy, as was done in this study.

As a final comment, it seems appropriate to retain the notion of therapist as facilitator when considering Maturana's theory, since without the facilitation, (i.e. orthogonal interactions) the family would maintain its conservative drift. The role of the therapist is analogous

to the role which reality plays as described by Heinz von Foerster in the following:

A travelling mullah was riding on his camel to Medina, when he saw several camels standing next to a group of three young men who clearly were in distress.

'What befell you, my friends?' he asked, and the eldest replied, 'Our father died.'

'Be he blessed by Allah. I sympathize with you. But he must have left you something in his will.'

'Yes,' said the young man, 'these seventeen camels. That's all he had.'

Rejoice! What then ails you?'

'You see,' the eldest brother continued, 'his will says I should get one-half of his possessions, my younger brother one-third, and the youngest here one-ninth. But however we try to distribute these camels, it never works out.'

Is this all that troubles you, my friends?' the mullah said. 'Then take my camel for a moment and let's see what we can do.'

With 18 camels now the eldest brother got one-half, that is, nine camels, and nine were left. The next in line got one-third of the 18 camels, that is, six, and three were left. Since the youngest brother got one-ninth of the 18 camels, that is, two, one camel was left. It was that of the mullah, who mounted it and rode away, waving the happy brothers good-bye.

To this Heinz von Foerster says: 'Reality, like the eighteenth camel, is needed to become superfluous' (Segal, 1986, p. vii).

Maturana in Context: A Computation of Maturana,

Bateson and von Foerster

To this point, the review of the theoretical framework for the study and the discussion have focused solely on the work of Maturana. As indicated, this was done in order to attend to the salient points of his theory and to the observations which could be brought forth as the result of

theory application. The current discussion is designed to extend the focus to consider two other theorists. The first of these is Heinz von Foerster, whose comments about the nature of reality were presented as an apt ending to the discussion of the implications of Bateson's theory for the therapist and the process of therapy. The other theorist is Gregory Bateson, whose idea of double description was mentioned when the evolution of the current study was presented in the first chapter. This discussion of Maturana in context will be a computation in the following sense in which von Foerster uses the word:

One usually associates computation with computers. But computation has a much broader meaning. 'Computation' has two latin roots: com which means 'together' and putare which means 'to contemplate'. When you contemplate two or more entities together, you compute their relationship. (Segal, 1986, p. 83).

Alternatively, the process could be labelled a double description. While this computation will extend the focus of discussion, it will do so within a limited framework for two reasons. First, Bateson, Maturana, and von Foerster are all theorists who believe that reality is in some way connected to the individual who is involved with that reality. Second, while the previous discussion of the implications of Maturana's theory for the therapist and the process of therapy focused on many aspects of Maturana's theory, this discussion will be limited to presenting a few key points

regarding languaging and objectivity in parenthesis. The purpose of the presentation will be to see how the work of each of these three theorists enhances the other.

Before beginning the specific discussion, a point that helps place these three theorists in context is that they knew each other well. For example, von Foerster met Bateson in the 1940's and they both attended several meetings at which cybernetic notions were discussed (Segal, 1986). Also, Maturana was a resident at the Biological Computer Laboratory which von Foerster established at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Keeney, 1986). Finally, the relationship between Bateson and Maturana is described by Dell (1985) as follows:

Toward the end of his life, Bateson was asked who else was carrying forward the study of the epistemology of Creatura. In reply, Bateson stated that 'The center for this study is now in Santiago, Chile under a man named Maturana'. (p. 5.)

In the preceding quotation, Creatura is the world of the living in which effects are brought about by difference as opposed to events being caused by forces and impacts (Bateson, 1972).

Views Concerning an Objective Reality: Maturana,
von Foerster, and Bateson

As previously stated, Maturana's epistemological stance, which he labels objectivity in parenthesis, arises from his work as a biologist—specifically from his coming to view the nervous system as organizationally closed. The explanatory concept of structure determinism arises directly from that work. Heinz von Foerster, an individual whose interests lie in areas such as physics, mathematics, logic, philosophy, and the implications of research in neurophysiology, is considered to be a radical constructivist. Segal, (1986) who has written a book on the von Foerster's constructivist view, stated that radical constructivism has the job of shattering an objective reality. He continued as follows:

Constructivists argue that there are no observations—i.e., no data, no laws of nature, no external objects—independent of observers. The lawfulness and certainty of all natural phenomena are properties of the describer, not of what is being described. The logic of the world is the logic of the description of the world (Segal, 1986, pp. 3-4).

Overall, Maturana and von Foerster can be seen as being closest in viewing reality as observer dependent, while Bateson can be characterized as inconsistent in this regard. This perspective will be developed in the ensuing discussion. In 1973, von Foerster gave a lecture entitled "On Constructing a Reality" which has appeared in adapted form since (von Foerster, 1984a; von Foerster, 1984b) and which forms part of a recent presentation of von Foerster's view (Segal,

1986). The essence of von Foerster's argument was and still is that "the environment as we see it is our invention" (von Foerster, 1984a, p. 228). This statement seems similar to Maturana's idea concerning an observer-dependent reality. In fact, several ways in which the work of von Foerster enhances that of Maturana will be considered. (Bateson will not be excluded entirely; however, his view of reality will be presented near the end of the discussion, as it contrasts with both that of Maturana and von Foerster.)

Reality and Language

Von Foerster drew from many fields in building his case for the constructivist view—fields such as mathematics, logic, neurophysiology (including references to Maturana's work) and physics. Thus, von Foerster's work provides a synthesis for anyone looking for a broad perspective from which to view the world as observer dependent. For example, one area of concern to von Foerster is the way in which our language and our thinking affect our view of reality (Segal, 1986). Among the many examples discussed in Segal (1986), two will be considered here. The first of these is nominalization, which Segal described as "the linguistic process for turning verbs into nouns. Thus, language allows us to convert actions or processes into things" (1986, p. 33). Segal gave the example of how psychiatrists labelled certain

behavior as schizophrenia and then, before long, began to label the patients who demonstrated those behaviors as schizophrenics. Bateson (1972) had a similar concern with the "reifying processes of language" (1972, p. 499).

A second concern which von Foerster has about how language affects our thinking and world view is the issue of paradox. A paradox is a statement which is true when it is false and false when it is true. Paradox can arise whenever statements are self referential (Segal, 1986). Segal commented that philosophers and scientists object to paradox because they want something to be either true or false. They want that certainty. He discusses how Bertrand Russell developed (invented) the theory of Logical Types which disallowed paradox because it stated that a set could not be considered as one of its own elements; for example, mankind is a class of individuals but itself is not an individual. The relationship of this concern with paradox to the present discussion concerning views about reality will be made apparent next.

It was Bateson who brought the theory of logical types to the attention of those interested in communication. Keeney (1983) indicated that Bateson adopted logical typing as a descriptive tool for discussing the formal patterns of communication that underline interaction. Also, in the

following comment, he noted that von Foerster used logical typing in a different way, one which is most relevant to the current discussion. Keeney commented as follows:

The epistemology of Russell's Theory of Types has been challenged by von Foerster who objected to its use as an injunction against paradox, since an alternative way of dealing with paradox is possible. Self referential paradoxes can be used as conceptual building blocks for an alternative view of the world. For example, we may begin . . . by noting that an observer always participates in what he observes. Thus, all statements, being statements by observers, are self referential and hence laden with paradox. (Keeney, 1983, p. 30).

Further, Segal noted that paradox is a specific example of a more general idea, that of recursion, a concept which will be discussed further. However, for the present, the discussion of the concepts of nominalization and paradox serves to indicate the type of contribution von Foerster makes to viewing reality as observer dependent. In fact, he outlined an epistemology of the observing as opposed to an epistemology of the observed. Next, his ideas related to the operation of the nervous system will be discussed.

Recursion, Eigen Behaviors and Ethics

Von Foerster made a major contribution to understanding the nature of the nervous system. For example, he introduced the very important notion of undifferentiated encoding as a lead in to his discussion of recursion. Segal defined the

principle of undifferentiated encoding as being that "our sensors only encode how much stimulation they receive and not what causes that stimulation. Thus, our senses, our empirical link with reality, do not encode what stimulates them." (1986, p. 23). Von Foerster posed a problem that arises when this situation is considered. He stated his concern as follows:

Since the physical nature of the stimulus—its quality—is not encoded into nervous activity—the fundamental question arises as to how does our brain conjure up the tremendous variety of this colorful world as we experience it any moment while awake, and sometimes in dreams while asleep. This is the 'Problem of Cognition', the search for an understanding of the cognitive processes. (1984a, p. 294).

He considered the "Problem of Cognition" in several ways. For example, he described the evolution of the nervous system in a way which is intended to enhance understanding of its sensori-motor closure. As well, he explained how transmission of nervous impulses requires a computation process within the nervous system. In fact, his answer to the problem of cognition is that cognitive processes can be interpreted as never ending recursive processes of computation (von Foerster, 1984a).

Perhaps one of von Foerster's greatest contributions is his description of what happens as a result of recursive processes in the nervous system. He uses "recursive function

theory" as a "formalism to handle the notion of systemic closure. A formalism provides a mathematical representation that allows us to illustrate and manipulate conceptual ideas" (Segal, 1986 p. 126). In mathematics, when something operates continually on itself, a stable value, which von Foerster called an eigen value (or self value), will result. In workshop presentations, (e.g., von Foerster, 1986) he illustrates this situation by doing the operation of square root repeatedly (i.e., the square root of the initial number, then the square root of the resultant number, etc.) Soon an eigen value will result. (The eigen value for square roots is one). Von Foerster has stated the following:

If you will remember, the nervous system operates on itself. Each neuron fires after performing complex computations. The result of this computation is the input of another neurons computation. So you can readily substitute the words 'computation of computation' for 'operation of operation'. (Segal, 1986, p. 141).

Thus, von Foerster's use of recursive function theory and his notion of eigen values can add additional depth to Maturana's discussion of the autopoietic, or self producing nature of our nervous systems and of us as living systems.

Von Foerster explained that when the primary variable being considered is behavior, then we speak of eigen behaviors. He made one further point which is highly relevant to the overall discussion of views concerning an objec-

tive reality and to the previous introduction to his ideas of how our language influences our view of reality. He stated that, "objects are tokens for eigen behaviors" (von Foerster, 1984a). Segal (1986) provided the following presentation of von Foerster's view concerning how objects arise.

When we engage in sensori-motor behavior with something, we operate on the object, generating eigen values, more commonly known as the objects of perception. For instance, consider an infant interacting with what for us is a 'ball'. After sufficient interaction, he begins to experience the ball as an invariant. His recursive behavior, operating on the result of his previous operations, reaches a stability The constructivist would say the child has access to his behavior--his operations and his sensory motor correlations. The observer, however, sees a child interacting with a thing, a ball The observer's language nominalizes his own sensori-motor experience, the correlation between the image on his retina and the movement of his eyes. (Segal, 1986, p. 142).

An interesting contrast can be made when von Foerster's view of how language arises is compared with that of Maturana. In a recent manuscript, Maturana indicated that objects arise as the result of interaction. This idea has been noted before when the theoretical framework for the study was presented; however, the following quotation, particularly its use of the term, token, helps to contrast Maturana's view with that of von Foerster.

I claim that recursive consensual coordination of consensual coordination of actions or distinctions in any domain, is the phenomenon of language. Furthermore,

I claim that objects arise in language as consensual coordinations of actions that operationally obscure for further recursive consensual coordinations by the observers the consensual coordinations of actions (distinctions) that they coordinate. Objects are in the process of languaging consensual coordinations of actions that operate as tokens for the consensual coordinations of actions that they coordinate. Objects do not preexist language. (Maturana, 1986, p. 56).

Thus, von Foerster sees objects as tokens for eigen behaviors, a physiological conceptualization, while Maturana views objects as operating as tokens for consensual coordinations of behavior, an interactive view, by definition. However, both von Foerster and Maturana would agree that the observer operates in a language of objects, acting as though those objects were real and not brought forth (Maturana) or constructed (von Foerster) by him. The difference between the notions of "brought forth" versus "constructed" will be discussed once Bateson's views on objectivity have been considered.

Maturana (Simon, 1985) has commented that sometimes Bateson rejects the notion of objectivity while at other times he operates within it. In the following discussion, Dell (1985) both described and explained why he would be in agreement with Maturana's comment.

Both Maturana and Bateson agree on the impossibility of objective information, but with a very important difference. Bateson's position entails a subject-dependent epistemology, whereas Maturana's stance involves both a subject-dependent epistemology and a

'subject'-dependent or relativistic ontology Bateson's position retains notable traces of objectivity. In particular, he speaks of the concept of difference as though it were objective. His phrase 'news of difference' implies that there are objective differences 'out there'. Those differences which we receive 'news of' he called 'effective differences' or differences which make a difference. Differences which we do not receive news of, he called 'potential differences' or 'latent differences i.e., those which for whatever reason do not make a difference'. Bateson believed that 'all perception of differences is limited by threshold'.... 'Differences that are too slight or too slowly presented are not perceivable In short, Bateson's discussion of differences seemed to claim that there is an objective world 'out there', but that we cannot receive unfiltered information about it Bateson insisted that objective knowledge (i.e., epistemology) was impossible: his failure to squarely confront ontology, however, allowed objectivity to continue to exist — 'out there'. It is just that we cannot know it (i.e., we cannot know the ding an sich.) (p. 10)

To consider the issue of ontology further, Bateson stated that an organism in an environment is an example of a system which has chains of causation which are:

closed in the sense that causal interconnection can be traced around the circuit and back through whatever position was (arbitrarily) chosen as the starting point of the description such systems are, however, always open ... in the sense that events within the circuit may be influenced from the outside or may influence outside events. (Bateson, 1972, p. 404).

Thus, while Maturana and Von Foerster are emphatic in their views that the ontology of living systems is organizational closure, Bateson was much less clear in this regard, as evidenced in the preceding quote.

The discussion of views concerning the possibility of knowing an objective reality could go on at great length; however, it seems more appropriate to conclude with three general observations. First, a quotation in the presentation of theoretical framework for the study indicated that Maturana does not consider himself a constructivist because he believes the notion of fitness of experience as used by the radical constructivist, Von Glaserfeld, (1984) implied an objective reality. Additionally, Tomm stated that Maturana takes the position that he is not a constructivist because Maturana says that what we bring forth in our constructions is not arbitrary. We can bring forth only those coherences that have a domain of existence. We simultaneously bring forth the entity and the context in which that entity exists so that there is ultimately some criterion of coherence amongst coherences which limit us in terms of what we can construct (Tomm & White, 1986). Concerns regarding Bateson's approach to objectivity have been noted also. However, the first general observation to be made is that these three theorists are like members of a kinship which takes the problems of knowing an objective reality seriously. And, certainly, Bateson (1972, 1979) was ahead of the majority of his contemporaries in this respect.

The second general observation is that the three theorists reached similar kinds of ethical conclusions from

dealing with epistemological questions. For Maturana, operating in objectivity in parenthesis means, among other things, taking full responsibility for one's world as one brings it forth. Von Foerster reached a similar conclusion i.e., because we are autonomous individuals we are responsible for our behaviors. Secondly, von Foerster chose to reject any sort of solipsism which he described as the view that the world is only in his imagination and that he is the only one imagining. Segal explained as follows:

Von Foerster argues that ethics arise out of choice—in fact, two choices. First, one chooses to see identity between oneself and another. Second, one chooses to evoke the principle of relativity, thus abandoning the solipsistic hypothesis. The process can only arise from acknowledging the other person. The entire process hinges on seeing an identity between oneself and another. (1986, p. 147).

Finally, Bateson's notion of ethics is also related to a sense of relationship. He emphasized the importance of viewing the world in terms of circular causality rather than taking the lineal perspective that "A causes B". He comments that we live in "a world of circuit structures—and love can survive only if wisdom (i.e., a sense of recognition of the fact of circuitry) has an effective voice." (Bateson, 1972, p. 146). Thus, all three theorists view ethics from a relationship perspective.

Language, Communication, and Relationships

This section will discuss the remaining research concept, that of languaging. First, Maturana and Bateson will be compared in terms of their views concerning the interactive nature of languaging. Second, because languaging is viewed by Maturana as an interactive phenomenon, the nature of stability and change in relationships will be considered. Third, Bateson's and Maturana's classifications of interactional processes will be discussed as they apply to the family. Finally, a synthesis of Maturana and Bateson will be used to present one particular approach to therapy. As with the objectivity in parenthesis discussion, the overall goal in considering languaging is to demonstrate how computation, or multiple description, can enhance one's perspective concerning these theorists.

Languaging as an Interactive Phenomenon

Two major points can be made regarding Maturana's conceptualization of languaging. First, as was mentioned in the definition of major theoretical concepts for this study, languaging is described as "a manner of living together . . . a social phenomenon" (Mendez, Coddou, & Maturana, 1986, p. 18). Second, as also mentioned, Maturana views languaging as entailing much more than the use of words. The following excerpt from a delightful metalogue (fictitious conversation) between Bateson and his daughter illustrates that Bateson

would agree readily with Maturana's distinctions concerning languaging:

Daughter: Daddy, why do Frenchmen wave their arms about?
 Father: What do you mean?

D: I mean when they talk. Why do they wave their arms and all that?

F: Well—why do you smile? Or why do you stamp your foot sometimes?

D: But that's not the same thing, Daddy. I don't wave my arms about like a Frenchman does. I don't believe they can stop doing it, Daddy. Can they?

F: I don't know—they might find it hard to stop Can you stop smiling?

D: But Daddy, I don't smile all the time. It's hard to stop when I feel like smiling. But I don't feel like it all the time. And then I stop.

F: That's true—but then a Frenchman doesn't wave his arms in the same way all the time. Sometimes he waves them in one way and sometimes in another—and sometimes, I think, he stops waving them

F: Anyhow, it is all nonsense. I mean, the notion that language is made of words is all nonsense—and when I said that gestures could not be translated into 'mere words', I was talking nonsense, because there is no such thing as 'mere words'. And all the syntax and grammar and all that stuff is nonsense. It's all based on the idea that 'mere' words exist—and there are none.

D: But Daddy

F: I tell you—we have to start all over again from the beginning and assume that language is first and foremost a system of gestures. Animals after all have only gestures and tones of voice—and words were invented later. Much later. And after that they invented schoolmasters.

D: Daddy?

F: Yes.

D: Would it be a good thing if people gave up words and went back to only using gestures?

F: Hmm. I don't know. Of course we would not be able to have any conversations like this. We could only bark, or mew, and wave our arms about, and laugh and grunt and weep. But it might be fun—it would make life a sort of ballet—with dancers making their own music. (Bateson, 1972, pp. 9 & 13).

The metalogue reflects Bateson's view of language as involving a rich interactional dance which includes more than (mere) words. One further point upon which Bateson and Maturana agree is that we are always communicating. Bateson noted that:

The whole energy structure of the pleroma—the forces and impacts of the hard sciences—have flown out the window, so far as explanation within creatura is concerned. After all, zero differs from one, and zero therefore can be a cause, which is not admissible in hard science. The letter which you did not write can precipitate an angry reply, because zero can be one-half of the necessary bit of information. Even sameness can be a cause, because sameness differs from difference. (1972, p. 481).

Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson (1969), in applying the work of Bateson, used this point in describing the axiom concerning communication that "one cannot not communicate" (p. 51). Maturana expressed a similar idea when he spoke of ontogenic structural drift and coontogeny and stated that although everything takes place in a deterministic manner in a drift, what we think or what we language is not trivial because as soon as we language it, it becomes part of the drift (Maturana & Tomm, 1986). It is from this perspective that Mendez, Coddou, and Maturana (1986) admonished therapists to choose their language with care.

The Nature of Stability and Change in Relationships

Maturana and Bateson specifically address the nature of

stability and change. Bateson recognized that stability and change are both descriptive terms. He noted that an individual walking on a high wire maintains stability by continual correction of the imbalance and stated that "when we talk about living entities, statements about stability should always be labeled by reference to some descriptive proposition so that the typing of the word, stable, may be clear" (1979, p. 62). As was mentioned in the discussion of the biological tenets, Maturana also used the analogy of a tight rope walker to deal with the concepts of stability and change. In his terminology, a living system must undergo continuous change (in structure) in order to remain stable (unchanged in its organization) and, therefore, identifiable as that entity).

Maturana, von Foerster, and Bateson each provided an explanation as to why an observer can distinguish stable patterns of interaction. As was indicated in the discussion of ontogenic structural drift and coontogeny, structural coupling is a situation in which the two or more individuals perturb each other recursively. Each begins to interact with a particular structure and, as each interacts and maintains an independent autopoiesis, they trigger ongoing changes in each other which appear as stable interactional patterns to the observer. Because the couples interact as a closed system, von Foerster can use recursive function

theory to explain how behaviors which appear stable to the observer arise as a part of repeated interaction. His terminology is somewhat different from that of Maturana. Von Foerster stated that "equilibrium is obtained when the Eigen behaviors of one participant generate (recursively) those for the other" (von Foerster, 1984a, p. 281). Thus, for both Maturana and von Foerster, the notion of closure is central in their explanations.

In general terms, Bateson would have a cybernetic explanation for why an observer would see stable patterns developing over time. A cybernetic explanation is a negative explanation in that it proposes that events take their course because they are restrained in relation to alternative courses. (This is as opposed to positive explanation which proposes that events take their course because they are driven or propelled in that direction. White, 1986). So, for Bateson, couples appear to the observer to be in a stable pattern of interaction because they are restrained from being otherwise. More specifically, Bateson pinpointed what aspect of communication is responsible for the development of pattern (or redundancy, as he calls it) by stating that, "the human communication which creates redundancy in the relationships between persons is still preponderantly iconic and is achieved by means of kinesics, paralinguistics, intention movements, actions, and the like". (1972, p. 423). Efforts

at classification of patterns in relationships will be considered next.

Classification of Interactional Patterns

Bateson and Maturana both have made efforts to classify interactional patterns. Bateson can be credited with distinguishing clearly between processes and classification by applying the notion of logical typing. (Keeney's recognition of Bateson's use of logical typing in this way was mentioned earlier when the way in which our languaging affects our views about reality was discussed). Bateson described the applicability of logical typing in the following manner:

When we take the notion of logical typing out of the field of abstract logic and start to map real biological events onto the hierarchies of this paradigm, we shall immediately encounter the fact that in the world of mental and biological systems, the hierarchy is not only a list of classes, classes of classes, and classes of classes but has also become a zigzag ladder of dialectic between form and process. (1979, p. 194).

His actual description of process and classification of process which arose originally from his 1930's study of a New Guinea culture has been of considerable interest to family therapists. Specifically, Bateson gave the general label, schizogenesis, to relations which he observed as potentially subject to escalation. There were two types of relations which could be classified under schizogenesis (a) symmetri-

cal interactions in which the more A exhibited a certain behavior, the more B was likely to exhibit the same behavior, and (b) complementary interactions in which B's behavior was different from, but complementary to A's (Bateson, 1979). Bateson indicated that, in observing the interactions (which he labelled as complementary and symmetrical, "both of these were sequences of social interaction such that A's acts were stimuli for B's acts, which in turn became stimuli for more intense action on the part of A, and so on." (1972, p. 109). The description sounds like the description of structural coupling given when coontogeny was discussed in the presentation of the theoretical framework. Finally, Bateson observed the following:

There were fascinating interactions between the named processes. It turned out that the symmetrical and complementary themes of interaction are mutually negating (i.e., have mutually opposing effects on relationship), so that when complementary schizogenesis (e.g., dominance-submission) has gone uncomfortably far, a little competition will relieve the strain; conversely, when competition has gone too far, a little dependency will be a comfort. (1979, p. 193).

Thus, in the preceding quote, Bateson provided an example of self correction within a system.

As was introduced in the theoretical framework for the study, Mendez, Coddou, and Maturana (1986) have developed a typology or classification for conversations which occur in families. Like schizogenesis, "conversations" can be

thought of as a general label for interactive processes. However, while Bateson looked at interactive processes which have the potential for escalation in a system such as a family, Maturana dealt with languaging and emotions in his typology. As was indicated in the presentation of the theoretical framework for the study, the three fundamental conversations identified by Mendez, Coddou, and Maturana include conversations for coordinations of actions in any domain, conversations for characterization (the family members ascribe positive or negative characteristics to each other), and conversations for accusations and recriminations (the conversations entail complaints about expectations which are unfulfilled). The key point regarding these conversations is in relation to the emotions which an observer would note as the various conversations occur. Mendez, Coddou, and Maturana (1986) stated that: "These different kinds of conversations give rise to different emotional dynamics that involve the participants in different manners with respect to the basic attitudes about reality (objectivity, truth), that, in the long run, define them as individuals" (p. 36).

As noted in the discussion of the theoretical framework, Mendez, Coddou, and Maturana see the family organization as a network of criss crossing conversations. Families which participate to a large extent in objectivity in parenthesis

do not get stuck in a particular emotion because those conversations are emotionally "monotonic" (Mendez, Coddou, & Maturana, 1986, p. 36). In other words, in this particular braiding between emotioning and languaging, each individual has emotional postures which allow flexibility in interactions in the family.

In conclusion, the work which Bateson has done on classification of interactional processes enhances that of Maturana and vice versa. Specifically, Bateson tells us about interactional processes which, if unchecked can threaten the existence of the family entity. By distinguishing complementary and symmetrical interactions, he describes what an observer would see as he observes a family interacting together (structurally coupling to use Maturana's term). Maturana, on the other hand, focused on patterns of languaging and emotioning which also could threaten the family entity. Like Bateson, he distinguished stable patterns of languaging and emotioning which an observer would see as he observes the couple interacting together. Also, as indicated in the literature review, Maturana makes reference to "health" by indicating that the goal of therapy should be to assist family members to operate in objectivity with parenthesis while Bateson noted that "in mixed systems schizogenesis is necessarily reduced" (1972, p. 324). The individual who incorporates the work these two theorists

could benefit from the increased perspective of which Bateson speaks in his discussion of double description.

A View of Therapy: A Synthesis of Maturana and Bateson

Maturana stated that he and Bateson "intersect" but they do not "superimpose" (Simon, 1985, p. 36). In order to illustrate further how the work of these two theorists can enhance each other, a brief discussion of the one family therapist will ensue. The discussion will show how the work of Michael White, a family therapist who uses Bateson's theory explicitly, also can be conceptualized by using Maturana's theory. Michael White was chosen because he appears to operate de facto from an objectivity in parenthesis perspective and to appreciate the nature and importance of languaging as it is discussed by Maturana.

Some Theoretical Foundations

White uses Bateson's description of cybernetic explanation. Therefore, he focuses on the notion that a family is restrained from taking alternate courses (as was discussed briefly in the preceding consideration of stability and change in relationships). In particular, White focuses on redundancy (restraints of pattern). In addition, White emphasized Bateson's concept of news of difference and

relates it to double description in the following way:

The receipt of news of difference is essential for the revelation of new ideas and the triggering of new responses, for the discovery of new solutions. Receipt of news of difference requires that family members perceive a contrast between two or multiple descriptions. The therapist contributes to the family's perception of such contrasts by working to develop double or multiple descriptions of certain events, standing these descriptions side by side for family members and then inviting them to draw distinctions between these descriptions. This provides news of difference which makes a difference. (1986a, p. 172).

White (1986a) outlined a sequence for therapy which involved (a) determining the relative influence of the problem in the life of the family, and the family members' influence in the life of the problem, (b) helping family members view the problem in the context of a trend by using questions which draw contrasts between the state of affairs at one point in time and at another point in time, (c) raising dilemmas which help family members establish two descriptions of how they participate with each other around the two different lifestyles, (d) discussing the consequences of change and predicting a hangover if a radical (i.e., change-oriented) course is adopted, (e) having the family undertake experiments if the radical course is adopted, (f) responding to the families responses, and (g) predicting relapses as expected phenomena. Several of these points will be highlighted.

Examples of Objectivity in Parenthesis and Languageing

The discussion of White's theory is not intended to be a comprehensive one. Rather, it is like a sampling of his work in order to illustrate some key points. In this light, two examples of objectivity in parenthesis and two of languaging will be given. First, in relation to objectivity in parenthesis, it is worth noting that White uses the family members' distinctions of the problem in formulating the double description which he helps them bring forth. Also his languaging is designed to bring the problem out of an individual context and into a relationship context. He agrees with Bateson on the following point.

We commonly speak as though a single 'thing' could 'have' some characteristic That is how our language is made But this way of talking is not good enough in science or epistemology. To think straight, it is advisable to expect all qualities and attributes, adjectives, and so on to refer to at least two sets of interactions in time. (1979, pp. 60-61).

White uses some particularly creative languaging to externalize the problem into a relationship context. For example, in an article entitled, "Family Escape From Trouble" White described how he dealt with a twelve year old boy and his parents. The boy had been seen by professionals for nine years and had received a variety of diagnoses. White's (1986b) first question to the parents was concerning the extent to which they thought John "was presently under the influence of the problems that had plagued his life so"

(p. 29). This was the first of a series of distinctions which were designed to counter the "family's characterological description" (p. 29). (Also it is interesting to note that as the family terminated therapy "the father's parting comment was that it was a case of family escape from trouble" [p. 33], indicating that indeed, the father saw the problem in a relationship context.) A second example of languaging demonstrates that White appreciates the perspective that languaging involves more than (mere) words. In the portion of therapy which White entitled responding to responses, he described how he encourages change in a new direction as follows:

The therapist can further promote the endurance of these new ideas by noting in detail the family members' responses. She or he can carefully take notes while inquiring about the various vicissitudes. Family members become more involved in obtaining information about these changes if the therapist mumbles quietly while taking notes, frequently checking with family members to ensure that the evidence being written down is indeed correct. During this phase, family members often "spontaneously" discover other facets of change that have taken place between sessions, facets that have previously gone unnoticed. (1986a, p. 177).

One further example of White's functioning in objectivity in parenthesis will be given. He stated he does not argue with a family's perspective (White & Tomm, 1986). Rather he can be distinguished as working persistently and creatively to help the family bring forth the new description with which they have had little experience (e.g., competence, etc.).

Some General Observations: Double Description,
Restrains, and News of Difference

The first general observation is that White's overall therapy sequence can be described as the orthogonal interaction, or, in other words, an interaction with the components of the family in ways other than how they interact currently to integrate the specific "problem" family. Therefore, if the therapy sequence is distinguished as the orthogonal interaction, that interaction could be described as a sequence of steps intended to create and perpetuate a double description.

Secondly, restraints can be thought of as the structures of the individual family members. For anyone concerned about Bateson's views on objectivity, this reconceptualization of restraint as structure explicitly indicates that change will be determined by the family members and not by the therapist's interventions. In practice, White seems to function in that spirit anyway. For example, he stated that "new responses are, more often than not, entirely new. There are responses which were not and could not have been predicted in earlier discussions of the requirements for family members participation in regard to a new course." (White, 1986a, p. 196). Finally, news of difference can be thought of as a perturbation. In the previous discussion of Bateson's view

of reality. Dell (1985) stated that Bateson's discussion of news of difference seemed to be a claim that there was an objective world. However, alternate distinctions are possible. For example, considering Bateson's view of circular causality, it seems unlikely that he meant information coming from the environment actually causes change. However, this must remain speculation. In any case, it seems that White conducts his therapy in a way which sees news of difference as a perturbation which may or may not be experienced by family members, depending on their structures. Thus, White's therapeutic approach can be considered compatible with much of Maturana's theory.

The consideration of the second major theoretical concept, languaging, is complete. The discussion has emphasized the nature of languaging as an interactive phenomenon, stability and change in relationships, and classification of interactive processes. In addition, a brief discussion of a therapeutic approach which can be used to synthesize some of the major ideas of Maturana and Bateson was presented. Further, with the completion of the discussion of the concept of languaging, the computation of Maturana, Bateson, and von Foerster also draws to a close. As a final comment in this regard, an overall distinction which focuses on the uniqueness of each theorist is that Maturana provides a sound foundation for understanding our

biology and its implications; von Foerster contributes a synthesis from many fields in arguing for an observer dependent epistemology; and, Bateson provides some fundamental understandings concerning the nature and classification of communication.

In a still wider frame, the overall discussion of the implications of Maturana's theory and the consideration of Maturana in context were designed to emphasize both theory and application. For example, the computation section can be distinguished as primarily theoretical in nature, while the implications section was more application oriented. For example, it dealt with the issue of distinguishing between health and pathology as well as with a framework for therapy which was brought forth directly from the biological tenets. In addition, it was suggested that the majority of the implications were relevant to the process of viewing oneself and one's relationship to others. For example, the majority of the implications would apply to interacting with others in a setting in which therapy was not the goal, such as the current study. The remaining discussion will focus on some final observations brought forth from the process of theory application which this project entailed.

The Study Couples, Study Method, and the Nature of the Study

This discussion is designed to highlight some significant observations which can be made as a result of the theory application process. It is recognized that from the process of reading the material presented to this point, others could well bring forth many different observations. However, the discussion will provide some sense of how these particular observations arose.

The Study Couples

A significant observation is that Maturana's theory provides a way to describe the study couples and their interaction, and consideration of Bateson and von Foerster enhances that perspective. The following is such a description.

The husbands and wives met and continued to interact because their structures allowed it (structure determinism). If not, they would have met and separated. They have remained together because their structures continue to allow it. Specifically, they stay together because one aspect of their structures is that each has the emotion which Maturana called the passion (willingness, desire) for living together in close physical or emotional proximity. (A couple could

stay together if one of them had lost that emotion, or, indeed if both of them had, but that would be a rational decision made through languaging with oneself or with the other partner).

The couples interact together in a closed domain (A perturbs B, B perturbs A, etc. in a process called structural coupling). They can interact in an infinite variety of ways as long as each conserves organization and correspondence with the medium (a part of which is their structural coupling with each other).

The study couples have undergone a life transition without having sought therapy because they have not distinguished a problem in this regard. Additionally, no one empowered by society has identified a problem and required that they seek therapeutic assistance.

Because of the recursive nature of their structural coupling, the couples have developed stable behavior over time. At least some of their behavior patterns can be observed in an interactive setting such as an interview.

During the interviews, the interviewer observed that the couples seemed to function well together. Two perspectives can be taken in looking at that situation. The languaging (in the case of this study, the verbal languaging) can be

identified with emphasis on the differences among the couples, and each couple can be distinguished as functioning in an idiosyncratic fashion. This situation occurs because of the relationship between structure and organization i.e., as composite unities the couples can have any components and relationships as long as their organization as the couple is conserved. This perspective can bring forth appreciation of the wide variety of ways in which couples or families can function (a sense of the legitimacy of their realities). It can act to guard against the establishment of rigid norms about couples and families.

The second perspective is to look for similarities among the couples by observing their languaging (again, verbal languaging in the case of the study). Similarities, combined with an appreciation of the idiosyncratic nature of the relationships, may yield a broader perspective. In relation to similarities for example, noting that each husband and wife often shared similar distinctions in their languaging, saw the emotion of anger as normal within a relationship, or that they seemed tentative when they spoke about how the other might feel or think allows one to make distinctions about why these couples appear to be functioning well together. Some overall distinctions concerning their languaging also becomes possible. For example, one could say that they function with a sense of relationship, or a double

description of how they interact as a couple. Also, one can say they have some self corrective mechanisms acting so as to prevent escalation. Or, one can focus on the responsibility they take for their actions and their tentativeness in interacting with each other and characterize this as objectivity in parenthesis. One can infer that their emotional postures must be such that they allow languaging of this sort to occur.

Finally, the couples can be viewed as undergoing continuous structural change. For example, in the interview setting, some of the interactions with the interviewer were perturbations which triggered change in each of them. It is impossible for the interviewer to know what change occurred. Equally, it is impossible to predict what the couples will be like in the future; that is contingent upon their individual ontogenic structural drifts and upon the interactions into which each person enters, both within the relationship and in other systems of which they are a part.

The Study Method

An Epistemology Regarding Science

The overall research methodology was classified as a hermeneutical approach. However, before the methodology is

discussed, one broader notion will be considered. Specifically, Maturana presents his epistemology concerning science whenever he writes about the nature of language, cognition, etc. (e.g., 1978, 1986, etc.). This is because he is a scientist making explanations. His epistemology is that we do science as follows:

We as scientists make scientific statements. These statements are validated by the procedure we use to generate them: the scientific method. This method can be described as involving the following operations: (a) observation of a phenomenon that, henceforth, is taken as a problem to be explained; (b) proposition of an explanatory hypothesis in the form of a deterministic system that can generate a phenomenon isomorphic with the one observed; (c) proposition of a computed state or process in the system specified by the hypothesis as a predicted phenomenon to be observed; and (d) observation of the predicted phenomenon. (1978, p. 28).

What is most significant is that carrying out the scientific method does not require reference to an objective reality. Further, whether or not a scientific explanation is valid, or in other words, accepted or rejected, depends on whether or not it satisfies an explicit or implicit criterion of acceptability that a listener specifies.

When these two points are considered it puts science in a different light. For me, it solidifies my view of an observer dependent reality and the appropriateness of doing this type of study which, among other things, attempts to account for the observer and my observations in more than a

cursory manner. Also, it make debates over the relative merit of quantitative versus qualitative methods nonsense, i.e. of no sense (Maturana & Tomm, 1986). Finally, the understanding that the validity of any endeavor is determined by the listener (or listeners) has helped me to understand my role. Just as the therapist is responsible for the careful choice of an interaction which he hopes will be orthogonal, my responsibility has been to tell a story in a manner I distinguish as careful or thorough. Finally, the discussion is included at this point because I was not fully aware of the consequences of Maturana's epistemology concerning science until later in the overall process of theory application during this project. The following quote by von Foerster seems appropriate in this context:

While in the first quarter of this century physicists and cosmologists were forced to review the basic notions that govern the natural sciences, in the last quarter of this century biologists will force a revision of the basic notions that govern science itself. (Segal, 1986, p. 29).

The more specific topic, that of the hermeneutical approach, will be discussed next.

The Hermeneutical Approach

-The essence of the hermeneutical approach was presented in the discussion of the methodology for the study. In

addition, rationale which was presented when the study was proposed is included in that discussion. The current distinctions will be restricted to two observations of which I was aware only partly at the time of proposing the research study. The first of these is that the hermeneutical approach is particularly suited to the application of the concept of objectivity in parenthesis as it related to the study couples and to myself. Taking Dell's (1985) point that Maturana provides us with an ontology of our nature as biological beings, Gadamer can be seen to present a highly compatible notion of how our ontology affects our interaction with others in research. In the introduction to Gadamer's (1976) work, the following is noted:

(The) methodological alienation of the knower from his own historicity is precisely the focus of Gadamer's criticism. Is it the case, Gadamer asks, that the knower can leave his immediate situation in the present merely by adopting an attitude? An ideal understanding that asks us to overcome our own present is intelligible only on the assumption that our own historicity is an accidental factor. But if it is an ontological rather than a merely accidental and subjective condition, then the knower's own present situation is already constitutively involved in any process of understanding. Thus Gadamer takes the knower's boundness to his present horizons and the temporal gulf separating him from his object to be the productive ground of all understanding rather than negative factors or impediments to be overcome (p. xiv).

This statement provides clear support for Maturana's notion of our constitutive inability to know an objective world. The second observation is that Gadamer's idea of dialogue

suits the study of couples as they interact through languaging. He described the hermeneutical task as a "coming into conversation" (Weinsheimer, 1986, p. 209). Also, Gadamer noted that questioning is reciprocal in a dialogue. This point will be discussed further as it relates to my particular study and studies of this nature. It would seem that the hermeneutical approach provides an excellent opportunity for dialogue as the term is used by Gadamer. In the presentation of the study results, I noted that I imposed structure in the interviews by talking about the decision in three distinct time periods. Secondly, I observed that to varying degrees, each couple and I treated the interview in the traditional sense of the word i.e., I led the discussion and the couples responded. Thus, while my interaction with the couples was much more of a dialogue than in those studies on the transition to parenthood and of the work/non work decision as reviewed in the introductory chapter, it was less of a dialogue than it could have been. The implication of this is that when choosing to use a hermeneutical approach, a researcher needs to consider carefully what sort of structure will be used because it will affect the nature of the interaction and yield different data. The nature of the research project will be considered next.

The Nature of the Project

I will end the discussion with a personal comment on the nature of the research project. I distinguish it as a luxury to have done an application type of project. As mentioned earlier, such an application has allowed me to live with the theory, a particularly appropriate idea since Maturana talks about languaging (including self reflection and thinking in this case) as arising through the praxis of living together. I will end with an anecdote. While I was working on my dissertation, my husband was reading an exciting fiction book and broke out in loud laughter. I asked what was funny. He said that it wouldn't seem funny to me. When encouraged, he stated that he was laughing at a line "look in the telephone book". At the time it struck me that this project had been a similar process of living with a theory so that I could come to understand it for myself.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

STUDY INFORMATION

APPENDIX 1

Study Information

I am a graduate student doing a dissertation at the University of Alberta and living in Calgary. As part of my dissertation, I am interested in interviewing couples who have made a decision for the wife not to return to work after the birth of their first child. In other words, couples who have no definite plans about when or if the wife will go back to working outside the home. I want to interview couples whose babies are now between three to twelve months of age. In each interview, I will ask the couple to share their particular experiences related to this decision. The interview will probably take about two hours to complete.

If you are willing to participate in this study or wish further information about it, please contact me at 283-8605. Thank you.

Lee Wertzler B.Sc. (Nursing); M.Ed.

APPENDIX 2

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

APPENDIX 2

Consent To Participate In A Research Study
Concerning The Decision A Couple Makes
For The Wife Not To Return To Work
After The Birth Of Their First Child

Having had the above study described to us by Lee Wertzler, we agree to be interviewed as a family concerning how we made and have experienced the decision as stated above. We understand that we will receive feedback about the results of the study after it is completed. Further, we understand that the interview (of approximately two hours duration) will be recorded on audiotape and that this material will be kept in confidence and available only to those people officially involved in the study.

We understand that names, and other identifying information, in as much as can be determined, will be excluded from the research report.

Signed: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____